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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

**THE LEGACY OF HUMEANISM:
UNITY OF MIND, TEMPORAL AWARENESS, AND PERSONAL IDENTITY**

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Philosophy

by

Daniel R. Siakel

Dissertation Committee:
Professor David Woodruff Smith, Chair
Professor Sven Bernecker
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2016

DEDICATION

To

My mother, Anna
My father, Jim

Life's original, enduring constellation.

And

My "doctor father," David

Who sees.

"We think that we can prove ourselves to ourselves. The truth is that we cannot say that we are one entity, one existence. Our individuality is really a heap or pile of experiences. We are made out of experiences of achievement, disappointment, hope, fear, and millions and billions and trillions of other things. All these little fragments put together are what we call our self and our life. Our pride of self-existence or sense of being is by no means one entity. It is a heap, a pile of stuff. It has some similarities to a pile of garbage."

"It's not that everything is one. Everything is zero."

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche
"Galaxies of Stars, Grains of Sand"
"Rhinoceros and Parrot"

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John Cobb generously devoted time speaking to me about Whitehead's philosophy and process philosophy more broadly.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Legacy of Humeanism:

Unity of Mind, Temporal Awareness, and Personal Identity

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

University of California, Irvine, 2016

Professor David Woodruff Smith, Chair

David Hume's thought has interrupted entire disciplines from dogmatic slumbers. Yet Hume's influence is even more expansive and continuous than we might have thought. There are two significant areas of inquiry where Hume's influence has not been adequately appreciated or articulated: analytic phenomenology and analytic process philosophy. My dissertation explores these traditions' indebtedness to Hume by engaging with the work of Edmund Husserl and Alfred North Whitehead, who introduce consequential changes into their systems in direct response to what they see as Humean problems with their initial models.

Three major themes are of special interest. First, *vis-à-vis* "Unity of Mind," each philosopher asks what accounts for the apparent unity of mind and experience, including what principles connect distinct experiences. Second, *vis-à-vis* "Temporal Awareness," each philosopher inquires into what grounds temporality and the experience of temporal passage, including what principles connect distinct moments. Third, *vis-à-vis* "Personal Identity," each philosopher investigates what constitutes the experience of continuity and unity over time, including personal continuity and unity *qua* "personal identity."

A fourth concordance is methodological. In pursuing the aforementioned themes, each philosopher accords epistemic primacy to lived experience and what discloses itself therein. An overarching Humean problem for all, correlatively, is how continuity and unity arise from distinct items: perceptions, intentional experiences, and actual occasions, respectively. My dissertation attempts to explicate this and related systematic issues from a historical perspective informed by contemporary analytic metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and recent scholarship in Hume, Husserl, and Whitehead studies.

Chapter One argues that Hume's infamous "Appendix problem" concerns reconciling the incontrovertible unity of mind with his unrenounceable epistemological principle that the mind never perceives real connections between distinct perceptions. Chapter Two traces Hume's proto-phenomenological influence on Husserl's theories (not theory) of temporal awareness. Chapter Three examines Hume's proto-processual influence on Whitehead's theories (not theory) of personal identity.

Unfortunately, neither Husserl nor Whitehead read each other's work. Nevertheless, both take Hume to be the one who knocks at, yet ultimately fails to walk through the doors that his explorations unveil. By so doing, they beg that we do the same with them.

INTRODUCTION

David Hume's thought has interrupted entire disciplines from dogmatic slumbers. An incisive yet tempered gadfly, Hume has inspired such divergent explorations that "Humeanism" and "neo-Humeanism" encompass:

- reductive nominalism or "Humean supervenience" *vis-à-vis* (putative) universals and laws of nature;
- skepticism regarding the existence of truth-makers for general and negative truths;
- regularity and probabilistic theories of causation;
- four-dimensionalism and perdurantist theories of persistence and personal identity;
- views according to which there is a sharp division or "fork" between matters of fact and relations of ideas;
- logical empiricism and positivism;
- positions that reject the solvability of the problem of induction;
- theories that deny the existence of proprietary cognitive phenomenology;
- belief-desire models of psychology;
- internalist theories of reason, according to which one's having a reason to do something requires one having a desire that would be served by enacting it;
- views according to which instrumental rationality is the only kind of practical rationality;
- internalist theories of motivation, including moral motivation, which hold that both a belief and a desire (or conative state) are required to motivate action;
- the general view that one cannot infer an "ought" from an "is";
- constructivist meta-ethical theories that take the truth of normative judgments to derive from evaluative idiosyncrasies of particular individuals;
- compatibilism *vis-à-vis* determinism and free will;
- skepticism regarding the existence of God;
- antitheism;
- aesthetic theories that ground experiences of and judgments about pleasure and/or taste in natural sentiments;
- conceptions of private property that reject its naturalness.

Furthermore, recent scholarship has seen a resurgence in Hume studies—with respect to a "New Hume" whose epistemic skepticism allegedly accommodates metaphysical realism about causation, the existence of external objects, and persons, for example.

Yet Hume's influence is even more expansive and continuous than we might have thought. In particular, there are two significant areas of inquiry where Hume's influence has not been adequately appreciated or articulated: analytic phenomenology and analytic process philosophy. My dissertation explores these traditions' indebtedness to Hume by engaging with the work of Edmund Husserl and Alfred North Whitehead, who introduce consequential changes into their systems in direct response to

what they see as Humean problems with their initial models. The dissertation's title, accordingly, is *The Legacy of Humeanism: Unity of Mind, Temporal Awareness, and Personal Identity*. The scope of “Unity” is intentionally ambiguous. Hume, Husserl, and Whitehead are concerned with not only the unity of mind, temporal awareness, and personal identity *per se*, but also the more encompassing “Unity” of the unity of mind, temporal awareness, and personal identity. Concordantly, Husserl’s and Whitehead’s major themes resonate with Humean basics. Three of these themes are of special interest and receive detailed treatments below.

First, *vis-à-vis* “Unity of Mind,” each philosopher asks what accounts for the apparent unity of mind and experience, including what principles connect distinct experiences. Hume (eventually) accounts for the mind’s unity in terms of associative connections and association-generating relations that form interconnected complexes among discrete, discontinuous perceptions. Husserl and Whitehead, in contrast, explain the mind’s unity in terms of non-Humean causal connections, in accordance with which experiences that arise in the stream of consciousness are always-already unified with their immediate predecessors and successors. Husserl and Whitehead differ, however, about the nature of the *experiencers* to which experiences “belong.” Husserl’s initial model is Humean; he holds that the ego is identical to the unified stream of experience. Following detailed engagement with Hume’s analyses of time and individuation—which, as we will see, motivated Husserl to introduce a new model of time and temporal awareness—Husserl rejects his Humean model and recognizes a pure ego that necessarily remains one and the same while experiences flow. Here Whitehead sides with Hume, for he rejects the possibility of diachronic numerical identity and contends that the unity of mind amounts to connections between ontologically distinct entities. The challenge for Whitehead, then, as for Hume, is to explain how ontologically distinct entities can constitute one mind.

Second, *vis-à-vis* “Temporal Awareness,” each philosopher inquires into what grounds temporality and the experience of temporal passage, including what principles connect distinct moments. Hume takes his analyses to prove that time is identical to the discontinuous, irregular, and atomistic succession of distinct perceptions. Husserl and Whitehead agree that Hume’s analyses fail because time

is, and must be, a continuous manifold. Furthermore, both take temporality to derive from a more fundamental manifold: absolute consciousness and ontological becoming, respectively. Husserl and Whitehead differ, however, as to what properties these fundamental manifolds exemplify. Husserl takes absolute consciousness to be continuous, self-constituting, and specific to human persons, whereas Whitehead takes ontological becoming to be discontinuous, other-constituting, and universal to all entities.

Third, *vis-à-vis* “Personal Identity,” each philosopher investigates what constitutes the experience of continuity and unity over time, including personal continuity and unity *qua* “personal identity” (properly conceived). Hume and the early Husserl propone reductive theories of personal identity that are saddled with explaining how distinct experiences can be diachronically unified. This Humean problem came to vex Whitehead; reconsideration of Hume’s theory brought Whitehead to believe that his initial model of personal identity was susceptible to the same problem and motivated him to introduce an incompatible model. Whitehead’s second model follows Plato’s *Timaeus* in postulating “formless receptacles,” the sole function of which is to unify diachronically distinct experiences. Such postulates are inadmissible, by Hume’s and Husserl’s lights, because they discord with what presents itself in the flow of experience. Tellingly, Whitehead would come to agree; for he came to recognize that a refined version of his initial model obviated the Humean problem of explaining the inescapable fact of personal unity.

This epistemological consideration invokes a fourth concordance that is less thematic than methodological. In pursuing the three aforementioned themes, each philosopher accords epistemic primacy to lived experience and what discloses itself therein. An overarching Humean problem for all, correlatively, is how continuity and unity arise from distinct items: perceptions, intentional experiences, and actual occasions, respectively. My dissertation attempts to explicate this and related systematic issues from a historical perspective informed by contemporary analytic metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and recent scholarship in Hume, Husserl, and Whitehead studies.

Chapter One argues that Hume’s infamous “Appendix problem” concerns reconciling the incontrovertible unity of mind with his unrenounceable epistemological principle that the mind never

perceives real connections between distinct perceptions. The argument is unique in that it employs retrodictive reasoning that attends to what Hume found to be so impressive about Lord Kames's method of analyzing personal identity, in addition to a subtle yet significant shift introduced in *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. These considerations lead me to defend the claim that Hume's attempted redress accounts for the unity of mind via perceivable associative connections and the association-generating relations that they presuppose. In other words, Hume comes to realize that "the true idea" of the human mind is consistent with his negative epistemic position regarding necessary, inseparable connections.

The explanation of unity among flux takes a different form in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Chapter Two examines Husserl's explanation by tracing Hume's proto-phenomenological influence on Husserl's theories (not theory) of temporal awareness. More specifically, the chapter explicates how Husserl—in direct response to Hume's analyses of time and individuation—grounds the unity of mind, temporal awareness, and personal identity in an atemporal manifold: absolute consciousness. Husserl takes the atemporal character of consciousness' absolute dimension to avoid the vicious regress entailed by Hume's and the early Husserl's models, since both take the constitution of temporality to be temporal. Moreover, Husserl takes absolute consciousness to be a continuous manifold, *pace* Hume's argument that the experience of continuity presupposes the primacy of discontinuous, discrete, and atomistic succession. Husserl could not have envisaged the notion of an atemporal, continuous manifold of intentionality without first addressing the Humean problem of individuation over time, consideration of which also motivated Husserl to reject his Humean conception of the reduced ego. Husserl's mature theory of time-consciousness and transcendental phenomenology are *Neo-Humean*, in this respect.

Whereas Husserl's estimation of Hume becomes increasingly laudatory in later writings, Whitehead's engagement with Hume remains predominantly negative. Whitehead focuses on what Hume's analyses explicitly reject but implicitly presuppose; for example, the primacy of process presupposed in Hume's account of personal identity. Chapter Three traces Hume's proto-processual

influence on Whitehead's theories (not theory) of personal identity. More specifically, the chapter explicates how Whitehead—in direct response to the primacy of process presupposed in Hume's analysis of mind—grounds the unity of mind, temporal awareness, and personal identity in an atemporal manifold: ontological becoming. Although Whitehead agrees with Husserl that the fundamental level of constitution is atemporal, he takes consideration of Zeno's paradoxes to entail that it must be discontinuous. Thus Whitehead agrees with Hume, whom Whitehead countenances among the greatest philosophers, that the experience of continuity presupposes discontinuity. But Whitehead also takes the implications of this insight to contradict and undermine Hume's analyses of mind, time, and personal identity. Despite the fact that Whitehead's estimation of Hume is less approbative than Husserl's, therefore, Whitehead's theories of personal identity and his process-philosophical system are *Neo-Humean* (or *Post-Humean*, if one prefers) in this respect.

Unfortunately, neither Husserl nor Whitehead read each other's work. Both nevertheless take Hume to be the one who knocks at, yet ultimately fails to walk through the doors that his explorations unveil. By so doing, they beg that we do the same with them.

A process-philosophical phenomenology or phenomenologically-anchored process philosophy, however, have yet to be explored.

I. HUME'S APPENDIX PROBLEM AND ASSOCIATIVE CONNECTIONS

IN THE *TREATISE* AND *ENQUIRY*

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO HUME'S SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE

The titles of Hume's major works indicate both the scope and focus of his philosophical project: human nature, human understanding, the principles of morals, the passions, and natural religion. The subtitle of the *Treatise* expresses Hume's general method: "an attempt to introduce the experimental method into moral subjects."¹ By "moral" Hume means subjects concerning human nature; his "moral philosophy," correlatively, is a "science of human nature."² Hume's philosophy purports to address and redress perennial philosophical problems by examining the nature of the mind. It is an *empirical* "science of man [*sic*]," in this sense—hence the term "empiricism"—where human nature serves as Hume's "principal Study, & the Source from which I would derive every Truth."³ Hume's philosophy is ambitious, moreover, in that it attempts to explain how all sciences are grounded in the science of human nature that provides "the only solid foundation for the other sciences... [which] must be laid on experience and observation."⁴ Hence Hume's *logic*, in his idiosyncratic sense, foregrounds both Husserl's phenomenology (according to which transcendental logic grounds formal logic), Whitehead's process philosophy (according to which the logic of experience grounds deductive logic), and other forms of Humeanism that are alive and well or not-so-well in contemporary philosophy.

¹ I follow standard conventions when referencing Hume's works. When citing the *Treatise of Human Nature* (hereafter cited as *Treatise*), I first indicate the book, part, section, and paragraph number, followed by a slash, then the page number of Nidditch's revision of Selby-Bigge's edition. When citing from the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (hereafter cited as *Enquiry*), I first indicate the section and paragraph number, followed by a slash, then (when applicable) the page number of Nidditch's revision of Selby-Bigge's edition. Passages occurring between *ibid.*, 3.3/24 and 4.1/25 did not appear in the 1777 edition, hence lack Selby-Bigge-Nidditch designations. References to subsets of the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*, e.g., the "Appendix," employ the same conventions.

² Hume, *Enquiry*, 1.1/5.

³ Hume, *Letters*, 3.6.

⁴ Hume, "Introduction," 7/xvi; cf. "Abstract," 3/646.

When responding to objections to the analysis of time that Hume delivers by way of examining the *idea* of time, he contends that “my philosophy... pretends to explain only the nature and causes of our perceptions, or impressions and ideas.”⁵ One year later, Hume qualifies this claim in a manner that aptly expresses the proto-phenomenological character of his project:

As long as we confine our speculations to the *appearances* of objects to our senses, without entering into disquisitions concerning their real nature and operations, we are safe from all difficulties, and can never be embarrass’d by any question.⁶

Hume delegates the task of explaining the origin of sensations to natural philosophers (meaning anatomists)⁷ and pretends not to explain the ultimate “secret springs and principles by which the mind is actuated in its operations,” despite his endeavor to discover some of the mind’s principles as far as they can be conceived.⁸ Hume’s philosophy, therefore, hence also certain (though certainly not all) forms of Humeanism, profess modesty—one may be tempted to say “skepticism”—in philosophical pursuits. Hume’s modesty becomes increasingly evident in later writings; yet all of his philosophical writings focus on clarifying and/or confirming general, empirically evident relationships between the mind’s constituents: perceptions.

All perceptions, Hume holds, fall under two headings: impressions and ideas, each of which admits of various subtypes.⁹ These include impressions of sensation, which effectively function as primitives in Hume’s system, and “abstract ideas” such as time, unity, and the mind. Curiously, Hume takes impressions and ideas to differ only in the degree of force, liveliness, or vivacity attending their objects¹⁰—the phenomenal character of their *intentionality*, we might say.¹¹ So while “the universe” is

⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.5.26/64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.2.5.26/638n12 (from “Appendix”).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.1.2.1/8; cf. *ibid.*, 2.1.1.1-2.1.1.2/275-76. Hume proposes a quasi-physiological explanation as to why mistakes can occur when the mind perceives relations holding between objects of ideas (*ibid.*, 1.2.5.20/60).

⁸ Hume, *Enquiry*, 1.15/14. “If, in examining several phenomena, we find that they resolve themselves into one common principle, and can trace this principle into another, we shall at last arrive at those few simple principles, on which all the rest depend. And tho’ we can never arrive at the ultimate principles, ’tis a satisfaction to go as far as our faculties will allow us” (“Abstract,” 1/645).

⁹ Perceptions can be primary or secondary, simple or complex, sensations or reflections, mediate or immediate, etc.

¹⁰ Here and in the sequel “object” means only “object of a perception,” unless specified otherwise.

¹¹ Others interpret the difference in terms of functional role; see Cottrell, “David Hume: Imagination,” §1.

tantamount to the universe *of the imagination*,¹² and more specifically, a universe composed only of perceptions¹³ (as far as we can know),¹⁴ Hume thinks that we can discover the principles that govern that universe with a striking degree of probability; sufficient probability, indeed, to justify strong belief in the truth of ideas that represent those principles.

Among the most important of these principles—Hume’s use of which, if nothing else, “can entitle [him] to so glorious a name as that of an *inventor*” (ibid.)—are the imagination’s *principles of the association*, in virtue of which representations of objects, perceptions, and relations are possible. The mind’s associative principles also make possible all forms of reasoning regarding matters of fact, including especially causal reasoning, which concerns “the only connexion or relation of objects, which can lead us beyond the immediate impressions of our memory and senses.”¹⁵ This positive (if not positivistic) aspect of Hume’s philosophy is counterbalanced by an opposing force: our inexorable, irrevocable ignorance about the mind’s “real nature and operations”—hence also “the universe’s” real nature and operations.

2. INTRODUCING HUME’S APPENDIX PROBLEM

At the age of twenty-eight, Hume anonymously published Books I and II of the *Treatise*. Approximately one year later, he penned an anonymous Abstract of the *Treatise* “wherein the chief argument of that book is farther illustrated and explained” and subsequently published Book III along with an infamous Appendix, the meaning of which has vexed scholars much as the problem that Hume raises, but woefully (and uncharacteristically) underdescribes, vexed Hume. Widespread, longstanding, and recalcitrant disagreement about the nature of Hume’s Appendix problem had led many interpreters to maintain that Hume’s second thoughts remain underdetermined by the “‘interpretive openness’ of Hume’s

¹² Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.6.8/67.

¹³ “I can never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception” (ibid., 1.4.6.3/252).

¹⁴ Hume, “Abstract,” 35/662.

¹⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.6.7/89.

actual text”¹⁶—meaning the *Treatise* and Appendix. Furthermore, virtually every interpreter agrees that the two principles Hume claims he can neither “render consistent” nor “renounce,” call them Hume’s *unrenounceable principles*,¹⁷ are not inconsistent.¹⁸

I will refer to Hume’s first unrenounceable principle as the *distinct-existence principle*: “that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences.”¹⁹ This particular formulation of the distinct-existence principle, which Hume expresses within the dialectical context of having all his hopes vanish, does not adequately express Hume’s considered position. The reason concerns the modality of Hume’s claims regarding perceptions’ independent/dependent existence. Hume takes two of his other principles (the separability and conceivability principles, discussed below) to entail that perceptions being independent or self-sufficient existences is metaphysically possible. But Hume takes his empirical experiments to prove that perceptions are not *in fact* independent; for they depend for their existence both on the body, especially the brain, and “animal spirits.” Hume’s considered position, therefore—which is enough to help generate the Appendix problem, as I interpret it—is that all our distinct perceptions are possibly self-sufficient existences, whereas in fact perceptions depend on the brain, animal spirits, and (as we will see) each other.

I will refer to Hume’s second unrenounceable principle as the *perception principle*: “that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences” (ibid.). The crucial part of this expression concerns the connection’s being “real.” The word “real” is a technical term—though only in the *Treatise* and Appendix and not the *Enquiry*, for reasons explained below—which *ipso facto* means necessary and inseparable. Hume’s hopelessness, therefore, somehow concerns the unrenounceable principle that the mind never perceives any necessary, inseparable connection among distinct existences, especially perceptions, and the similarly unrenounceable principle that it is metaphysically possible for perceptions to be independent existences.

¹⁶ Garrett, “Once More,” 78; cf. Inukai, “Hume’s Labyrinth,” 258.

¹⁷ This terminology derives from Garrett, “Rethinking Hume’s Second Thoughts,” 22.

¹⁸ Kemp Smith, *Philosophy of David Hume*; cf. Fogelin, “Hume’s Worries.”

¹⁹ Hume, “Appendix,” 21/636.

It is logically consistent to maintain both the distinct-existence and perception principles. From these, it follows *inter alia* that the mind never perceives any real connection between distinct perceptions. Most commentators take the consistency of Hume’s unrenounceable principles to entail that one or more additional principles generate an “inescapable inconsistency” regarding either the *metaphysics of bundling*, meaning what actually connects distinct perceptions in a way that constitutes one mind, or the *psychology of ascription*, meaning how the mind can attribute perfect simplicity (partlessness) and identity (invariability and uninterruptedness) to itself when it is neither simple nor identical.²⁰

Given the alleged underdetermination of Hume’s second thoughts and the difficulty of explaining the inconsistency that he has in mind, is it striking how few interpreters have considered how Hume redresses the Appendix problem in the *Enquiry*, let alone that Hume *addresses* it in the *Enquiry*. In what follows, I argue that Hume’s 1746 letter to Lord Kames prefigures a significant, albeit subtle change introduced in the *Enquiry* of 1748, and that the latter provides the (retrodictive) key to a systematically satisfactory account of Hume’s second thoughts.

Interpreters’ tendency to confine attention to the *Treatise* and Appendix, occasionally with passing references to the *Dialogues*, is an unnecessarily restrictive methodological bias which often operates implicitly but also finds explicit expression, for instance in Garret’s influential contention that “no trace of [Hume’s misgivings with his earlier account] recurs in the first *Enquiry*, nor in any of Hume’s other writings.”²¹ My account locates Hume’s inconsistency not in one or more additional philosophical principles, but in his reasonings regarding and expressions of the perception principle—reasonings and expressions that shift slightly, albeit significantly between the Appendix and *Enquiry*. Underscoring this discontinuity between the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* is consistent with taking seriously Hume’s qualification that the *Enquiry* corrects “some negligences in his former reasoning and more in the expression” and respecting his desire “that the following Pieces may alone be regarded as containing

²⁰ Stroud, *Hume*, 135; cf. Ainslie, “Hume’s Reflections,” 569; Cottrell, “Minds,” 536; Garrett, “Once More,” 78.

²¹ Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment*, 164.

[Hume's] philosophical sentiments and principles."²² It is consistent, moreover, with the clarifications that Hume expressed later in life: that his "philosophical Principles are the same in both" the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*; that "By shortening & simplifying the Questions, I really render them much more complete";²³ and that the *Treatise*'s shortcomings "proceeded more from the manner than the matter" of what Hume argued therein.²⁴ The Appendix problem concerns Hume's reasonings regarding and expressions of the perception principle.

Interpreters of the Appendix problem often describe criteria that any plausible interpretation must satisfy.²⁵ Accordingly, I propose two new criteria that any plausible interpretation must satisfy. The first is the *Kames Criterion*: an interpretation must explain why Hume judges Lord Kames's method of analyzing personal identity to be "more satisfactory than any thing that had ever occur'd to [him]" six years after the publication of the Appendix and two years prior to the publication of the *Enquiry*.²⁶ This criterion is especially important in light of the fact that Kames contends—explicitly against Hume and implicitly against the perception principle—that he can directly perceive "the only connecting principle, that binds together, all the various thoughts and actions of my life."²⁷ The second criterion is the *Enquiry Criterion*: an interpretation must explain whether Hume addresses the Appendix problem in the *Enquiry*; and if not, why Hume would forgo discussing a problem that caused all his hopes to vanish and continued to vex him until at least 1746; or if so, how Hume eventually addressed and (putatively) redressed the problem that vexed him.²⁸

Immediately many commentators will object that, since Hume does not respond to the Appendix problem (as they interpret it) in the *Enquiry*, the so-called "Kames Criterion" and "*Enquiry* Criterion" are at best trivial or at worst assume the initial point. My response is that, although Hume finds himself to be

²² Hume, "Advertisement," 1/xlii.

²³ Hume, *Letters*, 73.2.

²⁴ Hume, "My Own Life," 8.

²⁵ The widely accepted criteria that I have in mind derive from Ainslie, "Hume's Reflections." Cf. Garrett, "Once More," 78.

²⁶ Quoted in Tsugawa, "Hume and Kames," 398.

²⁷ Kames, *Essays* (1st ed.), 233-34.

²⁸ In light of Moore, "Hume and Hutcheson," it is unfortunate that I will not be able to engage with Hutcheson's account and Moore's reconstruction. Cf. Thiel, *Early Modern Subject*, 411.

involved in a labyrinth specifically “upon a more strict review of the section concerning *personal identity*”;²⁹ and despite the fact that the *Enquiry* forgoes mentioning the phrase “personal identity”; it does not follow that the *Enquiry* forgoes addressing and redressing an inconsistency most evident in, but not thereby quarantined within, the *Treatise*’s section concerning personal identity. Put differently, from the fact that Hume’s doubts arise upon a more strict review of the section concerning personal identity, it does not follow that Hume’s doubts or the alleged inconsistency pertains to personal identity *tout court*. The difficulty concerns finding a theory that would enable Hume to satisfactorily “explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness.”³⁰ As such, the difficulty extends beyond one section of the *Treatise*. The unity and systematicity of the mind are as “unrenounceable” as Hume’s unrenounceable principles:

Were ideas entirely loose and unconnected, chance alone wou’d join them; and ’tis impossible the same simple ideas shou’d fall regularly into complex ones (*as they commonly do*) without some bond of union among them, some associating quality, by which one idea naturally introduces another.³¹

Hume introduces the Appendix problem by claiming that it pertains not to his theory of personal identity, but his “theory of the intellectual world.”³² This includes his theory of perception and “true idea” of the human mind.

It is precisely a difficulty of this magnitude—a difficulty most evident in, but not solely confined to the section concerning personal identity—which could cause “all [Hume’s] hopes [to] vanish” due to a “very considerable [mistake] in the reasonings deliver’d... on one article.”³³ Most commentators interpret “article” to mean personal identity; but Hume never says this. *A fortiori*, the *Treatise*, as several

²⁹ Hume, “Appendix,” 10/633.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 20/636.

³¹ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.1.4/10 (emphasis mine). Note that the unity and systematicity of mind does not universally require there to be some associating quality by which one idea naturally introduces another; the mind can join two ideas even in the absence of such an associating quality (*ibid.*). Also note, however, Hume’s contention (discussed below) that the vast majority of perceptions involve some associating quality.

³² Hume, “Appendix,” 10/633.’

³³ I therefore disagree with narrow interpretations of the “*Scope Criterion*” that appear to conflict with the “*Crisis Criterion*.” Cf. Garrett, “Rethinking Hume’s Second Thoughts,” 13.

commentators observe, employs “mind,” “self,” “person,” “thinking being,” and “soul” interchangeably.³⁴ These terms are annexed to the abstract “true idea” of the mind that represents it “as a system of different perceptions or different existences, which are link’d together by cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other.”³⁵ Although this specific formulation occurs in the section concerning personal identity, what it represents—the mind, self, person, thinking being, or soul, *truly conceived*—is presupposed throughout the *Treatise* and Hume’s philosophy as a whole.

Contending that the Kames and *Enquiry* Criteria are trivial or beg the question, therefore, itself risks begging the question or trivializing the magnitude of the crisis that causes all Hume’s hopes to vanish. I cannot settle this point now; the argument requires detailed exegesis of relevant texts. At present, the important point is to recognize that the *Enquiry* may address and (putatively) redress the Appendix problem despite forgoing explicit discussion of “personal identity” by that phrase, especially since discussion of the mind occurs throughout the *Enquiry*. The mind’s operations remain both the fundamental presupposition and principal object of Hume’s science of human nature.

In the *Treatise*, Hume reasons that the distinction between real and associative connections is mutually exclusive. Relatedly, Hume takes any (putative) real connection to be *ipso facto* necessary and inseparable, hence (in light of the perception principle) unperceivable and undiscoverable. I will argue that the *Enquiry* corrects this erroneous reasoning and that this erroneous reasoning is Hume’s problem *by Hume’s own lights*. Hume’s revised reasoning, I will argue, allows for both association-generating relations and associative connections to sufficiently connect and unify their relata without those connections being necessary or inseparable. In effect, the *Enquiry* allows associative connections to partially constitute the mind’s systematicity while preserving Hume’s argument against the absurd (because empirically false) claims that ideas are entirely loose and unconnected, and that relations between perceptions are necessary or inseparable. The author of the *Enquiry* comes to realize that

³⁴ Hume uses these terms interchangeably in the relevant sections of the *Treatise*. See Cottrell 2015, 535n4; G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 35; Swain, “Personal Identity,” 134. Cf. Bettcher, “Berkeley,” 208 (mentioned in Cottrell, *ibid.*).

³⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.6.19/261.

associative connections (one necessary condition) taken together with the association-generating relations that almost invariably give rise to them (another necessary condition) are jointly sufficient or sufficiently “strong” to explain the unity and systematicity of mind. Hume’s epistemic justification for this revised reasoning takes inspiration from Lord Kames’s method of explaining personal identity. Against his earlier reasonings, Hume realizes that associative connections (and association-generating relations) are directly perceivable and discoverable as such, a fact evident by “certain proof,” meaning it leaves no room for doubt or opposition.³⁶

This revised reasoning resolves the Appendix problem, as I interpret it: the inconsistency of the perception principle, as reasoned about and expressed in the *Treatise* and Appendix, and the empirically provable “true idea” of the mind *qua* system that Hume assumes throughout his corpus. The unity facilitated by associative connections and association-generating relations explains how distinct perceptions, which can (modally speaking) but do not (as a matter of fact) have independent existence, constitute the interconnected system of successive perceptions that is the mind.³⁷ Therewith, the Appendix problem disappears.

My strategy is as follows. First, I will examine the Appendix and provide exegetical and scholarly context for the claims that I will defend (§3). After introducing considerations that favor interpreting Hume’s second thoughts as concerning the metaphysics of bundling, I argue that, when we consider Hume’s epistemology of perception, discovery, proof, and truth (§4), the implications of Hume’s praise of Kames (§5), and the revised reasonings and expressions introduced in the *Enquiry* (§6), the account adumbrated above satisfies evaluative criteria proposed by other commentators in addition to the Kames and *Enquiry* Criteria. Having advanced my account, I will respond to objections (§7) and differentiate it from alternative metaphysics-of-bundling interpretations (§8). My conclusion will provide a transition to the two remaining chapters by way of explicating Hume’s views regarding temporality, discontinuity,

³⁶ Hume, *Enquiry*, 3.1/23, 6.1/56n10.

³⁷ Hume’s revised reasonings also happen to be more phenomenologically accurate, *pace* James and even Husserl, who took the *Enquiry* to be “badly watered down” in comparison with the *Treatise*, as we will see in Chapter Two (*Crisis of European Sciences*, 88).

atomism, and individuation *vis-à-vis* the mind's unity (§9). This will help us appreciate the underappreciated Humeanism of Husserl's and Whitehead's philosophies.

3. CONTEXTUALIZING HUME'S APPENDIX PROBLEM

Hume's "explanation" of his second thoughts are infamously (and uncharacteristically) opaque. This opacity has resulted in over thirty incompatible interpretations of what has come to be known as Hume's *Appendix problem*.

We can parse these interpretations into four general but internally heterogeneous groups.³⁸ Group 1 interpretations take Hume's problem to concern the metaphysics of bundling: how distinct perceptions are actually connected such that there can be a mind *qua* system of successive perceptions to which we erroneously ascribe the attributes of simplicity and identity.³⁹ Group 2 and 3 interpretations, in contrast, take Hume's problem to concern the psychology of ascription: how the operations of the mind, and the associative principles of the imagination (resemblance, contiguity, and causation) in particular, account for our ascriptions of identity and simplicity to the mind. Group 2 interpretations differ from Group 3 interpretations, in that the former take Hume's problem to concern principles other than resemblance and causation,⁴⁰ whereas the latter take Hume's problem to concern something about the scope or operation of resemblance and causation.⁴¹ Group 4 interpretations locate Hume's problem in neither the metaphysics

³⁸ Following Ellis, "Contents of Hume's Appendix." Cf. Garrett, "Rethinking Hume's Second Thoughts"; Stroud, *Hume*, 135.

³⁹ Group 1 interpretations include Basson, *David Hume*; Cottrell, "Minds"; Garrett, "Hume's Doubts," *Cognition and Commitment*, and "Rethinking Hume's Second Thoughts"; Inukai, "Hume's Labyrinth"; Kail, *Projection and Realism*; Pears, "Hume's Account"; G. Strawson, "All My Hopes Vanish," *Evident Connexion*, and "Hume on Himself"; and Stroud, *Hume*.

⁴⁰ Group 2 interpretations include Fogelin, "Hume's Worries"; Lalor, "Antilogistic Puzzle"; Mascarenhas, "Hume's Recantation." McIntyre, "Is Hume's Self Consistent?"; Nathanson, "Hume's Second Thoughts"; Robison, "Hume of Personal Identity"; and Waxman, "Hume's Quandary."

⁴¹ Group 3 interpretations include Ainslie, "Hume's Reflections"; Baier, *Death and Character*; Baxter, "Hume's Labyrinth"; Patten, "Hume's Bundles"; Haugeland, "Hume on Personal Identity"; Roth, "What Was Hume's Problem?"; and Winkler, "All is Revolution."

of bundling nor the psychology of ascription.⁴² Even when interpreters agree about the general character of Hume’s problem, however, they disagree about its specific character—hence the plethora.

Given the alleged underdetermination of Hume’s second thoughts and the difficulty of identifying the inconsistency he mentions, is it striking how few interpreters have considered whether Hume addresses and/or redresses the Appendix problem after 1740—in the *Enquiry*, for example. This is not only unfortunate but ironic; for in the Appendix, Hume mentions that more mature reasonings may reconcile whatever contradiction(s) he has in mind: “This difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I pretend not, however, to pronounce it absolutely insuperable. Others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflection, may discover some hypothesis, that will reconcile those contradictions.”⁴³ To see how (and why) the author of the *Enquiry* reconciles the contradictions that he has in mind, we must begin with Hume’s initial reflections.

The Appendix begins with Hume noting that the terms “self” and “substance,” to be intelligible, must signify some *abstract idea*: a particular idea that has been annexed to a general term in virtue of which that idea has a more extensive signification, meaning that it can bring to mind similar ideas.⁴⁴ Hume then (re)asserts the *copy principle* introduced at the beginning of Book I: “Every idea is deriv’d from preceding impressions.”⁴⁵ Taken together, these observations lead Hume to (re)affirm the critical position proposed in the section concerning personal identity: since we have no impression of self or substance as simple and individual, we have no abstract idea of self or substance “*in that sense*”—that is, as a partless particular.⁴⁶

The Appendix continues by (re)asserting the *separability* (and *converse separability*) principles: “Whatever is distinct, is distinguishable; and whatever is distinguishable, is separable by the thought or

⁴² Group 4 interpretations include Beauchamp, “Self Inconsistency?”; Kemp Smith, *Philosophy of David Hume*; Penelhum, “Hume on Personal Identity”; and Swain, “Personal Identity.”

⁴³ Hume, “Appendix,” 21/636.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11/634; cf. *Treatise*, 1.1.7.1/17.

⁴⁵ Hume, “Appendix,” 11/634; cf. *Treatise*, 1.1.1.7/4.

⁴⁶ Hume, “Appendix,” 11/634 (emphasis mine).

imagination.”⁴⁷ These conjoin with Hume’s *conceivability principle*—if *x* is conceivable, *x* is possible—to yield the following: “All perceptions are distinct. They are, therefore, distinguishable, and separable, and may be conceiv’d as separately existent, and may exist separately, without any contradiction or absurdity” (ibid.). As noted above, Hume does not contend that perceptions are *in fact* separately existent, meaning ontologically or metaphysically independent. The conceivability principle entails only that that which is conceivable (epistemically) is possible (metaphysically). The general position that Hume reiterates in the Appendix, then, is that it is possible for perceptions to be ontologically independent.

The more specific position that Hume (re)asserts is that it is intelligible and consistent for perceptions to be ontologically independent of a simple substance or subject of inhesion. Hence Hume continues to reason as he did in Book I: because (almost) all ideas derive from preceding impressions,⁴⁸ “no proposition can be intelligible or consistent with regard to objects, which is not so with regard to perceptions.”⁴⁹ And since it is “intelligible and consistent to say, that objects exist distinct and independent, without any common *simple* substance or subject of inhesion,” it follows that it is intelligible and consistent to say that perceptions exist distinctly and independently from any common simple substance or substrate *qua* subject of inhesion (ibid.).

As an empirical matter of fact, however, perceptions are not ontologically independent. For although perceptions exist independently of any substance or subject of inhesion, Hume takes other “experiments” to show that perceptions depend on bodily organs, especially the brain, and “animal spirits.”⁵⁰ He also holds that most perceptions depend on other perceptions; for example (apropos of the copy principle), the simple primary idea of the object of a simple primary impression, *qua* copy, depends on that impression *qua* cause, despite the fact (*nota bene*) that such connections are neither necessary nor

⁴⁷ Ibid., 12/634.

⁴⁸ *Modulo* missing shades of blue and the like which, as Garrett notes, remind us that the copy principle is a general empirical maxim and not a universal, necessary, *a priori* law. See Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.1.11/6; cf. *Enquiry*, 2.8/21.

⁴⁹ Hume, “Appendix,” 14/634.

⁵⁰ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.5.20/60-61.

inseparable.⁵¹ After all it is conceivable, hence (via the conceivability principle) possible, for a simple primary impression not to give rise to a simple primary idea that represents the former's object. Another impression or idea could immediately arise.

That said, Hume also maintains that it is inconceivable, hence metaphysically impossible, for all perceptions to be joined merely “by chance alone,” meaning the negation of a cause or, as Hume puts it in the *Enquiry*, “not any real power, which has, any where a being in nature.”⁵² It is empirically evident that the same type of simple ideas (or resembling tokens thereof) commonly fall regularly into complex ones. Correlatively, it is empirically evident that *there is a mind*, “the true idea” of which represents it as an interconnected system of successive perceptions—of copied or resembling ideas, for example.

Appropriately, the issue as to how perceptions are connected as to constitute one mind arises immediately after the *Treatise*'s claim that it is impossible for perceptions of all types (and not just simple ideas)⁵³ to be entirely loose and unconnected: “This uniting principle among ideas is not to be consider'd as an inseparable connexion; for that has been already excluded from the imagination.”⁵⁴ Thus we have “bonds of union” between perceptions, which are established by the imagination's associative principles, and we also have necessary, inseparable connections, which Hume's experiments (via the copy, separability, converse separability, and conceivability principles) have excluded from the imagination and the mind.

Since the phrase “associative connection” is not Hume's yet perspicuously expresses his considered view, I should specify what I mean by it. If the objects of different perceptions are experienced as standing in a *natural relation*, meaning resemblance, temporal or spatial contiguity, or cause and effect, then ideas of those objects almost invariably come to be associated in (and by) the imagination. Relations do not ontologically differ from perceptions, however. A natural relation is itself a

⁵¹ “Thus tho' we clearly perceive the dependence and interruption of our perceptions, we stop short in our career, and never upon that account reject the notion of an independent and continu'd existence” (ibid., 1.4.2.51/214).

⁵² Ibid., 1.3.11.4/125; *Enquiry*, 8.25/95.

⁵³ The passions, too, are connected and mutually dependent; and such connections are “found by experience” (Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.2.20/195). Passions *qua* impressions are often *associatively* connected. Thus while Hume sometimes writes as if associative connections hold only between ideas, he also allows and in the *Enquiry* explicitly contends that associative connections can hold between perceptions of all kinds, including lively non-representational perceptions. Here I agree with Cottrell, “Minds,” 548n36.

⁵⁴ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.4.1/10.

perception, and more specifically a complex idea⁵⁵ that “produces an union among our ideas.”⁵⁶ Natural relations are *association-generating*, in this sense. Perceptions of objects that resemble, are contiguous to, or are causally related naturally cause the imagination to produce ideas of the initial perceptions’ objects and the relevant relation(s).⁵⁷ For this reason, commentators employ the formulation “association-generating relations” to refer to relations that cause perceptions to be associated. Associated ideas, like associated perceptions more generally, establish and maintain *associative connections* between token perceptions, many of which exemplify general types—a fact particularly pertinent to the natural relation of causation *vis-à-vis* causal reasoning. Indeed, even “unnatural” or *philosophical relations* can be association-generating. The reason is that when we (as Hume thinks philosophers are prone to do) arbitrarily compare objects that do not stand in a natural relation, for example the edge of the expanding universe and this cup of sencha,⁵⁸ we still acquire an idea of a relation, such as distance, by having imaginarily compared the objects.⁵⁹ The imagination causes there to be an associative connection between the perceptions (and their objects) as a result of the philosophical relation that was present to the mind making the comparison. Any associative connection between perceptions, therefore, presupposes the prior presence of some relation—an association-generating relation.

This brings us back to Hume’s distinction between associative connections and real, necessary, and inseparable connections. Hume takes the distinction between these two general kinds to be mutually exclusive. The former are relatively weak. The uniting principle among ideas, for example, is to be regarded merely “as a gentle force, which commonly prevails.”⁶⁰ The latter (if they exist) are not only

⁵⁵ Hume holds that complex ideas divide into relations, modes, and substances (ibid., 1.1.4.7/13).

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1.3.6.16/94. Inukai argues that relations are not objects of separable perceptions because they are not distinct so as to constitute separable, potentially independent impressions (“Hume on Relations,” 204).

⁵⁷ Cottrell notes the *Treatise*’s ambiguity as to whether ideas become associated when *ideas themselves* stand in relations or *their objects* stand in relations; and he takes the *Enquiry* to demonstrate that the latter is Hume’s considered view (“Minds,” 545n32).

⁵⁸ Hume would deny that these objects are spatially contiguous in any natural sense.

⁵⁹ For details, see Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.5.1/13-14.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1.1.4.1/10.

relatively but absolutely strong. There is nothing “stronger” than a (putative) necessary, inseparable connection.⁶¹

Recall that Hume’s unrenounceable perception principle concerns the mind’s inability to perceive *real* connections between distinct existences such as perceptions. Throughout the *Treatise*, when Hume discusses “real connections” he employs “real” as a technical term to mean necessary, inseparable connections.⁶² In the section titled “Of the idea of necessary connexion,” for example, Hume contends that, “If we really have no idea of a power of efficacy in any object, or of any real connexion between causes and effects, ’twill be to little purpose to prove, that an efficacy is necessary in all operations.”⁶³ When discussing the reason of animals, moreover, Hume contrasts necessary, inseparable connections, which he refers to as “real,” with the constant conjunction of objects in perception: “Beasts certainly never perceive any real connexion among objects. ’Tis therefore by experience they infer one from another.”⁶⁴ Similarly, Hume’s analysis of the idea of time contrasts the mere succession of perceptions with a real succession of objects.⁶⁵

Most significantly, in the section concerning personal identity Hume contrasts real connections with associative connections *vis-à-vis* attributions of identity to persons:

But, as, notwithstanding this distinction and separability [of different perceptions], we suppose the whole train of perceptions to be united by identity, a question naturally arises concerning this relation of identity; whether it be something that really binds our several perceptions together, or only associates their ideas in the imagination.⁶⁶

Identity is a philosophical and indeed the most universal relation, “being common to every being, whose existence has any duration.”⁶⁷ The subsequent sentence adds an epistemic qualification to Hume’s

⁶¹ Cf. Cottrell, “Minds,” 543.

⁶² Here I agree with Garrett that by “real connexion,” Hume means at least a connection between two objects that is more than simply an associate relation in the imagination (*Cognition and Commitment*, 181). In a footnote, Garrett claims that Hume implies that “in a ‘real connexion,’ the existence of one object in some way entails or is impossible without the existence of the other (ibid., 252n7). Cottrell rightly points out “that a real connection would involve ‘absolute’ inseparability” (“Minds,” 543).

⁶³ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.14.27/168.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1.3.16.8/178.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 1.2.3.8/35.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 1.4.6.16/259.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1.1.5.4/14.

metaphysical distinction between real and associative connections—precisely the kind of epistemic qualification mentioned in Hume’s description of what would solve the Appendix problem: “That is, in other words, whether in pronouncing concerning the identity of a person, we observe some real bond among his perceptions, or only feel one among the ideas we form of them?” (ibid.). These questions are easily decidable, Hume contends, because he takes himself already to have “prov’d at large,” in the technical sense of proof that we will examine in §4, “that the understanding never observes any real connexion among objects, and that even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examin’d, resolves itself into a customary association of ideas.”⁶⁸

As early as 1.1.4.1, then, Hume foreshadows the Appendix problem by maintaining that associative connections between distinct perceptions are not tantamount to necessary, inseparable, and real connections.⁶⁹ The upshot is that while there must be some connecting principle or principles that unite possibly independent perceptions, it is impossible for the relevant connections to be real. When memory acquaints us with the causal relations that unite distinct perceptions (*qua* parts) into one interconnected chain of succession (*qua* whole) and thereby enables us to “discover personal identity, by showing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions,” the relevant connections are not real but merely associative.⁷⁰ Shortly after publishing Book 1, Hume comes to believe that he needs real connections to explain the systematicity of mind and that they must be perceivable or discoverable as such.

This brings us back to the Appendix. Hume’s reasonings regarding and expressions of the perception principle employ “real” in his technical sense: “*the mind never perceives any real connexion*

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1.4.6.16/260.

⁶⁹ We should not be misled by Hume’s claim that “The very nature and essence of relation [*qua* complex idea] is to connect our ideas with each other, and upon the appearance of the one, to facilitate the transition to its correlative” (ibid., 1.4.2.34/204). What Hume refers to as “natural connections” are associative connections generated by the imagination in response to complex perceptions involving natural relations of resemblance, contiguity, or causation. The *Treatise* does not countenance these as being real connections.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.4.6.19-20/261-62.

among distinct existences.”⁷¹ This sense of “real” also motivates Hume’s reasoning regarding how perceptions are connected:

If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only *feel* a connexion or a determination of the thought, to pass from one object to another.⁷²

The mutually exclusive distinction between associative and real connections enters into not only Hume’s formulations of the problem, but also its potential solution: “Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case.”⁷³ If Hume could help himself to either of these claims, the difficulty that he describes would disappear. In the first case, perceptions would constitute an interconnected whole by inhering in one and the same self or substance that serves as their uniting principle. Hume rejects this position in the section concerning personal identity, the anonymously published Abstract of March 1740 (which predates the Appendix by only eight months),⁷⁴ and the Appendix itself.⁷⁵

The real contender, therefore, is the second option. In that case, perceptions *qua* distinct existences would belong to one interconnected system in virtue of connections that *really* (hence sufficiently) unite them; and the relevant connections would be perceivable or discoverable as such. If there are no such connections, however, then it is not clear how can there be a mind at all. More specifically, it is not clear that “the true idea” of the mind described in the section concerning personal identity and reasserted in the Appendix and Abstract is true.⁷⁶ If neither resemblance nor (especially)

⁷¹ Hume, “Appendix,” 21/636.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 20/635.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21/636.

⁷⁴ “The soul, as far as we can conceive it, is nothing but a system or train of different perceptions, those of heat and cold, love and anger, thoughts and sensations; all united together, but without any perfect simplicity or identity.... Every thing, that exists, is particular: And therefore it must be our several particular perceptions, that compose the mind. I say, *compose* the mind, not *belong* to it. The mind is not a substance, in which the perceptions inhere.... So our idea of any mind is only that of particular perceptions, without the notion of any thing we call substance, either simple or compound” (Hume, “Abstract,” 28/657-58).

⁷⁵ Hume, “Appendix,” 14-15/634.

⁷⁶ The author of the Appendix maintains that the self or mind is a composition of perceptions and that we have no idea of the self as something simple and individual (*ibid.*, 11/633, 15/634). Furthermore, Hume takes these reasonings to entail “*that we have no notion of [the mind], distinct from the particular perceptions,*” a principle that seems “to be attended with sufficient evidence” (*ibid.*, 19-20/635). The true idea of the mind that represents it as an interconnected system of perceptions, therefore, is still in play—as it must be.

causation can generate sufficiently “strong” connections between distinct perceptions, despite the imaginary “links” or “natural connections” that those relations generate, then it is not clear how Hume can legitimately claim that the mind is a system of perceptions—a claim that Hume needs to avoid the absurd alternative that perceptions are entirely loose and unconnected.⁷⁷

The claims that the author of the *Treatise* and Appendix advances via the copy, separability, converse separability, and conceivability principles result, he thinks, in the loosening of all “our” (though Hume should restrict his claim to his) particular perceptions.⁷⁸ The “real” disconnection entailed by this loosening requires Hume to explain what principle of connection binds particular perceptions together because the mind is in fact—so his experiments show—a system of perceptions. Yet Hume thinks that he cannot help himself to such a principle, since it would contradict the unrenounceable perception principle. If experience can neither perceive nor discover real connections, then either there is no principle that unifies distinct perceptions, or there is, but belief in it would be empirically unjustified—however strongly Hume might believe (as he must) that some such principle exists. If Hume were able to perceive real connections between perceptions, the Appendix problem would disappear, for then all our particular perceptions would be *really* connected, and perceivably so, versus being merely associatively connected and merely *felt* to be really connected. Hume’s reasonings regarding and expressions of the perception principle preclude this possibility. The systematicity of mind, therefore, appears to be both a systemically necessary and systemically unjustifiable postulate. This is precisely the kind of contradiction—an apparent contradiction between the perception principle and true idea of the mind—that would generate a crisis of sufficient magnitude to cause all of Hume’s hopes to vanish and lead him to plead the privilege of a skeptic.

Thus far, I have introduced an account of Hume’s Appendix problem that accords with formulations delivered in the *Treatise*, Abstract, and Appendix. The introduction has not established the account, however, for other commentators have interpreted the same formulations differently. The

⁷⁷ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.6.19/261.

⁷⁸ Here I agree with Penelhum, “Self and Selves.”

account adumbrated above becomes more appealing when we consider writings produced after the Appendix, especially Hume's letter to Lord Kames and the *Enquiry*. Consideration of these texts will show that I have not stacked the deck in favor of an idiosyncratic, metaphysics-of-bundling interpretation.

Before we examine those texts, a brief foray into Hume's epistemology will help clarify what it would mean to either perceive or discover a real connection; what constitutes a proof, in Hume's technical sense; and what makes the true idea of the mind "true." These epistemological considerations will illuminate Hume's praise of Kames and the *Enquiry*'s subsequent claims about being able to perceive and discover—indeed, *prove*—that associative connections contribute to the unity of mind.

4. PERCEPTION, DISCOVERY, PROOF, AND TRUTH

I contend that, rather than abandon the unrenounceable perception principle, Hume revised his reasonings regarding and expressions of it. Hume employs the technical term "reasoning" in both the Appendix to the *Treatise* and Advertisement for the *Enquiry*:

But having this loosen'd all our particular perceptions, when I proceed to explain the principle of connection, which binds them together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings cou'd have induc'd me to receive it.⁷⁹

Most of the principles, and reasonings, contained in this volume, were published in [the *Treatise*]: A work which the Author had projected before he left College, and which he wrote and published not long after. But not finding it successful, he was sensible of his error in going to the press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, where some negligences in his former reasoning and more in the expression, are, he hopes, corrected.⁸⁰

In all relevant texts, furthermore, Hume distinguishes between his philosophical principles, reasonings regarding those principles, and expressions of his principles and reasonings.⁸¹

All forms of *reasoning* consist in a comparison and discovery of the constant or inconstant relations that two or more objects (of perceptions) bear to each other.⁸² When any number of objects is

⁷⁹ Hume, "Appendix," 20/635.

⁸⁰ Hume, "Advertisement," xlii.

⁸¹ By "principle," Hume sometimes means a theoretical item and other times a real item that a theoretical principle aims to characterize as accurately as possible. See G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 113.

⁸² Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.2.2/73.

present to the senses without a relation between them, the mind can reason by making a comparison and thus discover the relation(s) that those objects bear. *Discovery* is thus a diachronic epistemic process involving: first, the immediate presentation of two or more objects without an immediately evident relation; and subsequently, a comparison that reveals a relation or relations holding between those objects. *Perception*, in contrast, involves all related objects being present to the senses along with the relation itself (*ibid.*). Discovery and perception, therefore, differ: the former but not the latter is a form of reasoning; and the latter but not the former involves observation of an immediately evident relation between two or more objects, in addition to the relation's relata. Perception (in the narrow epistemic sense)⁸³ does not involve the exercise of thought in the imagination. It is synchronic; hence perceived evidence, in the strict sense, is immediate. Discovery, on the other hand, is diachronic; hence discovered evidence, in the strict sense, is mediate (at least temporally). Perception and discovery are complementary, however. One can discover and thus foster stronger belief in what one previously perceived.

When I perceive (in the narrow epistemic sense) this cup of sencha on my desk the perception (in the wide metaphysical sense) is a complex consisting of the cup of sencha, my desk, and the relation of being-on-top-of—a form of spatial contiguity—which I immediately perceive along with its relata.⁸⁴ Natural relations of this kind typically facilitate the production of associative connections in imagination or memory, such that my idea of the cup of sencha on the desk is associatively connected with my earlier, more vivacious perception thereof. Connections between initial impressions and subsequent ideas constitute one kind of discoverable relation-type: the copy-type.

⁸³ This qualification is important because even discovery, or indeed *any* mental item, counts as a perception in Hume's wide metaphysical sense. In the narrow epistemic sense, however, perception and discovery differ.

⁸⁴ I have simplified for illustration. The complex perception, as described, would also involve sensing the cup, green liquid, the relation of spatial contiguity between them, and features of the surrounding environment—an *outer horizon*, in Husserl's technical sense (D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 444). Cf. Whitehead: "Consciousness is an ever-shifting process of abstracting shifting quality from a massive process of essential existence. It emphasizes. And yet, if we forget the background, the result is triviality" (*Modes of Thought*, 108).

Given the distinction between perception and discovery, causation is vital to inquiries concerning matters of fact. Only causal reasoning enables us to go beyond immediate perception and discover relations between various types of relata. Only causation can “[produce] such a connection, as to give us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that ’twas follow’d or preceded by any other existence or action.”⁸⁵ Causal reasoning thus amounts to probable reasoning from experience concerning matters of fact. This means that causal reasoning does not generate *knowledge* in the strict sense (for only demonstrative reasoning generates knowledge), but belief.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, causal reasoning enables us to characterize some beliefs as not only probable, but extremely likely—likely enough to “give us assurance” to such a degree that doubting or opposing those beliefs would be absurd.⁸⁷

The highest degree of confidence obtainable via probable reasoning is *proof*, which Garrett perspicuously describes as “a high level of psychological certainty resulting from the experience of completely uniform and pervasive constant conjunction.”⁸⁸ Probable proofs differ from demonstrative proofs of the kind produced by mathematicians in that demonstrations concern relations of ideas; hence the denial of a demonstration’s conclusion is logically contradictory or absurd.⁸⁹ A probable or sensible proof, in contrast, is non-demonstrative reasoning concerning matters of fact and real existence, where a high level of certainty results from uniform and commonly experienced constant conjunctions.⁹⁰ Denial of a probable proof’s conclusion is empirically contradictory or absurd.

⁸⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.2.2/73-74.

⁸⁶ Later Hume distinguishes between three kinds of reasoning: from knowledge, meaning the assurance derived from comparison of ideas; from proofs, meaning arguments derived from the relation of cause and effect; and from probabilities, meaning evidence that is still attended with uncertainty (ibid., 1.3.11.2/124). Knowledge from probabilities admits of further distinction between that founded on chance and that which arises from causes.

⁸⁷ The distinction between highly probable and proven beliefs need not be sharp for the latter to have significant empirical import, for the gradation “from probabilities to proofs is in many cases insensible; and the difference betwixt these kinds of evidence is more easily perceiv’d in the remote degrees, than in the near and contiguous” (ibid., 1.3.12.2/131).

⁸⁸ Garrett, *Hume*, 95.

⁸⁹ “But with regard to any matter of fact, however strong the proof may be from experience, I can always conceive the contrary, tho’ I cannot always believe it” (Hume, “Abstract,” 18/653).

⁹⁰ “’twould perhaps be more convenient, in order at once to preserve the common signification of words, and mark the several degrees of evidence, to distinguish human reason into three kinds, viz. *that from knowledge, from proofs, and from probabilities*. By knowledge, I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas. By proofs, those arguments, which are deriv’d from the relation of cause and effect, and which are entirely free from doubt and

Consider Hume's proof of the copy principle:

The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions, is a convincing proof, that the one are the causes of the other; and this priority of the impressions is an equal proof, that our impressions are the causes of our ideas, not our ideas of our impressions.⁹¹

(Hume takes his “experiments” to constitute a proof of the copy principle, despite the fact that there may be exceptions to it. Hume infamously allows that it is possible to acquire the idea of a particular shade of blue without having previously sensed that shade.⁹²) Hume introduces his proof of the copy principle prior to his refutation of belief in necessary connections between causes and effects. One of the implications of that refutation is that causal reasoning regarding relations between perceptions cannot deliver positive conclusions regarding *real* relations. The author of *Treatise* and Appendix takes causal reasoning to deliver the negative conclusion that the associative connections generated by natural relations are not real. Belief in real connections between perceptions, therefore, is empirically absurd, meaning false or fictitious. Similar reasoning applies to belief about the natural resemblance relations that memory seems to produce among all of “a person’s” perceptions, since resemblance seems *prima facie* to unite them.⁹³ Natural resemblance relations between perceptions are neither necessary, nor inseparable, nor real, hence—given Hume’s reasoning regarding the perception principle—not sufficient to justify belief in the empirically evident systematicity of mind.

When the author of the Appendix describes his second thoughts, he takes them to concern the mind never being able to either “discover” any connection among distinct existences or “perceive” real connections among distinct existences. Real connections are neither discoverable nor perceivable. Epistemically speaking, this is precisely the kind of quandary that could cause all of Hume’s hopes to vanish. The author of the Appendix remains committed to “the true idea” of the mind asserted in the *Treatise* despite the fact that he has loosened all our particular perceptions and must explain the principle

uncertainty. By probability, that evidence, which is still attended with uncertainty” (Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.11.2/124; cf. *Enquiry*, 6.1/56n10).

⁹¹ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.1.8/5.

⁹² See *ibid.*, 1.1.1.11/6; cf. *Enquiry*, 2.8/21.

⁹³ Hume mentions this possibility at *Treatise*, 1.4.6.18/260-61.

of unity in virtue of which perceptions are actually connected. Yet this is what the perception principle precludes Hume from doing—so the author of the Appendix reasons.

What makes “the true idea” of the mind *true*? Hume notes that this conclusion derives from causal reasoning.⁹⁴ Belief in the true idea of the mind is not supported by perception (in the narrow epistemic sense) because the systematicity of successive perceptions, according to the author of the *Treatise* and Appendix, is not immediately perceivable.⁹⁵ It takes time, hence a form of reasoning, to discover that there are systematic connections among the mind’s perceptions.⁹⁶ The phrase “true idea” occurs only twice in the *Treatise*; once with regard to extension and once with regard to the mind.⁹⁷ In Book III, Hume asserts that reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood, which he elaborates as follows:

Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the *real* relations of ideas, or to *real* existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore, is not susceptible of this agreement or disagreement, is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason.⁹⁸

Hume also holds that the truth and falsehood of ideas concerning matters of fact can be proven.⁹⁹ Falsity or contradiction concerning matters of fact “consists in the disagreement between ideas, consider’d as copies, with those objects, which they represent.”¹⁰⁰ When Hume refers to a true idea, therefore, he means that the reality of that idea’s object (what it represents) has effectively been proven. This, in turn, entails that strong belief in the represented reality is epistemically justified.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.4.6.19/261.

⁹⁵ This may seem to conflict with the *Treatise*’s earlier claim that “we may observe, that what we call a *mind*, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos’d, tho’ falsly, to be endow’d with a perfect simplicity and identity” (*ibid.*, 1.4.2.39/207). The observation, however, is “observable” only because a discovery has taken place. Once a relation-type is discovered to be constantly conjoined with multiple tokens of an object-of-perception-type, one can perceive (or observe) various objects represented by that abstract idea.

⁹⁶ Similarly, Hume holds that “time cannot make its appearance to the mind, either alone, or attending with a steady unchangeable object, but is always discover’d by some *perceivable* succession of changeable objects” (*ibid.*, 1.2.3.7/35). Whereas a succession of changeable objects is directly perceivable, time *qua* relation is not; it must be discovered. “An idea of time is an idea that requires some time for an individual to have,” as Garrett puts it (*Cognition and Commitment*, 246n11).

⁹⁷ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.5.15/59; 1.4.6.19/261.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.9/458; cf. Cottrell, “Minds,” 540n19.

⁹⁹ Hume, *Treatise*, 2.1.12.2/325.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.3.3.6/415.

This brief foray into Hume's epistemology enables us to appreciate Hume's quandary more fully. On the one hand, his science of human nature discovers and proves the true idea of the human mind. On the other hand, his reasonings regarding the perception principle preclude him from proving that idea because they entail that he can neither discover nor perceive any real connection in virtue of which that idea truly represents its object.

Here we can interrogate Hume on his own terms. Why would Hume take only necessary and inseparable connections to be "real," meaning sufficiently "strong" to explain the evident systematicity of mind? There seems to be no principled empirical or empiricist reason to do so—as Husserl and Whitehead would recognize. The kind of connections that Hume needs are those in virtue of which perceptions are not in fact loose and disconnected even if it is possible that perceptions could exist independently. Are such connections not established by the imagination and memory, for example, or by associative connections more generally? Associative connections presuppose the previous occurrence of a bundle involving at least one association-generating relation. Such a relation is the principle of its bundle's synchronic unity. Why then would associations deriving from such bundles not count as connections that contribute to the unity of mind? Hume holds, moreover, that impressions and ideas have "real existence" or *are* real existences in the sense of being (empirical) matters of fact.¹⁰¹ Why would connections between real existences not count as "real," albeit neither necessary nor inseparable? It seems even that on empirical (and phenomenological) grounds, mind-derived connections between perceptions, even if merely associative, are sufficient to "really" contribute to the evident systematicity of mind.

In texts written after the Appendix Hume no longer employs the term "real" in the technical sense of the *Treatise*, Abstract, and Appendix. The reason, as I will now proceed to argue, is that Hume realized that associative connections, together with the association-generating relations from which they derive, explain the unity of mind.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 1.1.7.4/19.

5. HUME'S LETTER TO LORD KAMES

Henry Home, more widely known as Lord Kames, was a personal friend of Hume to whom Hume sent drafts of everything that he intended to publish.¹⁰² Likewise, Kames sent drafts to Hume. Six years after the publication of the Appendix, Hume reviewed a manuscript copy of Kames's *Essays*, the first edition of which Kames published in 1751. The letter that Hume penned to Kames in May or June of 1746 includes a striking, oft-overlooked compliment:

I like exceedingly your Method of explaining personal Identity as more satisfactory than any thing that had ever occur'd to me. As to the Idea of Substance, I must own, that as it has no Access to the Mind by any of our Sense or Feelings, it has always appeared to me to be nothing but an imaginary Center of Union amongst the different & variable Qualitys that are to be found in every Piece of Matter. But I shall keep myself in suspense till I hear your Opinion.¹⁰³

Although we do not have access to the specific manuscript that prompted Hume's compliment, we can use the first edition of Kames's *Essay* to help determine what Hume found so satisfying about Kames's method. This may help illuminate Hume's second thoughts and whether Hume redressed the Appendix problem in the *Enquiry*. Kames's method involves perceiving a uniting principle that connects all particular perceptions.

In the first edition's short essay, titled "Of the Idea of Self and of Personal Identity," Kames begins by explicitly referencing the *Treatise* to help differentiate his account from Hume's:

Had we no impressions but those of the external senses, according to the author of the treatise of human nature, we never could have any consciousness of *self*; because such consciousness cannot arise from any external sense. Mankind [*sic*] would be in a perpetual reverie; ideas would be constantly floating in the mind; and no man be able to connect his ideas with *himself*. Neither could there be any idea of *personal identity*. For a man, cannot consider himself to be the same person, in different circumstances, when he has no idea or consciousness of *himself* at all.¹⁰⁴

Kames then implicitly uses Hume's conception of internal impressions against him:

¹⁰² Tsugawa notes that "it was on Kames's recommendation that [Hume] left out the essay 'On Miracles' from the *Treatise*" ("Hume and Kames," 398n4).

¹⁰³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 398.

¹⁰⁴ Kames, *Essays* (1st ed.), 231.

Beings there may be, who are thus constituted; but man is none of these beings. It is an undoubted truth, that he has an original feeling, or consciousness of himself, and of his existence; which, for the most part, accompanies every one of his impressions and ideas, and every action of his mind and body.¹⁰⁵

Kames seems to be criticizing the following reasoning. “The uniting principle among our internal perceptions is as unintelligible as that among external objects, and is not known to us any other way than by experience.”¹⁰⁶ Yet reasoning from experience, and causal reasoning in particular, proves only the existence of associative connections. Associative connections are not sufficiently “strong” to be one of the principles or the principle in virtue of which our perceptions are united, as they evidently are.¹⁰⁷ Given that there is no internal impression of a diachronically identical self, moreover, it would be absurd to believe that any (putative) idea thereof truly represents its purported object. Thus there is no such self. The true idea of the mind, meaning its being systematically interconnected or “personally identical,” must have some other origin.

Against this reasoning, Kames contends that nearly every moment of experience includes not only awareness of what I am feeling, thinking, or doing, but also awareness that *I* am feeling, thinking, or doing thus and so.¹⁰⁸ Kames goes on to criticize the conclusion that Hume draws from the example of being in sound sleep; namely, that whenever Hume’s perceptions are removed, he is insensible of himself and may be truly said not to exist.¹⁰⁹ Kames’s criticism invokes an argument related to a qualification that Locke introduces in his account of personal identity:¹¹⁰ to constitute personal identity, consciousness need

¹⁰⁵ Kames, *Essays* (1st ed.), 232-33. “Our internal impressions are our passions, emotions, desires and aversions” (Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.3.3/33).

¹⁰⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.14.29/169.

¹⁰⁷ This reconstruction does not beg the question. Other interpreters, e.g., Garrett, Inukai, Kail, and G. Strawson, would endorse this reading even if they reject what I take it to imply.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Tsugawa, “Hume and Kames,” 399.

¹⁰⁹ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.6.3/252.

¹¹⁰ In the third edition of his *Essays*, Kames criticizes Locke who “inadvertently jumbles together the identity that is nature’s work with our knowledge of it” (204). Kames then speaks favorably of Reid and quotes him at length, citing his contention that “All men agree, that personality is indivisible: a part of a person is an absurdity” (*ibid.*, 204-5). In effect, Kames invokes Reid to counter Hume’s rejection of the simplicity of self, since he has already taken himself to have countered Hume’s rejection of the identity of self. Kames also invokes Reid to underscore their common opinion that while memory (along with a present impression of self) serves to *acquaint* one with one’s personal identity, it does not thereby constitute personal identity, *pace* Locke.

not actually but only *possibly* extend to a previous thought or action.¹¹¹ Similarly, Kames argues that the feeling or consciousness of one's self and existence need not accompany every perception in order to justify belief in a continuous, identical self. In most circumstances, however, the impression of self is "of the liveliest kind" (*ibid.*). Kames takes the liveliness of this impression to entail the "undoubted" truth that one's impression of oneself accompanies most perceptions.

Kames maintains that most perceptions involve self-preservation, hence that perception *per se* is self-preserving: "the vivacity of this perception [of oneself] is necessary to make us attentive to our own interest, and particularly, to shun every appearance of danger."¹¹² Kames allows that *reveries* or circumstances in which the mind "forget[s] itself" are possible; when one falls asleep to the sound of rain, for example, or when one becomes engrossed in reading. Such exceptions prove the general empirical rule that the perception of oneself rarely, for good (self-preserving) reasons, vanishes. Thus while Hume (partially) grounds his accounts of perception, association, and mind in a quasi-neurological theory about bodily organs and animal spirits, Kames (partially) grounds his account in a proto-evolutionary theory about self-preservation. This move also seems subversive; for the *Treatise* rejects the notion that there are internal impressions of agency or powers that would aim at self-preservation.¹¹³

The internal impression of oneself that Kames believes to be necessary to explain our instinct for self-preservation also helps explain personal identity:

It is this perception, or consciousness of self, carried through all the different stages of life, and all the variety of action, which is the foundation of *personal identity*. It is, by means of this perception, that I consider myself to be the same person, in all varieties of fortune, and every change of circumstance.¹¹⁴

Here Kames means "perception" in not only a wide metaphysical sense, meaning an impression that has the self as its object, but also a narrow epistemic sense that accords with Hume's usage. Strictly speaking, however, present consciousness of oneself explains only why synchronic feelings, thoughts, and actions

¹¹¹ For a reconstruction that emphasizes this aspect of Locke's account, see Perry, "Problem of Personal Identity," 16.

¹¹² Kames, *Essays* (1st ed.), 232.

¹¹³ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.3.14.10/160; 1.3.14.12/161.

¹¹⁴ Kames, *Essays* (1st ed.), 233.

are experienced as belonging to or being owned by *a* self, meaning some self or other.¹¹⁵ What explains diachronic “ownership” and personal identity is not present awareness of oneself, but more specifically the “feeling of identity” that recurs in a lively manner during most occasions of experience. Note how closely Kames’s diction resembles expressions delivered in Hume’s Appendix:

The main purpose of this short essay, is to introduce an observation, that it is not by any argument or reasoning, I conclude myself to be the same person, I was ten years ago. This conclusion rests entirely upon the feeling of identity, which accompanies me through all my changes, and *which is the only connecting principle, that binds together, all the various thoughts and actions of my life.*¹¹⁶

This observation purports to achieve precisely what Hume thought that he could not, as I have interpreted it: the perception or discovery of the connecting principle(s) that actually binds together all of one mind’s particular perceptions. The feeling or impression of self-identity through time and change, Kames contends, is that connecting principle.

Kames’s proto-evolutionary theory should not mislead us into thinking that he takes himself to proffer an alternative and more probable line of reasoning than Hume’s. Kames takes himself to identify an empirically pervasive, immediate perception that contravenes Hume’s method—a perception that, *a fortiori*, Kames claims to be *the only* connecting principle that binds together particular perceptions.¹¹⁷ In addition to grounding personal identity, the impression of self-identity purportedly explains why the mind is not perpetually in reverie but pervasively self-concerned—even (on a charitable reading) when other-than-self concerned.¹¹⁸

The third edition of Kames’s *Essays*, published three years after Hume’s death, places further emphasis on directly perceivable connections between perceptions. The sense of self and one’s existence that naturally accompanies experiences qualifies not only every present thought and action, but also

¹¹⁵ Cf. Tsugawa, “Hume and Kames,” 399.

¹¹⁶ Kames, *Essays* (1st ed.), 233-34 (emphasis mine).

¹¹⁷ Kames also has Descartes in mind (*ibid.*, 234).

¹¹⁸ This would be the case even when one is concerned for others *qua* others-than-oneself. Such concern presupposes there being an impression of oneself as the diachronically identical locus of other-directed thought and action.

must qualify every idea of memory; because that faculty recalls to the mind things as they happened: *I* was present at the King's coronation; and, at a greater distance of time, *I* saw the first stone laid at the Ratcliff library at Oxford.¹¹⁹

The sense of self that accompanies the majority of present perceptions, especially present impressions and memories, acquaints one with her or his personal identity.¹²⁰ As in the first edition, Kames underscores the connections made possible by the sense of self-identity that attends present perceptions and memories: "I am assured of my own identity by connecting every thing I thought and did with myself" (ibid.).

Kames goes on to claim that the same process that acquaints one with her personal identity also acquaints her with the mind-independent identity of plants and animals—where again the issue concerns connections between the human mind's perceptions: "Were I kept ignorant of my personal identity, it would not be in my power to connect any of my past actions with myself: I could not think myself accountable for them, more than if done by another person."¹²¹ Such connections are epistemically accessible in only one way: "inward sense of consciousness of fact."¹²²

The crucial dialectical point regarding to what Hume found to be "more satisfactory" about Kames's account concerns not its content *per se* but—following Hume's letter to the letter—the form or "Method" of Kames's account. Unlike the author of the Appendix, Kames does not preclude the possibility of perceiving a system-generating principle that unites distinct perceptions. In addition, Kames rejects the relevance of discovering such a principle via probable reasoning.¹²³ Instead Kames highlights an observation that provides immediate evidence of "the only" connecting principle that unites particular perceptions. The fact that Hume judges Kames's method to be "more satisfactory than any thing that had

¹¹⁹ Kames, *Essays* (3rd ed.), 201.

¹²⁰ "It is thus that I am made acquainted with my personal identity; that is, with being the person who saw the things mentioned above, and every other things recorded in my memory as said, done, or suffered by *me*; the same *person*, without regard to what changes my body may have undergone" (ibid., 201).

¹²¹ Ibid., 202.

¹²² "Not the greatest skeptic ever doubted of his own personal identity, continued through the successive periods of life; of his being the same man this year as he was the last: which, however, is a discovery made by no reasoning; resting wholly upon an inward sense and consciousness of fact" (ibid., 373). Here Kames seems not to employ "discovery" in Hume's technical sense.

¹²³ The third edition reiterates that the sense of self, and thus the evidence for personal identity, derives from experience "without reasoning," and not via logical demonstration *à la* Descartes or causal reasoning *à la* Hume (ibid., 198-99).

ever occur'd to [him],” therefore, does not entail Hume’s coming to believe, *contra* the *Treatise* and Appendix, in an impression of a diachronically identical self. Hume still takes himself to have undermined the legitimacy of that belief. His praise pertains to Kames allowing there to be some perception (in the narrow epistemic sense) to provide evidence for a principle that actually connects distinct perceptions (in the wide metaphysical sense). The method that Hume finds so satisfactory conforms to the two general requirements prescribed in the Appendix’s potential solution: it features both a metaphysical and an epistemic component, the latter of which justifies strong belief in the former. Once we examine the *Enquiry*, we will see that consideration of Kames’s method helps motivate Hume to retain the perception principle while advancing an epistemically qualified claim about what helps explain the mind’s unity.

One might object that my interpretation presumes that Hume’s praise of Kames was intended in earnest. Yet Ross (following Hume’s and Kames’s contemporary, Boswell) notes that the “high point” of Hume and Kames’s relationship occurred in June 1745, whereas sometime thereafter Hume’s relationship with Kames became marked by “some reserve and even irony and antipathy,” as many of Kames’s relationships with younger protégés did because of the judge’s domineering character.¹²⁴

My response is that even if Hume only one year after the “high point” of his long-standing relationship with Kames intended his praise to be somewhat ironic and/or antagonistic, the objection does not undermine my interpretation as to why Kames’s method seems to and should have appealed to Hume. Let us grant the objector’s assumption that Hume’s praise was ironic and/or antagonistic. Then an appropriate rephrasing of his letter on such an assumption would resemble the following: “The *method* of your account, Lord Kames, is more satisfactory than *anything* that had ever occurred to me...” This ironic rephrasing suggests that such a method did occur to Hume, perhaps as prefigured in the Appendix’s second solution—a method that Hume felt forced to reject in light of his reasonings regarding and expressions of the perception principle. The rephrasing’s implications still accord with my claim that

¹²⁴ Ross, “*Le Bon David*,” 542.

Hume's second thoughts concern the apparent inconsistency between the perception principle and true idea of the mind. An ironic rephrasing, in other words, preserves there being something genuinely *methodologically* satisfying that would have motivated Hume to praise (earnestly or ironically) his long-standing friend.

Alternative rephrasings, of course, are available. Tsugawa's analysis of typical letters from 1750 and earlier, however, indicates that there is no reason to presume that Hume was being merely polite, ironic, or antagonistic.¹²⁵ Given other contemporaries' and Hume's own accounts of his interpersonal ethos, it seems extremely unlikely that Hume's letter would be designed to ironically antagonize Kames. Consider what Hume wrote in his brief autobiography, penned months before his death:

I was, I say, a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions.... My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct.¹²⁶

Of course, we should not take Hume at his word. But consider Kames's concluding comments in the third edition of his *Essays*, published three years after Hume's death.

I am fond however of any apology I can make for Mr Hume.... Whatever prejudice I may have against the doctrines of the [Second] Enquiry, my conscience acquits me of any prejudice against the author. Our friendship was sincere while he lived, without ever a difference, except in matters of opinion. I never was addicted to controversy; and would have avoided the attacking a gentleman who had both my love and esteem, had it been consistent with the plan of the present work.¹²⁷

The burden of proof, it seems to me, falls on the objector.

Hume did not adopt Kames's view, but was motivated by Kames's method to introduce reasonings that differ from those treated in the *Treatise* and Appendix.

¹²⁵ Tsugawa, "Hume and Kames," 398.

¹²⁶ Hume, "My Own Life," 21.

¹²⁷ Kames, *Essays* (3rd ed.), 149-50.

6. THE *ENQUIRY*'S EVIDENT PRINCIPLES

I have claimed that the Appendix problem concerns how there can be a mind at all, given Hume's belief that the perception principle precludes him from explaining the evident systematicity of the mind. The author of the *Enquiry*, in contrast, reasons that the principles of connection in virtue of which the mind is a system are "evident," "observable," and "discoverable" to the mind—*provably* so. Thereby, the *Enquiry* obviates the Appendix problem. Hume's revised reasonings enable him to achieve precisely what was so epistemically satisfying about Kames's method—it explains via direct observation those connecting principles that bind together all the various thoughts and actions of one's life—while preserving Hume's critique of belief in necessary connections. Hume recognizes, in other words, that associative connections and association-generating relations unify distinct perceptions in such a way that justifies belief in "the true idea" of the mind regardless of whether such connections count as "real." Hume's considered view, accordingly, is that association-generating relations and the associative connections caused by them jointly constitute the interconnected system of successive perceptions that is the mind.

The *Enquiry* begins with Hume noting that there are truths and falsehoods about the mind's constitution that fall within the compass of human understanding.¹²⁸ As in the *Treatise*, Hume holds that we may obtain certain truths and falsehoods about the mind, for example that it is neither by chance alone nor via necessary connections that all our particular perceptions are united. Yet Hume slightly and subtly widens the scope of the kinds of truths and falsehoods that we may know about the mind, including the range of phenomena that we can perceive and discover regarding the mind's unity. He claims, for example, that we can "observe" and "examine carefully the principle, which binds the different thoughts to each other [in the mind]."¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Hume, *Enquiry*, 1.14-15/14-15.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.3/23.

That said, the *Enquiry* distinguishes associative connections from “the secret springs and principles, by which the human mind is actuated in its operations.”¹³⁰ As in the *Treatise*, Hume pretends not to explain the origin of primary impressions of sensation, but only other subtypes of perceptions, especially ideas, since determining the origin of our abstract ideas may help us discover something probable about the mind’s secret springs and principles.¹³¹ Hume proceeds approximately as he did in Book I of the *Treatise*, noting that while at first sight the mind and the imagination in particular may seem to be unrestrained and possess “unbounded liberty,” closer examination shows that it is constrained by general principles such as the copy principle and associative principles of the imagination—*evident* principles.

Hume concedes that we cannot reflect on the operations and principles of the mind without their seeming to be obscure. Yet he also allows that we may apprehend those operations and principles in an instant via a form of “superior penetration” that derives from nature and improves with habit and reflection. He describes such insight as follows:

This task of ordering and distinguishing, which has no merit, when performed with regard to external bodies, the objects of our senses, rises in its value, when directed towards the operations of the mind, in proportion to the difficulty and labour, which we meet with in performing it.¹³²

Whereas the mind’s secret springs and principles are not directly perceivable via superior penetration, associative connections are.¹³³ So far, this is consistent with the *Treatise*. The twist is that Hume allows associative connections to be principles of connection that unify particular perceptions—perceivably and discoverably so. This justifies strong belief in the true idea of the human mind.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.15/14.

¹³¹ Cf. Hume’s “Abstract,” 35/661-2, which employs the word “secret” to refer to the principles of the association of ideas.

¹³² Hume, *Enquiry*, 1.13/13.

¹³³ Regarding the relation between associative connections and secret principles, Hume writes: “It is probable, that one operation and principle of the mind depends on another; which, again, may be resolved into one more general and universal” (*ibid.*, 1.15/15.)

The key passage occurs at the outset of Section 3, “Of the association of ideas”:

*It is evident, that there is a principle of connexion between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind, and [it is evident] that, in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method and regularity. In our more serious thinking or discourse, this is so observable, that any particular thought, which breaks in upon the regular tract or chain of ideas, is immediately remarked and rejected.*¹³⁴

Compare these claims with the Appendix: “But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only *feel* a connexion or a determination of the thought, to pass from one object to another.”¹³⁵ The author of the *Enquiry* does not contend that we merely feel a fictional and therefore unreal connection between a determination of ideas *qua* distinct existences. The fact that the principle of connection between ideas is merely associative, moreover, does not entail that Hume (by his own lights) cannot explain the principle of connection that unites successive perceptions. Hume now maintains that “it is evident” and “observable” that such associative connections are the principle of connection between different ideas of the mind. He allows, in other words, that we can *perceive* the principles of connection that unite distinct perceptions. The metaphor of a chain is fitting, for it expresses the general empirical maxim that each idea *qua* part of the mind is connected with both its immediate predecessor and successor whether they are impressions (apropos of the copy principle) or ideas (apropos of the associative principles of the imagination and/or memory). Like links in a chain, such connections constitute a system that remains unified as its number of parts increases.

Throughout the *Enquiry*, Hume reiterates that the mind’s principles of connection are epistemically accessible. Even when the mind does not presently perceive the principle of connection between successive perceptions, the connection is discoverable upon reflection:

*We shall find, if we reflect, that the imagination ran not altogether at adventures, but that there was still a connection upheld among the different ideas, which succeeded each other. Were the loosest and freest conversation to be transcribed, there would immediately be observed something, which connected it in all its transitions.*¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Hume, *Enquiry*, 3.1/23 (emphases mine).

¹³⁵ Hume, “Appendix,” 20/635.

¹³⁶ Hume, *Enquiry*, 3.1/23.

Hume prefigures this claim in the Abstract immediately after lauding the author of the *Treatise* for being an inventor for the use he makes of the principles of the association: “Hence arises what we call the *apropos* of discourse; hence the connexion of writing: and hence that thread, or chain of thought, which a man naturally supports even in the loosest *reverie*.”¹³⁷ (Here and elsewhere Hume focuses on the principles of idea-idea connections because the imagination is the principle source of all our errors. His claims about the mind’s principles of unity, however, also apply to impression-idea (*à la* the copy principle), idea-impression (*à la* ideas giving rise to impressions of reflection),¹³⁸ and impression-impression (*à la* the passions) connections.¹³⁹ All such connections are discoverable upon reflection, even if not immediately perceived.¹⁴⁰) Hume takes the fact that different languages are capable of expressing the same ideas, moreover, to provide “certain proof” of universal principles of connection that hold for all human beings, which makes it “too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together.”¹⁴¹ The three epistemic modes that we examined in §4 (perception, discovery, and proof) support the *Enquiry*’s claim about it being evident that there are principles of connection between different perceptions.¹⁴²

These modes also justify strong belief in the true idea of the mind defended in the *Treatise* and presupposed throughout Hume’s corpus, including the *Enquiry* and *Dialogues*, in which all participants seem to agree about the mind’s general nature.¹⁴³

But the ideas in a human mind, we see, by an unknown, inexplicable economy, arrange themselves so as to form the plan of a watch or house. Experience, therefore, proves that there is an original principle of order in mind, not in matter. [Philo]

¹³⁷ Hume, “Abstract,” 35/662.

¹³⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.2.1/7.

¹³⁹ Hume thinks that there is a natural connection between uneasiness and anger, for example (ibid., 2.2.3.6/350).

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., ibid., 1.3.8.7/101. Hume continues to hold this view in the *Enquiry* (3.12). As in the *Treatise*, passions *qua* impressions, like all perceptions, have origins and are connected to other perceptions (ibid., 9.1/104).

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 3.2/24, 3.1/23.

¹⁴² As in the *Treatise*, proofs are “such arguments from experience as leave no room for doubt or opposition” (*Enquiry*, 6.1/56n10).

¹⁴³ Cf. Cottrell, “Minds,” 565, who holds that the *Dialogues* introduce a slightly wider conception of mind that includes faculties in addition to perceptions.

What is the soul of man? A composition of various faculties, passions, sentiments, ideas; united, indeed, into one self or person, but still distinct from each other. When it reasons, the ideas which are the parts of its discourse arrange themselves in a certain form or order, which is not preserved entire for a moment, but immediately gives place to another arrangement.... How is this compatible with that perfect immutability and simplicity which all true theists ascribe to the Deity? [Demea]

A mind whose acts and sentiments and ideas are not distinct and successive, one that is wholly simple and totally immutable, is a mind which has no thought, no reason, no will, no sentiment, no love, no hated; or, in a word, is no mind at all. It is an abuse of terms to give it that appellation. [Cleanthes]¹⁴⁴

In the *Treatise*, Hume maintains that no philosophical question is more abstruse than that concerning identity and the nature of the uniting principle that constitutes a person, and that the question cannot be settled by the senses, but only the understanding and “the most profound metaphysics.”¹⁴⁵ Here and elsewhere Hume supposes that there is some uniting principle that constitutes a person or mind. Even Hume’s more “skeptical” or critical moments (which often function as precursors to his constructive moments) presuppose the systematicity of mind. This presupposition finds clear expression in the Abstract, for example, which concludes as follows:

So far as regards the mind, these [principles] are the only links that bind the parts of the universe together, or connect us with any person or object exterior to ourselves. For as it is by means of thought only that any thing operations upon our passions, and as these are the only ties of our thoughts, they are really *to us* the cement of the universe, and all the operations of the mind must, in a great measure, depend on them.¹⁴⁶

The qualification “*to us*” foreshadows the Appendix problem; for what Hume takes the cement of “the universe” (meaning the universe *of the imagination*) to explain is the unity of the mind, as far as reasoning will allow.

The *Enquiry*’s epistemic justifications recur in multiple sections:

We have already observed, that nature has established connexions among particular ideas, and that no sooner one idea occurs to our thoughts than it introduces its correlative, and carries our attention towards it, by a gentle and insensible movement.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Hume, *Dialogues*, 18, 28-29.

¹⁴⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.2.6/189-90.

¹⁴⁶ Hume, “Abstract,” 35/662.

¹⁴⁷ Hume, *Enquiry*, 5.14/50.

As in Section 3, the mind's evident principles of connection not only bind and unite perceptions, but also "beget that regular train of reflection or discourse, which, in a greater or less degree, takes place among all mankind." (ibid.). When describing a prisoner being conducted to the scaffold, Hume writes: "His mind runs along a certain train of ideas.... Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions; but the mind feels no difference between them, in passing from one link to another."¹⁴⁸ The upshot is that while the prisoner does not perceive (in the narrow epistemic sense) the evident principles of connection between his rapidly successive perceptions, most of which are quite vivacious and hence not "perfect ideas," reflection would enable him to discover them, if only he had time.

In this way, the associative connections that the *Treatise* describes as principles of merely imaginary union are refashioned in the *Enquiry* as perceivable, discoverable, and provable connecting principles: "That these principles serve to connect ideas will not, I believe, be much doubted."¹⁴⁹ The proto-phenomenological analyses conducted in the *Treatise*, motivated as they are by Hume's reasonings regarding the perception principle, failed to recognize that associative connections contribute to the mind's systematicity even if they are "merely" imaginary and neither necessary nor inseparable. (Husserl was mistaken about the *Enquiry* being a "badly watered-down" version of the *Treatise*, which Husserl regarded as the first draft of a pure phenomenology, albeit a "sensualistically perverted" one.¹⁵⁰ Although the *Treatise*'s explorations more closely resemble Husserl's preferred style, the *Enquiry* contains important proto-phenomenological developments concerning the unity of mind.) Associative connections are precisely the epistemically justified, system-generating principles that Hume's philosophy requires. After all, he takes matters of fact, including perceptions, to be real existences and thinks that principles pertinent to perceptions can be proven to be "real" or "have reality" in a way that does not entail their being necessary or inseparable.¹⁵¹ Hume comes to realize that associative connections between perceptions "have reality" in this revised sense, and provably so.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 8.19/90-91.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 3.2-3.3/24.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 12.

¹⁵¹ Hume, *Enquiry*, 5.16/52; 5.8/46.

As prefigured in the Abstract, Hume employs analogical reasoning to explain why narrative compositions and compositions of genius, which necessarily have some plan or object and thus unity among the events and actions related therein, exhibit the same type of unity exhibited by the mind. Both “form a kind of *Unity*” in the imagination, a “rule [that] admits of no exception.”¹⁵² The key feature of narrative and historical productions is “unity, amidst all their diversity,” where relevant connections are typically those of cause and effect. The connecting principle at any given moment may be resemblance, contiguity, or causation. But *some* such principle, in almost all cases (save exceptions that prove the rule, such as madness) connects the narrative’s events, hence also the narrator’s and reader’s ideas of those events. More “perfect” productions present an unbroken chain of events that are connected via causation, the relation or connection that is “the strongest of all others; [and] also the most instructive.”¹⁵³ Biographies also presuppose uniting principles that connect the events of a person’s life “by showing their mutual dependence and relation.”¹⁵⁴ As with the connections between narrative and historical events, the mutual dependence and relations between distinct events of a person’s history presuppose resemblance, contiguity, and/or causal connections—that is, a “certain required unity”—between the ideas that represent those events (*ibid.*).

The *Enquiry*’s claims regarding associative connections are directly relevant to personal identity, meaning the unity of distinct experiences and our experience thereof. Hume’s analogical reasoning regarding narrative, historical, and bibliographical productions alludes (intentionally or not) to the *Treatise* claim that

The mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations.... The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.5-3.6.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3.9.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.10.

¹⁵⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.6.4/253.

The connections characteristic of productions and bibliographies are directly relevant to questions concerning personal identity. The mind is also a production that unfolds over time, where “a certain unity is requisite in all productions” just as a certain unity is requisite in all minds.¹⁵⁶ When an epic poem’s miraculous events resemble each other and are contiguous in time, Hume holds that there is “sufficient unity to make them be comprehended in one fable or narration.”¹⁵⁷ By analogy, when the object of a perception that is temporally contiguous to an appropriately related chain of perceptions stands in some relation to the object of simultaneous or immediately preceding perception, there is sufficient unity to make that perception comprehended in one person’s life. Hume’s revised reasonings, therefore, are directly relevant to personal identity despite the fact that the phrase “personal identity” does not occur in the *Enquiry*.

Even the forms of reasoning that Hume employs in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* presuppose there being experienceable connections that constitute the unity of mind. Analogical reasoning presupposes there being some perceived resemblance between analogous objects that may also be causally related. Causal reasoning, furthermore, presupposes an interconnected admixture of three elements: an original impression, an idea *qua* copy of that impression, and a transition or “connexion” from the impression to the idea. Constant conjunctions of such object- and perception-types are also “connexions,” meaning connections that are perceivable and discoverable in light of their evident contribution to the systematicity of mind.¹⁵⁸

Issues pertinent to personal identity occur throughout the *Enquiry*. In Section 8, for example, Hume inquires:

¹⁵⁶ Hume, *Enquiry*, 3.14.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.17.

¹⁵⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.2.47/212.

Are the actions of the same person much diversified in the different periods of his life, from infancy to old age? This affords room for many general observations concerning the gradual change of our sentiments and inclinations, and the different maxims, which prevail in the different ages of human creatures. Even the characters, which are peculiar to each individual, have a uniformity in their influence; otherwise our acquaintance with the persons, and our observation of their conduct, could never teach us their dispositions, or serve to direct our behaviour with regard to them.¹⁵⁹

Hume speaks freely of persons remaining the same despite the diversity of sentiments, inclinations, characters, conduct, and particular perceptions that constitute them. This line of reasoning is consistent with Section 3's reasoning regarding the evident principles of connection between perceptions:

Not only in any limited portion of life, a man's actions have a dependence on each other, but also during the whole period of his duration, from the cradle to the grave; nor is it possible to strike off one link, however minute, in this regular chain, without affecting the whole series of events, which follow.¹⁶⁰

The cited passages advance claims about the nature of personal identity; and fittingly, Hume employs the metaphor of an unbroken regular chain to emphasize the evident unity of different perceptions. This effectively redresses Hume's second thoughts, as I have interpreted them: thoughts concerning what *actually* connects distinct perceptions in a way that is consistent with the true idea of the human mind. At the same time, the *Enquiry* preserves the *Treatise* claim that "this uniting principle among ideas is not to be consider'd as an inseparable connexion; for that has already been excluded from the imagination."¹⁶¹ The *Enquiry* also preserves the *Treatise* distinction between primary (necessary, inseparable, and "real") connections and secondary (associative, imaginary, and customary) connections while allowing the latter to partially constitute the unity of mind.¹⁶² Hume's revised reasonings, moreover, are more empirically and phenomenologically accurate, as Husserl and Whitehead would agree. Far from betraying Hume's empiricism or rejecting any of his philosophical principles, Hume's revised reasonings regarding and expressions of the perception principle enable him to embrace the proto-phenomenological and (epistemically qualified) metaphysical implications of his experiments. (Not surprisingly, the challenge of

¹⁵⁹ Hume, *Enquiry*, 8.11/86.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.10. Note that this qualifies Hume's separability and converse separability principles.

¹⁶¹ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.1.4.1/10.

¹⁶² Cf. *ibid.*, 1.3.8.13/104.

explaining what connects distinct existences is endemic to forms of Humeanism defended in analytic metaphysics *à la* Lewis, Sider, and other Humean perdurantists.)

We can paraphrase Hume's revision most succinctly as follows:

The mind never perceives or discovers any real, necessary, inseparable connections between distinct existences, including perceptions. [*Treatise*, Abstract, Appendix]

The mind never perceives or discovers any necessary, inseparable connections between distinct existences, including perceptions. That said, the mind can perceive and discover associative connections between distinct perceptions; and these, taken together with the association-generating relations on which they depend, sufficiently establish the mind's evident unity. [*Enquiry*]

Note that since the *Enquiry* no longer employs the word "real" in the technical sense of the *Treatise*, its omission in the second formulation is philosophically insignificant. Whether associative connections count as real is not a substantive philosophical issue, but a linguistic issue concerning whether a word would be more perspicuously employed in one way or another. Hume might want to avoid claiming that associative connections are real; it might seem possible for two perceptions to be associatively but not more-than-associatively, meaning necessarily or inseparably, connected. Alternatively, Hume might want to allow that associative connections *really* connect distinct perceptions, despite being neither necessary nor inseparable. Nothing substantive depends on this linguistic decision; Hume has already clarified and confirmed "what matters" epistemically and metaphysically. Hume's revised reasonings regarding and expression of the perception principle effectively enable him to assert the Appendix's proposed solution while preserving his unrenounceable principles. The *Enquiry*'s revisions satisfy the Appendix solution's epistemic and metaphysical criteria.

7. OBJECTIONS

One might object that in Section 7, Hume reiterates the *Treatise* claim that we can never observe or discover *any* instance of connection between distinct existences:

So that, upon the whole, there appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connexion, which is conceivable by us. All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing, which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion *seems* to be, that we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings, or common life.¹⁶³

This seems to undermine my claim that the *Enquiry* allows the mind to perceive and discover associative connections that unify distinct perceptions.

The problem with the objection is that it ignores the context in which the words “connexion” and “tye” appear—a section titled “The Idea of Necessary Connexion” that focuses exclusively on beliefs concerning necessary, inseparable connections. The general strategy of the section is to clarify and (dis)confirm the idea of necessary connections by attempting to discover the impression that gives rise to that idea. Hume considers body-body causation, body-mind causation, and mind-mind causation, but concludes that the idea of necessary connection cannot be perceived in any particular instance of causal reasoning. This entails that the idea cannot underwrite causal reasoning.¹⁶⁴ As in the *Treatise*, Hume once again takes himself to prove that we can neither perceive nor discover necessary connections, especially those we naturally but erroneously believe to hold between causes and effects. Instead, he grounds the idea of necessary connection in customary transitions between causes and effects, whereas historically, others had done the opposite. The words “connexion” and “tye” thus do not refer any connection whatsoever, but specifically the “idea of a necessary connexion among events”—where the word “events” encompasses not only perceptions, but also (putative) “natural objects.”¹⁶⁵

Hume goes on to claim that we feel or have an impression of “this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant,” a transition he explicitly refers to as connection:

This connexion, therefore, which we *feel* in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression, from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Hume, *Enquiry*, 7.26/74; cf. 10.5/111.

¹⁶⁴ I am grateful to Sean Greenberg for helping elucidate the structure of Section 7.

¹⁶⁵ Hume, *Enquiry*, 7.28/75, 7.26/74.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.28/75.

Hence we perceive (have an impression of) an epistemically relevant but unnecessary and separable connection: the customary transition of the imagination that nature has established or implanted within us as a general principle for the succession of perceptions. “When we say, therefore, that one object is [necessarily] connected with another, we mean only, that they have acquired a connexion in our thought.”¹⁶⁷ This is consistent with claiming that “we *feel* a customary connexion between the ideas,” meaning an associative connection generated by custom, and “transfer that feeling to the objects,” but never discover a *necessary* “connecting principle.”¹⁶⁸ Hume’s recapitulation of Section 7 reiterates that we have impressions of customary connections but not necessary connections.¹⁶⁹ The passage cited in the objection, therefore, does not pertain to associative connections. Hume’s critique of necessary connections in both the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* is consistent with allowing associative connections to be perceivable or discoverable principles of the mind’s unity.

A different objection is that, if what I have said is correct, then the perceivability of associative connections entails that such connections must be common to not only perceptions, but also external objects. In the *Treatise*, Hume holds that “Every idea of a quality in an object passes thro’ an impression; and therefore every perceivable relation, whether of connexion or repugnance, must be common to both objects and impressions.”¹⁷⁰ Assume that the author of the *Enquiry* also holds this position. Given that associative connections are perceivable relations between perceptions, they must be common to both extended objects and impressions. But this is absurd. Associative connections hold only between constituents of the mind.

This objection inaccurately interprets the cited passage to refer to external objects. The dialectical context clearly indicates that this is not what Hume has mind. Prior to the cited passage, Hume argues that it is impossible for the idea of an object or external existence to represent something that is specifically

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.28/76.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.29/78n17.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.30/78.

¹⁷⁰ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.5.21/243.

different from perceptions.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, he takes himself to have established the “certain maxim” that when we discover a connection or repugnance between objects, it *ipso facto* extends to impressions; and he qualifies this maxim: “tho’ the inverse proposition may not equally be true, that all the discoverable relations of impressions are common to objects.”¹⁷² The objection fails, therefore, whether one interprets “objects” to mean external objects or objects of perceptions.

8. ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTS OF HUME’S APPENDIX PROBLEM

Although I cannot hope to address all alternative accounts of Hume’s Appendix problem, especially those (belonging to Groups 2, 3, and 4) that disagree about its general character, differentiating my account from other Group 1 interpretations will help support my contention that it is more systematically satisfying while prefiguring some central features of the Humean frameworks that we will examine in Chapters Two and Three. Accordingly, I will focus on those accounts that identify genuine challenges for Hume’s philosophy, despite my disagreement as to whether they accurately describe Hume’s Appendix problem. The challenges raised, moreover, are germane to Husserl’s and Whitehead’s sustained engagement with Hume, as we will see.

Let us begin with Galen Strawson, a neo-Humean phenomenologist and proto-process-philosophical proponent of psychism who recently supplemented his controversial interpretations of Hume’s theory of causation and Appendix problem with a controversial interpretation of Humeanism *per se*.¹⁷³ *Prima facie*, my account might seem to accord with Strawson’s; for he holds that “within a year, Hume sees that he can’t maintain the view that [the idea of a mere bundle] is the true idea of the mind, although his empiricist principles commit him to the view that it is.”¹⁷⁴ Everything depends on what one

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 1.4.5.19/241.

¹⁷² Ibid., 1.4.5.20/242.

¹⁷³ G. Strawson, *Selves*, 301-04; *Secret Connexion; Evident Connexion*; “Humeanism.”

¹⁷⁴ G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 33.

takes Hume's empiricist principles to be, however, since they determine that to which Hume's philosophy is wittingly or not committed. On this point (bracketing myriad others),¹⁷⁵ Strawson and I disagree:

Or rather, he sees that ["the true idea" is] not the idea of the mind that he's worked with in his philosophy, although his empiricist principles commit him to working with no other. This is his problem: the empiricistically "true" idea of the mind isn't consistent with his philosophical commitments and presuppositions considered as a whole.... His philosophy relies—essentially—on a richer idea of the mind or self than his empiricist principles allow him.¹⁷⁶

Strawson maintains that Hume's philosophy relies essentially on and unequivocally presupposes perceptions being *really* connected, such that the mind is "something more" than a system of perceptions and commits him to "the existence of some sort of real continuity of mind or self."¹⁷⁷ Being committed to real continuity, however, is inconsistent with Hume's empiricist principles, the perception principle in particular. Hence Hume allegedly "realizes that he needs the real thing, the real connection, not just the constant conjunction that is all that is represented in the empirically respectable 'true idea.'"¹⁷⁸

These claims exemplify the principal problem with Strawson's account: it rests on an erroneous interpretation of what Hume's empiricist principles are and what his philosophy as a whole requires. Relatedly, Strawson's account overlooks the subtle shift that Hume's thought (thanks in part to Kames) undergoes between the Appendix and *Enquiry*, and thereby fails to satisfy the Kames and *Enquiry* Criteria.¹⁷⁹ This is ironic, for Strawson's interpretation is inconsistent with his recognition both of the

¹⁷⁵ I disagree with G. Strawson that Hume's skepticism precludes him from advancing the kind of *epistemically qualified* metaphysical thesis that I have attributed to him. This aligns me with Cottrell, "Minds."

¹⁷⁶ G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 33-34; cf. *Selves*, 358ff.; "'All My Hopes Vanish,'" 181.

¹⁷⁷ G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 46.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 48n29.

¹⁷⁹ In a footnote, G. Strawson refers to Hume's praise of Kames's account but forgoes considering its significance for his own interpretation ("'All My Hopes Vanish,'" 195n2).

Enquiry's authoritative status in interpreting Hume's philosophy¹⁸⁰ and the fact that Hume addresses the Appendix problem in the *Enquiry*.¹⁸¹

Strawson takes Hume's philosophy to be inexorably committed to the existence of real connections that constitute the mind as a real continuity. Although Strawson acknowledges that (though does not explain why)¹⁸² the word "real" functions as a technical term only in the *Treatise*, Abstract, and Appendix, he takes the technical sense of "real" to apply to the *Enquiry*'s claim that the principle of connection between different perceptions is evident to the mind, despite the fact that the *Enquiry* does not employ the term "real" in that or any relevant passage.¹⁸³ Furthermore, as I argued above and as Pitson and others have recognized, the dialectical context of Section 3 (titled "Of the Association of Ideas") and related sections (excluding Section 9) concerns only associative connections.¹⁸⁴ There is therefore no textual basis, especially in the text that Strawson rightly recognizes to contain the authoritative statement of Hume's philosophy, for interpreting Hume's shift as allowing the mind to perceive real connections, let alone real continuity. Were Strawson's interpretation correct, the *Enquiry* would renounce one of Hume's unrenounceable principles: the perception principle. Yet Hume consistently claims in both the Advertisement and subsequent writings that the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* present the same philosophical principles. Renouncing the perception principle, moreover, would undermine the epistemological

¹⁸⁰ "We can read the *Enquiry* back into the *Treatise*, when trying to understand his considered view; we cannot go the other way. Everything in the *Treatise* that is or appears incompatible with the *Enquiry* must be discarded. Nothing in the *Treatise* can legitimately be used to throw light on any passage in the *Enquiry* unless two conditions are fulfilled: the passage in the *Enquiry* must be unclear (this is not often the case), and the passage from the *Treatise* must not be incompatible with anything in the *Enquiry* that is not in dispute. Even when a passage from the *Treatise* is called in evidence, its claim to make a contribution to interpretation must be weak when compared with competing claims from passages in the *Enquiry* other than the passage under consideration" (G. Strawson, "Objects and Power," 32).

¹⁸¹ G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 35.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 103n3; cf. "'All My Hopes Vanish,'" 196n13.

¹⁸³ "Here [Hume] refers to a real connection of precisely the sort that the empiricistically 'true idea' of the human mind can't countenance" (G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 35; cf. "'All My Hopes Vanish,'" 186).

¹⁸⁴ "In fact, it is clear from the context of Hume's remark that his 'principle of connexion' is an allusion to the association of ideas of which we are aware by reflection and not a reference to some 'real' underlying connection unavailable to experience. There is no evidence here of Hume renouncing the view of the relation between the mind and its ideas to which he commits himself in [1.4.6]" (Pitson, "Skeptical Realism," 53-54).

foundation of the critical and constructive phases of Hume's analyses of causation and the mind. The magnitude of Hume's crisis, *by his own lights*, is considerably less than Strawson alleges.

Nor does Hume's shift consist in renouncing the provably true idea of the mind asserted throughout Book I, including that Book's conclusion, Book II, the Abstract, Appendix, and the posthumously published *Dialogues* that Hume continued to refine until his final years.¹⁸⁵ Instead the *Enquiry* allows, without violating the perception principle or true idea of the mind, that the mind can perceive and discover those connections—association-generating relations and associative connections—in virtue of which it is unified. This revised reasoning constitutes a direct response to the loosening (putatively) entailed by the separability and conceivability principles, which is precisely (even by Strawson's lights) when all of Hume's hopes vanish. The magnitude of Hume's problem may have temporarily caused all of his hopes to vanish, but the evidence does not suggest that it motivates him to reject a provably true idea or renounce an unrenounceable principle.¹⁸⁶

Strawson is correct that, were Hume to assume more about the mind than his empiricist principles allow, for example its being a real continuity, then that assumption would threaten his philosophy as a whole. But Strawson is incorrect that Hume's second thoughts in the Appendix pertain to the fact that "no suitable continuing entity (or observable real connection) can have a legitimate place in his philosophy."¹⁸⁷ Hume's second thoughts *derive from* but are not tantamount to this fact. As Hume's letter to Kames and the *Enquiry* help show, Hume does not continue to reason that only a continuing entity or observable real connection would explain the mind's unity. Observable associative connections, taken together with the association-generating relations that they presuppose, are jointly sufficient and empiricistically innocuous.

¹⁸⁵ At the conclusion of Book I, Hume reiterates that it is "that succession of perceptions, which constitutes our self or person" (*Treatise*, 1.4.7.3/265). In Book II, Hume reiterates that the self is "that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness" (*ibid.*, 2.1.2.2/277). What we call "self" or "mind" is "that *connected* succession of perceptions"—nothing more, nothing less (*ibid.*, 2.1.2.3/277 (emphasis mine)).

¹⁸⁶ On this point, I agree with Garrett that it is in complete accordance with Hume's empiricism for the mind to be able to perceive and discover systematizing connections that are not real, in the technical sense (*Cognition and Commitment*).

¹⁸⁷ G. Strawson, *Evident Connexion*, 98.

Even if Hume's philosophy and Humeanism require more than Hume's empiricist principles allow, the range of evidence that I have considered suggests that Hume's second thoughts do not concern a problem of system-undermining magnitude, though it does extend beyond the section concerning personal identity that make the problem most evident. By the time of the *Enquiry*, Hume (thanks in part to Kames) rejects needing something real. Hume comes to believe that, despite having once lost hope, he does not need to abandon his empiricist account of the mind, the perception principle, or his philosophy as a whole. Hume delivers on the Appendix's promissory note that while the difficulty initially presents itself as being too difficult for his understanding, more mature reflections may enable him to discover a hypothesis that reconciles the apparent inconsistency of the perception principle and true idea of the mind.

Given that Hume's philosophy inspired Husserl's and Whitehead's divergent reflections on continuity, unity, association, and constitution more broadly, it is important to understand why neither continuity nor "something more" than associative connections is the problem that worries Hume. Hume grounds apparent continuity and unity in the fundamentally discontinuous, discrete, and atomistic nature of perception. Correlatively, Hume's problem concerns the unity of perception *given that* perception is discontinuous, as Hume takes his experiments (for example, those concerning sound sleep) to prove. Hume does not take perception's discontinuity to conflict with the mind's systematicity, however. Associative connections and association-generating relations unify perceptions without generating "real continuity." Thus it is possible for the parts of mind to be both discontinuous and systematically connected, *pace* Strawson.

That said, Strawson's account identifies a genuine problem with Hume's philosophy, hence highlights an explanatory challenge endemic to various forms of Humeanism, including Husserl's phenomenology and Whitehead's philosophy of organism: the mind involving "something more" than associative connections, association-generating relations, and discontinuous, discrete, and atomistic succession. The explanatory challenge is to account for how succession *per se*, temporality *per se*, the experience of continuity and unity in general, and the experience of the mind's continuity and unity in particular become *constituted*. Strawson aptly criticizes Hume for failing to explain how entities like

copies or their objects can “remain” in the mind to make mental operations like recall possible. Suppose I have an impression, then an idea that represents that impression’s object. Thereafter, my mind is constituted by different perceptions involving other objects. Where are the former perceptions and their objects? What makes possible my present memory of previously experienced objects? Furthermore, how can I presently remember having had past experiences? (*Nota bene*: It is precisely these kinds of questions that enabled Husserl, following sustained engagement with Hume’s *Treatise*, to recognize insuperable difficulties with his Humean models of temporal awareness and the reduced ego.) In Strawson’s words,

If the bundle view of the mind is the right one, then, there is no possible structure or mechanism given which the occurrence of the original [impression] or [idea] can be the basis of the occurrence of any later, temporally non-contiguous [idea of the same object]. The whole phenomenon of memory, furthermore, must be a complete illusion.¹⁸⁸

Strawson suggests that Humean causation is not adequate to the explanatory task because causal relations, once empiricistically reconstructed, connect only immediate predecessors and successors.¹⁸⁹ Strawson’s criticism highlights important questions regarding Hume’s (hence Humeanism’s) capacity to explain experience’s intentionality, conditions for the possibility of the experienceable unity of experience, and the mind being the kind of “place” where memory and other mental operations like association take place—precisely those questions that would occupy Husserl’s and Whitehead’s attention.

This brings us to Garrett’s interpretation,¹⁹⁰ which I invoke not to criticize but to appreciate since, like Strawson, Garrett identifies a genuine problem for Hume’s philosophy.¹⁹¹ Garrett argues that what Hume came to realize “was simply that his own conception of the mind did after all *require* just what he remarked he could not provide: ‘a notion of the place’ where all and only the perceptions of each mind occur.”¹⁹² Hume’s second thoughts, as Garrett interprets them, concern the need yet simultaneous unavailability of such a conception.¹⁹³ Bracketing disagreement as to whether this is the problem that

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 58-59; cf. Garrett, “Rethinking Hume’s Second Thoughts,” 22, 34.

¹⁹⁰ Garrett’s earlier interpretation finds expression in “Hume’s Self-Doubts” and *Cognition and Commitment*, 163ff.

¹⁹¹ G. Strawson identifies a similar difficulty regarding Hume’s need of a “place of residence” for the mind’s operations, but one that by Garrett’s lights is less radical than the problem Garrett proposes (“Rethinking Hume’s Second Thoughts,” 36-37n23).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

vexed Hume,¹⁹⁴ Garrett identifies a genuine problem for Hume’s philosophy which, given that it concerns “where” and therefore *how* experience can be unified, is directly relevant to a pseudo-problem that Whitehead explicitly associated with Hume and (for a time) took to undermine his initial model of personal identity. Whitehead’s second model postulates a “place” where unification occurs: a “formless receptacle,” the sole function of which is to unify distinct experiences within the same manifold or life. Whitehead’s receptacle model, as we will see in Chapter Three, has its own problems; but the “problem” of requiring a notion of the place where all and only the perceptions of each mind occur is not one of them, thanks to Whitehead’s consideration of Hume. Unlike Hume, whom Garrett rightly criticizes for holding that certain types of perceptions are “placeless” while forgoing explanation as to how such perceptions can be unified in one mind (versus any other), Whitehead recognizes the importance of not “attenuating” personal history into a genetic relation between distinct occasions of experience—especially in light of the fact that the fundamental constitution of experience for Whitehead, as for the later Husserl, is non-spatial and non-temporal.

Inukai’s interpretation of Hume’s Appendix problem also highlights a genuine problem in Hume’s philosophy by emphasizing the *Treatise*’s inconsistency regarding whether association-generating relations are perceivable. Inukai also rightly points out that “it is misguided to assume that the associative principles initially unite perceptions into a whole bundle,” since associative connections cannot be “initial”: they presuppose initial association-generating relations that are dependent parts of complex perceptions.¹⁹⁵ However, Inukai incorrectly infers from this that Hume’s Appendix problem cannot concern whether associative principles generate bundles of perceptions. Although associative connections *per se* are not sufficient conditions for the mind’s unity, they are necessary; otherwise a mind could be in a state of “perpetual reverie,” to employ Kames’s phrase. Similarly, association-generating

¹⁹⁴ My criticism, as with G. Strawson, would rely essentially on the Kames and *Enquiry* Criteria that I have defended. Briefly, the problem that Garrett describes, were it Hume’s, would entail interpreting the *Enquiry* as rejecting several principles defended in the *Treatise*, among them one of the “Three Central Doctrines” that Garrett refers to as “Placeless Perceptions.” This, in turn, would contradict Hume’s statements that the *Treatise* and *Enquiry* contain the same principles.

¹⁹⁵ Inukai, “Hume’s Labyrinth,” 260.

relations *per se* are not sufficient conditions for the mind's unity, yet they too are necessary; otherwise a mind would be unable to associate and form complex ideas as it almost invariably does. Association-generating relations and associative connections are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the mind's unity. Hume's considered position is that association-generated relations, as dependent parts of complex perceptions, are immediately perceived along with their relata. This almost invariably causes the mind's associative principles to form a new perception (often a less lively perception) of the objects of those relata in addition to the relation itself.¹⁹⁶ The contributions of both association-generating relations and associative connections, therefore, explains the evident unity of mind even as the liveliness of experience shifts radically from sensations to thoughts.

Relatedly, Inukai errs in claiming that the Appendix problem concerns the "radical independence" of perceptions because she misconstrues the modality of Hume's claims regarding the dependence and independence of particular perceptions. As noted above, Hume claims only that it is possible for perceptions to be ontologically independent; he does not hold that they are in fact ontologically independent.¹⁹⁷ Thus it is inaccurate to maintain that "perceptions are for Hume completely loose, bearing *no* connections to any other perceptions and anything else whatsoever."¹⁹⁸ And from this, it is inaccurate to infer that Hume's Appendix problem concerns the incompatibility of the existence of unified bundles and the radical independence of individual perceptions. Like Strawson, Inukai takes Hume's Appendix problem, by Hume's own lights, to be insoluble within his philosophical system. This contradicts not only the letter and spirit of Hume's letter to Kames and the alterations introduced in the *Enquiry*, but also Hume's reiterated assertion that the *Enquiry* contains his corrected reasonings regarding and authoritative expressions of his philosophical principles. We do not need to look as far ahead as James to find an empiricist solution to Hume's Appendix problem.¹⁹⁹ The *Enquiry* is far enough, and the *Dialogues* lend support.

¹⁹⁶ Often but not necessarily, as in impression-impression (e.g. passion-passion) associations.

¹⁹⁷ Here I agree with Pitson, *Hume's Philosophy*, 15-16, 45; Kail, *Projection and Realism*, 130.

¹⁹⁸ Inukai, "Hume's Labyrinth," 268.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 271.

9. TRANSITION VIA HUME'S ANALYSIS OF THE IDEA OF TIME

Though I have not emphasized it, Hume's contention that the true idea of time represents a discontinuous, rapid, irregular, and atomistic succession of perceptions plays an important role in his account of how the mind is individuated by (in that it *is*) such an interconnected succession. Both Husserl and Whitehead laud Hume for raising essential questions about the relationship between continuity and discontinuity *vis-à-vis* temporality, temporal awareness, and the constitution thereof, despite the fact that each takes Hume to fall short of recognizing the *atemporal* constitution of temporality by a more fundamental process (inner time-consciousness and ontological becoming, respectively).²⁰⁰

Husserl's initial "schematic model" of time and temporal awareness shares several affinities with Hume's (by way of Brentano). This includes locating the constitution of temporality in the nature of apprehension *à la* Humean association and, tellingly, conceiving of "the phenomenologically reduced ego [as] nothing peculiar, floating above many experiences: it is simply identical with their own interconnected unity."²⁰¹ Returning to Hume's *Treatise* helped Husserl recognize insuperable difficulties with his Humean model. More specifically, direct engagement with the *Treatise*'s analysis of time *vis-à-vis* individuation motivated Husserl to develop a model that attributes temporality's constitution not to apprehension, since apprehension (like Humean association) presupposes the constitution of temporality, but rather to an atemporal, continuous manifold that Husserl refers to as "absolute" or "inner time-consciousness"—the *ground* of association. Even after Husserl worked out the details of this model, he continued to engage with Hume's philosophy more than with Kant's, despite exaggerated claims about Husserl taking a "transcendental turn" to "transcendental idealism," a description Husserl eventually

²⁰⁰ This terminology derives from D. W. Smith, who employs "ontological becoming" to denote the atemporal and discontinuous ground of continuous, "temporal becoming" ("Consciousness and Actuality").

²⁰¹ Husserl, *Logical Investigations II*, 86.

regretted and rejected.²⁰² Hume's theory of association became especially important in Husserl's later writings on active and passive synthesis and "primal impressions," a term Husserl adapts from Hume.

Whitehead also locates temporality's constitution in an atemporal manifold, but takes consideration of Zeno's paradoxes to entail that that manifold is discontinuous. In addition, Whitehead adopts a form of atomism that accords with Hume's claim (via Malezieu) that "existence in itself belongs only to unity,"²⁰³ meaning the unity of experiences, without adopting Hume's view that experiences are capable of independent existence. Whitehead rejects the notion of independent existence.²⁰⁴

Consideration of Hume's analysis of the idea of time will enable us to appreciate the profound influence that he had on Husserl and Whitehead, who take Hume's philosophical project to have radically different implications.

Hume purports to examine time by first clarifying and confirming the true *idea* of time.²⁰⁵ One of Hume's intentions is to prove that belief in "time itself," as if time were objective, mind-independent, or separable from perception, is unjustified. The reason is that experiencing time itself would require a direct perception (and more specifically, a primary impression) of time *per se*, independently of the succession of perception. Hume's principles rule out this possibility; the notion of "time itself" cannot be verified empirically or experientially.²⁰⁶

²⁰² As Husserl puts it in a letter to Abbe Baudin in 1934: "No ordinary 'realist' has ever been as realistic and concrete as I, the phenomenological 'idealist' (a word which I no longer use)" (quoted in Miller, *Husserl's Theory of Perception*, 197.) Miller's elaboration is apt: "Still, if 'idealism' is a misleading name for Husserl's phenomenology, so is 'realism.' Indeed, Husserl's phenomenology does *not* entail that physical objects are 'nothing but' bundles of experiences, sense-data, or noemata, but *neither* does it presuppose or entail that physical objects as we ordinarily think of them do, in fact, exist. Husserl's phenomenological theory is neutral to this aspect of the idealist-realist debate, and I consider this to be among its virtues" (ibid., 197-98).

²⁰³ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.2.3/30.

²⁰⁴ "The misconception which has haunted philosophic literature throughout the centuries is the notion of 'independent existence.' There is no such mode of existence; every entity is only to be understood in terms of the way in which it is interwoven with the rest of the Universe" (Whitehead, "Immortality," 687).

²⁰⁵ Observing the title of Hume's section, "Of the ideas of space and time," Baxter contends that the way in which Hume oscillates between analyzing the *ideas* of space and time and time and space *themselves* is largely responsible for 1.2's neglect among contemporary scholars ("Hume's Theory," 105).

²⁰⁶ "From the succession of ideas and impressions we form the idea of time, nor is it possible for time alone ever to make its appearance, or be taken notice of by the mind" (Hume, *Treatise*, 1.2.3.7/35).

Hume argues that the idea of time derives from the form of perception and more specifically from perception of experience's succession: "[the idea of time is] 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."²⁰⁷ Correlatively, one cannot conceive of a time "when there was no succession or change in any real existence," meaning a transition from perception to perception.²⁰⁸ On this point, Husserl and Whitehead would tentatively agree; both take experience's temporality to be "empirically" primary *vis-à-vis* objective temporality.

Hume's argument relies on there being an essential analogy between the ideas of continuity and discontinuity and the idea of time because he takes conclusions about the former to entail conclusions about the latter. Does the idea of time represent a continuous or discontinuous whole? To discover which, Hume contends that we must determine whether the idea of time is infinitely divisible. If it is, then time and our idea thereof are continuous. If not, then time and our idea thereof are discontinuous.

Hume takes causal and analogical reasoning to discover the truth of the latter. The reason, he argues, is that the capacity of the mind is finite, which entails that it may arrive at an end when dividing its perceptions. The imagination "reaches a *minimum*," in other words, "and may raise up to itself an idea [or impression], of which it cannot conceive any sub-division, and which cannot be diminish'd without a total annihilation."²⁰⁹ Such minimal perceptions (Hume's example is the simple idea of a grain of sand) do not consist of parts that can be distinguished or separated, hence of nothing that is different or separable. Similarly, since perception is nothing more than a succession of individual perceptions, each of which is finitely divisible into perceptual minima, a succession of such perceptions is also divisible into minima—temporal minima. Perception *qua* succession, in other words, is discontinuous and atomistic. If the idea of time derives from the succession of perceptions that *is* the mind, truly conceived, then time and our idea thereof are discontinuous and atomistic.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 1.2.3.6/35.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.2.4.2/40.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 1.2.1.3/27.

The idea of time is a perception copied from a more vivacious perception of the rapid succession of perceptions, meaning a “number” or multiplicity of perceptions. This is why Hume holds that the idea of time arises from the manner in which perception unfolds, meaning the *form* of experience. Succession entails there being a multiplicity of moments, but a multiplicity of moments, like any multiplicity, is asymmetrically grounded by the unities that compose it; in this case, temporal minima.²¹⁰ The notion of so-called objective time, therefore, derives from the true idea of time that represents it as a discontinuous multiplicity composed by atomic minima.

Given Hume’s contention that only unities and not multiplicities have real existence, does this not entail that the mind *qua* succession cannot be a unity or unified, *pace* even the author of the *Enquiry*? Given that the temporal and perceptual minima that allegedly constitute time, the mind, and our ideas thereof are real existences that constitute a multiplicity that is not a real existence, this seems like a damning problem for Hume’s philosophy. Relatedly, Husserl and Whitehead will develop more nuanced and powerful mereologies than Hume’s, as we will see.

Hume goes on to argue that the experience of succession neither requires nor implies regularity.²¹¹ This means that the notion of the steady progression of an analog time-piece or the resonance frequency standard of an atomic clock do not accurately represent time or our idea thereof. On the contrary, Hume takes his reasonings to justify the belief that the irregular, chaotic, and unpredictable rapidity of the discontinuous way in which perceptions succeed each other constitutes the true idea of time. Although we “imagine we can form the idea of a time and duration, without any change or succession,” the fiction of mind-independent time and duration asymmetrically presupposes the immanent succession of “perpetually perishing” perceptions, as Whitehead (following Locke) might put it.²¹²

²¹⁰ Moments of time, for Hume, are radically indivisible and never co-exist. They are, in other words, atomic phenomena that Hume claims can never be perceived *per se*. Like time-points, perceptions may be distinct, separable, and irreducible. Unlike time-points, multiple perceptions can exist simultaneously as constituents of complex perceptions. To each irreducible time-point there corresponds a reducible or irreducible (minimal) perception.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.2.3.7/35.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 1.2.5.29/65.

Perception does not consist of such shorter and longer durations of objective time, but of a *flux*, a notion crucial for both Husserl and Whitehead. The belief that one perception “lasts longer” than another derives from its relative vivacity *vis-à-vis* predecessors and successors. Forming such a belief, moreover, presupposes not only the passage of time, but also an association of ideas—hence an associative connection between *two* perceptions.

Only after having clarified and confirmed the origin of time and our idea thereof does Hume address the *principle of individuation* that would be crucially important for Husserl’s circa-1905 reflections on individuation, continuity, mereology, time, temporal awareness, and constitution. The principle of individuation, by Hume’s lights, “is nothing but the *invariableness* and *uninterruptedness* of any object, thro’ a suppos’d variation of time.”²¹³ This critical assessment is directly relevant to how Hume conceives of time, identity, the mind, and personal identity. The reason is that the same guiding principle of all human action, namely perception of pleasure and pain (especially avoidance of the latter), generates fictional products of the imagination which, despite their falsehood, are often connected with strong beliefs.²¹⁴ The avoidance of pain in particular generates a “great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possess of an invariable and uninterrupted existence thro’ the whole course of our lives.”²¹⁵—a pleasurable belief, perhaps, despite the unreality of what it represents and the suffering entailed by ignorance.²¹⁶ Hume’s analysis of the idea of time parallels his analysis of the idea of personal identity, therefore, in that both arise from the irregular succession of perceptions that *is* the mind, despite our inability to perceive necessary, inseparable connections.

The account of Hume’s Appendix problem that I have defended helps illuminate Hume’s proto-phenomenological report that “I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can

²¹³ Ibid., 1.4.2.30/201.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 1.3.10.2/118. Contradictions produce pain and are unsatisfying (ibid., 1.4.2.37/205-06). Consequently, many of the ideational products of the imagination, foremost among them beliefs, serve to avoid contradictions and maximize pleasure.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 1.4.6.5/253; cf. 1.4.6.16/260.

²¹⁶ Here we are not far from the traditional Buddhist conception of *anattā* or no-self.

observe any thing but the perception.”²¹⁷ There are only rapidly successive perceptions and their connection—or so one, for example Husserl, might think, until he managed to find the pure ego.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 1.4.6.3/252.

II. HUME'S INFLUENCE ON HUSSERL'S THEORY OF TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY

The aftermath of the so-called analytic/continental divide has seen a resurgence of interest in Edmund Husserl's philosophy, especially in metaphysics and philosophy of mind *vis-à-vis* cognitive science.¹ The systematic explorations conducted throughout Husserl's corpus have had wide-ranging and far-reaching implications for issues concerning dependence, grounding, mereology, truth-making, the ("hard") mind-body problem, perception, mental content, internalism/externalism, intentionality, phenomenal character, cognitive phenomenology, neurophenomenology, and empathy.

Relatedly, in speaking of Husserl's *philosophy*, I mean to intimate that his contributions encompass more than just phenomenology and phenomenological methodology. Husserl's phenomenology serves as the cornerstone of a system comprising logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and value theory.² Here I will focus only on those aspects that are germane to my primary thesis; to wit, that the fundamental shift in Husserl's thought regarding time and temporal awareness, which had extensive consequences for his philosophy as a whole, was occasioned principally by Husserl's reengaging with Hume's philosophy between 1905-9. The argument that I will advance not only challenges the *doxa* among Husserl scholars that Brentano served as the predominant catalyst for Husserl's mature theory of time-consciousness, but also helps illuminate Husserl's philosophical motivations for postulating something as seemingly esoteric as "absolute consciousness," a continuous intentional manifold that atemporally constitutes temporality and (scandalously) itself.

¹ For detailed discussion, see D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 395ff. The approach sketched here is strongly inspired by Smith's writings and our illuminating (for me) conversations over the years.

² *Ibid.*, 45.

Hume's "logic" or "science of human nature," as we saw in Chapter One, aims to address and redress perennial philosophical problems and ground all scientific disciplines by examining the nature of the mind. Husserl's ambitions and approach accord with Hume's in this respect. However, Husserl departs from Hume regarding what kind of foundation is required and what the contents of the mind are and make possible.

Husserl discusses Hume extensively in several major works, with bookends at the *Logical Investigations* of 1900-1 and *Crisis of European Sciences* of 1936, Husserl's final major contribution. Against Hume and Humean "psychologism"—a pejorative that Husserl was especially anxious to avoid given Frege's scathing³ and perhaps inaccurate⁴ review of Husserl's first major work—Husserl holds that scientific disciplines can be grounded only by ideal (non-spatiotemporal and multiply-instantiable) objective meanings. Science requires an *a priori* foundation, in other words, though in a different sense of necessity and universality than that envisioned by Kant. Husserl's sense derives from phenomenological analysis of things themselves (*den Sachen selbst*), which he distinguishes from Kantian things-in-themselves (*Dinge an sich selbst*):

Our great task is now to bring the Ideas of logic, the logical concepts and laws, to epistemological clarity and definiteness. Here phenomenological analysis must begin. Logical concepts, as valid thought-unities, must have their origin in intuition: they must arise out of an ideational intuition founded on certain experiences, and must admit of indefinite reconfirmation.... We must go back to the "things themselves."⁵

Husserl takes the propositions that constitute all scientific theories to stand in objective, essential entailment relations regardless of contingent psychological facts about how humans reason about them.⁶

Husserl's first landmark work, the *Logical Investigations*, criticizes Hume for attempting to ground all factual sciences in psychological facts and failing to see the necessity of objective meanings:

³ Frege contends, for example, that Husserl employs magic instead of science, which "is possible only in the psychological wash-tub" (Frege, "Review," 332).

⁴ For a defense of Husserl against Frege, see Willard, "Introduction," xxvff. Cf. Tieszen, *Phenomenology*, 318ff.

⁵ Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*, 168.

⁶ D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 47.

Instead of looking to the semantic character of meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment, [Hume] loses himself in the genetic connections which give names an associative relation to the objects of a class. He quite fails to mention, and does not see with operative lucidity, that [objective] generality evinces itself in our subjective experience.⁷

Husserl counterbalances this criticism with praise, however—a pattern that will recur in Husserl’s future engagements with Hume, as we will see. Unlike Berkeley’s “extreme empiricism,” Hume’s “moderate empiricism” laudably attempts to preserve an *a priori* justification for sciences concerning the other tine of Hume’s fork, namely relations of ideas, including logic and mathematics.⁸ Furthermore, Husserl allows that while Hume’s theory of abstract ideas “was an extreme case of error from the angle of logic and epistemology,” we should

vindicate for it the glory of having shown the way to a psychological theory of abstraction.... Hume’s genetic analyses certainly cannot claim theoretical completeness and finality, since they lack a foundation in an adequate descriptive analysis. This does not, however, mean that they do not contain valuable trains of thought, which could not escape notice and have also had a fruitful effect.⁹

The emergence of Brentano’s and Husserl’s phenomenologies are foremost among these fruitful effects, the latter of which Husserl explicitly opposes to his “Humean,” psychologistic contemporaries.¹⁰

The hallmark of Husserl’s phenomenology is its theory of intentionality. Any experience that is about or directed at something is so directed in virtue of an ideal content (akin to a Fregean eternal thought) which determines the mode of presentation of the act’s object. We can schematize the *Logical Investigations*’ basic theory of intentionality as follows:

act [real] — **content** [ideal] —[intend]→ **object** [real or ideal]

Husserl comes to add significant structure and background to this basic schema, especially following the “transcendental turn” inaugurated around 1907 and codified in *Ideas I, II, and III*. Note that the *Logical Investigation*’s schema makes no mention of a subject. This is not an accident. In the first edition, Husserl follows Hume in holding that “the phenomenologically reduced ego is therefore nothing peculiar, floating

⁷ Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*, 290-1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 292.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 302-03.

above many experiences: it is simply identical with their own interconnected unity.”¹¹ That said, Husserl’s starting point of experiences’ intentionality differs markedly from Hume’s. Husserl follows Brentano in recognizing that experience exhibits more structure and provides access to a greater range of objects than Hume’s atomistic perceptions. As Husserl’s philosophy develops, the basic premise of Husserl’s theory of intentionality remains the same: experiences can be directed at objects, including objects that represent ideal objective meanings, in virtue of *directly experienceable* ideal contents that are “entertained” in real acts of consciousness.¹²

The fact that real acts can intend ideal objects (for instance, the ideal objective meaning \langle not both p and not- p \rangle can be represented by the phrase “the law of non-contradiction”) is crucial for Husserl’s philosophical project. The reason is that the ability to access ideal objective meanings grounds all scientific inquiry, even empirical sciences. Husserl takes scientific method to involve “zigzagging” between “the givenness of something itself,” meaning an object or meaning as given immediately in experience, “but then going back *critically* to the results already obtained” to refine and systematize one’s judgments.¹³ The process of zigzagging in the science of phenomenology carries a special requirement: the phenomenologist must “bracket,” “suspend,” or “phenomenologically reduce” various features of presented objects to attend to one’s *consciousness* of those objects.¹⁴ More specifically, phenomenological *epoché* (the Greek word for “abstain”) involves temporarily suspending presuppositions about the existence and nature of the material world, though phenomenological analysis will ultimately reveal how the presentation of the material world, or the material world *as given*, depends on consciousness’ intentional constitution of its constituents. Note that this is compatible with *realism*, the view that the material world does not depend for its existence on consciousness. Husserl may be a realist about material objects and a “transcendental idealist” (a phrase he eventually regretted and

¹¹ Husserl, *Logical Investigations II*, 86.

¹² D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 419.

¹³ Husserl, *Analyses*, 125.

¹⁴ In *Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl allows for two forms of phenomenological reduction, one that excludes the material-ontological region of culture (*Geist*) to focus on consciousness *per se* and one that includes that region to focus on the constitution of consciousness’ lifeworld.

rejected) about contents; for him, constitution is not creation.¹⁵ Put differently, constitution can serve as experience's "principle of unity" without being "real" in the technical sense of Hume's *Treatise* and Appendix.

Husserl's takes his theory of intentionality to ground *transcendental logic*, which is "transcendental" in that the domain about which it reasons concerns the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience *and* scientific inquiry. The fact that experience immediately presents itself as meaningful entails that transcendental logic involves analysis of not only experience's syntactical and structural features, but also its semantical features; in particular, the ideal objective meanings involved in intentional acts. The term "logical" in Husserl's investigations (*Logical Investigations* and otherwise), therefore, encompasses more than formal logic. Like Hume's logic of human nature and Whitehead's logic of experience (as we will see in Chapter Three), Husserl's takes transcendental logic to ground formal logic. His epistemology is *Humean* in this sense. The upshot is that returning to things themselves, or objects as meaningfully experienced from the first-person perspective, provides precisely what a phenomenologically grounded philosophical system must: the *a priori* grounds of experience and scientific inquiry.

This approach to the grounding of experience would not have been possible without Hume. From the beginning, Hume's philosophy exerted profound influence on Husserl, who confessed:

In the context of my studies, which at the beginning of the 1890's were for some time predominantly epistemological, I intensively studied and thought about Locke, Berkeley, and Hume—Hume before all, and Hume time and time again.¹⁶

Sustained engagement with Hume's philosophy proved to be pivotal at several points during Husserl's development. Edith Stein notes that by Husserl's own estimation, Hume was one of his two greatest influences: "When one day we asked Husserl which philosophers had had the greatest influence on the development of his own thought, he mentioned Descartes and Hume."¹⁷ As Husserl's thought developed

¹⁵ This has come to be known as the "Fregean" or "California" interpretation of analytic phenomenology.

¹⁶ Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, 25; my translation, with advice from Martin Schwab and Sven Bernecker.

¹⁷ Imhof, *Steins Philosophische Entwicklung*, 308n10; my translation, with advice from Martin Schwab and Sven Bernecker.

his philosophy became increasingly indebted to Hume's *Treatise*, which Husserl's final major work takes to "represent... a great historical event."¹⁸ (In the same breath, however, Husserl belittles the *Enquiry* for being "badly watered down" in comparison, despite the more proto-phenomenologically accurate observations regarding the mind's principles of connection that the *Enquiry* allows, as I argued in Chapter One.) In the Epilogue to *Ideas II* (published in 1931), Husserl goes so far as to say that

Hume's *Treatise* contains the first systematic sketch of a pure, though not eidetic, phenomenology, and, in particular, Volume I of it is the first sketch of a comprehensive [albeit "sensualistically perverted"] phenomenology of cognition.¹⁹

Hume's *Treatise* provided the first systematic sketch of Husserl's conception of the ego, which like Hume he thought to be nothing over and above (or below) experiences' "interconnected unity." Yet *pace* the author of the *Treatise* and Appendix, Husserl views these experiences as *self-evidently unified*:

The self-evident fact that the sensory moments, the colour-moment, the shape-moment and other immanent determinations, *really belong to the unity of intuition*, are moments making it up, cannot in any manner be interpreted away.²⁰

Following the revisions that were motivated by Husserl's rereading of Hume, the second edition of the *Investigations* includes a revisionary footnote wherein Husserl declares that where he once could not find the pure ego, he has "since managed to find it."²¹

I will argue that Husserl's initial "schematic model" of time and temporal awareness counts as another Humean draft that Husserl—specifically as a result of reengaging with Hume's philosophy—realized that he had to revise. I will focus on the exceptionally fruitful period of 1905-9, wherein engaging with Hume's analysis of time *vis-à-vis* individuation proved pivotal for a decisive shift in Husserl's thought. Husserl's later engagements with Hume will help corroborate my claims.

The full expression of Husserl's phenomenology, in approximation, is that acts of intentional consciousness involve a subject that harbors a background of individual and collective ideal meanings. In

¹⁸ Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences*, 88.

¹⁹ Husserl, *Ideas II*, 423.

²⁰ Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*, 298.

²¹ Husserl, *Logical Investigations II*, 353n8; cf. Miller, "Husserl on the Ego," 158.

virtue of these, the experience of objects is possible, meaningful, and prescribes a horizon of related meanings that motivate the continuous flow of experience from moment to moment.

(background) **subject** — **act** — **meaning** → **object** (horizon)

Underlying this basic structure of intentionality is a fundamental “level” or dimension of intentionality that makes experience, the experience of temporality, and indeed the temporality of experience possible. Husserl’s mature account of constitution entails that time itself is constituted in the atemporal form of what he calls “absolute consciousness” or “inner time-consciousness,” which as we will see is surprisingly akin to Whitehead’s idiosyncratic conception of ultimate process.

2. THE MOST IMPORTANT YET MOST DIFFICULT PHENOMENOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Husserl took the analysis of time-consciousness to be “perhaps the most important in the whole of phenomenology.” Yet he also took that analysis to be “the most difficult of all phenomenological problems.”²²

Achieving clarity about the most important yet most difficult phenomenological problem has been exacerbated by Stein’s preparation of materials published in 1928 under the title, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (henceforth “*Time*”). Stein not only arranged in chronological disorder texts as old as 1901 and as new as 1917, but also replaced technical terms employed in earlier writings (for example, *primary memory*, *now-perception*, and *primary expectation*) with technical terms employed in later writings (*retention*, *primal impression*, and *protention*). The shift in Husserl’s terminology is not merely terminological: it marks a philosophical advance.

Given the difficulty of the problem *per se* and the difficulties introduced by Stein’s editing (in concert with Husserl’s willingness to publish such a *mélange*), it is no surprise that there have been lively debates about Husserl’s theories of time and temporal awareness. The recent publication in German of the

²² Husserl, *Phenomenology of Consciousness of Internal Time* (hereafter cited as *Time*), 286, 346; cf. Brough, “Most Difficult.”

Bernau Manuscripts and *C-Manuscripts*, written in 1917-8 and 1929-34, respectively, has enlivened and enriched these debates, for Husserl subjects both his initial and subsequent theories to detailed scrutiny.

Despite the resurgence of interest, commentators have overlooked a crucial reason as to why Husserl's theory changed: his reconsideration of Hume. This oversight has generated historical and systematic inaccuracies in interpreting Husserl's theory. Adequately appreciating Hume's influence on Husserl remedies these inaccuracies and clarifies how Husserl's mature theory of time-consciousness, while drawing measured inspiration from Hume, rectifies Humean shortcomings of Husserl's initial "schematic model." Hume prompts Husserl to rethink the constitution of continuity and identity over time in addition to temporality and temporal awareness because Hume's philosophy cannot accommodate continuity or identity over time. My aim in this chapter, accordingly, is to revise our understanding of how and why Husserl's theory changed with special attention to the philosophical implications of Husserl's alterations.

To demonstrate that direct engagement with Hume's philosophy influenced Husserl's mature theory of time-consciousness despite the fact that Husserl rarely mentions Hume in his most cited writings about time, I will first explicate several passages in which Hume's influence is apparent. This will lead me to examine three sets of texts that Husserl wrote between the summer of 1905 and the end of 1911. Unlike the materials published in Part A of *Time*, Stein did not alter the content of these texts. Husserl also later added several revealing annotations to them, including references to Hume. Focusing on these texts will thus enable us to avoid the difficulties introduced by Stein's editing while affording more immediate engagement with the development of Husserl's thought.

The claims (with corollaries) that I will defend are as follows. First, Husserl's rereading of Hume's *Treatise* circa 1905-9 helped him recognize that temporality and temporal awareness are grounded by a (i) continuous, (ii) atemporal, and (iii) apodictically evident (iv) manifold with (v) two nexuses of intentionality. Second, this Hume-inspired recognition played a preeminent role in the development of Husserl's philosophy, especially with respect to time and temporal awareness, but also to Husserl's arguments regarding the primacy of continuity over discontinuity, the nature of constitution and

“passive synthesis” presupposed in any intentional act, and the nature of the self. The interruption that Hume’s philosophy occasioned also contributed to Husserl eventually finding the pure ego that had eluded him. (Sometimes, it seems, “the finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it.”)²³ One benefit of my interpretation is that it explains Husserl’s interest in Hume’s account of the origin of identity specifically as it pertains to Husserl’s mature theory of time-consciousness; for Husserl took the latter to obviate difficulties entailed by the former—and models that the former inspired.

3. THE SCHEMATIC MODEL OF TIME-APPREHENSION

Husserl’s 1904-5 lectures present a relatively straightforward application of the apprehension/apprehension-content schema that Husserl introduced in the *Logical Investigations* to time and temporality. The apprehension/apprehension-content schema is part of the structure of the basic theory of intentionality adumbrated above. The schema hinges on two central theses.²⁴ The first is a *neutrality thesis* according to which experiential contents *per se* do not refer to any specific time, spatial region, or object. The ideal objective contents that can be entertained in real acts of consciousness are referentially neutral, in this respect, which is why one and the same content can present different objects at the same time in different acts, different objects at different times in different acts, the same object at different times in different acts, the same object at the same time in different acts, and so on. “The content is simply the neutral bearer of the intentional ray,” as Brough puts it.²⁵ The second is an *animation thesis* according to which an act’s apprehensions determine the referent of an act’s ideal content. The fact that an act of consciousness is *real*, meaning that it occurs at a specific time and place in relation to a specific object (or set thereof), entails that the act determines the reference of the ideal content that it entertains. An act does so, moreover, in virtue of the “apprehensions” that “animate”—meaning determine the reference of—that experience’s content. In some cases, an act apprehends an ideal object, such as the law

²³ Freud, *Three Essays*, 88.

²⁴ The terminology that I employ derives from Hoerl, “Absolute Consciousness.”

²⁵ Brough, “Introduction,” xliii.

of non-contradiction. In other cases, an act apprehends a real object, such as the rising sun. In all cases, a real act's apprehensions animate an ideal content and thereby determine the act's referent, whether real or ideal.

The temporally neutral content <red> that forms part of the experience of seeing this Red Delicious before me, for example, is presently animated by “time-constituting,” “space-constituting,” and “referent-constituting” act-characters. It is in virtue of these act-characters that one and the same Red Delicious can present itself as thus-and-so at *this* moment in *this* experience and subsequently as thus-and-so at *this* moment in *this* experience. In this way, time and the temporality of experience are possible specifically in virtue of each act's time-constituting apprehensions—apprehensions that are (*nota bene*) immanent to the act itself. Without such time-constituting apprehensions, ideal contents could not be or present themselves as being entertained in real acts. *A fortiori*, acts of consciousness could not immediately preset themselves as being temporal and following after and preceding others because there would be no determination in virtue of which such successive presentations were possible.

We can understand the neutrality and animation theses to entail schematizing acts of consciousness as follows:

apprehensions [animating] — **content** [animated] —[intend]→ **object** (reference)

The *Logical Investigations* do not explain how this schema is supposed to apply to time and temporality; Husserl does not explicate the temporal determinations that an act's animating apprehensions allegedly accomplish. Husserl's explication of consciousness' temporality (and therewith, the necessary preconditions for the possibility of temporal awareness) took shape between 1901 and 1905. This culminated in the *schematic model* of time and temporal awareness, which Husserl presented in “The Lectures on the Consciousness of Internal Time,” lectures that Husserl delivered in Göttingen during the winter semester of 1904-5 as he led a seminar on Hume's *Treatise*. It was within this context that Husserl recognized that he (*à la* Hume) needed to explain both the temporal succession of experience the experience of temporal succession itself.

Here an important qualification is in order. The notion of “temporal succession,” for Husserl, encompasses both *immanent temporality*, meaning the “internal” time or succession of experiences, and *transcendent temporality*, meaning the “external” time of clocks and objects that present themselves as existing independently (“transcendently”) of experience. In addition to explaining the succession of experience and the experience of temporal succession, then, Husserl holds that any theory of temporal awareness must also explain how immanent and transcendent temporality are related or correlated.

The problem with accounting for this is that the apprehension/apprehension-content schema and the schematic model can explain neither our awareness of immanent or transcendent temporality nor their putative correlation. The schematic model conceives of the awareness of succession to involve not one apprehension, but a continuum of apprehensions. Indeed, on the schematic model temporal awareness *just is* a continuum of time-constituting apprehensions that animates a continuum of temporally neutral contents, a “continuum of continua” as Husserl put it in 1905.²⁶ The continuous manifold of time-constituting apprehensions thus includes: (a) apprehensions of moments as immediately and mediately past; (b) the apprehension of the present as present; and (c) apprehensions of moments immediately and mediately to come (what may). Conceiving of temporal awareness in this way requires each experience to involve a plethora of time-constituting apprehensions in addition to other apprehensions that determine an act’s spatial and objectual referents.

The crucial point is that this profusion of apprehensions itself allegedly—and, on the schematic model, must—occur in time. Every present experience thus contains apprehensions that simultaneously animate some content(s) as being experienced in the past, some content(s) as being experienced in the present, and some content(s) as being potentially experienced in the future. But how can a profusion of apprehensions that occurs *now* in the immanent succession of experience animate contents that are presently experienced as being past or future?

²⁶ Husserl, *Time*, 239. Interestingly, Husserl employs the same phrase in 1908-9 to characterize Brentano’s 1906 objection to Bergman (ibid., 340-41, 340n69).

In addition to requiring a profusion of apprehensions, the schematic model suffers from three systemically interrelated but distinguishable problems, each of which Husserl seems to have recognized between 1905-9. I will refer to these severally as the problem of correlation, the problem of neutrality, and most importantly, the problem of origin (or infinite regress).

The *problem of correlation* concerns the schematic model's inability to explain the relationship between immanent and transcendent temporality. Husserl maintains that a phenomenological analysis of time should explain the distinction and relation between immanent and transcendent temporality. Whether immanent and transcendent temporality are disjointed, strictly identical, or parts of a whole, a phenomenological philosophy owes us an account of how and why experience presents objects as belonging to two temporal manifolds: the flow of experience and world-time. Clarifying the nature of the relationship between (or identity of) these manifolds is crucially important for Husserl's philosophy, because virtually every experience immediately presents itself as occurring both in immanent and transcendent time, yet the flow of experience seems to differ from the temporality tracked by clocks and employed in the physical sciences.

Following the lectures of 1905, Husserl recognized that his schematic model did not and could not explain the correlation of immanent and transcendent temporality. When we ask why certain apprehensions determine specific experiential contents as being immanent versus transcendent, as transcendent versus immanent, or as both, the schematic model simply refers us to an assumption: that apprehensions animate contents and intend objects as belonging to immanent and/or transcendent manifolds.²⁷ For that reason, the schematic model's assumption that there is some correlation is merely "a piece of good fortune for which the theory does not account," as Brough aptly notes.²⁸ Time-apprehensions that are immanent to experience—like Humean atomistic association—cannot explain what constitutes temporality.

²⁷ A *manifold*, in Husserl's technical sense, is a structured whole. See Ierna, "Husserl's Notion of Manifold."

²⁸ Brough, "Emergence of Absolute Consciousness," 92.

The brings us to the interrelated *problem of neutrality*, which concerns the schematic model's neutrality thesis. The schematic model entails that an act's determinable contents are animated in time by time-constituting apprehensions that also occur in time. Contents themselves are supposed to be temporally neutral. Like the problem Hume faces in explaining how memory and anticipation are possible, given the atomistic, discontinuous, and discrete nature of individual moments and their constituents. Husserl comes to think that numerically one and the same content, despite being ideal, cannot simultaneously appear as being past and present, past and future, or present and future. Temporal determinations are mutually exclusive; one and the same content entertained in one and the same act cannot be past and present, past and future, present and future, or past, present, and future. When one presently remembers a past experience, the content of that occurrence, as the schematic model explains it, is determined as both present and past.

The schematic model accounts for present remembrances of past events ("recollections") by postulating time-constituting apprehensions that *simultaneously* determine the same content as appearing both present and past in the same moment. But this, it seems, is absurd, especially on phenomenological grounds. If an experiential content is presently determined as appearing in the present, how can the subject of that experience presently experience the content as being past? Husserl's schematic model attempts to account for such recollections by allowing different "time-constituting apprehensions" to simultaneously animate one and the same content. If that were the case, however, the content would seem to be determined by distinct kinds of apprehensions, such that it appears as being both now and past. If that were the case, however, it is unclear how experience itself could be successive, let alone how the subject(s) of those experiences could become aware of temporal passage. On the schematic model, presently occurring apprehensions animate contents as both present and past. But these are mutually exclusive determinations.

In 1909, Husserl recognized that there is an inexorable difficulty in maintaining both that experiential contents are temporally neutral and that time-constituting apprehensions occur in time. Ironically, this is precisely the problem that in 1904-5 Husserl attributed to Meinong and Brentano:

This moment shades off and changes continuously, and according to the degree of change, A is more or less past. Thus the past, insofar as it falls within the sphere of the original intuition of time, must at the same time be present. . . . But how in that case do we know that A existed earlier, that it already existed before the existence of the present A? . . . What, then, are the moments of original association that are now being experienced? Are they perhaps times themselves? In that case, we confront the contradiction: all of these moments are there now, enclosed within the same consciousness of an object; they are therefore simultaneous. And yet the succession of time excludes simultaneity.²⁹

The problem with the schematic model is that Husserl just shifts the difficulty from contents to apprehensions. An act's time-constituting apprehensions are supposed to occur simultaneously with its other determinations, where such determinations are supposed to *presently* determine an experiential content as both past and present. But how can apprehensions that occur simultaneously in one act generate the experience of recollection or (*a fortiori*) continuous passage? The problem of neutrality, therefore, pertains to not only the neutrality thesis, as Hoerl and others have claimed, but also the temporality of the apprehensions that allegedly animate an act's contents. Brough notes this parenthetically,³⁰ but it is of central importance—important enough, indeed, to have motivated Husserl's *atemporal* conception of time-consciousness. As Husserl put it in 1909:

There are objections here to my original view, my theory of representation, which operated with experienced *contents* (e.g. sensuous contents) and regarded them as apprehended in one way or another, depending on the circumstances. Everything is merely a matter of differences in apprehension, which would simply attach itself to the content that is experienced and that exists in consciousness, “animating” it. But such an interpretation might be quite untenable, and it is our particular task to create complete clarity here.³¹

In the sheet that immediately follows, Husserl attempts to “create complete clarity” by discussing difficulties associated with not only the neutrality thesis, but also the alleged temporality of apprehensions:

²⁹ Husserl, *Time*, 18-19.

³⁰ Brough, “Introduction,” xlvii.

³¹ Husserl, *Time*, 331.

Now if these simultaneous contents were at the same time also apprehensible as *successive*, then both intuition of *co-existence* and intuition of *succession* would be possible on the basis of identical contents. And evidently it would also be possible that the same contents that simultaneously coexist there (and they are always supposed to coexist simultaneously in the consciousness of the now) would at the same time be successive as well, and *that is absurd*. This is true not only of the primary contents but also of the *thing-apprehensions*, and consequently of the *appearances taken as a whole*.³²

The schematic model fails not simply because of the implausibility of the neutrality thesis, but because it is absurd to think that apprehensions which occur in immanent time could ground their own temporality via the immanent animation of temporally neutral contents.

This brings us to the *problem of origin*, which is more devastating than the interrelated problems of correlation and neutrality because it entails that the schematic model can account for neither the basis of experience's temporality nor our awareness thereof. Take my awareness₁ of the temporal determination of a transcendent object; for example, the cup of sencha (here, now) before me. My awareness₁ of the cup of sencha immediately presents itself as being in time—both immanently (within my stream of consciousness) and transcendentally (as belonging to world-time). Subsequently, I can become aware₂ of not only the immanent and transcendent temporality of awareness₁, but also the temporal passage or succession from awareness₁ to awareness₂. When I aim to identify the origin of the temporal awareness that issues in awareness₂, however, the schematic model refers me to temporal determinations accomplished by time-constituting apprehensions—apprehensions that occur *now*. In this way, the schematic model attempts to ground temporal awareness in present apprehensions that generate immanent succession and my experience thereof. Each moment of the succession (*qua* continuum of continua), however, includes a continuum of apprehensions that simultaneously determine one and the same content as past, present, and future.

Like Whitehead, Husserl came to recognize that temporal entities, and particularly time-constituting apprehensions that as parts of real acts of consciousness necessarily occur in time, cannot constitute their own basis. The reason, Husserl holds, is that a temporal manifold of a continuum of

³² Ibid., 335-36.

continua must on pain of vicious regress have some *atemporal* foundation in virtue of which the former can present itself to consciousness *as* temporal. Otherwise the alleged “origin” of temporal awareness will have its “origin” in another temporal entity, such as an awareness; and that awareness would have its “origin” in another temporal entity, such as another awareness; and so on *ad infinitum*. The schematic model precludes disclosing the origin of temporal constitution and direct awareness of the flow of experience because it generates an infinite regress, a vicious circle. The regress is *infinite*, in that it prevents consciousness from discovering the origin of temporality and its awareness thereof. The circle is *vicious*, in that such circularity entails a defect of reasoning via a deficiency of theory. The schematic model cannot explain what any theory of temporal awareness must explain: the constitution of time and temporal awareness.

The correlation between immanent and transcendent temporality, Husserl recognizes, is merely presupposed. Similarly, the schematic model presupposes that there is an origin of temporality and temporal awareness, but this is yet another “piece of good fortune” for which the schematic model does not and cannot account. Temporal entities cannot constitute temporality or ground awareness thereof.

4. FROM IMMANENT TIME-APPREHENSION TO INNER TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS

With the problems of correlation, neutrality, and origin looming, 1906-7 finds Husserl introducing the notion of absolute consciousness that he would continue to refine until his final years.

Absolute consciousness, as previewed above, is an intentional *manifold*, in Husserl’s technical sense. This means that it is a structured multiplicity distinct from mere set-theoretical gatherings. More specifically, a manifold is “the form that is abstracted from a domain” or “an *objective structure* defined as the *form* of a *field*”—in this case, the domain or field of temporality.³³ Husserlian manifolds differ from Cantorian sets in that they necessarily involve internal structure. Mereologically speaking, the manifold of time-consciousness is a *precise (prägnant) whole*, in that each part bears an essential relation to every

³³ D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 100-01, 278.

other part, hence depends essentially but not asymmetrically for its existence on every other part.

(Husserl's philosophy is a precise whole, in this sense.)

The manifold of absolute consciousness cannot be a fully-formed object of the kind experienced in perception. It is rather a structured multiplicity or "field of givenness," as Husserl puts it.³⁴ Absolute consciousness is neither a thing nor a process, strictly speaking, hence counts as an "object" only in Husserl's abstract sense of being a subject of possible true predications. Minutia aside, this means that absolute consciousness is neither a fully-formed object nor a multiplicity of contents. If it were a multiplicity of contents, the problem of neutrality would arise; the notion of absolute consciousness would generate the same paradox that Husserl took to undermine Brentano's model of temporal awareness. Concordantly, Husserl conceives of absolute consciousness as being a structured multiplicity of intentionalities of retentions, primal impressions, and protentions, which form a proto-Jamesian specious present.

In addition to being a manifold of intentionalities, absolute consciousness exhibits (at least)³⁵ four structural features that Husserl highlights via four interrelated claims. At the moment, I will merely introduce these claims. After explicating Hume's "mature" analysis of time and temporal awareness, I will argue that each claim plausibly derives from Husserl's reengagement with Hume's philosophy.

The first is Husserl's *continuity claim*: that absolute consciousness is a continuous manifold. In a text written sometime after Husserl's lectures of 1904-5 (the exact date appears to be unknown), Husserl argues that "wherever we speak of change and variation [in experience, a] consciousness of unity must underlie them."³⁶ Husserl reaches this conclusion by analyzing the "evidential consciousness of duration" or temporal awareness via a favorite example: a continuously perceived enduring tone that presents itself as unchanging over an interval of time. Husserl observes:

³⁴ Husserl, *Time*, 379.

³⁵ I have omitted features that Husserl describes in later texts, such as being passively synthetic.

³⁶ Husserl, *Time*, 90.

The temporal positions [of the continuous tone] are not separated from one another by means of self-differentiated acts; the unity of the perception here is an unbroken unity without any internal differences interrupting it. On the other hand, there do exist differences inasmuch as each time-point is individually distinct from every other one—but precisely *distinct* and not *separated* (ibid.).

Husserl holds, *pace* Hume, that experiencing an unchanging tone or the continuity of a tone *as if* unchanging requires a continuous passage of time. We may individuate moments of an interval and refer to them as separate via descriptions such as t_1 , t_2 , and so on. Yet Husserl maintains that the separability, distinctness, and difference of phenomena *in thought or imagination* (via abstraction or “idealization”) does not entail that whatever is psychologically separable, distinct, or different in thought is ontologically separable, distinct, or different. On the contrary, Husserl, here prefiguring Russell, Foster, Dainton, and others, contends that moments of time cannot be ontologically separable and independent. They are *moments* in Husserl’s technical sense, meaning dependent parts, and in this case parts of a precise whole: an intentional, continuous manifold.

Husserl’s observation regarding the psychological distinctness yet ontological inseparability of time-points leads him to conclude that the notion of a discontinuous manifold of temporal atoms is a “fiction” produced via abstraction. (Whitehead, as we will see, refers to such cases as “fallacies of misplaced concreteness,” which we can recast in more familiar terms as reification and hypostatization.) Husserl also contends that the passage of ontologically separable instants cannot generate the unity required for our continuous awareness of enduring objects and unfolding processes. (On this point, I agree with Miller that constituting a manifold continuously, *as* continuous, does not require the parts of that manifold to be individuated; for constitution and individuation are distinct “operations,” the latter of which asymmetrically presupposes the former.³⁷) Details aside, the upshot of this argument for present purposes is that absolute consciousness, the intentional manifold that Husserl takes to constitute temporality and our experience thereof, cannot be discontinuous. The reason is that it must be an

³⁷ Miller, *Husserl’s Theory of Perception*, 138ff., 142.

intentional manifold with interdependent, intersecting, and overlapping parts, such that experiences of continuity *and* discontinuity are possible.

The distinction between psychological and ontological separability that Husserl employs in his discussion of continuity directly contravenes Hume's separability principle, according to which whatever is psychologically separable is *ipso facto* ontologically separable and capable of independent existence. In addition, the aforementioned argument contradicts Hume's claim that the idea of continuity is a fiction generated in discontinuous succession of atomistic perceptions. This is fitting, so I will argue; for the investigations that Husserl conducted in Seefeld during the summer of 1905, following the seminar on Hume's *Treatise* that Husserl led in 1904-5, consistently use Humean ideas and "Humean problems" as a springboard for neo-Humean advances.

Husserl's second claim about the nature of absolute consciousness—a response to the interrelated problems of neutrality and origin—is the *non-temporality* (or *atemporality*) *claim*: that absolute consciousness is atemporal. Unlike temporal objects, the intentional parts of absolute consciousness (retention, primal impression, and protention) do not "occur" in time; nor are they parts of time. Furthermore, neither absolute consciousness nor its parts are processes that unfold over time. The reason is that every process, by Husserl's lights, involves some object that undergoes the process and serves as its subject. (Here many process philosophers will disagree.) No formed objects belong to absolute consciousness. It is "composed" only of distinct intentionalities that are essentially interdependent and constitute the *a priori* form of experience, including temporal awareness.

As an atemporal structure, absolute consciousness provides the necessary form for the constitution of temporal objects, including acts of consciousness that present themselves immanently in the flow of lived experience. Absolute consciousness constitutes what it constitutes atemporally by providing the general form or structure for the temporal presentation of objects, regardless of whether those objects are presented as being real or ideal. Even ideal objective meanings such as the law of non-contradiction can be presented in experience. *Being presented*, however, requires the passage of time and therefore absolute consciousness, since the latter atemporally constitutes the temporal manifold of lived

experience. In addition to remedying the problems of neutrality and origin, then, Husserl's atemporality claim is supposed to remedy the problem of correlation; for as Miller aptly demonstrates (albeit in a different interpretive context), absolute consciousness constitutes both immanent and transcendent temporality while allowing for differences between the two, including evident "lapses" between transcendent time and immanent time, as when time "flies" or "stops."³⁸

Husserl's third claim about time-consciousness, a "shocking" yet apodictically-evident insight that Husserl takes to block the infinite regress described above, is the *self-appearance* (or *self-manifesting*) claim: that absolute consciousness constitutes its own appearance. Husserl's position as to how absolute consciousness manifests itself in inner time-consciousness differs in earlier and later writings. Initially he held that absolute consciousness can manifest itself due to the double-intentionality of retention or "the retention of retention."³⁹ Later Husserl seems to have attributed the self-manifesting nature of time-consciousness' flow to the double-intentionality of both retention and protention.⁴⁰ Despite the evolution, from 1909 onward Husserl consistently maintains that absolute consciousness manifests itself apodictically, such that no "deeper" level of constitution is necessary.

The self-generated appearance of absolute consciousness in (and as) inner time-consciousness blocks the infinite regress generated by the assumption that temporal objects or processes could ground temporality. This claim finds clear expression in the *Cartesian Meditations* (1931):

The correlate of this consciousness [of internal time] is immanent temporality itself, in conformity with which all the life-processes belong to the ego that can ever be found reflectively must present themselves as temporally ordered, temporally beginning and ending, simultaneous or successive, with the constant infinite horizon: immanent time.... As these modes of appearance, which make up the consciousness of internal time, are themselves "intentional components of conscious life [*intentionale Erlebnisse*]" and must in turn be given in reflection as temporalities, we encounter here a paradoxical fundamental property of conscious life, which seems thus to be infected with an infinite regress. The task of clarifying this fact and making it understandable presents extraordinary difficulties.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., 127.

³⁹ Husserl, *Time*, 85ff., 390.

⁴⁰ Cf. Miller, *Husserl's Theory of Perception*, 154ff.; Rodemeyer, *Intersubjective Temporality*, 87ff.

⁴¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 43.

Yet conscious life is not in fact infected with the infinite regress entailed by the schematic model. Hence Husserl continues: “Be that as it may, the fact is evident, even apodictically evident, and indicates one aspect of the ego’s marvelous being-for-himself [*sic*]: here, in the first place, the being of his conscious life in the form of reflexive intentional relatedness to itself” (ibid.). The fact that absolute consciousness constitutes its own appearance and does so *atemporally* transforms a vicious circle into a paradox generated by the expressive limitations of natural language. (Husserl thinks that he has no choice but to employ the words “process,” “flux,” and related terms metaphorically and potentially misleadingly because any process, truly conceived, is essentially temporal and presupposes some object or set thereof that undergoes the process.) Fittingly, the infinite regress entailed by attempting to ground temporality in a temporal manifold is a problem for not only the schematic model, but also the bundle theory that Husserl attributes to Hume.

Husserl fourth claim, a primary motivation of which is to avoid the infinite regress entailed by the schematic model’s problem of origin, is the *two-fold intentionality claim*: that absolute consciousness consists of two interrelated nexuses of intentionalities: “two inseparably united intentionalities, requiring one another like two sides of one and the same thing, are interwoven with each other in the one, unique flow of consciousness.”⁴² Husserl’s self-appearance claim entails that “the constituting and the constituted coincide.”⁴³ His immediate qualification of this statement, “yet naturally they cannot coincide in every respect,” implies that absolute consciousness serves two distinct functions and accomplishes both in virtue of its form or intentional structure.

First, time-consciousness is stream-unifying. This means that absolute consciousness constitutes the unity of the flow of consciousness. Recast in Humean terms, inner time-consciousness constitutes *its*

⁴² Husserl, *Time*, 393. Andersen and Grush note that “Husserl’s first explicit formulation of the double intentionality doctrine is from a note that Bernet dates to around early 1905, where the topic is the double intentionality of recollection (or secondary memory). It is later that Husserl works out a doctrine of the double intentionality of retention” (“Brief History of Time-Consciousness,” 304). I take this to support my interpretation, especially since it intimates that Husserl was aware of the interrelated problems of neutrality and origin—hence his exploration of double intentionality—prior to his introduction of the notion of absolute consciousness with double intentionality.

⁴³ Husserl, *Time*, 83.

own “principle of unity.” Husserl expresses this metaphorically by saying that absolute consciousness unifies itself “horizontally” in the stream of consciousness, with every moment of the flow overlapping its immediately predecessors and successors in a way that constitutes a unified continuum. Husserl refers to the stream-unifying aspect of time-consciousness as its *horizontal intentionality*.

Second, time-consciousness is object-constituting. This means that absolute consciousness constitutes objects as belonging to both the immanent temporality of consciousness and the transcendent temporality of the material world. Crucially (*vis-à-vis* the schematic model), the “objects” constituted in inner time-consciousness include acts of consciousness, which count as temporal objects in Husserl’s technical sense. Absolute consciousness thus constitutes objects and acts in a way that explains their order, temporal extension, and continuous appearance in lived experience. Husserl refers to the object-constituting aspect of time-consciousness as its *transverse intentionality*.

The upshot of these considerations is that the general theory of intentionality adumbrated above presupposes a continuous, atemporal, and apodictically evident intentional manifold with two nexuses of intentionality. We can represent this as follows, with the general form of intentional experience being grounded by the general form of inner time-consciousness:

(background) **subject** — **act** — **meaning** → **object** (horizon)
 <...>_{m-1} — < **retention** — **primal impression** — **protention** >_m — <...>_{m+1}

The task now is to see how this neo-Humean model of time-consciousness was influenced by Hume, despite or rather because of the fact that it diverges from the *Treatise*.

5. EVIDENCE OF HUME’S INFLUENCE

Having adumbrated Husserl’s schematic model and the problems that absolute consciousness is supposed to solve, we can now return to the interpretive question posed above. Why should we think that Hume, whom Husserl rarely mentions in connection with time, played a preeminent role in the transformation of Husserl’s theory?

Brentano is thought to be both the primary inspiration for and, through some uncanny twist of fate, *the principal foil* of the schematic model. As Brough and others rightly claim, the problems that undermine Brentano's model of temporal awareness also undermine Husserl's schematic model. This fact and select passages from Husserl's corpus can make it seem as if recognition of Brentano's failures played the predominant role in influencing Husserl's second theory, which I will refer to as the *flow model*. I wish to dispute this claim, which through repetition and sedimentation has assumed the status of a *doxa* in Husserl scholarship.⁴⁴ Hume has at least as good a claim to that title.

If Brentano were the historical figure who motivated Husserl to recognize insuperable difficulties with the schematic model and develop a flow model founded on absolute consciousness, the trajectory of Husserl's thought would be unusual and uncanny, to put it mildly. On that view, the shortcomings of Brentano's account motivated Husserl to not only develop the schematic model, as it clearly did, but also *abandon* it. Proponents of this view maintain that Husserl abandoned the schematic model because he realized that it fell prey to essentially the same objections that he had previously leveled against Brentano's theory. The first of these objections is that theories which conceive of experiential moments as being "temporally undistributed," such as Hume's and Brentano's, cannot adequately explain awareness of temporal passage, because they are saddled with atomistic time-points that preclude constituting the past or future. The second is that representational theories like Hume's and Brentano's cannot account for the experiential immediacy of temporal awareness.

The psychologistic affinity between Hume's and Brentano's accounts would explain why in the lectures of 1904-5 Husserl felt no need to directly criticize Hume's analysis of the idea of time. Criticizing Brentano enables Husserl to dismantle Hume's psychologistic theory in one fell swoop, with one phenomenological analysis, while publicly distinguishing Husserl from his teacher. That said, returning to Hume's *Treatise* proved to be decisive for the transformation of Husserl's position, especially

⁴⁴ A paucity of commentators has resisted attributing principal importance to Husserl's engagement with Brentano after the lectures of 1904-5. Andersen and Grush, in contrast, claim to have identified an "almost completely unknown" influence: Shadworth Hollway Hodgson (*ibid.*, 299ff.).

with respect to the mereological, phenomenological, and ontological details of temporal awareness and the pre-personal nexus of absolute consciousness that Husserl would introduce.

There are at least five sources of evidence for direct connections between Hume's and Husserl's analyses of time, in addition to corroborating evidence that I will present below.

First, while delivering his lectures during the winter term of 1904-5, Husserl conducted a seminar titled "Reflection[s] in Connection with Hume's *Treatise*." This means that Husserl had the *Treatise* squarely in mind while delivering his lectures on time, despite the fact that the lectures do not explicitly refer to Hume. Furthermore, this entails that Husserl's reflections on Hume's *Treatise* served as a background for the Humean explorations that Husserl conducted in Seefeld during the summer of 1905, which may be the precise date that Hume's investigations concerning time first influenced Husserl's. (I delve into these explorations below.)

Second, in his extensively annotated copy of the *Treatise*—specifically at 1.4.2.25/200ff., where Hume contends that explaining the origin of the principle (or idea) of identity requires the analysis of the idea of time delivered earlier at 1.2ff.—Husserl writes with emphasis, "My lectures and investigations concerning time!"⁴⁵ This annotation indicates that Husserl took interest in Hume's interrelated analyses of identity and time specifically because he took them to be germane to his own investigations concerning time and temporal awareness. More specifically, the annotation suggests that Husserl took interest in Hume's claim that explaining the origin of the belief in diachronic identity requires explaining the origin of temporal awareness—a claim with which Husserl would tentatively agree, with the qualification that Hume and Husserl conceive of mental phenomena in incommensurable ways.

Unfortunately, the exact date of Husserl's annotation appears to be unknown. Thanks to the editorial efforts of Boehm and Brough, we know that Husserl returned to Hume's *Treatise* after delivering his lectures of 1904-5, since the annotation refers at least to them and Husserl did not complete a full draft of the lectures until February 1905. (I write "at least" because between 1905-9 Husserl delivered three

⁴⁵ Husserl, *Time*, 249n6.

other lecture courses that investigate time and temporal awareness, as we will see.) Moreover, in 1909—precisely at the time that Husserl’s theory of temporality was undergoing radical change—Husserl returned to material on time that he had initially written in 1905 to add a marginal reference to Hume’s *Treatise*.⁴⁶ This reevaluation suggests that Husserl returned to the *Treatise* between 1905 and 1909 and appears to have done so on several occasions. If this approximate range is correct, then Husserl’s engagement with Hume’s analysis of time *vis-a-vis* the origin of identity may have played an important role in the transformation of Husserl’s theory. I take the likelihood of this possibility to be strengthened by Husserl’s subsequent references to Hume when discussing temporality and inner time-consciousness.

The *Analyses* (based on lectures presented in the 1920’s) offer a third example of Hume’s relevance. There Husserl contends that Hume commits the same error as Brentano in conceiving of time-consciousness solely in terms of reproductive, secondary memories and representations rather than productive, primary memories and immediate presentations. Given that Husserl returned to Hume’s *Treatise* between 1905 and 1909, it is likely that Husserl’s rereading of Hume resulted not merely in recapitulating conclusions which he had already reached in 1904 via consideration of Meinong and Brentano, but rather enabled Husserl to attain new insights about the nature of temporal awareness *per se*.

As late as the *Crisis of European Sciences* (1936) Husserl employs a technical notion from his mature theory of time-consciousness, “primal *impression*,” to characterize Hume’s proto-phenomenological inquiry into abstract ideas, including the idea of time. As usual, Husserl’s judgments balance criticism and praise. For despite “Hume’s revival and radicalization of the Cartesian fundamental problem, [through which] ‘dogmatic’ objectivism was, from the point of view of our critical presentation, *shaken* to the foundations,” Husserl claims that Hume utterly failed to achieve the “Cartesian radicalism of presuppositionlessness” required for an adequate theorization.⁴⁷ Details aside, some of the presuppositions that short-circuit Hume’s analyses are his “moderate” empiricist epistemology and theory

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 247n1.

⁴⁷ Husserl, *Crisis of European Sciences*, 88-90. For an account of phenomenology’s (*relative*) presuppositionlessness, see D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 73ff., 280ff.

of abstract ideas (criticized in the *Logical Investigations*), sensualism (“the error of reducing... all experiences to mere primary contents”),⁴⁸ the copy principle (that ideas are representational copies of impressions), and the separability principle (that whatever is psychologically separable is *ipso facto* ontologically separable and capable of independent existence).

In addition to addressing Hume’s *Treatise* directly, Hume’s influence is evident in Husserl’s diction, with his writings on time-consciousness uncannily echoing formulations expressed in Hume’s *Treatise* even and especially when they deviate from them. This intimate yet critical affinity is particularly perspicuous when Husserl emphasizes the phenomenological distinctness yet ontological *inseparability* of moments of time—which, in opposition to Hume, Husserl takes to constitute a continuous manifold. In the *Bernau Manuscripts*, for example, Husserl (as De Warren reports) “notes [that] Hume had already emphasized that every ‘impression’ necessarily becomes modified in a retentive manner, that is, that every (simple) impression loses its original force and vivacity in becoming a (simple) idea.”⁴⁹ De Warren is right to infer from this that Hume, by Husserl’s lights, “remained blind to the protentional modification of impressional consciousness and the manner in which retention (speaking here in Husserlian terms) generates a protentional consciousness” (*ibid.*). Yet Hume remains blind to much more than that, from Husserl’s perspective. Hume’s copy, separability, and converse separability principles are precisely the kind of “unclarified and unjustified preconceptions” from which empiricists begin, “in obvious contradiction to their principle of being free from prejudice.”⁵⁰

The copy principle fails (*vis-à-vis* temporal awareness) because the consciousness or presentation of time, as distinct from mere representation of time, involves awareness of moments that are interdependent, continuous, and present themselves as such. Suspending the copy principle and assumption of independent existence reveals that consciousness of the past, present, and future does not involve representational copies that can exist independently, but immediate experience of the inter-

⁴⁸ Husserl, *Time*, 20.

⁴⁹ De Warren, *Husserl and the Promise*, 195.

⁵⁰ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 38.

determined parts of a precise whole. From 1908-9 onward, Husserl maintains that phenomenological analysis reveals the continuity of time apodictically: it is inconceivable that time could be otherwise, *pace* Hume.

The separability principle and its converse fail on similar grounds; the psychological separability of temporal moments does not entail their being ontologically separable. On the contrary, phenomenological analysis apodictically reveals the inextricably interwoven intentionalities immediately constituting the past, present, and future. The question that Husserl takes to be germane to temporal awareness, accordingly, concerns the nature of the flowing or running off presented in it:

The question about the essence of time thus leads back to the question about the “origin” of time. But this question of origin is directed towards the primitive formations of time-consciousness, in which the primitive differences of the temporal become constituted intuitively and properly as the original sources of all the evidences relating to time. This question of origin should not be confused with the question about psychological origin, with the controversial issue that divides empiricism and nativism.⁵¹

Though Husserl does not state it explicitly, the distinction between empiricism and *nativism*, the view that certain aspects of experience are constitutive and thus knowable *a priori* rather than empirically, is meant to emphasize that time-consciousness *is* the flow or running off—the constitutive *a priori form*—of experience. (Philosophers who identified as nativists were reacting specifically to Locke and Hume.)

We have examined how and why Husserl thinks that time-consciousness grounds temporality and temporal awareness. But what constitutes time-consciousness? What does so, moreover, in a way that enables it to become evident to a subject engaged in phenomenological reflection? It is precisely with respect to this question (among others) that returning to Hume’s *Treatise* became so important for Husserl.

Hume’s influence is especially evident when Husserl analyzes individuation over time. Note the similarity between the following formulations. The first occurs in the *Treatise*, which sometime between 1905-9 Husserl annotated with the comment, “My lectures and investigations concerning time!”:

⁵¹ Husserl, *Time*, 9; see 107.

In order to justify this system, there are four things requisite. *First*, to explain the *principium individuationis*, or principle of identity.... One single object conveys the idea of unity, not that of identity. On the other hand, a multiplicity of objects can never convey this idea.... Since then both number and unity are incompatible with the relation of identity, it must lie in something that is neither of them.... To remove this difficulty, let us have recourse to the idea of time or duration.⁵²

The second occurs in *Time*:

How, in the fact of the phenomenon of the constant change of time-consciousness, does the consciousness of objective time and, above all, of identical temporal positions come about? This question is very closely connected with the question about the constitution of the objectivity of individual temporal objects and events: all objectivation is accomplished in time-consciousness; without clarification of the identity of the temporal position, there can be no clarification of the identity of an object in time either.⁵³

The passage from *Time* closely parallels the way in which Hume formulates his interest in the idea of individuation over time, grounded as it is in Hume's analysis of time as the atomistic, discontinuous, and irregular succession of ideas and impressions. This may explain why Husserl chose the phrase "primal impression" to designate the central part of the tripartite intentional structure <retention – primal impression – protention>. Husserl's formulation of the question regarding trans-temporal identity contains a crucial difference, however: it concerns the *consciousness* of time, in Husserl's phenomenological sense, and not the mere idea of time in Hume's psychologistic (albeit proto-phenomenological) sense. Husserl allows that Hume captures something essential: the primordial role of impressions as immediate presentations. But given the copy and separability principles, Hume misconstrues what impressions of time present: the manifold of *intentionalities* evident therein, which presents itself as atemporal and continuous.

In 1923-4 Husserl would contend that

Impression is for Hume the epistemological title for the intuitions qualified for the conscious performance of evidence-verification.... Impression is [however] in truth a title for evidential consciousness in general, or, taken in the widest sense, intuiting something itself, as possible foundation for every sort of evident-making, for every sort of verification.⁵⁴

⁵² Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.2.25/200ff.

⁵³ Husserl, *Time*, 66.

⁵⁴ Husserl, *First Philosophy*; quoted in Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 46-47.

With that claim in mind, we will now examine Husserl's detailed engagement with a nexus of "Humean problems," beginning with investigations conducted shortly after the 1904-5 seminar on Hume and lectures on time.

6. THE SEEFELD MANUSCRIPTS ON INDIVIDUATION (1905)

After delivering the "Lectures on the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time" and leading a seminar on Hume's *Treatise* at Göttingen during the winter term of 1904-5, Husserl traveled to Seefeld to spend his summer vacation researching time, individuation, continuity, and related issues. This included detailed discussions with Johannes Daubert and Alexander Pfänder of the Munich Circle of phenomenology. Husserl's studies culminated in a set of texts titled "Seefeld Manuscripts on Individuation" which Husserl also referred to as the "Pfänder-Daubert perplexities." These exploratory manuscripts are best known for containing Husserl's self-proclaimed first "correct use" of the phenomenological reduction, a notion that Husserl would not introduce publicly until 1907 in lectures now known as "The Idea of Phenomenology." The Seefeld manuscripts contain several other advances, however, including examinations of evidence, abstraction, unity, continuity, extensions of spatial and qualitative continua over time, the identity of objects over time, personal identity, change and alteration, species belonging to time, and that which fills time—among other topics treated in Hume's *Treatise*.

Fittingly for a vacation, the Seefeld manuscripts focus on the experiential content presented in Husserl's perception of a brown beer bottle. The concepts employed in these analyses (intentions, animation, content, determination, fulfillment, and so on) indicate that he is still utilizing the apprehension/apprehension-content schema that he had recently elaborated in the 1904-5 lectures on time. That said, Husserl's investigations reveal a newfound interest in abstraction, a topic treated in the *Logical Investigations* via extended engagement with Hume. Unlike the *Logical Investigations*, which focus on abstraction *vis-a-vis* intentionality and Hume's theory of abstract ideas, Husserl now focuses attention on the role that abstraction plays in individuating moments of time. Here and elsewhere Husserl underscores the fact that when one reflects *without presuppositions*, what immediately presents itself is the unity of a

content (in this case, the brown of a beer bottle) which “fills” a continuous duration of time and does so continuously. In abstraction, Husserl allows that one may “distinguish phases within its duration” and distinguish separate moments of time that the unified content fills. The qualification is that the results of such abstractions, namely points of time or temporal minima, differ from the phenomenon of time itself, and more specifically “the *continuous consciousness of unity*, a consciousness that gives unity: *uninterrupted unity*, identity in the continuity of time, something identical in the continuous flow of time.”⁵⁵ Taking the results of an abstraction to be equivalent to the phenomenon itself (which Whitehead would describe as a “fallacy of misplaced concreteness”) would generate a theory of perception akin to Hume’s: an atomistic, discontinuous “bundle theory” of mere succession. Such a view entails that what presents itself as being continuous, including both the sensory content <brown> and the duration of time that the content fills, in fact are diachronically discrete bundles of discontinuous and ontologically separable minima. Hence “we [would] have a consciousness that is broken up, divided into pieces.... But these are distinct unities that do not join together to make up the unity of a whole” (ibid.). This is precisely the problem that vexed Hume, as we saw in Chapter One.

The problem with bundle theories is that they derive from illegitimate “transcendental presuppositions” about the nature of experience and what presents it therein. Hume’s copy and separability principles are especially suspect in this regard. Phenomenological reduction, the first “correct use” of which Husserl executes in relation to these Humean problems, entails suspending all such suppositions. This enables the phenomenological philosopher to attend to what immediately presents itself in experience, including the structure and mode of presentation itself, so that one can theorize on the basis of that which is immediately and potentially apodictically evident. (This also entails the kind of “zigzagging” characteristic of scientific method, as adumbrated above.) What makes itself immediately and apodictically evident to Husserl is the irreducible continuity of his consciousness of uninterrupted unities, such as the brown of a beer bottle and the beer bottle itself. (Note that the term “uninterrupted” is

⁵⁵ Husserl, *Time*, 248.

the word that Hume employs to criticize the fictions of external objects and simple, identical persons and minds.) This leads Husserl to conclude that the independent and discontinuous unities capable of being generated via abstraction essentially and asymmetrically depend for their existence on interdependent and continuous unities. We have the power to objectify qualitative and temporal extensions, divide them, and distinguish their parts; and for certain purposes (engineering, for example) such operations are appropriate and efficacious. Nonetheless, the possibility of such operations is founded upon the unity and continuity of experience and the qualitative unity and continuity—not separability—of the phenomena given therein and the form in which phenomena are given (in time).

The paucity of historical data regarding Husserl's influences between 1905-9 means that there is no knock-down argument for the claim that one figure played the predominant role in motivating Husserl to first supplement the schematic model with the notion of absolute consciousness and then supplant it for a flow model founded on absolute consciousness and its extensive implications. That said, the philosophical content treated in the Seefeld manuscripts, including especially the relationship between time and the experience of identity, uncannily resembles the content treated in Hume's *Treatise* and the proto-phenomenological methods that Hume employs to clarify and confirm that content. Furthermore, Husserl explicitly connects his analysis of time and trans-temporal identity with the alternative account that Hume delivers in the *Treatise*. Husserl argues that although different qualitative parts of a duration are different, "since they fill one extent of time continuously, there is *one* object that 'endures'; it is one and the same thing that runs throughout this whole extent of time."⁵⁶ Husserl takes this insight to spell disaster for Hume's theories of time and perception; in the margin he refers to *Treatise* 1.4.2.25/200ff. Recall that in Husserl's extensively annotated copy of the *Treatise*, he annotates 1.4.2.25/200ff. with the emphatic comment, "My lectures and investigations concerning time!" Although this annotation is not sufficiently specific to clarify exactly how Husserl responded to the *Treatise*'s treatment of time, it is a smoking gun for Hume's relevance to the development of Husserl's view.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 249.

Did Husserl return to the *Treatise* after his lectures and before the summer of 1905? Were his thoughts during the summer of 1905 directly stimulated by engagement with the *Treatise*? Did Daubert and Pfänder inspire Humean reflections during their weeks of conversation with Husserl?

We do not have definitive answers to these questions. We know, however, that Husserl associated the Seefeld manuscripts with Hume because in reflections on the Seefeld manuscripts Husserl identifies “Humean problems” that arise in connection with his interests in time and individuation:

Now, how does the typical lead us over into the *sphere of ideas*, into the pure limit-concepts of a mathematical sort: the mathematical point, mathematical lengths or straight lines, division *in infinitum*? Humean problems.⁵⁷

There are conflicting accounts as to when Husserl introduced this reflection, with Boehm claiming 1905 and Bernet claiming 1917. What is clear, however, is that Seefeld and Humean problems go hand in hand and thus that in addressing Seefeld problems—problems concerning the constitution of temporality and trans-temporal identity—Humean problems were destined to arise. The lack of certainty about the date of Husserl’s reflection is especially unfortunate because immediately before Husserl’s Humean problems arise, he gestures at what would form the foundation of his mature theory: inner time-consciousness.

While analyzing the concept of divisibility, Husserl observes that although “phenomenological stretches” such as qualitative and temporal extensions are divisible in abstraction, they are not infinitely divisible into *independent* parts (“pieces,” in the technical sense). Abstraction ultimately reaches qualitative and temporal parts that admit of no further division; but in contrast to Hume, such parts present themselves as *moments* in the technical sense: dependent parts. Husserl goes on to consider comparing longer and shorter moments of extension and asks how such comparisons—a mental operations to which Hume devotes considerable attention—are possible. Not surprisingly, Husserl’s answer invokes intentionality. Surprisingly, however, his answer also invokes a *hidden* intentionality. In this way, Husserl seems to gesture at inner time-consciousness for what may be the first time: “Moments are surely classified as ‘short’ here, but we must ask to what extent a hidden intentionality plays a part in

⁵⁷ Ibid., 264.

the comparison” (ibid.). Following this passage, Husserl contends that time-consciousness is veiled, meaning that it *presents itself* as veiled, that “something” hidden is nevertheless accessible via phenomenological reduction, and which phenomenological attention could unveil—an interesting proclamation, given that it replicates, in some ways, Husserl’s relationship with Hume.

In the sentence immediately following Husserl’s reference to a “hidden intentionality,” he refers to Humean problems that arise in connection with it. In the next sheet, moreover, Husserl differentiates his position from that entailed by Hume’s separability principle, emphasizing that every qualitatively and temporally extended moment “is in itself something that persists, but *not something self-sufficient*.”⁵⁸

I conclude that throughout the Seefeld manuscripts, Hume’s analyses of time and individuation, connected as they are to issues concerning continuity, dependence, and constitution, figure significantly into the conceptual background of Husserl’s explorations. Whether or not Hume *foregrounded* Husserl’s explorations regarding a “hidden intentionality” that serves as a necessary condition for the possibility of comparing durations of time, Humean problems are directly relevant—by Husserl’s own lights.

7. MANUSCRIPT OF AN “INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC AND EPISTEMOLOGY” (1906-7)

The second set of texts exhibiting important developments regarding Husserl’s emerging theory time-consciousness consists of Nos. 39-50 of Part B of *Time*, which Brough titles “On the Dissolution of the Schema: Apprehension-Content—Content.” The majority of these sketches, namely Nos. 39-47, present material detailed in a lecture course titled “Introduction to Logic and Epistemology” which Husserl first delivered at Göttingen during the winter term of 1906-7, then again with important alterations in the summer of 1909 under a different title, “Introduction to the Phenomenology of Cognition.” Boehm dates Nos. 48-50 as being written between 1907 and the summer of 1909, whereas Bernet contends that Husserl produced Nos. 48-50 between September 1909 and the end of 1911. Either way, the sketches provide us with important evidence *vis-à-vis* the development of Husserl’s thought, for

⁵⁸ Ibid., 268.

they present Husserl's reflections on and modifications of earlier explorations, including his seminar on Hume's *Treatise*, the lectures of 1904-5, and the Seefeld manuscripts of summer 1905.

Sketch Nos. 39-47 are less exploratory and speculative than the Seefeld manuscripts, in part because Husserl designed them with a specific audience in mind. Nonetheless, I agree with Brough that a decisive shift occurs in these texts, though I disagree that the primary motivation for this shift was Husserl's reconsideration of Brentano.

In light of what I argued above with respect to Hume and the Seefeld manuscripts, it is telling that in 1906-7 Husserl begins to refer to the fundamental unities of experience as "impressions" and subsequent representations (or ideational "copies") of such impressions as "reproductions," "phantasms," and "memories":

If we call this positing-as-this, which occurs in looking at the object, "act," then the appearance itself is not an act. To the unities experienced in consciousness, the intended unities, there belongs the fundamental distinction between those that are original, or impressions, and those that are reproductive (reproductions, phantasms).⁵⁹

Husserl's distinction between primal impressions and reproduction represents a phenomenological reformulation of Hume's proto-phenomenological distinction between primary impressions and ideas. Fittingly, Husserl's elaboration of the aforementioned claim explicitly references Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas, implicitly alludes to the copy principle, and alludes to the argument about the primacy of continuity that Husserl produced in Seefeld: "*The temporal modification and the modification of an impression into an idea are fundamentally different. The latter is discrete; the former is continuous.*"⁶⁰ Husserl implies that although Hume was right to emphasize the *empirical* primacy of impressions and "impressional experiencing," Hume's analyses fail (as Husserl also claims in the Seefeld manuscripts) because they are founded on illegitimate "transcendental presuppositions," principal among them the copy and separability principles. Husserl takes the unities and continuities that become evident via phenomenological *epoché* to refute Hume's conclusion that experiences are nothing more than

⁵⁹ Ibid., 304.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 307.

synchronic and diachronic bundles of independent and discontinuous perceptions. As Husserl puts it, apropos of empiricist accounts of association,

Memory flows continuously, since the life of consciousness flows continuously and does not merely piece itself together link by link into a chain... Thus it is not as if we had a mere chain of “*associated*” intentions, one bringing to mind another, this one recalling the next, and so on (in the flow); rather, we have *one* intention that in itself is an intention aimed at this series of possible fulfillments.⁶¹

The implication here (as elsewhere) is that associative principles on their own are not enough to explain the evident unity and continuity of experience, especially the experience of continuous temporal passage. Association presupposes some *form*, and more specifically a unified, continuous, intentional manifold, in virtue of which association *per se* is possible: inner time-consciousness.⁶²

The diction that Husserl employs in a related argument alludes to several central principles of Hume’s philosophy, including “Hume’s fork” between matters of fact and relations of ideas, the copy principle, the associative principles of the imagination, and the conceivability principle. The infamous “missing shade of blue” described in Hume’s putative counterexample to the copy principle (discussed in Chapter One) is also at play:

The empirical psychologist, who is accustomed to treating everything psychic as a mere matter of fact, will deny [that “primary memory is possible *only* in continuous annexation to a preceding sensation of perception”], of course. He will say: Why should a beginning consciousness that commences with a fresh memory without having been preceded by a perception not be *conceivable*? Perception may in fact be necessary to the production of fresh memory. It may in fact be the case that human consciousness can have memories, even fresh ones, only after it has had perceptions. But the opposite is also conceivable.⁶³

Although Husserl does not specify which (or which kind of) empirical psychologist he has in mind, the target of his criticism resembles Hume more than any other empiricist, especially Brentano. Several considerations justify this inference. First, Brentano’s “descriptive psychology” or “phenomenology” does not rest upon principles of the criticized kind. Indeed, Brentano’s empiricism has significantly less in common with Hume than figures such as Aristotle or Aquinas, as Tassone notes:

⁶¹ Ibid., 315-16.

⁶² See DeRoo, “Revisiting the Debate,” 8.

⁶³ Husserl, *Time*, 325.

Brentano is confident that all knowledge stems from some sensory or immediately given content or source, but this immediately given intuitive foundation will be said to be capable of articulation by apprehension of non-sensory “rational” principles that, in turn, form the foundation and basis for the methods used by the natural or positive sciences.... Unlike Hume...Brentano refuses to reduce the source of all concepts to either psychological impressions or reflection and conjunctions of associations of ideas.... Brentano’s response to Hume is... that cause is not always an empirical antecedent.⁶⁴

Second, the principles that Husserl invokes accurately reconstruct Hume’s idiosyncratic copy and conceivability principles. Third, the alleged conceivability of having a memory (*qua* copied idea) before a perception (*qua* primary impression) is structurally identical to the “missing shade of blue” example discussed in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*. I conclude that the target of Husserl’s criticism and therefore the philosopher that Husserl has most squarely in mind during his explorations in this context is Hume.

Husserl employs the cited passage to criticize the Humean view that each moment of time need not be “impressional” or have an impression that corresponds to it. Hume holds that although the mind as a general rule can have ideas only after the contents of those ideas have been copied from lively impressions, it is conceivable and thus possible that present experience does not involve an impression or “impressional experiencing,” but only a simple idea without any accompanying impression. Hume thinks that this is not only possible, but occurs often, as when the mind (via the imagination) enters into a reverie. In effect, Husserl rejects Hume’s (and not just a Humean) position: “Over against this, we defend the *a priori* necessity that a corresponding perception precedes the fresh memory.”⁶⁵ The problem is that Hume reifies individual perceptions and perception generally by treating impressions and ideas as if they were “things” or static items rather than interdependent moments of a continuous unfolding manifold. As Husserl puts it in the *Logical Investigations*, “Here as elsewhere, Hume left this difference [between the appearance of an object and appearance itself] quite unnoticed; for him appearance and the apparent phenomenon coalesce.”⁶⁶ Husserl takes phenomenological analysis to show that impression is a necessary *form* of experience presupposed by even the least lively experiences. Properly analyzed, therefore, so-

⁶⁴ Tassone, *From Psychology to Phenomenology*, 73.

⁶⁵ Husserl, *Time*, 325.

⁶⁶ Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*, 295.

called impressions and ideas are intentional manifolds that exhibit the same tripartite structure at every moment *qua* (proto-Jamesian) specious present. In abstraction, we can schematize any moment *m* of continuous impression flow $\{\dots, m - 1, m, m + 1, \dots\}$ as follows:

$$\langle \dots \rangle_{m-1} \text{ — } \langle \text{retention — primal impression — protention} \rangle_m \text{ — } \langle \dots \rangle_{m+1}$$

Even so-called ideas necessarily involve the form of “impressional experiencing” represented in this schema, for two reasons. First, every act of consciousness necessarily involves both an ideal objective meaning and a primary impression of the object presented in accordance with that meaning. If there were no primal impression, there would be no intended object, hence no experience. Second, every act of consciousness is a “temporal object,” meaning it is temporal or occurs in time. This means that it is constituted by a continuous manifold, any moment of which (as Husserl will come to claim) exhibits the tripartite structure represented above.

Husserl is not yet ready to assert the atemporality or self-manifesting nature of the hidden manifold emerging in the lectures of 1906-7. Nonetheless, Husserl’s lectures follow the Seefeld manuscripts in developing a flow model of time-consciousness by direct engagement with central principles of Hume’s philosophy.

8. MANUSCRIPT OF AN “INTRODUCTION TO THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF COGNITION” (1909)

During the summer term of 1909, Husserl delivered a lecture course titled “Introduction to the Phenomenology of Cognition.” As with the texts examined in §§6-7, Husserl later returned to the original manuscript (Nos. 51-2) to provide commentary and alterations (Nos. 53-4), in this case, at the end of 1911, when the flow model had supplanted the schematic model.⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, the phenomenological reduction that Husserl officially introduced in 1907 plays a central role in Husserl’s lectures. Husserl’s initial inquiries concern a worry about phenomenological reduction that is directly related to temporal passage and our awareness thereof. Specifically, Husserl

⁶⁷ This is a contentious historical thesis about which there has been much debate. Whether and/or when Husserl supplanted the schematic model does not affect my argument about Hume’s preeminent influence.

worries whether phenomenological reduction entails the exclusion of not only the nature of the material world, but also “*that transcendence that is inherent in memory and retention* [in which case] *at the end we find ourselves in the moment in which we began,*” meaning the now-point and nothing more.⁶⁸ If the phenomenological reduction were to entail excluding retention and protention from consciousness, Husserl’s theory would be undermined by the same difficulty that he (following James) takes to undermine any theory involving temporally unextended moments, including Hume’s. If phenomenological reduction were to restrict attention to a temporally unextended present rather than a “specious present” that includes retention and protention as essential parts, philosophical inquiry would be confined to judgments concerning discontinuous minima that lack “real connections” with immediate predecessors and successors. This would make the experience of succession impossible, which directly contradicts the apodictically evident fact that experience “flows.” In Husserl’s words, “*Phenomenologically, therefore, we would not even have the right to speak of a flow of consciousness, of a running-off of ever new acts.*”⁶⁹ If the reduction excluded retention and protention, in other words, Husserl would have no right to speak of the absolute flow of inner time-consciousness, which at this point had emerged as the cornerstone of his theory of temporality and temporal awareness. Two fundamental features of Husserl’s phenomenology, namely the phenomenological *epoché* and inner time-consciousness, would exclude each other. The results of this exclusion would be devastating. One would have to hold adopt a regularity theory of causation, oppose belief in diachronic objectual identity, and conceive of personal identity as a fiction—Humean problems that entail “*extreme*” or “*absolute skepticism.*” The skepticism entailed would be *absolute*, by Husserl’s lights, in that

*we [could] not even presume to speak of a flow of consciousness, indeed, to speak of anything at all, since the absolute now nowhere seems capable of being apprehended when we attempt, in abstraction, to leave the flow out of consideration or even to question it.*⁷⁰

All Husserl’s hopes would vanish.

⁶⁸ Husserl, *Time*, 253.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 352-53.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 354, 361.

What prevents this disastrous result is the way in which parts of the flow present themselves in phenomenological reduction: not as independent parts, but as dependent parts of a tripartite intentional manifold consisting of retentional, impressional, and protentional moments. What Husserl refers to as the “Cartesian evidence” of a thematizing regard that apprehends that which is given “*in its duration as something given in itself, absolutely*” (*pace* Descartes’ meditator) entails “*that the restriction to the now, which is in continuous flux, would be a fiction.*”⁷¹ The fact that Husserl invokes Hume’s notion of a fiction in this context is telling.

We know with certainty that by the time Husserl introduced the aforementioned problem, appreciated its devastating Humean implications, and formulated a solution, he had not only returned to Hume’s *Treatise* but took the *Treatise* analysis of identity *vis-a-vis* time to be directly relevant to his own lectures and investigations concerning time. Consequently, in referring to the “absolute skepticism” entailed by the “fiction” of conceiving of moments of time as atomistic minima, it seems likely, especially in light of the evidence presented above, that Hume was once again the principal foil that Husserl had in mind. The disastrous philosophical implications of the copy and separability principles make them paradigmatic targets of a claim reiterated throughout texts written after the 1904-5 lectures; namely, “that we may presuppose nothing as given in advance, use nothing as premises, allow no method of investigation that is itself afflicted with the problem.”⁷² When we presuppose nothing in advance, what presents itself as given is that “*all experiences flow away. Consciousness is a perpetual Heraclitean flux.*”⁷³ Presentism (*à la* Augustine) and Humeanism (*à la* Hume), in contrast, entail “absolute,” “extreme,” and “dogmatic skepticism” in contradistinction to the “phenomenological” or “critical” skepticism licensed by phenomenological *epoché*. “Critical,” of course, alludes to Kant’s critical philosophy and expresses Husserl’s “transcendental turn” to an idiosyncratic form transcendental idealism inaugurated around 1907 and codified in *Ideas I, II, and III*. Husserl’s allusion to Kant’s critical

⁷¹ Ibid., 355.

⁷² Ibid., 357.

⁷³ Ibid., 360.

philosophy is compatible with Hume's having been both a foil and inspiration, however. Kant was one of many philosophers whose dogmatic slumbers Hume interrupted.

Husserl's anti-Humean arguments against discontinuity reemerge in texts written in 1911 and directly contravene the primacy of discontinuity asserted in Hume's analysis of time and the separability principle that causes Hume to propound the atomicity of temporal moments:

This continuity [of continuous changes] forms an inseparable unity, indivisible into concrete parts that could exist by themselves and indivisible into phases that could exist by themselves, into points of the continuity. The parts that we single out by abstraction can exist only in the whole running-off, and this is equally true of the phases (the points belonging to the running-off continuity).⁷⁴

Husserl elaborates on his rejection of these Humean principles by first invoking and then taking himself to resolve the problems of neutrality and origin that we adumbrated above *vis-à-vis* the schematic model:

But the question is whether it truly and properly makes sense to say that the constituting appearances belonging to time-consciousness (to the consciousness of internal time) themselves fall into (immanent) time.⁷⁵

Husserl holds that one cannot analyze phases of the flow into further phases *ad infinitum*. This resolves the problem of origin without entailing that there are discontinuous temporal minima. Hume contends that the discontinuous succession of temporal minima transpires more or less "rapidly"—a term that Husserl employs in this context and encloses in scare quotes, perhaps to refer to Hume's claims about the unpredictable rapidity of succession. Against Hume, Husserl contends that the atemporal "flow" of absolute time-consciousness is automatic or (we might say) algorithmic.⁷⁶ This not only contradicts Hume's claim that the succession of distinct perceptions proceeds with greater or lesser speed, but also underscores the kind of continuity that presentation of discontinuity (including Humean rapid succession) presupposes.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 375.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 380.

⁷⁶ D. W. Smith, "Basic Modes," 227, 240.

9. MURPHY'S ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNT AND "RADICAL SUBJECTIVISM"

To my knowledge, Murphy has produced the only manuscript-length study of Hume's influence on Husserl, which to Murphy's credit highlights the importance of Hume's analysis of time *vis-à-vis* the development of Husserl's views. I agree with Murphy that Hume played a preeminent role in influencing Husserl's mature theory of time-consciousness. That said, I believe—and will argue—that Murphy misconstrues both the trajectory of Husserl's development and the character of Husserl's mature theory. Husserl is anything but a "radical subjectivist."

Murphy claims that Hume's principal influence concerns the conception of genetic phenomenology developed in *Analyses* and employed thereafter in *First Philosophy* and *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. We have already seen, however, that Hume's philosophy occasioned a radical shift circa 1905-9. Although Murphy rightly emphasizes the importance that Husserl accorded to Hume's analysis of time *vis-à-vis* individuation,⁷⁷ he fails to recognize how early Husserl appreciated the connection between his and Hume's accounts and how consequential those connections were for Husserl's emerging theory of time-consciousness. Because Murphy overlooks this pivotal period, he dates Hume's influence as occurring during the 1920's.

It may be true that in 1909 Husserl had not yet introduced "genetic phenomenology" by that name. Nonetheless, the analyses that Husserl conducted in the texts considered in §§6-8 are *genetic* in the strict sense, insofar as they aim to clarify the origin of constitution and the objects constituted therein. On this point I agree with Bernet, Kern, and Marbach that prior to Husserl's explicit development of genetic phenomenology from 1917-21 (versus 1920-6, as Murphy claims), Husserl already employed the term "genetic" in a technical sense that immediately connects it with time-consciousness.⁷⁸ I would add that

⁷⁷ Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 105.

⁷⁸ Bernet, Kern, and Marbach, *Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*, 8. Husserl also employs the term "genetic" to refer to the primal constitution of experiential contents and intentional objects: "There must be an original constitution of the object-tone which, as a pre-giving consciousness, is prior; in the most proper sense it is not actually *pre-giving* but is a consciousness which apprehends precisely already in terms of objects. If we leave aside [such] genetic considerations (which for all that do not have to be empirical-psychological), then two phenomenologically possible cases distinguish themselves" (quoted in *ibid.*, 25).

Husserl's conception of time-consciousness also counts as "genetic" in the technical sense of later writings, for the analyses conducted in and after the summer of 1905 explicitly aim to clarify the origin (*qua* "passive synthesis") of temporality and temporal awareness.

My oppositions to Murphy's account extend beyond such historicizing. One point of difference pertains to Murphy's claim that Husserl conceives of time-consciousness as being both *noetic*, meaning that it is part of the real (spatiotemporal) content of acts of consciousness, and *noematic*, meaning that it is part of the ideal (non-spatiotemporal) content of acts of consciousness. This claim disregards the difference between time-consciousness being an atemporal manifold and the unities that are thereby constituted as being temporal, including acts of consciousness *qua* temporal objects. The "noetic" moment of intentional consciousness, as D. W. Smith perspicuously notes, denotes the *sense-giving* part of an act of consciousness that occurs in time, as does the act itself.⁷⁹ Time-consciousness thus cannot be noetic (spatiotemporal), as Murphy claims, because time-consciousness *per se* is not and cannot be temporal. The shortcomings of the schematic model *vis-à-vis* the problems of neutrality and origin helped Husserl realize this fact. Relatedly, *noeses* (as parts of determinate acts of consciousness)⁸⁰ cannot have a "temporal genesis" in time-consciousness, as Murphy claims. The reason is that the intentionalities of time-consciousness that constitute objects and the manifolds in which they appear are not and cannot be temporal. If *noeses* had a *temporal* genesis in time-consciousness, the problem of origin and infinite regress that it entails would ensue. Husserl took the introduction of the atemporal manifold of time-consciousness to obviate these difficulties.

These inconsistencies are not mere minutia, but concern the ethos of Husserl's philosophy as a whole and motivate Murphy's thesis that Hume inspired Husserl to embrace a form of radical subjectivism. Murphy's contention that Husserl's radical subjectivism derives from a "solipsistic point of departure—the pure ego [which is] no less solipsistic than Hume's," fails to appreciate the results of the

⁷⁹ D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 264ff.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 448.

solipsistic thought experiment that Husserl conducted earlier in *Ideas II* (1912).⁸¹ Husserl conducted this thought experiment (as he reveals in 1931) specifically to counter-act the alleged solipsism of *Ideas I*.⁸² The dialectic of the argument begins by assuming the possibility of a solipsistic world, a premise that leads Husserl to spend approximately eighty pages engaging in detailed analysis of seemingly solipsistic phenomena and structures of experience.

Eventually Husserl rejects this solipsistic assumption, despite the fact that “when we carry out an apprehension of a thing we do not, it *seems*, always co-posit a number of fellow men [*sic*] and, specifically, co-posit them as ones who are to be, as it were, invoked.”⁸³ What Husserl’s solipsistic thought experiment shows, by his own lights, is that “strictly speaking, the *solus ipse* is unaware of the *Objective Body* in the full and proper sense... In other words, the *solus ipse* does not truly merit its name.”⁸⁴ The subject of such an extreme thought experiment inevitably recognizes that it is still “a human subject, that is, still an intersubjective object, still apprehending and positing himself [*sic*] as such” (ibid.). *A fortiori*, the phenomenological subject’s experiences of intersubjectively constituted objects present themselves as occurring in “the one *Objective* time” shared by other subjects, in relation to which the pure ego finds itself fundamentally in the relation of empathy.

Husserl’s phenomenological point of departure is anything but solipsistic. Instead “the point of departure is here, too, a transferred co-presence: to the seen Body [of the Other] there belongs a psychic life, just as there does to my Body.”⁸⁵

Murphy’s attribution of solipsism and radical subjectivism to Husserl’s later phenomenology also disregards the intersubjective constitution of objects accomplished via shared ideal meanings, a form of constitution presupposed by any pure ego’s individual noeses (or acts). Husserl defended this position in *Ideas I, II, and III*, which finds even fuller expression in the *Crisis of European Sciences* when Husserl

⁸¹ Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 15.

⁸² See §5 of the Epilogue to *Ideas I, II, and III* included in the English translation of Husserl, *Ideas II*, 417ff.

⁸³ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 174.

explicates the interrelated notions of an “historical *a priori*” and “lifeworld” that constitute the background of *any* act of consciousness, however solipsistic it might seem to be. Bracketing details, the important point is that any seemingly solipsistic experience presupposes an intersubjectively constituted background of available meanings. The ability to experience a mug of sencha *as* a mug of sencha versus green liquid in a container, for example, presupposes the ideal meanings <mug> and <sencha> that are available to many pure egos, even those not yet familiar with them.

The few passages that Murphy cites in support of his attribution of radical subjectivism do not entail what he infers. For example, he cites Husserl’s claim that “anyone who seriously intends to become a philosopher must ‘once in his [*sic*] life’ withdraw into himself and attempt, within himself, to overthrow and build anew all the sciences that, up to then, he has been accepting,” and claims that it exhibits methodological similarities with Descartes and Hume—Husserl’s two principal influences, as noted above.⁸⁶ Yet unlike Descartes’ meditator and (arguably) the inquirer of Hume’s *Treatise*, Husserl’s point of departure is not solipsistic. For Husserl, the “world [that] goes on being for [the pure ego]” after phenomenological reduction is not only the pure ego’s world.⁸⁷ It is rather an intersubjectively constituted life-world in which the pure ego discovers itself as always-already having (had) experiences that are partially determined by intersubjectively constituted and available meanings, meanings which pre-exist the pure ego and some, if not most of which, will survive it. Rojcewicz and Schuwer have noted that when Husserl speaks of the objects (*Objekte*) of intentional acts of consciousness, he means a specific kind of *Gegenstände* (his term for any item whatsoever that can be intended in any way): intersubjectively constituted *Gegenstände*.⁸⁸ This entails that, in principle, whatever can be intended involves intersubjective constitution of some kind, particularly with respect to shareable ideal meanings. Referring to Husserl’s starting point as solipsistic and Husserl’s phenomenology on the whole as radically

⁸⁶ Quoted in Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 12.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 13.

⁸⁸ Rojcewicz and Schuwer, “Introduction,” xv.

subjectivistic, therefore, fundamentally misconstrues the nature and spirit of Husserl's philosophical project.

10. CONCLUSION

The interpretation that I have proffered explains why formulations from throughout Husserl's corpus uncannily echo even as they deviate from Hume's, among them explicit statements about the essential difference between distinctness and separability. In 1929, Husserl emphasizes that:

The temporal positions are not separated from one another by means of self-differentiating acts; the unity of the perception here is an unbroken unity without any internal differences interrupting it. On the other hand, there do exist differences inasmuch as each time-point is individually distinct from every other one—but precisely *distinct* and not *separated*.⁸⁹

Here Husserl's rejection of the separability principles motivates a direct response to Hume's account of time *vis-à-vis* individuation. Having phenomenologically modified Hume's question about the relationship between the ideas of time, identity, and their origin, Husserl answers Hume's question regarding time and individuation—suitably modified—as follows: “This undergoing of continuous retentive modification is the essential part of the constitution of an identical object, one that, in the broadest sense, persists.”⁹⁰ Two years later Husserl reiterates his answer to Hume's modified question: “If we consider the *fundamental form of synthesis*, namely *identification*, we encounter it first of all as an all-ruling, *passively* flowing synthesis, in the form of the *continuous consciousness of internal time*.”⁹¹

Husserl's answer to Hume's modified question finds even fuller expression in *Experience and Judgment*:

Thus, the sensuous data, on which we can always turn our regard as toward the abstract stratum of concrete things, are themselves also already the product of a constitutive synthesis, which, as the lowest level, presupposes the operations of the synthesis in internal time-consciousness. These operations, as belonging to the lowest level, necessarily link all the others. Time-consciousness is the original seat of the constitution of the unity of identity in general.⁹²

⁸⁹ Husserl, *Time*, 90.

⁹⁰ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 319.

⁹¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 41.

⁹² Quoted in Murphy, *Radical Subjectivism*, 99-100.

Holographic writer that he is,⁹³ Husserl effectively if unwittingly exemplifies a claim introduced as early as the *Logical Investigations*: “Hume’s thoughts, suitably modified, provide a basis on which a workable theory may very well be built.”⁹⁴ Hume’s thoughts about time and temporality, suitably modified, provided a basis for the workable theory of time-consciousness that Husserl eventually built.

⁹³ See D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 6-7.

⁹⁴ Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*, 295.

III. WHITEHEAD'S INHERITANCE AND RECEPTACLE THEORIES OF PERSONAL IDENTITY: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO WHITEHEAD'S PHILOSOPHY OF ORGANISM

Alfred North Whitehead is known principally for coauthoring *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell, the *doxa* being that Whitehead focused on providing proofs while Russell generated almost all of the work's philosophical content. The claim most attributed to Whitehead is that philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato; by the letter: "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."¹ Unfortunately, little is widely known about the philosophical content of the system that Whitehead began developing as early as 1920, the *doxa* being that it is a process philosophy which sharply diverges from the *Principia's* logicism and that Whitehead's recondite writing makes it seem impenetrable or dubious—as if over twenty years of output were reducible to the impressionistic, naïve speculations of a mathematician.

Whitehead's philosophy is *speculative*, even by his own lights, but in an idiosyncratic sense that allies him with Hume and Husserl: "The speculative school appeals to direct insight, and endeavours to indicate its meanings by further appeal to situations which promote such specific insights. It then enlarges the dictionary."² Despite eighteen-year-old Hume's resistance to the speculative philosophy of the ancients and moderns, Whitehead's speculative methodology agrees with Hume's in several respects. Like Hume's logic of human nature and Husserl's logic of transcendental phenomenology, Whitehead's logic of experience allegedly grounds all sciences including (so claims the author of *Principia*) deductive

¹ Whitehead, *Process*, 39.

² Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 173. On this point, Whitehead's methodology resonates with classical Buddhism. Perhaps it is not surprising that both emphasize the ultimate primacy of process over substances *qua* seemingly solid "reference points."

logic.³ Furthermore, Whitehead agrees with Hume and Husserl that experience, while fallible, allows for “superior penetration,” “categorical intuition,” or direct insight about the nature of not only experience, but reality as such. He holds that such insights constrain all deductive, inductive, and abductive (hence metaphysical and cosmological) endeavors. Unlike Hume, then, and like Husserl, Whitehead allows for and insists upon more than probable reasoning. He takes direct insight to be *infallible*, no less, yet takes the concepts and symbolism that we typically employ to express such insights to be extremely fallible—hence the predominance of substance ontology.⁴

Whereas Hume holds that most philosophical errors result from the imagination’s fictions, Whitehead holds that they result primarily from *the fallacy of misplaced concreteness*, “the accidental error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete,” which we can recast in more familiar terms as hypostatization or reification.⁵ Noonan has argued that Hume reifies perceptions and relations by conceiving of them as independently existing things, a claim with which Whitehead would tentatively agree.⁶ Hume commits “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” in this respect, because he begins from an inaccurate and inadequate starting point: perceptions *qua* (potentially) independent existences. Philosophy functions as the critic of such fallacious abstractions in scientific disciplines and society more broadly. The philosopher’s role is to recognize instances of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and refocus attention on more concrete starting points, whether that involves more, less, or different structure. This ensures that a system of thought or experience will be more accurate, adequate, and generalizable *vis-à-vis* its respective domain. The philosopher’s explanatory purpose is not merely to identify more concrete starting points, however, but to ensure that a system’s starting point enables it to explain more abstract phenomena to which concrete phenomena give rise. This purpose is especially germane to philosophical inquiry since philosophical systems, by Whitehead’s lights, explain the emergence of relatively abstract

³ “Philosophy is the search for premises. It is not deduction.... We thus dismiss deductive logic as a major instrument in metaphysical discussion. Such discussion is concerned with the eliciting of self-evidence. Apart from such self-evidence, deduction fails. Thus logic presupposes metaphysics” (ibid., 105-07).

⁴ Whitehead, *Symbolism*, 6.

⁵ Whitehead, *Science*, 51.

⁶ Noonan, *Hume on Knowledge*, 57.

entities such as abstract ideas (Hume) or *a priori* forms (Husserl) from relatively concrete entities such as perceptions (Hume) or experiences (Husserl).⁷ Apropos, Whitehead measures the success of a philosophical system “by its comparative avoidance of this fallacy [of misplaced concreteness], when thought is restricted within its categories.”⁸

Whitehead argues that the principal fallacies of the “Western” philosophical tradition are: first, that basic entities—from Aristotelian substances to Humean perceptions—can have independent existence; and second, that substances or things are ontologically primary, hence an appropriate basis for philosophical theorization. When one suspends (“brackets”) these assumptions and consults the nature of immediate experience, two contrary insights present themselves directly, infallibly: everything is dependent; all things flow. (Here we stand in immediate proximity to the Buddhist doctrines of dependent origination and impermanence. This is especially “auspicious” because dependent origination and impermanence are not only mutually dependent, but also presuppose a “background” of indestructible space that strikingly resembles the receptacle postulated in Plato’s *Timaeus*—precisely the notion that Whitehead feels he must invoke, as we shall see, to ameliorate the Humean inadequacy of his initial theory of personal identity.) Whitehead’s starting point, accordingly, is the experience of relative permanence amid inexorable flux:

That “all things flow” is the first vague generalization which the unsystematized, barely analysed, intuition of men has produced.... Without doubt, if we are to go back to that ultimate, integral experience, unwarped by the sophistications of theory, that experience whose elucidation is the final aim of philosophy, the flux of things is one ultimate generalization around which we must weave our philosophical system.⁹

That all entities are mutually dependent and flow is, for Whitehead, not only compatible with relative permanence, but also presupposes it. The reason is that whatever becomes must become somehow, that is, in accordance with some form or pattern. The form of an entity’s becoming is (partially) determined by what Whitehead refers to as “eternal objects,” which effectively function as quasi-Aristotelian immanent

⁷ Whitehead, *Process*, 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 208.

universals.¹⁰ Whitehead's emphasis on the interdependence of flux and permanence remains prominent throughout his corpus and receives special attention in Whitehead's final metaphysical contribution, "Immortality" of 1941. There, Whitehead underscores not only the essential fusion of activity and value, meaning the forms in virtue of which any entity (*qua* activity) has a determinate shape, but also *personal* activities and values.

Here an essential qualification is in order. Strictly speaking, Whitehead is not a dualist, but a monist of (idiosyncratic) sorts.¹¹ How dynamic entities and even temporality itself *come to be* presupposes not only eternal objects (forms) *per se*, but also the fusion and "ingression" of those forms into actual occasions. Like the foundational role played by absolute consciousness in Husserl's phenomenology, Whitehead's "Category of the Ultimate" or ontological becoming is responsible for the atemporal constitution of not only all entities, but also temporality itself. The mind-bending twist is that, unlike Husserl, yet like James, Whitehead holds that continuity becomes but becoming is not continuous:

But if we admit that "something becomes," it is easy, by employing Zeno's method, to prove that there can be no continuity of becoming. There is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming.... In other words, extensiveness becomes, but "becoming" is not itself extensive.¹²

Whitehead's explanation of "Zeno's method" is notoriously opaque. Fortunately, von Wright's elucidation (via Hartshorne's reconstruction) is crystalline:

In sum, apart from logical niceties, the argument is: a thing cannot have contradictory predicates at one and the same time; but, if change is continuous, no time can be found, unless an absolute instant, in which a process is not both *p* and not-*p* for some predicate. And, in an instant, nothing can happen, no change or process can take place.... The illusion is the continuousness of becoming, the reality is the succession of units.¹³

¹⁰ In resisting Whitehead's singular sense of (immanent) "realism" regarding eternal objects, Hartshorne arguably makes Whiteheadian process philosophy all the more Whiteheadian *and* Humean, *pace* Whitehead. See Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis*, 59.

¹¹ Cf. D. W. Smith, "Consciousness and Actuality," 230.

¹² Whitehead, *Process*, 35.

¹³ Hartshorne, "Personal Identity," 209. This elucidation reconstructs only one of Whitehead's proofs.

Although Whitehead rejects Hume's doctrine that time *qua* "mere succession" is discontinuous, he agrees that what grounds experience and makes it possible is discontinuous. Yet we do not experience mere succession, but *forms* of succession.¹⁴

Had Whitehead read Husserl, he would have lauded not only Husserl's methodology, but also the increasing emphasis on flux and process that characterizes his work (which, as argued in Chapter Two, occurs as a direct result of Husserl's sustained engagement with Hume). Fittingly, Whitehead begins "where" and approximately how an empiricist or phenomenologist begins: with that with which one is most intimately and directly acquainted: "oneself," the denotation of which could turn out to be neither one nor a "self," as traditionally conceived. Whitehead's methodology, like Husserl's, is "Humean" in this respect, despite disagreements as to which starting point is most concrete.

These adumbrations allow us to appreciate the problem of personal identity as it arises within Whitehead's system. If becoming is discontinuous, atemporal, and atomistic, what explains the "inescapable fact" of personal identity over time—which for Whitehead, as for Hume and the early Humean Husserl, is tantamount to personal *unity*?

2. WHITEHEAD'S ENGAGEMENT WITH HUME

Surveying Whitehead's engagements with Hume will enable us to appreciate more fully why Whitehead believed (for a time) that his initial model of personal identity was inadequate for precisely the same reason as Hume's: both allegedly "attenuate" human personality into a genetic relation between occasions of experience without explaining their principle of unity.

Whitehead lauds Hume for the potentially revolutionary insights occasioned in his inquiries, such that "we must reverence him as one of the greatest philosophers"; "Hume's *Treatise* will remain as the irrefutable basis for all subsequent philosophical thought."¹⁵ Whitehead also praises Hume for his "clarity of genius [in stating] the fundamental point" that specific body parts, such as the eyes and hands, play an

¹⁴ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, (hereafter cited as *Modes*), 83.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 133; *Symbolism*, 51-52.

essential role in the transmission from less to more intricately structured nexuses of experience.

Whitehead chides “Hume’s followers,” in contrast, for the obscurity of their statements and neglecting the importance of the body: in effect, what Husserl refers to as the *lived body* (*Leib*) versus mere physical body (*Körper*).¹⁶

That said, Whitehead consistently criticizes Hume’s empiricism (more so, indeed, than Husserl) and finds greater inspiration in Locke’s later writings.¹⁷ Whereas Husserl’s estimation of Hume becomes increasingly positive and Husserl’s philosophy becomes increasingly Humean, Whitehead’s relationship to Hume remains predominantly negative. Whitehead takes Hume’s failures to be exceptionally instructive, however; and Whitehead celebrates Hume’s willingness to acknowledge the problems raised by his own philosophy, a virtue which Hume’s followers, by Whitehead’s lights, would do well to embrace.¹⁸

Nature of 1920 never mentions Hume, whereas the 1925 Lowell Lectures comprising *Science* include ample references to Hume and Humeanism. Whitehead’s serious engagement with Hume’s philosophy thus seems to have occurred during 1920-5. We find initial indications of this in *Relativity* of 1922, though there, Whitehead forgoes detailed examination and mostly mentions Hume in passing. From 1925 until “Immortality” of 1941, examination of Hume’s philosophy figures prominently in Whitehead’s writings, particularly in *Symbolism* of 1927 and Whitehead’s magnum opus, *Process* of 1929, just as the fullest expression of Whitehead’s process philosophy was coming into view.

At the beginning of the Lowell Lectures, Whitehead criticizes Humean philosophers of science for denying science’s rationality, a conclusion which Whitehead thinks “lies upon the surface of Hume’s philosophy.”¹⁹ The problem with Hume’s and Humeans’ approach is that they assume that causes disclose no information about their effects; and this, in turn, entails that the emergence of an effect from its cause

¹⁶ Whitehead, *Symbolism*, 51-52.

¹⁷ My intention is to introduce, not evaluate, Whitehead’s criticisms.

¹⁸ Whitehead, *Process* (hereafter cited as *Process*), 131, 136.

¹⁹ Whitehead, *Science*, 4.

“must be *entirely* arbitrary.”²⁰ On this assumption, science is relegated to establish and systematize “*entirely arbitrary* connections which are not warranted by anything intrinsic to the natures either of causes or effects” (ibid.). Humean causation, consequently, reduces science to a “degenerate... medley of ad hoc hypotheses” versus a system of universal laws (ibid.). Whitehead’s criticism of Humean causation and its implications for scientific inquiry, therefore, parallels the criticism of Hume’s “moderate empiricism” that Husserl leveled two decades earlier.²¹

Relatedly, Whitehead argues (as Husserl does in the *Logical Investigations*) against Hume’s copy principle and theory of abstract ideas. Whitehead takes Hume’s concession about the “missing shade of blue” (to wit, that it is conceivable, hence possible, for a simple idea to arise even when its object was not previously sensed) to illustrate the copy principle’s explanatory inadequacy. The problem is not specifically that Hume’s counterexample is an exception to a general rule; for Hume takes the copy principle to be an empirical maxim that holds almost invariably, not an *a priori* law that holds universally and necessarily. The primary problem from Whitehead’s perspective is that Hume’s counterexample demonstrates that the mind employs *another* principle, in accordance with which “conceptual feelings” can give rise to “physical feelings.” Put differently, the counterexample shows that “there is an origination of conceptual feeling, admitting or rejecting whatever is apt for feeling by reason of its germaneness to the basic data.”²² Recast in Humean terminology, this entails that ideas need not and do not even *generally* have their origins in corresponding impressions, and that impressions of sensation can have their origin in ideas, not only the body (especially the brain) or “animal spirits.” Whitehead still allows that an extension of Hume’s copy principle is partially correct because ideas of reflection can and do derive from actual facts.²³ In this (paradigmatic) way, Whitehead takes Hume’s failure to highlight an essential aspect of lived experience, particularly as it pertains to personal identity: the fact that one’s

²⁰ Ibid., 17.

²¹ Husserl, *Logical Investigations I*, 60.

²² Whitehead, *Process*, 87.

²³ Ibid., 40.

values, beliefs, dispositions, intentions, volitions, and thoughts can be *causally efficacious* in enabling that person to introduce novelty into her experience and the universe more broadly.

In addition to refuting Humean causation and the copy principle, Whitehead repudiates Hume's separability principle (that whatever is psychologically separable is *ipso facto* ontologically separable and capable of independent existence) and Hume's attendant claims about the possibility of independent existence. Again, Hume's failure is instructive in that it motivates Whitehead to emphasize a fundamentally opposed principle: the *doctrine of relativity*, according to which all events, while epistemically distinguishable via intellectual abstraction, are ontologically inseparable in the sense of being mutually dependent. In Whitehead's words, "it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming.'"²⁴ (Here we stand in immediate proximity to Buddhism's metaphor of Indra's net.) Hume's separability principle exemplifies the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, in this respect.

Perhaps the most promising yet disappointing dimension of Hume's philosophy, from Whitehead's perspective, is that it recognizes the atomicity of experience and reveals its essential dynamicity without appreciating the latter's revolutionary significance. Despite the fact that Hume never moved away from "the subject-predicate habits of thought" that entrain erroneous beliefs about the primacy of static particulars,²⁵ Whitehead holds that

Hume's train of thought unwittingly emphasizes "process." His very scepticism is nothing but the discovery that there is something in the world which cannot be expressed in analytic propositions.... But, in effect, Hume discovered that an actual entity is at once a process, and is atomic; so that in no senses is it the sum of its parts.²⁶

A fortiori, Whitehead highlights the significance of the fact that Hume's discovery of experience's dynamicity and atomicity occurs specifically when he examines the mind or soul.²⁷ Despite Whitehead's

²⁴ Ibid., 22.

²⁵ Ibid., 51.

²⁶ Ibid., 140.

²⁷ Whitehead interprets Hume's Appendix, as distinct from Hume's *Appendix problem* that we examined in Chapter Two, as follows: "This doctrine of 'force and vivacity' is withdrawn in the last sentence of Hume's Appendix to the *Treatise*. But the argument in the *Treatise* is substantially built upon it. In the light of the retraction the whole 'sensationalist' doctrine requires reconsideration. The withdrawal cannot be treated as a minor adjustment" (ibid., 135n9).

consistent criticism of Hume, he allows that “from the point of view of the philosophy of organism, the credit must be given to Hume that he emphasized the ‘process’ inherent in the fact of being a mind. His analysis of that process is faulty in its details.”²⁸ As both Whitehead and Husserl recognize, Hume’s analyses reveal revolutionary insights: the primacy of becoming in constituting not only experience, but temporality itself.

Hume’s proto-processual theory of the mind’s unity helps Whitehead embrace that which Hume felt he could not: causal nexus beyond mere constant conjunction. In his 1933 *Adventures of Ideas*, Whitehead claims that the “general character of this observed relation [of causation, which Hume presupposes,] explains at once memory and personal identity.”²⁹ In the sentence immediately preceding Whitehead’s introduction of Platonic “receptacles,” which are conceived as structures proposed to situate concrete events, he refers to Hume’s and James’s inadequate accounts of personal unity and takes the same inadequacy to undermine the model of personal identity developed in *Science, Symbolism, and Process*. Thus while Hume and James were right to reject the notion of a self-identical Soul-Substance, “the problem remains for them, *as it does for the philosophy of organism*, to provide an adequate account of this undoubted personal unity, maintaining itself amidst the welter of circumstance.”³⁰

Hume’s philosophy played a critical role in the development of Whitehead’s thought. For some, the term “neo-Humean” might sound too strong, as Whitehead’s philosophy is not Humean in the way that Husserl’s phenomenology comes to be. Yet the philosophy of organism’s indebtedness to Hume, despite his failures and empiricistically unwarranted presuppositions, seems to warrant its being *neo-Humean* (or *post-Humean*, if one prefers).

Hume’s failures and presuppositions are especially germane to Whitehead’s reflections regarding the problem of personal identity. Before we examine Whitehead’s relatively recondite reflections, however, it will be useful to reflect on why personal identity generally presents itself as a *problem*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 151; cf. 210.

²⁹ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (hereafter cited as *Adventures*) 184.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-87 (emphasis mine).

3. THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

Expressed most simply, the challenge regarding personal identity—a perennial philosophical problem—is to explain how persons are both the same yet not the same at different moments. Correlatively, one must explain what *kind of entity* persons are such that so-called “personal identity” (whatever that locution denotes) is possible. How one explains personal identity has considerable implications for one’s broader ontology; for the way in which persons persist is generally thought at least to resemble, if not to exemplify, the way in which persistent objects survive the inexorable flux of time and change.

Given its philosophical and extra-philosophical implications, the problem of personal identity continues to garner interest, especially from metaphysicians concerned with whether persistence amounts to the endurance of three-dimensional particulars or the perdurance of four-dimensional particulars. That said, from a Whiteheadian perspective the majority of metaphysicians share an assumption about the kind of entity that persons are; namely, a particular of some kind, specifically one that either *endures*, meaning persons exist “wholly” whenever they occur, or *perdures*, meaning persons persist in virtue of having not only spatial but also temporal parts that “wholly” exemplify incompatible properties. Treatments that reject this generic assumption have virtually no influence in contemporary debates. Indeed, most are not even recognized as candidate theories because the distinction between endurantism (hence three-dimensionalism) and perdurantism (hence four-dimensionalism) appears to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Several interpreters have sought to remedy this situation.³¹ Even if one rejects (relatively) “revisionary” theories *tout court*, consideration of positions with radically different premises helps highlight assumptions operating in the “presuppositional depth-structure” of contemporary debates, as Seibt has argued.³² Such an approach also can reinforce one’s convictions about her or his preferred

³¹ Siakel, “Dynamic Process of Being,” 6ff., 24-25.

³² Seibt, “Existence in Time,” 164.

premises.³³ The present work aims to occasion such (re)considerations by critically examining Whitehead's theories (and not just theory) of personal identity, which have been almost completely overlooked, despite their putative abductive virtues.

In this vein, the purpose of the present project is twofold: to defend a novel historical thesis about the development of Whitehead's thought and to critically examine Whitehead's contributions. My historical thesis, in brief, is that Whitehead developed two incompatible theories of personal identity. I will refer to these as his *inheritance* and *receptacle* theories or models, respectively. The incompatibility of these models concerns how diachronic unity (and not just diachronic continuity) is possible. Whereas the inheritance model explains diachronic unity via recurring elements in temporally continuous but numerically distinct forms, the receptacle model takes such recurrence to be necessary but not sufficient, since it (like Humean association) appears to “[attenuate] human personality into a genetic relation between occasions of human experience.”³⁴ In attempting to redress this inadequacy, Whitehead's receptacle model posits *formless receptacles*: abstract structures that function as the “metaphysical space” in which and in virtue of which distinct experiences become unified within one life. The receptacle theory's constructive motivations derive from Plato; its critical motivations derive from Hume and James.

More specifically, I will argue that Whitehead developed his inheritance theory from the Lowell Lectures of 1925 (which later in 1925 would become *Science*), through the Barbour-Page lectures of 1927 (which later in 1927 would become *Symbolism*) until the Gifford lectures of 1927-28 (which in 1929 would become *Process*). In his Presidential Address to the 1931 Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association (which in 1933 would become part of *Adventures*), Whitehead abandoned the inheritance theory for the receptacle theory. However, by the time he delivered lectures at Wellesley College during 1937-8 (which in 1938 would become *Modes*), Whitehead jettisoned the receptacle theory and returned to refine his reasonings regarding and expressions of the inheritance theory. He continued to

³³ Here I agree with Mill, *On Liberty*, 34ff.

³⁴ Whitehead, *Adventures*, 186.

refine the inheritance model until his last publicly spoken and written words on the subject: his 1941 Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality titled, appropriately, “Immortality.”

One advantage of interpreting Whitehead in this way is that it explains why he introduced Timaeon receptacles in 1931 yet never clarified how that category was supposed to accord with the categorial scheme presented in *Process*. It seems not to have been recognized that Whitehead’s writings present two incompatible theories. Indeed, most interpreters assume that either one or the other model counts as Whitehead’s, “*the Whiteheadian*,” or even, as Mingarelli maintains, “*the process conception of personal identity*.”³⁵

My systematic claims are as follows. First, Whitehead’s inheritance model accords with the categorial scheme presented in *Process*. As such, it may appeal to those who take personal identity to involve entities that are essentially dynamic, but reject the relevance or existence of *diachronic objectual identity*: the (putative) binary equivalence relation that every entity bears to itself and only itself, even after undergoing intrinsic change.³⁶ Whitehead’s receptacle model, in contrast, inspired as it is by Hume’s inadequacies and Plato’s *Timaeus*, accords with speculations introduced in *Adventures*. Yet this model is not promising even for those who propound process ontology, reject the possibility of diachronic objectual identity, and defend *mereological essentialism*. The latter view holds that wholes have their parts necessarily, such that any change in the parts of whole₁ entails that, if another whole₂ is composed of not all of the parts of whole₁ or all the parts of whole₁ plus additional parts, whole₁ and whole₂ are not identical.

Given his fundamental commitments, Whitehead was right to jettison the receptacle theory and refine the inheritance theory. The reason is that the categorial scheme proffered in *Process* already contains the resources required (by Whitehead’s, though not necessarily this author’s lights) to adequately account for personal identity and our sense thereof. More specifically, the category of the ultimate postulated in *Process*, which also goes by the names of process, becoming, fluency, concrescence, and

³⁵ Mingarelli, “Personal Identity,” 104 (emphasis mine); cf. 106.

³⁶ Here I adapt terminology introduced in Wehmeier, “Without Identity.”

transition, obviates the need for Timaeus receptacles. Explaining why requires a foray into Whitehead's philosophy.

4. SUBSTANTIAL PARTICULARS AND PROCESSES

Whitehead's process approach does not readily cohere with any of the prominent approaches to personal identity. Following Olson and others, we can categorize those approaches into brute-physicalist, psychological-continuity, anti-criterialist, and no-self views.³⁷ (Whitehead's inheritance model shares some affinities with specific psychological-continuity and no-self views, as we will see.) Despite widespread disagreement between proponents of these views, which occurs at both generic and specific levels, the majority of theorists maintain that persons are and persist in virtue of being substantial particulars of some kind.

Take Perry's influential introduction to the issue:

I believe this general framework [of distinguishing between identity and unity relations] should be applied to the concept of a person, and the question of personal identity. This may not be obvious. After all, baseball games are not "things" in the ordinary sense, but "processes." And they break up easily into discrete events, most of which begin with a pitch and end with a noise from the umpire. But persons are not processes, and there is no one natural way to break up a person's life into discrete events. But although a person is not commonly thought of as a process, we can think of his [*sic*] *life* or *personal history* as a process.³⁸

Perry assumes without argument that persons are not processes and intimates that it would be absurd to maintain that persons are processes rather than substantial particulars of some kind. Consequently, when on the next page he describes the problem of personal identity as concerning what "kind of object [it is

³⁷ Olson, "Personal Identity." *Brute-physicalist* views propound the generic position that personal identity consists in some physical, non-psychological relation, such as having the same body or bring the same biological organism. *Psychological-continuity* views defend the generic position that personal identity consists in some psychological non-physical relation such as memory, intentionality, character, the capacity for rational thought, and so on. *Anti-criterialist* views propound the generic position that nothing—no single criterion—provides informative or nontrivial necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity, even if physical and/or psychological continuity provides evidence for personal identity (cf. Merricks, "No Criteria"). *No-self* views deny the existence of persons and personal identity altogether, however real they may seem; for discussion, see P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, 95ff.

³⁸ Perry, "Problem of Personal Identity," 10.

that] persists through time,” what Perry countenances as persistent objects, hence candidate kinds, rules out processes from the outset.³⁹

The generic locution “substantial particular” encompasses not only traditional three-dimensional substances *à la* Aristotle, Descartes, Lowe, et al., but also four-dimensional person-stages and space-time worms *à la* Lewis and Sider. Seibt argues that it also encompasses bundles of perceptions or tropes *à la* Hume, Campbell, and Simons, despite the apparently “revisionary” character of such theories. Each of the aforementioned kinds counts as a *substantial particular*, in that instantiations of each are supposed to be existentially independent and are able to remain essentially (or numerically) the same through accidental (or qualitative) change. Relatedly, substantial particulars are often taken to be the kind of entity that ground true propositions about what persists, where “persists” means either endure or perdure. Correlatively, most philosophers take substantial particulars to be metaphysically primary (“primary in being”) or somehow asymmetrically privileged (“identity independent”), whereas processes are supposed to be derivative, dependent happenings that substantial particulars undergo.⁴⁰ Take Grenon and B. Smith’s paradigmatic formulations, for example:

[Continuant] entities come in several kinds. Examples are: you, the planet Earth, a piece of rock; but also: your suntan, a rabbit-hole, Leeds. All of these entities exist in full in any instant of time at which they exist at all and they preserve their identity over time through a variety of different sorts of changes. You are the same person today as you were yesterday. In addition, however, [our Basic Formal Ontology] endorses a view according to which the world contains *occurents*, more familiarly referred to as processes, events, activities, changes. Occurents include: your smiling, her walking, the landing of an aircraft, the passage of a rainstorm over a forest, the rotting of fallen leaves. These entities are four-dimensional.... Substances [a kind of continuant] do not depend for their continued existence upon other entities.... Processuals are occurents or happenings; they involve participants of a [continuant] kind, and they are dependent on their participants.⁴¹

The authors present these claims as part of a Basic Formal Ontology that purports to remain metaphysically neutral on substantive issues such as the nature of persistence and personal identity. The aforementioned formulations, however, are not metaphysically neutral. They rule out (without argument)

³⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁰ One notable exception is Schaffer, “Monism.”

⁴¹ Grenon and B. Smith, “SNAP and SPAN,” 139-40, 153.

theories according to which processes or occurrents more broadly are asymmetrically fundamental *vis-à-vis* continuants, including continuants that are *prima facie* substantial.

Similarly, P. F. Strawson's well-known meta-linguistic denial of the primacy of processes presupposes the principal point that it purports to prove; namely, that only material things *qua* substantial "basic particulars" can be the proper referents of our claims about persistence, including personal identity.⁴² Strawson holds that the constitution of the referential framework that we employ to distinguish and reidentify concrete entities requires a kind that confers upon that framework the kind's fundamental characteristics. Since spatiotemporal location is essential for our referential needs, whatever kind confers spatiotemporal location upon our referential matrix and does so without necessary reference to any other kind is the best candidate for the status of basic particulars.

Processes, Strawson argues, are inadequate to the task, despite, or rather because of, the fact that certain processes (the paradigm of which Strawson takes to be flashes and bangs) can *in exceptional situations* be distinguished and reidentified without reference to any other kind. The problem is that the type-homogenous framework underlying the distinction and reidentification of such processes has exceedingly limited referential power, by Strawson's lights, power *completely* inadequate to our referential needs. A process-homogeneous framework suffices only when all relevant parties have directly experienced the locatable sequence(s) to which one refers. In other cases, nothing guarantees that the series of events that one employs for identificatory purposes is identical with any similar series that someone else employs for identificatory purposes.⁴³

And the fundamental limitations of states, processes, events and conditions, as independently identifiable particulars, is their failure to supply frameworks of this [type-homogeneous] kind which are at all adequate to our referring needs. Still less can they supply, of themselves, a *single*, comprehensive and continuously usable framework of this kind.⁴⁴

⁴² P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, 46ff. Cf. Rescher, "Revolt against Process" and *Process Metaphysics*, 60-64; Seibt, "Process Philosophy," §2.

⁴³ P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, 49.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

The only kind that can of itself supply such a framework, Strawson alleges, is that of material things. Only material things can confer upon our referential framework the space-time matrix essential to the distinguishability and reidentification of concrete entities—including not only processes, but also the material bodies on which they asymmetrically depend. Only the category of three-dimensional things that endure through time, in other words, “supplies enduring occupiers of space possessing sufficiently stable relations to meet, and hence to create, the needs with which the use of such a [unified spatiotemporal] framework confronts us.”⁴⁵ Material bodies, therefore, are basic, whereas processes are not and cannot be basic.

The problem with this argument, Rescher argues, is that it begs the question. Physical processes exemplify all of the features—spatiotemporal stability and endurance, diversity, richness, interpersonal accountability, and so on—that Strawson’s analysis requires.⁴⁶ Rescher conceives of processes as physically embodied entities that occupy sufficiently definite places and last for sufficiently long times to function as the coordinate markers of our spatiotemporal referential matrix.⁴⁷ The sufficiency of physical processes for referential purposes becomes evident when we consider two facts. First, there is a wide range of “unowned” physical processes, such as cold front movements and lightning flashes, which do not asymmetrically depend for their existence or identity on material bodies. Second, “it is theoretically possible to reconceptualize material bodies as complexes of physical processes, while the reverse—reconceptualization of physical processes as complexes of material objects—is just not on.”⁴⁸ The alleged upshot is that Strawson’s framework, like Perry’s, Grenon and Smith’s, and so many others, assumes the question-begging *process reducibility thesis*: that processes asymmetrically depend for their existence and identity on substantial particulars of some kind.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁶ Rescher, *Process Metaphysics*, 62.

⁴⁷ Rescher’s conception of process differs markedly from Whitehead’s.

⁴⁸ Rescher, *Process Metaphysics*, 62-63.

Process philosophers like Whitehead, Sellars, Rescher, and Seibt, in concert with metaphysicians like Steen,⁴⁹ reject the claim that processes are derivative, asymmetrically dependent happenings. With the proviso that “process philosophy” denotes a wide range of theories for which the notion of process is not univocal, process philosophers defend the strong claim that processes are fundamental; or less strongly, that it is theoretically preferable (say, on abductive grounds) to conceive of processes as being fundamental. On such views, all “things” that appear to remain one and the same over time, especially what *prima facie* might appear to be a substantial particular, are dynamic achievements of relative stability amid the inexorable flux of time and change. Explaining reality in terms of interfering processes, including the phenomenon of personal identity, is thus thought to be more accurate, adequate, parsimonious, and/or elegant.

Whether these claims are legitimate is irrelevant to the purposes of the present study: clarifying the historical development of Whitehead’s thought and critically examining his theories of personal identity, with a final proviso that *contra principia negantem non est disputandum*. My arguments do not depend on whether substantial particulars or processes are fundamental or whether one generic category asymmetrically grounds (all) others.

5. WHITEHEAD’S BASIC CATEGORIES

Whitehead employs the technical terms *actual entity* and *actual occasion* synonymously to refer to the basic existents of temporal reality; that is, *what* becomes.⁵⁰ He employs the technical term *eternal object* to refer to the most basic existents of atemporal reality; that is, forms that partially determine *how* an entity or occasion, which is itself a process, becomes. Reality *per se* consists of syntheses of these two interdependent categories of existence,⁵¹ whereby eternal objects “ingress” into actual occasions

⁴⁹ Steen, “Bare Objects.”

⁵⁰ The phrases do not co-refer, however, given the former’s unique application to God *vis-à-vis* his primordial (versus consequent) nature.

⁵¹ *Process* postulates six other categories of existence, but maintains that “actual entities and eternal objects stand out with a certain extreme finality. The other types of existence have a certain intermediate character” (22).

somewhat like Aristotelian universals are occurrently exemplified in individual substances via their modes.⁵² The forms of some entities, such as non-living occasions, are almost completely determined by the eternal objects pertinent to their becoming. The form of entities with more intricate structure, such as living and especially conscious occasions, is less determined. Certain grades of existence can introduce novelty into how they become.

Crucially, the ingression of eternal objects into actual occasions depends not on another category of existence, but on what Whitehead refers to as the “Category of the Ultimate,” which all categories of existence presuppose. The category of the ultimate involves three interdependent notions whereby many become one: (i) *many*, which represents diversity, difference, and multiplicity; (ii) *one*, which represents uniformity, sameness, and unity; and (iii) *creativity*, also known as the principle of novelty, which represents the dynamic advance from diversity to uniformity, from difference to sameness, from multiplicity to unity—from disjunction to conjunction, in short.

Note that an actual entity does not merely “undergo” the process of creative advance as a substantial particular allegedly undergoes various processes. Every occasion *is* an instance of creative advance from multiplicity to unity.⁵³ Whitehead holds, moreover, that processes are “the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real.”⁵⁴ Consequently, the category of the ultimate is not “more real” than actual occasions. Any token occasion becomes in accordance with the phases of ultimate process that are common to all occasions. Conversely, ultimate process presupposes some specific “initial datum” or material upon which it operates, and an actual occasion provides its own initial datum which “both limits and supplies.”⁵⁵

This seemingly esoteric point invokes one of Whitehead’s fundamental principles: the interdependence of all entities, eternal objects, and ontological becoming. These three categories—two categories of existence and one category of the ultimate—mutually ground all hierarchy in the order of

⁵² Lowe, *Four-Category Ontology*, 22.

⁵³ Cf. Simons, “Whitehead’s *Process*,” 303-04.

⁵⁴ Whitehead, *Process*, 18.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

being.⁵⁶ In that hierarchy, token processes are primary. So-called “substantial particulars,” which Whitehead conceives to be complex syntheses of “data” inherited from previously occurring entities, are derivative.

Whitehead maintains that actual entities often compose more complex units, including *societies*, which are organized complexes of many actual entities. Properly conceived, locutions such as “substance,” “thing,” “object,” “bundle,” “four-dimensional space-time worm,” and so on, denote societies.⁵⁷ Examples of societies include bosons, fermions, atoms, molecules, plants, protozoa, amoeba, non-human animals, groups of non-human animals, human animals, groups of human animals, planets, planetary systems, galaxies, and nebulae. Societies differ from actual occasions in that they are self-sustaining, persist, and have a history. An actual occasion exists at only one moment; they “perpetually perish” (to employ Whitehead’s adaptation of Locke’s locution)⁵⁸ or puff into and immediately out of existence, whereas societies survive the perpetually perishing occasions that constitute them.

Given Whitehead’s general distinction between actual occasions and the societies that they constitute, human living persons or (equivalently) souls count as a specific kind of society. Elsewhere I have argued that human persons, as conceived in accordance with the categorial scheme presented in *Process*, exhibit five features, each of which specifies its predecessor:

- (1) Human persons are *societies*, meaning complexes of actual entities that exhibit more internal structure than set-theoretical gatherings, involve antecedent and subsequent occasions, are self-sustaining, and have a history.⁵⁹
- (2) Human persons exhibit *social order*, meaning every token of the human-person type exemplifies some (though not all) of the defining characteristics inherited from antecedent occasions, and transmits some (though not all) of those characteristics to an immediately subsequent occasion.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ In technical terms, they ground all other categories of existence in addition to Whitehead’s categories of explanation and categorial obligations. See *ibid.*, 20-21; cf. *Science*, 93.

⁵⁷ Whitehead, *Science*, 52ff.

⁵⁸ Whitehead, *Process*, 29.

⁵⁹ Whitehead, *Science*, 104.

⁶⁰ *Modes* will qualify or eliminate these uses of “immediate,” for reasons explained below.

- (3) Human persons exhibit *personal order*, meaning the occasions that constitute the society are serially ordered along one dimension and each member of the series follows immediately from its predecessor.
- (4) Human persons exhibit the relative dominance, central direction, and unified control of a central personality or intelligence that can introduce novelty into its personal series by accepting or rejecting certain values, volitions, intentions, dispositions, and so on.
- (5) Human persons are capable of becoming self-aware that they meet conditions (1) through (5).⁶¹

Given conditions (1) through (5), the problem of personal identity in Whiteheadian terms is to explain how a human-person's experiences can be not only synchronically unified and diachronically continuous, but also diachronically unified. If human persons *are* complexes of absolutely distinct, transient occasions that immediately puff into and out of existence, how can *one and the same* person persist over time? *Prima facie*, that might seem impossible.

6. WHITEHEAD'S SPECULATIVE METHODOLOGY

Whitehead's methodology for interpreting personal identity is *speculative*, in the idiosyncratic, immediately empirical, and proto-phenomenological sense described above. After suspending suppositions as far as possible (Husserl and Whitehead agree that "bracketing" can never suspend *all* suppositions, for experience always-already presupposes some background),⁶² Whitehead takes experience to deliver directly the following infallible insight:

Our experience arises out of the past: it enriches with emotion and purpose its presentation of the contemporary world: and it bequeaths character to the future, in the guise of an effective element forever adding to, or subtracting from, the richness of the world.⁶³

⁶¹ It is not viciously circular to claim that one can become self-aware of oneself as actually or potentially self-aware.

⁶² For discussion, see D. W. Smith, *Husserl*, 73ff.

⁶³ Whitehead, *Symbolism*, 59.

The challenge for Whitehead is to explain how personal identity and our awareness thereof arise out of inheriting the character(s) of past occasions and transmitting character(s) to future occasions.⁶⁴ Do persons inherit and transmit one and the same character? If so, a person's diachronically identical character would seem well-suited to ground the "inescapable fact" of personal identity and one's awareness thereof.

Whitehead's *principle of novelty*, however, which he also takes to be justified by infallible insights, precludes any occasion from inheriting or transmitting one and the same whole character from or to another occasion, even an immediately preceding or succeeding occasion. He is a mereological essentialist in this sense: any change of parts entails the nominal existence and, in diachronic cases, novel emergence of a unique whole. No two occasions can have numerically the same parts or characteristics. The upshot is that assertions about personal identity are not and cannot be grounded by facts regarding numerically one and the same (whole) character. Whitehead takes direct insight about the essential dynamicity of personhood to entail that personal identity has nothing to do with absolute, strict, full, numerical, or objectual diachronic identity, but rather with relative, qualified, partial, qualitative, or genetic diachronic identity. Despite natural language's intimation that persons are substantial particulars which remain one and the same through time and change, direct insight reveals that not only all experiences but even experiencers themselves are dynamic nexuses of relative stability amid inexorable flux.⁶⁵ Strictly speaking, then, past-persons, present-persons, and future-persons are not and cannot be identical entities even if intimately, immediately, and uniquely related. Each occasion is a novel synthesis of occasions and characters that preceded it. Thus "what matters" in so-called cases of personal identity,

⁶⁴ The inheritance model is *ipso facto* a transmission model; "inheritance" and "transmission" emphasize different aspects of the same ultimate process, in Whitehead's idiosyncratic sense. "Inheritance" emphasizes how an entity has become in relation to occasions that are past, relative to its present. "Transmission," in contrast, emphasizes how an entity can contribute parts of itself to future becomings. The inheritance/transmission distinction, therefore, accords with Whitehead's referring to actual entities as "subject-superjects." Any actual entity is both a *subject* of the creativity of the universe that inherits from past occasions and a *superject* of creativity that can transmit parts of itself to future occasions. Cf. Mingarelli, "Personal Identity," 101.

⁶⁵ More specifically, the suggestion derives from what Whitehead refers to as "the subject/predicate form of expression" (*Process*, 13).

to put the point in Parfitian parlance,⁶⁶ is not identity, but relations of continuity and unity *qua* constructive, neutral, and destructive interferences between distinct occasions—a neo-Humean (or post-Humean) proposition.

Whitehead also holds that what person-tokens *are* cannot be adequately explained by conceiving of persons as a kind of substantial particular, meaning an entity that is supposed to be ontologically independent and privileged in the hierarchy of being. Direct insight undermines those widespread suppositions and shows that every experience of “a person’s” life is a dynamic synthesis of previous experiences’ contents and forms. *This* person-token (at t_1) and *this* immediately and intimately related person-token (at t_2) differ even if they are continuous and unified. Two syntheses cannot be one and the same. Consequently, personal identity concerns relations of continuity and unity between distinct occasions and the characters of those occasions.

Here a concern (bracketing others) arises. If one takes the Porphyrian tree of being to be rooted in processes, has one precluded the possibility of explaining personal identity *sensu stricto*, meaning the strict, essential, and/or numerical identity that is supposed to ground and make-true propositions regarding persons’ synchronic unity, diachronic continuity, and diachronic unity? Taking processes to be ontologically primary seems to jettison the supposition on which the entire debate rests: the possibility of remaining one and the same over time.

Whitehead bites the bullet. Personal identity has nothing to do with strict identity, but with continuity and (especially) unity among multiplicity. The ways in which Whitehead elaborates this Humean position brings us to his initial model of personal identity.

7. NOVELTY, SUBJECTIVE FORMS, AND DIACHRONIC UNITY

What makes possible a person’s experiences being synchronically unified, diachronically continuous, and (*nota bene*) diachronically unified, according to the inheritance model developed from

⁶⁶ Cf. Parfit, “Personal Identity What Matters?”

1925 to 1929, are *subjective forms*. The subjective form that provides the pattern for a person-occasion's becoming is determined partially by those objective and (especially) subjective eternal objects that are relevant to the occasion in question, in addition to other determinations that can introduce novelty into how the occasion becomes.⁶⁷ The Law of Excluded Middle *qua* objective eternal object, for example, constrains each actual occasion from exemplifying incompatible properties. The subjective eternal object of gratitude, in contrast, can enable one to attenuate displeasure while completing tedious tasks. Subjective forms are determined by those eternal objects that ingress into actual occasions of human experience and consist of emotions, intentions, volitions, dispositions, tendencies, beliefs, and so on—whatever *shapes* our experiences, including their “affective tone.”⁶⁸

The inheritance model that Whitehead developed until 1929 holds that subjective forms fulfill three generic functions which serve as necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for the possibility of personal identity. In this section, I will explicate two of these before presenting the problem that motivates Whitehead to explain the third in terms of inheritance.

The first function concerns the fact that each experience—your present experience of reading this word, for example—is synchronically unified. The subjective form of your experience provides the shape or “form” for the matter or “content” of your experience. Given that any experience *qua* actual occasion literally is a unique synthesis of data felt in previously occurring occasions (via pertinent eternal objects), that synthesis must take some form, namely the pattern provided by the occasion's subjective form.

The second function is more pertinent to present purposes. Subjective forms establish and maintain the diachronic continuity characteristic of experiences of the human-person type. Establishing and maintaining diachronic continuity is especially important in light of Whitehead's aforementioned

⁶⁷ Whitehead distinguishes between eternal objects of the objective species, such as mathematical platonic forms, and subjective species, meaning “element[s] in the definiteness of the subjective form of a feeling,” such as emotions, intensities, aversions, pleasures, pains, etc. (*Process*, 445-46; cf. Sherburne, “Glossary,” 221-22).

⁶⁸ All actual entities, not just occasions of the human-person type, have subjective forms. The term “subjective,” in Whitehead's technical sense, concerns all actual entities; for every entity (as mentioned above) is a *subject* of the creativity of the universe that inherits aspects from past occasions.

principle of novelty, which entails that no two actual occasions are (as matter of fact) or can be (modally speaking) strictly identical. Even immediately and intimately related occasions of the person-type (the occasion that is “me” at this moment and the occasion that is “me” at this distinct moment, for example) are not identical. How, then, are experiences of diachronic continuity possible? Subjective forms: those dispositions, values, intentions, emotions, etc., that not only occur, but also *recur* at distinct moments. The recurrence of subjective elements belonging to numerically distinct forms ontologically connects successive occasions. Such connections constitute a continuous manifold that satisfies conditions (1) through (5).

Whitehead’s principle of novelty applies to both actual occasions and the subjective forms that shape them. The subjective forms that underlie a person’s life, meaning the patterns of every occasion of her or his life, are numerically distinct.⁶⁹ Despite the strict non-identity of the subjective forms shaping this experience and this distinct experience, however, recurring elements in those forms enable those experiences to “flow” or succeed continuously in time.⁷⁰ Successive subjective forms accomplish this by inheriting and transmitting common characteristics: emotions, dispositions, intentions, values, and so on. Inheritance and transmission count as species of recurrence, in this sense, and form the basis of Whitehead’s inheritance model.

Even if one were to grant that the inheritance model accounts for diachronic continuity, one might doubt whether it adequately explains diachronic unity. (Whitehead himself had this doubt circa 1931, as we will see.) If the form of every becoming differs numerically from all others, including those which are immediately antecedent and subsequent, how can the occasions corresponding to those forms constitute one and the same life? The concern is that, if the underlying form or character of a person’s experiences does not remain identical over time, then “one person’s” unity cannot be explained. Inheritance might explain novelty, flux, synchronic unity, and diachronic continuity, but not diachronic unity. One of the

⁶⁹ Here I agree with Hartshorne, *Whitehead’s Philosophy*, 182.

⁷⁰ As explicated above, temporal becoming is continuous, but ontological becoming, meaning primordial process *qua* category of the ultimate presupposed by temporal becoming, is discontinuous.

three characteristics of the category of the ultimate, namely creativity (meaning the principle of novelty), seems to preclude precisely what Whitehead must explain: identity of character amid inexorable flux.

One way to address this doubt would be to maintain that distinct experiences instantiate *essentially* one and the same set of defining characteristics since this would allow for accidental changes of form that seems to accommodate Whitehead's principle of novelty. But consider how abstract that set would have to be even to explain "normal" cases, on Whitehead's model. Is there one set of defining characteristics that shapes both my present experience and experiences of my early childhood? Imagine radical change. Now we seem perilously close to postulating haecceities that name rather than resolve the issue. If distinct subjective forms are never identical, then it is unclear whether Whitehead can explain the "inescapable fact" of diachronic unity—the unity, and not mere continuity, of experience.

Whitehead (like Hume) cannot avail himself of an essentially identical unifying character. Subjective forms might be necessary for "personal identity" and one's sense thereof, but they seem insufficient because they are not identical over time.

8. THE INHERITANCE MODEL

Until 1931, Whitehead maintains that subjective forms, given the functions that they fulfill *vis-à-vis* actual entities and eternal objects, adequately explain diachronic unity.⁷¹ Precisely how subjective forms explain diachronic unity constitutes his inheritance model and (as we will see) marks the principal point of difference with his receptacle model.

Whitehead claims that occasions of the person-type inherit common patterns or defining characteristics from their immediate successors and transmit parts of those characteristics to immediate successors. Whitehead allows that such defining characteristics can be said *with qualification* to remain the same over time, the reason being that only parts and never wholes can recur. The recurrence of most of a person's characteristics from moment to moment serves to unify distinct occasions within one and the

⁷¹ On this point (but not others), I agree with Bennett, "Whitehead and Personal Identity," 515-16, *pace* Cobb, *Theology*, 35ff. In recent conversation, Cobb expressed dissatisfaction with his initial treatment.

same (whole) life. Consequently, Whitehead's inheritance model entails that the species of identity relevant to personal identity does not concern whole subjective forms or defining characteristics but only their parts. The recurrence of these parts at different moments unifies the occasions that they form within the same manifold—a manifold that remains “the same” nexus of stability not by remaining numerically one, but by dynamically maintaining unity among constructive, neutral, and destructive interference.

Unfortunately, some of Whitehead's formulations obscure this subtle point. In 1925, for example, Whitehead explicates the earliest version of the inheritance theory in terms of an identical pattern:

The only endurances are structures of activity, and the structures are evolved.... Physical endurance is the process of continuously inheriting a certain identity of character transmitted throughout a historical route of events. This character belongs to the whole route, and to every event of the route.... What endures is identity of pattern, self-inherited.⁷²

The problem with this and related passages is that they seem inconsistent with the principle of novelty, meaning the fact that not only every occasion, but also every occasion's subjective form and defining characteristic numerically differs from all others. The cited formulation is misleading, in this respect, because each occasion's defining characteristic is a subset of that occasion's subjective form. More specifically, it is that part of the form most relevant to the occasion in question, hence the term “defining.” Such characteristics can be said with qualification to remain the same over time, but Whitehead's early formulations do not always perspicuously express that fact. In light of the principle of novelty, Whitehead's considered view cannot be that the criterion of personal identity amounts to inheriting numerically the same defining characteristic over time. The defining characteristic most relevant to this person-occasion seems to share no parts with the defining characteristic of an ancestral person-occasion of thirty-three years prior, for example.

By 1927, Whitehead is more careful and often speaks of *partial* identity of forms:

These concrete moments [of a person's experience] are bound together into one society by a partial identity of forms, and by the peculiarly full summation of its predecessors which each moment of the life-history gathers into itself.⁷³

⁷² Whitehead, *Science*, 108, 194.

⁷³ Whitehead, *Symbolism*, 27.

There are still exceptions, however. In connection with this claim about partial identity of form, Whitehead notes that proper names can have three meanings and (*nota bene*) that in posing questions about personal identity, one may choose any one of these meanings, “but when you have made your choice, you must in that context stick to it.”⁷⁴ A proper name’s first and most concrete meaning denotes the person in one occasion of her existence. The second meaning denotes the historic route of that person’s life from birth to death. The third meaning, in contrast, denotes “the common form, or pattern, repeated in each occasion of [the person’s] life” (ibid.). Again Whitehead speaks of *one* common form or pattern, but this contradicts the doctrine of novelty.

By 1929, Whitehead consistently qualifies claims regarding sameness of forms and expressly states that the principle of novelty applies to subjective forms. Furthermore, he consistently emphasizes that only parts of the pattern underlying an occasion can recur in different occasions. Precisely expressed, then, Whitehead’s inheritance model amounts to holding that specific characteristics can and do recur in distinct occasions and that this recurrence—*qua* subjective, unique principle of connection—unifies appropriately-connected occasions within the same temporally continuous manifold. Rather than one pattern having to underlie all occasions of a person-society’s existence, what matters is the recurrence of relevant parts.⁷⁵ Both forms of recurrence, inheritance and transmission, are sufficient principles of unification.

In accordance with the first meaning of proper names, the character and defining characteristic of an old-man occasion can differ radically from those of his early-life occasions. In accordance with the second meaning of proper names, what unifies occasions within the same manifold are unique, subjective characteristics that serve as principles of connection. In accordance with the third meaning of proper names, the inheritance model enables us to identify which characteristics recurred most often or most strongly throughout a whole life or subset thereof, even as those characteristics change. What matters are continuity, connectedness, and unity via recurrence, which allow for development (perhaps even radical

⁷⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁵ Cf. Whitehead, *Science*, 125, 152.

development) over time. “The boy was timid and taciturn; the young man was overconfident and garrulous; the old man became measured and gregarious.” No parts of a boy’s subjective characteristics must recur in an old-man in order for those entities (*qua* parts of the same person-society) to be diachronically unified.

Whitehead’s inheritance model allows that there may be common elements in the subjective forms that shape present experience and the set of experiences to which “one’s childhood” refers. The recurrence of such elements *qua* parts in non-identical forms *just is* “personal identity.” The occurrence and recurrence of parts of subjective forms yields synchronic unity, diachronic continuity, and diachronic unity, hence the genetic identity of the person-society in question, secured as it is by subjective connections among a unique series of occasions.

Despite the difference in starting point, Whitehead’s inheritance model resembles Hume’s “true idea” of the human mind in one crucial respect: it explains personal identity in terms of “principles of connection” that unify ontologically discontinuous atoms.

9. THE RECEPTACLE MODEL

Here a potentially devastating problem arises. Does the inheritance theory adequately explain why occasions with distinct subjective forms are genuinely *unified* and not merely genetically related? Unity relations and genetic relations are distinct; it seems possible for a continuous series of personally-ordered occasions to be genetically related without also being unified. As with Hume, the concern is what makes occasions formed by recurring elements parts of one and the same (whole) life rather than instances of mere succession. Even if recurrence were necessary for the synchronic unity and diachronic continuity of personhood, hence the genetic relations that obtain between distinct person-occasions, why should we believe that recurrence yields diachronic unity versus mere genetic inheritance and transmission? To achieve *real* unity, something else seems necessary—or so one, including Whitehead (for a time), might think.

In 1931, Whitehead felt the force of this objection:

In our account of human experience we have attenuated human personality into a genetic relation between occasions of human experience. Yet personal unity is an inescapable fact.... Evidently there is a fact to be accounted for. Any philosophy must provide some doctrine of personal identity. In some sense there is a unity in the life of each man [*sic*], from birth to death.... But the problem remains for [Hume and James], as it does for the philosophy of organism, to provide an adequate account of this undoubted personal unity, maintaining itself amidst the welter of circumstance.⁷⁶

The key claim concerns “attenuation,” which indicates that Whitehead takes himself to have committed the fallacy of misplaced concreteness: he takes the inheritance model to have reduced the inescapable fact of personal unity to mere genetic relations between distinct individuals. Whitehead responded to this apparent inadequacy (in his technical sense)⁷⁷ of the inheritance model by introducing an abstract structure inspired by Plato’s *Timaeus*: formless receptacles.⁷⁸ This effectively forces him to shelve the inheritance theory and adopt an incompatible model, as we will see. The receptacle model is incompatible with not only Whitehead’s inheritance model of personal identity, but also the categorial scheme proffered in *Process*. The reason is that the receptacle model postulates an additional category of existence, *receptacles*, which the categorial scheme of *Process* does not, cannot, and ought not countenance.

Whitehead introduces the receptacle theory by adapting a passage from Plato’s *Timaeus*, which provides a general description of personal unity that Whitehead takes to be “impossible to improve upon”:

In addition to the notions of the welter of events and of the forms which they illustrate, we require a third term, personal unity. It is a perplexed and obscure concept. We must conceive it [as] the receptacle, the foster-mother as I might say, of the becomings of our occasions of experience. This personal identity is the thing which receives all occasions of the man’s [*sic*] existence.⁷⁹

That said, Whitehead took the force of the problem of attenuating human personality to extend well beyond the sphere of personal identity. The challenge of explaining personal unity caused Whitehead to

⁷⁶ Whitehead, *Adventures*, 186-87.

⁷⁷ A categorial scheme is adequate *vis-à-vis* some item—in this case, the inescapable fact of personal unity that maintains itself amidst the welter of circumstance—just in case it is necessary and universal, meaning that “the texture of observed experience, as illustrating the philosophic scheme, is such that all related experience must exhibit the same texture” (Whitehead, *Process*, 3-4).

⁷⁸ Whitehead mentions receptacles twice in *Process* (70, 81), but exclusively with critical reference to Newton’s conception of absolute space-time, not in the revised sense introduced in *Adventures*.

⁷⁹ Whitehead, *Adventures*, 187.

doubt whether the categorial scheme of *Process* adequately explains how all entities belong to the same universe. Thus *Adventures* finds Whitehead postulating a Receptacle in addition to receptacles, the sole function of which is to unify all actual entities within the same universe, unity that *Process* explained via the consequent nature of God.⁸⁰

In what follows, I will focus on the function of receptacles *vis-à-vis* personal identity. Once I criticize the notion of receptacles, I will suggest that essentially the same criticisms undermine the notion of the Receptacle. In both cases (for Whiteheadians) the category of the ultimate explicated in *Process* is enough to secure personal and universal unity among multiplicity.

Considering Timaeus's motivations for introducing receptacles will help us understand Whitehead's motivations. Timaeus begins Plato's dialogue by developing a cosmology with two fundamental categories: being ("that which always is and has no becoming") and becoming ("that which always becomes but never is").⁸¹ After delivering a breathtaking series of descriptions that explicate phenomena solely in terms of these two categories, Timaeus surprisingly stops short and claims that he must introduce a less parsimonious, but "more likely" cosmology with three fundamental categories: being, becoming, and "a *receptacle* of all becoming—its wetnurse, as it were."⁸² The reason that Timaeus postulates the additional category and finds the resulting scheme to be more promising is that his bipartite cosmology cannot explain how *the same thing* can be said to be water; then, upon condensing, earth; then, upon dissolving, air; then, upon being ignited, fire; then, upon being extinguished, air; then, upon coalescing, mist; then, upon compression, water, which eventually turns to earth again. As Timaeus puts it: "Now, then, since none of these appears ever to remain the same, which one of them can one categorically assert, without embarrassment, to be some particular thing, *this* one, and not something else? One can't."⁸³

⁸⁰ "According to the ontological principle, the impartial nexus is an objective datum in the consequent nature of God; since it is *somewhere* and yet not by any necessity of its own nature implicated in the feelings of any determined actual entity of the actual world. The nexus involves realization somewhere" (Whitehead, *Process*, 231).

⁸¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 27d-28a.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 49a.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 49d.

Timaeus concludes that one should avoid characterizing that which becomes different at different times as “this” or “that” because indexical references make it seem as if there is some *thing* that has stability and remains one and the same through time and change, whereas strictly speaking this is not the case. (Here Whitehead agrees, and takes mistakes entrained by indexicals and “the subject/predicate form of expression,” including those he attributes to Hume, to be fallacies of misplaced concreteness.) Rather than “this” or “that,” a more accurate locution for that-which-becomes-different at different times is “what is (altogether) such.” This locution more perspicuously preserves the insight that reality is not composed of stable things that remain one and the same through time and change, but essentially dynamic entities, the nature of which is (literally) constant flux between “what is such” (for example, water) and “what is altogether such” (for example, earth).

In light of this insight, Timaeus takes necessity to impel the introduction of receptacles:

But that *in* which [what is altogether such] each appear to keep coming into being and *from* which they subsequently pass out of being, *that’s* the only thing to refer to by means of the expressions, “this” and “that.”⁸⁴

A Timaeian receptacle performs two essential functions: it receives all (relevant) becomings into itself, yet it does not take on the characteristics of that which enters into it, despite the fact that it is shaped by them. Correlatively, Timaeus describes the Receptacle that receives all becomings into it as follows: “Its nature is to be available for anything to make its impression upon it, and it is modified, shaped, and reshaped by the things that enter it.”⁸⁵ Analogously, a person’s receptacle would be “what is altogether such” that remains available for any subjectively relevant occasion to impress, modify, and shape it, without imposing constraints on the subjective forms that those person-occasions have taken.

Strictly speaking, the entities that survive inexorable flux are neither (atemporal) beings nor (temporal) becomings, but receptacles, “that in which [that which comes to be] comes to be.”⁸⁶ The principal advantage of this tripartite cosmology, by Timaeus’s lights, is that it accommodates becomings

⁸⁴ Ibid., 49d-50a.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 50b-c.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 50d.

without reifying them. Just as a perfumer requires a liquid that is as odorless as possible to receive the scented liquids that he or she adds, becomings require a receptacle in virtue of which locutions such as “this” or “that” refer, despite the potentially misleading suggestion that intelligible phenomena are stable entities that can remain one and the same through time and change.⁸⁷

Whitehead’s motivations for introducing receptacles are similar, but occasioned specifically by his concern that the inheritance theory attenuates rather than adequately explains the undeniable unity of persons’ lives. Receptacles, accordingly, effectively function as an additional category of existence. A receptacle’s sole role is to impose unity upon any and all formed occasions that enter into it, yet it does not take on the characteristics of that which enters into it, despite the fact that it is shaped by them.

My receptacle, for example, purportedly makes it such that Siakel-occasions formed by recurring subjective elements belong specifically to me *qua* society and not any other. My receptacle unifies diachronically distinct person-occasions into “my life” (what is altogether such), a life that in virtue of my receptacle is the same that I enjoyed in childhood, despite various changes (thank goodness) in value and character. Thereby, my receptacle secures and explains the “inescapable fact” of my personal unity. More generally, persons’ receptacles allegedly avoid “[attenuating] human personality into a genetic relation between occasions of human experience” by ensuring that what becomes, no matter how it becomes, is unified within a unique manifold. The interdependence of actual occasions, eternal objects, receptacles, and the category of the ultimate is supposed to explain the inescapable fact of personal unity over and above mere genetic relation, so the author of *Adventures* adventurously thought.

Unlike the subjective forms that shape person-occasions and thereby impose certain restrictions on what becomes presently and what can become subsequently, Whitehead holds that receptacles are *formless* in that they do not require any specific kind of experience or unification to take place. On account of a person’s receptacle, any token experience of the human-person type (given sufficient

⁸⁷ Timaeus also refers to receptacles as (non-physical) “space,” which makes for fascinating comparisons with the *Vajrayana* school’s working understanding of four levels of space: indestructible space, self-existing wisdom, primordial space, and intricate space. See Trungpa, “Four Levels of Space.”

personal ordering via recurring parts in subjective forms) becomes a constitutive part of one unique life. Such experiences become part of one life, moreover, no matter how discordant they may be with respect to the person's previous experiences, beliefs, desires, intentions, values, and so on. The only restriction introduced by receptacles is the imposition of unity on sufficiently ordered occasions, which is precisely what Whitehead worried the inheritance model could not explain.

Note that Whitehead, like Timaeus, does not claim to have direct insights about or experience of receptacles. Timaeus takes receptacles to be "apprehended by a kind of bastard reasoning that does not involve sense perception, and [are] hardly even an object of conviction."⁸⁸ Similarly, Whitehead takes receptacles to be a necessary systemic postulate motivated by his speculative methodology. The meaning of insights concerning personal identity, by Whitehead's lights, requires receptacles to promote those insights despite our inability to have direct insights about them. Like Timaeus, Whitehead takes receptacles to be a necessary systemic postulate despite the additional ontological furniture; and like Timaeus, Whitehead takes his resulting theory to be more likely than the categorial scheme proffered in *Process* and the inheritance theory commensurate with that scheme.

Having introduced an additional category of existence, Whitehead takes himself (with assistance from Plato) to have adequately explained the inescapable fact of personal unity. Therewith, Whitehead also takes himself to have obviated the aforementioned objection and remedied the systemic inadequacy that he believed to undermine the inheritance theory: its attenuation of human personality, given the alleged inadequacy of subjective forms to confer diachronic unity upon a personally-ordered series of subjectively continuous occasions. A person's receptacle, like the Receptacle that unifies all occasions, is a unified community "whose essence is process with retention of connectedness."⁸⁹ This means that it serves as the formless matrix for all occasions of its person-society's existence. A person's receptacle, in other words, is the "necessary community" within which the course of a person's history unfolds. It

⁸⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 52b.

⁸⁹ Whitehead, *Adventures*, 150.

“imposes a common relationship upon all that happens” in someone’s history “but does not impose what that relationship shall be” (ibid.).

It is precisely the *formlessness* of a person’s receptacle that enables it to unify diverse experiences of different subjective characters. Experiences in which I feel I have authentically been myself and experiences in which I feel I have not count as *my experiences*, regardless of how discordant their values and characters may (now) seem to me to be. Crucially, receptacles allow truth-makers for propositions pertaining to personal identity to be of different subjective kinds, depending on the context in which an occasion becomes. (This implication will be essential for my criticism of the receptacle theory and interpretive thesis regarding Whitehead’s refinement of the inheritance model.)

Two pages after Whitehead introduces the receptacle model, he accentuates the fact that forms of dominant inheritance from immediately past occasions can be attenuated and interrupted—as if to provide additional criticism of the inheritance model and conditions (1) through (5) that he proposed in *Process*. The interruption of strict personal order, Whitehead claims, results from the “peculiar status of the human body” and more specifically the fact that subjective continuity and unity may be interrupted by experiences in which bodily sensations predominate. Whitehead takes the upshot of this observation to be that “the transference of affective tone, with its emotional energy, from one occasion to another in any human personality” does not yield, and in fact “[negates] this notion of strict personal order for human inheritance.”⁹⁰ One might think (as the author of *Process* thinks) that personally-ordered occasions, in light of recurring elements in their subjective forms, could in virtue of those forms be diachronically continuous and unified. The author of *Adventures* rejects this idea. By his estimation, inheritance *per se* cannot secure either diachronic unity or even continuity. This inadequacy motivates the introduction of receptacles, a category of existence that grounds personal identity *qua* personal unity even in the absence of linear seriality and subjective continuity. For although “our dominant inheritance from our immediately past occasions is broken into by innumerable inheritances through other avenues,” especially by bodily

⁹⁰ Ibid., 189.

avenues, in the absence of the dominant inheritance characteristic of a human personality a person's receptacle will still secure the continuity and unity of that person's experiences (ibid.). My ennui and ecstasy will still be *mine*—in “me” *qua* structure that includes, necessarily, a receptacle.

10. AN OBJECTION AND CRITICISMS

One might object to my account by citing Whitehead's preface to *Adventures*:

The three books—[*Science*, *Process*, and *Adventures*]—are an endeavor to express a way of understanding the nature of things, and to point out how that way of understanding is illustrated by a survey of the mutations of human experience. Each book can be read separately; but they supplement each other's omissions or compressions.⁹¹

If we take Whitehead at his word (so the objection goes), we should not interpret the introduction of receptacles as yielding an incompatible theory of personal identity or categorial scheme, but merely as a supplement to omissions or compressions delivered in *Science* and *Process*. The omission of receptacles in *Science* and *Process* enables Whitehead to supplement his inheritance model by introducing receptacles. It does not require him to supplant that model or the categorial scheme detailed in his magnum opus.

The problem with this objection is that it fails to appreciate the systemic implications of introducing an additional category of existence that plays an essential role for not only all societies, but also all actual entities, even those that do not compose parts of societies. Furthermore, it underappreciates the importance of Whitehead's statement that the inheritance model of personal identity, like Hume's and James's, reduces personal identity into a genetic relation. Receptacles do not supplement an omission or compression; they supplant the explanation of personal and cosmological unity proffered in *Science* and *Process*. The reason is that the introduction of receptacles essentially modifies Whitehead's understanding of both local and global unity. All societies and even the universe itself, hence actual entities that do not compose societies, must have receptacles and the Receptacle (respectively) in order to be unified. *Science* and *Process* explain persistence via recurring subjective elements. *Adventures*

⁹¹ Ibid., vii.

explains persistence via formless manifolds because Whitehead comes to think that recurring subjective elements yield only genetic relation, not unity.

More specifically, *Science* and *Process* explain cosmological unity via the consequent nature of God, meaning that aspect of God's being that embraces whatever occurs, whether "good" or "evil." *Adventures* explains cosmological unity via an all-embracing formless manifold: "the foster-mother of becoming." Although *Adventures* countenances God's primordial nature, it does not mention God's consequent nature or attribute to God the role of unifying whatever occurs. The introduction of receptacles and the Receptacle, therefore, generates an ontological scheme incompatible with that of *Science* and *Process*, despite their intimate connection. This progression mirrors that of Plato's *Timaeus*, as I believe was Whitehead's intent. *Timaeus* does not take receptacles to supplement omissions or compressions in his first cosmology. He takes it to yield an incompatible cosmology. Were Whitehead to have introduced a "Category of Explanation" or "Categorical Obligation," both of which are derivative with respect to his "Categories of Existence" and the "Category of the Ultimate," one could charitably interpret him as having introduced a supplement to *Process*'s ontological scheme. Whitehead goes further: he postulates an additional category of existence.

Whitehead's claim that *Adventures* introduces supplements to previous omissions and compressions, therefore, is consistent with his also introducing an additional category of existence that yields an incompatible model. An ontology that postulates n number of fundamental categories of existence is incompatible with an ontology that postulates $n + 1$ categories of existence, especially given Whitehead's contention that he needs receptacles to explain not only the unity of persons (and societies more broadly), but also the unity of all occasions.

Having addressed the aforementioned objection, I will now advance three criticisms against Whitehead's receptacle theory. The character of these criticisms differs markedly from those recently raised by Mingarelli, whose account I will scrutinize subsequently.

The first and most obvious criticism is that the notion of a formless receptacle is mysterious—as mysterious as the Receptacle postulated in *Timaeus*'s second cosmology. Mysteriousness *per se*, of

course, does not undermine the notion. Nevertheless, the mysteriousness of formless receptacles coupled with the impossibility of experiencing them requires Whitehead to provide some reason other than sheer convenience as to why we should believe *specifically* that a formless receptacle exists for and is superposed with every person.⁹² The most charitable way of interpreting Whitehead on this point, it seems to me, is taking his reasoning to be abductive. Even on abductive grounds, however, his “argument” falls short. Whitehead does not explain why we should postulate formless receptacles versus some other postulate, say an additional category of explanation or categorial obligation that would enable Whitehead to preserve his system’s parsimony. Instead, Whitehead invokes Plato’s authority, and the passage that Whitehead adapts from the *Timaeus* merely asserts a position; it does not provide an argument for that position.

Second, and relatedly, the introduction of formless receptacles seems *ad hoc* in that it explains personal unity by fiat or what Timaeus might refer to as “bastard reasoning.” It seems as if Whitehead has presupposed what must be shown. To press the point, we could ask what it is about receptacles that enable them to unify the specific occasions of one society versus another. If the answer is that receptacles are formless or that each receptacle belongs to one and only one society, then the account would seem to be vacuous or viciously circular. If a receptacle is formless, then what about it or the society to which it is “linked” explains the linkage? Furthermore, what differentiates one receptacle from another? Whitehead does not say. Unique spatial location would not be a sufficient criterion of individuation because the receptacle of one molecule that partially composes my brain’s primary visual cortex overlaps with a deluge of other receptacles, including that of my cortex, brain, head, and body. Those receptacles and my receptacle, moreover, overlap with the Receptacle. Whitehead assumes that there are such overlapping receptacles—his receptacle theory requires it—without explaining what differentiates and individuates one from another. Yet this is an essential part of what any theory of personal identity must provide. Even if we interpret Whitehead’s inference about receptacles to be abductive, it is not clear that his explanation

⁹² Cf. Hartshorne, “Personal Identity,” 215.

is abductively preferable to alternative Whiteheadian accounts. Whitehead does not specify why we should prefer the receptacle theory to alternative models, nor does he explore alternative models.

This invokes a third, more devastating criticism. Whitehead came to believe that *Process's* categorial scheme is inadequate because it attenuates human personality into a genetic relation between occasions of human experience without explaining personal unity. Is *Process's* categorial scheme incapable of explaining personal unity? I believe that it is not. There are two interrelated arguments for this claim, the first of which is systemic and the second of which is historical.

11. INHERITANCE REFINED

The key is to appreciate the systemic implications of the following claims. First, the relations of recurrence in virtue of which successive subjective forms become interconnected and continuous are essentially dynamic. Second, the inheritance and transmission of such characteristics is context specific. This means that different subjective characteristics are capable of unifying new occasions within the same series, depending on what form of unification is most relevant to the occasion in question. The fact that the questions we pose about personal identity are contextually sensitive and sometimes equivocal accords with the fact that the preservation of personal unity is contextually sensitive. Indeed, Whiteheadian inheritance and transmission *per se* are contextually sensitive. The ways in which a person-society preserves itself depends on the situations in which it finds itself *vis-à-vis* destructive, neutral, and constructive interferences. On certain occasions, memory might be most relevant to someone's persistence; for example, when now I remember that *I* determined to complete the current chapter in a timely fashion. More generally, the recurrence of remembered determinations can sustain me throughout an interval during which I remember, value, and act upon previous intentions and dispositions. In other contexts (on other occasions), memory might be less or even irrelevant to my persistence.⁹³

⁹³ The general lesson that characteristics other than memory can non-circularly ground or constitute survival has been explored extensively *vis-à-vis* psychological-continuity theories, especially Grice's, which withstands stock counterexamples such as Reid's Brave Officer Paradox. See, e.g., Perry, "Problem of Personal Identity," 136; Parfit, "Personal Identity," 16ff.

To further illustrate the context-sensitivity of Whiteheadian inheritance and transmission, consider the explanatory power that the inheritance model (once refined) has to explain even exceptional examples such as Clive Wearing. (Nothing depends on this specific case; a less extreme case would demonstrate essentially the same point.) In the midst of a thriving career as a musicologist, conductor, and musician, Wearing contracted herpesviral encephalitis. This severely damaged his hippocampi, amygdala, and other brain regions, resulting in retrograde and anterograde amnesia among the most significant ever recorded. Wearing has virtually no episodic memory of past events, cannot form long-term declarative memories, and can retain information in short-term memory for at most seven to thirty seconds, hence lives in an “eternal present,” as his wife Deborah puts it.

Despite Wearing’s profound amnesia, an undeniable ethos endures. Memory rarely makes Wearing the same person that he was on prior occasions; it rarely can. Other recurring elements sustain Clive: performing compositions on the piano; the value of communicating coming to consciousness for the first time; a tendency to quip; an awareness that he is ill; and most poignantly, enduring love for Deborah.

To illustrate the profundity of Wearing’s amnesia, documentarians asked Deborah to enter and leave Wearing’s room in quick succession. Each time she enters, Clive exults and embraces her as if being reunited after decades. He tells Deborah how much he loves and has missed her, then reveals that he has become fully conscious for the first time. Deborah leaves the room, reenters, and the scenario repeats. Several documentaries demonstrate that Clive is fully present there, then, on those occasions wherein his love sustains him (literally) whatever the interval. Sacks’s explication is apt: “[Deborah’s] appearance, her voice, her scent, the way they behave with each other, and the intensity of their emotions and interactions—all this confirms her identity, and his own.”⁹⁴ Deborah concurs:

⁹⁴ Sacks, “Abyss,” n.p.

Whatever the damage, however devastating the damage, his being, his center, his soul, is absolutely functioning as it ever did.... He's saying something about ego; he's saying something about identity. He's saying: "I know now; I know this moment now. I have no conscious recollection of those previous entries in my handwriting, *though I acknowledge obviously they were me*. Therefore, I—this is the real awakesness; and you have to take notice of that."⁹⁵

Considering all of [his lack of episodic memory and knowledge about the present], his state of mind is extraordinary calm, happy, content, and very much himself; he's himself."⁹⁶

Clive's at-homeness in music and in his love for me are where he transcends amnesia and finds continuum—not the linear fusion of moment after moment, nor based on any framework of autobiographical information, but where Clive, and any of us, *are* finally, where we are who we are."⁹⁷

There is still a Cliveness about Clive. I realized that we are not just brain and [neural] processes. Clive had lost all that and yet he was still Clive."⁹⁸

In Whiteheadian terms, Clive remains himself despite the impossibility of certain subjective features being able to recur in future forms. Recurrence, however, still occurs, wherein Wearing is sustained.

The inheritance model enables us to explain even extreme examples such as Wearing without attenuating personal unity. Three refinements help demonstrate this point. (I call these "refinements" to underscore the fact that no additional category of existence is needed.) The first concerns the model's entailing that diverse forms of inheritance and transmission can constitute personal unity and do so in ways that are contextually sensitive. The diversity and context-sensitivity of recurrence is especially important in light of the equivocality of the questions we post about personal identity, equivocality that Whitehead himself highlights in 1927. Ten years later, Whitehead explicitly maintains that personal unity does not depend on one "criterion," such as memory, but that personal unity can be multiply determined:

I find myself essentially as a unity of emotions, enjoyments, fears, regrets, valuations of alternatives, decisions—all of them subjective reactions to my environment as active in my nature. My unity—which is Descartes' "I am"—is my process of shaping this welter of material into a consistent patterns of feelings."⁹⁹

⁹⁵ British Broadcasting Corporation, *Living Without Memory*.

⁹⁶ Treays, *The Man with the Seven Second Memory*.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Sacks, "Abyss," n.p.

⁹⁸ Quoted in France, "The Death of Yesterday," n.p.

⁹⁹ Whitehead, *Modes*, 166.

The process that Whitehead mentions is tantamount to inheritance and transmission: maintaining oneself in the present while allowing parts of oneself to shape the future. Given the diverse and contextually-specific forms that recurrence can take, inheritance and transmission do not attenuate but secure personal unity, *pace Adventures*.

This brings us to the second refinement: accentuating the “interweaving” of actual occasions and eternal objects that is accomplished via ontological becoming, which yields not only temporal, but personal continuity and unity. The unification of many into one made possible by creativity, that is, the category of the ultimate, explains the unity that Whitehead worries he has attenuated. We have already examined how personal order involves each person-occasion’s subjective form transmits parts of its pattern to relevant successors, depending on the context. This entails that principles of connection between predecessors and successors are already “in place” as new occasions emerge. Another “place,” a receptacle, is not needed. The fact that recurrence relations are dynamic (constitutive parts of ontological becoming) means that new occasions *immediately* emerge as constitutive parts of a unified manifold. Consider the dynamic recurrence of subjective characteristics that forms your present experience. These characteristics—your characteristics—unify emerging experiences that immediately presents themselves as yours. What characteristics are most relevant or “defining” depends on the circumstances. Sometimes memory secures personal unity; sometimes love secures personal unity. The fact that characteristics of individual occasions can recur in subsequent occasions, despite various shifts in character that you have introduced or underwent, helps explain why emerging experiences immediately present themselves as yours, as constitutive parts of the unified society that you are. Diverse and contextually-sensitive recurrences, accomplished as they are via ontological becoming, are enough to achieve this Whiteheadian explanation of personal unity. Receptacles are neither here nor there.

The third refinement involves minor revisions in how *Process* expresses conditions (1) through (5). Specifically, Whitehead comes to allow that occasions can be unified even if there are temporary interruptions in experience, as when a strong sensation interrupts a train of thought. Relatedly, is it not necessary for a guiding personality to predominate at all moments. My intention to continue writing, for

example, may be interrupted by the sensation of thirst. Although the sensation interrupts my intention and causes me to drink water, the nexus of control which Whitehead refers to as my “central intelligence” can cause future occasions to be defined by the same intention, where this “defining characteristic” unifies all relevant occasions—until I decide to stop writing and enter another context, for example. Despite the sensation’s relative interruption, moreover, I experienced and now remember it as being inextricably mine, as a constitutive part of my history. These revisions regarding personal ordering also enable Whitehead to explain how personal unity can be preserved during periods of intelligence’s relative absence, such as sound sleep: “The continuity of the soul—so far as concerns consciousness—has to leap gaps in time. We sleep or we are stunned. And yet it is the same person who recovers consciousness.”¹⁰⁰ The person who falls asleep, enters into dreamless sleep, and awakens afresh remains the same person in light of the values, dispositions, intentions, passions, and other subjective characteristics that recur upon waking, despite the interruption. This directly contradicts Hume’s (in)famous claim that “when my perceptions are remov’d for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may truly be said not to exist.”¹⁰¹

12. *MODES* AND “IMMORTALITY”

Historical evidence corroborates these systemic claims about Whitehead’s refinements of the inheritance model. Whitehead never returned to receptacles or even the Receptacle in texts written after *Adventures*. Furthermore, in lectures delivered in and after 1937, Whitehead refines the notion of inheritance specifically in connection with personal identity and does so without mentioning receptacles:

How can the unchanging unity of fact generate the delusion of change? Surely, the satisfactory answer must embody an understanding of the interweaving of change and permanence, each required by the other. This interweaving is a primary fact of experience. It is at the base of our concepts of personal identity, of social identity, and of all sociological functionings.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 162.

¹⁰¹ Hume, *Treatise*, 1.4.6.3/252.

¹⁰² Whitehead, *Modes*, 53.

The interweaving that Whitehead mentions, as argued above, is accomplished by the category of the ultimate. Recall that process (in Whitehead's idiosyncratic sense) is neither temporal nor spatial. Furthermore, it is discontinuous and formally distinct from categories of existence like actual occasions and eternal objects. This means that process *qua* ontological becoming is well suited to play the role of marrying activity and character, of forming matter and unifying occasions that are—in light of recurring elements in their subjective forms—parts of a unique and unified series. The systemic postulates of *Process* are enough, from a Whiteheadian perspective, to explain personal unity. Receptacles are not needed.

Note Whitehead's contention that the interweaving of change and permanence is "a primary fact of experience," meaning an infallible insight about the nature of reality in general and personal identity in particular. Instead of postulating an additional category of existence on abductive grounds, the author of *Modes* grounds his theory of personal identity in the interweaving of activity and recurring characteristics. Unlike receptacles, this interweaving is not only directly experienceable as such, but also the proper "base" or foundation of our concept of personal identity. *Modes* thereby explains personal unity via the inheritance and transmission of character about which we can have immediate, infallible insight: "In fact we are *directly* conscious of our purposes as *directive* of our actions."¹⁰³ Explaining personal identity via recurrence, therefore, is not only metaphysically but epistemically preferable to the receptacle model.

Texts written from 1937 onward consistently emphasize the interweaving, fusion, and ingression of activity and character (in Whitehead's broad sense of that term).¹⁰⁴ *Modes*, for example, finds Whitehead reiterating that bodily sensations can interrupt the relative dominance of a central intelligence. Instead of using this fact to motivate the introduction of receptacles to explain how personal unity can be maintained across gaps, as Whitehead did in *Adventures*, *Modes* characterizes such interruptions as one side of persons-societies' twofold relationship with novelty. Bracketing details, the upshot is that the interruption of occasions' "dominant characteristics" no longer threatens, but underscores the explanatory

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 156; cf. D. W. Smith, "Consciousness and Actuality," 234ff.

¹⁰⁴ To reiterate, all actual entities, even electrons, have "characters," "values," or subjective forms.

adequacy of recurrence. “It is by reason of individual expression and reception,” or transmission and inheritance, so Whitehead claims, “that the human body exhibits activities expressive of the intimate feelings, emotional and purposeful, of the one human person.”¹⁰⁵ Whitehead goes on to emphasize the fact that different wholes (his example is sensory experiences) can be unified if they are partially identical—if parts of them are identical—via recurrence.

Modes also highlights how the characters of connected occasions “enter into the character of the connectivity which joins them.”¹⁰⁶ This is particularly important for personal identity. On this view, the defining characteristic of a person-occasion₁, for example my desire to express myself clearly, enters into the character of its connectivity with its immediate successor, person-occasion₂. The fact that the desire *enters into the transmission itself* enables person-occasion₁ to be unified with person-occasion₂. Parts of person-occasions’ subjective forms, in other words, characterize not only those individual occasions, but also the relations that connect them, meaning inheritance and transmission *per se*. Such relations are the “existential essence” of personal identity, the description of which “must apply to the unborn child, to the baby in its cradle, to the state of sleep, and to that vast background of feeling hardly touched by consciousness.”¹⁰⁷ On the receptacle model, occasions and their forms are unified by formless structures into which they enter. On the refined inheritance model, recurring subjective features enter into inheritance and transmission themselves, and this explains the “inescapable fact” of personal unity.

Modes also recognizes the importance of allowing for grades of permanence and “compulsive stability,” depending on the context.¹⁰⁸ Immediately after noting that self-identity in the sphere of realized fact is merely partial, Whitehead elaborates that partial identity holds for specific purposes, depending on the context. He illustrates the context sensitivity of persistence by emphasizing the equivocality of our questions concerning personal identity:

¹⁰⁵ Whitehead, *Modes*, 28.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

For the purpose of inheriting real estate, the identity of the man of thirty years of age with the former baby of ten months is dominant. For the purpose of navigating a yacht, the differences between the man and the child are essential; the identity then sinks into metaphysical irrelevancy.... In other words, the data, the forms of process, and the issues into new data, are all dependent upon their epoch and upon the forms of process dominant in that epoch.¹⁰⁹

A few pages later, Whitehead reiterates the diversity and context sensitivity of inheritances that preserve diachronic unity with direct reference to personal identity:

Complete self-identity can never be preserved in any advance to novelty. The only question is, as to whether the loss is relevant to the purposes of the argument [regarding self-identity]. The baby in the cradle, and the grown man in middle age, are *in some senses identical and in other senses diverse*. Is the train of argument in its conclusions substantiated by the identity or vitiated by the diversity?¹¹⁰

It depends—both on the question that the argument addresses and the contexts relevant to that question.

The author of *Adventures* did not appreciate the systemic implications of recurrence taking on diverse and contextually sensitive forms. Receptacles are supposed to secure personal identity regardless of context. The author of *Modes* realizes that the receptacle model contradicts an infallible insight about the diversity and context sensitivity of recurrence. He also recognizes that recurrence, so understood, obviates his earlier concern about having attenuated personal unity. Ontological becoming fuses characteristics into activities. Thereby, personal unity is established and maintained in diverse ways, depending on the context. The ways in which Wearing endures often differ from, even as they inspire, my own. Yet each of us fuses characteristics of previous occasions into unified activities. Every person “fuse[s] these new elements with the basic stuff of experience provided by our state of mind a quarter of a second ago.”¹¹¹ Equivocality, diversity, and context sensitivity are no longer problems to be solved via receptacles, but virtues of recurrence itself.

Whitehead’s final written words on the matter reassert the inheritance theory *vis-à-vis* Plato’s theory of imitation, but not Timaeon receptacles. The following formulation, for example, emphasizes,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 95.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. (emphasis mine).

¹¹¹ Ibid., 160.

diversity, context sensitivity, and the fusion accomplished by the ingression of eternal objects into actual occasions:

Each single example of personal identity is a special mode of coördination of the ideal world into a limited rôle of effectiveness. This maintenance of character is the way in which the finitude of the actual world embraces the infinitude of possibility. In each personality, the large infinitude of possibility enters into the finite actuality. Also this entrance is more or less; there are grades of dominance and grades of recessiveness.¹¹²

Whitehead takes personal identity to be the “outstanding example” of partial identity of character amid the flux of what becomes. The fusions accomplished by ontological becoming, which here Whitehead refers to as “evaluations” or essential processes of interconnection, unify distinct occasions. Apropos, Whitehead takes the problem of explaining personal unity to be “the key example for understanding the essential fusion of the World of Activity with the World of Value.”¹¹³ In an effort to enhance our understanding, Whitehead proceeds to explain personal identity in terms coordinate with *Modes*. Personal identity obtains when details of fact exhibit partial but coordinated unity of primary character amid secondary changes of value. Such “evaluations” both shape an occasion and realize a value. Personal identity is a “unity of style” *qua* maintenance of character, in this sense. Recurrence, which Whitehead now describes as evaluation, establishes such unity.

As in *Modes*, Whitehead accentuates the diversity and context sensitivity of recurrence. The entrance of ideal existence into a finite actuality is “more or less,” meaning there are grades of dominance and grades of recessiveness. Such differences in grade determine how we should answer specific questions concerning personal identity. The privileged contexts of inheriting real estate and navigating a yacht determine which characteristics of relative dominance or recessiveness are relevant. To inherit real estate, I merely have to be me. To navigate a yacht, I have to exercise my intelligence. Thus although

¹¹² Whitehead, “Immortality,” 691. The fact that there are various grades of dominance applies not only “horizontally” to unique routes of occasions, as in personal identity, but also “vertically” or hierarchically *vis-à-vis* how we distinguish between different grades of societies. Whitehead allows that these distinctions are not absolute and therefore sometimes vague (*Modes*, 27ff.).

¹¹³ Whitehead, “Immortality,” 689.

there is inexorable vagueness in the questions that we pose about personal identity, it lies within our power to answer such questions with confidence.

13. ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTS OF WHITEHEAD'S THEORY OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

Cobb's influential treatment holds that Whitehead's theory of personal identity (which Cobb interprets solely in terms of inheritance) faces seemingly inexorable difficulties in explaining phenomena such as moral responsibility, gratitude, and the possibility of life after death. If it is not one and the same *entity*, but only the same *society* that persists through time, it is not clear whether we would be justified in holding one subset of a society's entities morally responsible for the actions of a distinct subset of that society's entities. This is especially concerning if the defining characteristics of the first set differ radically from those of the second. Similarly, when one expresses gratitude for another person's actions, Whitehead's position suggests that one's gratitude is misplaced; for the set of entities responsible for the gratitude-generating actions is ontologically, and not merely temporally, distinct from the set of entities to which I express my gratitude. Finally, if inheritance necessarily involves both physical and mental aspects, then it is not clear whether Whitehead's theory can allow for the possibility of life after death, as (according to Cobb) a theory of personal identity should. The dissolution of the physical body entailed by biological death seems to negate one of the necessary conditions for the possibility of personal identity, namely its physical pole. This renders the persistence of subjective elements impossible, even for the soul.

Cobb maintains that there are two ways in which Whitehead can address the aforementioned concerns: by claiming that personal identity depends on either one common character being inherited through successive occasions or a special mode of inheriting. Cobb takes these options to be mutually exclusive and criticizes Whitehead for sometimes seeming to adopt the first. Indeed, Cobb takes it to be "an indication of desperation on Whitehead's part, that he fell into the trap of describing the personal in terms that refer to a common character" since Whitehead also held "that the decisive feature of life is

novelty and not the repetition of past patterns.”¹¹⁴ Novelty and repetition, on this view, are essentially at odds. Consequently, Cobb contends that Whitehead must adopt the second option and explain personal identity in terms of a special mode of inheriting. Because Cobb believes that Whitehead never developed such a position, he develops his own Whiteheadian conception of memory in an effort to fill the lacuna. Cobb ultimately takes his Whiteheadian attempt to be insufficient, however.

The options that Cobb enumerates are not mutually exclusive, for reasons commensurate with the explanation of recurrence that we examined above. The repetition of *parts* of prior patterns does not preclude novel expressions of character, but makes them possible. Novelty and repetition are not essentially at odds, but complementary, mutually necessary, and interdependent *vis-à-vis* personal unity. On this point, I agree with Bennett’s claim that “the specific actuality, the concrete content, of the members of that society is not prescribed by the defining characteristic... Inheritance of a common character does not require sacrifice of originality.”¹¹⁵ This response to Cobb accords with Whitehead’s statements that the concrete moments of a living person “are bound together into one society by a partial identity of form, *and* by the peculiarly full summation of its predecessors which each moment of the life-history gathers into itself.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the case of Clive Wearing helps show that memory is not, and for a Whiteheadian cannot be, the only criterion or “special mode of inheriting” which constitutes personal unity. Whitehead himself (as we have seen) comes to hold that relevant modes of inheritance are diverse and contextually sensitive. Cobb’s paradigmatic focus on *Process* overlooks the increased emphasis on diversity and context sensitivity that Whitehead proposes in later writings. Receptacles, too, are overlooked.

Despite our agreement about the essential complementarity of novelty and repetition, Bennett errs in claiming that the common form inherited from occasion to occasion derives from one and the same complex eternal object that shapes every occasion of a person-society’s experiences. Commonality of

¹¹⁴ Cobb, *Christian Natural Theology*, 37.

¹¹⁵ Bennett, “Whitehead and Personal Identity,” 515.

¹¹⁶ Quoted with emphasis in Bennett, “Whitehead and Personal Identity,” 516.

form, on Bennett's reading, amounts to identity of an eternal object. The problem is that Whitehead's principle of novelty does not permit one and the same complex eternal object to shape distinct occasions of experience. Each occasion of experience selects *its own* complex eternal object. The whole subjective form that results from the occasion's selection and rejection of different objective and subjective eternal objects differs in every instance. The problem with Bennett's interpretation is that it explains commonality of character via the trans-temporal identity of a complex eternal object.¹¹⁷ This contradicts Whitehead's doctrine of novelty, which requires there to be *some* difference, however minute, in the eternal objects that contribute to the forms underlying individual occasions. Subjective characteristics *qua* parts of previous forms can and do recur throughout a unified series, but no whole can persist beyond the moment that it partially determines. (As explicated above, this follows directly from Whitehead's principle of novelty and mereological essentialism.) The upshot, *contra* Bennett, is that personal identity cannot involve the strict identity of either an eternal object or a subjective form, but only (*pro* Hartshorne) their partial identity.¹¹⁸

While I agree with Hartshorne that the defining characteristic of a person "is less concrete or particular than its expressions; [and that] it has a certain abstractness or neutrality with respect to alternative possible experiences and acts,"¹¹⁹ Hartshorne's account, as virtually all others, recognizes only the initial version of Whitehead's inheritance model and neither the receptacle model nor the refined inheritance model. Lucas briefly mentions formless receptacles in connection with Whitehead's theory of personal identity but forgoes interpreting the relevant passages from *Adventures* and contends without argument that "Whitehead chooses not to develop a detailed response" to the problem, since doing that

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 520ff.

¹¹⁸ Put differently, Bennett has committed the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Only elements of distinct complex eternal objects may be identical. No whole complex eternal object can be identical to any other, and one and the same complex eternal object cannot ingress in multiple occasions. The reason, again, is the doctrine of novelty: the way in which any actual occasion feels the physical and conceptual aspects of its predecessors necessarily differs from every other occasion, even and especially those occasions that occur immediately before and after it. Cf. Hartshorne, "Personal Identity," 213.

¹¹⁹ Hartshorne, "Personal Identity," 3.

would allegedly reintroduce “some new form of epistemological or ontological dualism of the sort he was committed to overcome.”¹²⁰ The letter of Whitehead’s text does not support this claim.

Given the attention that Bennett Cobb, Hartshorne, Lucas, Sherburne, Weiss, and others have given to Whitehead’s thoughts about personal identity, it is striking that only Mingarelli has recognized how important receptacles were for Whitehead’s thought—for a time. In *Adventures*, Whitehead goes so far as to *identify* a person’s receptacle with his or her personal identity: “This personal identity is the thing which receives all occasions of the man’s [*sic*] existence. It is there as a natural matrix for all transitions of life”¹²¹ Mingarelli rightly emphasizes the relevance of “the *chôra*” (meaning receptacle or space) for Whitehead’s thoughts concerning personal identity. However, she does not recognize that in 1937 Whitehead jettisoned the receptacle model and returned to refine his inheritance model.¹²² Mingarelli also takes Whitehead’s receptacle model to be “*the* process conception of personal identity.”¹²³ This is misleading in two respects. First, there are several process conceptions of personal identity, including non-Whiteheadian models.¹²⁴ Second, if any model developed in Whitehead’s corpus represents his considered view, it is the refined inheritance model that he developed after the receptacle model.

I agree with Mingarelli that Whitehead’s receptacle model faces insuperable difficulties. The three difficulties that she describes, however, do not threaten their intended target. One general point of disagreement is that Mingarelli does not distinguish between the “universal,” all-encompassing Receptacle that Whitehead introduces to account for the unity of all occasions and the “particular,” person-facilitating receptacles that he introduces to account for the diachronic unity of persons. Consequently, she defines “Whitehead’s *chôra*, unlike Plato’s, [as] not a physical place, but rather the common ground, the over-determined horizon where all experiences, both actual and potential, lie and are contained even before they can be realized.”¹²⁵ This definition leads Mingarelli to interpret Whitehead’s

¹²⁰ Lucas, *Rehabilitation of Whitehead*, 155.

¹²¹ Whitehead, *Adventures*, 187.

¹²² I was not sufficiently perspicuous about this in Siakel, “Dynamic Process of Being,” 9ff.

¹²³ Mingarelli, “Personal Identity,” 104 (emphasis mine); cf. Siakel, “Dynamic Process of Being,” 106.

¹²⁴ For discussion, see Siakel, “Dynamic Process of Being.”

¹²⁵ Mingarelli, “Personal Identity,” 103.

theory of personal identity as involving the Receptacle rather than person-specific receptacles. Although person-specific receptacles exhibit the same general principle of unity exhibited by the Receptacle, Whitehead holds that person-specific receptacles are “marked out by [their] peculiarities,” given differences introduced by relatively “minor details of humanity.”¹²⁶ All entities whatsoever, from person-occasions to occasions that do not contribute to the sustenance of any society, belong to the Receptacle. Only person-specific receptacles are directly relevant to personal unity and to Whitehead’s Hume-inspired worry about attenuating human personality. If the author of *Adventures* postulated only the Receptacle and not person-specific receptacles, the problem of attenuation would remain, albeit in a different form: he would have to explain how personal unity not only derives from, but is inescapably evident in, universal unity.

This brings us to Mingarelli’s first criticism: “it is not clear how an impersonal entity, such as the *chôra*, can give rise to *personal* strands of unity and, thus, be the source of personal identity.”¹²⁷ Although Whitehead does not elaborate how the Receptacle and receptacles relate, he differentiates between two types of *chôra* and explicates personal identity in terms of person-specific receptacles.¹²⁸ From this, it does not follow that receptacles *per se* “give rise to” personal strands of unity. Thus the criticism that Mingarelli raises fails to hit its target even if we reinterpret her claim in terms of person-specific receptacles. On the receptacle model, personal unity results from not just person-receptacles, but also (as we have seen) inheritance and transmission of recurring subjective characteristics. Even on the receptacle model, person-receptacles are necessary but not sufficient for personal identity.

What makes the occasions that enter into a person-receptacle *personal*, moreover, consists in their partially constituting a person-society. This entails that the occasions which enter into or become within a person’s receptacle are always-already instances of the person-society type—that is, personal—and are so

¹²⁶ Whitehead, *Adventures*, 187-88.

¹²⁷ Mingarelli, “Personal Identity,” 104.

¹²⁸ The key passage is: “our consciousness of the self-identity pervading our life-thread of occasions... is a locus [i.e., receptacle] within the whole [locus, i.e. Receptacle], *marked out by its peculiarities*, but otherwise exhibiting the general principle which guides the constitution of the whole” (Whitehead, *Adventures*, 187-8 (emphasis mine)).

in virtue of what recurs: defining characteristics. Consequently, to hold that the Receptacle is the structure most relevant to the achievement of personal identity; that the Receptacle somehow gives rise to personal identity, as if it were a sufficient condition; and that Whitehead's theory fails to explain how the Receptacle confers personal unity upon a series of occasions that are always-already of the person-type, seems to target a position that Whitehead never held.

The claim that Whitehead's Receptacle is an "impersonal entity," moreover, seems problematic on two counts. First, Whitehead takes the Receptacle to exemplify the general principle of personal unity that he takes person-receptacles to exemplify, *modulo* irrelevant considerations concerning "minor details of humanity."¹²⁹ Thus it seems as if the Receptacle *is* personal, in the technical sense explicated above. Second, neither the Receptacle nor receptacles are "entities" in Whitehead's technical sense, as Mingarelli claims, but are a distinct category of existence as they must be to accomplish their only distinctive function: unifying diachronically distinct entities within the same manifold. Even if the Receptacle or receptacles appear to be "impersonal entities," when taken in abstraction from concrete instances of becoming, every concrete becoming involves an actual occasion which becomes in accordance with some form, a complex eternal object that partially determines that form, and a process of creativity in virtue of which many previous parts become unified into one novel whole. Conceiving of the Receptacle as impersonal, therefore, seems to commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Appreciating the essential interdependence of person-occasion, person-society, and person-receptacle presupposed in any concrete instance, in contrast, suggests that person-receptacles are always-already "personal." The type of occasions that enter into a person's receptacle are person-occasions that, as such, partly constitute the person-society to which they (via that person's receptacle) belong. What makes persons' receptacles *personal*, in other words, are parts of subjective forms that person-occasions inherit and transmit.

¹²⁹ "In mathematical studies, where there is a problem to be solved it is a sound method to generalize, so as to divest the problem of details irrelevant to the solution. Let us therefore give a general description of this personal unity, divesting it of minor details of humanity" (ibid., 187).

Mingarelli's second criticism is that, since the *chôra* theory takes the concept of human personality to be community-based, a "logical fallacy" arises.¹³⁰ What Mingarelli means by the concept of personality being "community-based" is that self-recognition involves awareness of being part of a series of past and future experiences. Self-recognition represents this series as being unique *vis-à-vis* all other unified streams. The logical fallacy entailed by this view, Mingarelli claims, is that recognition of one's uniqueness and uniqueness *per se* can occur "only in connection with all the others." Mingarelli takes this to entail that one's personal identity "totally depends" on that person's relationship to all other strands of unity. Personal identity's *total* dependence on other societies' unity, however, contradicts the sense of "pure identity," or intimacy" that Mingarelli claims to have—hence the logical fallacy.

This criticism also seems to miss the mark. First, Whitehead explicitly allows societies of various kinds, especially persons, to introduce novelty into how they develop. This means that neither uniqueness *per se* nor self-recognition thereof *totally* depends on all other strands of unity. My choice to become self-aware and my subsequent self-awareness do not totally depend on my awareness that nature contains an indefinite number of unique societies. It partially depends on that implicit awareness, but also on my novel choice. (A person's subjective characteristics can be causally efficacious, in this sense.) Whitehead would maintain that my choice introduced genuine novelty into my stream's creative advance and that he experience *qua* choice was partially self-determining, in this respect. Whitehead's position regarding the essential connectedness of all entities does not entail that all entities are totally dependent. (As we have seen, Whitehead maintains that no actual entity is totally dependent.) *A fortiori*, it does not entail that a person's principle of identity or her recognition thereof totally depends on that person's relations to all other threads of unity. One's uniqueness and recognition thereof may essentially depend on others' uniqueness and one's implicit recognition thereof, but essential dependence is not tantamount to total dependence.

¹³⁰ Mingarelli, "Personal Identity," 104.

Second, Whitehead's philosophy (like Hume's) rules out the possibility of diachronic objectual identity and discredits belief in a perfectly simple and identical self. The only "pure identity" that Whitehead countenances is synchronic self-identity, a trivial "property" necessarily exemplified by all entities. At the same time, he maintains that a person's sense of intimacy and uniqueness derives from those recurring characteristics that the person *qua* society inherits and transmits. Whitehead's receptacle model involves neither "total dependence" nor "pure identity."

Mingarelli's third criticism concerns the notion's vagueness: "how can we explain the *chôra* in our everyday lives; do we have any experience of it? And if we do not..., can we ground the *chôra* in the natural world?"¹³¹ I have argued that Whitehead's motivations for introducing receptacles are abductive, where an additional motivation for introducing the Receptacle may be to account for the universe's unity without referring to God. Although receptacles are not directly experienceable, introducing an abstract structure of this kind is compatible with Whitehead's speculative methodology. The issue is not that receptacles cannot be directly experienced and have to be introduced by a kind of "bastard reasoning" that fails to ground them in the natural world. The issue is that even when we interpret Whitehead charitably by taking his motivations to be abductive, his reasoning fails on abductive grounds: he does not explain why we should postulate receptacles versus some other systemic postulate that would preserve his system's parsimony. Thus while I agree with Mingarelli that the notion is vague and such vagueness is *prima facie* problematic, the notion's vagueness *per se* is not the issue. Whitehead's argumentation and the notion's extraneousness are the issues.

14. THE RECEPTACLE

This specific lesson regarding the receptacle theory also applies to Whitehead's cosmology as a whole. Whitehead does not need to postulate a Receptacle to explain the unity of all occasions within the

¹³¹ Ibid., 105.

same universe.¹³² *Modes* finds Whitehead claiming that there are two interdependent aspects of the universe: a factor of unity and a factor of multiplicity. Explaining “the summation of the many into the one” or “the derivation of importance from the one into the many” does not require a Receptacle, but rather creativity, which is precisely the position that Whitehead defends in *Process*. Understanding how the unity of the universe requires its multiplicity requires only “two ultimate types of existence,” namely realized fact and eternal forms, and the creative process that involves them.¹³³ Relatedly, Whitehead now explains the unity of all realized facts via the notion of a “world-process,” meaning “the totality of process,” which he takes to convey the proper sense of a supreme being or deity.¹³⁴ These descriptions refine the explanation of universal unity proffered in *Process*, which accounted for it via the consequent nature of God. The Receptacle receives no mention.

Whitehead’s final written words on the matter postulate a World of Activity (involving actual occasions) and a World of Value (involving eternal objects). These “Two Worlds,” Whitehead tells us, “require each other, and together constitute the concrete Universe. Either World considered by itself is an abstraction.”¹³⁵ Again, Whitehead describes the “essential unification” accomplished by the Two Worlds and evaluation in terms of God’s nature.¹³⁶ A Timaeus Receptacle is neither here nor there.

Whitehead’s legacy (via Hartshorne, Cobb, et al.) was once strongly associated with Christian theology. Yet Whitehead’s conception of God in the end was more pluralistic and abstract than (strictly) ecumenical. In his words,

The World of Value exhibits the essential unification of the Universe. Thus while it exhibits the immortal side of the many persons, it also involves the unification of personality. This is the concept of God. (But it is not the God of the learned Christian Theology, nor is it the diffused God of the Hindu Buddhistic [*sic*] tradition. The concept lies somewhere between the two.) (ibid.)

Whitehead’s mature conception of God accords with his Humean motivations—so one might argue.

¹³² For a discussion of the Receptacle’s relevance to Whitehead’s theory of time, especially in relation to the space-time of relativity and quantum mechanics, see Klose, “Alfred North Whitehead’s Receptacle,” §10.

¹³³ Whitehead, *Modes*, 84-85.

¹³⁴ Whitehead, *Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹³⁵ Whitehead, “Immortality,” 683.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 694.

15. CONCLUSION

One advantage of interpreting Whitehead in the way that I have suggested is that it explains why he introduced receptacles and the Receptacle in 1931 yet never explicated precisely how they were supposed to accord with the categorial scheme presented in *Process*. The fact that a thinker of Whitehead's caliber never detailed these issues, in concert with his omission of receptacles and the Receptacle in later writings, suggests that he abandoned the notion altogether. He was right to do so. Receptacles are extraneous, even for a Whiteheadian. Introducing receptacles was thus an adventure of ideas that discorded radically with previous ventures. The identity of Whitehead's system, as it were, could not be maintained on such an extraneous, if adventurous, assumption.

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