

0 Last time

Copy Principle: "...all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones." (539)

Association of ideas: resemblance, contiguity, causation

Causation

- There is no *necessary connection* between any of ideas, only constant conjunction which we are accustomed to by habit. If cause and effect include this notion of necessary connection, there are really no such things.
- But insofar as all we mean is *constant conjunction*, there is causation. Whenever Hume talks about cause and effect as if there really are such things, he means this.

Substance

- Hume's stance on substance is that there is no such thing, for either body or mind.
- He has particular arguments against mental substance based on the Copy Principle and on the principle that conceivable independence entails possible independence.
 - CP principle: If X is conceivable without Y, then X can exist without Y.
- He also argues against the mind-thought model by comparing it with Spinoza's monism. Don't worry too much about this.

1 Personal identity

Plausible claim: We have immediate knowledge of the existence of a self that persists through time.

- Immediate, that is, no demonstration is necessary. It is self-evident and justified.
- Hume asserts that we think it is simple and uninterrupted, and there is identity.
 - Simple, as in partless
 - Uninterrupted, as in continuous through time rather than "gappy"
 - Identity, as in identity through time

Hume's argument:

- If there were such a thing as the self, we would have an idea of it.
- If we had such an idea, then by the Copy Principle, it would arise from some one impression.
- This impression must be present in all our experiences to account for the persistence of the self.
- But there is no such impression.
- Therefore there is no such thing as the self.

"Thus we feign the continued existence of the perceptions of our senses to remove the interruption and run into the notion of a *soul*, and *self*, and *substance* to disguise the variation.

- Hume notes that the only evidence we have with respect to the mind is a succession of different perceptions.

- He claims that we suppose there is some relation between each bundle of perceptions that is supposed to underlie their identity, despite their actual diversity.
- Thus, we confuse “identity” and “relation.”

Hume claims that his only notion of himself consists entirely in perceptions and nothing more.

- “For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, or heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception.” (526)

Hume has a bundle theory of the mind: the mind is nothing but a bundle of perceptions.

- To perceive red just is for the impression/idea of redness to be included in some bundle of perceptions.
- The mind is not simple, as defenders of immaterial substance think.
- Nor is there identity between the perceptions of the mind at one moment and those at the next.
- They are only connected by resemblance, contiguity, or causation. (527)
 - The supposed identity is added by the imagination. (529)
 - We suppose some stronger bond between the bundles of perception, but even cause and effect is nothing but “a customary association of ideas.” (529)

Thought experiment concerning change:

- Imagine some object at a time (e.g. a chair).
- Vary its location, or the relative locations of its parts to each other, and it will remain the same.
- But add or subtract any part of it, and it is destroyed.
- Whether or not we notice depends on how big this added or subtracted part is relative to the whole object.
- So if it is proportionally very small, we tend not to notice.
- “The reason can plainly be no other than that the mind, in following the successive changes of the body, feels an easy passage from surveying its condition in one moment to viewing of it in another and at no particular time perceives any interruption in its actions – from which continued perception it ascribes a continued existence and identity to the object.” (528)

Other diagnoses:

- Sometimes parts are replaced with other parts which nonetheless share a “common end.” For example, a seedling grows into a tree, but with the loss and gain of each part the common end of forming a tree is preserved.
- We confuse numerical and qualitative identity. (528)
- Furthermore, we tend to ascribe identity through time simply because we expect it. (529)

“All the disputes concerning the identity of connected objects are merely verbal, except so far as the relation of parts gives rise to some fiction or imaginary principle of union as we have already observed.” (531)