VIVACITY AND HUME'S IMPRESSION-IDEA DISTINCTION

by

Prescott Jackson

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ABSTRACT

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Prescott Jackson

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Hume famously grounds his foundational distinction between impressions and ideas on "force and vivacity." However, he acknowledges that vivacity is sometimes imprecise for distinguishing impressions from ideas, in, for example, the phenomena madness. Therefore, interpreters question how impressions and ideas are really differentiated. Interpretations of the impression-idea distinction traditionally take one of two forms—either attempts to better-defined vivacity in other terms, or arguments that already better-defined distinctions, like the Copy Principle, suffice to distinguish impressions from ideas. However, both approaches create unpalatable problems for interpreting Hume. This paper gives a phenomenological account of vivacity and suggests that we should read the opening movements of both the *Treatise* book I and the first *Enquiry* dialectically. This approach makes sense of the seeming inconsistency while avoiding unpalatable consequences of other approaches by diffusing the debate entirely. It also promises application in other areas of Hume studies.

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Introduction

My subject is a vital, load-bearing column at the foundation of Hume's philosophy. In the introduction to *A Treatise of Human Nature*,[1] Hume purposes to discover the foundational principles of human nature, upon which he hopes to ground all scientific enterprise. He begins both his *Treatise* and the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*,[2] by taking the perceptions[3] of the mind as his foundational objects and asserting that these fall into two kinds—*impressions* and *ideas*. The load-bearing column in question is the distinction between these—how Hume's foundational objects fall into their foundational categories.

This column lies at the very base of Hume's project, but it is at first glance rather rough-hewn. Hume states that impressions and ideas are distinguished by their degree of force and vivacity. [4] However, there is debate about what Hume means by vivacity and in what sense it therefore distinguishes impressions from ideas. Attempts to settle this question usually follow one of two strategies. Barry Stroud, Jonathan Bennett, and Stephen

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[1] Hereafter, *Treatise*. I mark references to the *Treatise* with T followed by the book, part, section, and paragraph numbers, respectively.
[2] Hereafter, *Enquiry*. I mark references to the *Enquiry* with EU followed by the section and paragraph numbers, respectively.
[3] What Hume means by perception can be confusing given our contemporary association of perception with sensation which, for Hume, is a mere subset of perception. For Hume, perception is much more general, perhaps even equivalent to experience, and a perception is just an instance and product of experience—an "object of the mind." I will mostly keep to Hume's and not a contemporary way of speaking in this essay.
[4] For consistency and concision, I will use "vivacity" in place of the large family of terms Hume uses to refer to the qualitative difference between perceptions, which includes "force," "liveliness," "violence," "vigour," "solidity," "steadiness," "firmness," and possibly "influence," "facility," and "evidence" (T 1.1.1.1, 1.2.2.6, 1.3.7.7, 1.3.5.6, 1.3.9.16, 1.3.11.1, etc.). Although Hume most frequently uses "force" by far, "vivacity" has acquired the least baggage from common use. My argument does not turn on this simplification (in fact, it challenges it), see §4.

Everson take Hume seriously in his assertion that only vivacity distinguishes impressions from ideas and try to reduce it to more precise terms. I call this the Vivacity Interpretation. Some vivacity interpreters, like Stroud, believe that vivacity is both the best way to understand Hume's theory and closest to what Hume himself thought. Others, such as Bennett, believe only the latter and think that we do Hume's theory a favor by understanding it differently than the man himself intended.

Don Garrett and especially David Landy believe that the distinction is grounded on (in the case of the latter), or at least shored up with (in the case of the former), Hume's Copy Principle—the thesis that we derive all our ideas from impressions.[5] I call this the Copy Principle interpretation.

In §1, I present the impression-idea distinction, and show how it lends itself to the Vivacity Interpretation. Despite its straightforwardness, the Vivacity Interpretation faces three serious challenges. In §2 I turn to Landy's Copy Principle and an objection to it inspired by Stroud. In §3 I begin to present my own view by offering a dialectical reading of the introductory movements of the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*. In §4, I clarify the role vivacity plays in Hume's project, and identify the pre-theoretical perspective from which it is the only impression-idea distinction. I argue that the entire debate about what distinguishes impressions from ideas for Hume makes an unreasonable demand of his theory. The phenomenological interpretation of vivacity should diffuse, rather than answer, the debate. In conclusion, I briefly mention how it also promises to diffuse a related debate about the normative standing of belief.

[5] Hume first introduces the Copy Principle in T 1.1.1.7: "All our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent."

§1 – The "Difference Betwixt These"

Vivacity interpreters rightly argue that theirs is the most straightforward way to interpret the passages in which Hume first introduces impressions and ideas:

> All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call Impressions and Ideas. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions; […] By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only, those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion. (T 1.1.1.1, compare EU 2.1)

Here, Hume straightforwardly declares vivacity to be the difference and defines "impression" and "idea" in terms of vivacity. He puts it even more strongly later in the *Treatise*:

> Impressions and ideas differ *only* in their strength and vivacity […] (T 1.1.7.5, my emphasis)
> All the perceptions of the mind are of two kinds, viz. impressions and ideas, which differ from each other *only* in their different degrees of force and vivacity. (T 1.3.7.5, my emphasis)

It may seem indisputable, then, that Hume means vivacity, or the degree of "force and liveliness, with which [perceptions] strike upon the mind," to essentially, fundamentally, and unequivocally be the impression-idea distinction (T 1.1.1.1).

However, the Vivacity Interpretation faces three major challenges. Firstly, it is unclear what Hume means by vivacity. Let me bracket this concern for now to revisit in §4. Secondly, Hume acknowledges cases where vivacity fails to distinguish impressions from ideas in his text. In the *Treaties*, he writes that,

> In sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions: as on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. (T 1.1.1.1, compare EU 2.1).

Vivacity is something that Hume expects everyone can "readily perceive," and a mind that is not somehow disordered cannot fail to perceive this difference. But if vivacity just is the readily available, apparent distinction between feelings and thoughts, how could we even recognize when perception has gone wrong, as in the case of madness? Madness presumably refers to cases when perceptions which are in fact ideas appear to be impressions, or the other way around. But if the appearance of a perception determines its character, there can be no difference between how a perception appears and how it really is![6] If vivacity determines the difference there cannot be exceptions; or, as Landy puts it, "For it to be possible […] to say that some idea has the same degree of force and vivacity as some impression, there must be some criterion other than force and vivacity that makes these different kinds of mental entities" (121).[7]

But there is another reason to doubt that vivacity is the only difference between impressions and ideas, even if it is the essential one—Hume articulates many other ways in which impressions differ from ideas throughout the development of his theory. As early as the supposedly unambiguous opening of the *Treatise*, Hume introduces ideas, not only as less vivacious than, but also as the faint images of impressions. He furthermore uniquely

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[6] For a more expansive argument along these lines, see Stroud 28–29. Stroud and Landy seem to think this argument is decisive against Hume's theory of ideas in general, but it is not, see Everson 410–412. However, Stroud still shows that, inasmuch as vivacity 1) is readily apparent and 2) determines the impression-idea distinction, then this distinction must also be readily apparent.

[7] This assumes Everson's point that "any interpretation needs to respect Hume's solipsistic account of the mind and allow a 'perception's' force and vivacity to be available to introspection" (403). Landy grants that, "if true, this would be reason to reconsider the force and vivacity interpretation, despite its difficulties," but argues that this "condition does not, in fact, follow from the previous one unless one also attributes to Hume the thesis that everything mental is available to introspection" (122). However, my arguments in the next section extend to show that vivacity must be available to introspection from some perspective for any claims from any other perspective to be meaningful.

associates ideas, not impressions, with thinking and reasoning (T 1.1.1.1). The two "only" claims from T 1.1.7.5 and T 1.3.7.5 likewise appear in company with other distinctions. The quotation from T 1.1.7.5 is immediately preceded by, "Now since all ideas are *deriv'd from impressions*, and *are nothing but copies and representations of them*, whatever is true of the one must be acknowledg'd concerning the other," and the quotation from T 1.3.7.5 is immediately followed by, "Our ideas *are copy'd from our impressions, and represent them* in all their parts" (T 1.1.7.5; 1.3.7.5, my emphasis). It seems fantastic that Hume either missed or would disagree that being-derived-from and being-copies-of are viable properties upon which to ground a distinction between impressions and ideas.[8]

§2 – The Copy Principle

For these reasons, some discard vivacity in favor of other options. Landy argues that vivacity is really a symptom of the more essential distinction marked by Hume's Copy Principle. In other words, impressions are essentially original perceptions, ideas are essentially copied perceptions, and vivacity is the appearance that results from this essential difference. For Landy, the Copy Principle is the "other rule" by which Hume judges vivacity an imperfect criterion for distinguishing impressions from ideas. Disease and madness are cases where the apparent distinction between perceptions, vivacity, is in conflict with their real distinction, as original or copied.

[8] These 'properties' both point at the Copy Principle. Additional examples are far, far too many to catalogue. T 1.3.7.7 (quoted in §3) alone gives us three more—presence, weight-in-thought, and influence-on-passions/imagination—all of which track with vivacity.

However, this solution doges one problem by diving into the way of another.[9] One of Hume's major objectives is to argue (following Locke) that "there can be no thoughts or ideas unless there are first some sensations or feelings" (Stroud 28, see also 30–31). That is to say, he means to argue for the Copy Principle. But if the Copy Principle is the impression-idea distinction, then Hume cannot argue for it from that distinction. Hume must have a theoretically prior distinction in mind to make a *claim* about—i.e., that it is the result of the Copy Principle relationship.

If this is the case, however, then Hume's empirical exceptions to the vivacity distinction arise anew. If vivacity and the Copy Principle divide perceptions even slightly differently, then Hume cannot presume to demonstrate that ideas are actually copies of impressions. A claim about a category which presumes to change the extension of that category seems to just mark out a different category. The best Hume could claim is that ideas are *often* copies of ideas. This makes Hume's further discussion of impressions and ideas devastatingly equivocal. Every claim about impressions and ideas proceeding from the Copy Principle inherits the weakness of this ambiguity.

This interpretation also fails to avoid the third objection to the Vivacity interpretation because Hume can also distinguish impressions and ideas by, for example, which faculties produce them (see also footnote 8). What we need is some way to understand Hume as using the words "ideas," "impressions," and, by extension, "vivacity" in different senses throughout his project but to refer to the same things. Furthermore, this

[9] Arguably, the Missing Shade of Blue, as a blatant exception to these essential characterizations, presents an additional problem to the one I mention here, but I think Landy's account of it is correct (132–136).

way must be compatible with Hume's claim that vivacity is the only distinction between impressions and ideas.

§3 – A Dialectical Reading

Hume's initial moves in both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry* reflect dialectical progression from the phenomenal to the theoretical. The *Enquiry* most clearly expresses this pattern. In it, Hume begins by contrasting pairs of experiences—feeling the pain of excessive heat against recalling that feeling to memory, being in a fit of anger against imagining the emotion of anger, being in love against a third-person conception of someone in love (EU 2.2). Hume then names the class to which the first member of each pair belongs impressions, and the class to which the second member of each pair belongs ideas. He then identifies vivacity as a degreed distinction between these classes. In the Treatise, Hume begins by naming his objects and mentioning some of the associated theoretical baggage, but promptly tells us, "It will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking" (T 1.1.1.1). By using examples and ordinary language, Hume invites the reader into a basic, intuitive, and merely phenomenal standpoint from which his objects (he hopes) come into view.

This suggests that the ensuing theoretical turn is a self-conscious one. As Boehm writes, "We start with what we ordinarily think of as sensing and feeling something, but then Hume instructs us to consider those objects in a new way: he asks us to focus our attention exclusively on the perceptions themselves" (209). He does this in two ways. Firstly, by renaming his objects "impressions" and "ideas" to separate the intuitive objects—feelings and thoughts—from the ambiguity and baggage associated with the

words—"feelings" and "thoughts"—used to describe them. Secondly, he names the distinction between the two. By naming the impression-idea distinction, Hume conceptually separates impressions and ideas from the way in which they are distinct. This allows him to, by making claims about vivacity, make claims about impressions and ideas as such. In other words, this prepares us to make the transition from an initial standpoint from which we recognize our objects to theoretical discovery about those objects.

In both works, Hume proceeds from this point by successive argument to the Copy Principle. In the *Treatise*, this process takes on an almost narrative style. The *Treatise* also gives us additional evidence that Hume is conscious of the dialectical nature of this first discovery,

> […] I am curious to find some other of [impressions' and idea's] qualities. Let us consider how they stand with regard to their existence, and which of the impressions and ideas are causes and which effects. The *full* examination of this question is the subject of the present treatise; and therefore we shall here content ourselves with establishing one general proposition, *that all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent*. (T 1.1.1.6–7)

That Hume explicitly intends to discover other qualities distinctive of impressions and ideas suggests that his claims that vivacity is the only distinction between the two really just marks out the original standpoint from which Hume intends to proceed.

Now we can characterize the different senses in which Hume uses the words "ideas," "impressions," and "vivacity." The first sense is phenomenological. It is clear that Hume's claim that impressions and ideas differ only in their degree of vivacity is just false except from a phenomenological standpoint as his object first come into view. From this perspective, there is no separation between being and appearance there can be no understanding of disorder of the mind or notion of appearance. But as we shift to a more

theoretical perspective, conceptually separating impressions and ideas from their appearance, the observation that the phenomenology of perceptions denotes underlying causal priority becomes possible. From this new perspective, we can make sense of the meaning of appearance as well as the intuition that appearance sometimes misleads. The possibility of error arises as the possibility of conflict between interpretation informed only by the first perspective with interpretation informed by the second.

§4 – Vivacity as Phenomenon

Both Vivacity interpreters and Copy Principle interpreters, as I've called them, agree that Vivacity's privileged place in Hume's theory conflicts with a lack of technical explanation. Stroud captures this concern neatly:

> "Certainly everyone will acknowledge that there is a difference between feeling or perceiving something and merely thinking about it in its absence, and not many words are needed to convince people of that distinction. But Hume is putting forward a view about what that difference is. He says it is merely a difference in the degree of 'force and liveliness' with which certain perceptions strike upon the mind. And that does need explanation and defense. The obviousness of the fact that there is a distinction between perceiving and thinking does not make Hume's account of that difference obvious. In fact, it is not even clear what his account comes to." (28)

Stroud demands that Hume "must explain in more detail what 'force and liveliness' of perceptions are, and how they are recognized, or else he must explain the distinction between [feeling] and thinking in some other way" (29). The Copy Principle interpretation answers this demand by technically explaining vivacity as the phenomenological symptom of the metaphysical difference laid out by the Copy Principle. Vivacity interpreters commonly offer their own similar explanations of vivacity in other terms (interestingly, Stroud does not give his own explication of vivacity, despite his call for such explication).

For example, Bennett thinks vivacity comes down to the objectivity of a given perception. That is, when Hume says that an impression is more vivacious than an idea (or a belief than a mere imagining) he is saying that we take the content of the first perception to be more objective than that of the second. Relatedly, but more nuancedly, Everson argues that vivacity comes down to behavioral disposition. That is, what Hume means when he says that an impression is more vivacious than an idea is that an impression more powerfully disposes one to act on its content than an idea. Everson counters Stroud's famous fire poker counter-example to Hume's impression-idea distinction by observing that, while a memory of the location of a fire poker (the murder weapon) may be striking enough to cause a detective to stop in his tracks and rush off to catch the culprit, it will not cause him to reach out for the poker or avoid it on his way as he will a nearby fire hydrant. The memory of the poker is strong, as evidenced by the detective's active response to it, but not directly influential in the same way as the detective's perception of nearby objects. Additionally, it is not merely the memory that causes the detective to act in the way he does, but the memory in company with other ideas that, through a bit of reasoning, come to produce the idea that so-and-so is the killer. On the other hand, the detective's perception of the fire hydrant in his path is directly significant enough that he alters his trajectory.

Of course, Landy is simply correct in asserting that the Copy Principle marks out a difference between impressions and ideas, and I take Everson to be likewise correct that behavioral disposition somehow tracks vivacity. Hume makes both of these claims more or less explicitly in the course of his project. Most attempts to disambiguate vivacity latch on to something Hume actually claims in the course of his examination of the relationship between impressions and ideas. The problem is thinking that any one of these things is

what vivacity really comes down to or what it really means. The problem is rising to Stroud's demand at all. While Stroud is correct that the obviousness that a distinction exists does not make the account of that difference obvious, he is incorrect in thinking Hume's word choice is meant to give sufficient account of that difference, or that Hume must give such an account on the outset. Instead, vivacity is explanatorily basic, for Hume, in the same way that impressions and ideas are. *Any* explanation of the distinction, theoretical or practical, presupposes the distinction itself for intelligibility. Dialectically speaking, one must already grasp what Hume is talking about to understand anything he says, and if one does not, he can do little other than multiply examples and metaphorical names until his reader catches on. Even if Hume has his theory in mind from the beginning (which he clearly does) he must begin with what his theory is of.

The instinct to explain vivacity as such for Hume follows from misunderstanding the part it plays as it first comes on to the scene in his project. "Vivacity"[10] is just Hume's *name* for the impression-idea distinction. As noted, Hume does not confine himself to "vivacity" in the technical way that I have (footnote 4). But in his more common way of speaking, "force," "vivacity," and the like just *denote* the phenomenological difference between impressions and ideas which makes any theoretical claim about them intelligible. However, these names are not mere variables, they also have metaphorical value; "vivacity" both refers to the impression-idea distinction and evokes how that distinction is.

Consider, for a moment, the role vivacity plays in designating the difference between more or less vivacious images. What explanation can we give of it? We could perhaps say that more vivacious images have more color, but this is just to ground vivacity

[10] The word.

on another term of imprecise theoretical standing: vivacity=colorfulness. We might say, after some observation, that vivacity is a measure of pigment density. But this is unsatisfying for two reasons. First, while pigment density correlates with vivacity, all things equal, so does the relationship between the hue of illuminating light relative to the hue of the color in question, the hues of other proximate colors, and so on. And that is only in light reflection; the correlates are completely different in light emission. In order to account for both, we might say that vivacity is instead a matter of photon density, but then vivacity becomes exclusive of all but retinal images, even though it seems appropriately attributed to objective images. A full account of everything associated with vivacity appears far too complex to be the meaning of the word itself. Secondly, once we equate vivacity with something like pigment density, then the statement that vivacity is a measure of pigment density becomes vacuous, meaning only that pigment density is a measure of pigment density. To be meaningful, image vivacity has to remain tied to one's phenomenal experience of colors and images. An artist does not increase pigment density to increase pigment density, but to increase vivacity. All discoveries about the physical and mental associates of vivacity depend on a pre-existing phenomenology of more or less vivacious images for their meaningfulness, and a valid (and probably original) use of the word "vivacity" is to simply denote that phenomenology.

Perhaps as a result of this, some interpret Hume's choice of "vivacity" as stronger than metaphor, attributing to him the theory that all mental objects are images. While this helpfully makes descriptions of perceptions in terms of vivacity literally true, it is, as Everson notes, a suspiciously crude theory (Everson 404–405). In addition to its crudeness, the theory is distinctly at odds with the other names for the impression-idea distinction

and the variety of experiences Hume considers "perceptions." These discrepancies contradict the idea that Hume's use of "vivacity" to denote a general property of perceptions is the same as the literal use of the term to denote a property of images, pre-theoretical or otherwise.

Hume's most direct attempt to clarify what he means by "vivacity" evokes metaphorical gesturing at otherwise ineffable qualitative experience:

> An idea assented to feels different from a fictitious idea, that the fancy alone presents to us: And this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior *force*, or *vivacity*, or *solidity*, or *firmness*, or *steadiness*. This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is intended only to express that act of the mind, which renders realities more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination. (T 1.3.7.7)

Hume calls vivacity a feeling, though we might today call it a phenomenon. It is associated with reality, significance, and behavior. But Hume can say little more than this, going as far as to assert "'tis impossible to explain perfectly this feeling or manner of conception. We may make use of words, that express something near it" (T 1.3.7.7). In the same way, I might use the word "salty" metaphorically to describe someone's personality (rather than their flavor). As a metaphor, "salty" handily describes someone who, like salt, is not altogether unpleasant but certainly harsh or inappropriate in certain contexts. We often communicate otherwise nameless phenomena in this way.[11]

Hume relies on "vivacity's" literal meaning to gesture at an aspect of perceptions that is similarly phenomenal (notably, Hume's use of the word "impression" to refer to

[11] Of course, it now seems that salty as describing someone's personality is just an additional meaning of "salty." I suspect that when we reference otherwise nameless phenomena in this metaphorical way and the reference is taken up into common use, the result is a new meaning of the word.

immediate perception is the same in this respect). His choice of metaphor invites readers into the perspective he has in mind—that from which the metaphor makes sense. Hume is counting on readers either recognizing what he is talking about or casting about for the right perspective until they do.

It is something like this interpretation that Bennett criticizes as "simple to the point of idiocy" because it results in "equating 'experience of the objective realm' with 'intense or violent sensory states'" (Bennett 225). But this fails to appreciate the nuance of Hume's phenomenology. That an impression is or results from a sensory state is not a perceptive phenomenon but a *theory* about perception; one that actually *presupposes* vivacious perceptions to be of an objective realm which as such requires faculties of sensation for access. A claim that perceptions of the objective realm are especially vivacious because they originate from the senses is, like the Copy Principle, an *explanation* of vivacity. But vivacity itself is the qualitative experience of the perceptions theorized to be of the objective realm. Vivacity is the phenomenon which grounds theoretical supposition of a real world and a faculty of sensation by which we access it. If we grant Hume attunement to the difference between phenomenological and theoretical standpoints, this straightforward, even vacuous, interpretation of vivacity leaves Hume's theory far from simplistic. By equating experience of the objective realm with vivacity, Hume asserts that the objective realm is just a theoretical extrapolation from the quality of phenomenal experience.[12]

[12] This theoretical extrapolation is, furthermore, only sometimes justified. See, T 1.4.1–4. For an account of Hume on conceptual justification, see Garrett's "Reason, Normativity, and Hume's 'Title Principle'."

Conclusion

Before concluding, I will briefly mention another debate that my phenomenological account of vivacity promises to clarify. Some, such as Don Garrett and David Owen, hold that Hume's account of belief is merely descriptive—that is, he intends, or only has the means, to describe the cause of belief in, as opposed to mere consideration of, an idea. On this view, Hume either does not or cannot make intelligible how we justify some inferences while rejecting others. On the other hand, some, such as Miren Boehm, Lois Loeb, Frederick Schmitt, Helen Beebee, Edward Craig, and William Edward Morris, observe that Hume clearly prefers causal belief over, for example, the belief-like states of superstition and indoctrination, and attempt to ground Hume's normativity about these things in various apparent or structural differences between what we can roughly call good and bad belief.

But the two sides of this debate mirror the characterizations Hume can give from a purely phenomenal and more theoretical standpoints, respectively. Pre-theoretically, there can be no standards by which to judge beliefs good and bad. Beliefs are apparently distinct from fictions, which difference Hume just calls vivacity. Wielding only vivacity as mere phenomena, Hume cannot distinguish good from bad beliefs, only belief from fiction. However, from more theoretical perspectives, Hume has access to the manner in which the believed idea acquires vivacity, the faculties from which that idea (and its vivacity) issues, the customary and general ideas by which we characterize it, all of which promise a foundation for normativity. Given my interpretation, we should expect both descriptive and normative strains in Hume's account of belief because his project spans phenomenal and theoretical perspectives.

The demand that Hume better explain the distinction between feeling and thinking before he goes on is one that Hume must not meet. Rather than a symptom of basic incompleteness, vivacity's initial want for technical explanation is appropriate for the way it comes onto the scene as phenomena. Mine is, admittedly, an extremely basic account of vivacity, but only as Hume initially introduces it. After grounding himself in what he takes to be pre-theoretically available, Hume's entire proceeding project is an examination of how impressions and ideas stand with regard to their existence (T 1.1.1.7). Further explanation of vivacity is a core outcome of Hume's project; we cannot demand that explanation of him before he begins to give it. Furthermore, while the Copy Principle is certainly a theoretical disambiguation of vivacity, there are many others—as many distinctions between impressions and ideas as Hume makes claims about vivacity.

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