



Can Hume's Impressions of Reflection Represent?

Anna Stoklosa (University of Toronto, Canada)

Humean passions are *of, for* or *about* things – that is, they are intentional. However, Hume is also taken to claim, in a famous passage of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, that the passions do not represent anything (THN 2.3.3.5). Hume's views in 2.3.3.5, and his views on intentionality of the passions, have been interpreted to be in tension with each another (Kenny 2003, Penelhum 1993, Cohon and Owen 1997, Sayre-McCord 1997, Baier 1991).

Consequently, two approaches have been offered to reconcile the tension. On the one hand, it has been argued that the claims of 2.3.3.5 are anomalous and therefore ought to be disregarded (Baier 1991, Penelhum 1993). On the other hand, it has also been argued that the claims of 2.3.3.5 *can* be reconciled with the intentionality of the passions, if we shift the representationality of the passions (or, impressions of reflection) onto the *ideas* associated with the passions (Cohon and Owen 1997, Sayre-McCord 1997).

Both approaches, however, start from the assumption that passions – or impressions of reflection – *do not represent anything* for Hume. It is my aim in this paper to argue against this view. More specifically, I will argue that Hume holds the following view of representationality of perceptions: if perception A is the cause of perception B, and perception B derives its content from perception A, and perception A is epistemically accessible to us, then perception B represents perception A. Hume holds that ideas of sensation cause impressions of reflection. Impressions of reflection, moreover, derive their content from ideas of sensation, and, finally, ideas of sensation are epistemically accessible to us. Thus, impressions of reflection (that is, passions) *are* representational for Hume.

The view I argue for appears to be in tension with the standard interpretation of Hume's claims in 2.3.3.5 as asserting that passions do not represent. I will therefore also argue that in 2.3.3.5 Hume only denies *a particular type* of representationality of the passions, rather than denying their representationality tout court, rendering consistent my argument with Hume's views in 2.3.3.5.