

## Candidate 4

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1	<p>Hume calls <del>anything</del> every thought, sensation or other discrete thing in our mind a perception. Hume then divides perceptions into two categories, <del>of</del> impressions and ideas. Impressions are experiences, either external or internal. An external impression might be a smell or taste, an object you can see, or a sensation like pain, while an internal impression is an emotion like anger or happiness. Hume thinks that ideas are weaker copies of impressions, and that we cannot have any ideas without corresponding impressions. The recollection of any sensation or emotion is, according to Hume, <del>me</del> always less vivid than the actual sensation or recollection. Hume explains the reason for us having ideas without impressions that directly correspond</p>

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<p>by explaining how imagination works. Hume first <del>draws</del> draws a distinction between simple and complex ideas. A simple idea cannot be broken down into smaller parts, while a <del>not</del> complex idea is made up of other simple or complex ideas. For example, the complex idea 'table' may be broken down into simple ideas, such as surface, wood, and leg-having. Hume says using our imagination, we can make up new complex ideas. The functions of the imagination as described by Hume are transposing, or moving some aspect of one complex idea onto another, (like a talking dog), compounding, or adding multiple ideas together (like a unicorn, which is made up of 'horse' and 'horn'), and augmenting <del>or</del> diminishing, which are making something greater or less respectively.</p>	

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Hume believes that our idea of God comes from compounding augmented ideas of goodness, power, and fatherhood.

Hume says that ~~complex~~<sup>simple</sup> ideas can only come from corresponding impressions.

He provides the example of the ~~blind~~<sup>born blind</sup> man who has no concept of colour, but, if his sight was restored, would gain one, to prove that we only get ideas from corresponding impressions. He says that the only thing that could prove him wrong would be to find an idea without a corresponding impression.

However, there are a number of issues with the argument Hume puts forward.

Hume puts forward a counterexample to his own claim, 'the missing shade of blue'. Hume proposes that we imagine a person, possessing perfect colour vision,

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	who has seen every shade of blue but one.
	Hume proves that shades of colour are distinct <del>shades of colour</del> simple ideas using a reductio ad absurdum argument where he points out that if different shades of colour are the same simple idea, then logically there is no way to make a distinction between two visibly different colours if presented as a spectrum. With this proved, Hume goes on to say that the hypothetical person who has simple ideas of all but one shade of blue would, if all the <del>other</del> shades he knows were presented to him in a continuous spectrum, not only be able to identify where the missing shade would go, but could also gain a <sup>(simple)</sup> idea of the missing shade. This is a problem for Hume as it is a counterexample to his copy principle. <sup>(an idea without a corresponding impression)</sup> There are a

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	number of ways that the problem might be addressed
	Some people might argue that the person would not be able to gain an idea of the missing shade, meaning the counterexample is wrong and thus doesn't matter. This doesn't really <del>prove</del> prove that the missing shade of blue is wrong though, only asserts it, meaning it is not an adequate response to the criticism. Another way to circumvent the missing shade of blue is to <del>say</del> say that colours are complex ideas made up of the simple ideas of hue, saturation and value. This would be able to combat the missing shade of blue, but not all similar <del>counterexamples</del> counterexamples concerning continuous spectra. Hume himself argued that the missing shade of blue was a singular exception and thus not worth considering. This at first seems obviously



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	<p>colour. The concept as a whole may be expressed to a blind man through analogy, and there are blind artists who use colours in their work. Supporters of Hume might argue that the blind man's idea of colour is less specific and accurate and that he doesn't have a true idea of what colour is, but the criticism is still relevant, as it forces supporters of Hume to give a more specific definition of 'knowledge of colour'. The final criticism is that sometimes, dreams feel more vivid than <u>experiences</u>. This is a problem because Hume says that ideas are always weaker copies of impressions, but my dream of meeting the queen might feel more vivid and lively than my impression of waiting for the bus, meaning that the weakest impression may not be weaker than the strongest idea, disputing his copy principle.</p>	

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A rebuttal might be to argue that dreams are internal impressions, or just to outright deny that they are more vivid, but the former seems implausible, as dreams are copied from other ideas and experiences, meaning they are likely to be ideas themselves, and the other response doesn't really defeat the criticism as just saying it's wrong doesn't make it wrong.

Overall Hume's theory of impressions and ideas seems superficially plausible, but has some issues that cannot be fixed but only ignored, making Hume's theory as a whole less plausible.