

Was Henry Home the Author of Hume's Mature Theory of Belief?

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If we take seriously the possibility that the story related by Boswell – the story about Henry Home's objections to the philosophy of the *Treatise* which David Hume had to accept as valid – is true, what were the objections and how Hume reacted to them? I argue that, most likely, two of Henry Home's objections concerned belief and personal identity, and that Hume modified his theory of belief accordingly between the *Treatise*, book I, and the *Abstract*. In the early theory, force and vivacity are the primitive phaenomena in terms of which belief is to be explained; in the mature theory, the primitive phaenomenon is belief (and force and vivacity are just some of the words that we can use to speak about it). I show further that the untenability of the early theory is shown clearly by the argument of Henry Home's essay „Of Belief“ (printed 1751, probably circulated around 1746, quite likely based on the objections of May 1739), and I provide further indirect evidence for taking the Boswell story seriously.