The Historical Convergence of Happiness and Virtue:
A Reading of Hume's Theory of Moral Motivation

by

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Abstract

That Hume offers an account of motivation and action is widely accepted. But whether he offers a distinct theory of moral motivation is less obvious. Contemporary scholarship has attempted to reconstruct this theory, but not always fruitfully, given its focus on examining the moral psychology of moral sentiments: do moral sentiments produce virtuous actions? I depart from this traditional approach. I set up Hume's views as addressing two crucial concerns present in his contemporaries' discussions of the problem of moral motivation: the nature of virtuous motives and the role that reflection plays in virtuous behaviour. To reveal Hume's position, I propose to look at the historical evolution of the motives that, on his view, are objects of positive moral judgment.

In my reading of Hume, the motivational impulse of virtue derives from the convergence between the gradual regulation and refinement in the satisfaction of the passions — i.e., happiness — and the sense of virtue. This convergence shows up only through the lens of conjectural history, a genre of historiography used by Hume to describe the nature and civilizing potential of the passions. My central argument is a reconstruction of the conjectural histories that Hume scatters throughout his texts, by means of which I show that behind the story of the 'rise and progress' of justice, commerce, government, the arts and sciences, and politeness lies the natural history of civilized individuals' motivation towards virtue.

This argument allows me to articulate Hume's distinctive views in regards to the problem of moral motivation. For Hume, it is not true, against the common interpretations of Hobbes and Mandeville, that self-regarding motives are more natural, basic, or stronger than other-regarding ones. In fact, Hume conceives human motives, very much like Butler, as native affections directed at various objects, some of which affect the self, some of which affect other people. Their moral quality derives, as in Butler's view, from how they are regulated. But whereas Butler takes it that the principles of self-love and of conscience regulate in each individual the direction and strength of the passions, Hume conceives the regulation and refinement of the passions as a process driven by experience, that unfolds historically as human beings interact with the world and with each other and which is finally realized in the practices and institutions of 'polished' and 'luxurious' societies. Further, the crucial effect of this historical progress of the passions is that members of such societies are able to adopt a reflective perspective from which they recognize the coincidence between satisfying their regulated and refined passions and acting virtuously. In a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, individuals' psychology is shaped in such a way that what people

see as contributing to their happiness *is* what they see as virtuous ways of acting. In this sense, happiness and virtue finally converge.

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

Leviathan - Hobbes, T. (1909). *Hobbes's Leviathan reprinted from the edition of 1651 with an Essay by the Late W.G. Pogson Smith.* Oxford: Clarendon Press. Retrieved January 13, 2015 from http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/869

Fable - Mandeville, B. (1988). *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits,* 2 vols. Retrieved January 9, 2015 from <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/846>

Honour - Mandeville, B. (2014). *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War.* Retrieved January 9, 2015 from https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/ 7819

Inquiry - Hutcheson F., [1725] (2004). *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Morality in Two Treatises,* W. Leidhold (Ed.). Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Essay - Hutcheson F., [1728] (2002). [1728] (2002). *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense,* A. Garret (Ed.). Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Fifteen Sermons - Butler J., [1726-1792] (2006). *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel.* In D. E. White (Ed.), *The Works of Bishop Butler*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press.

Theological Writings - Luther, M. (2012). *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*. W. R. Russell (Ed.). Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Institutes - Calvin, J. [1536] (1936). *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Vol. I, II. J. Allen (Tr.). Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education.

ECHU - Cited by using arabic numerals of book, chapter and section. Locke, J. (1824). *Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*. In: *The Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes.* London: Rivington, 12th ed. Vol. 2. Retrieved January 12, 2015 from <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/762>

Characteristicks - Cooper, A.A., Earl, Shaftesbury. (2001) *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times Vol 1-3.* Douglas den Uyl (Ed.) Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. Retrieved January 13, 2015 from http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/812

SBN - Followed by page number. Hume, D. [1739-40], (1978). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. L.A. Selby-Bigge & P.H. Nidditch (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

T- Followed by book, part, section and paragraph. Hume, D. [1739-40], (2000). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Norton David & Norton Mary (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

EHU & EPM - Followed by page number 3rd edition. Hume, D. [1777], (2005). *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*. L.A. Selby-Bigge & P.H. Nidditch (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NHR - Followed by page number. Hume, D. [1757], (1889). *The Natural History of Religion*. London: A. and H. Bradlaugh Bonner. Retrieved May 11, 2015. <http:// oll.libertyfund.org/titles/340>

E - Followed by essay abbreviation and page number. Hume, D. [1889], (1987). *Essays. Moral, Political and Literary*. E. F. Miller (Ed.). Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Essays Abbreviations:

E-BG - Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic (1741)

E-BT - Of the Balance of Trade (1752)

E-CL - Of Civil Liberty (1741)

E-Co - Of Commerce (1752)

E-CP - Of the Coalition of Parties (1760)

E-CR - A Character of Sir Robert Walpole (1742; withdrawn after 1768)

E-DM - Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature (1741)

E-DT - Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion (1741)

E-Ep - The Epicurean (1742)

E-FP - Of the First Principles of Government (1741)

E-IM - Of Impudence and Modesty (1741; withdrawn after 1760)

E-In - Of Interest (1752)

E-IP - Of the Independency of Parliament (1741)

E-IPC - Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth (1752)

E-IS - Of the Immortality of the Soul (1777, after having been withdrawn in 1757)

E-JT - Of the Jealousy of Trade (1760)

E-LP - Of the Liberty of the Press (1741)

E-Mo - Of Money (1752)

E-NC - Of National Characters (1748)

E-OC - Of the Original Contract (1748)

Introduction

There seems to be a wide consensus that Hume offers an account of motivation and action, even though commentators still debate the exact content of his position[1]. But whether he offers a distinct theory of moral motivation, that is, a theory about how virtuous traits become part of individuals' characters and how virtuous actions are caused, remains controversial[2]. Indeed, on

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[1] That Hume offers a theory of action is such an accepted view that contemporary philosophers of action have come to refer to certain group of claims about motivation as 'the Humean theory of action'. Michael Smith's (1987) is perhaps the clearest presentations of this theory ─ although he denies that his account constitutes an attempt to interpret the actual Hume. According to this theory 'a belief is insufficient for motivation, which always requires, in addition to belief, the presence of a desire or conative state' (Rosati 2014). Among Hume scholars, John Bricke (1988, 1996) offers the interpretation that best accommodates the Humean theory of action claims within Hume's texts. Commonly, however, Hume scholars challenge the idea that the actual Hume shared the tenets of the contemporary Humean theory of action. See for example, Gill (2006), Haakonssen (1996), Magri (1994), Mason (2005), Millgram (1995), Phillips (2005), Rawls (2000), Schafer (2008), Schauber (2009), Shaw (1989), Snare (1991), Sturgeon (2001), Tilley (2009), Weller (2004) and Zimmerman (2007). It is worth mentioning that although a Humean theory of *action* is different from a Humean theory of *moral motivation*, it is fairly easy to extend the former so to construe a version of the latter. Rosati writes: 'Moral motivation thus cannot arise from moral belief alone but must depend as well upon a preexisting desire or other conative or intrinsically motivating state' (Rosati 2014).

[2] In this sense, Hume's guiding question in the *Treatise* investigation on 'Morals' is '*whether it is by means of our ideas or impressions we distinguish betwixt vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blameable or praiseworthy*?' (SBN- 456; T- 3.1.1.3. Italics in the text). In the second *Enquiry,* he states the goal and method of his project as follows: 'if we can be so happy, in the course of this enquiry, as to discover the true origin of morals, it will then easily appear how far either sentiment or reason enters into all determinations of this nature. In order to attain this purpose, we shall endeavour to follow a very simple method: we shall analyse that complication of mental qualities, which form what, in common life, we call Personal Merit': we shall consider every attribute of the mind, which renders a man an object either of esteem and affection, or of hatred and contempt; every habit or sentiment or faculty, which, if ascribed to any person, implies either praise or blame, and may enter into any panegyric or satire of his character and manners (…) The very nature of language guides us almost infallibly in forming a judgment of this nature' (EPM- 173). Note that, although it may appear as if Hume's interest in the second *Enquiry* were not in the character of moral distinctions but rather in their object, he is not examining how these qualities come to be part of people's characters, but what it is that makes us consider them virtuous at all. So, in neither of these works Hume's explicit goal is to offer a theory of moral motivation.

the topic closest to a theory of moral motivation, i.e., how moral sentiments or moral distinctions motivate actions, Hume's comments are sketchy and subject to heated scholarly discussion.

My aim in this project is to show that Hume's texts contain a reasonable theory of moral motivation. As such, I offer this dissertation as a contribution to the history of philosophy, and more specifically, as a contribution to the contemporary scholarship on Hume's philosophy. I use standard methods of interpretation of philosophical texts, where arguments contained in different parts of Hume's corpus are reconstructed, examined and proposed as solutions to questions that he explicitly asked or that he might have asked, given the influences and interests apparent in his overall work. I argue that, on Hume's view, the motivational impulse of virtue derives from the convergence between the concern for happiness and the sense of virtue. This convergence arises historically, showing up clearly in the conjectural accounts where Hume traces the developmental course of virtuous motives from their origin in natural and uncultivated passions to their civilized versions as regulated and refined virtuous traits. According to my reading, Hume's conjectural histories about the 'rise and progress' of justice, commerce, government, the arts and sciences, and politeness narrate the process of regulation and refinement of three central passions: 'avidity', 'curiosity' and the 'social affections' — the latter including the 'desire of company and conversation', certain aspects of 'pride' and the passion of 'benevolence'. This process produces 'polished' and 'luxurious' societies which equip individuals psychological and socially to achieve 'the happiest disposition of mind' i.e., 'the *virtuous*' (E-Sc 168).

To evaluate the merit of this interpretation, in chapter 1, I set up what I call *the problem of moral motivation*. I formulate this problem on the basis of a selective review of some of the authors that may have influenced Hume's views on the motivational power of morality. In my view, the problem of moral motivation addressed two main concerns. First, seventeenth and eighteenth British authors were concerned with establishing how virtuous behaviour is produced within a naturalistic framework that appropriately reflected both the phenomenology and the moral language of people's everyday experience of moral motivation. I call this the concern about *the nature of virtuous motives*. Second, these authors were also concerned with how individuals understand the significance both of acquiring and cultivating virtuous traits and of performing virtuous actions. Their concern was that, from a moral perspective, virtue involves, not only the outward performance of virtuous actions and not only the right motives, but also

some degree of the agent's reflective endorsement of the motivations that lead her to act virtuously. I call this the concern about *reflection in virtuous motivation*.

Although contemporary scholarship on Hume's moral psychology has addressed the problem of moral motivation, it has done it partially and not always fruitfully. Hume's views on this topic have been discussed mainly through one interpretative question: *are virtuous actions one of the effects that moral sentiments produce?* In chapter 2, I examine the most influential answers in the secondary literature. In this context, I depart from traditional interpretations that focus on the moral psychology of the civilized adult presented mainly in the *Treatise*, to turn to Hume's interest in the historical development of the passions as a key to his account of moral motivation. This implies a departure from the sort of question typically asked by commentators. Instead of investigating the nature of moral sentiments, I propose to look at the evolution of the motives that, on Hume's view, are the object of positive moral judgment.

After thus setting up the problem of my investigation, in chapter 3 I clarify the methodological tenets of 'conjectural history', which is the particular genre of historiography that Hume chooses to trace the historical development of the passions. To this end, I examine the grounds on which Hume must have defended his contributions to conjectural history as valid forms of historical explanation of 'human affairs'. My claim is that, for Hume, conjectural histories provide a unique insight into the nature of modern practices and institutions by offering the rationale that must have caused their emergence and development and which justifies our current approbation of them. Conjectural histories thus enable readers to take a critical stance towards such practices and institutions.

In chapter 4, I outline the basic moral psychology on which Hume grounds the history of the regulation and refinement of the passions. On my view, this account comes down to what I call the 'genetic account of motives'. I introduce it by arguing against the common interpretation that Hume's moral psychology is hedonistic and egoistic (Darwall 1993, 1995, Cohon 2008a, 2010). I defend a reading according to which Hume takes perceptions of pleasure and pain as intermediary causes in the generation of desires, and as a consequence, as signals of value in external objects. I elaborate further on this interpretation by discussing what has been called the 'Humean theory of action' — represented here by John Bricke (1996) — which attributes to Hume the reduction of the explanation of action to a particular version of the template 'belief

plus desire'. This interpretation agrees with my rejection of the hedonistic and egoistic reading of Hume, but claims that the causal factor in motivation, what Bricke calls the 'conative' component, is a generic mental state called 'desire'. My aim in rejecting this particular feature of the 'Humean theory of action' is to develop the distinctive tenet of the genetic account of motives, according to which the passions set the goal of actions in several distinctive ways, thereby avoiding the reductionistic view of motivation that contemporary philosophers of action associate with Hume. I argue instead that Hume holds human actions to be caused by different sorts of passions, each of which aims at a distinctive intentional object. I call this feature of Hume's theory 'motivational pluralism'.

In chapters 5 and 6, I develop the central part of my thesis. The argument in these chapters consists in a reconstruction of Hume's conjectural histories designed to expose how the process of regulation and refinement of some central passions brings along its way their virtue. For my purposes, Hume's conjectural histories are best seen as showing the role that the origin and establishment of certain practices and institutions play in the dispositions of individuals. Each of the practices or institutions to which Hume devotes a conjectural history produces a double effect on individuals' psychology: on the one hand, they regulate and refine the passion central to the practice or institution in question, enabling individuals thereby to satisfy these and other passions in ways that promote their happiness more effectively than they would otherwise. On the other hand, they equip individuals to gain the awareness that there is virtue in satisfying their passions in regulated and refined ways, thereby expanding their conception of virtue and making it consistent with their civilized conception of happiness. Chapter 5 is devoted to the history of the regulation and refinement of 'avidity', and chapter 6 to that of curiosity and the social affections.

My conclusion up to this point is that, on Hume's view, individuals in a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society achieve a degree of regulation and refinement of their passions such that the search for the civilized satisfaction of their affections converges with what they recognize as the pursuit of virtue. This conclusion provides what I take to be the Humean answer to the first concern of the problem of moral motivation. On my reading of Hume, it is not true, against the common interpretations of Hobbes and Mandeville, that self-regarding motives are more natural, basic, or stronger than other-regarding ones. In fact, Hume conceives human motives, very much

like Butler, as native affections directed at various objects, some of which regard the self, others other people. Their moral quality derives, as in Butler's view, from how they are regulated. But whereas Butler takes it that the principles of self-love and of conscience regulate the direction and strength of the passions in each individual, Hume conceives the regulation and refinement of the passions as a process driven by experience that unfolds historically as human beings interact with the world and with each other and which is realized in the practices and institutions of 'polished' and luxurious' societies.

The primordial effect of this historical progress of the passions is that civilized individuals develop the ability to adopt a reflective perspective from which they recognize the coincidence between satisfying their regulated and refined passions and acting virtuously. The ability to adopt this perspective is what realizes their motivation to become and to act virtuously. By examining Hume's notion of reflection and elaborating on the idea of the reflective perspective of happiness, I argue in the last part of this project that Hume's answer to the second concern of the problem of moral motivation is that reflection transforms civilized individuals' motivation to happiness into an aspect of their civilized motivation to virtue. In a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, individuals' psychology is shaped in such a way that what they see as contributing to their happiness *is* what they see as the virtuous way of acting.

Chapter 1
The Problem of Moral Motivation

1. Introduction

In this chapter and the next, I describe what I want to call *the problem of moral motivation*. This is the kind of problem that I take Hume's theory of moral motivation to answer. I introduce it in three stages: the first, developed in this chapter, consists in a selective review of some of the authors that may have influenced Hume's views on the motivational power of morality. I touch only on a few writers and only on a few of their texts aware that my account may not do them full justice. My interest is only to highlight certain concerns and lines of thought that I consider relevant for understanding the problem to which my reading of Hume responds.

Second, on the basis of this selective review, I formulate the concerns that Hume's theory of moral motivation attempted to tackle. I identify two concerns. In the first place, there was a concern among seventeenth and eighteenth British authors to establish how virtuous behaviour is produced within a framework that reflected appropriately both the phenomenology and the moral language of people's everyday experience of moral motivation. They thus raised questions such as what is it that moves people to act according to morality? Is it a passion or a desire? Is it reason? Is it some propensity to obtain the pleasure from others' praise? Is it self-interest or self-love? Since the central question in this concern is what the real motive or motives for acting virtuously are, I call this set of issues *the concern about the nature of virtuous motives*.

There was a second concern about the sense in which individuals understand the significance both of acquiring and cultivating virtuous traits and of performing virtuous actions. Although central to the discussions in the period, this concern is less clearly articulated and sometimes difficult to pinpoint. One way to understand it is the following. Although for some purposes the outward appearance of virtuousness is sufficient to avoid censure or even to gain the approval of others (prominently, legal purposes), we do not consider that a person acted virtuously from a moral perspective, unless she was moved by a certain motive (i.e., certain affections, passions, or desires) *and she wanted to be moved by that motive*. In other words, from a moral perspective, virtue involves more than the external performance of a type of action

produced by the right kind of motive; it also involves some degree of the agent's reflective endorsement of the motivations which led her to act virtuously. As a result, the central question underlying this concern could be formulated as what are the capacities or dispositions that make taking up a morally reflective stance psychologically possible and how do they work? I call this set of issues *the concern about reflection in virtuous motivation*.

As noted before, my purpose in distinguishing these two concerns is to frame the problem to which Hume's theory of moral motivation is a response. But I also want to use them as a reference point to show that Hume carries his contemporary discussion about moral motivation further than other authors of the time. More specifically, Hume's theory of moral motivation explains, on the one hand, the origin, reliability and efficacy of virtuous motives and, on the other, the way such motives are reflectively upheld by the agent within a framework that underscores the historical development of human nature, and in particular, the civilization of the passions. In this, I claim, Hume's account is distinctive from and particularly insightful among his contemporaries'. As I interpret Hume, if we look at the conjectural development of the passions, we find that individuals of civilized passions are in fact virtuous individuals.

2. The antecedents of the problem of moral motivation

With the exception of Luther and the Calvinists, all the authors reviewed in this chapter were born or were much discussed in the England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. My intention is not to propose any claim concerning the changes, conceptual, methodological or of any other kind, that might have occurred in the period, whether for moral philosophy as a whole, or for moral motivation in particular. Not only is my sample too selective to make any serious claim in this direction, but my selection centres around a very few, cutting-edge authors, without examining their philosophical nuances or their reception. Given that both in scope and quality my review is inadequate to lend support to any significant hypothesis about the transitions of thought in the moral philosophy of early modern England, my purpose in this section is the considerably more modest one of identifying some common topics and concerns in the most influential authors of Hume's time. I do not argue that Hume read or explicitly responded to the

views examined here, but I believe that the topics and concerns that I highlight are representative of the state of the discussion around moral motivation of which he must have been aware[3].

Given the small temporal spread of the authors that I mention in this chapter, I do not place too much weight on the actual chronological order of their writings or on the direction of influence among them. The order and depth in which I introduce them serve my purpose of presenting the concerns that make up the problem of moral motivation. Still, to reduce the sense of arbitrariness that this self-serving use of these authors might provoke, it is convenient to take a look at the way in which some prominent contemporary historians of philosophy portray the state of the discussion in the period. This, I hope, justifies my focus.

According to Jerome Schneewind (1998), the Europe of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries saw a paradigm change in moral thought. Schneewind claims that during the

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[3] Still, to say this is not to deny that there were other aspects of moral motivation debated under different headings or by other authors in this period. Different commentators writing on the history of moral philosophy of the period choose different philosophers to reconstruct the lines of development of the concepts or problems in which they are interested. The obvious classical example is Selby-Bigge's anthology of British Moralists (1897) and his division between rationalists and sentimentalists. More recently, Isabel Rivers (2000) traces the changes in the relationships between Anglican religion and ethics from 1660 to 1780. Her survey is very thorough and includes representatives of the various movements that attempted to change the conception of 'true religion' endorsed by the Church of England in the seventeenth century (latitudinarianism, nonconformism, dissentism and methodism); she also pursues the evolution of this debate between seculars (Shaftesbury, Tolland, Tindal and Collins in the first generation, Hutcheson, Turnbull, Fordyce and Butler, in the second) and divines (Clarke, Berkeley, Skelton and Leland) into the eighteenth century. Another example is Christian Maurer (2013). In his survey of British early modern notions of self-interest and sociability, he notes, following Hutcheson, that neo-Epicurean authors (such as Hobbes, Locke, Pufendorf) tended to defend, whereas neo-Stoic authors (Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume) tended to reject the 'selfish hypothesis'. This neat division is complicated by the fact that neo-Augustinian authors (Clarke, Campbell and Gay) also defended the selfish hypothesis, although on different grounds from those of neo-Epicureans. Another worth mentioning line of development is the Malebranchian reception of the notion of love in seventeenth and eighteenth century England, beginning with authors belonging to the group of the Cambridge Platonists, such as Henry More and continuing with the exchanges between John Morris, Mary Astell and Damaris Masham. In the text, I comment briefly on another three commentators (i.e., Schneewind, Darwall and Gill) and their canons. What I want to stress from these examples is that my selection of authors, as probably the selection of any other student of the history of philosophy, does depend on the purposes of the project at hand, and in my case, on practical considerations of space and time. At any rate, I concede that, perhaps, a review of a different selection of authors would produce a different notion of the problem of moral motivation. After all, the picture of any historical landscape is always a matter of theoretical decisions that irremediably leave some things out. The success of my selection should be estimated by how it helps to delineate the central problem of this project.

period, established conceptions of 'morality as obedience' were challenged, particularly in two aspects (Schneewind 1998, 1-2): on the one hand, the understanding of how individuals know what morality requires of them, and on the other, the conception of how individuals are moved to act according to such knowledge. Under the morality as obedience paradigm, 'morality is to be understood most deeply as one aspect of the obedience we owe to God' (Schneewind 1998, 4). Reason and revelation were the preeminent ways for individuals to gain acquaintance with what God required of them. But since not everyone was fitted to obtain such knowledge, and even fewer were able to apply it to particular cases, individuals were subjected to the guidance and enforcement of obedience exerted by some figure of authority, either religious or secular. Moral motivation was then reduced to the predictable reactions to threats of punishment and offers of reward.

The new paradigm of 'self-governing morality' advanced a different account of the relations between human beings and God as well as of the nature and role of morality. Although, as Schneewind (1998, 5) notes, these new views were not worked out self-consciously as alternatives to the paradigm of morality as obedience at least until the early eighteenth century, the discussions of the period led to conceptions in which the content and normative status of morality were deduced directly from human nature, leaving a gradually smaller role for God. Paradoxically, this secularizing turn was a consequence of rethinking the ideal of human dignity endorsed by the Christian tradition and that most writers of the time still accepted (Schneewind 1998, 5). Ultimately, the change in the conception of the content and status of morality implied that individuals either possess natively or could eventually acquire the capacities needed to grasp and follow the precepts of morality. Both kinds of capacities were thus explained in naturalistic terms, as the offspring of the natural psychological equipment of the average human being.

Whereas Schneewind stresses the change in the conception of morality as a result of the disintegration of the European religious consensus[4], Michael Gill (2006) focuses on England and places the defining factor of evolution in the moral thought of the period in a changing stand on the 'Human Nature Question'. On Gill's view, this question asks whether human beings are

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[4] While recognizing some influence, Schneewind rejects both that developments in science and the supposedly uniform and secularizing movement of the Enlightenment could have been the deciding factors (2008, 7-8).

naturally good or evil, whether they are naturally drawn to virtue or to vice, and whether it is natural or not for them to do the right thing (2006, 1). Although he seems to imply that this question is perennial, Gill believes that examining the responses given by British authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries allows us to appreciate the birth of a moral philosophy increasingly independent of religious or theological commitments, and presumably as a consequence of this, it also 'reveal[s] a Copernican Revolution in moral philosophy, a shift from thinking of morality as a standard against which human nature as a whole can be measured to thinking of morality as itself a part of human nature' (Gill 2006, 2). Both positive and negative responses to the Human Nature Question assumed that morality was something externally imposed on individuals, and which the latter were more or less able to bring themselves to follow. Only a headlong challenge to the terms of the question — something that Gill considers only took place with Hume's philosophy — could have allowed the rethinking of morality and its positioning as a fundamental part of human nature.

In turn, Stephen Darwall (1995, 2) structures his picture of early modern England as a reaction to the disintegration of the established conception of the binding force of morality. In ancient and Renaissance traditions, moral deliberation, action and evaluation were articulated in terms of the human good. The binding force of morality was then self-evident, or at least, not difficult to establish, since the 'ought' of moral action was taken to be the same as the 'ought' derived from what a rational human agent has most interest in doing. Defining morality in terms of the human good, moreover, provided it with a solid metaphysical basis, because the content of the human good was supposed to be what the human nature is essentially aimed at, rather than the focus of contingent interests.

By contrast, early modern European authors, at least since Grotius, lived in a world where morality was seen as a set of demands imposed on individuals by a legislator and which they have to obey regardless of their interests and often in conflict with them. The bindingness of morality was harder then to settle, remaining in a constant need of justification. Moreover, with the rejection of Aristotelian ontology, modern moral philosophers could no longer invoke any unified moral end whose metaphysical foundation was generally accepted. These two theoretical changes in the understanding of the notion of moral obligation raised a question of normativity in a way that had not been done before. The question was also urgent in a practical sense, given the

social and political conflicts that Europe was then enduring. On Darwall's view, the general response of early modern British authors was to ground the 'ought' of morality in a conception of either the *nature* or the *autonomy* of the moral agent (Darwall 1995, 8)[5]. In this context, Darwall takes it that the distinguishing characteristic of the period was the understanding of morality as something intrinsically related to human motivation.

These three general pictures of the early modern British landscape in moral philosophy help us to understand why the authors in the review that follows were particularly concerned with issues hinging on the topic of moral motivation. Indeed, they shared the assumption that if morality was to be binding at all, individuals must possess the capacities needed to recognize the content of moral demands and to be moved by them. Fitting morality into an increasingly naturalistic view of human nature was also a prominent and common project of the authors of this period. So, although I go only over a few authors, their interest in questions of moral psychology of a naturalistic sort, and in motivation in particular, was not unusual.

In this sense, there are two recurrent debates which illustrate the growing interest in the psychology of virtue and which provide the context for the discussions that I review in this chapter. The first is the discussion concerning human selfishness, the second, the discussion concerning the place of reason in morality.

The debate on human selfishness was initially about whether human beings form society out of a natural instinct or desire, or whether they join it out of self-interest (Maurer 2013, 292). Given the consequences for morality of the accounts of sociability proposed by Mandeville and

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[5] Darwall's own investigation is not focused on British early modern conceptions of obligation (1995, 13), but rather on one specific conception thereof: 'existence internalism', in the variety according to which 'the existence of motive, perhaps of a certain kind or under certain circumstances, is (at least part of) what it is for a normative proposition to be true' (Darwall 1995, 10-1). On his way to establish that this sort of internalism was at the centre of the philosophical reflection of British authors from 1640 to 1740, Darwall distinguishes two traditions: the empirical naturalist (comprising Hobbes, Cumberland, Hutcheson, Hume, and, in most moods, Locke) and the autonomist one (Cudworth, Locke, Butler, Shaftesbury). The distinctive feature of the former was a commitment to explain obligation in terms of an empirical epistemology and a naturalist metaphysics. The distinctive feature of the latter was the belief that 'obligation consists in conclusive motives raised through the exercise of autonomous practical reasoning' (Darwall 1995, 16).

Hobbes, authors such as Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson, among others, framed the debate in its context. The reason was that their conception of virtue required that the human propensity towards sociability was more than the result of a self-interested calculation. As Maurer states, '[i]f morality is conceived as depending on some kind of disinterested motivation, rather than on other features such as an action's accordance with some law or its consequences, then the truth of the selfish hypothesis entails that there are no morally virtuous actions at all' (Maurer 2013, 293). By Hume's time, the debate about whether there is a native desire to sociability had reached a point of exhaustion, and many authors, Hume included, took for granted that such desire existed. The debate, however, continued in the form of whether the reliability and strength of such desire was sufficient to account for moral motivation in view of the force of self-interested motives. The authors that I survey were the protagonists of the debate before Hume, and their positions are evident in the treatment that Hume himself gave to the ongoing debate. My review of Hobbes, Mandeville, Hutcheson and Butler in this chapter looks to show the way in which, in the context of the debate about sociability and self-interest in moral motivation, the positions of these authors reveal a marked concern for how glory, self-liking, self-love and self-interest produce or prevent virtuous behaviour.

Equally prominent among Hume's predecessors, and even among authors in his own generation, was the debate about the place of reason in morality. Following Selby-Bigge's classification of British moralists (Selby-Bigge 1897), the debate was framed by the contrast between rationalists and sentimentalists. The former defended the claim that morality is grounded in and grasped by reason; the latter rejected the claim and held instead that affections or sentiments do both. Although, usually, the issue about the place of reason concerned meta-ethical and epistemological questions (Cuneo 2013, 226), the discussion about the practical role that this faculty supposedly has in deliberation was also of great importance. The debate about reason thus provides some context for the discussion of the authors that I review in the section about the concern of reflection in moral motivation. Whereas Luther and the Calvinists deny human reason any power to grasp or to guide genuine moral action, Locke and Shaftesbury, each in their own way, give reason a role to play in their accounts of reflection[6]. My review of these

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[6] Gill (2006, 2010), among others, challenges the common assumption that takes Shaftesbury to be an unambiguously sentimentalist.

writers aims to show how, whether with the intervention of reason or without it, they were concerned with identifying the ability that allows human beings to execute a sort of reflective control over behaviour.

2.1. Hobbes and the nature of virtuous motives

Hobbes's moral and political philosophy was one of the most important contenders in the debate about human selfishness. I will look at it in order to point to the sort of issues constituting what I have called the concern about the nature of virtuous motives. Hobbes rejected the typically Aristotelian belief that there is a social instinct which leads individuals to congregate in communities where their human nature is fulfilled. Instead, Hobbes thought that all human motives are bodily mechanical operations devoid of any intrinsic teleology. As such, human actions, as with any other animal behaviour, have mechanical causes that can be traced to causal exchanges with external bodies and which, along with the conditions of the human body in question, explain the occurrence of individuals' intentional actions[7]. Human desires and aversions are the mechanical effects of the encounter of individuals with objects which they find pleasurable or unpleasant and which, as a result, predispose them to anticipate the attainment of pleasure or displeasure from similar objects. This mechanistic conception of human motivation leads Hobbes to reject any trace of teleology even in the notion of good, for according to his nominalism, 'good' and 'evil' are just names by which each individual designates objects of desire and of aversion (*Leviathan* 41). Accordingly, the existence and the strength of the desire to associate with others are contingent upon agreeable and disagreeable experiences, rather than upon the content of a teleologically arranged human disposition.

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[7] Hobbes's moral psychology is a science of motion because, as Bernard Gert puts it, '[t]he mind consists of motions of the body' (Gert 2006, 157). This view also leads Hobbes to displace the Aristotelian moral psychology, based on teleology, and instead to advance one based on causal efficiency. On this point, Amy Schmitter writes: 'Although Hobbes does not abandon faculty psychology, he reinterprets such capacities of the soul as sensing, memory, understanding, imagination, and willing in terms of the 'animal motion' ebbing and flowing within the human body (see Gert 1996: 159ff), which starts with sensation and is discharged in voluntary action' (Schmitter 2013a, 458).

Still, Hobbes does not derive the content and authority of morality from human nature. The 'laws of nature', which constitute a full-fledged morality, are divine precepts, discoverable by human reason, that command behaviours designed to promote individuals' wellbeing. Since they are issued by God, who can impose Its power and thus wields authority over individuals, these laws are obligatory. However, and speaking generally, the motivation to abide by them relies partly on the rational recognition that obeying them ensures an orderly flow of the vital motions of the members of a social group, and partly on the passions that a sovereign is charged to manipulate, among which the most important is fear. In this way, although Hobbes's views on the content and authority of morality place him on the 'morality as obedience' camp, his views on how morality motivates make him one of the first authors in the 'self-governing morality' paradigm. The motivation to obey morality, like the desire of association, is not innate; instead, it is the effect of the nature of human beings and the circumstances in which they find themselves.

Accordingly, for my purposes, how individuals are led to obey the laws of nature is the most relevant part of Hobbes's account. It is worthwhile then to expand a little on it. Hobbes starts off with the idea that human beings' main motivation is the pursuit of 'felicity', i.e., the search for objects that each individual expects to bring him satisfaction, that helps to secure his life and to achieve a 'contented life'[8]. To obtain felicity, individuals need to provide themselves with 'powers', that is, with the required means for obtaining the objects of their desires[9]. This implies that to the desire of felicity always follows a subordinated desire of power: 'a generall inclination (…) a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death' (*Leviathan* 75). Still, the general desire of felicity and its subordinated desire of power

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[8] Hobbes writes: 'And therefore the voluntary actions, and inclinations of all men, tend, not onely to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life; and differ onely in the way: which ariseth partly from the diversity of passions, in divers men; and partly from the difference of the knowledge, or opinion each one has of the causes, which produce the effect desired' (*Leviathan* 47).

[9] 'Power' is defined by Hobbes as the 'present means, to obtain some future apparent Good' whether 'naturall' – also called 'originall' – or 'instrumentall'. A '*Naturall Power*, is the eminence of the Faculties of Body, or Mind: as extraordinary Strength, Forme, Prudence, Arts, Eloquence, Liberality, Nobility. *Instrumentall* are those Powers, which acquired by these, or by fortune, are means and Instruments to acquire more: as Riches, Reputation, Friends, and the secret working of God, which men call Good Luck' (*Leviathan* 41).

are not necessarily sources of social strife. There are certain passions, among which glory is the most important, that set individuals into conflict with one another. Glory, on Hobbes's view, is the '*Joy,* arising from imagination of a man's own power and ability' (*Leviathan* 26). This joy, however, is intrinsically comparative: one's perception of one's powers depends on the relative amount of power that one sees others enjoying. Since, in normal circumstances, individuals' glory increases proportionally to their accumulation of power, the desire for the latter borrows strength from the desire of glory. The effect is a sort of keen ambition for the accumulation of powers: a passionate impulse that drives individuals to perceive themselves in a permanent competition for available resources, for the results of such competition determines the degree of glory that each enjoys.

If the 'powers' to obtain felicity are scarce or cannot be shared or if their distribution is unregulated, conflicts escalate and thus individuals' natural passions lead them to war[10]. This is the scenario that Hobbes depicts in his version of the state of nature. If we imagine a hypothetical state, the main characteristic of which is the total absence of political authorities, we have to acknowledge a relative equality of physical and intellectual powers across individuals. When any two or more individuals aim their powers at the same non-shareable external object, a fierce competition fuelled by the impulse of glory ensues. Since there are no political authorities to arbitrate the match, each contestant is at liberty (i.e. each individual has a right of nature) to use any means, even to kill other competitors, if that is needed to win the object in dispute. In this environment, fear of being killed and the subsequent 'diffidence' felt towards others accentuate the competition and make preemptive attacks the dominant rational alternative. Hobbes conjectures accordingly that in such a state individuals see their prospects of satisfying their desire of self-preservation decrease. Individuals' behaviour becomes even more defensive and antagonistic. The situation of the state of nature is, according to Hobbes's description, one where society is obviously impossible.

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[10] Indeed, on Hobbes's view, only under certain conditions the desire of power is a disturbing source of social conflict. On this point, Gert writes: 'Hobbes's disturbing statement about power is only a claim that all people tend to be concerned about their future; it explains pensions funds and medical checkups more than it does anti-social power grabs. Indeed, for Hobbes, the former are not only more common than the latter; they are also more rational' (Gert 2006, 168).

The recourse to the state of nature serves Hobbes's purpose of illuminating how morality and our motives towards it would fare in the absence of certain artifices. In the state of nature, there would be no motives backing morality up. Yet, the cause of this is not that any of the passions is essentially immoderate, or immoral. The problem is rather one of how the passions are 'engineered'. The combined forces of certain passions, when arranged in certain dispositions, cause social disequilibrium; so the solution is to introduce an artificial force that prompts a different and more convenient arrangement[11]. The solution is called 'artificial' because it is the product of a deliberate effort of individuals' powers of reason to both discern the laws which ensure peace and figure out a method of enforcement.

Once the laws of nature are formulated and accepted *in foro interno*[12], individuals agree that the institution of the sovereign is the best method of enforcement. Indeed, the sovereign's job is to become the predominant source of fear and the predominant source of glory. By monopolizing fear, the sovereign prevents the exacerbation of that passion among members of society, whereas by monopolizing reputation, through the regulation of honours, titles and recognitions, the sovereign lays the grounds for social cooperation[13].

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[11] 'In short, rational passions are simply *coordinated* passions' (Schmitter 2013, 466).

[12] Hobbes writes: 'The Lawes of Nature oblige *in foro interno*; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place: but *in foro externo*; that is, to the putting them in act, not alwayes. For he that should be modest, and tractable, and performe all he promises, in such time, and place, where no man els should do so, should but make himselfe a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruine, contrary to the ground of all Lawes of Nature, which tend to Natures preservation. And again, he that having sufficient Security, that others shall observe the same Lawes towards him, observes them not himselfe, seeketh not Peace, but War; & consequently the destruction of his Nature by Violence' (*Leviathan* 121). I take it that the distinction has to do with the difference between being able to rationally formulate the laws of nature and understand the convenience of following them, on the one hand, and the willingness to actually obey them, once the security that others will obey them too obtains, on the other.

[13] Notice that there is no weakening of the strength of the individual passions, or the creation of new objects of desire. The institution of the sovereign does not make that people desire any less what they desire, or that they obey the sovereign due to any new affection. People still want to achieve felicity, self-preservation and the means of a commodious life, and people obey the sovereign out of old good fear of death. What the sovereign's institution does is to centralize the objects of those passions, and by doing so, to guarantee that the impulses of individuals' fear and desire of glory get along with each other in a coordinated and rational way. Interestingly, by giving up their right of nature, individuals commit themselves to follow a single standard behaviour. In this sense, Schmitter writes: 'When individuals establish a commonwealth, they transfer the right of nature to the sovereign, and thereby make themselves

As noted earlier, Hobbes's position is somewhat peculiar. Whereas morality's authority and content are God-given, the motivation to act according to its laws is acquired and based on amoral passions such as self-preservation, fear, and glory. In this sense, Hobbes is a pivotal author in the theoretical changes of the period, for even though he is still linked to the paradigm of obedience[14], he turns to the passions to explain obedience and social cooperation in a naturalistic fashion driven perhaps by his rejection of the innateness of sociability. This prevented later authors from dismissing him easily. Hobbes's moral psychology sets a methodological example for future empiricists: rejecting any resort to the teleology of human nature, his empiricist moral psychology takes as unit of analysis the imaginations, desires and passions of individuals. All these mental phenomena are considered items in a mechanistic universe and their causal interactions are supposed to explain, if not the origin and force of morality, at least the motivation to obedience.

For Hobbes, the problem of moral motivation consisted in explaining how certain passions are arranged, so that they come to produce actions according to the laws of nature. For him, the nature of virtuous motives is artificial, but explicable in terms of human nature: the sovereign causes fear and respect among individuals and thereby creates the motives to comply with natural and civil laws. There is no native moral motive, let alone any benevolent or sociable one. The recognition that the path of political obedience is more convenient than the path of war, along with the impulse of the passions of fear and respect for the authority of the sovereign, constitute human beings' motives to morality.

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subject to its determination of apt means. It provides a standard outside of private individuals, one that can impose normative demands on both their passions and their reckonings. And so, individuals become fully rational only by submitting to the determinations of a public reason instantiated in the sovereign power. The remedy for the passions must come from the top down, even though the motivations for applying it flow from the bottom up' (Schmitter 2013a, 467).

[14] In this sense, Hobbes's remarks on the divine origin of the laws of nature are relevant: 'These dictates of Reason, men use to call by the name of Lawes; but improperly: for they are but Conclusions, or Theoremes concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves; wheras Law, properly is the word of him, that by right hath command over others. But yet if we consider the same Theoremes, as delivered in the word of God, that by right commandeth all things; then are they properly called Lawes' (*Leviathan* 123).

2.2. Mandeville: moral motivation and self-interest

Hobbes's radical individualism and his view about the inordinate strength that self-preservation, the desire of power and the passion of glory acquire in the state of nature often led his contemporaries to read him as defending some variant of the so-called selfish theory[15]. In the event, almost every eighteenth-century author took Hobbes's moral philosophy as a challenge to the 'reality' of morality (Norton & Kuehn 2006), on the assumption that morality's justification required the existence of innate other-regarding passions[16]. In 1705, half a century after the publication of the *Leviathan* (1651), Mandeville released the poem titled *The Grumbling Hive*, then in 1714, the poem was re-edited and a group of essays was added and published under the title *The Fable of the Bees* (with a second volume added in 1729). The *Fable* caused as much or even more consternation among moralists, because it explained the origin and efficacy of morality as the effect of the manipulation of individuals' pride through skillful flattery. For my

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[15] Jean Hampton (1986) distinguishes three related thesis that may have led Hobbes's readers into confusion and may made them think of him as defending some extreme version of psychological egoism. The first is Hobbes's radical individualism, that is, the view 'that regards individual human beings as conceptually prior not only to political society but also to *all* social interaction' (Hampton 1986, 6). According to this view, Hobbes sees individuals as able to develop their linguistic, cognitive and affective capacities independently of society. Society is not necessary for individuals' full maturation. Hobbes also holds a monistic psychology: 'Hobbes's psychology appears to be monistic – not because he makes all desires functions of one ultimate desire but because he makes all desires functions of a single biological mechanism in which a physical process correlated with the experience of pleasure plays a central role' (Hampton 1986, 18). And finally, Hobbes may hold a mild version of psychological egoism according to which 'all my actions are caused by desires and …my desires are produced in me by a "*self-interested*" *bodily mechanism*' (Hampton 1986, 23). Although none of these theses separately considered is sufficient to class his moral psychology as egoist, the conclusion may be different if they are held together and in the context of the state of nature. Given the circumstances with which Hobbes depicts such state, individuals act as if they were highly self-interested, if not egoists. In any case, Hobbes does not claim that the behaviour exhibited in the state of nature is the only one that individuals can display. His point is precisely that under the proper conditions of civil state, individuals are able to express the other-regarding motivations which exist in their psychology, but which are relegated in the state of nature.

[16] To reiterate the opinion of a commentator cited earlier: '[i]f morality is conceived as depending on some kind of disinterested motivation, rather than on other features such as an action's accordance with some law or its consequences, then the truth of the selfish hypothesis entails that there are no morally virtuous actions at all' (Maurer 2013, 293).

purposes, Mandeville's challenge to morality is relevant as it brings to light the problem of the relations between self-interest and moral motivation. After a brief presentation of Mandeville's position, I will review the ways Hutcheson and Butler answered its challenge.

Mandeville premises his conjectural account of morality on a psychological fact: human beings are made up of passions, which alternate the government of behaviour among themselves and thus prevent any stable agency. So, in order to see why human beings act as they do, Mandeville argued, we have to understand the behaviour of the passions that constitute them[17].

Untaught human beings, like any other animal, are mostly concerned with self-preservation and self-satisfaction. Mandeville's inventory of human original features, accordingly, does not include any tendency towards morality[18]. In fact, Mandeville adopts a rigoristic definition of virtue that makes it impossible that the object of any passion could ever be a virtuous action:

> It being the Interest then of the very worst of them, more than any, to preach up Publick-spiritedness, that they might reap the Fruits of the Labour and Self-denial of others, and at the same time indulge their own Appetites with less disturbance, they agreed with the rest (…) to give the Name of VIRTUE to every Performance, by which Man, *contrary to the impulse of Nature*, should endeavour the Benefit of others, *or the Conquest of his own Passions* out of a *Rational Ambition* of being good (*Fable* I- 79. My emphasis).

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[17] The paradox that Mandeville is most concerned with is that it is precisely the passions that typical moral rules condemn the ones that actually produce the material wellbeing of society as a whole: 'private vices, public benefits'. Though compatible, the thesis of psychological egoism is not necessarily required to support such claim. In the text, I focus on Mandeville's egoism and do not examine its relations to Mandeville's paradox.

[18] Perhaps what comes closer to a desire resembling morality is the passion of pity: 'It must be own'd, that of all our Weaknesses [pity] is the most amiable, and bears the greatest Resemblance to Virtue; nay, without a considerable mixture of it the Society could hardly subsist' (*Fable* I- 82). But Mandeville dismisses pity as a source of morality on the very grounds of it being a passion: 'But as it is an Impulse of Nature, that consults neither the publick Interest, nor our own Reason, it may produce Evil as well as Good. It has help'd to destroy the Honour of Virgins, and corrupted the Integrity of Judges; and whoever acts from it as a Principle, what good soever he may bring to the Society, has nothing to boast of but that he has indulged a Passion that has happened to be beneficial to the Publick' (*Fable* I- 82).

So, virtue is, by definition, behaviour that represses the impulse of the passions out of a rational desire to be considered virtuous[19]. Mandeville's account of the origin of morality has to explain thus the way in which untaught human beings came to develop a conception of moral behaviour and to impose it on themselves, being as foreign to their nature as he claims. Initially, this seems a bit difficult, since animals tend to satisfy their own appetites 'without considering the good or harm that from their [inclinations] being pleased will accrue to others' (*Fable* I- 77). Human beings, moreover, are intelligent and able thus to increase the number of their appetites and accordingly the chances of conflict among each other. And since they are 'extraordinarily selfish and headstrong, as well as cunning' (*Fable* I- 77), their social life is impossible by sheer imposition of force.

In Mandeville's story, as in Hobbes's, passions are engineered so that the result is a livable society. But unlike Hobbes, Mandeville seems to introduce a strong component of disguise and manipulation among the causes that originally, and presumably still today, get people to act in morally approved ways[20]. He claims that pioneering political leaders (moralists, philosophers and lawgivers), having studied human nature, came up with the idea of working on the passions of people so as to put them at the service of common profit. Political leaders needed to convince individuals that it was better to lead an anti-natural life of self-restraint than to give in to their natural selfish inclinations. So, they undertook a massive and gradual campaign of

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[19] In *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War*, Mandeville reiterates this rigoristic definition of virtue: 'no Practice, no Action or good Quality, how useful or beneficial soever they may be in them selves, can ever deserve the Name of Virtue, strictly speaking, where there is not a palpable Self-denial to be seen' (*Honour* Preface).

[20] Or at least, he was read in this fashion by his contemporaries. In this sense, note for example, the criticism that Hume, without mentioning Mandeville, throws in the *Treatise*: 'Any artifice of politicians may assist nature in the producing of those sentiments, which she suggests to us, and may even on some occasions, produce alone an approbation or esteem for any particular action; but 'tis impossible it should be the sole cause of the distinction we make betwixt vice and virtue. For if nature did not aid us in this particular, 'twou'd be in vain for politicians to talk of *honourable* or *dishonourable, praiseworthy* or *blameable*. These words wou'd be perfectly unintelligible' (SBN- 500; T- 3.2.2.25).

education that pulled people away from their natural condition to make them docile cooperating individuals[21].

The most outrageous element in Mandeville's story is that pioneering political leaders accomplished their objective by working on individuals' susceptibility to flattery. On Mandeville's account, the desire of obtaining the praise of others is so basic and powerful that individuals are prepared to give up the satisfaction of any other passion to gratify this desire: '[t]he Greediness we have after the Esteem of others and the Raptures we enjoy in the Thoughts of being liked and perhaps admired, are Equivalents that overpay the Conquest of the strongest Passions' (*Fable* I- 89). This picture of the origin of morality, in consequence, could not be more upsetting to Mandeville's contemporaries. Morality is unnatural, is product of massive deception — or self-deception — and is ultimately motivated by individuals' vanity. Remarkably, on Mandeville's view, individuals never act virtuously, if a virtuous intention is presupposed as a requirement of so doing. All virtuous motives are reducible to vanity, or as Mandeville makes the precision later, to 'self-liking'[22].

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[21] Although this is the account that Mandeville presents in the 1714 edition, after 1729, he claims that his talk of 'politicians' should be understood metaphorically, as referring to the gradual accumulation of particular acts performed as a response to the praise and flattery of many individuals, not necessarily only politicians, and which across time ended up generating virtuous patterns of behaviour. Heath (2014, 97) stresses this point and proposes an insightful relation of Mandeville's evolutionary account of morality to the accounts defended by eighteenth-century Scottish authors. In Heath's reading of Mandeville, in the first transitional stages of morality, praise lacks moral content and has to do with inclusion in and exclusion from certain social groups. Only gradually, praise acquires the characteristic normative and moral dimensions that civilized societies recognize in it.

[22] In the second volume of the *Fable*, Mandeville distinguishes between, on the one hand, 'self-love' and, on the other hand, 'self-liking' or the natural tendency to overvalue the self and to desire the approval of others: 'Cleo. Self-liking I have call'd that great Value, which all Individuals set upon their own Persons; that high Esteem, which I take all Men to be born with for themselves. I have proved from what is constantly observ'd in Suicide, that there is such a Passion in Human Nature, and that it is plainly distinct from Self-love. When this Self-liking is excessive, and so openly shewn as to give Offence to others, I know very well it is counted a Vice and call'd Pride: But when it is kept out of Sight, or is so well disguis'd as not to appear in its own Colours, it has no Name, tho' Men act from that and no other Principle. Hor. When what you call Self-liking, that just Esteem which Men have naturally for themselves, is moderate, and spurs them on to good Actions, it is very laudable, and is call'd the Love of Praise or a Desire of the Applause of others. Why can't you take up with either of these Names? Cleo. Because I would not confound the Effect with the Cause. That Men are desirous of Praise, and love to be

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To some extent, Mandeville's account of moral motivation resembles Hobbes's. There is no original motive towards virtue or morality. What we take for such a motive is an artificial twist to which non-moral original passions have been subjected. Yet, in contrast to Hobbes's, Mandeville's account of morality's content and normative authority is wholly naturalistic. The motives that we take as moral are strong, reliable and effective because we have been tricked by our own innate slavery to flattery.

For my purposes, it is noteworthy that Mandeville deepened the threat to morals that Hobbes's philosophy was perceived to represent. Although, the passions that Hobbes took to explain the motivation to morality were fear, self-preservation and glory and the one that Mandeville chose was self-liking, their opponents attacked what they took as a common egoistic claim: there are no innate other-regarding passions founding morality[23].

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applauded by others, is the Result, a palpable Consequence, of that Self-liking which reigns in Human Nature, and is felt in every one's Breast before we have Time or Capacity to reflect and think of Any body else. What Moralists have taught us concerning the Passions, is very superficial and defective. Their great Aim was the Publick Peace, and the Welfare of the Civil Society; to make Men governable, and unite Multitudes in one common Interest' (*Fable* II- 130).

[23] To be fair, taking this claim as the central tenet of either of these authors' accounts — or of egoism for that matter — obscures many important distinctions. For one, neither Hobbes, nor Mandeville deny the existence of other-regarding passions in human psychology, for neither of them was blind to the evidence of compassion, pity, friendship and all the forms of love. For another, although both authors considered certain self-regarding passions as central to their explanations of the origin of and motivation to morality, neither of them took these self-regarding passions as incompatible with the other-regarding demands of morality. In fact, both Hobbes and Mandeville held that these self-regarding passions make morality and its other-regarding demands possible at all. Third, there are crucial differences between the self-regarding characterization of the passions in Hobbes's account and in Mandeville's, the most important being that Hobbes takes self-preservation and glory to be disproportionally influential only in the situation of the state of nature, whereas Mandeville takes self-liking to be a primitive and always dominant affection. Fourth, although both Hobbes and Mandeville included pleasure as natural effect of either glory or self-liking, none of them took it to be the object of these passions. This is relevant as some criticisms tended to reduce the self-regarding character of a passion to its being constituted by a species of pleasure enjoyed by the agent. Among the authors in my review, Shaftesbury and sometimes Hutcheson seems to do this.

2.3. Two responses to Hobbes and Mandeville: Hutcheson and Butler

Because anti-egoist authors did not want to deny the obvious existence and prominent force of self-interest[24] in human motivation, they were faced with the question of how to accommodate its motivational force along with the other-regarding aspects of human psychology that they were stressing: if there are innate and distinctive motives that drive us steadily towards the good of others, that is, if there are innate and distinctive virtuous motives, it must be explained how such impulses get along with our natural and equally powerful self-interest. This is the common point of most responses to Hobbes and Mandeville. Yet, for someone who wants to defend the normative authority of morality independently of self-interest — as, for example, Hutcheson and Butler — the situation is somewhat difficult. He has to show that morality is of value and moves us to action, in a way similar to and as intuitively as self-interest does. But at the same time, he has to show that acting as morality commands is, in some sense, self-interested, for a radically altruistic morality looks intuitively unappealing. In what follows, I review the way Hutcheson and Butler dealt with this problem.

Let me begin by looking at how Hutcheson understands self-interest and morality. Hutcheson took on board much of the Lockean epistemology and psychology and made use of a thorough empirical methodology. In this guise, early in the *Inquiry*, Hutcheson defines the 'natural good' as follows:

> The Pleasure in our sensible Perceptions of any kind, gives us our first Idea of *natural Good*, or *Happiness*; and then all Objects which are apt to excite this Pleasure are call'd *immediately Good*. Those Objects which may procure others immediately pleasant, are call'd *Advantageous*: and we pursue both Kinds from a View of *Interest*, or from *Self-Love (Inquiry* 86*)*.

According to this passage, Hutcheson defines self-love, self-interest and happiness in ways related to the notion of pleasure. An object which procures pleasure is a natural good, and

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[24] I am aware that there might be important and relevant differences between 'self-interest' and other terms such as 'self-love', 'self-liking', 'egoism', 'selfishness', 'partiality', 'self-regard', etc.; yet, at this point I want to leave the terminology as vague as possible, just to point to the direction of the anti-egoist attack. When reviewing particular authors, I will make the necessary distinctions.

the possession of many such objects constitutes human happiness. Further, the action motivated by such pursuit is interested, or rather, self-interested, insofar as it aims at the agent's own happiness. Defined in this way, the natural good is clearly different from the moral good:

> The word moral goodness, in this Treatise, denotes our Idea of some Quality apprehended in Actions, which procures Approbation, and Love toward the Actor, from those who receive no Advantage by the Action (…) All men who speak of moral Good, acknowledge that it procures Love toward those we apprehend posses'd of it, whereas natural good does not (*Inquiry* 85).

In general, moral and natural good are ideas that arise in our minds out of different sorts of perceptions: the moral kind when the object of those perceptions is certain set of characteristics in people's affections, and the natural when an object causes us to experience pleasure. The ideas associated with the moral good are disinterested, because the approbation that they produce has nothing to do with the happiness of the individual who experiences it. Their objects are the actions and mental qualities of other people. By contrast, the ideas associated with the natural good are interested: the evaluation of objects produced by them relates directly to the happiness of the individual who experiences it. Their objects are the pleasant or unpleasant qualities of things that affect the agent.

In line with Lockean psychology, both species of ideas, natural and moral, presuppose the existence of two different senses[25]. Moreover, the ideas acquired by these senses are followed by typical desires that correspond to the moral and natural good. For Hutcheson, desires are ideas ('apprehensions') that include prospective pleasures or pains, and so are ideas endowed with intrinsic motivational power[26]. As ideas, desires can form associations with other ideas and

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[25] Hutcheson defines a sense as a 'Determination of the Mind, to receive any Idea from the Presence of an Object which occurs to us, independently of our Will' (*Inquiry* 90).

[26] Hutcheson is not hedonist, for he contends – almost always – that our desires are directed towards pleasurable objects, and not simply towards pleasure (otherwise we wouldn't aim at virtue for virtue's sake, but for the gratification of the public sense's pleasures). But he claims, at any rate, that pleasure and pain are the valences that determine human motivation. In other words, for Hutcheson the empiricist, pleasant and unpleasant thoughts move to action, which is different from saying that thoughts of pleasure or thoughts of pain do. The 'almost always' qualification above respects Jensen's observation that Hutcheson's formulations about desires do not always make clear if desires always aim at objects, rather

produce 'secondary', i.e., complex or artificial, desires[27]. Moral good causes love towards the rational agent whose affections we perceive, whereas natural good produces a desire or passion to enjoy the corresponding object.

On Hutcheson's account, human beings naturally possess desires for the good of others as well as towards self-good, which is why he does not see all passions as necessarily selfish or evil. He also believes that passions such as love, gratitude, pity, and compassion could grow stronger than the affections of self-interest. Still, Hutcheson rejects the view that self-interest can play a part in the recognition of moral obligations or in the motivation to obey morality. Self-interested motivation diminishes the moral value of an action performed out of benevolence (*Inquiry* 128). To be sure, Hutcheson admits that there is a species of self-interest that recommends the performance of virtuous actions, just because virtue constitutes our greatest happiness:

> if we must bring in Self-Love to make Virtue Rational, a little Reflection will dis- cover, as shall appear hereafter, that this Benevolence is our greatest Happiness; and thence we may resolve to cultivate, as much as possible, this sweet Disposition, and to despise every opposite Interest (*Inquiry* 134).

The pleasures of the consciousness of the good affections are among the highest pleasures available for a rational agent, and thus, it is no surprise that if we consider our own happiness rationally, we find a self-interested reason to behave virtuously. But this self-interest only supports benevolence, rather than being the proper motive that turns an action into a 'truly' virtuous one: '[n]ot that we can be truly Virtuous, if we intend only to obtain the Pleasure which

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than at pleasure. Nonetheless, Jensen reassures us, 'at the most crucial points in his theory he never fails to insist that desire is directed towards objects other than pleasure' (Jensen 1971, 21).

[27] Desires of wealth and power, for instance, are secondary desires which arise due to our ability for 'Reflection, Memory, Observation, and Reasoning about the distant Tendencies of Objects and Actions, and not confined to things present' *(Essay* 8). Desires and aversions are future oriented. In contrast, 'sensations', although strictly speaking a species of desires, move to action immediately because the correspondent pleasures or pains are immediately perceived. Another category of motivating determinations of the mind is that of the 'appetites', which arise out of the frame of our nature and without previous excitation (hunger, thirst, sex). The last aspect makes them different from either sensations or desires properly, although, appetites are usually accompanied by desires about specific ways of being satisfied.

accompanies Beneficence, without the Love of others: Nay, this very Pleasure is founded on our being conscious of disinterested Love to others, as the Spring of our Actions' (*Inquiry* 134)[28]. For Hutcheson, we have an obligation towards morality for morality's sake and it is because of our motive of benevolence that we act accordingly.

Nonetheless, the claim that benevolence constitutes our greatest happiness allows him to characterize morality and self-interest as co-extensive: although not necessarily in every particular case, generally virtuous actions tend to promote happiness. Yet, this is only a matter of fortunate coincidence, or better, of God's contingent design, as when a food is tasty as well as nutritious[29]. More importantly, for Hutcheson, it is false that our motivation to act virtuously is based on the recognition of this coincidence. Noticing the co-extension between morality and self-interest at the time of acting requires a great amount of reflection and a meticulous tracing of many causes and effects, which we hardly can manage to do in everyday life, and at any rate, it is not necessary for us to act benevolently.

Butler is perhaps in a better position than Hutcheson to establish a positive relation between morality and self-interest. He devotes his eleventh and twelfth sermons 'to show[ing] that benevolence is not more unfriendly to self-love, than any other particular affection whatever' (*Fifteen Sermons* 42). He aims at those '*Epicureans* of old' and Hobbes, who suffer

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[28] Maurer (2006) argues that Hutcheson conceives self-interest as a source of hedonistic motives and desires. In this sense, unless Hutcheson would have wanted to say that we are motivated to virtuous action for hedonistic reasons, he has to deny that self-interest could be source of moral motivation.

[29] Hutcheson writes: 'It is perhaps true, that Reflection and Reason might lead us to approve the same Actions as advantageous. But would not the same Reflection and Reason likewise, generally recommend the same Meats to us which our Taste represents as pleasant? And shall we thence conclude that we have no Sense of Tasting? Or that such a Sense is useless? No: The use is plain in both Cases. Notwithstanding the mighty Reason we boast of above other Animals, its Processes are too slow, too full of doubt and hesitation, to serve us in every Exigency, either for our own Preservation, without the external Senses, or to direct our Actions for the Good of the Whole, without this moral Sense'. (*Inquiry* 179). According to Darwall (1995), this answer engenders a further problem for Hutcheson. Hutcheson's distinction between exciting and justifying reasons makes difficult for him to account for genuine moral motivation. Admittedly, we have affections which cause us to act in a way that the spectator's moral sense would approve of; moreover, we could approve of our own actions in a sort of self-reflective view. But this still leaves intact the difference between acting out of motives considered virtuous and acting out of for-virtue's-sake motives. The morally good is seen only by the moral spectator's eyes. From the actor's perspective, every motive aims at a natural good.

from the 'strange affectation' of 'explaining away all particular affections, and representing the whole of life as nothing but one continued exercise of self-love' (*Fifteen Sermons* 42).

For Butler, every single thing in nature conforms to a system, i.e., a compound of parts which stand in some ordered relation one to another. The purpose of the whole imposes order to the parts and determines their mutual relations. In his own example, a watch is a compound of strings, wheels and gears arranged to tell the time. In a similar fashion, human nature exhibits a certain constitution, where its parts relate one to another in a sort of functional harmony. But only in human beings does the organizing end of this harmony relate to the authority of the reflective capacity:

> Appetites, passions, affections, and the principle of reflection, considered merely as the several parts of our inward nature, do not at all give us an idea of the system or constitution of this nature: because the constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into consideration, namely by the relations, which these several parts have to each other; the chief of which is *the authority of reflection or conscience*. 'Tis from considering the relations which the several appetites and passions in the inward frame have to each other, and above all the supremacy of reflection or conscience, that we get the idea of the system or constitution of humane nature. (*Fifteen Sermons* 47)

What defines us as human beings, then, is our capacity to reflect upon our own nature and judge whether our affections and actions respond to the order such nature should exhibit. Conscience allows us to do just that. Conscience is the principle at the top of the hierarchy. It has normative as well as motivational power so that acting out of it makes us agents in the proper sense. Right below conscience comes self-love, defined by Butler as the general desire for our own happiness. The object of self-love is 'internal' because it drives us towards the well-ordered satisfaction of our passions and desires, rather than towards the possession of any external object or the satisfaction of any particular passion[30]. The passions, in turn, are at the bottom of the normative hierarchy. Their objects are 'external', given that they move us towards particular objects according to our sensible nature[31].

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[30] 'Happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions, and affections' (*Fifteen Sermons* 121)

[31] Butler believes that the relation between conscience and self-love, on the one hand, and the passions, on the other, is primarily normative. It is thus possible that we act sometimes out of one of our passions, paying attention to neither of the regulative principles of action, self-love or conscience. But when we act

By describing self-love as a regulative principle that aims at the happiness of the individual, Butler prevents two possible confusions. On the one hand, self-love is not the same as selfish hedonism. For sure, when our passions for particular external objects are satisfied, we feel pleasure, but neither the passion itself, nor the principle that regulates it, i.e., self-love, aim at such pleasure. Pleasure is an effect of our actions that we gladly receive, but not their object. On the other hand, self-love is not to be identified with self-regard, or with the self-regarding affections. There are passions whose object is the occurrence of good or evil to other people, and since self-love regulates the indulgence of all the passions, self-love regulates our other-regarding as well as our self-regarding concerns.

Recalling his idea of the normative hierarchical order of principles in human nature, Butler argues that we obey morality insofar as we follow our conscience and that we follow our own self-interest insofar as we aim to satisfy our natural desire for happiness within the boundaries of morality. So, it is impossible that, normatively speaking, our pursuit of happiness could diverge from the judgments of our conscience, simply because we are constituted (by God) so that it is always in our interest to recognize and abide by morality[32]. Immoral actions arise

out of our passions, it only confuses things to say that we acted self-interestedly, because, although we look to satisfy one of *our* passions, we do not do so in a regulated way, and thus, in fact, we satisfy *our* passions *against* our self-interest: '[W]e should want words to express the difference between the principle of an action, proceeding from cool consideration that it will be to my own advantage; and an action, suppose of revenge or of friendship, by which a man runs upon certain ruin, to do evil or good to another. It is manifest the principles of these actions are totally different, and so want different words to be distinguished by; all that they agree in is that they both proceed from, and are done to gratify, an inclination in a man's self. But the principle or inclination in one case is self-love; in the other, hatred or love of another' (*Fifteen Sermons* 111).

[32] In the second Sermon, Butler runs a long discussion on the different senses of 'nature'. He does this in order to support his position that we are obliged to act morally by 'nature': 'But there is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them, pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good, others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust (…) It is by this faculty, *natural to man*, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself, but this faculty, I say, not to be considered meerly as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others, but considered as a faculty in kind and *in nature* supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so' (*Fifteen Sermons* 67. My emphasis). More clearly, he uses the term 'disproportion' to the nature of man to label the unnaturalness of acting against conscience: 'But suppose a man, foreseeing the same danger of certain ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present gratification.

because the *strength* of a particular affection or passion outweighs the *authority* of the principles of self-love or of conscience (*Fifteen Sermons* 68).

As we can see, Butler's strategy for accommodating self-interest and moral motivation consists in making God and the constitutional order he created in us, a sort of guarantee that the demands of morality and self-interest do not conflict. Given this view, there is not much practical difference between acting out of self-interest or out of morality. Insofar as we act respecting the hierarchical authority of conscience, we act for the right sort of reasons — given that conscience possesses a superior kind of authority over self-love[33]. The nature of the virtuous motives, on Butler's view, is less about the identity of the motive than about its proper regulation. The motives that produce right actions are always some kind of passion or desire, yet what turns them virtuous is the extent to which they align with the regulation of self-love or of conscience.

Hutcheson and Butler deny that self-interested and moral motivations, if properly understood, conflict with each other. Both advocate the thesis that these motivations work harmoniously, though ultimately appealing to God's intervention. Interestingly, Hutcheson denies that individuals can know how each particular virtuous action promotes self-interest, although moral philosophy might make them aware of the general coincidence. Butler, in contrast, holds that individuals can see the coincidence, but only because they can reflectively, through their conscience, appreciate the way self-interest's counsels fit within the judgments

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He in this instance would follow his strongest desire, as did the brute creature: but there would be as manifest a *disproportion*, *between the nature of a man and such an action* as between the meanest work of art and the skill of the greatest master in that art; which disproportion arises, not from considering the action singly in itself, or in its consequences, but from comparison of it with the nature of the agent. And since such an action is utterly *disproportionate to the nature of man*, it is in the strictest and most proper sense *unnatural;* this word expressing that disproportion' (*Fifteen Sermons* 67. My emphasis). From these

passages, it is important to note that Butler is introducing a normative conception of 'nature' and 'natural'. Natural is what fits and promotes the normative conception of a human being where conscience wields supreme authority. In this sense, giving Shaftesbury's point a twist, Butler claims that the natural affections are virtuous and the unnatural vicious.

[33] The basic idea behind Butler's view is that only insofar as the agent acts out of his conception of himself as agent (and what this implies is that he acted respecting the hierarchy among the principles in his constitution), we can say that he acts as a human at all. As Darwall writes: 'Put very crudely, it holds that the authority of conscience is a condition of the very possibility of an agent's having reasons to act at all, since only a being who has the capacity for maintaining a self-regulated constitutional order can have reasons for acting, and this capacity depends on the agent's taking her conscience to be authoritative' (Darwall 1995, 247).

proper of their 'natural' constitutions. My interest in reviewing these two positions has been to show the existence of the problem and to present their views to use them later as an illuminating contrast with Hume's own stance on this matter.

2.4. The concern about the nature of virtuous motives revisited

The central question in the concern about *the nature of virtuous motives* is how to explain the origin, reliability and efficacy of virtuous motivation within a naturalistic framework. I chose Hobbes's account to introduce this concern because he proposes the typically modern and empiricist idea of looking at the mechanics of human psychology in order to understand the stability of social institutions. In this, Hobbes seems to contribute to the change of paradigm that Schneewind (1998) detects in seventeenth-century England, for, despite Hobbes' commitment to the natural law tradition, he regards the problem of motivation as entirely related to the mechanics of human reason and the natural passions. Hobbes's account is thus useful to my setup of the problem of moral motivation insofar as it introduces the question of the nature of virtuous motives as the object of a distinctively modern naturalistic investigation of human moral psychology. It is also useful since the Hobbesian position according to which human beings lack innate capacities towards morality became the object of a tremendous attack, remarkable in itself in the early modern period, and led by authors that Hume recognized as influential in the development of his own philosophy. I attempted to illustrate how Hobbes's and Mandeville's projects were perceived as endeavours to derive morality from self-interest, or at least from the self-regarding passions, and in this sense, these projects were taken to pose a challenge to the validity of morality.

Both historical and philosophical details are relevant to fully understanding the urgency with which Hobbes and Mandeville were attacked. But, even leaving those details aside, it is plausible to affirm that this debate bears a great significance for the problem of moral motivation. The challenge of accommodating self-interest with moral motivation is based on the common-sense intuition that there is an obvious and direct relation between the fact that we

recognize something as good for us and the fact that we feel drawn towards it[34]. Herein lies the force of the egoist's position: there seems to be no further question to ask when one says that the reasons for someone's actions were that that person thought that what she did was good for her. Yet, morality sometimes asks us to see the value in other-regarding actions or in actions that hinder our own self-interest. The question then is in what way, if any, self-interest and morality are compatible.

The challenge posed by the so-called selfish authors can be seen as one way to address the problem of the bindingness of morality highlighted by Darwall (1995). Their view would be that in order to defend the binding force of morality, one needs to locate its source of motivation in self-regarding human desires, such as glory or self-liking, since these are the truly native and most effective motives of individuals. To pose any other motive as the ground of morality is to explain its normativity in the dispositions that result from it, rather than in its proper causes. Notice further that if it is assumed that there is a chance that self-regarding motives produce evil actions, it is easy to see how the selfish authors were associated with a negative answer to Gill's Human Nature Question (Gill 2006)[35].

From this part of the review, I take it that to address the concern about the nature of virtuous motives, Hume's account must include a story of *how self-interested inclinations affect the acquisition, strength and content of moral motives*. Such an account must indicate what self-interest is, whether its commands or impulses conflict or harmonize with moral motivations, or even if they are ultimately the same. It must also clarify if the influence of self-interest is only a matter of strength of motivations, or if it is able to alter the content of moral motivations, maybe by imposing limits or qualifications on our concern for others or for the public good. In chapter 4, I develop Hume's naturalistic analysis of human motivation. In that chapter, I discuss the sense in which Hume's general theory of motivation can be considered hedonistic and egoistic and the role of perceptions of pleasure and pain in motivation, all notions commonly associated

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[34] As a matter of fact, the idea that agents always act according to what appears best to them was commonly held by scholastic authors. Hobbes's view that individuals call 'good' what produces satisfaction is a twist on that position.

[35] A deeper reason, as Maurer (2013) shows, is that the most discussed authors upheld both egoism and an Augustinian view of human nature, i.e., one in which the human will is peculiarly prone to evil.

with self-regard, selfishness and self-interest. I argue that Hume's theory of motivation is passion-based, which leads him to agree with the basic distinctions that Butler makes: self-interest is not an intrinsic quality of motives; it is a matter of how they are directed. In a similar way, the nature of virtuous motives depends on their regulation, i.e., on the way in which they are satisfied, instead of on whether they are self or other-regarding. In chapters 5 and 6, I show further that the regulation of motives that turns the latter virtuous, depends on the development of practices and institutions that civilize the passions, which is the topic of conjectural histories.

2.5. The problem of reflection in virtuous motivation

Turning now to the second of the concerns that make up the problem of moral motivation, by reflection in virtuous motivation, I mean to capture the concern around the issue of what is, or at least should be, the proper disposition that agents have regarding their actual virtuous or vicious conduct. Reflection is a difficult concept both in the modern and in our own period. So, it may be convenient to start by discussing some features that I see as necessary, yet not sufficient, to fully understand this notion. By reflection I mean to include the idea of awareness that one is acting. Most authors took for granted that the moral agent must possess the minimal consciousness required for intentional action, if we are to grant that his behaviour was motivated at all and thus liable to moral evaluation. Unconscious behaviour, even if externally identical with morally good or virtuous conduct, does not count as motivated, let alone, morally motivated, because the causal sense in which the action can be attributed to the individual does not seem sufficient for responsibility[36].

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[36] This can be part of the motivation of the Cambridge Platonists' rejection of predestination. At least intuitively, predestination seems morally wrong because that God had decreed who will be saved and who won't before individuals have even come into existence seems to violate the basic idea behind the 'ought-implies-can' principle. It seems wrong, that God allocates reward and punishment for circumstances that individuals cannot control at all (Gill 2006, 21-2). This can also be part of the reason why, in Darwall's reading, Curworth and Locke stressed that 'it is distinctive of moral obligation that agents are thought to

The notion of reflection also includes the requirement that the agent is able to own his actions. As a matter of fact, as I take it, this is part of what possessing agency involves: even if one's actions can be explained as the result of a causal process, one experiences one's actions as originating in one's volition. In this sense, the agent perceives that his actions are not ineluctably determined by his native psychology[37]. That is why, although in the period in question the model of the naturally virtuous agent was used as a point of contrast to characterize actual moral agents[38], perhaps no author took very seriously the idea that we could be born with no proclivity towards immorality, temptation, vice or inordinate self-love, or that moral training could set us completely free from such proclivities. Ineluctably determined virtuous agency is somewhat at odds with the very idea of agency. In the same sense, the image of the irremediably wicked monster was seen as implausible.

To be sure, much more is needed to tell the whole story, but at least that the agent perceives his actions as effects of his willing them opens the possibility of conceiving him as able to control them. The degree to which this is possible is debatable. Yet this is precisely part of the problem involved in working out a plausible notion of reflection. The concern about the role of reflection in virtuous motivation consists then in how to articulate the intuition that there must be a capacity in our psychological equipment that allows us to reflect on our own conduct, so that we can assess it and guide it accordingly, resisting the most common sources of vice. Obviously, the problem of how to describe human reflective capacities presupposes a plausible picture of agents: the reality and permanence of drives distracting us from virtue or morally good behaviour leads naturally to the idea that real virtue requires some degree of alertness against temptations. The character of this reflective capacity in human psychology varied from author to author. In what follows, I would like to offer a short survey of three alternative accounts: the Calvinists', Locke's and Shaftesbury's.

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be accountable for violations. Not just any kind of intelligent being can intelligibly be held accountable - only a being who can determine herself to act as she is obligated' (Darwall 1995, 17).

[37] Luther and the Calvinists seem to deny this and thus should be taken as denying that human beings are able of reflection. I discuss below why I still consider them to have an admittedly thin notion of reflection.

[38] See for example, Shaftesbury (*Characteristicks* II, 22) and Hume (EPM- 269).

2.6. Self-examination as substitute for reflection: the Calvinist view

Luther and the Calvinists typically held the thesis of natural human wickedness. After Adam's fall, every human being inherited a wicked and corrupt nature such that none of their faculties was able to aim at the good. There is nothing human beings can do either to overcome this natural evilness or to deserve God's forgiveness. And, while God benevolently decided to justify a few selected souls through grace, no human can know who the elect are, not even the elect themselves. Human beings are naturally evil and incapable of self-redemption[39].

Despite this, Luther and the Calvinists preached a form of life in which a constant recalling of our sinful constitution was considered central to a pious life. Although works do not earn grace, there is a spark of hope in the very fact that God's decisions regarding grace are indecipherable. This hope supports the attitude of active readiness for God's grace through the performance of good actions, which must be done with utmost humility. Constant self-denial, permanent recollection of our fallen nature, permanent attention to the advice of the Scripture and submission to divine and civil laws are means of maintaining humility or meekness. For the Calvinists, a vivid awareness of our sinful nature substitutes for our inability to reflect on our conduct and autonomously guide it for the better[40].

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[39] 'Works' (good deeds) do not justify (*Theological Writings* 147). Reformers did not think that human beings are naturally evil, if that means that God created them so. Humanity's primitive condition was one of perfection. Yet, they called the corruption accruing after the fall 'natural' because, after Adam, human beings are born evil and, thus, no actual evil act is needed to make them so. Corruption is not a characteristic acquired by commerce with the world, it is inherited from birth: 'We say, therefore, that man is corrupted by a natural depravity, but which did not originate in nature. We deny that it proceeded from nature, to signify that it is rather an adventitious quality or accident, than a substantial property originally innate. Yet, we call it natural, that no one may suppose it to be contracted by every individual from corrupt habit, whereas it prevails over all by hereditary right' (*Institutes* 277).

[40] Gill (2006) presents the views of the English Calvinists as the starting point of the debate over the Human Nature Question among British moralists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Gill sets a contrast between the fundamental claims of the English Calvinists and those of the Cambridge Platonists, not only in terms of what side of the Human Nature Question each group stood at, but also in terms of whether they considered the source of morality as something external or internal. Although, I do not dispute this contrast, I would emphasize the way in which God's grace, the reading of the Scripture and fear of punishment were used within Calvinism to promote what they believed to be the proper attitude of

Let me introduce the Calvinist conception before explaining the nature of this substitution. By thorough wickedness, Luther and Calvin did not mean total indifference to good, at least not in so far as human creatures always aspire to gain union with their creator. Following fundamental dogmas of the Christian faith, they held that 'knowledge of God' was the true end of human beings, the end which truly constitutes their happiness. Calvin is explicit that such end organizes human's interests[41], but he also believes that 'knowledge of ourselves' is important as well because[42] '[it] is essential to gain knowledge of God'.

Specifically, knowledge of ourselves possesses both cognitive and motivational power to keeping us on the route towards our true end[43]. Awareness of humans' wicked condition is cognitively instrumental because it allows us to gain a better insight into God's perfection by contrast, realizing thereby that God's grace-giving acts speak of his infinite benevolence. In turn, awareness of our wickedness is motivationally instrumental because we can spur our intrinsic desire for union with God by comparing our actual fallen situation with the happy one we had once at the Garden of Eden. So, to attain our natural end, we must carry on a life full of constant reminders of our fallen and corrupt nature. This is particularly important since men are very prone to pride and to forget, through custom and habit, their actual situation after the fall: 'the eye, accustomed to see nothing but black, judges that to be very white, which is but whitish, or perhaps brown' (*Institutes* 48). The practice of Calvinist self-knowledge possesses thus a crucial purpose: it abates our pride, it keeps our situation on the road to salvation alive in our minds and

pious Christian life and, in this sense, the way in which they believe these elements to be surrogates for moral reflection.

[41] 'Now, if the end for which all men are born and live, be to know God, (…) it is evident, that all who direct not every thought and action of life to this end, are degenerated from the law of their creation (…). The worship of God is therefore the only thing which renders men superior to brutes, and makes them aspire to immortality' (*Institutes* 56-57).

[42] 'True and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves' (*Institutes* 47).

[43] 'Thus a sense of our ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, depravity and corruption, leads us to perceive and acknowledge that in the Lord alone are to be found true wisdom, solid strength, perfect goodness and unspotted righteousness; and so, by our imperfections, we are excited to a consideration of the perfections of God. Nor can we really aspire toward him, till we have begun to be displeased with ourselves. For who would not gladly rest satisfied with himself? (…) The knowledge of ourselves, therefore, is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance towards finding him' (*Institutes* 48).

by doing so, it prepares us for achieving union with God, just in case we happen to be among the elect[44].

The sort of awareness that the Calvinists demanded did not only concern human general wickedness. They also required each individual to undertake a personal examination to detect the ways common human corruption takes form in his or her own particular life. The role of this style of self-knowledge in the life of the pious is evident in the way topics were arranged in the creed taught to seventeenth English Christians. Gill cites Williams Perkins' catechism thus:

> The catechism begins with the question "What doest thou believe concerning God?", to which the child responds, innocuously enough, "There is one God, creator and governor of all things, distinguished into the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" (…) the second question is "What doest thou believe concerning man and concerning thine own self?" And to this the child must answer "All men are wholly corrupted with sin through Adam's fall and so are become slaves of Satan and guilty of eternal damnation" (…) The child is then made to elaborate on the complete corruption of his soul, explaining that he "is by nature dead in sin as a loathsome carrion, or as a dead corpse [that] lieth rotting and stinking in the grave, having in him the seeds of all sins" (Gill 2006, 8)

Knowledge of God occupies the first and opening position in the creed, attesting thereby to its importance in our hierarchy of ends. But, it is the knowledge of ourselves that next to it claims vivid description, indispensable if the aim is to instil in the believer a knowledge designed to have effects on his emotions, particularly on pride.

Furthermore, the notion of divine law embraced by Calvinism fits in perfectly with this conception of human nature. Indeed, just because of our inability to reflectively guide our actions, Reformers considered that the force of the law was necessary. Calvin resorts to the often-cited passage in Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 2:14: the Gentiles have the law unto themselves) to claim that every human being, even non-Christians, has some notion of God's law (*Institutes* 304). This law 'shows us what we ought to do and thereby forces us to learn that we

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[44] '(…) we should contemplate our miserable condition since the fall of Adam, the sense of which tends to destroy all boasting and confidence, to overwhelm us with shame, and to fill us with real humility (…) Hence arise disapprobation and abhorrence of ourselves, and real humility; and we are inflamed with fresh ardour to seek after God, to recover in him those excellences of which we find ourselves utterly destitute' (*Institutes* 266).

cannot do it', (Schneewind 1998, 34)[45], yet at the same time, makes our sins inexcusable[46]. Consequently, and also relying on another of his favourite passages, Calvin cites I Timothy 1.9 to say that the law is for the unjust, or as Schneewind puts it: 'the law is intended to check those whose outer behaviour displays the "raging lusts of the flesh"' (Schneewind 1998, 34). Given then our corrupted reason, we need the assistance of the law to learn what we ought to do and, given our wicked will, the threat of punishment is needed to contain our evilness[47]. In this sense, the actual motivation to obey morality is fear of punishment[48], for the 'lusts of the flesh' are common to all. In other words, if we happen to act according to God's or civil laws, it is because fear of punishment overcame the push of the passion towards sin[49].

Calvinists heavily stressed the possibility and even the need of a sort of self-examination encapsulated in the idea of the 'knowledge of ourselves'. Human beings are able thus to turn attention to their own motives and actions and pass a judgment of moral quality. This self-

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[45] Presumably, this same function might work differently if one happens to be one of the elected. Schneewind cites Calvin to the effect that 'The Lord (…) instructs by their reading of [the law] those whom he inwardly instills with a readiness to obey' (Schneewind 1998, 34).

[46] Calvin comments on Paul: 'The end of the law of nature, therefore, is, that man may be rendered inexcusable' (*Institutes* 304).

[47] Although the human will is simply unable to aim at the good, this does not mean that human beings, acting in evil ways, act involuntarily. Calvin does not accept the claim that the possibility of acting otherwise is condition of responsibility. In fact, while he understands free will as the capacity to choose one way or another, he restricts the condition of voluntariness to the ability of acting freely from physical constraints. Calvin writes: 'Then man will be said to possess free will in this sense, not that he has an equally free election of good and evil, but because he does evil voluntarily, and not by constraint. That, indeed, is very true; but what end could it answer to decorate a thing so diminutive with a title so superb?' (*Institutes* 287).

[48] Gill writes: 'Indeed, the Calvinists' great emphasis on vivid descriptions of heavenly bliss and hellish torments indicates their belief that the prospects of heaven and hell are the primary motivators of religion' (Gill 2006, 28).

[49] In any case, Calvin's God is powerful enough to have his cake and eat it too: 'God only requires us conformity to his precepts. If we do anything contrary to them, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression' and yet, '(…) even by criminal actions we subserve his righteous ordination, because, in the infinite greatness of his wisdom, he well knows how to use evil instruments for the accomplishment of good purposes' (*Institutes* 239). Since God's providence implies the micromanaging of every detail of the creation, criminal actions are somehow caused by him, then punished, but because of that circumstance not the less used for the greater good.

examination was meant to cause practical effects on individuals' motivations, since the realization of both their common and particular wickedness checked their pride, imposed humility and made the ultimate object of all their actions be the worship of God. However, precisely because of all these features, the sort of self-examination proposed by the Calvinists prevented truly reflective agency because the actions of the pious individual neither aimed at the good of each action, nor were undertaken for virtue's sake. Moreover, the result of the practice of self-reflection was always pre-determined by the overwhelming belief that human nature is intrinsically wicked. The process of reflection was not a real process of discernment, but a process of confirmation of an already given dogma.

For these reasons, the Calvinist conception of self-examination can be seen as a denial of truly reflective agency. Let me show this from another perspective by indicating the main elements of what I think authors of the period looked for in what I have called the concern about the role of reflection in virtuous motivation. First, the process of reflection must enable the agent to gain some knowledge of the moral situation of human beings. By this I mean that a reflective moral agent is able to grasp the content and bindingness of morality: what it is that is required of human beings in particular situations and on what grounds. Granted, Calvinist self-examination enables individuals to do this as long as the consciousness of wickedness explains why they must obey the Scripture and the enforcers of divine authority on Earth. It reveals that God imposes a moral order in the world that each individual must follow as a part of the divine creation.

Second, the process of reflection must make the agent aware of the capacities and dispositions that enable him to follow the requirements of morality. Calvinist self-examination denies that individuals possess the capacity to follow morality by themselves. Instead, given the inadequacy of human reason and will, divine law must be imposed from the outside by means of punishment and rewards. If there is any human capacity where morality can purchase any grip on human behaviour, this is the non-moral disposition to avoid pain and prefer pleasure.

Third, the process of reflection must cause changes in behaviour consistent with what is grasped in the reflective exercise. Calvinist self-examination produces changes, as the constant reminding of human and individual moral indisposition encourages humble behaviour. But notice that these changes are effects of a consciousness of inadequacy, impotence, or even shame caused by knowing oneself to be a wicked human. In this sense, Calvinist self-examination puts

individuals at odds with their own nature: when they examine their conscience, they can never bear their own survey.

Finally, a truly reflective agency must make that the behavioural effects produced by it are directed at the moral good of the action, or grounded on seemingly moral reasons, rather than aimed at the purpose of avoiding punishment or obtaining a reward, and so disconnected of moral reasoning. Calvinist self-examination clearly lacks this feature.

2.7. Free will: Locke's instrumental reflection

Lockean moral psychology can be seen as an empiricist attempt to accommodate some of the anti-Calvinist intuitions derived from a change in the conceptions of human nature and the role of God in religion that occurred in the second half of the seventeenth century. Locke particularly differs from the Calvinists in that he maintains that human beings are capable of genuine moral action, insofar as they can know the law by themselves as well as make real choices between right and wrong. For Locke, human beings are capable of exercising 'free will'. However, given his commitment to the natural law tradition, Locke shared with the Calvinists the idea that the content and binding force of morality depends on the will of God, which given his definition of law, led him further to believe that morality gains purchase on human dispositions only through our natural preference for pleasure and dislike of pain. For Locke, having free will means having the power to reflect on our motives and choose the course of action more convenient to our happiness, but only because God connects pleasures to the obedience to the moral law, pursuing our happiness is also the moral thing to do.

In the analysis that follows, it is worth noting that my use of 'reflection' and its cognates is not entirely Lockean. For Locke, reflection is a form of internal sensation. As Schmitter points out: 'Lockean reflection is simply introspection, a turning of attention inwards to the operations of the mind. It allows us to observe the passions, without much touching their character' (Schmitter 2013b, 209). I am using reflection or reflective capacities here to refer to an ability that, although it might require a sort of introspection, works to assess our desires and passions and guide our actions accordingly, in the ways defined in the previous section. Then when in my discussion I refer to Locke's conception of reflection, I do not mean his well-known notion of

internal sensation, but the conception of the distinctive human capacity for gaining awareness of moral motives and reasons that I think is present in his texts.

Locke holds the idea that the motivational effectiveness of God's natural law relates closely to its purpose. This claim appears at the beginning of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in the attack on innatism, and then later on in the analysis of moral concepts. Locke says that both practical principles and moral concepts involve motivational force as part of their definition (*ECHU* 1,4,21)[50]. Locke is prompted to establish such a connection due to his rejection of the metaphysical framework that classical natural law theorists such as Aquinas, Suárez or Curverwell accepted. Indeed, Locke sees no metaphysical fact that constrains us to obedience[51]. Rather, he believes that the only reason to obey the law of nature is its being a divine command[52], which means that for the natural law to be a law at all it must be enforced by a threat of punishment:

> [I]t would be in vain for one intelligent Being, to set a Rule to the Actions of another, if he had it not in his Power, to reward the compliance with, and punish deviation from his Rule, by some Good and Evil, that is not the natural product and consequence of the Action itself. For that being

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[50] Locke is not confusing the validity of the law (i.e., the reasons why the law applies to human beings) with its motivational effectiveness (i.e., the conditions in human psychology that turn obedience possible). Rather, Locke's point is that part of what 'law' means involves the capacity to engage the motives of its subjects. Since Locke thinks that the prospects of pleasure and pain are basic human motivators, what he is saying is that for the natural law to be a law at all, it must connect somehow with our prospects of pleasure or pain. Darwall reads this Lockean claim as one important milestone in the turn towards the 'internal ought' among British moral philosophers: 'But propositions expressed with such ideas will be practical truths — part of ethics — only if they engage the motives of rational agents. In order for the complex idea of moral obligation to figure in ethics, therefore, it must relate to agents' rational motives' (Darwall 1995, 150).

[51] Locke does not believe the natural law to be the expression of the eternal law, i.e., the divine law prescribing the metaphysical order of the whole of the creation.

[52] Surely, a command that God gives us for our own good. Locke makes clear in the *Second Treatise on Civil Government* that given that we call good different things and that there are situations where it is impossible that everyone gets what they desire, social life is threatened by conflict. Locke also believes that human beings are prone to egocentricity, power hunger, laziness and pride (Taylor 1989, 240). He concludes that we would not be able to achieve peace by ourselves. We need God, who issues the natural law and gives us reason, so that, by learning and obeying such law, conflicts are prevented, our destructive tendencies contained and social cooperation achieved. In a way, Locke continues the Reformers' theme of the wicked human nature that is redeemed by divine grace. Only this time, God gives grace indiscriminately in the form of the natural capacity of reason and the law of nature.

a natural Convenience, or Inconvenience, would operate of it self without a Law. This, if I mistake not, is the true nature of all *Law,* properly so called (*ECHU* 2, 28,6) [53].

So, God insures that his law will be obeyed by joining pleasures to the obedience of the law and pains to its disobedience. Still, God does not make us incapable of free choice. Human beings can really choose to obey, even though their choices are among pleasures and pains, not among morally right and wrong actions as such. In this sense, Locke thinks of humans as self-determining agents, i.e., as agents that can choose their actions based on their reflection of relevant reasons[54]. For Locke, human actions are *voluntary* and *free*.

The place to look for Locke's account of voluntary free actions is his *Essay*'s explanation of the idea of power[55]. The experience of change[56] provides us with an intuitive grasp of the idea of power. Yet this idea, on deeper analysis, is a compound of two simpler ideas, similarly acquired by internal sensation of the exercise of two powers of our minds: the power of willing and the power of liberty. Locke defines the first thus:

> This power which the mind has thus to order the consideration of any idea, or the forbearing to consider it; or to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and vice versa, in any particular instance, is that which we call the WILL. The actual exercise of that power, by directing any particular action, or its forbearance, is that which we call VOLITION or WILLING (*ECHU* 2, 21,5).

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[53] As Darwall writes: 'At just this point, we encounter what is most distinctive about Locke's view, namely, that although what makes God's commands morally obligatory appears (as with Culverwell) to have nothing intrinsically to do with what makes them rationally compelling, and vice versa, the two are, nonetheless, necessarily related, since, Locke thinks, the only form in which God can make His demands is by providing agents with rational motives to obey them' (Darwall 1995, 37). In the same sense, Darwall cites Locke from the early *Essays on the Law of Nature* thus: '"God and the soul's immortality," Locke declares, "must be necessarily presupposed if natural law is to exist."' (Darwall 1995, 37). The immortality of the soul is necessary to guarantee supra-natural punishment and reward.

[54] For Taylor, this means that Locke conceives human beings as 'punctual' selves that gain control over their behaviour through disengagement: '[Being rational and free agents] involves taking a stance to ourselves which takes us out of our normal way of experiencing the world and ourselves' (Taylor 1989, 161-2).

[55] I use Locke's revised version of the chapter 'Of Power' in the second edition of the *Essay*.

[56] 'The idea of the BEGINNING of motion we have only from reflection on what passes in ourselves; where we find by experience, that, barely by willing it, barely by a thought of the mind, we can move the parts of our bodies, which were before at rest' (*ECHU* 2, 21,4).

Then he defines liberty as follows:

> So that the idea of LIBERTY is, the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferred to the other: where either of them is not in the power of the agent to be produced by him according to his volition, there he is not at liberty; that agent is under NECESSITY (*ECHU* 2, 21, 8).

Will and liberty are related powers. The will is the power to opt for one of the alternatives at our disposal, whereas liberty is the power of executing or not the chosen alternative among the ones that we have[57]. Liberty denotes the scope of what is 'in the power of the agent'[58] and will the power of deliberately picking out one among the options within such power[59].

One crucial feature of Locke's conception of reflection is that he believes that thinking is indispensable for willing: 'So that liberty cannot be where there is no thought, no volition, no will; but there may be thought, there may be will, there may be volition, where there is no liberty' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 8). If the agent is to will at all, he must be able 'to think on [his] own actions' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 15). To illustrate, Locke says that a tennis ball bouncing lacks willing, even though it has many alternatives of motion. The reason is that: 'we conceive not a tennis ball to think, and consequently not to have any volition' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 9). This association between thinking and volition suggests that Locke conceives willing as an act that involves a species of reflection. This suggestion is further supported by Locke's idea that willing resembles a

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[57] Whereas the exercise of the will implies only the act of choosing ― being the most precarious case of willing that in which the agent has only one way to go — the exercise of liberty implies the existence of at least two alternatives: that of executing the act and that of forbearing it. Locke writes: '(…) so far as a man has power to think or not to think, to move or not to move, according to the preference of direction of his own mind, so far is a man free' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 8).

[58] 'From the consideration of the extent of this power of the mind over the actions of the man, which every one finds in himself, arise the ideas of liberty and necessity' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 7).

[59] Locke stresses some form of priority of the will over liberty by indicating that there could be actions that are voluntary, albeit not free, but that there could not be actions that are involuntary, yet free. A paralytic sitting still may exert his power of will if he chooses to stay still, but he is not free, since it is not in his power either to remain still or to move. By contrast, although a tennis ball may bounce in many directions or remain still, its motions are involuntary, for it cannot choose among alternative motions. Yet, lacking will implies for the tennis ball that it also lacks freedom: if it cannot choose at all, nothing is really in the tennis ball's power. But lacking alternatives where to exert his liberty does not imply for the paralytic to lack will. He still can opt to remain where he is.

command that the mind issues over either the understanding or the body. Willing involves a sort of reflection because, by willing, the agent realizes both that she has certain kind of dominion and that there is an object over which she exerts such dominion. In other words, volition implies self-reflection: 'Volition, it is plain, is an act of the mind *knowingly* exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in, or withholding it from, any particular action' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 15. My emphasis).

Moreover, the reflection involved in willing is of a deliberative sort because Locke understands that the mind has the capacity of mediating between the present uneasiness of desire and the particular volitions that follow, steering the latter towards what the agent takes as good. So, Locke does not think of actions as products of the bare strengths of competing desires or passions[60]. Rather, he takes willing as the manifestation of the power of deliberately determining which desire will be translated into action at any given moment[61]. Willing not only manifests the agent's power to exert dominion over himself, it also expresses the agent's ability to consider his

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[60] A Hobbesian idea that Locke rejects right at the beginning of the *Essay*: 'Nay, a great part of men are so far from finding any such innate moral principles in themselves, that, by denying freedom to mankind, and thereby making men no other than bare machines, they take away not only innate, but all moral rules whatsoever, and leave not a possibility to believe any such, to those who cannot conceive how anything can be capable of a law that is not a free agent. And upon that ground they must necessarily reject all principles of virtue, who cannot put MORALITY and MECHANISM together, which are not very easy to be reconciled or made consistent' (*ECHU* 1, 2,14).

[61] Portraying the will in such a manner explains why Locke goes out of his way to distinguish willing from desiring. Willing is a determination of the mind 'to give rise, continuation, or stop (…) any action which it [the mind] takes to be in its power' (*ECHU* 2, 21,30), whereas desire is the presentation before the mind of a certain degree of uneasiness. To reinforce this difference, Locke mentions cases where willing and desiring push us in different directions: 'A man, whom I cannot deny, may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which, at the same time I am speaking, I may wish may not prevail on him. In this case, it is plain the will and desire run counter. I will the action; that tends one way, whilst my desire tends another, and that the direct contrary way. A man who, by a violent fit of the gout in his limbs, finds a doziness in his head, or a want of appetite in his stomach removed, desires to be eased too of the pain of his feet or hands, (for wherever there is pain, there is a desire to be rid of it,) though yet, whilst he apprehends that the removal of the pain may translate the noxious humour to a more vital part, his will is never determined to any one action that may serve to remove this pain' (*ECHU* 2,21,30).

motives and to ponder accordingly the reasons to give in or to abstain from the satisfaction of certain desires[62]. This makes willing a minimal condition of moral agency.

At any rate, the exercise of the will naturally asks for the exercise of liberty. If liberty denotes the scope of what is 'in the power of the agent', ideally, the agent could be able to will whatever he takes to be the best alternative among the ones available to him. But, Locke thinks that human beings suffer from a tendency to unwittingly reduce the scope of their alternatives of action[63]. In effect, a desire is the uneasiness caused by the want of some absent good. But, desires do not always present the agent with a degree of uneasiness proportional to the good that their objects would produce:

> The reason whereof is evident, from the nature of our happiness and misery itself. All present pain, whatever it be, makes a part of our present misery; but all absent good does not at any time make a necessary part of our present happiness, nor the absence of it make a part of our misery. If it did, we should be constantly and infinitely miserable; there being infinite degrees of happiness, which are not in our possession. All uneasiness therefore being removed, a moderate portion of good serves at present to content men (*ECHU* 2, 21, 45).

While moderate good leaves us fairly content, moderate evil disturbs our minds disproportionally. We take it that even the slightest present pain spoils our entire happiness and

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[62] Darwall expresses this point saying that the will 'intrinsically involves a more or less considered view of the alternatives', willing, he continues, reveals the mind as 'self-comprehensive' (Darwall 1995, 159).

[63] Locke comes to this conclusion after his friend William Molyneux, having read the first edition of the *Essay*, objected that the author seemed to have located moral wrongs more in the understanding than in the will. In effect, in the first edition, Locke answered the 'what determines the will?' question by saying that it is the greatest good in view, implying thereby that immoral actions are caused by miscalculations on what is in reality the greatest good among the agent's present alternatives. After the second edition, Locke introduces the idea that what moves the mind to determine the will is the most pressing 'uneasiness a man is at present under' (*ECHU* 2, 21,31). The change implies that moral wrongs are caused by unfortunate acts of the will: the will gives in when it should not. Darwall cites Molyneux's objection thus: 'the "thread" of liberty and necessity seems so wonderfully fine spun in your book, that at last the Great Question of Liberty and Necessity seems to Vanish and herein you seem to make all Sins to proceed from our Understandings, or to be against Conscience; and not at all from the Depravity of our Wills. Now it seems harsh to say, that a Man shall be Damn'd, because he understands no better than he does' (Darwall 1995, 156-7). The charge was of importance considering that failures of reason were the favourite way in which received Scholasticism used to explain the occurrence of sin (see Ward 2010, 40).

so, when we feel pain, we rush to act so to remove any small degree of it, instead of enduring it and willing the actions that promote our long-term happiness. Since, we are 'capable but of one determination of the will to one action at once' (*ECHU* 2, 21, 36), we are constantly distracted by the smallest trifles and never really focus on rationally maximizing our chances of happiness. We suffer from a sort of psychological distortion: we see small pains as enormous inconveniences. A full exercise of the power of liberty consists in the ability to suspend our tendency to rush and so to keep open the real scope of our choices:

> For the mind having in most cases, as is evident in experience, a power to suspend the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another; is at liberty to consider the objects of them, examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty man has; and from the not using of it right comes all that variety of mistakes, errours, and faults which we run into in the conduct of our lives, and our endeavours after happiness; whilst we precipitate the determination of our wills, and engage too soon before due examination (*ECHU* 2, 21, 48).

So, anticipating insights that Kant would make famous, Locke claims that our liberty consists in being able to set ourselves free from the tyranny of our own inclinations, or in other words, in taking an objectifying stance on ourselves so to gain control over our inclinations. Liberty, as Locke takes it, consists in our power to restrain the natural tendencies in forming our volitions, thereby allowing space for rational deliberation. Liberty is a necessary condition of reflection. If there was a proper exercise of the will, there should have been a prior exercise of liberty. Only in this sense, do human beings have 'free-will':

> This seems to me the source of all liberty; in this seems to consist that which is (as I think improperly) called free-will. For during this suspension of any desire, before the will be determined to action, and the action (which follows that determination) done, we have opportunity to examine, view, and *judge* of the good or evil of what we are going to do; and when, upon due examination, we have judged, *we have done our duty*, all that *we can or ought to do* in pursuit of our happiness; *and it is not a fault*, but a perfection of our nature to desire, will, and act according to the last result of a fair examination (*ECHU* 2, 21, 48. My emphasis).

The successful exercise of our free will amounts to an exercise of reflection. The power of liberty allows the individual to examine any prudential reason there may be to perform the

next action, enabling thus the will to pick out the really worthy alternative[64]. This means that a morally good action is the effect of 'freely willing' obedience to natural law. But, since the natural law is a command for which obedience merits rewards and for which disobedience merits punishment, moral agency consists ultimately in choosing reflectively between the pleasures of rewards and the pains of punishments.

In view of this, we can assess now the way in which Locke's notion meets the four elements of reflection drawn from the discussion of Calvinism. The first element consists in the process of reflection enabling the agent to gain some knowledge of the moral situation of human beings. In this aspect, Locke seems to remain close to Calvinist ideas. For him too, God imposes a moral order in the world, which each individual must follow on the simple grounds of being part of the divine creation[65]. Second, the process of reflection must make the agent aware of the capacities and dispositions that enable him to follow the requirements of morality. Locke differs from the Calvinist on this point as he holds that, through deliberative reflection, individuals are able to exert their free will. It is this power which enables them to make genuine choices and thus, which makes them genuinely responsible for their moral destiny. Third, accordingly, the process of reflection, in Locke's view, causes behavioural effects: it prompts individuals to prefer their long-term happiness over the temptation of removing temporary annoyances. However, fourth, there is a sense in which Locke's conception of reflection does not accord human beings truly reflective agency. As a hedonist, Locke thinks that individuals' free choices are among alternatives of perceived sources of pleasure or pain. Human beings do not choose among moral goods or wrongs *per se,* even though, due to God's design, choosing among pleasures and pains coincides with choosing among moral good and evil. Ultimately, Lockean reflection lacks moral content.

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[64] This conclusion, however, faces two problems. First, it is unclear that Locke has managed to respond effectively to Molyneux's objection. It seems that moral wrong is explained, after all, by a species of miscalculation: flawed practical deliberation. Second, as Leibniz pointed out, the suspension of willing according to the pressing uneasiness is itself an act of will which either Locke leaves unexplained or which one has to assume it is caused by some sort of present uneasiness.

[65] However, on my reading of Locke, the process of reflection pertains to the deliberative process prior to action and the worthiness of the alternatives in regards to happiness. By itself, deliberative reflection does not tell the individual anything about the moral order of the world. It rather informs him about the long-term hedonic potential of alternative courses of action. Assuming an upbringing where individuals are taught to include their afterlife pleasures and pains into the calculation, their reflective deliberation might involve their consciousness concerning their relation to God and the order of created nature.

2.8. Shaftesbury's sentimental reflection

Although Shaftesbury was an author with many interests[66], I focus here on his anti-Lockean streak[67]. Specifically, I wish to focus on how his rejection of the idea that punishments and rewards are genuine moral motivators led him to formulate the notion of a reflective faculty which enables us for moral action in a value-infused world.

In the preface to his edition of Whichcote's sermons, Shaftesbury declares that those who think of morality as a law meant to bend human beings' nature by punishment 'have made war (…) on virtue itself' (Shaftesbury 1698, cited in Darwall 1995, 177). Perhaps part of what Shaftesbury means is a positive answer to what Gill calls the question of Human Nature[68].

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[66] Shaftesbury makes himself a pivotal figure in the history of moral philosophy by bringing together in his thought almost every philosophical trend of his time. He takes part of the revival of Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Stoicism, in vogue in the seventeenth century (Taylor 1989, 251); he is key in propelling the Republican movement articulated before him by James Harrington (Schneewind 1998, 295); he joins the British moralists common enterprise of opposing Hobbes and his perceived moral skepticism (Norton & Kuehn 2006, 944); he continues and develops further the anti-voluntarist and seemingly rationalistic tendencies of the Cambridge Platonists (Darwall 1995, 176; Gill 2006, 77); and finally, he himself pushes forward a new drift of criticism against Locke and what he takes to be Locke's either moral skepticism or moral relativism.

[67] Charles Taylor (1989, 253), Darwall (1995, 177) and Schneewind (1998, 296) all cite Shaftesbury's declaration, in a letter to Michael Ainsworth, June 3, 1709, of his position regarding the moral philosophy of his tutor John Locke. For Shaftesbury, Locke's view was even more dangerous than Hobbes's, presumably as Darwall suggests, because the former made 'positivism respectable for his contemporaries in a way that Hobbes could not' (Darwall 1995, 178). Shaftesbury's declaration reads thus: 'It was Mr. Locke that struck the home blow: for Mr. Hobbes's character and base slavish principles in government took off the poison of his philosophy. 'Twas Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these … unnatural, and without foundation in our minds' (Darwall 1995, 177).

[68] That is, the question of whether human beings are naturally good or evil. Depending on the answer to this question, morality would appear either to take on the features of restriction, or on the features of enhancement of human capabilities (Gill 2006, 79). Admittedly, Shaftesbury holds a positive assessment of human moral capacities and he echoes the Cambridge Platonists' complaint (especially Whichcote's) that a pessimistic or selfish view of human beings ends up producing the human nature that it supposedly only describes. Cambridge Platonists thought that moral philosophy is practical, not only because it is meant to guide action, but because, in a more important sense, it has the power to change people's self-

Although not incompatible, I think, Shaftesbury was also aiming at Locke's moral psychology and at what he took to be its fatal error[69].

Locke centred his account of moral motivation around the human propensity towards pleasure and against pain. This troubled Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury believed that a morality based on punishment and rewards implied a flawed picture of the structure of human motivation. It seems inconsistent to Shaftesbury that we approve as virtuous actions motivated not by moral goods, but by the rewards attached to performing virtuous actions. Shaftesbury aims at this inconsistency by rejecting first the idea that actions motivated by pleasure or pain count as intentional actions at all. Being moved by punishment or by reward is morally similar to being moved by external or non-agential forces:

> We do not, however, say of anyone that he is an ill man because he has the plague spots upon him, or because he has convulsive fits which make him strike and wound such as approach him. Nor we do say, on the other side, that he is a good man when, having his hands tied up, he is hindered from doing the mischief he designs or (which is in a manner the same) when he abstains from executing his ill purpose through a fear of some impending punishment or through the allurement of some exterior reward (*Characteristicks* II, 169)[70].

In consequence, the punishments and rewards that, according to Locke, God attaches to the law are like ties that might prevent the flawed character from acting wrongly, but that neither make it good, nor make its actions genuinely moral. In other words, punishments and rewards,

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understandings. Following the Cambridge Platonists, Shaftesbury believed, as Gill writes, that 'inundated by statements of the inherent wickedness of human nature, people in Christian nations begin to treat each other as wicked beings, and in so doing become wicked themselves' (Gill 2006, 79).

[69] Or as Gideon Yaffe (2002) argues, the moral psychology that he saw in both Hobbes and Locke.

[70] In a similar sense: 'Therefore, if through such an earnest and passionate love of life a creature be accidentally induced to do good, as he might be upon the same terms induced to do ill, he is no more a good creature for this good he executes than a man is the more an honest or good man either for pleading a just cause or fighting in a good one for the sake merely of his fee or stipend' (*Characteristicks* II, 24).

And also, 'If, as in the first case, there be a belief or conception of a deity who is considered only as powerful over his creature and enforcing obedience to his absolute will by particular rewards and punishments and if on this account, through hope merely of reward or fear of punishment, the creature be incited to do the good he hates or restrained from doing the ill to which he is not otherwise in the least degree averse, there is in this case, as has been already shown, no virtue or goodness whatsoever. The creature, notwithstanding his good conduct, is intrinsically of as little worth as if he acted in his natural way, when under no dread or terror of any sort' (*Characteristicks* II, 32).

like plague spots, convulsive fits or the ties in the passage just cited, prevent the attribution of agency. For this reason, Shaftesbury's issue with Lockean moral psychology is not that it depicts moral agency as a mercenary business, but that it fails to account for agency at all[71]. Shaftesbury defends, by contrast, the claim that for an action to count as intentional, the good that is pursued through it must figure explicitly in the purpose that produced the action in the first place. And accordingly, for an action to count as genuinely moral, the agent must be moved by the moral good at which the action is directed.

Now, the purpose of our actions cannot be pleasure as such[72], rather it is a good under some specific form. If one is to explain why someone chose one action rather than another, some form of good ought to be mentioned. This reasoning motivates the question about the capacities that makes us sensitive to the different forms of the good and able to be moved to action accordingly. Shaftesbury's answer to this question is his notion of affection. Schmitter offers a good characterization of what Shaftesbury means by affection:

> [N]ot only do we sense ordinarily perceptible primary and secondary qualities, such as shape and color, we can also sense various value-laden, emergent qualities, such as beauty and goodness. Sensing such properties is equivalent to bearing an "affection" towards the object. An affection is simply a sensory reception, which includes an evaluative component as part of its qualitative character (Schmitter 2013b, 9).

Shaftesbury's psychology of affections is intended to replace the Lockean moral psychology which describes human motivation as aiming at pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The affections enable us to see goods in the world. They also possess a motivational component which, *ceteris paribus*, determines the will towards the normative qualities that they let us perceive:

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[71] As Darwall points out, Shaftesbury thinks that '[m]oral agents must have a source of moral motivation within as well as the power to determine themselves through it' (Darwall 1995, 178), something that the drive for pleasures and the repugnance of pains does not allow us to do.

[72] '[W]hen will and pleasure are synonymous; when everything which pleases us is called pleasure, and we never choose or prefer but as we please; 'tis trifling to say "Pleasure is our good". For this has a little meaning as to say, "We choose what we think eligible"; and "We are pleased with what delights or pleases us"' (*Characteristicks* II, 128).

'Tis evident, that a Creature having this sort of Sense or good Affection in any degree, must necessarily act according to it; if it happens not to be opposed, either by some settled sedate Affection towards a conceiv'd private good, or by some sudden, strong and forcible Passion, as Lust or Anger (*Characteristicks* II, 30).

The metaphysical side of this moral psychology is the claim that there are moral facts, that is to say, features in the world whose normative dimension is irreducible to any physical property[73]. Shaftesbury understands those moral facts in a teleological fashion: features of the world are good or bad depending on their relation to the perfection of the universe[74]. The goodness or evil of any given object depends on whether such object contributes or not, by way of fitting, with the perfection of the world. And correspondently, the goodness or evil of an active being depends on whether its passions and affections move it to contribute to the same perfection, or at least, to the good of its species. In this sense, a good affection is a *natural* affection[75].

Still, what characterizes moral agents is not only that they can aim towards the good. For Shaftesbury, human virtue requires a peculiar sort of affection which leads the creature to gain awareness, not just of the goodness of what is pursued by her actions (such thing is accomplished by garden-variety sort of affections), but of the goodness that an affection being directed at the

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[73] So, for Shaftesbury, explaining how we become responsive to certain goods is a twofold task. It includes the psychological question of what capacities allow us to see value in external objects, as well as the ontological question of what this value is.

[74] 'Whatsoever then is so as that it could not really have been better, or anyway better ordered, is perfectly good. Whatsoever in the order of the world can be called ill must imply a possibility in the nature of the thing to have been better contrived or ordered. For, if it could not, it is perfect as it should be' (*Characteristicks* II, 5).

[75] Darwall writes: 'A good affection is a natural one. Indeed, 'natural' frequently functions in Shaftesbury's writings as a synonym for 'good'. Standing behind this identification is a teleological picture of the natural order as an integrated system in which subsystems function together to realize a well-functioning whole. Every species, human beings included, has a natural function. Each has a constitution fitted, indeed designed, to a specific functional role in the "system of all things" or "universal nature." Whether an individual or species is "really" good or ill depends on whether it enhances or detracts from the functioning of the whole (1.246). Nothing is indifferent, since to fail to enhance the whole is to be superfluous, an imperfection (1.246)' (Darwall 1995, 183). It is worth noting that, by defining good and evil in teleological fashion, Shaftesbury affirms, against Locke, that creatures have affections that move them towards objects, not just towards pleasure, and moreover, that some of those objects comprise the good of the species or the 'publick interest'. And by the way, against Hobbes, Shaftesbury claims that benevolent affections are real: people try to benefit others for these others' sake.

good possesses. Virtue, in order words, presupposes reflective awareness, i.e., a reflective ability to issue judgments of approbation or disapprobation over the agent's own affections:

> In a creature capable of forming general notions of things, not only the outward beings which offer themselves to the sense are the objects of the affection, but the very actions themselves and the affections of pity, kindness, gratitude and their contraries, being brought into the mind by reflection, become objects. So that, by means of this reflected sense, there arises another kind of affection towards those very affections themselves, which have been already felt and have now become the subject of a new liking or disliking (*Characteristicks* II, 16)[76].

Indeed, the moral sense does this and more. It informs us about the special sort of harmony that there should be in our own motives and passions. This harmony involves the coherence with which the motives of the individual stand among each other as well as the fittingness between these coherent motives and the ecosystem to which the individual belongs. The deliverances of the moral sense, in consequence, allow us to perceive the objective order of the world as the framework within which our motives fit or fail to fit[77]. Furthermore, given the motivational aspect of the affections, the reflective affections produce a distinctively moral impulse[78]. This moral impulse is responsible, according to Shaftesbury, for our capacity of moral self-government: a reflective capacity that recruits our first-level affections towards that which, in virtue of a teleological harmonious nature, they must tend.

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[76] Here Shaftesbury introduces 'reflection' in a non-Lockean flavor: reflective affections makes possible, beyond simple introspection, a peculiar mode of perception receptive to the value of our own motives. Without this self-reflective capability, a creature could be good, but it could not aspire to virtue because it could not undertake its own survey. Shaftesbury considers this power of self-awareness so crucial to the definition of virtue that a few pages later, when he discusses the degrees of virtue, he calls 'cheaply virtuous' a person who acts according to morality without experiencing any internal struggle between her proper affections and her self-good or other passions. The idea seems to be that such naturally virtuous person has fewer chances of becoming aware of her own motives, given that she is automatically predisposed to act well (*Characteristicks* II, 22).

[77] Reflective affections are subjective, insofar as they are feelings directed at our own feelings, and objective, insofar as they are representations of the external, objective order (Schneewind 1998, 302).

[78] Recall the passage cited above: 'Tis evident, that a Creature having this sort of Sense or good Affection in any degree, must necessarily act according to it; if it happens not to be opposed, either by some settled sedate Affection towards a conceiv'd private good, or by some sudden, strong and forcible Passion, as Lust or Anger' (*Characteristicks* II, 30).

Furthermore, Shaftesbury understands that a large part of the appeal which the affections exert on us towards the teleologically good is aesthetic. Human beings are by nature allured by order and beauty. Accordingly, when we let our reflective affections guide our actions, we are actually modelling ourselves in the aesthetically perfect image of the world. So, if the moral sense works properly in us, it will turn us into active contributors of the world's beauty. But, precisely because the moral sense helps us to model our lives according to the perfection of the world, the motivation towards virtue is, in a sense, self-interested. Our nature possesses a vocation towards the publick interest because in fitting in such wider scheme, it achieves its own flourishing state. It is not a surprise then that Shaftesbury called 'natural affections' those that drive us towards virtue, given that virtue is the state that realizes our nature within the ordered world.

Shaftesbury's account illustrates better than the Calvinists and Locke, the elements of reflection that I have identified earlier in this section. According to the first two elements, the process of reflection must enable the agent to gain some knowledge of the moral situation of human beings and it also must make the agent aware of the capacities and dispositions that enable him to follow the requirements of morality. In these first two aspects, reflective affections are sentiments through which the agent perceives the order and perfection of the world and at the same time perceives the way in which his first-level affections harmonize or not with it. The reflective affections thus locate the individual in the moral universe and make him aware of his moral capacities. Regarding the third element, i.e., whether reflection produces behavioural changes, Shaftesbury thinks that reflective affections are motivationally active: their deliverances guide the agent's conduct and rise in him the impulse toward virtue. Moreover, the behavioural changes that in this manner reflection produces are directly connected to the moral good that the very reflective affections allow the agent to perceive. The agent, in this sense, does not act virtuously out of a motive other than his recognition of the value of virtue. And this is so despite the fact that for Shaftesbury the motive to virtue is ultimately self-interested, since he considers individuals as parts of a system, and so, acting self-interestingly, if guided by reflection, is the same as acting for the public good.

2.9. The concern about the role of reflection in virtuous motivation revisited

The central question of the concern about reflection in virtuous motivation is about the existence and character of the capacities that enable the moral agent to take a reflective stance on his own motives and actions, so that he can endorse those that accord with virtue. In the foregoing review, I presented three attempts to articulate a response to such question. The Calvinists, Locke and Shaftesbury agree that morally good behaviour requires the agent to be able to own, assess and, to certain extent, control his actions. They all agree, in other words, that moral agency requires reflective capacities. The Calvinists' view is a good point of contrast, since they simply deny that human beings could possess all of these abilities. Though Calvin's notion of voluntary action allows the attribution of causal responsibility, the human inability to choose the good by its own sake implies a rejection of the possibility of a truly reflective agency. Admittedly, the Calvinists acknowledge that agents are able to turn their attention towards their own motives and actions and pass judgments on them. Without such acknowledgement, their emphasis on self-examination would be inconsistent. But, Calvinist self-examination is a rigged game, so to speak. The agent is expected always to find only his own wickedness after reflection, and accordingly, to adopt a general attitude of humility, to act according to the Scripture, the divine or the civil law and to assume as the only purpose of his actions the worshipping of God. Reflection, on this view, is greatly constrained; it is not open to the agent's individuality or the particularity of his motives. That self-examination is not reflection justifies the resort to external devices of moral motivation such as the enforcement of God's law on earth, constant self-examination, obsessive reading of the Scripture and the threat of eternal punishment after death. These resources substitute for our moral inability by placating our pride, mobilizing our fear, and shaping our motivation according to the model of the pious believer.

Locke admits that human beings are capable of truly free choice. Moreover, tying the exercise of free will to that of instrumental reason, Locke introduces the idea of rational reflection, a species of reflection that allows deliberate control over one's desires and inclinations. However, Locke does not think that the exercise of free will allows individuals to choose the morally good for its own sake, i.e., to make choices where the awareness of the value involved in the law's content guides the election. In fact, given his definition of law as a precept backed up by punishment, the moral law turns out to be a command that we obey because of our

inclination towards pleasure and our aversion to pain. Our reflective capacities then allow us to choose only what is rationally instrumental for us, but not what possesses moral value.

Shaftesbury attacks such view. Instead of a rational reflective capacity, Shaftesbury sees in the reflective affections the deliverances of a sentimental faculty that enables us to perceive the normative features of our own primary affections and of the world. Such a faculty equips us for self-governance. But, whereas Shaftesbury attempts in this way to respond to what he sees as the failures of the Lockean position, he acquires strong metaphysical commitments. The story of a teleological world can hardly convince authors of an empirical and mechanistic bent.

The crucial presupposition of these three authors is that human motivation is not simply the result of the strength and hedonic valence of our motives. The fact that what is assessed is the behaviour of a human being typically implies that, along with the causal role that desires and impulses provide, individual agency carries some importance. Allegedly, one can think of agency as a peculiar sort of causality. Yet, the core intuition to be drawn from the discussion of Shaftesbury is that individual agency is a function of the content of the motives, and not simply of their causal features. To be an agent, an individual must be able to appreciate the content of his motives, which means being able, first, to recognize his motives as his own, and second, to assess in some normative fashion the objects of his impulses, desires and passions. In most cases, this capacity of reflection must enable the individual to modify his behaviour, if not in full accordance with his evaluation, at least to some extent in this direction[79]. In this sense, the problem of reflection in virtuous motivation is the problem of characterizing the reflective capacities of agents such that allow them to evaluate the object of their motives against a moral standard and, in most cases, to guide their behaviour according to such evaluation.

The attempts surveyed in this section to include some sort of reflective capacity within our psychological repertoire attest to the importance of the problem of reflection in virtuous motivation. It also reflects the change pointed out by Schneewind (1998) and Gill (2006): for eighteenth-century authors, explaining moral motivation involved more than providing an

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[79] Surely, being an agent does not necessarily mean being able to evaluate the object of one's own motives against a moral standard. In fact, the ability to evaluate whether the object of one's desires promotes or hinders one's survival and wellbeing represents a minimal form of agency. The more complex we think the value in regards to which the agent evaluates the objects of his motives, the more complex the form of agency may be.

account of the origin, reliability and efficacy of virtuous motives. It also included providing a story of the way such motives are reflectively upheld by the agent, to the point that he consciously lets them guide his conduct. The Humean account of moral motivation must therefore provide a solution to *the concern about reflection in virtuous motivation*. I develop my reading of Hume's position on this concern in the final section of chapter 6.

Chapter 2
The Problem of Moral Motivation in Contemporary Scholarship

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed a selected group of early modern authors who may have influenced Hume's views on virtuous motivation. I also identified the concerns that constitute the problem of moral motivation, to name, the concern about the nature of virtuous motives and the concern about the role of reflection in virtuous motivation. In this chapter, I want to finish the setup of this project's problem by looking at the current state of the scholarship. My interest is twofold: on the one hand, I want to show the extent to which the scholarly debate on Hume's theory of moral motivation presupposes the two concerns pointed out in the previous chapter. This will add support to my presentation of the problem and will help to clarify the place and import of my own interpretation. I would also like to single out some points of agreement and some important shortcomings in current interpretations and move forward on my own argument by proposing a novel way to approach the search for Hume's account of moral motivation: looking at the conjectural histories in various of Hume's texts.

Authors in the last three decades have discussed Hume's views on moral motivation mainly through one interpretative question: *how did Hume believe that moral sentiments motivate virtuous behaviour?*[80] The answer to this question varies across authors depending on

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[80] I do not claim that the scholars that I discuss in this chapter are the only ones that concern themselves with Hume's theory of moral motivation. Interpretations of the character of the general point of view, the origin of the motive of justice and Hume's characterization of virtue might be important for a full reconstruction of Hume's theory of moral motivation. I will resort to these particular discussions in my own argument when it seems appropriate. I do not claim either that Hume's moral psychology has not been an object of debate before the 1980's. The psychology of the passions and Hume's characteristic distinction between the natural and the artificial virtues, to name just two outstanding examples, have been discussed with great attention among commentators since the interest in Hume's moral philosophy was revived in the 1940's by Norman Kemp-Smith's *The Philosophy of David Hume* (1941). However, the focus on Hume's account of moral motivation is relatively new. As Katie Abramson (2002, 302-3) notes, the predominant reading, common before and into the 1980's, was that Hume failed to offer a

how they understand the nature of the moral sentiments[81]. Apart from describing them as 'sentiments' — implying thus that they are affections that cause no emotional disturbance in the mind — and as the result of 'reflection' — which makes them resemble what it is usually taken for the workings of 'reason' — Hume is not sufficiently clear on their nature, or not in the degree needed to grant readers a solid understanding of how these sentiments produce virtuous conduct. Interpreters exploring the motivational aspect of the moral sentiments, in consequence, are always faced with some shortage of textual support.

The obvious move to address this problem is to investigate what kind of affections moral sentiments are by relying on other aspects of Hume's moral psychology. Current scholarship can be divided up in at least three lines of interpretation. First, moral sentiments are or are like the *indirect passions*. So, in the same way that Hume denies direct motivational purchase to pride, humility, love or hatred, he must have denied it to the moral sentiments. Still, since moral sentiments allow evaluative perceptions of people, as do indirect passions (e.g., love and hatred), their content and quality link them to some direct motives (i.e., benevolence, anger, respect or

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justificatory account of the normative authority of morality. This reading led some authors to conclude that Hume could not have provided a theory of moral motivation (Abramson mentions MacIntyre's *After Virtue*). Michael Smith's articles (1984) on the Humean theory of action, though not intended as contributions to the history of philosophy, sparked a new interest in Hume's account of moral motivation. And by roughly the same time, John Bricke's works on Locke's and Hume's (1988) moral psychology put the question about Hume's account of moral motivation on the scholars's list of concerns. Some of the authors that I survey in this chapter helped to give shape to the problem and to the views that are mainstream nowadays.

[81] In the literature, authors commonly distinguish between two problems. One is the problem of whether *moral judgments* (i.e., assessments, evaluations, distinctions) motivate action. Hume's argument against rationalists seems to assume that they do, but a puzzle arises if Hume's general point of view is understood as the source of the judgments of an ideal spectator. Since nobody can actually pass the judgments of this ideal kind of spectator, the conclusion seems to be that morality lacks motivational purchase on actual people, and thus that moral judgments are 'unsentimental' (Hampton 1997, 93-4). This is what Abramson (2002, 303) calls the second version of the spectator complaint, and which Elizabeth Radcliffe (1994a) criticizes. The other problem is whether *moral sentiments* (that is, the actual affections) motivate action. Here the issue consists in how these particular sort of affections produce action. This is the sort of problem that I trace in the secondary literature reviewed in this chapter. Note that if one rejects the view that moral judgments are the judgments of an idea spectator and instead adopts any version of the view that these judgments are expressions of the actual moral feelings of actual individuals, then the question of how *moral judgments* motivate is just another form of the question of how *moral sentiments* motivate.

contempt). And given that the evaluations can be directed at the self or at others, direct motives can operate as immediate causes of virtuous behaviour. Charlotte Brown (1988), Stephen Darwall (1993), and Rachel Cohon (2010) —although the last two do not exactly fit this pattern of argument — are among the authors who defend this sort of reading.

The second line of interpretation holds that moral sentiments are or are like the *direct passions*. Just as the direct passions typically motivate action according to their particular character (e.g., fear produces actions of response to objects or situations perceived as dangerous, benevolence produces actions for the good of others), the moral sentiments typically produce actions of response to self-approbation or self-reproach when directed at the self. Elizabeth Radcliffe (1994a, 1996), John Bricke (1988, 1996) and to some extent Rachel Cohon (1997b) are among those who argue for this interpretation.

Finally, on the third line of interpretation, moral sentiments are a peculiar sort of affections as they do not motivate directly or by an interposed direct passion or desire. Rather their functional role is that of second-order regulative affections. Moral sentiments organize, buttress or alter the content and strength of the direct and indirect passions involved in the production of virtuous behaviour. Marcia Baron (1988) and Katie Abramson (2002) uphold different versions of this reading.

All these interpretations agree that whatever the answer, the account of how moral sentiments motivate virtuous behaviour must be compatible with the so-called 'argument from motivation' or 'motivational argument'. According to this argument, since morality 'ha[s] an influence on the actions and affections' — the so-called 'practicality of morality' premise — (SBN- 458; T- 3.3.1.6), it cannot be derived from reason, because, as *Treatise* 2.2.3 established, reason is motivationally inert[82]. Scholars assign great importance to the 'motivation argument' because, in its brevity, it expresses Hume's opposition to early modern rationalists, revealing

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[82] Here is the argument in Hume's words: 'Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be deriv'd from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason' (SBN- 458; T- 3.1.1.6).

thus his sentimentalist conception of morality, at the same time that it exemplifies one of the consequences of Hume's own brand of non-cognitivism[83].

By itself, however, the motivational argument does not point to a clear way to establish an account of moral motivation. Nor does the practicality of morality premise, which most authors see as crucial for moral motivation, given that it seems to commit Hume to a version of motivational internalism. Indeed, this premise is only that: one of the premises of the motivation argument, rather than one of its conclusions. Moreover, it is a premise that Hume does not support very thoroughly[84]. What Hume seems to mean by it is a generally accepted assumption: rules of morality are action-guiding and commonly regarded as having a special sort of authority. The very fact that moralists, parents, and politicians invoke these rules to assess behaviour and that the first two inculcate them among children and the general public prove that it is generally assumed that people listen to such rules and that they can at least register that they should obey them; all this independently of whether they actually follow them or not. Thus understood, the practicality of morality premise provides very little in the way of a distinctive Humean view on the motivational power of moral sentiments[85].

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[83] Famously condensed in the 'reason is and only ought to be the slave of the passions' sentence SBN-415;T- 2.3.3.4.

[84] Hume seems to assume that it is a claim easily accepted by anybody, or at least, by his antagonists in this part of the *Treatise*. He offers three quick reasons to support the 'practicality of morality' premise: 'If morality had naturally no influence on human passions and actions, 'twere in vain to take such pains to inculcate it; and nothing wou'd be more fruitless than that multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound. Philosophy is commonly divided into speculative and practical; and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division, 'tis supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgments of the understanding. And this is confirm'd by common experience, which informs us, that men are often govern'd by their duties, and are deter'd from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impell'd to others by that of obligation' (SBN- 458; T- 3.1.1.5).

[85] What it is that Hume actually takes as established by his practicality of morality premise is not without problems however. For example, Francis Snare (1991) contends that the 'motivation argument' poses a meta-ethical question of which Hume loses focus when he turns to answer it. For Snare, it is ambiguous whether the practicality of morality premise establishes the meta-ethical claim that we are most of the time epistemically acquainted with morality (either with its prescriptions or with moral qualities) or the internalist thesis in motivation according to which morality has most of the time the power of affecting the will. More recently, Sophie Botros (2006) has shown the many difficulties and apparent contradictions contained in this premise and in the motivation argument of which it makes part.

Besides accounting for this premise, authors looking for an account of moral motivation feel the need to accommodate also the passages where Hume shows small confidence in the motivational effect of moral sentiments and moral judgments[86]; the passages where he seems to require special conditions for an action to be motivated by virtue[87], and the passages where Hume seems to assimilate the actual impulse towards virtuous actions to the effect of practices of social education or habituation anchored in self-regarding motives[88]. The interpretations

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[86] For instance, Hume writes: '[b]ut however the general principle of our blame or praise may be corrected by those other principles, 'tis certain, they are not altogether efficacious, nor do our passions often correspond entirely to the present theory' (SBN- 583; T- 3.3.1.18). Similar passages are the following: SBN- 592, 603; T 3.3.2.2, 3.3.3.2. Although some commentators (Garret 2002, Abramson 2002) take these passages as saying that moral judgments, as opposed to moral sentiments, sometimes or to some degree fail to motivate action, it is not clear that Hume had the same in mind. In general, Hume uses the expression 'moral distinctions', and only depending on what argument he is advancing, he stresses the judgmental or affective dimensions of such distinctions.

[87] The most indicative of these passages is the 'undoubted maxim', according to which '*no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality*' (SBN- 479; T- 3.2.1.7. Italics in the text). Hume confirms his undoubted maxim by the example of a hypothetical 'self-hating person' who acts virtuously out of the concern for lacking a truly virtuous motivation: 'When any virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person, who feels his heart devoid of that motive, may hate himself upon that account, and may perform the action without the motive, from a certain sense of duty, in order to acquire by practice, that virtuous principle, or at least, to disguise to himself, as much as possible, his want of it' (SBN- 479; T- 3.2.1.8). Both passages aim to show that, to be considered as such, a virtuous action must be caused by a non-moral and natural motive. The maxim and the example come in at the end of Hume's discussion of the 'circle' in which we would fall, were we to concede that a virtuous action is one done out of the regard for the virtuousness of the action. However, since Hume raises this discussion in order to introduce the peculiarity of the virtue of justice, particularly its typical 'artificiality', the degree of Hume's commitment to the claim that every virtuous action must be caused by a non-moral, natural motive is debatable. In this sense, see Cohon 1997b, 2008b, who argues that Hume is not fully committed to such claim.

[88] For example, 'Tho' this progress of the sentiments be *natural*, and even necessary, 'tis certain, that it is here forwarded by the artifice of politicians, who, in order to govern men more easily, and preserve peace in human society, have endeavour'd to produce an esteem for justice, and an abhorrence of injustice (…) As publick praise and blame encrease our esteem for justice; so private education and instruction contribute to the same effect. **For as parents easily observe, that a man is the more useful, both to himself and others, the greater degree of probity and honour he is endow'd with**; and that those principles have greater force, when custom and education assist interest and reflexion: For these reasons

surveyed in the present chapter may be seen as attempts to gather all these seemingly disparate claims into a coherent account.

2. The motivating power of the moral sentiments

Although how moral sentiments produce virtuous actions has been the guiding question of the scholarly debate on Hume's account of moral motivation, some commentators either believe that Hume fails to show how moral sentiments motivate or claim that he simply does not hold that these sentiments motivate in any obvious way[89]. For my purposes, I focus on interpretations that

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they are induc'd to inculcate on their children, from their earliest infancy, the principles of probity, and teach them to regard the observance of those rules, by which society is maintain'd, as worthy and honourable, and their violation as **base and infamous**' (SBN- 500-1; T- 3.2.2.26-27. Italics in the text. My emphasis in bold). In a similar sense: 'Another spring of our constitution, that brings a great addition of force to moral sentiments, is the *love of fame*; which rules, with such uncontrolled authority, in all generous minds, and is often the grand object of all their designs and undertakings' (EPM- 225. My emphasis).

[89] Barry Stroud (1979) and Francis Snare (1991), for example, point to inconsistencies in Hume's approach to action and morality, inconsistencies that they judge fatal to the project of an account of moral motivation; Annette Baier (1994) attributes to Hume a conscious disregard for the psychology of moral motivation, precisely because he characterizes moral sentiments as calm affections; and James Harris (2010) argues that Hume cares little about finding out the motivation behind virtue — although Harris restricts this reading to the virtue of justice. The problem for Stroud is that whereas Hume is keen to show the 'active' aspect of morality and this leads him to stress the relation of morality to feelings, he has to divorce actual feelings from moral judgments, if he is to attend to the 'objective' aspect of morality (i.e., its normative authority). In effect, for Stroud, if Hume is pressed to explain the origin of moral sentiments, he has to fall back on a theory that explains the origin of actual and partial feelings (rather than of objective or impartial feelings), but this move makes him lose the divorce that he would like to acknowledge between actual feelings and morality. So, Stroud concludes, Hume cannot account for morality's objectivity without losing morality's practicality and vice versa. This dilemma is captured by Radcliffe as follows: 'The interpretive challenge in Hume is to reconcile the claim that (a) our moral distinctions are directly based on feelings not identical to the feelings we in fact experience, with the claim that (b) the motivating force of morality comes from the internal nature of its grounds' (Radcliffe 1994a, 47). In turn, Snare proposes a method for examining Hume's theory of motivating reasons that consists in facing the account with commonplace cases or counter examples in which, according to the proper use of the concepts of common-sense psychology, actions are not motivated by passions, desires or

read Hume to be holding that moral sentiments do motivate. In what follows, I discuss some representative interpretations of the three lines mentioned above, pointing to the way in which they presuppose the concerns about moral motivation identified in the previous chapter.

2.1. Do moral sentiments motivate indirectly?

Brown (1988), and, in a different way, Darwall (1993), and Cohon (2010) contend that, on Hume's account, moral sentiments motivate action through non-moral motives or desires, that is, indirectly. In outline, their argument is that, on Hume's view, moral sentiments contribute only to form people's moral beliefs. Since beliefs cannot cause actions, given Hume's commitment to the motivational inertness of reason, one must suppose an additional conative element to explain virtuous behaviour. For Brown, moral sentiments are expressed as moral judgments and serve as information input for desires such as the desire of good reputation or the desire to be happy,

wants. Confronting Hume's theory with these cases leads Snare to distinguish four varieties the theory might take. His conclusion is that three of these varieties are either 'question-begging', 'vacuous', or 'defeating', and the only one that is 'provocative' rules out cases where promises or the needs of others motivate people to act, something which Snare finds refuted by common-sense psychology (Snare 1991, 114). Baier stresses passages in which Hume shows hesitations about the motivational power of morality and concludes that '[o]n calmer reflection, it may turn out that the actions they [the moral sentiments] most dependably produce are the expressive ones occurring in evaluative discourse' (Baier 1994, 184). Baier believes that this is consistent with Hume's description of moral sentiments as calm, and thus very different from 'the fiery passions' that govern the heart. Moral sentiments, thus, cannot motivate. However, Baier does allow for a different way to understand the idea that moral sentiments motivate. She points out that, for Hume, morality motivates the expression of moral distinctions which, she further suggests, are speech acts. As such, they may have a deep influence on the design of 'places of moral education and passing legislation' (Baier 1994, 185. For a similar conclusion, although based on different reasons, see Mackie 1980). For Baier's Hume, morals does not influence the heart effectively, but in the mild way in which it does, morality certainly has virtue-encouraging effects. Finally, Harris calls attention to the Humean definition of justice and stresses the point that it is more a virtue of minding one's own business and letting others alone, and less a virtue whose value depends on its antecedent motivations. Justice's core is the respect for other's perfect rights. In this sense, justice is morally worthy only because of its consequences; the motivation behind it is irrelevant (Harris 2010, 40).

which directly motivate virtue. For Darwall, the motivation behind actions related to the natural virtues is brought about by passions and desires aimed at what the individual perceives to be his good. Moral sentiments are involved in motivation only in connection with the artificial virtues, where they give content to rule-abiding motives, introduced in individuals' psychology by conventions. Darwall finds this difference puzzling as Hume seems to hold two contradictory theories of motivation: one theory, hedonistic and egoistic, in which passions drive individuals to obtain their perceived good, and another, moral, in which individuals are moved by an internal recognition of the moral authority of rules[90]. Finally, Cohon (2010), presumably complementing a position held in her 2008 paper, claims that moral sentiments are 'indirect affections', which, in conjunction with causal inferences about the pleasure of behaving virtuously, generate proximate

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[90] On Darwall's reading of Hume, motives and desires always aim at particular objects or state of affairs subjectively represented as good, which for Darwall's Hume, means represented as sources of pleasure. Since, in this sense, Hume's official theory of action is hedonistic and egoistic, virtuous actions other than just actions, have to be produced by the moral agent's conception of what is pleasant. Being just, in contrast, is a matter of internalizing rules of action, which produce a rule-following disposition that typically overrides the impulses of passions and desires, and more specifically, of our tendency to act for pleasure's sake. For Darwall, Hume believes that the motivation of justice consists in the dispositional desire to follow the rules because of the authority conferred to them, as his discussion of the 'inflexibility' of the rules of justice attests. Furthermore, the moral sentiments that become possible due to the existence of the convention give specific content to the blank desire of rule-abiding. Once we take up the general point of view and appreciate the vice in unjust acts, we develop a desire to follow the rules of justice. Honest or just actions, therefore, are special insofar as they are informed by a sort of reflection that actions derived from the natural virtues lack. Darwall thinks that these two theories of motivation contradict each other. To offer a consistent account, on Darwall's suggestion, Hume would have to explain the way in which developing the rule-following disposition contributes to achieve individuals' good. This is why I have classed Darwall among the authors who believe that moral sentiments motivate indirectly. Darwall's suggestion implies that in a consistent account of moral motivation, a further desire, different from the desire to abide by the rule, must provide the real motivation to virtue. Lorraine Besser-Jones (2006) offers an interpretation that accommodates Darwall's worries and thus eliminates the perceived inconsistency in Hume's account of the motivation to justice. She agrees with Darwall's diagnosis, but argues that Hume actually points to the missing desire. For her, the desire of developing one's social nature in the context of a just society provides the desire, aimed at one's own good, that motivates the acquisition of just dispositions.

motives for virtue (Cohon 2010)[91]. Let me focus on Brown's reading, as it is, in my view, the most representative author in this line of interpretation[92].

In "Is Hume an Internalist?" (1988), Charlotte Brown sets up her paper as a challenge to the assumption that Hume is an internalist in regards to moral motivation[93]. She claims that, although the thrust of the 'argument from motivation' commits Hume to elaborate an internalist theory of motivation, he in the end fails to do so. Brown examines the argument from motivation and affirms that nobody would deny the premise that morality is able to 'excite the passions, and produce or prevent actions' (SBN- 458; T- 3.1.1.6). However, assuming that such a premise plays any role in the argument, one must wonder what Hume's actual point regarding motivation is. Hume might have thought that '[e]ither moral thought or perception by itself moves us to do

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[91] For Cohon, if we are to understand Hume's account of moral motivation, it is crucial that we give up one fundamental, yet commonly accepted assumption about his moral psychology. This is what she calls 'the signpost assumption'. According to this assumption, 'when we come to have a hedonic belief [i.e., a belief about objects or events promising pleasure or pain for us], that hedonic belief never causes a new desire or aversion, but only directs a desire for pleasure or aversion to pain that exists independently of the belief' (Cohon 2010, 197). The signpost assumption is fundamental because it determines Hume's theory of action: it implies that actions are produced by the activation of a supposedly general desire for pleasure. More importantly, the signpost assumption implies that moral sentiments only motivate indirectly, as any hedonic belief does: by informing us about the pleasure that fulfilling our duty has in store for us. The problem for Cohon is that, if this is the way moral sentiments motivate, Hume's argument against rationalism does not work, for according to the motivational argument, morals have a motivational power that reason, even in the form of beliefs, lacks. Cohon invites us to give up on the signpost assumption. She invokes passages in book 1 of *Treatise*, where Hume holds that hedonic beliefs motivate by themselves, and not by means of directing a latent and general desire for pleasure. Giving up the signpost assumption means that the moral sentiments can produce desires for virtuous actions that are independent of the activation of the supposedly general desire of pleasure. What Hume sees as proximate cause of actions are the direct passions, which are produced by evaluations from the indirect passions or from reasoning about prospects of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This fact, and perhaps also her sensitivity to the concern about reflection in moral motivation, leads Cohon to argue that moral sentiments are 'indirect affections' through which we evaluate our own behaviour. As indirect affections, they have the capacity to produce new motives, though not alone, but with the help of causal beliefs about the ways in which virtuous actions bring us the satisfaction of self-approbation and vicious actions the displeasure of self-reproach.

[92] I discuss with some detail aspects of Darwall's, Besser-Jones's and Cohon's interpretations in other chapters.

[93] 'I shall argue, however, that Hume fails in an important respect to show that moral concepts influence action. For I shall try to show that, at least as far as Hume construes them, the moral feelings of approval and disapproval do not by themselves move us' (Brown 1988, 69).

the right thing or it guides action only by triggering an antecedently given desire to do what is right' (Brown 1988, 75)[94].

Brown concludes that Hume offers an externalist conception of moral motivation[95]. To show this, Brown recalls two distinctions that Hume makes in the *Treatise*. The first is between the artificial and the natural virtues, which she reads as the difference between tendencies and patterns of behaviour that we have due to civilization or education and tendencies and patterns that we have by nature, respectively. The second distinction is between actions performed with regard to their moral worth and actions performed without such regard. Acting out of regard to the moral worth of the action is what Hume calls acting from a sense of duty, or acting from a moral motive according to Brown[96]. Both distinctions interact to produce four cases of being moved to do the virtuous or the right thing: 1a) an agent might be moved to do a *naturally* virtuous or right thing out of a *non-moral motive*; 1b) an agent might be moved to do a *naturally* virtuous or right thing out of a *moral motive*; 2a) an agent might be moved to do the *artificially* virtuous or right thing out of a *non-moral motive*, and 2b) an agent might be moved to do the *artificially* virtuous or right thing out of a *moral motive*. Since Brown identifies what Hume calls 'acting from a sense of duty' with acting from a moral motive, cases 1b and 2b are the only ones where moral sentiments can have any motivational input[97]. But, since, for Hume, the moral worth of actions depends on whether an impartial spectator would approve the feelings that produced them, there cannot be actions done out of regard for their moral worth, if there is not a

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[94] In other words, the alternatives are internalism and externalism. Brown (1988, 74-5) follows here Falk's (1948) classic distinction and Nagel's (1970) further elaboration of it.

[95] If the first premise of the argument from motivation is read in an externalist fashion, the second premise, according to which reason is inert, 'loses its bearing', because that reason cannot move to action does not imply that it cannot be the faculty from which moral distinctions are derived. So, this cannot be Hume's claim. By contrast, if the first premise is read in an internalist manner, the argument is valid, because if moral opinions move to action and reason is inert, moral opinions cannot be derived from reason.

[96] 'If an agent acts with some attention to the moral worth of the action, s/he acts from a moral motive. Hume standardly refers to this motive as the sense of duty. If an agent acts without any regard for an action's moral worth, s/he acts from a non-moral motive' (Brown 1988, 79).

[97] 'Only actions of type 1b and 2b are possible cases where the moral sentiments may motivate. Since actions motivated by an attention to their moral worth are performed from the sense of duty, my discussion focuses on that motive in both the natural and artificial cases' (Brown 1988, 79).

natural, non-moral motive that a moral spectator could previously approve. Now, if we imagine a 'naturally sound person' (Brown 1988, 81) who always act according to virtue, we must conclude that she would not be really virtuous because 'lacking the moral sense, this individual would also lack any awareness of doing something with moral worth' (Brown 1988, 81). Brown supports this idea by the self-hating person passage (SBN- 479; T- 3.2.1.8), which supports the conclusion that moral sentiments lack all motivational purchase, unless they are prompted by a mediating and motivating desire, supposedly, 'the sense of duty'.

How does one acquire the sense of duty? According to Brown's Hume, virtue and vice are causes of pride and humility and taking pride in one's own character is an important ingredient of happiness. The sense of duty is the desire of acting virtuously produced by the desire of taking pride in one's own characters, which in turn is associated with the desire to be happy[98]. From all this follows then that for Brown's Hume, moral sentiments motivate action indirectly, by triggering the 'sense of duty', that is, the desire to act virtuously caused by our concern for having a praiseworthy character.

For my purposes, Brown's interpretation deserves attention because the setup of her interpretative problem is paradigmatic of the typical approach taken in the secondary literature, as it may be evident from this summary. Besides, her solution manages to bring together the two concerns of the problem of moral motivation. On the one hand, Brown's argument to characterize the 'sense of duty' can be seen as inspired by something like the concern about the nature of virtuous motives. On the other, Brown understands the distinction between acting out of a non-moral and a moral motive as a difference between ways in which the awareness of moral value figures in the motivation that produces virtuous actions. This, in turn, reveals her

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[98] 'One important ingredient of happiness is having a good sense of ourselves. Having virtuous tendencies is one of the things that makes us proud of ourselves and so promotes and contributes to our happiness. If someone happens to lack one or more of the virtuous motives, an agent's moral sense disapproves and one feels ashamed. The person's sense of self-worth is disrupted and lowered, and consequently, an important ingredient of happiness is lost. The motive of duty is, therefore, created by the moral sense in conjunction with pride and the desire to be happy and, once created, it may last. But what makes the disapproval of the moral sense matter to a person is the fact that individuals want to be proud of their character and that this is associated with being happy' (Brown 1988, 82). In Brown (1994), the author presents an elaboration of her 1988's interpretation: in the new paper, she offers an account of the 'active' character of the moral sentiments, according to which they provide us with a moral ideal of ourselves which obligates, given that we are able to internalize through sympathy the disapproval of others.

concern with the role of reflexion in virtuous motivation. Further, Brown's interpretation touches on the issue of how self-interest affects virtuous motivation. For her, the desire of having a good sense of ourselves is an obvious aspect of our natural desire for happiness, which she associates with self-interest. In the end, for Brown, the nature of the 'sense of duty' is self-interested, but this motive is of such a kind that it involves also a sort of moral reflection given its origin in the moral sentiments[99].

2.2. Do moral sentiments motivate directly?

Radcliffe (1994a, 1996), Bricke (1988, 1996), and to some extent Cohon (1997b) read Hume as claiming that moral sentiments motivate directly. They understand that the moral sentiments are feelings, passions or desires that prompt action by their own. For Radcliffe, in her 1994 paper, moral motivation is simply a matter of the agent being inclined to a certain attitude towards certain actions as a result of the beliefs he formed due to past experiences of approval or disapproval of others' actions. In Radcliffe (1996), she defends a version of internalism according to which the moral sentiments of self-approbation and self-reproach are species of feelings of pleasure and pain that directly motivate virtuous conduct. Finding oneself at a moral fault causes displeasure and such displeasure is just the desire to act virtuously, to get rid of the uneasiness of present and prospective self-disapproval. Bricke (1988, 1996), in turn, argues that the moral sentiments are in fact 'moral desires' which meet standards of impartiality and intersubjectivity and whose function is to motivate several forms of virtuous behaviour: from the

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[99] There are some dubious steps in Brown's argument that I want just to point out. First, although the distinction between natural and artificial virtues is prominent in Hume's *Treatise*, it is a controversial point whether he means it as a simple contrast between innate and acquired patterns of behaviour. In this sense, see Baier (1994), Baron (1995), Bricke (1996), Cohon (1997b), Cottle (1979), Flew (1995), Garret (2007), Gauthier (1995), Mackie (1980), Ponko (1983). Second, it is uncertain that Hume would consider actions done out of regard for the moral worth of the action as actions motivated by the moral sentiments. In the passages where he talks about this sort of actions, he seems to refer to actions that are not genuinely virtuous. This is how Radcliffe (1996) and Abramson (2002) read the passage, for example. Finally, Brown's appeal to the passages where Hume comments on moral pride and consciousness of integrity seems a misreading, for Hume seems to take those feelings as effects of virtuous actions, rather than as their causes.

identification of virtuous and vicious character traits to the cultivation of virtue and the avoidance of vice and particular virtuous actions[100]. Finally, Cohon defends the view that, in the case of artificial virtues, moral sentiments amend our natural affective deficiencies, as if they were 'moral prostheses', generating virtuous actions directly (Cohon 1997b, 2008b)[101]. I discuss Radcliffe's positions in her 1994a and 1996 articles as they seem to be the clearest representatives of this line of interpretation[102].

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[100] For Bricke's Hume, moral desires are indistinguishable from their non-moral variants, except for the fact that the agent takes up the moral point of view when he experiences them. This implies that what actually distinguishes moral desires from non-moral ones is that their content meets strong conditions of impartiality: moral desires are general and devoid of particular interest. As such, moral desires abstract from the variability of one's own position with regard to others. The combination of these features makes moral desires, 'intersubjective' (Bricke 1996, 113) in the sense that they are desires that could be had from anyone's perspective. Still, there are situations where moral desires simply are not in place ('rude and natural condition of men'), situations where there is no need to have them (when human groups have not grown yet to a tribe or a society), situations where people fail to align their non-moral desires to them (akrasia) and situations where people intentionally avoid to do so (sensible knave) (Bricke 1996, 123). In general, Bricke takes it that moral desires vary in motivational force both across individuals and across situations and that their fundamental (i.e., minimal) motivational efficacy consists in giving content to moral discourse (Bricke 1996, 124).

[101] Cohon (1997b, 2008b) identifies Hume's difficulty with the mechanics of moral motivation for the virtue of honesty, and by extension, for the virtue of fidelity to promises. Hume's difficulty consists in maintaining three seemingly contradictory claims: i) honesty is a virtue, ii) for every virtue, there is a natural, non-moral motive that typically motivates its corresponding virtuous actions (the 'undoubted maxim') and iii) there is no natural, non-moral motive for the virtue of honesty (Cohon 1997b, 92). Cohon asks how Hume reconciles these claims and what leads him to believe that from the combination of these claims, he can deduce the artificiality of justice, while avoiding the circle of defining the motive behind honesty by the regard to the virtuousness of the honest action. Cohon's answer rests on the idea that the moral sentiments motivate directly, but only in the case of the artificial virtues. She argues that, although Hume's initial definition of virtue reflects a commonsensical understanding of such concept, he has to modify it in view of the peculiarities of the artificial virtues. In contrast with the actions derived from the natural virtues, which receive approbation from the approbation that its corresponding natural and admirable disposition already has, the actions derived from the artificial virtues are approved because of the utility that they are seen to promote. It is only as a consequence of such approbation, that people begin to expect the artificial motive to justice in others and to cultivate it in themselves. Moreover, since people are able to appreciate the utility of honest actions due to their adoption of the general point of view, it is ultimately the moral sentiments ensuing from it that produces the virtue of honesty.

[102] I discuss with more detail some aspects of Bricke's and Cohon's readings in next chapters.

In "Hume on Motivating Sentiments, the General Point of View, and the Inculcation of 'Morality'" (1994a), Radcliffe introduces her discussion by finding a middle point between a pair of conflicting interpretations on Hume's account of the general point of view (Radcliffe 1994a, 37)[103]. In her opinion, whereas moral distinctions have their origin in actual feelings, it is not true that every time that we make a moral distinction, we actually experience a moral feeling. Rather, having experienced moral feelings at some point in life generates general rules for the application of moral concepts, which can be further mobilized when we are required to issue particular moral judgments[104]. Our moral judgments thus are not, strictly speaking, based on moral sentiments, but on beliefs that, given the content's identity with original moral sentiments, resemble those feelings. Radcliffe wonders if a similar explanation would work for the motivating role of moral judgments[105]. She hypothesizes that moral education could be the way to construe a similar account: physical and psychological rewards and punishments could be used to produce general rules of conduct in children, so that they associate the idea of virtuous actions with ideas of reward and the idea of vicious actions with ideas of punishment. But she rejects this reading because the associations created by education 'have nothing to do with morality': moral education fails to link virtue with pleasure, or vice with pain; it rather links virtue with the idea of reward and vice with the idea of punishment[106]. Thus, the moral agent

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[103] 'The sentimentalist interpretation has it that moral judgments are based on, or possibly even identical to, actual human feelings. Further, on this reading of Hume, virtue and vice themselves depend respectively on what produces pleasure or pain in us as normal human beings when we reflect on certain motives to action. The ideal observer reading, on the other hand, has it that, for Hume, moral distinctions are based on the hypothetical feelings of an ideal spectator — one who is, among other things, fully informed, entirely objective and not self-interested. Thus, virtue and vice themselves do not depend on actual human sentiments, but on the projected sentiments of an ideal spectator' (Radcliffe 1994a, 37).

[104] 'Hume's theory is quite plausibly read as a theory about how the genesis of our basic moral concepts lies in our human nature without committing him to the claim that there is a one-to-one correspondence between each individual's judgments and that individual's own feelings. One of the points of Hume's references to general rules (scattered throughout all three books of the Treatise) upon which people rely when they form judgments is to explain how an individual can apply concepts derived from impressions she has never experienced herself' (Radcliffe 1994a, 48).

[105] Notice that Radcliffe's question here is about the motivational influence of moral judgments, not of moral sentiments. Still, her position is relevant as will be shown in the text.

[106] 'One requirement for success in this moral training is that the initial connection that forms between the idea of virtue and the ideas of specific rewards that are pleasurable be replaced by a natural association

would feel displeasure, not because he failed to act virtuously, but because he failed to get a reward and instead risked or actually gets a punishment.

Radcliffe's own alternative interpretation relies on redefining what being morally motivated means. To say that a person is morally motivated to virtuous actions means only that her experiences of approval or disapproval of other people's actions produce in her a certain attitude towards future instances of similar actions done by herself[107]. Interestingly, Radcliffe finds that her interpretation generates the following alternative: 'either the sentiments that motivate us when we make moral distinctions are not moral sentiments (since they do not correspond directly to the moral judgments), or the moral sentiments simply do not track the corrected moral judgments precisely' (Radcliffe 1994a, 52). She opts for the latter on the grounds that what this alternative ultimately means is that moral motivation is a matter of degree, which explains, in turn, why the same moral judgment, say, that tyranny is wrong, generates different actions in different people or in different contexts: 'My disapproval of a dictator in a distant country may not be as intense as my disapproval of a local politician, but I can be motivated to take action to stop the dictator's actions (e.g., lobbying my government to impose economic sanctions against the dictator), or to avoid developing the sort of dispositions that would make me insensitive to others' suffering in the way he is' (Radcliffe 1994a, 52). The attitude produced by moral sentiments is, however, weak so that it often needs a further incentive

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between the former idea and the idea of pleasure itself; likewise, the association nurtured between the idea of vice and the ideas of specific punishments that are painful must be replaced by a natural association between the ideas of vice and of pain itself. Otherwise, the motivations being nurtured are motives that have nothing to do with morality, but are best described as fear of harmful consequences, desire for the good opinion of others, concern that one may be ostracized, and so on. In that case, when these incentives are removed, the agent loses the motives conducive to virtuous behaviour because she has not acquired genuine motives to virtue' (Radcliffe 1994a, 50).

[107] 'Just as one only need be naturally benevolent to a degree in order to understand what it is to be a benevolent person, so too, having sentiments that approach those that would be experienced in a GPV [general point of view] and finding those sentiments motivating may be sufficient to consider one to be motivated by moral considerations. While, for instance, I do not feel the intensity of disapproval that would correspond to the vice of the malice I find in someone I'm fond of, I do feel some degree of disapproval, and that may be sufficient to inspire the passion necessary to say I have a motive not to be the same way' (Radcliffe 1994a, 51).

to cause concrete virtuous actions[108]. In the end, for Radcliffe, being morally motivated consists in having the disposition to act in a certain way, given the beliefs one has formed about certain actions, although it is usually due to the further reinforcement of moral education, that one performs one or other particular moral action.

In "How Does the Humean Sense of Duty Motivate?" (1996), Radcliffe claims to defend a Humean account of 'motivation by approbation and disapprobation' offered by authors such as Philippa Foot and John Mackie. Her position in this article could be read as a further elaboration of the thesis endorsed in her 1994's paper. However, she holds now that moral sentiments motivate directly with sufficient force to produce determined particular actions: 'moral sentiments are among the motivating passions' (Radcliffe 1996, 398). The key claim to support this view is a particular interpretation of Hume's mechanics of motivation: for Radcliffe, Hume holds that pleasures and pains are states such that one is moved, if in state of pleasure, to seek more pleasure and, if in a state of pain, to seek relief from it. Evidence that Hume sees pleasures and pains as inherently motivating feelings derives from his description of the origin of pleasure and pain (Radcliffe invokes SBN- 7-8; SBN- 276 and SBN- 574). That the idea that feelings of pleasure and pain were intrinsically motivating was popular in the English world of Hume's time seems to add some support (according to Radcliffe, Locke and Hobbes endorsed it). Further, Radcliffe connects the claims about the motivational power of pleasure and pain with the self-hatred man passage (SBN- 479; T- 3.2.1.8) and states that 'there is good reason to think that the self-hatred Hume describes is a justifying perception of the moral sense, that is, it is the displeasure produced when my moral sense is turned on myself as an agent, a type of self-disapprobation or self-reproach, which signifies a character deficiency' (Radcliffe 1996, 396). For Radcliffe, the moral sentiments are then feelings of self-approbation and self-disapprobation, which motivate because in the end they are nothing but forms of pleasure and pain[109].

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[108] 'Moral education still has a crucial role on this interpretation of Hume's view, however, to make effective in action the natural sentiments we already possess. It is one thing to have a motive in favour of morality and another thing to act on it' (Radcliffe 1994a, 52).

[109] That this account elaborates on his 1994's interpretation can be seen in that Radcliffe links the motivating feelings of pleasure or pain to previous experiences of approbation and disapprobation of others' actions. According to Radcliffe, moral sentiments motivate 'because we have cultivated the habit,

There is one point that deserves special attention in Radcliffe's account. The rejection of the idea that moral education through habituation and conditioning is able to implant genuine moral motives. It seems reasonable to agree with Radcliffe that moral education is able to create an association between the idea of rewards and punishments and the idea of virtue and vice respectively, but that it is unable to link virtue with pleasure and vice with pain. So, if one would like to construe a naturalistic account of the nature of virtuous motives, one must pay attention to the way in which the disposition acquired by habituation relates to virtue. A virtuous motive is not any motive that produces outward-looking virtuous actions, but one that produces such actions due to a genuinely virtuous disposition in the agent. This consideration is of importance for the account of reflection that I offer in chapter 6[110].

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as observers of others, of focusing on the action and taking it as a sign of character. The motivation to do an act a virtuous person would do naturally derives from the moral sentiment which is the source of moral justification. This is an internalist account of moral motivation' (Radcliffe 1996, 402).

[110] Radcliffe's interpretation drives a correct point home by holding that approbation and disapprobation must relate somehow to pleasure and pain in order to have motivational effects. But her cashing out of this idea raises questions. First, it is not clear that Hume considers the moral sentiments as direct affections. Although, Hume does not say anything explicit on the classification of the moral sentiments, beyond some allusions to their resemblance to the indirect passions, if attention is paid to their structure, they look more like indirect affections, as Cohon has argued (Cohon 2008a). Second, Radcliffe's claim that Hume's takes pleasures and pains as intrinsically motivational feelings is also questionable. It is true that on his empiricist framework, pleasure and pain play an important role in motivation, as they are 'the chief spring and moving principle' (SBN- 118; T- 1.3.10.2) of all mind's actions. But what Hume means by this is that perceptions of pleasure and pain, either in the form of impressions or of ideas, are part of the causal process that produce motives for action, not that they are motives in themselves. Moreover, in the condensed account of motivation that Hume offers at the end of Appendix 2 of the second *Enquiry*, the idea seems to be that perceptions of pleasure and pain refine the object of natural appetites and passions and add some strength to the original impulse towards certain external objects, rather than being self-perpetuating mental states. Finally, even if one were to accept Radcliffe's reading about Hume's conception of pleasure and pain, a further account on the reflexive and evaluative structure of moral sentiments is still missing. If self-approbation is a state that makes the agent seek more of its pleasure, one may wonder what distinguishes it from self-delusion about being a virtuous person.

2.3. Do moral sentiments regulate first-level passions?

Baron (1988) and Abramson (2002) share the view that moral sentiments are crucial in motivating virtuous actions. But, they take notice of the fact that Hume's 'undoubted maxim' imposes a constraint on the motivating role of the moral sentiments. In consequence, they argue that if the moral sentiments are to motivate at all, they must do it by regulating our dispositions towards virtuous behaviour, rather than by directly affecting the will or by triggering non-moral desires that do so. Baron (1988) argues that moral sentiments constitute the agent's overarching conception of value which filters, tempers, redirects or checks our natural passions towards morality[111]. Abramson (2002) holds that moral sentiments operate as second-order affections that regulate the content, strength and expression of first-order passions. It is remarkable that in contrast with the previous two groups of interpretations, the readings in this line take the concern about the the role of reflection of virtuous motivation as crucial to understand Hume's account. Both Baron and Abramson take moral sentiments to be reflective psychological entities[112] with regulatory functions over first-level passions. In this sense, the moral sentiments indicate the degree of reflection that the moral agent is able to display regarding his own motives and reasons for action. To illustrate this position, in what follows I summarize Abramson's view.

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[111] In "Morality as a Back-up System: Hume's View?" (1988), Marcia Baron argues that there is a tension in Hume's moral philosophy between, on the one hand, the view that morality's job is only to correct affective deficiencies (the 'morality as a back-up system' view), and on the other, the view that morality is always needed because even the desires of a virtuous person need to be filtered, tempered, redirected or checked (the 'somewhat Kantian view of morality'). That moral sentiments are corrected passions shows that, in the absence of moral reflection, such passions are not what they should be. While Baron notes that Hume's claims about the corrected nature of the moral sentiments concern moral evaluation, she thinks that the idea can be extended to moral motivation: as our passions are not the final word on the evaluations we should pass, our passions are not the final word on the motives upon which we should act. Baron invokes passages where Hume stresses the commonality proper of the sentiments of morals (SBN-536, EPM- 272, SBN- 585, EPM- 273) to argue that these sentiments exert a regulative function, given the vantage point and thus the authority that they have. The idea is that something like an overarching conception of virtue, embodied in the agent's moral sentiments, must take precedence over his desires. This overarching conception has a regulative function: it organizes (or harmonizes) one's desires, discarding unworthy ones, pushing back imprudent or revising the inconvenient ones.

[112] Reflective in the sense that their formal objects are other passions.

In "Two Portraits of the Humean Moral Agent" (2002), Kate Abramson addresses the alleged incompatibility between Hume's spectator-centred theory of moral evaluation and his claim about the practicality of morality. The incompatibility, which Abramson calls 'the spectator complaint', takes several forms[113], yet against all of them, Abramson calls attention to the *Treatise*'s sections on greatness and goodness of mind. She attempts to show that Hume takes the 'moralized regulative dispositions' (Abramson 2002, 305), which turn those traits into virtuous motives, to be the motivational effect of the moral sentiments.

Abramson starts off by noting that greatness of mind is a set of qualities of character with a common feature: courage, magnanimity, ambition, all warrant the agent's taking pride in the resoluteness of his or her own character. On Abramson's account, however, it is crucial that the person with greatness of mind knows to what degree and in what situations each aspect of her greatness of mind is required. This indicates that there is something in the great person's character that produces an 'orderly psychology'[114]. Abramson offers a similar picture of goodness of mind: all the qualities of character, that Hume calls the 'tender passions' exhibit the agent's ability to sympathize with other people's affections to a degree that move her to act for others good's sake. However, it is crucial that the person endowed with goodness of mind knows to what degree and in what situations it is right to act in this way. Thus, there must be some

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[113] Initially, the complaint derived directly from the dogma among early scholars of Hume's moral philosophy that Hume's project was thoroughly descriptive, and so that we should read him as avoiding any attempt to justify moral practices. The assumption was that a discussion of how the moral agent deliberates would produce implications for how we should act. Later in the scholarly debate, the complaint took the form of a negative answer to the question of whether moral evaluations motivate the moral agent. Commentators recognized the implications of the practicality of morality premise and its seeming internalism, but doubted that moral evaluations were practical in the required sense: for them, moral evaluations are cognitive because they are beliefs about the responses of a hypothetical judicious spectator. Abramson notes that the passages where Hume points out the weakness of moral sentiments, among which there was the self-hating person passage, were exploited in this interpretation. Yet, she also notes that the passages indicate precisely the opposite: if moral sentiments are weak, it is because they in fact motivate (Abramson 2002, 304).

[114] So, Abramson states: 'Amidst all the courage, magnanimity, ambition, and so on, the great woman must also have some second-order affection which makes her greatness of mind possible: an affection which moves her to cultivate her potentially laudable passions and extirpate her vicious ones, an affection which curbs or strengthens her potentially virtuous first-order passions where the demands of virtue require, and one which prompts her to express those potentially laudable passions in appropriate courses of conduct' (Abramson 2002, 309).

affection in the good person that produces the 'orderly psychology' of benevolence. So, both greatness and goodness of mind are comprehensive character traits composed of qualities that express distinctive virtuous features. Greatness of mind's qualities are forms of strength of mind and are virtuous because they express resoluteness in the face of temptation; whereas goodness of mind's qualities are forms of the tender passions and are virtuous because they express forms of benevolence towards others that are not hurtful to the self or to others. Further, both comprehensive character traits require a second-order affection that regulates the right and proper expression of the qualities associated with the trait.

By process of elimination (of all the passions Hume discusses in depth, only the moral sentiments are plausible candidates), Abramson concludes that the moral sentiments are the only affections that meet this regulative function both in greatness and goodness of mind[115]. Still, the moral sentiments are motivationally weak, Abramson recalls, and this is why there are cases where one can be wholly great without being good and vice versa. In those cases, she says, Hume thinks there are resources to strengthen the motivational impulses typical of either greatness or goodness. In cases where goodness of mind fails, sympathy with the people affected by one's flaws can be the buttressing element, like when courage makes one overdo greatness at the expense of benevolence. In cases where greatness fails, due pride can fulfill the buttressing role, for example, when the conflict is between the needs of our loved ones and the imperatives of the public. Hence, pride is prominent in Hume's explanation of greatness: when the situation is such that the morally required thing to do is to act in favour of the public even if that ignores or harms one's or our loved ones' interests, the motivational strength of the moral sentiments

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[115] 'Hume's views about moral motivation are illustrated through Hume's descriptions of goodness and greatness of mind, just to the extent that Humean moral evaluations play a practical role in the dispositions constitutive of these two virtues. And if the moral sentiments are regulative in goodness and greatness of mind, then Humean moral evaluations play a key practical role in both of these virtues' (Abramson 2002, 319). Among the reasons Abramson offers to conclude that the moral sentiments display a regulative function on the qualities belonging to greatness and goodness of mind is the fact that they are overlapping traits, that is, one cannot be great without being benevolent and one cannot be good without exercising strength of mind. She writes: 'The good Humean regulates her first-order passions in light of her moral sentiments, which are also the regulative affection in greatness. Hence, insofar as the set of passions which are the objects of regulation in goodness and greatness of mind overlap, this wholly good person is also great' (Abramson 2002, 320).

comes from pride, i.e., from the conception of our one character as something worthy of the admiration of the public[116].

Abramson's interpretation is important for my purposes as it draws attention to the regulatory role of the moral sentiments. Abramson's emphasis is on the causal effect that these sentiments have on first-level affections. She suggests that the moral sentiments regulate our first-order passions. This is evident in her claim that sympathy and due pride act as buttressing forces to goodness and greatness of mind, respectively. For Abramson, the moral sentiments calls upon particular passions, when the force of other affections weakens.

2.4. Towards a new approach

Just because the authors in these lines of interpretation focus on the nature of moral sentiments, they understandably approach the problem of moral motivation as part of an account of the moral psychology of adult and civilized individuals. Scarce attention is paid to developmental issues either in the sense of the moral education of individuals or in the sense of the moral progress of groups of individuals on their way to civilization. Accordingly, Hume's treatment of the passions and sentiments is read by these authors as a functional account, where the nature of impressions, ideas, beliefs, passions or sentiments is defined in terms of the causal role that they play in typical mental operations. For example, if what needs to be accounted for is a typical virtuous action — and adopting the first line of interpretation — the explanation proceeds by identifying its typically and causally antecedent elements. A virtuous action is the effect of a series of operative principles: first, according to the principle of double association of ideas and

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[116] Abramson summarizes thus the role of the moral sentiments in moral motivation: 'Morality moves the good and the great to express their passions in particular ways; it redirects the objects of their passions where necessary; it prompts them to afford some passions more weight than others; it curbs their passions where appropriate; it moves them to make use of pride and sympathy as support in the battle against temptation; and it moves them to cultivate a disposition in which the appropriate emotions arise as occurrent motives to action in situ. The moral sentiments are second-order motives in these virtues, just in the sense that their motive force is mediated through the passions which those evaluations take as objects of governance' (Abramson 2002, 326-7).

impressions and the operation of reflection, a calm form of love directed at the self, i.e., self-approbation, is produced. This sentiment, second, is naturally linked to the desire of gaining the approbation of others, which is part of human happiness, and thus, third, this desire affects the will so producing the volition to act according to virtue.

Admittedly, a lot of details must be provided to make this explanation plausible, and the principles and elements invoked may change according to the line of interpretation adopted. Still, what I want to draw attention to is that the character of the interpretations surveyed in this chapter precludes the consideration of questions about how the typically functional comes to be so, either in the individual or in the species. Now, I am not claiming that just because of this the current approach is flawed. In fact, I believe that Hume provides a powerful account of our moral psychology and that he himself offers a sound functional explanation of many of our typical mental operations. In this sense, commentators have done a great job identifying and discussing the claims that made up this part of his philosophy. Yet, it is manifest that Hume was also concerned with the developmental and evolutive aspect of moral psychology[117], and so I think that it is worthwhile to approach a reconstruction of his account of moral motivation from this perspective.

My proposal in this project is to explore the developmental and evolutionary strand of Hume's thought in regards to moral motivation. Particularly, I want to place the questions about the nature of virtuous motives and the role of reflection in virtuous motivation in the historical context that Hume provides in the conjectural histories included in some of his texts. By this, to repeat, I am not dismissing the contribution of the lines of interpretations reviewed in this chapter. I am rather suggesting that my alternative approach may illuminate some of Hume's views on moral motivation that are relegated to the margins by an emphasis on the functional reading of his moral psychology.

As I noted at the beginning of my survey, every interpretation busies itself with the two concerns about moral motivation. Yet, the extent to which they do so is unequal. Interpretations that argue that, for Hume, moral sentiments motivate directly or indirectly tend to privilege the concern about the nature of virtuous motives, whereas the interpretations that argue that moral

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[117] Most famously, his account of the origin of the laws of justice and of government in the *Treatise* are clear examples of this preoccupation, and evidently, this concern has not escaped commentators' attention, as the vast secondary bibliography around justice attests.

sentiments are regulatory affections give priority to the concern about the role of reflection. The reasons for these tendencies seem natural: the first two lines of interpretation attempt to understand moral sentiments as causes of virtuous actions and so, either they conclude that moral sentiments are virtuous motives or that moral sentiments are among the antecedent causes of virtuous motives. In either case, commentators in these lines of interpretation are obliged to propose some claim about the nature of virtuous motives. The third line of interpretation considers moral sentiments as regulatory affections, and since the concern about reflection in virtuous motivation involves precisely the question about the nature and influence of some form of self-awareness in virtuous behaviour, authors in this line have to determine whether moral sentiments are, because regulatory, also reflective.

With this background, I propose to look at Hume's conjectural histories as a source of new insights in the interpretation of his account of moral motivation. The premise that guides this project is the following: Hume moral philosophy's ultimate purpose was to understand, guide and perhaps reform the most important social institutions that he saw emerging in eighteenth-century England. Institutions such as the laws regulating property and contracts, certain aspects of the economy and the informal behaviour of people in various social settings (rules of good-breeding) were seen by Hume as the medium where the passions and motives of individuals civilize, improving thereby their wellbeing and happiness. His story about moral motivation, it is my contention, needs to be understood as part of such project. I propose to focus on Hume's interest in the developmental and evolutive aspects of virtue in order to show the way he thought that the motivation to virtue is the result of a historical process of regulation and refinement of the passions. To achieve this end I devote my attention to the conjectural histories that Hume scattered throughout some of his texts. These are histories written in a peculiar genre of historiography, namely, conjectural history, that trace the large transitional steps of development of civilized practices and institutions. After examining the methodological tenets behind conjectural history in the next chapter (chapter 3), I move on in the following chapter to reconstruct Hume's general theory of motivation (chapter 4) and then the conjectural histories that tell the story of how virtue acquires motivational purchase in individuals by means of its connexion with happiness (chapters 5 and 6).

Chapter 3
The Nature of Conjectural History

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I proposed to turn attention to Hume's interest in the historical development of the passions as a key to his account of moral motivation. I then introduced the claim that by looking at the conjectural histories that Hume develops in some of his works, we can find an account able to address the two concerns of the problem of moral motivation. In this chapter, I begin my case for this claim by explaining 'conjectural history': the particular genre of historiography that Hume, as several of his contemporary Scottish philosophers, found useful to address certain kinds of questions.

Hume's clearest engagement in conjectural history is *The Natural History of Religion,* where he deals with religion's 'origin in human nature' (NHR- 1). But this is not the only place where he resorts to conjectural history. Scattered throughout his works, there are many other pieces that exhibit the same methodological features. Hume undertakes investigations concerning the origin 'in human nature' of artistic and scientific practices in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" and "Of the Refinement in Arts". His essays on commerce ("Of Commerce", "Of Interest", and "Of Money") and on government ("Of the Origin of Government") are also attempts to locate the rationale of socio-economic and political institutions in the likely evolution of different aspects of the human passionate equipment and early and fundamental incursions in conjectural history can also be found in his explanations of the origin of justice, promises and government in book 3 of the *Treatise*. This chapter is devoted to examine the methodology of conjectural history. To this end, I propose a way in which Hume must have defended his conjectural history contributions as valid forms of historical explanation.

Conjectural history was indeed a peculiar form of doing history. Authors in this genre attempted to explain the practices and institutions of their societies as the result of the historical evolution of certain permanent features of human nature. What features and what accounted for the historical evolution of such features differed with each author. However, the common impulse behind investigations so different in other respects was that recounting the evolution of practices and institutions allows us to see their grounding in human nature, making them appear

intelligible to us. First Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1750)*,* and later several other works by Scottish authors such as Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man*, (1774), David Hume's *The Natural History of Religion* (1757), John Millar's *Observations concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (1771), Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), and Adam Smith's *History of astronomy,* published in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects to which is prefixed An Account of the Life and Writings of the Author* (1795) were widely read modern instances of conjectural or, as they were also called, natural histories. More familiar to us are Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men* (1754) and Kant's *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786). At any rate, despite criticisms directed at its methodology, conjectural history enjoyed a long period of popularity, mostly in the eighteenth century, during which it proved useful in expanding the perspective and topics of the time's historiography. To provide some background, in Appendix 1, I locate conjectural history in the context of the historiographical practices of seventeenth and eighteenth-century England[118].

My conclusion at the end of this chapter is that, according to Hume, assuming certain degree of uniformity in human nature, the conjectural historian is able to figure out the effects of the interaction between certain passions and certain external circumstances that might have taken place in the past. Conjectural histories explain the origin of modern practices and institutions by offering the rationale that must have caused their emergence and development and which justifies our current approbation of them. This, in turn, allows readers to take a critical stance towards the practices and institutions under study.

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[118] That discussion relies heavily on the contributions of a representative sample of twentieth-century intellectual historians. Since I am not a specialist in this field, I do not engage critically with their analyses, but given that my purpose is only to provide a general characterization of the method by contrast with the historiographical practices of the time, I resort to their discussions to highlight the features that most of them agree to be distinctive of conjectural history. I invite the reader to have a look at Appendix 1 to get a hold of this background before moving onto the following examination of conjectural history's methodology.

2. Conjectural history as a form of moral explanation

What kind of explanation do conjectural histories provide? When Dugald Stewart, who coined the name and examined conjectural history's methodology before anyone else, indicates that to answer the 'interesting question' of the origin and progress of civilization, in the absence of historical records, we need to turn to 'the principles of [human] nature, and the circumstances of [individuals'] external situation' (Stewart 1795, xxxvi. My emphasis), he possibly means, as Evnine (1993, 589-90) notes, that conjectural history is a kind of triangulation. To conjecture about the origin and progress of a human institution, the historian needs to fix two other variables: on the one hand, the likely external situation that human beings must have faced at some point in the past and, on the other, the nature of the human mind (i.e., 'the principles of their nature').

Accordingly, conjectural histories can be seen as inferences to the best explanation. The *explanandum* is civilization, or more often, a particular modern practice, such as language or organized religion, or a modern institution, such as property or civilized government. The explanation begins by imagining the characteristics of the situation in which the modern practice or institution originated. To fix this variable, most conjectural historians recurred to descriptions of 'backward' societies, which were supplied by the increasingly vast literature on European travel to the America, Africa and Asia of the time[119]. Once external situations were fixed in this way, the historian would point to the universal features of the human mind that, interacting with said external situations, best explain the emergence of the practice or institution and its likely development. The validity of a conjectural account depends partly on explanatory considerations: a given conjectural account is valid, if it captures better than other conjectural explanations all or most of the features of the practice or institution, relying on widely accepted presuppositions about both the past and about the nature of the human mind.

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[119] As Stewart affirms, '[i]n such inquiries, the detached facts which travels and voyages afford us, may frequently serve as land-marks to our speculations; and sometimes our conclusions, a priori, may tend to confirm the credibility of facts, which, on a superficial view, appeared to be doubtful or incredible' (Stewart 1795, xxxvi). Lord Kames (1778) and Ferguson (1782) rely heavily on travellers reports.

Typically, most of the explanatory weight in a conjectural account was borne by the universal features of the human mind that the historian identified as fundamental in the origin and progress of a practice or institution. Surprisingly, Stewart, in a move common with other authors, does not spend much time arguing for the universality of any set of features. For him, it has 'long been received as an *incontrovertible logical maxim* that the capacities of the human mind have been in all ages the same, and that the diversity of phenomena exhibited by our species is the result merely of the different circumstances in which men are placed' (Stewart 1854, 69. My emphasis). So, on his view, the conjectural historian needed only to look at the capacities of the human mind of his contemporaries to fix this variable of the triangulation[120]. Hume seems to uphold a similar supposition, stating that 'it is universally acknowledged' that '[m]ankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular' (EHU- 83)[121].

Admittedly, without assuming some degree of uniformity in the characteristics of the human mind, the whole project of conjectural history could not get off the ground. Still, to understand the epistemological credentials of this kind of history, it is worthwhile to examine what degree of uniformity was actually justified. In fact, there are at least two related problems in the supposition that the nature of the human mind is uniform throughout time. The first concerns how to support a claim of such comprehensiveness. For a group of authors such as the eighteenth-century Scottish, who stressed the role of experience in the acquisition and justification of knowledge as much as they did, resting the foundation of conjectural history on 'incontrovertible' or 'universally acknowledged' statements looks odd. What are the reasons

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[120] To be fair, and relying on Jennifer Marusic's (2013) presentation of Stewart's conception of 'universal causes', determining what constituted the unchangeable set of human capacities was more complex than I make it look in this part of the text. For now, it suffices to say that, although Stewart did not think of the task of finding the universal capacities of the human mind as absolutely easy, he did not see it as a particularly problematic.

[121] Hume affirms basically the same view elsewhere, for example, in the *Treatise,* he writes*:* '[w]hether we consider mankind according to the difference of sexes, ages, governments, conditions, or methods of education; the same uniformity and regular operation of natural principles are discernible. Like causes still produce like effects; in the same manner as in the mutual action of the elements and powers of nature' (SBN- 401; T- 2.3.1.5). And again in "Of Populousness of Ancient Nations": '[s]tature and force of body, length of life, even courage and extent of genius, seem hitherto to have been naturally, in all ages, pretty much the same (…) As far, therefore, as observation reaches, there is no universal difference discernible in the human species' (E-PA 377-8).

behind these seemingly bold statements? Second, even conceding the uniformity of the human mind, a problem remains as to what exactly is supposed to be uniform: the list of our mental faculties?, the structure of our beliefs forming mechanisms?, a determined set of passions or affections?, the virtues that we tend to approve?, the objects that we tend to like?[122]

To address these issues, I want to put Hume's 'universally acknowledged' supposition in context and inquire what kind of explanation Hume must have thought his conjectural histories amounted to. To that end, in the rest of this chapter, I examine first in what sense Hume's conjectural histories can be seen as instances of explanations of 'human affairs' and then how they fared in view of Hume's standards of historical explanation.

2.1. The 'universally acknowledged' uniformity of human nature

Hume's claim that '[m]ankind are so much the same, in all times and places' (EHU- 83) needs to be read in the context of his 'attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects'. Following Poovey (1998), we can locate the rise of experimental moral philosophy at a same time as a new form of government emerged in England. Poovey (1998, 147) calls this form of ruling 'liberal governmentality'. It was the form of government that replaced the sovereign sort of power, which operated through a centralized apparatus that extracted knowledge and economic resources directly from its subjects and imposed political obedience by way of coercion. Liberal governmentality, by contrast, operates through the market and civil society. It is a government by self-rule, supported on the standards of consumption, taste and fashion that citizens themselves develop and endorse. A renovated interests in moral philosophy around the seventeenth century was thus no mere coincidence, for liberal governments, in the sense just introduced, required a new sort of knowledge to understand the motivations of their citizens, particularly, the new desires and affections in play in the market:

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[122] In fact, conjectural history was subject to one specific kind criticism by contemporary Scottish authors due to this air of arbitrariness. Poovey (1998) notes that writers such as William Robertson and Thomas Reid criticized conjectural history on the grounds that 'because it indulged the philosopher's propensity for speculation, conjecture opened the door to partisanship and opinion' (Poovey 1998, 219-20).

consumption, emulation, ambition, self-interest and civil virtue[123]. Indeed, to be able to regulate citizens' behaviour and to encourage political obedience, legislators needed to understand the motivations of merchants and consumers (Poovey 1998, 27-8) [124]. Early modern moral philosophy strove to fit that bill.

To do so, moral philosophy needed to acquire reputable epistemological credentials. Continuing a trend initiated back in the seventeenth century by Bacon's and Newton's works, British eighteenth-century moral philosophy tried to model itself in the image of natural philosophy, by looking for standards of proof and methods of investigation that could be anchored in experience. Because of this, it was not strange that authors of the time showcased their commitment to 'the experimental method' often in the very title of their works, although what was meant by such label varied, depending on their particular interpretations of Bacon's and Newton's philosophies of science.

At any rate, the 'science of man' was commonly thought as the science of the *typical social individual,* that is, the individual whose life takes place in commercial society, in the polished environment of clubs and associations and in the world of polite conversation and intercourse with peers. Apart from the reasons to understand sociability in this narrow fashion, the urge to focus on the *typical* reflected moral philosophy's epistemic commitments,

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[123] Poovey writes in this context: 'The new mode of rule that emerged after the collapse of absolutism in Britain has been called liberal governmentality. Operating in civil society and through the market, liberal governmentality depended (depends) on self-rule rather than rule by coercion; eliciting voluntary compliance through the mechanisms of discrimination and emulation essential to rule by fashion, it did not rely on numbers in the same way that sovereignty did (…) Administering self-rule in a market society involved understanding human motivations, including the desire to consume, rather than simply measuring productivity or overseeing obedience. As a consequence, the knowledge that increasingly seemed essential to liberal governmentality was the kind cultivated by moral philosophers: an account of subjectivity that helped explain desire, propensities, and aversions as being universal to humans as a group' (Poovey 1998, 147).

[124] As Poovey holds, that British eighteenth-century theorists were up to the challenge of producing accounts of subjectivity useful to liberal governmentality and of promoting the kind of virtues proper of commercial society was evident, for example, in the discussions encouraged by Addison and Steele in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. In the exchanges carried out in these journals, they suggested that 'the practices associated with taste — sociability, sympathy, and honesty, among others — could form the basis for a new kind of virtue, which served national interests by promoting civility and, not incidentally, by strengthening Britain's commerce with the rest of the trading world. Indeed, the *Spectator* coupled taste and refinement not only to personal virtue but, more specifically, to economic investment understood as civic virtue. In so doing, it also linked beneficial national government to effective self-government, through manners and civility' (Poovey 1998, 152).

particularly, the assumption that it was possible to extract general laws or regularities informing human subjectivity from the observation of particular instances[125]. This, however, was not an easily defensible assumption in view of the sceptical doubts that accompanied the emergence of experimental science, even when applied to nature: by means of what reasoning can one be sure that the particulars one had yet to observe would resemble the particulars one has already seen? Hume was indeed pivotal in articulating these doubts (SBN- 89; T- 1.3.6.5), and thereby, in bringing to light the problem that moral philosophy needed to face. Without the epistemological security provided by the uniformity of nature, there was not way to guarantee the validity of any inferential reasoning or causal generalization of importance for the 'science of man'. Consequentially, moral philosophers needed to make the case that the world of 'human affairs' was subjected to causal regularities that turn it intelligible at least in the same way as the natural world was presumed to be[126].

Hume was well aware of the difficulties of making this case successfully. He was also among the authors firmly committed to building an experimental moral science. The introduction

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[125] In this sense, Poovey draws attention to the differences between the eighteenth-century project to understand subjectivity and our contemporary projects focused on the psychological idiosyncrasies of types of individuals: 'This view meant that the moral philosopher assumed he could conduct "experiments" on subjectivity and that the results would simultaneously describe particular events and contribute to systematic knowledge. While this feature of eighteenth-century moral philosophy resembles assumptions inherent in at least some branches of late twentieth-century psychology, however, at least two subtle differences differentiate the two practices. First, eighteenth-century moral philosophers assumed that science should explore human motivation primarily for its social implications, not its implications for individual happiness or misery. Second, and by extension, they assumed that one sought knowledge about the particulars of subjectivity in order to understand the regularities of the moral universe, including the principles that underwrote (most) human beings' willingness to submit to government. Stressing regularities (not individual idiosyncrasies) and attentive to the social implications of these regularities, they developed a science of subjectivity that focused on *universal human nature*, not atomistic individuals or even psychological types' (Poovey 1998, 148. My emphasis).
[126] As Poovey states: '[l]ike natural philosophers, experimental moralists claimed to describe observed particulars and to extract from them the general laws or regularities that informed them, especially those laws that explained the virtuous behaviours that made individuals social (governable). As with natural philosophers, then, one of the primary epistemological problems moral experimentalists faced was how to assimilate the variations represented in particulars into kinds or types sufficiently uniform to allow for claims about general laws. By and large, natural philosophers used taxonomies to address this problem, because taxonomies distinguished as salient those features that could be used to assimilate a group of discrete but similar entities into a single commensurate kind' (Poovey 1998, 175).

to his *Treatise* attests to this commitment and in later writings his faith seems unrelenting[127]. Hume's confidence in experimental moral science rested on his case for the causal intelligibility of the moral world. The first part of it consisted in his analysis of our idea of causality in book 1 of the *Treatise*. Such analysis leads him to conclude that the idea of a necessary connection between two events, one called the cause and the other the effect, originates in an 'inference of the mind' derived from the past experience of constant conjunctions between similar sets of events (SBN- 104-5; T- 1.3.8.14-16). In book 2 of the *Treatise*, Hume continues the argument by noting that, since we take the natural world to be intelligible because we perceive necessary connections among events in nature, we must take the world of human affairs to be equally intelligible, if we perceive similar necessary connections in the 'actions of the mind'. To support this contention, Hume points out that we explain human actions by appeal to causes which we identify as such due to the same kind of inference of the mind derived from the same kind of experience of constant conjunctions as that which makes us attribute causes to the 'actions of matter' (SBN- 400-1; T- 2.3.1.4). Therefore, we rely on the same sort of necessity to make sense of human actions as the necessity we rely on to understand the natural world:

> Whether we consider mankind according to the difference of sexes, ages, governments, conditions, or methods of education; the same uniformity and regular operation of natural principles are discernible. Like causes still produce like effects; in the same manner as in the mutual action of the elements and powers of nature (SBN- 401; T- 2.3.1.5).

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[127] This is evident, for example, in his discussion of the differences between 'shallow' and 'abstruse' thinkers at the beginning of the essay "Of Commerce". Shallow thinkers 'fall short of the truth' (E-Co 253) because they fail to grasp the principles that explain the 'general course of things' (E-Co 254). Hume attributes this failing to the intricacy of general reasonings, which are necessarily refined and abstruse given that they follow from distinguishing 'in a great number of particulars, that common circumstance in which they all agree, or to extract it, pure and unmixed, from the other superfluous circumstances' (E-Co 254). By means of this contrast between shallow and abstruse thinkers, Hume offers an outline of the chief task of moral philosophy: to identify general causal principles out of the chaotic mass of particulars. Admittedly, Hume adds, general principles 'may fail in particular cases', but it is still the 'chief business' of philosophers and politicians 'to regard the general course of things', the former to 'produce fine discoveries', and the latter to attend to 'the domestic government of the state' (E-Co 254).

The uniformity that grants intelligibility to the natural and the world of human affairs is so similar that should we run into a particular moral event that disappoints our causal expectations, we do not conclude that there is a hole in the fabric of the moral world, as we never do when we run into an inexplicable natural phenomenon. Rather, we assume that we do not yet know the causal connection that underlies the puzzling occurrence[128]. Moreover, the idea that human nature is uniform, i.e., governed by causal regularities, is not the product of the refined and abstruse thinking of philosophers, rather it finds its ground in everyday common experience:

> A prince, who imposes a tax upon his subjects, expects their compliance. A general, who conducts an army, makes account of a certain degree of courage. A merchant looks for fidelity and skill in his factor or super-cargo. A man, who gives orders for his dinner, doubts not of the obedience of his servants (…) Now I assert, that whoever reasons after this manner, does *ipso facto* believe the actions of the will to arise from necessity, and that he knows not what he means, when he denies it (SBN-405; T- 2.3.1.15).

We can appreciate a similar argument in the first *Enquiry,* which is where the claim that '[m]ankind are so much the same, in all times and places' (EHU- 83) appears. There, Hume's point is again that the moral world is intelligible due to the same reasons that make the natural world to be so as well. In both species of explanations, we rely on the perception of causal connections, and though such connections are in philosophical analysis nothing but mental inferences produced by our past experience of constant conjunctions, we trust them equally to manipulate the natural and to navigate the social world.

All this means that what Hume takes to be 'universally acknowledged' is that both in everyday life and in philosophical speculation, we inevitably resort to a kind of uniformity in the minds of other people to deal successfully with them: we judge that from certain motives certain actions follow regularly[129]. Practices such as assigning moral responsibility, institutions such as legal punishment and the belief in divine retribution in the afterlife all depend on it[130]. There is

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[128] As Hume writes: 'Even when these contrary experiments are entirely equal, we remove not the notion of causes and necessity; but supposing that the usual contrariety proceeds from the operation of contrary and conceal'd causes, we conclude, that the chance or indifference lies only in our judgment on account of our imperfect knowledge, not in the things themselves, which are in every case equally necessary, tho' to appearance not equally constant or certain' (SBN- 403-4; T- 2.3.1.12).

[129] 'There is a general course of nature in human actions, as well as in the operations of the sun and the climate' (SBN- 402-3; T- 2.3.1.10).

[130] ''Tis indeed certain, that as all human laws are founded on rewards and punishments, 'tis suppos'd as a fundamental principle, that these motives have an influence on the mind, and both produce the good and

therefore nothing epistemically suspicious or even special in relying on the same assumption in the theoretical enterprise of explaining the moral world.

2.2. Conjectural history and explanations of 'human affairs'

The claim of the uniformity of human nature, in the sense just presented, provides the methodological framework for Hume's 'science of man'. The claim directly implies that, to be valid, any explanation of 'human affairs' must be causal, i.e., that it must identify the causal regularities that underwrite a moral phenomenon. This is the sense in which we must understand Hume's approvals of 'abstruse thinkers' in "Of Commerce" — cited in an earlier footnote — and the following passage at the beginning of "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences":

> [W]hen the event is supposed to proceed from *certain and stable causes*, he [the moral scientist] may then display his ingenuity, in assigning these causes; and as a man of any subtilty can never be at a loss in this particular, he has thereby an opportunity of swelling his volumes, and discovering his profound knowledge, in observing what escapes the vulgar and ignorant (E-RP 111)[131].

As this passage attests, for Hume, a valid explanation of moral affairs consists in the account of the 'certain and stable causes' that produce the phenomenon. Fall short of this and the result is to attribute events to chance, which 'cuts short all farther enquiry concerning [the event

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prevent the evil actions (…) This reasoning is equally solid, when apply'd to *divine* laws, so far as the deity is consider'd as a legislator, and is suppos'd to inflict punishment and bestow rewards with a design to produce obedience' (SBN- 410; T- 2.3.2.5-6).

[131] Certainly, identifying regularities involves also recognizing their explanatory limits, as Hume points out in the first *Enquiry*: 'We must not, however, expect that this uniformity of human actions should be carried to such a length as that all men, in the same circumstances, will always act precisely in the same manner, without making any allowance for the diversity of characters, prejudices, and opinions. *Such a uniformity in every particular, is found in no part of nature*. On the contrary, from observing the variety of conduct in different men, we are enabled to form a greater variety of maxims, which still suppose a degree of uniformity and regularity' (EHU- 85. My emphasis). And again in the introduction to "Of National Characters"(1748): 'The vulgar are apt to carry all *national characters* to extremes; and having once established it as a principle, that any people are knavish, or cowardly, or ignorant, they will admit of no exception, but comprehend every individual under the same censure. **Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judgments:** Though at the same time, they allow, that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours' (E-NC 197. My emphasis in bold).

to be explained], and leaves the writer in the same state of ignorance with the rest of mankind' (E-RP 111). Still, there is some distance between this sort of assumption of uniformity and the assumption of the conjectural historian, according to which 'the capacities of the human mind have been in all ages the same' as Stewart puts it. To understand how Hume closes such gap, let us start by elaborating what he calls 'certain and stable' causes.

Hume's discussion of liberty and necessity provides a valuable indication as to what a certain and stable cause is. Recall that Hume's argument that the moral world is as intelligible as the natural proceeds by showing that, as a matter of fact, both in everyday life and in philosophical speculation, we rely on the supposition that *actions are caused by motives*. Hume calls this sort of reasoning 'moral evidence': 'moral evidence is nothing but a conclusion concerning the actions of men, deriv'd from the consideration of their *motives, temper and situation*' (SBN- 404; T- 2.3.1.15. My emphasis). Valid explanations of human affairs are based on moral evidence: our curiosity regarding a human affair is satisfied when we identify the 'motives, temper and situation' that produced the actions in question. These are the specific kind of causes that turn the moral world intelligible.

The idea that 'motives, temper and situation' explain human affairs appears with more clarity in Hume's discussion of moral causes in "Of National Characters". His aim in this essay is to identify the kind of causes that he believes are worthy of moral philosophy's study. His argument is polemical, since it takes the claim, proposed among others by Montesquieu, that physical causes determine the character of nations as its foil. Hume defines moral causes as 'all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as *motives or reasons*, and which render a peculiar set of manners *habitual* to us' (E-NC 198. My emphasis). This in contrast to the physical causes, defined as 'those qualities of the air and climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the temper' (E-NC 198). Hume's position is that only moral causes can provide a satisfactory explanation. In effect, the relationship between physical causes and social changes is difficult to establish: not only are there counterexamples that suggest that the same physical

cause produce different effects, but what actually explains that a physical cause seems to generate an effect on human behaviour is always the interposition of a moral cause[132].

Indeed, only *moral* causes can provide genuine explanations in moral philosophy, for in the end, any understanding of human affairs is a species of exercise of sympathy. Motives and reasons can explain 'human affairs' because we feel the drive of such propensities in ourselves and so are able to appreciate the certainty of their operations. That is why moral evidence is continuous between the world of everyday affairs and the speculations of the moral philosopher. That is why 'we not only observe, that men *always* seek society, but can explain the principles on which this universal propensity is founded' (SBN- 402; T- 2.3.1.8)[133]. Explanations of human affairs are always informed by that 'great resemblance' that 'nature has preserved (…) among all human creatures' and that secures that of every passion or principle in others, we 'find a parallel in ourselves' (SBN- 318; T- 2.1.11.5). In this sense, the notion of moral cause in the study of history involves the assumption that there are at least some set of psychological features, motives or passions that are universal, i.e., uniformly present in individuals of all times. Without such universality we could simply not make sense of our ancestors' behaviour. In explanations of human affairs, in other words, we are always assisted by a sort of '*presensation*; which tell us what will operate on others, by what we feel immediately in ourselves' (SBN- 332; T- 2.2.1.9) and which extends to all times and places.

This priority of moral causes in the science of man manifests a crucial feature of Hume's moral philosophy: to understand the mechanics of any human phenomenon, the scientist must identify and track down the dynamics of the general passions and interests of humankind, rather than the operation of fleeting passions, the effects of external circumstances or the underlying logic of humanity's supernatural destiny[134].

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[132] A good example of this is Hume's refutation of the theory that the amount of circulating money in a country determines its wealth or the rate of interest. See "Of Money" and "Of Interest".

[133] As Hume continues: 'For is it more certain, that two flat pieces of marble will unite together, than that two young savages of different sexes will copulate?' (SBN- 402; T- 2.3.1.8).

[134] To be sure, the claim of universality of motives and psychological features is not a metaphysical claim about human nature. It is epistemological: independently of what the essence of human nature may be, unless we assume that there are some features that allow us to identify it, we cannot even have a subject

Still, identifying moral causes is not completely free of complexities and tensions. On the one hand, the 'universally acknowledged' maxim of the uniformity of human nature obliges the scientist to assume that there are 'regular springs of human behaviour', i.e., motives and psychological features that, although of varying influence depending on place, time and people's temper, are nonetheless universal: 'Nor are the earth, water, and other elements examined by Aristotle and Hippocrates more like to those which at present lie under our observation than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world' (EHU- 84). Admitting this sort of universality grants the very possibility of a 'science of man'. Yet, on the other hand, acknowledging this cannot blind the scientist from recognizing the diversity that human nature usually takes on: 'We must not, however, expect that this uniformity of human actions should be carried to such a length as that all men, in the same circumstances, will always act precisely in the same manner, without making any allowance for the diversity of characters, prejudices, and opinions' (EHU- 85). The reasoning of the moral scientist must allow him to recognize both uniformity and diversity in particular phenomena. The consideration of how to achieve this opens up the question asked above as to what is exactly considered universal: what mental faculties, what psychological mechanisms, what motives or passions?

One obvious place where Hume attempts to separate universal motives and universal psychological features, on the one hand, from motives and features derived from circumstantial

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matter for the science of human nature. As Wertz (1994, 269) and Evnine (1993, 591) note, Hume was read by nineteenth-century philosophers of history as making a metaphysical claim. For example, Collinwood argued that Hume 'substituted for the idea of spiritual substance the idea of constant tendencies to associate ideas in particular ways, and these laws of association were just as uniform and unchanging as any substance'. This view has been rejected by contemporary scholarship. Dees (1992) and Cohen (2000), for example, claim that the uniformity in human nature is a methodological principle of the moral sciences — and of history in particular. As Dees states: 'we assume that people are enough alike that we can say that their actions are predictable (…) [T]o see them as members of a culture — any culture — we must assume that they meet certain minimum requirements of rationality (…) But such requirements are rather weak; they do presuppose little content to their behaviour' (Dees 1992, 226-7). And as Cohen claims more succinctly: we must assume uniformity 'for there to be any consistency and credibility in what the historian says' (Cohen 2000, 113). The idea is that the methodological status of the assumption of uniformity commits Hume to holding only that people are actually similar in all times and places in regards to the basic structure of their motivations, that is, in that minimal degree needed to understand them as human beings at all (e.g., insofar as everyone judges that a trait that is either agreeable or useful for its possessor or for others is virtuous). But this assumption still leaves room for acknowledging changes due to cultural variation, differences in causal reasoning, external circumstances and historical progress.

diversity, on the other, is *A Dialogue*, in which he addresses the issue in the context of moral evaluation. In that text, after comparing the manners of ancient Greeks and Romans with those of modern Europeans, the narrator suggests that at moral philosophy's appropriate level of abstraction, all moral determinations obey a single, identifiable principle: '[i]t appears, that there never was any quality recommended by any one, as a virtue or moral excellence, but on account of its being *useful*, or *agreeable* to a man *himself*, or to *others'* (EPM- 336). Differences in what people consider virtuous and vicious or differences in the very expressions of passions and manners are accountable for by differences in causal reasoning, customs, peculiar historical circumstances and harmless choices that affect how people perceive usefulness and agreeableness: '[a]ll the differences, therefore, in morals, may be reduced to this one general foundation, and may be accounted for by the different views, which people take of these circumstances' (EPM- 336).

In other words, the narrator's point in *A Dialogue* is that, underneath the differences, lies a great similarity in what people located in different times and places appreciate as virtuous and vicious. There is indeed an universal psychological feature underlying moral evaluation: the tendency to approve utility and agreeableness perceived through sympathy[135]. But this 'principle of human nature' emerges at the end of the inquiry as a result of the scientist's observation and examination of the diversity present in human experience.

In effect, the methodology for finding principles of human nature displayed in *A Dialogue* is one of observation, comparison and analogy. The characters of the dialogue start by describing two contrasting set of mores, then they note and discuss the differences, but only as the intermediary step to pinpoint the similarities or analogies that hide behind the appearance of diversity. The investigation of the moral scientist reveals that seemingly diverse phenomena can be attributed to a single principle. The moral scientist aims at reducing the complexity of the observable phenomena by examining and comparing his findings and by ascribing similar phenomena to the same principle. Ideally, the science of man must be able to capture the full complexity of human nature. However, as Hume makes clear at the end this text, the principles of human nature are universal but not absolute: there is always the possibility of exceptions,

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[135] 'The Rhine flows north, the Rhone south; yet both spring from the same mountain, and also actuated, in their opposite directions, by the *same* principle of gravity' (EPM- 333).

anomalies or special cases. Once the narrator has achieved the synthesis of the seeming diversity of virtue in the principle of agreeableness and utility, his interlocutor questions it by proposing the examples of Diogenes and Pascal's lives. Theirs are lives in which we struggle to find agreeableness or utility and therefore examples that challenge the absolute validity of our principle.

Still, the validity of any account that aims at the explanation of 'human affairs' depends on finding the underlying 'principles of human nature'. Such kinds of principles identify the universal features of the human mind on which we can rely to explain new observations. This methodology of observation, comparison and analogy is indeed the one that Hume recommends at several points in his texts. Beginning in the Introduction to the *Treatise*, Hume affirms that:

> the essence of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities *otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects*, which result from its different circumstances and situations. And tho' *we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes*, 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience (SBN- xxi; T- Intro 8. My emphasis)[136].

Observation, comparison and analogy apply also to principles. Similar operations must be attributed to a higher principle, so that ideally, we are able to 'trace up our experiments to the utmost'. In the following passage, Hume is explicit about the explanatory potential of the principles of human nature. Once the scientist has 'mount[ed] up' towards the principle that synthesize a set of seemingly diverse observations in 'the simplest and fewest causes', he can 'descend' and thus explain other phenomena:

> By means of this guide [i.e. historical and everyday observations of human behaviour], we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures; and again descend to the interpretation of their actions from our knowledge of their

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[136] Also in the *Abstract*: 'If, in examining several phænomena, we find that they resolve themselves into one common principle, and can trace this principle into another, we shall at last arrive at those few principles, on which all the rest depend. And tho' we can never arrive at the ultimate principles, 'tis a satisfaction to go as far as our faculties will allow us' (SBN- 645; T- Abstract 1)

motives and inclinations. *The general observations treasured up by a course of experience, give us the clue of human nature, and teach us to unravel all its intricacies* (EHU 85. My emphasis).

To be sure, the principles of human nature are not metaphysical entities underlying reality. As Hume notes in the passage cited, it is 'certain we cannot go beyond experience'. These principles are only the product of our intellectual exercises in theorizing about the world, and in this sense, they resemble somewhat our idea of necessary connections. In a similar way in which the mind infers causal connections between pairs of events due to past observation of constant conjunctions, the scientific (or philosophical) mind infers principles that organize human nature's complexity due to its efforts to observe, compare and organize its experience. The importance of the principles of human nature lies with their utility, for they allow us to understand and control our own nature. But they are far from being the ultimate causes that may give full satisfaction to our curiosity. It is in this context that Hume characterizes them as the rock bottom of moral explanations: since 'beside our experience of their reality' (SBN- xviii, T- 9; SBN-590, T- 3.3.1.26; SBN- 624; T- App.5), no other reason can be given for their existence, the features that they describe are to be deemed 'natural and original' or 'inseparable from the species' (SBN- 280; T- 2.1.3.3)[137].

Along with the universal psychological features captured by principles of human nature, Hume admits also the existence of universal motives. Apart from bodily wants or appetites, Hume points to passions that are 'original' and thus possessed by every human being. In the *Treatise*, he includes the desire to punish our enemies, the desire of happiness for our friends[138], and 'benevolence, resentment (…) and kindness to children'[139]. In the second *Enquiry*, he adds

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[137] McCormick (1993) claims that one sense of the term 'natural' helps Hume to signal the universal psychological features that he takes to be the object of principles of human nature. On her reading, Hume distinguishes two meanings of 'natural'. First, natural as ordinary or normal (SBN-474; T- 3.1.2.7), which means simply that a given event seems to happen frequently. Hume does not give deep explanatory importance to natural features in this sense. In contrast, Hume also uses 'natural' to indicate characteristics that are 'part of [our] nature' as opposed to artificial or product of education (SBN-484; T- 3.2.2.19). These characteristics are important for moral explanations as, on McCormick's reading, Hume thinks of them as features that cannot be accounted for by any other higher principle and thus that must be the features that Hume take as universal. Characteristics of this type listed by McCormick are selfishness, sympathy, the propensity to form habits, the inclination towards pleasure and the aversion to pain, the mechanisms of association of ideas and the propensity to form causal inferences.

[138] Hume calls this group 'natural impulses or instincts' in SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.8.

[139] Hume calls this group 'certain instincts originally implanted in our natures' in SBN- 417; T- 2.3.3.8.

the desire of fame, the desire of power and the desire of 'vengeance without any regard to interest' (EPM- 301)[140]. In the first *Enquiry*, Hume mentions some motives which he expects to find universally, although 'mixed in various degrees and distributed through society'. The list includes '[a]mbition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit' (EHU- 83). Finally, in *A Dialogue*, the narrator mentions a group of passions expressed in the diversity of virtues that we can expect to find in different times and places: the desire of company, love, pride, benevolence, avidity, industry and curiosity.

Notice how the sort of triangulation — in the sense introduced at the beginning of this chapter — that Hume performs in his conjectural accounts becomes clearer. Hume's conjectural histories are accounts of what must have been the effects of the interaction between certain human universal features and motives, on the one hand, and certain set of external circumstances, on the other. The guiding question of Hume's conjectural histories is something like: what happens when individuals characterized by these universal features and who possess this set of motives face situations such as, say, scarcity and instability of external goods, absence of natural political authorities, rudeness in mutual treatment, etc.? Is the result the sort of practices and institutions that we, modern Europeans, recognize as justice, commerce, government, arts, sciences, and politeness?

This way of formulating the guiding questions of Hume's conjectural histories also allows us to appreciate the connections between this kind of historiography and Hume's statements about the experimental method in the *Treatise*'s Introduction. Hume notes that moral philosophy finds itself in the 'peculiar disadvantage' of being unable to reproduce at will the relations among its phenomena of investigation that would confirm its hypotheses. Moral philosophy is not 'experimental' in exactly the same sense as natural philosophy; it rather has to proceed 'from a cautious observation of human life' to glean its experiments 'as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures' (SBN- xix; T- Intro 10). But this does not mean that moral philosophy is purely observational. Hume often recurs to imaginatively altering the situations where people are actually observed to check whether the expected result accord with our intuitions, thus giving

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[140] Hume calls this group 'original passions' (EPM- 300).

credence to his theories. An example of this is the series of 'experiments' undertaken in section 2, part 2 of book 2 of the *Treatise* to prove the principle of double association of ideas and impressions. Hume imagines a set of situations where the relations between two people and one object change so that different associations of ideas and impressions produce different passions: pride, humility, love and hatred. Note that these sort of 'experiments' do double duty, for, on the one hand, they prove that passions are caused according to the principle, and on the one hand, by doing so, they allow us to look at our passions as intelligible phenomena that we can assess in terms of appropriateness of occasion, intensity or expression. Conjectural histories can be seen as another way to perform 'experiments' in moral philosophy. Assuming certain universal psychological features and motives, Hume imagines human individuals facing situations prior to the existence of certain practices and institutions. If the conjectural account is successful, it confirms Hume's hypotheses about the universality of certain features of human nature, at the same time that it allows to look at the practices and institutions in question as intelligible, and thus as liable to assessment in terms of reasonability or utility.

Another characteristic of conjectural history becomes also clear. Given the complexity of the practices and institutions that Hume proposes to explain, the accounts of how the interaction between universal psychological features and external circumstances produces them need to be 'genetic' (Hempel 1965, 447). Practices or institutions of the modern world are explained as the result of a sequence of stages, each of which describes a small transition based on a universal principle (a feature or a motive present in the human mind), and which leads to the next stage with certain degree of probability. Consider in this context a representative instance of Hume's conjectural history, i.e., the origin of justice. The description of the initial state of human society comprises two parts. First a subjective component which includes the set of original passions attributed to human beings in a pre-society stage, i.e., the appetite between the sexes and the natural love for the offspring. Second, it includes the description of the external situation in which human beings would find themselves in the absence of laws that regulate property. From this initial stage, individuals move onto a stage of familial association, where they learn the advantages of human union and the typical problems of keeping individuals' possessions safe. The universal principles that allow the transition are, on the one hand, the assumption that individuals will look to satisfy their natural appetites and that when such satisfaction produces children, individuals will take care of them by living in families, on the other. The assumption

that individuals will see the instability of possessions as problematic given their 'avidity' ('love of gain', 'interested passion', 'self-interest'), and the relative scarcity of external goods is meant to set the stage for the next transition. Once individuals are in this second stage, Hume relies on further universal principles to explain the following ones. The exercise of 'judgment and understanding' enable individuals to come up with the artificial rule that solves their predicament. This places them in a new situation: they know there is a solution, but it has not been implemented. Hume then appeals to the effect of custom and habit, another universal psychological feature, to account for the gradual establishment of justice's convention.

For further stages, Hume invokes different universal features or motivations to account for the characteristics of the institution that we can appreciate in its modern version: moralized, inculcated since childhood and supported by public approbation. So, being told in stages is crucial for a conjectural history such as that of justice, since there is no single universal feature or motive that by itself leads individuals its establishment. Rather, justice is the result of small transitions whose order and logic can only be captured by a genetic or developmental account. The validity of a whole conjectural explanation, therefore, depends on the validity of the steps given from one stage to the next.

2.3. Conjectural history and historical explanations

The conclusion of the previous section suggests a natural reason to consider conjectural accounts a species of historical explanation. Conjectural accounts are stories of development told in sequential stages, the transition among which is propelled by universal principles. But Hume has other reasons to consider his conjectural accounts as instances of history. On Hume's view, a valid historical explanation must answer two questions: first, whether a given event really occurred and, second, why such event occurred, that is, according to what principles of human nature such event did occur (Livingston 1984, 200-1). For Hume, I want to claim now, although conjectural histories do not tell us whether a particular set of events occurred, they do tell us *why* certain *kinds* of events *must have* occurred given certain universal features of human nature.

That history must address the two questions above is explained by the principles of the human mind from which historical accounts derive their possibility and justification. First, historical accounts are testimonies of events occurred in the past. Yet, human nature is credulous, which means that we tend to believe others' testimony, sometimes even regardless of its inherent plausibility. Accordingly, while history is only possible as a set of stories of witnesses from the past, we need to examine their reliability in light of rules of *historical criticism*. Second, historical accounts must provide us with an understanding of the actions and characters of people living in times other than ours. Yet, we are not able to understand the actions of other people, unless we are able to engage with them in sympathetic communication. Accordingly, history must depict recognizable human actions done by recognizable human characters according to rules of *historical composition*.

The first aspect of historical explanations is developed by Hume in his criticism to the possibility of miracles 'in all history, sacred and profane' (EHU- 110). Hume starts by noting that our natural credulity leads us to believe in miracles (SBN- 112-3; T- 1.3.9.12). This credulity is natural as it is a result of the principle according to which the perceptions associated by cause and effect commonly produce the force and vivacity of assent. We tend to believe what others say, and historians in particular, because we take their testimony to be a instance of the frequent conjunction between the account and its corresponding facts: 'our assurance in any argument of this kind [testimony] is derived from no other principle than our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses' (EHU- 111)[141]. But if we are to proportion our belief to evidence (EHU- 110), thereby deciding what ought to be considered a valid historical account, we must accord our belief to the testimony that carries the greatest amount of probability. To establish such probability, we need to estimate the net result of pro and con evidence. More concretely, we must examine such testimony in light of contrary testimonies, in light of the reliability and expression of the witnesses, and in light of the number and quality of other testimonies.

The second aspect of historical explanations can be found in Hume's texts as a series of scattered rules on historical composition. These rules are derived, in turn, from the views

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[141] Or as Hume puts elsewhere, '[t]he reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians, is not derived from any connexion, which we perceive a priori, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them' (EHU 113).

expressed in the *Treatise* according to which ideas lend force and vivacity to each other by the mind's fitting them in either systems of 'reality', according to the order of succession in which they entered the memory or the senses, or in systems of 'realities', according to the order of causality in which they are organized by the mind (SBN- 107-8; T- 1.3.9.3). The fundamental rule of historical composition is that any historical account must convey characters that appear credible to the reader according to what he takes to be the constant features of human nature: 'I am apt to think a traveller wou'd meet with as little credit, who shou'd inform us of people exactly of the same character with those in Plato's Republic on the one hand, or those in Hobbes's Leviathan on the other' (SBN- 402; T- 2.3.1.10). Since in this case, what the testimony tells us does not fit with our conception of how human nature generally is, as Hume expresses it through an old saying, 'I should not believe such a story were it told me by Cato' (EHU- 113). We believe what a historian relates more readily, if he shows us that the actions of historical characters were produced by passions and interests with which we can sympathize. In the end, our sympathy with the affections of historical characters lends plausibility to the account of history because we are able to incorporate their actions in the system of 'realities' of what we judge to have been the actions of human beings[142].

Other rules of composition have to do with the design of the historical account. Since 'man is a reasonable being' and 'he seldom acts, speaks or thinks without a purpose and intention', it is requisite that 'in all composition of genius (…) the writer have some plan or object' (EHU- 33 of the first edition). The historian must design his account according to some plan, which must rest on any of the principles of association if it is to appeal to the reader, although preferably on the principle of cause and effect: 'An annalist or historian who should undertake to write the history of Europe during any century would be influenced by the connexion of contiguity in time and place (…) but the most usual species of connexion (…) is

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[142] 'But if we compare together all the phænomena that occur on this head, we shall find, that truth, however necessary it may seem in all works of genius, has no other effect than to procure an easy reception for the ideas, and to make the mind acquiesce in them with satisfaction, or at least without reluctance. But as this is an effect, which may easily be supposed to flow from that solidity and force, which, according to my system, attend those ideas that are establish'd by reasonings from causation; it follows, that all the influence of belief upon the fancy may be explained from that system. Accordingly we may observe, that wherever that influence arises from any other principles beside truth or reality, they supply its place, and give an equal entertainment to the imagination' (SBN- 121; T- 1.3.10.6).

that of cause and effect' (EHU- 34 of the first edition). Again, the point of this rule is to give historical narration the force and vivacity that only the possibility of inclusion in a system of realities can provide:

> The historian traces the series of actions according to their natural order, remounts to their secret springs and principles, and delineates their most remote consequences. He chooses for his subject a certain portion of the great chain of events which compose the history of mankind: each link in this chain he endeavours to touch in his narration; sometimes unavoidable ignorance renders all his attempts fruitless; sometimes he supplies by conjecture what is wanting in knowledge; and always he is sensible that the more unbroken the chain is which he presents to his readers, the more perfect is his production (EHU- 34 of the first edition).

According to this, we might ask now whether conjectural history meets the criteria for historical accounts. One reason to answer in the negative concerns the lack of evidence upon which to base the description of the situations where civilized practices or institutions originated. In effect, there is no eye-witness account that one can examine to determine whether the origin of modern institutions was as conjectural historians claimed to be. What document can we look to in order to fact-check the situation of the first families in Hume's account of justice? Moreover, the origin of the practices or institutions that conjectural historians attempted to explain (e.g., language, property, religion practices, commerce, the arts, etc.) is located so far back in the past that no clue as to the circumstances surrounding this origin could be retrieved. In this sense, conjectural history seems to fare poorly in regards to the first question that a historical account must answer: we cannot expect conjectural histories to tell us that such and such did come about in a particular way.

To pursue a more promising way to deal with the question of this section, let me show how I think Hume dealt with the second aspect of historical explanation, to recall, that history must depict recognizable human actions done by recognizable human characters. This seems to be the strong side of his view on conjectural history. Indeed, conjectural accounts depict recognizable human actions done by recognizable human characters, given that the focus of their stories is always a typical human passion and the 'moral causes' that produced their emergence, regulation and refinement. Think of the account of justice by means of which Hume traces the natural history of 'avidity' or 'self-interest', its origin in human nature, its relations to other passions, its effects on the sociability of individuals, its forms of regulation and its 'oblique' or 'indirect' forms of satisfaction through the practice of free trade.

Furthermore, the unity of conjectural histories is determined by the aim of capturing all the characteristics of the practice or institution object of study, the plot being usually that of a 'rise and progress'. Think here of the plot enacted in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", in which Hume pursues the conditions for the awakening of curiosity and their further developments in modern and 'polite' societies. Given that the main characters of Hume's conjectural histories are the human passions, the plausibility of the story of their progress is supplied by the reader's sympathy, which allows him to recognize in the history of practices and institutions the features of affections that he is able to feel in himself.

But this does not seem sufficient to make conjectural histories credible history. They look more like 'just so stories' with a weak relation to reality. To show that Hume considers his conjectural histories more than make-believe, let us explore the question of what he might have found of epistemic value in composing them. If conjectural histories cannot establish that a given set of facts did indeed occurred, what is the point of writing and reading conjectural histories? And moreover, given that conjectural histories are kinds of inferences to the best explanation, what kind of explanatory considerations determine what constitutes a valid form of conjectural account?

That there must be something of value in writing conjectural histories is suggested by Stewart's description of the method, in which conjectural history is depicted as a safeguard against the 'indolent philosophy (…) which refers to a miracle, whatever appearances, both in the natural and moral worlds, it is unable to explain' (Stewart 1795, liii). The question thus is about the value of an account that is neither mere fantasy, nor record of available facts. In Marusic's reading of Stewart (Marusic 2013), the epistemic value of establishing a (counter-factually robust) conjectural account is that it allows us to understand the 'general causes' in virtue of which some events happened, rather than just that they happened. Conjectural history, in this sense, aims at discerning the logic behind human history and so, it provides a type of rationality that standard record-based historiography lacks.

Now, Hume seems to share this conception of the value of conjectural history. To show this, let me use Michel Malherbe's reading of Hume's 'natural history' as it provides a good starting point to understand the idea I try to defend here. In his analysis of the sense in which Hume's *Natural History of Religion* is a 'natural' history, Malherbe (1995) compares Hume's investigation to the kind of natural histories that were composed in the early eighteenth century.

He denies that Hume's belongs to this group of inquiries, for their main characteristic was a balance between empirical collection and causal explanation. Instead, the arguments in Hume's 'natural histories' resemble the sort that Cudworth had given before in his *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678). Cudworth attempted to show that given how ancient religions understood the notion of divinity, they must have endorsed monotheism in a very similar if not in the same way as Christian religion does. The argument then privileged considerations of consistency and semantics over considerations of facts to ascertain the underlying logic behind a practice. If Cudworth was right, ancient religion was in fact monotheistic, even if its actual practice deviated from it. Malherbe thinks that Hume's natural history does something similar, insofar as the role of empirical considerations is diminished as much as possible, so that the validity of the conjectural account is shielded against lack of or contrary evidence. Yet, on Malherbe's reading, Hume resorts to the principles of the human mind to defend claims about the nature of original religious practices:

> Man lives and tries to survive in a world which he depends on and which is a constant threat to his own happiness, if he is not able to dominate it. Fear of unknown causes is necessary in a state of ignorance (…) Religion is the result of the relationship between passions and reason, in a world that man has to subdue. Every man, whether he is a philosopher or not, knows that, since he is a living being. Such is the evidence of origin (Malherbe 1995, 267).

By describing the origin of religion as a direct effect of the universal principles of human nature, on Malherbe's view, Hume renders what may appear to us as a strange phenomenon, i.e., superstitious beliefs, into an understandable one. Conjectural histories, with their reliance on such kind of principles, appeals to '[e]very man, whether (…) philosopher or not'. Moreover, also on Malherbe's reading, Hume does something over and above what any empirical historical investigation can: '[r]ather than an historical inquiry, Hume's account of the origin of religion presents the theoretical or philosophical conditions of any history of religion' (Malherbe 1995, 267). We can understand what Malherbe calls 'conditions' to be something like the invariable psychological background where any religious practice can arise: given the universal features of the human mind, there is a necessity of sorts in that whenever human beings face situations where their happiness is importantly threatened, and if ignorance is prevalent, they will develop some sort of superstitious beliefs about the divine. A similar argument would run through

Hume's accounts of the origin of juridical institutions, commercial practices, artistic and scientific enterprises and institutions of sociability.

This interpretation allows us to reconsider the question of whether conjectural history accounts for the actual occurrence of past events. Given that the subject matter of conjectural histories are the practices and institutions of civilized societies, there is a sense in which the events that are object of their study are evident to their audiences. Justice, commerce, government, the arts and sciences and the rules of good-breeding are there for everyone to see. Yet, to explain their origins and evolution does not mean to explain how they actually emerged and progressed through time, say, by providing the dates and places of their origins or the particular individuals that lived under them, or their particular evolutions. Rather, it means to take these practices and institutions as expressions and combinations of expressions of universal features and motives of the human mind and then figure out what circumstances might have provoked different expressions and what logic might have followed.

Looked at in this way, conjectural history is a form of the anatomy of the passions that adopts a historical, developmental perspective. As physicians can learn about the human body from the story of how muscles and organs naturally grow and develop, readers of conjectural histories can learn about the human nature from the story of how its affections naturally emerge and transform. Within this framework, moreover, readers can grasp whether the practices and institutions in which they actually live deserve approbation, for the conjectural account lets them see which of them fit better with their vision of human nature. In short, Hume's conjectural histories make civilized practices and institutions intelligible and the reader's approbation of them justifiable. As in Marusic's reading of Stewart, Hume's conjectural histories aim at making out the rationale behind human practices and institutions and so, they aim at providing a type of understanding that standard record-based historiography cannot.

Further support for this reading comes from seeing Hume's conjectural history projects as both resembling and complementing the philosophical history of his *History of England*. In this history, Hume looked to capture the 'opinions' that kept governments in place, the passions that mobilized changes in the life of peoples and the interests that organized their social structures, all of this with the goal of providing a stock of practical knowledge by means of which readers could alter their present for the best. Hume's conjectural histories resemble his philosophical history in the attempt to identify the moral causes of human affairs. Hume explains the origin of

justice, government, commerce and the polite and learned world by analysis of the passions and interests behind them. But his histories also contribute to the practical aim of his philosophical history insofar as, by tracing the 'most natural and usual course of things', they let readers see why some policies that they may want to introduce in the modern world are inconvenient or will bring more harm than the one they intend to prevent.

An example of this is Hume's discussion of the maxim that '[t]he greatness of the state, and the happiness of its subjects (…) are (…) inseparable with regard to commerce' (E-Co 255) in his essay "Of Commerce". Hume states the maxim as generally true, as it is based on 'the most natural and usual course of things'. But he goes on to examine its soundness by means of an objection that finds its ground on the idea that '[m]an is a very variable being' and so '[w]hat may be true, while he adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions' (E-Co 256). Hume's reply to this objection accordingly is intended to show that it is possible to find moral causes that explain large patterns of human behaviour despite changes in people's manners and opinions and, at the same time, that there is a practical element to the knowledge of these causes.

The objection brings up the historical examples of Sparta and Rome: there was almost no commerce when these states reached their peak of flourishing. Moreover, the objector might say, it was precisely because their governments discouraged commerce, that their states reached the glory that made them famous. Hume's rejoinder concedes the fact, but explains it by noting the special circumstances of these peoples: '[t]hey were free states; they were small ones; and the age being martial, all their neighbours were continually in arms (…) [n]o to mention [that each proprietor's field] was able to maintain a family' (E-Co 259). So, citizens were happy to pay the species of tax that military service constituted, for, besides their martial spirit, their own land and the surplus of plunder were more than enough for them to live prosperously.

However, this combination of circumstances is accidental, Hume reiterates, for 'according to the most natural course of things, industry and arts and trade encrease the power of the sovereign as well as the happiness of their subjects' (E-Co 260). The proof for this claim consists in a reasoning concerning the logic of human passions and their social and economic effects: where there is no incentive to improve the skills of manufacture, people fall back on basic methods of agriculture, growing food sufficient only for bare survival. This indolence makes the state weak because taxes are hard to extract from impoverished subjects. Moreover,

this situation brings the disbanding of armies, whose members, lacking any permanent training, leave the state at other nations' mercy. Foreign armies plunder then with more ferocity than usual, and what remains of the local armies transform into groups of mercenaries with no loyalty for their own people.

Something different happens if commerce is encouraged: the demand of manufactures and items of luxury incite farmers to improve their methods, so they can provide material for commerce. With the dynamic commerce that naturally follows, the state can raise and extract taxes without upsetting the population, train armies, build infrastructure and if the threat of foreign war comes up, the industry of manufacturers and merchants can be easily put at the service of national defence.

As we can see in this example, Hume's reasoning is not based on specific historical records, but instead on the dynamics of the passions of typical individuals. Given that in the conjectural history at hand, Hume is interested in describing the passions behind commercial activity, his reasoning concerns the dialectic between industrious and indolent passions. His conclusions allow him, not only a better understanding of the rationale of moral causes behind commerce, and not only either a better understanding of the circumstances of a particular historical case (i.e., the exceptionality of Sparta's and Rome's situation regarding commerce), but also to issue a practical lesson of universal validity for legislators: promote commerce as '[i]t is the best policy to comply with the common bent of mankind, and give it all the improvements of which it is susceptible' (E-Co 260). In this way Hume's conjectural history complements the didactic commitment of the philosophical historian and provides his readers with a framework to evaluate the rationality of their institutions.

Chapter 4
Hume's General Theory of Motivation

1. Introduction

I propose that if we are to find a Humean account that addresses the two concerns of the problem of moral motivation, we need to look at the conjectural histories that Hume scatters throughout his texts. The central tenet of my thesis is that, on Hume's view, the motivational impulse of virtue derives from the convergence between the historical process that leads to the regulation and refinement of the passions and the sense of virtue. Hume's conjectural histories capture the process of this convergence. In this chapter, I outline the basic moral psychology on which Hume grounds the history of the regulation and refinement of the passions.

In a way, this chapter begins my project of tracing Hume's conjectural histories of the passions. Indeed, his general account of motivation is a sort of conjectural history: it is the account of the emergence and refinement of passions and desires directed at external objects and people which are produced by individual and social experience. Following the script of conjectural history, Hume starts by imagining a mind previous to any experience and endowed only with 'original' instincts and passions. Then, he introduces experience in the form of perceptions of pleasure and pain to explain the psychological variety of content and strength of the desires and passions that we actually attribute to full-grown individuals.

I call this the 'genetic' account of motives and I develop it in the next section by arguing against the common interpretation according to which Hume's moral psychology is hedonistic and egoistic (Darwall 1993, 1995, Cohon 2008a, 2010). I defend a reading according to which Hume takes perceptions of pleasure and pain as intermediary causes in the generation of desires, and as a consequence, as signals of value in external objects. In Hume's picture of our moral psychology, there is no such thing as a generic desire of pleasure, but rather a quality of the mind whereby the prospects of enjoying pleasurable objects and avoiding unpleasant ones add content and emotional intensity to the original passions and desires that individuals have for certain categories of external objects.

I elaborate further on my interpretation of Hume's general theory of motivation by discussing what has been called the 'Humean theory of action' — represented here by Bricke (1996) — which attributes to Hume the reduction of the explanation of action to a particular version of the template 'belief plus desire'. This interpretation agrees with my rejection of a hedonistic and egoistic Humean theory of action, but claims that the causal factor in motivation, what Bricke calls the 'conative' component, is a generic mental state called 'desire'. My aim in rejecting this particular feature of the 'Humean theory of action' is to pave the way to a reading that stresses the goal-setting quality of the passions, avoiding by the way the reductionistic view of motivation that contemporary philosophers of action associate with Hume. Against this view, I argue that Hume holds human actions to be caused by different sorts of passions, each of which aims at a distinctive intentional object. I call this feature of Hume's theory 'motivational pluralism'.

Together, my defence of the 'genetic account of motives' and of Hume's 'motivational pluralism' constitute part of Hume's take on the concern about the nature of virtuous motives introduced in chapter 1. On my reading of Hume, it is not true, against Hobbes's and Mandeville's common interpretation, that self-regarding motives are more natural or basic or stronger than other-regarding ones. In fact, Hume conceives human motives, very much like Butler, as native affections directed at external objects, some of which are directed at the self, others directed at other people. Their moral quality derives, in Hume's as in Butler's view, from how they are regulated. But whereas Butler takes it that the principles of self-love and of conscience regulate in each individual the direction and strength of the passions, Hume conceives passion regulation — and refinement — as a process driven by experience that unfolds as human beings interact with the world and with each other and which is realized in the practices and institutions of a 'polished' and luxurious' society. In this chapter, I examine the role of perceptions of pleasure and pain in the gaining of experience and guiding the actions of human beings endowed with 'original' instincts and passions. I leave for the next chapters the reconstruction of the conjectural histories which tell the process of regulation and refinement of the passions crucial to the practices and institutions of a modern society.

2. Pleasure and action in Hume's moral psychology

It seems evident that Hume's theory of motivation is causal[143]. What this means is that this theory explains human agency as the effect of regular interactions among perceptions of the mind. In this sense, Hume follows Hobbes in his naturalistic and anti-teleological approach to the science of human nature and thus in understanding that offering an account of human psychology involves providing a theory in which elements in the mind relate to each other causally, as if the mind were a species of orderly mechanism.

Like Hobbes, Hume takes pleasure and pain to be important explanatory elements. Hume states that the most remarkable quality of the mind is its sensitivity to the influence of the perceptions of pleasure and pain: 'the perception of pain and pleasure [is] the chief spring and moving principle of all [the mind's] actions' (SBN- 118; T- 1.3.10.2)[144]. Indeed, Hume stresses the significance that perceptions of pleasure and pain have in the causal explanation of human behaviour, claiming that the first impulse in the causal production of the passions is always a particular perception of pleasure or pain: the 'productive principle' of the indirect passions (SBN- 278; T- 2.1.2.5) and the 'good or evil', 'pleasure or pain', from which the direct ones immediately arise (SBN 120; T- 1.3.10.4, SBN- 276; T- 2.1.1.4)[145]. Moreover, Hume claims that volitions are caused by the awareness that pleasure and pain can be attained or avoided by our actions: 'The WILL exerts itself, when either the good or the absence of evil may be attain'd by any action or the mind or body' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.7). Probably in view of the prominence of

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[143] For example, at the end of the *Treatise*'s section 'Of liberty and necessity', he writes: 'having prov'd, that all actions of the will have particular causes, I proceed to explain what these causes are, and how they operate' (SBN- 412; T- 2.3.2.8).

[144] Hume also states that '[t]he mind by an original instinct tends to unite itself with the good and to avoid the evil' where Hume assimilates good to pleasure and evil to pain (SBN- 438; T- 2.3.9.2). For Hume, this quality constitutes one of the 'principles of the science of man', that is, one of 'these qualities [of the mind], which we must consider as original, [and] such as are most inseparable from the soul, and can be resolv'd into no other' (SBN- 280; T- 2.1.3.3).

[145] More generally, in the *Treatise*, Hume states that all the passions, direct and indirect, 'are founded' on pleasure or pain (SBN- 438; T- 2.3.9.1), and at the beginning of *A Dissertation* (*A Dissertation*- 1.1), he says that pleasure and pain are 'necessary conditions' for the arousal of any passion.

perceptions of pleasure and pain in the Humean explanation of action, commentators have called attention to the seemingly hedonistic character of his account[146]. Furthermore, there are passages where Hume seems to imply that obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain are original aims of human action, supposedly admitting that the prospects of obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain are the typical motives of action. Indeed, in an often-cited passage from the second *Enquiry*, Hume notes that, if we are pressed to give reasons for our behaviour, we eventually end up invoking something like a drive to obtain pleasure and to avoid pain as final justification of any action (EPM- 293)[147]. So, apparently, Hume's account of agency is hedonistic either because it holds that human actions are produced by motivating feelings of pleasure or pain or because it claims that the prospects of obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain motivate conduct[148].

Moreover, on the assumption that pleasure and pain are feelings experienced by the agent, Hume's account of motivation has also been considered egoistic. Human agency would be egoistic or self-regarding either because the causes of actions are hedonic feelings that move the agent to prolong his own satisfaction — or to stop his own unease — or because the motive

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[146] See for example, Darwall 1993, 1995, Cohon 2008a, 2010, Magri 2008, Owen 2014.

[147] Hume writes: 'Ask a man *why he uses exercise*; he will answer, *because he desires to keep his health*. If you then enquire, *why he desires health*, he will readily reply, *because sickness is painful*. If you push your enquiries farther, and desire a reason *why he hates pain*, it is impossible he can ever give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object. Perhaps to your second question, *why he desires health*, he may also reply, that *it is necessary for the exercise of his calling*. If you ask, *why he is anxious on that head,* he will answer, *because he desires to get money*. If you demand *why? It is the instrument of pleasure,* says he. And beyond this it is an absurdity to ask for a reason' (EPM- 293).

[148] More accurately, Hume's account of action seems to be a form of *psychological* hedonism. In effect, from the passages cited, it is not apparent that he endorses pleasure as a good aim or as a justified end of action, but only as the aim that human actions happen to aim at. On a different note, there is a sense in which the claim that i) feelings of pleasure and pain are motivating and, the claim that ii) prospects of pleasure and pain direct human action mean the same. It can be said that pleasure and pain are states such that they prompt us to continue the experience of pleasure and to stop the experience of pain respectively and thus that feelings of pleasure and pain lead the will to seek future pleasure or pain. Alternatively, it can be said that prospects of pleasure or pain are beliefs which are themselves pleasant or painful, and thus that having this kind of beliefs is the same as experiencing feelings of pleasure and pain that motivate action. Although both ways to identify claims i) and ii) are plausible, they are not necessary. It can be said that beliefs about prospective pleasure or pain activate a generic desire for pleasure or a generic aversion to pain and thus, that the pleasure or pain represented in those beliefs are only mediate causes of action. It can also be said that beliefs about prospective pleasure or pain cause new desires and passions, each of which has a characteristic form of pleasure or pain as their intentional object. In my discussion, I keep claims i) and ii) separated, as Cohon, who I take as my foil in this section, presents them in this way in the articles that I discuss.

which makes the agent pursue or avoid certain objects is the prospect of obtaining his own pleasure or of avoiding his own pain.

I would like to argue against this interpretation and instead offer a reading of the relation that Hume sees between pleasure or pain and action according to which the experience of these feelings develop and refine original human motives. So, instead of looking at pleasure and pain as either sources or goals of action, I would like to look at them as intermediary factors in the genesis of motives[149]. On my view, perceptions of pleasure and pain are primarily elements in *Hume's genetic account of motivation,* and only as a consequence of their role in the generation of motives can they be understood as providing direction to particular actions.

A good way to present my reading is in contrast with a particular interpretation. I would like to use Rachel Cohon's because, apart from being a well-established Hume scholar, her 2008a and 2010 articles, when taken together, constitute a strong version of the hedonistic and egoistic reading of Hume' theory of motivation. Indeed, "Hume's Moral Sentiments as Motives" (Cohon 2010) argues for the view that pleasure and pain are causes of action[150], whereas "Hume's Indirect Passions" (Cohon 2008a) develops the argument that pleasure and pain are intentional objects of the direct passions. Together, these articles make up the claim that the agent's pleasures and pains are both causes of his motives and intentional objects of his volitions.

To start let us note that in Cohon (2010), she exploits some remarks in the *Treatise*'s section 'Of the influence of belief on the will', where Hume introduces the principle according to which 'the perception of pain and pleasure [is] the chief spring and moving principle of all its [the mind's] actions' (SBN- 118; T- 1.3.10.2). In the text, Hume adds that perceptions of pleasure or pain appear in the mind either as ideas or impressions, but that while impressions always influence the will, not every idea does. The reason for this, he contends, is that if every idea influenced the will, we would be driven to act upon every fancy of the imagination; but if no ideas had any influence, we would be unable to act upon our causal inferences. So,

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[149] Here I take up Radcliffe's suggestion (1999) that, to render it plausible, Hume's theory of action has to be complemented by his account of motive formation.

[150] In fact, the actual contending point is about the capacity of beliefs of pleasure or pain to influence the will, since nearly every interpreter agrees that Humean impressions of pleasure or pain actuate the will.

[n]ature has, therefore, chosen a medium' such that '[t]ho' an idle fiction has no efficacy, yet we find by experience, that the ideas of those [pleasures and pains], which we believe either are or will be existent, produce in a lesser degree the same effect with those impressions, which are immediately present to the senses and perception (SBN- 119; T- 1.3.10.3).

Cohon reads these remarks as meaning that beliefs about external objects that promise pleasure or pain for the agent (what she calls 'hedonic beliefs') have the power to arouse a new instance of a desire or a direct passion, which in turn, becomes the proximate cause of action[151]. Leaving aside for now the soundness of her argument, it is worth noting that, in her 2010 paper, Cohon's interpretation follows the general tendency among Hume's commentators of reading his texts as an account of the moral psychology of an adult and civilized individual. In line with this tendency, Hume's account explains how categories of desires or passions are triggered by hedonic beliefs — another category of mental states — and how actions are produced as a consequence. This means that Cohon's reading takes Hume's description of the causal process leading to action as functional, paying little attention to how such a description can fit into a developmental account of the formation and refinement of passions and desires. So, Cohon's reading avoids saying anything about the potential of perceptions of pleasure or pain to form new desires or passions or to alter the ones that the agent already possesses. Part of my argument against her, as I present it below, is that failing to consider perceptions of pleasure and pain from a developmental perspective prevents her discovering the real functions that Hume attributes to these perceptions.

Turning now to Cohon's 2008 article, she argues that prospects of pleasure and pain are the intentional objects of desires and direct passions. In general, she says, the intentional object of a passion is 'what the passion causes us to think of or attend to' (Cohon 2008a, 165). The

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[151] Since the object of Cohon's attack in this article is the view that hedonic beliefs trigger a supposedly latent general desire for pleasure (the so-called 'signpost assumption'), she argues that every hedonic belief has the potential to spark a particular new instance of desire or passion. In this regard, Cohon's interpretation is similar to Baier's (1994). Cohon also claims that hedonic beliefs are only mediate causes of actions, which is consistent with her own interpretation of Hume's claim of the inertness of reason (Cohon 1997c) and against David Owen's (2014), who uses the same passages in 'Of the influence of belief on the will' to argue that hedonic beliefs motivate action directly, i.e., without the interposition of any new desire or passion.

experience of the indirect passions involves a turning of attention from the pleasant or unpleasant quality perceived in others' actions, qualities of mind, or external possessions[152] to the whole person that performs, exhibits or owns them[153], while the experience of the direct passions, by contrast, always keep us fixed on the qualities perceived in external objects[154]. In this way, whereas the indirect passions have objects which are always different from their causes, the objects of the direct passions are always the same as their causes. For my purposes, the relevant consequence that Cohon draws from this is that this difference in intentional objects explains why the indirect passions are non-motivating forms of imposing value on certain aspects of the world, whereas the direct passions are decidedly motivating, yet only as feelings that drive us towards pleasure and pain. To confirm this last piece, Cohon brings a couple of passages where Hume talks of the direct passions as 'pursuing' pleasure or pain[155] and concludes that, by means of this wording, Hume highlights the distinctive motivational character of the direct passions: they direct the will at the pleasure or pain that external objects promise for us[156]. This makes

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[152] All the indirect passions are directed at people, either at the self or at others.

[153] The turning of attention involved in the indirect passions makes their causal structure complex. Cohon points out that Hume invokes the principle of the double association of ideas and impressions to explain that the indirect passions make us attend to the ideas of objects other than the qualities which first aroused the experience of the passion.

[154] Cohon admits that Hume does not make the contrast between the intentional objects of the passions explicitly, '[b]ut since the cause of a direct passion is the same as its object, what he [Hume] seems to think is that there is no need for any turning; in coming to have the direct passion our view is already on its object' (Cohon 2008a, 165-66).

[155] Cohon cites Hume thus: 'A remark in the *Dissertation on the Passions* may shed light here: he describes the direct passions as those that "arise from a direct *pursuit* of good and aversion to evil" (DP, p. 132, emphasis added). Similarly in the *Treatise* in discussing direct passions as motives to action he says "[b]oth these kinds of passions [the calm and the violent direct passions] pursue good, and avoid evil" (T 2.3.4.1).' (Cohon 2008a, 171).

[156] Cohon writes: 'But Hume's considered view seems to be that while the dog is called (an) evil and our thought of it elicits fear, the ultimate intentional object of our fear is not the dog but the pain it is likely to cause us if it attacks (…) we talk about fearing a mugger (and so fear seems to take persons as its object at times), but the mugger is only an intermediate object of our attention when we feel this fear; the ultimate object is not the person but what he is likely to do to us' (Cohon 2008a, 171). In this respect, Cohon's interpretation partially agrees with Tito Magri's (2008), who describes the direct passions as 'primitive, blank impulses to pursue or avoid [pleasant or unpleasant] objects' (Magri 2008, 186).

sense for Cohon, given that she assumes that Hume's conception of the will is thoroughly hedonistic: 'Action, for Hume, and hence the will, aims at getting pleasure and avoiding pain' (Cohon 2008a, 172). The direct passions are thus motives of action precisely because they point to the hedonic qualities of external objects.

Notice that, according to this argument, Cohon is entitled to say that Hume's theory of action is hedonistic, but it is not obvious that his theory is also egoistic. However, Cohon believes that Hume's theory is both. In fact, Cohon does not argue for the egoistic reading on grounds independent of Hume's supposed hedonism. She seems to believe that the hedonistic character of the theory implies that it is egoistic too. This is clear in her answer to the question of whether Hume is a 'motivational egoistic hedonist' or not[157]. Her answer is negative, but telling of her actual understanding of Hume's theory. Cohon says that the direct passions are not the only motives that actuate the will: Hume believes that there are natural appetites and original instincts that also motivate action. Benevolence and anger are two of such original motives. These motives influence the will, according to Cohon, independently of the agent's hedonistic and egoistic prospects: '[s]o on many occasions we help and harm others with an eye to *their* pleasure or pain rather than our own' (Cohon 2008a, 173)[158]. Still, the argument of the original motives in fact confirms that for her Hume's theory is an 'egoistic hedonist' one. She stresses that for Hume the workings of the original instincts are 'perfectly unaccountable', indirectly suggesting then that the operation of these instincts contrasts with the general hedonistic and egoistic disposition of human agency that she attributes to Hume[159]. In the end, she claims that, on Hume's view, the typical and common motive of human agency is the *agent's* prospect of obtaining pleasure *for himself* or avoiding *his* pain: '[a]part from our instincts (which are more numerous in the moral *Enquiry*), only the prospect of pleasure or pain for *ourselves* moves us to

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[157] 'Does this mean that Hume is a motivational egoistic hedonist, contrary to what many commentators, going back to Kemp Smith (1941: 140–1, 164), have thought? Does he trace all human action to the pursuit of one's own pleasure and avoidance of one's own pain?' (Cohon 2008a, 173).

[158] In fact, although Cohon denies that Hume's theory is 'egoistic hedonist', her argument of the role of natural appetites and original instincts seems to counter only the egoistic part. One is tempted to conclude then that her reading is that Hume's theory is hedonistic, but not egoistic.

[159] She writes: '[a]ll the other passions that qualify as motives, however, engage the will only by means of the prospect of pleasure and pain (Cohon 2008a, 173).

act' (Cohon 2008a, 173. My emphasis)[160]. Non-egoistic motives are exceptional, not just in their actual operation, but in the place Hume gives them in his theory.

To challenge this hedonist and egoistic reading of Hume's account of motivation, it is useful to begin by discussing what the egoistic label might mean. One possibility is to say that an account of motivation is egoistic if it holds that agents do what they desire to do[161]. This interpretation would say, in other words, that all my actions are caused by my desires. Let us leave aside for the moment whether or not by 'desire' it is meant a special category of mental state and assume that it is simply the name for any conative state. If a theory is egoistic in this sense, either the label of egoism is trivially true of almost every causal account of motivation or such a label does not really count as egoistic and should be rejected as it misleadingly extends the meaning of such term.

In effect, if the claim 'all *my* actions are caused by *my* desires' is to be taken as egoistic, then calling a theory egoistic means simply that it takes actions being generated by the agent's desires as a condition of *motivated* actions. But, although what motives really belong to the agent may be difficult to settle in particular cases, being egoistic in this sense means only that the theory establishes a minimal requirement of attribution of action: *my* actions are all and only those caused by *me*. Arguably, Hume's account is egoistic in this sense, as he assumes that one's desires and passions are causes of one's actions (SBN- 401, T- 2.3.1.4; SBN- 477, T- 3.2.1.2).

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[160] In a similar sense, she writes: 'If we are not attending to any good or evil *for ourselves*, our will is not activated' (Cohon 2008a, 173. My emphasis). In her 2010 paper, Cohon states: '[Hume] holds that a belief that an object has pleasure or pain in store *for me* operates on my passions and will in just the same way as does an occurrent feeling of pleasure or pain', and later on in the same page: 'Here Hume says that if I believe that pleasure or pain is to be had from a certain source, this belief (this believed idea) has the same effect on me as an occurrent feeling of pleasure or pain, similarly causing me to desire what will give *me* the expected pleasure or to be averse to what will give *me* the expected pain' (Cohon 2010, 204. My emphasis). Darwall's interpretation agrees with Cohon's and is less ambiguous as to the egoistic reading: 'Hume's theory of action thus not only employs the traditional idea that the will invariably aims at the good. It interprets that idea *hedonistically and egoistically*. Desires and aversions arise from the prospect of *pleasure or pain*, respectively, *for the agent*' (Darwall 1993, 423. My emphasis).

[161] In this discussion, I follow Hampton's illuminating analysis of psychological egoism in her interpretation of Hobbes's moral psychology (Hampton 1986, 19 ff.).

But this is not a particularly distinctive feature of his theory. A theory would avoid being egoistic in this sense only if it says that actions produced by external causes can be validly ascribed to the agent.

If read in another sense where the emphasis is not on *my* desires causing my actions, but on my *desires* causing my actions, a theory is egoistic if it rules out the possibility that at least some of my actions are caused by reason or by any other motivating state other than desire. Hume's would be an egoistic theory in this other sense because he rejects that reason can be a motive of action (SBN- 415; T- 2.3.3.4). But then, the contrast that seems intended by the 'egoistic' label is between non-cognitivist or desire-based theories, on the one hand, and cognitivist theories of motivation, on the other. So, calling Hume's account egoistic in this sense unduly extends the scope of the term. Admittedly, Hume's theory might be considered 'non-cognitivist', but then the merits and drawbacks that follows from that must be considered within the appropriate framework of analysis[162].

Another interpretation consists in locating the egoistic element of the theory in what it says about the *content* of the agent's desires. In this sense, a theory of motivation is egoistic if it holds that all my actions are caused by my *self-regarding* desires. Let us say that for a desire to be self-regarding, the state of affairs desired must be desired by the agent because they bring him satisfaction or affect his interests, so that a desire is not self-regarding if it is desired because it satisfies other people's desires or because it serves other people's interests, even if as a side-effect the desire in question also satisfies or affects the agent's interests. This is probably the sense in which Hobbes's and Mandeville's accounts were interpreted by their contemporaries. They were read as 'egoists' because they supposedly held that all human actions are motivated by self-regarding motives: motives desired because they bring satisfaction to the agent. Hume's theory of motivation is not egoistic in this sense. He clearly admits desires such as benevolence ('a desire of the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery' SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3), anger ('a desire of the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated' SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3), and passions such as love and hatred (SBN- 329; T- 2.2.1.1), the amorous passion (SBN- 394-5; T- 2.2.11.4-5), esteem, pity (SBN- 368; T- 2.2.7.1) and respect and

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[162] In the next section, I discuss Bricke's non-cognitivist interpretation of Hume's theory of action.

contempt (SBN- 389; T- 2.2.10.1), all desires and passions whose content is the fortune of another human being. Moreover, he recognizes benevolence and kindness to children as natural appetites or original instincts that move us towards the good of others, even if there is no direct benefit for the self (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.8; SBN- 417; T- 2.3.3.8). Elsewhere, he says that 'original passions' such as instinctive resentment and anger may also make us desire the misfortune of others 'without any regard to interest' (EPM- 301).

As a matter of fact, in the second *Enquiry*, Hume displays a battery of arguments against the so-called selfish theory. Since his primary focus is to show that the origin of moral distinctions cannot be found in our self-regarding affections (EPM- 215, 219, 234,270-1), he takes pains to demonstrate that, along with the 'selfish' or self-regarding passions, human beings are able to experience a 'common', 'universal and comprehensive' (EPM- 272) sentiment that enables us to sympathize impartially with the happiness and misery of others. Hume even goes as far as to say that such 'fellow-feeling' 'overpowers' the 'selfish and private' passions (EPM- 275-6), if not in every action, at least in the evaluation of others' characters and actions. Furthermore, in Appendix II to the second *Enquiry*, Hume appeals to common experience to argue against those who, like an 'Epicurean or a Hobbist' 'attempt, by a philosophical chymistry, to (…) explain every affection to be self-love' (EPM- 297). For Hume, benevolence, generosity, love, friendship, compassion and gratitude are passions 'marked by common language and observation, and plainly distinguished from those of the selfish passions' (EPM- 298). His point being that reducing all passions and affections to self-love is a wrong concession to explanatory simplicity, since the fact that common sense recognizes other-regarding passions as different yet on equal foot with the self-regarding ones mirrors the fact that they are casually so as well[163].

So, at first glance, calling Hume's account egoistic is misleading. In fact, as noted earlier, Cohon (2008a, 173) acknowledges the passages where Hume speaks of benevolent passions. But she claims that these affections figure in Hume's account as 'inexplicable' original motivators

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[163] Hume says that common-sense even accepts that sometimes the impulses of self-regarding and other-regarding passions, though originally distinct, can pull us in the same direction: 'where is the difficulty in conceiving, that (…) from the original frame of our temper, we may feel a desire for another happiness or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyment?' (EPM- 302).

and to some extent in conflict with the egoistic tone of his official conception of the will[164]. In effect, Cohon attributes to Hume something like an *ad hoc* move. On Cohon's reading, Hume's first thought is that all human motives are hedonistic and self-regarding and that, accordingly, the will actuates itself upon the agent's prospects of pleasure or pain. Yet, realizing that a large part of our actions are motivated by other-regarding intentions, Cohon's Hume would have invoked nature and claimed that, by our original frame, we are able to display benevolence, despite the obvious difficulty of accounting for how an hedonistic and egoistic will would exert itself in cases of benevolence.

This is indeed problematic for Cohon's egoistic reading of Hume. Yet, she might have a way to reply if we understand her calling Hume's account egoistic as a claim about our desires' origin. She might want to say that Hume's account of action is egoistic because the mechanism of desire production is an egoist one. But then, either her reading becomes one of trivial attribution of egoism (i.e., my actions are egoist because they are produced by my desires) or she needs to give content to the egoistic label by building it into the theory's hedonism. In effect, notice that the sense of egoism that I have discussed until now is neutral as to whether the theory is also hedonistic or not[165]. Yet, Cohon might want to claim that Hume's theory is both egoistic and hedonist because she believes that the agent's perceptions of pleasure and pain *cause his* desires and direct passions and because the prospects at which the agent's direct passions aim are *the agent's future pleasure and pain*.

As a matter of fact, that all desires and direct passions *originate* in hedonic beliefs is Cohon's crucial point in her 2010 article. She explicitly says there that hedonic beliefs inform the agent about the pleasures or pains that external objects have in store *for him* (Cohon 2010,

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[164] Finding puzzling or in conflict motives which Hume esteems proper of human nature seems to be the consequence of attributing to him an egoistic theory of motivation. Another example is Darwall (1993, 1995) who thinks of Hume's account of justice motivation as in contradiction with his official hedonistic and egoistic theory of action.

[165] A theory of motivation can be egoistic, if it says that all my actions are caused by my self-regarding desires, without being hedonist, if it understands self-regard in terms other than the achievement of pleasure or the avoidance of pain. For instance, a theory of action is egoistic, but not hedonistic, if it says that all my actions are motivated by my purpose of attaining a list of objective goods such as knowledge, emotional wellbeing, or individual perfection.

204)[166], thus making the claim of egoism closely linked to that of hedonism. Moreover, for her, the direct passions have prospects of pleasure or pain as their intentional objects because in this class of passions intentional objects and causes are the same (Cohon 2008a). So, since the perceptions that trigger the agent's direct passions are about pleasures and pain that *he* felt, his prospects are of pleasures and pains that *he* expects to feel. In the end, Cohon's claim that Hume depicts all human motives as hedonistic and egoistic impulses depends on her assumptions about the origin of such motives.

Cohon might want to reply that she is not attributing any *ad hoc* move to Hume. Her claim is about the origin of desires and passions and in this regard she reads faithfully what Hume says about the generation of most of our desires. When it comes to other-regarding affections, she can claim that Hume explicitly categorizes them as 'instinctual passions' (as she actually says in Cohon 2008a, 173) and so that he thinks of them as emerging from a source different from that of common hedonistic and egoistic desires and passions. According to this reply, the difficulty of how other-regarding passions move the will — which only mobilizes itself upon the prospect of pleasure or pain — can be solved by Hume's own statements to the effect that generous and benevolent actions naturally bring a peculiar sort of enjoyment[167]. So, presumably, once we have learned through experience about the delights of such satisfactions,

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[166] Recall the passages from Cohon 2008a and 2010 quoted above: '[a]part from our instincts (which are more numerous in the moral Enquiry), only the prospect of pleasure or pain *for ourselves* moves us to act' (Cohon 2008a, 173. My emphasis) and 'If we are not attending to any good or evil *for ourselves*, our will is not activated' (Cohon 2008a, 173. My emphasis). 'We should note, however, that there is textual evidence that the signpost assumption expresses a view to which Hume does not in fact subscribe. Rather, he holds that a belief that an object has pleasure or pain in store *for me* operates on my passions and the will in just the same way as does an occurrent feeling of pleasure or pain.' And later on: 'Here Hume says that if I believe that pleasure or pain is to be had from a certain source, this belief (this believed idea) has the same effect on me as an occurrent feeling of pleasure or pain, similarly causing me to desire what will give *me* the expected pleasure or to be averse to what will give *me* the expected pain' (Cohon 2010, 204. My emphasis).

[167] For example, Hume states that 'the immediate feeling of benevolence and friendship, humanity and kindness, is sweet, smooth, tender, and agreeable, independent of all fortune and accidents' (EPM- 282).

the will would actuate itself upon the prospect of a benevolent action in the same way as it actuates itself upon the prospect of any self-regarding one[168].

Still Cohon's interpretation is not fully satisfying. Her reading leads her to face a difficult dilemma: *either* she admits that Hume's theory of motivation is thoroughly hedonistic and egoistic *or* she has to say that Hume's theory comprises two apparently unrelated motivational mechanisms. If she opts for the first horn, she has to attribute Hume a selfish view of benevolence, whereas if she opts for the second, she fails to explain what triggers the operation of one or the other mechanism on particular occasions. In effect, on the one hand, if Cohon acknowledges that for Hume benevolence is an original affection (heeding what Hume affirms in the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*), she cannot avoid reading him as a selfish theorist, for if she maintains that Hume's conception of the will is hedonistic and egoistic, she has to conclude that individuals would not act benevolently for the other's sake, but for the prospect of pleasure they would obtain from being benevolent. On the other, if Cohon assumes that Hume conceives two independent motivational mechanisms, common desires and direct passions caused by pleasure and pain, on the one hand, and natural appetites and original instincts, on the other, she seems unable to spell out the relation between them. On her reading, prospects of pleasure and pain trigger our direct passions and desires, but it remains a mystery what would cause the activation of natural appetites and original instincts. She might want to say that natural appetites and original instincts are aroused by the appearance in the mind of their natural intentional objects, but it is still problematic how the drives of each class of motives relate to each other.

Fortunately, there is no reason to remain stuck in Cohon's dilemma. In fact, the first horn is simply unacceptable, given Hume's views against the selfish theory. In turn, the second horn

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[168] This might be what Cohon has in mind when she says that '[Hume] does make Butlerian arguments in the moral *Enquiry* against the claim that all benevolence is a species of self-love (EPM App. 2.12–13), and in support of the claim that we must have some original outward-directed impulses "to give a relish" (that is, impart pleasure) to the objects of self-love (EPM 9.20)' (Cohon 2008a, 173). She might be thinking of passages such as the one quoted earlier in the text: 'where is the difficulty in conceiving, that (…) from the original frame of our temper, we may feel a desire for another happiness or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyment?' (EPM- 302).

can be avoided if Hume's theory of motivation is read as a *genetic account of motives*, as I intend to do in the rest of this section. Cohon understands Hume's talk of pleasure and pain in the framework of a functionalist story of the moral psychology of an adult and civilized individual. Natural instincts and original appetites stand uneasily alongside desires and passions because they are not seen as genetically related, but as causal elements of what appears to be two parallel mechanisms of action production. Yet, if Hume's account of motivation is seen as a developmental story of the origin of human motives, a relation between original motives and direct passions and other desires can be discerned.

In the rest of this section, I offer my interpretation of Hume's account of the role of pleasure and pain in action. I claim that this account explains the role of perceptions of pleasure and pain in Hume's theory and accommodates the fact that he speaks of them as if they were both causes and intentional objects of desires and direct passions. It also reveals that Hume's account is causal in a different way from that which Cohon and other interpreters assume. It is causal insofar as it tells the genetic story of human motives: it explains how desires and passions are developed and refined versions of 'original' motives.

Let me start by stating that I read the *Treatise* claims regarding the generation of desires, passions and actions within the framework of the account of motivation offered in Appendix II to the second *Enquiry*. This account is tightly summarized at the end of the appendix. There, Hume says that there are two kinds of original causes of action: 'bodily wants and appetites' and original 'mental passions' (EPM- 301) [169]. Bodily wants and appetites carry the mind 'necessarily' to actions that seek the 'possession of the[ir] object[s]' (EPM- 301)[170]. Presumably,

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[169] Note that these causes of action correspond roughly to the two sorts of impressions that Hume distinguishes in the *Treatise*: original impressions or impressions of sensation which 'without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs' (SBN- 275; T- 2.1.1.1) and secondary impressions or impressions of reflection ― the passions ― which, by contrast, 'proceed from some of these original ones, either immediately or by the interposition of its idea' (SBN- 275; T- 2.1.1.1).

[170] 'Possession' is a vague expression here. Hume must mean something like consuming, making use of or reacting to the object that corresponds with the original impulse or instinct. So, hunger drives us to eat the object and thirst to drink it, the love of gain to accumulate possessions, benevolence to desire and perform

the function of bodily wants and appetites consists in driving us towards categories of goods indispensable for our biological preservation. However, given how Hume describes these instincts, they leave undetermined the particular objects that we would prefer in particular situations: '[t]hus hunger and thirst have eating and drinking for their end' (EPM- 301). In other words, that Hume characterizes the objects of our instincts as actions, e.g., 'eating' or 'drinking', indicates that what particular objects we choose to eat or drink depends on causes beyond themselves. This sort of indeterminacy makes sense, if we bear in mind that their impulses do not require the representation or the previous sensation of the goods that satisfy them. For this reason, Hume affirms that these impulses 'precede all sensual enjoyment' (EPM- 301), and 'properly speaking produce good and evil, and proceed not from them like the other affections' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.8). So, supposing individuals lack any sort of experience, when they feel hunger, they want to eat, but they probably would not know what particular external object would satisfy their hunger best.

The claim that bodily wants and appetites 'precede all sensual enjoyment' and 'produce good and evil', instead of being caused by them, may sound odd, unless we take it as an indication of the genetic relationship that exists between the impulses of original wants and appetites and the affections that arise as a consequence of our experience of pleasure and pain. Hume states that the pleasure caused by the gratification of the objects of the instincts 'become[s] the object of another species of desire or inclination that is secondary and interested' (EPM- 301). This, I claim, constitutes the backbone of Hume's genetic story of human motives. At first, natural appetites and original impulses move humans to try any of the particular objects that look satisfactory. Their impulse in this sense is generic, that is, it is not restricted to any set of objects characterized by definite features. Instead, the impulse of original motives moves individuals to 'possess' any object that may roughly satisfy the instinct. But then, the use or consumption of these particular objects produce impressions of pleasure and pain which gradually refines the unsophisticated stimulus of the instincts. Impressions of pleasure and pain become ideas of memory and then serve to flag the particular sorts of objects from which we may expect future satisfactions or disagreeable experiences. The accumulation of these ideas of

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actions in favour of our friends and resentment to desire and produce the misery of those who caused us injury.

memory, or in other words, the accumulation of experience, produces dispositions to desire or prefer certain particular objects over others:

> An impression first strikes upon the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or other. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. *This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear*, which may properly be called impressions of reflexion, because derived from it. (SBN- 8; T- 1.1.2.1. My emphasis).

Thus, while we are moved originally to look for the satisfaction of certain generic desires, the accumulated experience of pleasures and pains that we acquire in this attempt, gradually produces new refined dispositions, desires and aversions. Experiences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction may obviously differ depending on individual features and idiosyncrasies. All the same, accumulated experiences of delight and disgust make individuals acquire preferences, i.e., desires and aversions, hopes and fears, which later dispose them towards some particular objects rather than others among the set of objects with the potential to assuage their instincts. Perceptions of pleasure and pain are then intermediary factors in the generation of dispositional desires and inclinations from original impulses. Perceptions of pleasure and pain allow individuals to discriminate among external objects and so constitute their particular preferences. They provide content and set a characteristic level of strength to their refined preferences. Remarkably, taking note of Hume's use of 'reflexion' in the passage above, we can say that perceptions of pleasure and pain produce reflective desires and aversions, desires and aversions that refine original impulses and give shape thereby to individuals' particular conceptions of self-interest.

A similar pattern can be established for the second category of original causes of action mentioned by Hume, i.e., original 'mental passions'. Like wants and appetites, these original passions are built-in motives, and so no previous experience of their particular objects is needed in order to seek their satisfaction. From the examples cited, it seems that by mental passions, Hume means original desires that prompt us to social exchange or to look for satisfactions that presuppose the intercourse with other people. In the *Treatise*, Hume includes lust, the desire to

punish our enemies, the desire of happiness for our friends[171], 'benevolence, resentment (…) and kindness to children'[172]. In the second *Enquiry*, he adds the desire of fame, the desire of power and the desire of 'vengeance without any regard to interest' (EPM- 301). As with wants and appetites, the enjoyments and displeasures produced by the satisfaction of the objects of the mental passions serve as causal bridges to new motives and affections that refine the primitive drive of the original passions, giving them content and setting their typical strength. On this note, Hume writes:

> [i]n all these cases there is [an original] passion which points immediately to the object, and constitutes it our good or happiness; as there are other secondary passions which afterwards arise and pursue it as a part of our happiness, when once it is constituted such by our original affections (EPM- 301).

It is in this context that Hume's principle of double association of impressions and ideas comes in. From how he introduces this principle in the *Treatise*, we are to suppose that the pleasurable or painful quality that an object possesses triggers the psychological mechanism that produces a passion. Hume calls this initial impression the 'productive principle' of the indirect passions (SBN- 278; T- 2.1.2.5) and the 'good or evil', 'pleasure or pain', from which the direct ones immediately arise (SBN 120; T- 1.3.10.4, SBN- 276; T- 2.1.1.4). Once we perceive such quality, the idea of the object bearing it associates by resemblance, contiguity or causality with the idea that constitutes the original object of the passion (a person if the passion is indirect, an object or state of affairs if the passion is direct), while the impression of the pleasant or unpleasant quality associates by way of resemblance with the hedonic impression that characterizes the passion. The principle of double association of ideas and impressions operates against a background of instinctual passionate dispositions that prompts us towards certain objects in certain ways. The principle of double association explains the way experience of actual objects is brought into the mind to calibrate our original motivational dispositions. So, while we possess an original mental passion to fear situations or external objects that endanger our integrity, only by means of the experience brought into the mind according to the principle of

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[171] Hume calls this group 'natural impulses or instincts' in SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.8.

[172] Hume calls this group 'certain instincts originally implanted in our natures' in SBN- 417; T- 2.3.3.8.

double association of ideas and impressions, we refine such original passions so that we fear, say, bankruptcy, demotion, or job loss, rather than ghosts, witches or poltergeists. The various and repeated contacts with the particular objects that trigger the mental passions, i.e., 'custom and practice', are stored as ideas of memory and, as in the case of preferences and desires grown out of bodily wants and appetites, they produce new preferences and inclinations regarding people and external objects.

> The passions are often vary'd by very inconsiderable principles; *and these do not always play with a perfect regularity, especially on the first trial*. But as custom and practice have brought to light all these principles, and have settled the just value of every thing; this must certainly contribute to the easy production of the passions, and guide us, by means of general establish'd maxims, in the proportions we ought to observe in preferring one object to another (SBN- 294; T- 2.1.6.9. My emphasis).

These sorts of refined passions that follow the experience of particular people or objects help, in a similar way as bodily wants and appetites, to form individuals' conceptions of self-interest or happiness; in this case, that part of their happiness which involves relationships with others (or with the self).

Cohon points out that as they are introduced in the *Treatise*, natural appetites and instincts and original mental passions seem to be a 'separate category of passions' (Cohon 2008a, 163). So, instead of recognizing the genetic relation between the original passions and the passions produced according to the principle of double association of ideas, she argues that Hume proposes two ways in which the direct passions can be triggered: either by perceptions of pleasure and pain, or by the instincts[173]. This is a clever way to make sense of Hume's statements, yet, at the cost of ignoring what Hume indicates in the second *Enquiry*[174]. In light of

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[173] Cohon writes: 'So desire, for example, might arise either from pleasure "consider'd simply" (T 2.3.9.7) or from the instinct of hunger or anger/resentment. Presumably this means that I might desire to eat a certain delicacy because I think it will be pleasant (good considered simply), or because I am hungry, or because I wish to pain my enemy (another instinct) by showily indulging when he cannot' (Cohon 2008a, 164).
[174] To be fair, Cohon (2008a) chooses to focus on the theory of motivation offered in the *Treatise,* leaving aside any detailed discussion of the views contained in the second *Enquiry,* since the chief topic of her paper is the moral psychology of the passions — of which there is virtually nothing in the second

what he says there, my alternative reading seems more plausible. Natural appetites and original instincts, including the 'mental passions', constitute our motivational native endowment. These appetites and instincts have original intentional objects, but given our lack of acquaintance with particular things, i.e., our lack of experience, they direct us towards generic categories of external objects. Once we gain familiarity with particular external objects and people, new desires and passions emerge according to the principle of double association of ideas and impressions. So, in one sense, desires and direct passions replace the impulse of appetites and instincts once we know our environment, but given the native character of the latter, they are the original and latent sources of motivation that, we may suppose, drive us to try new external objects whenever we face uncharted aspects of experience.

As a consequence of this interpretation, perceptions of pleasure and pain play two related roles in motivation. First, perceptions of pleasure and pain refine the impulses of original motives and generate desires, passions and inclinations of a more calibrated or defined content and with a typical degree of strength. In effect, to say that nature drives us to seek the satisfaction of the original impulses and instincts is not to say that nature decides on what specific objects we choose to gratify our hunger or lust or what actions are the best means to express our parental concern, our benevolence or our resentment. In fact, there is more than one way in which this process of refining may take place. The influences of pleasant and unpleasant experiences, blends of passions, social exchange and conventions are different ways to generate desires and passions for particular objects and forms of gratification. Once we try, perhaps by chance, say, a

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Enquiry. In view of this, the question may arise as to whether Hume provides a different theory of motivation in the second *Enquiry* compared to the *Treatise*'s. Magri (2008) argues that Hume does. The *Treatise*'s is a pleasure-based theory of motivation, whereas the second *Enquiry*'s is a desire-based one: 'The importance and scope of the desire-based view of motivation might be questioned, since, in the *Treatise*, Hume proposes it alongside the pleasure-based one, without any comment. But the desire-based view is the central one in the later *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*' (Magri 2008, 193). I agree with Magri in that in the *Treatise* Hume makes several comments that suggests a hedonistic and, presumably also, egoistic theory of motivation. Yet, in the *Treatise* he also makes comments in agreement with a theory of motivation where direct passions and desires figure as motives aiming at ends other than pleasure for the agent (although these remarks may not be as striking and numerous as the former). I think that the theory of motivation presented in the second *Enquiry* constitutes Hume's considered view and that my interpretation offers a way to read coherently most of the relevant passages in both texts.

food which we find good to the taste, we come to prefer that specific food over others and then to acquire what Hume calls a 'palate' (SBN- 287; T- 2.1.5.7). There are other appetites and natural instincts that generate desires or passions by a sort of blend with original passions. For example, lust and the desire of generation join the sentiment of beauty and the passion of love to produce the 'amorous passion', which finds satisfaction only in a narrow range of people and which can be expressed in different ways depending on social circumstances (SBN- 394-5; T- 2.2.11.4-5). Finally, social exchange may refine our instincts by the creation of conventions, which may make us impose restrictions on what passions to indulge, when, where, and in regards to whom. The virtues of chastity and modesty (SBN- 570; T- 3.2.12.1; EPM- 207), monogamous marriages (EPM- 206-7, 210), child-rearing by biological parents (SBN- 486; T- 3.2.2.4; EPM- 206), manners (EPM- 209, 261-2), gift-trading or duelling (EPM- 257) are examples of conventions that regulate and refine our original passions[175].

In short, the first role of perceptions of pleasure and pain consists in intervening in the *production* of new motives, i.e., desires and direct passions. The natural instincts 'properly speaking produce good and evil' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.8) and the experience of these 'good and evil' produce, in turn, preferences and individual and social conceptions of self-interest and happiness. For sure, although this is one specific sense in which it can be said that pleasure and pain *cause* actions, i.e., by producing motives, it is not the sense that Cohon and other interpreters have in mind when they invoke passages such as those Hume writes in 'Of the influence of belief on the will'[176]. In there, Hume seems to suggest that perceptions of pleasure and pain are actual causes of action, whether mediate or immediate, instead of causes of motives in my sense. To make sense of this talk within my interpretation, we should note the second role that perceptions of pleasure and pain play in the production of action.

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[175] Conventions can regulate even what, when or what to eat: 'fowl on Thursday is lawful food; on Friday abominable: Eggs in this house and in this diocese, are permitted during Lent; a hundred paces farther, to eat them is a damnable sin' (EPM- 198).

[176] Where Hume says, for example, 'ideas of those [pleasures and pains], which we believe either are or will be existent, produce in a lesser degree the same effect with those impressions, which are immediately present to the senses and perception' (SBN- 119; T- 1.3.10.3).

This second role derives from the one perceptions of pleasure and pain have in the generation of new desires. Once we acquire new desires, the mind relies on the same kind of ideas of pleasure and pain that produced the desires in the first place to recognize particular objects of future satisfaction. As a first approximation, we can see this as an instance of inductive knowledge. We note that certain objects satisfy our instinctual motives by the pleasure that we get from their possession or we note that other objects fail to satisfy our instinctual motives from the pain or unease they cause to us. With enough familiarity, we develop preferences for certain objects and aversions for some others. Subsequently, these objects will appear in the mind when the perceptions of pleasure and pain do and vice versa. Given this association, the mind then can use perceptions of pleasure or pain (stored as ideas of memory and beliefs) to *direct* its actions. For instance, the memory of previous agreeable conversations with a particular friend creates the expectation that meeting her tomorrow will be agreeable as well and that 'makes' me go and meet her. Notice that the sense in which pleasure 'makes' me do things is neither the sense in which a motive makes me do things — for my motive in this case is my desire to meet my friend — nor is it the sense in which obtaining pleasure or avoiding pain is the aim of my action — for again, the aim of my desire to meet my friend is not to obtain pleasure, but to meet my friend.

Surely, perceptions of pleasure and pain guide action differently according to the different degrees of force and vivacity with which they enter the mind. In the *Treatise*'s section 'Of the influence of the imagination on the passions', Hume reviews several ways in which the definiteness or vividness of the content of our ideas affect the way in which the mind resorts to them to choose courses of action. Ideas about objects or activities which may be pleasurable, but with which we are not acquainted or of which we have only a general knowledge guide action with less determination as ideas about familiar or concrete objects or activities (SBN- 425-6; T-2.3.6.2-6). Ideas of memory of recent satisfactions come up to the mind more easily than ideas of satisfactions far in the past. Similarly, ideas about pleasurable objects or activities that fit well in our established way of life guide action more effectively than ideas about objects or activities foreign to us. The opinion of others reinforce the vividness of the ideas of pleasure that we may have associated with some objects, and thus makes us desire such objects instead of others (this explains the effectiveness of rhetoric or 'eloquence' in moving people to action). Furthermore, the peculiar temper of the agent or the particular situation of a given object in relation to her may

make the ideas of the latter prominent in the mind, and so the agent would tend to rely on them more easily (SBN- 427; T- 2.3.6.9) [177].

My interpretation of the second role of pleasure is compatible with what seems to be Hume's intention in stating that 'the perception of pain and pleasure [is] the chief spring and moving principle of all [the mind's] actions' (SBN- 118; T- 1.3.10.2). Hume wants to point to an important original quality of the mind: if the mind is considered as a system of response to external objects, it is much more effective that we register our experiences with external objects in a hedonic key, so to speak, than if we do it in any other way. Perceptions of pleasure and pain come easier to the mind than the representation of the corresponding object and move it more effectively in consequence: 'The mind by an *original* instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil' (SBN- 438; T- 2.3.9.2). When I am hungry, I can think of a specific dish that usually satisfies my appetite, by imagining its presentation on the table, its colour, its texture, its smell or its ingredients, or perhaps even recalling the biological mechanism whereby its chemical components nourish my body; but it is much simpler in terms of survival if my mind naturally recalls my previous pleasant experiences in eating dishes of the same kind, and on the basis of such memories, I am moved to eat the dish again. In this sense, ideas of pleasure and pain are part of a natural mechanism by means of which the mind identifies external objects that are commonly beneficial to the individual[178].

Accordingly, Cohon is right in calling attention to that desires and direct passions turn our attention to objects promising pleasure and pain. But, notice that this is not the same as to claim that pleasure and pain are the objects of our desires or aversions, or to say that the motives of our actions are prospects of pleasure or pain. Admittedly, there can be cases or conditions in which pleasure *per se* is the object of desire. Although it seems extremely weird that one can desire pleasure as such, rather than some kind of pleasurable object — even if sometimes it is

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[177] A similar reading can be construed from Hume's explanation about the influence on the will of the contiguity and distance in space and time of objects of desire in section 7, part 3, book 2 of Treatise.

[178] However, although in general, pleasurable objects are favourable objects, to the extent to which they are pleasurable, there could be anomalous cases where pleasure does not match benefit, such addictions or anhedonia, the condition where the individual cannot find pleasure in objects that people generally enjoy. The possibility of mismatches of this sort is simply evidence that the process of gaining knowledge through experience is not infallible.

hard to specify all the features of the kind of object desired — the point is not that, for Hume, pleasure is never the object of desire or pain never the object of aversion, but that it is not the characteristic case in human motivation. What Hume is probably saying is that, *at some level of psychological analysis*, the mind exhibits the quality according to which objects promising pleasure move it to their possession and objects threatening pain move it to their aversion. That the mind reacts in such a way to objects of pleasure and pain may be nature's way to insure a quick and efficient form of responding to external objects. Still, at the conscious level, pleasure and pain are rather psychological *indicators* of objects that promise to satisfy our desires, rather than the objects of our desires.

Another argument to support my reading can be found in Hume's discussion of the power of custom and repetition 'to convert pleasure into pain, and pain into pleasure' (SBN- 422; T- 2.3.5.1). Normally, the consideration of familiar objects or the performance of usual activities raises a level of emotional agitation to which we are habituated and which in consequence we tend to ignore: we know the object or we master the activity, and so there is a certain facility in the contemplation or the performance. In such a case, the pleasure associated with the object or the activity goes unnoticed. But, the consideration of rare or unfamiliar objects or the exercise of new or unusual activities, by contrast, 'excites the spirits'[179], thereby causing a corresponding degree of pleasure, 'like every thing, which inlivens the mind to a moderate degree' (SBN- 423; T- 2.3.5.2). So, the mind enjoys the struggle caused by a novelty and while it climbs the learning curve, so to speak, it experiences 'wonder' or 'surprise' and as an effect. But, again, when the object or the activity becomes common, the agitation derived from novelty diminishes accordingly as well as the corresponding pleasure. Custom and repetition turn off the pleasure that we draw from external objects, and it can even turn pleasure into pain when the familiarity lasts to the point where 'the actions of the mind' get 'so faint and languid, that they are no longer

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[179] In a rather surprising way, Hume resorts to 'the spirits' to explain this power of custom. It seems odd to read Hume as if he were using the term 'spirits' in the physiological sense that was current in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that is, as a sort of very fine matter. It seems more plausible to take it that by the 'spirits' Hume refers simply to the emotional agitation that accompanies the experience of a passion when we contemplate an object or perform an activity. The agitation of the 'spirits' then is another, admittedly strange, expression for the 'violence' of the passions.

able to interest and support it' (SBN- 423; T- 2.3.5.4). It is remarkable that, in this explanation, pleasure and pain appear as effects of the contemplation of objects or the exercise of activities, which are the actual objects of the actions of the individual. The susceptibility of the mind to pleasure or pain depends thus on changes in its relation to these objects or activities. It is when the object or the activity becomes dull to us, due to familiarity and repetition, that the pleasure that such object or activity is able to provide declines. Hume's explanation then is not that a gradual loss of sensibility to pleasure turns the object or the activity less and less interesting to us, as it should be had he thought that objects or activities are desirable because of the pleasure that they have in store for us. His explanation is rather that the object or activity becomes less able to raise our passions and *as a consequence* we are less able to draw pleasure from its possession or exercise.

To recap my discussion so far, it is admittedly not completely wrong to say that the mind is *moved or motivated by pleasure and pain*, if this does not mean that the *object* of the mind's desire *is* pleasure or the avoidance of pain. The mind anticipates pleasure, but in the form of a pleasurable object. Perceptions of pleasure and pain operate as indicators of external objects, but we desire the external objects. Against Cohon then, on the one hand, for Hume, the prospects of pleasure or pain do not motivate human action; instead, desires and direct passions do. In the example mentioned above, the mind anticipates the pleasure of a nice conversation, which means that pleasure flags conversations with my friends as desirable. And, on the other hand, perceptions of pleasure and pain do not cause new instances of desires and direct passions; instead, pleasure and pain *guide* our motives as hedonic perceptions operate in the mind as signs of desirability[180] — this is the second role that the genetic account attributes to perceptions of pleasure and pain — but it is the latter that produces actions[181].

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[180] Notice that my claim that perceptions of pleasure and pain guide our motives relates to the scholarly debate on Hume's view about the practical power of reason. To the extent that beliefs of pleasure and pain are the products of a rational activity, my claim entails that reason possesses some practical power. But my claim does not represent a definite view on the issue. It can be argued that being a product of a rational activity does not suffice to call the subsequent effects of such product something rational or derived from reason (as Cohon 1997c, 2010 and Radcliffe 1999 do). Moreover, my claim does not commit me to the view that Hume is an instrumentalist in regard to practical reason. Instrumentalism in this sense is the view according to which reason prescribes the actions which are means to secure the

My interpretation reveals that, on Hume's account of motivation, actions presuppose a motivational background upon which experiences of pleasure or pain appear, producing effects that may vary depending on the character of such background. By motivational background, I mean the configuration of desires, preferences and passions that individuals' experiences with the objects which they have to deal with create. Evidently, the experiences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction vary across individuals: the access to different external objects depends on environmental conditions, the interpretations of the significance that possessing external objects entails differ from culture to culture and even individual passionate peculiarities may affect what experiences of pleasure or pain produce what actions[182]. Such background differences affect what objects or activities motivate individuals and groups of individuals.

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satisfaction of our fixed desires — or if you want the ends, you necessarily want the means — (Radcliffe 1999, 2012, Millgram 1995, Mason 2005, Schafer 2008, Zimmerman 2007; Hume's contention that reason is, and ought to be, the slave of the passions has been read as an instrumentalist declaration. Whether Hume is an instrumentalist or a skeptic about practical reason is still a heated debate in the secondary literature). All my claim says in this regard is that certain beliefs help the mind to identify which external objects are desirable. It is an open question i) whether causal beliefs about hedonic potential constitute normative beliefs about desirability, ii) whether causal beliefs about the relations of desirable objects and our ways to get them count as 'reason' and iii) whether or not they have practical power or simply psychological influence.

[181] My interpretation of the role that perceptions of pleasure and pain play within Hume's account of motivation is not much different from Millgram's conception of the role of pleasure in practical reasoning (Millgram 2001). Millgram notes that practical reasoning might look ungrounded, since to justify a desire it seems that one has to get back to further desires none of which is self-justifying. Millgram holds that this view of practical reasoning is mistaken. In practical reasoning, pleasure plays the same role as empirical observations do in theoretical reasoning. In the same way that empirical observations guide and refine the acquisition of beliefs, experiences of pleasure and pain guide and refine the acquisition of practical ends. Thus, we use pleasure as sign or indicator of objects which might deserve being desired, as we use observations as signs or indicators of events or phenomena which might deserve our conviction. Millgram says that this conception of pleasure as empirical indicator of desirability helps to see the way in which hedonism is mistaken: hedonism would say that the object of practical reasoning is to maximize the amount of pleasure achievable through our actions, which is as unintuitive as to say that the object of theoretical reasoning is to maximize the amount of conviction achievable through our experience. In fact, the object of practical reasoning is to establish what objects are desirable, and the object of theoretical reasoning is to establish what states of affairs we are to take as true.

[182] Radcliffe (1999) seems to suggest something close to this. She goes back to book 1 of *Treatise* to find the key for understanding Hume's theory of motivation. Citing SBN- 120; T- 1.3.10.4, where Hume talks about a mutual interaction between beliefs and passions, she claims that certain beliefs, along with the passionate nature of the person acting as a backdrop, arises the prospect of pleasure and pain. This

My interpretation of Hume's genetic account of motivation provides some elements that foreshadow my reading of Hume's position regarding the concern about the role of reflection in moral motivation. One claim that can be derived from the genetic account is that the content and strength of desires and passions are informed by experience. I mentioned earlier that taking a clue from Hume's indication that passions are reflective impressions, we can say that they are reflective motives. The sense in which passions are reflective here has to do with how elaborated the experience that they convey is: they are not mere sensations that tell the mind about an external object's sensual characteristics at the time of feeling, but impressions that bear information about the kind of objects and the typical ways to respond to those objects, people included. This means that desires and passions, being reflective impressions, convey information about the world and how it may affect us. That desires and passions shape our preferences means that, presumably by nature, they tell us what will bring us satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and so how we can pursue our own happiness. From here, it might be possible to argue later for ways in which reflective impressions become reflective also in the sense that they direct our attention to the moral qualities of our own characters. Although this may be the work of civilization, rather than of nature, as we may see in later chapters.

Notice further that my interpretation of Hume's genetic account of motives establishes that his theory of motivation is not hedonic-based — as it would be if it said that we are moved by the expectation of pleasure and pain — but *passion and desire-based*: original motives and then passions and desires move us towards particular objects. It is the expectation of such objects which pulls us to act, although in virtue of its original sensitivity to pleasure and pain, the mind uses the hedonic qualities of objects to guide its actions.

More evidence in favour of my reading of Hume's general account of motivation as passion and desire-based can be found in the context in which Hume introduces the discussion of original wants, bodily appetites and mental passions in the second *Enquiry*. In the Appendix II,

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implies, interestingly, that what objects produce an arousal that ends in action depends on the person's character, personality, passionate nature or disposition: 'My primary conclusion here is that Hume's theory of motive formation has it that the affective constitution of the agent is a necessary component in the generation of motivating passions' (Radcliffe 1999, 117).

'Of Self-Love', Hume displays a series of arguments to refute the 'selfish theory'. One of them is the claim that self-love would be an empty notion, were it not for the fact that human beings are endowed with desires and passions that naturally drive them towards external objects. The central premise supporting that claim is that we are able to extract pleasure or enjoyment from objects because we antecedently possess desires for them: 'If I have no vanity, I take no delight in praise: if I be void of ambition, power gives me no enjoyment: if I be not angry, the punishment of an adversary is totally indifferent to me' (EPM- 301). Certainly, part of having a desire or a passion consists in enjoying its satisfaction, from which follows that pleasure is the effect of fulfilling our desires, not their cause. One must presuppose the existence of the desire or the passion in order to make sense of the pleasure that follows. Hume's argument aims to refute the claim that benevolent or friendly actions are ways in which we look to reap self-interested pleasure. So, benevolence and friendship need to be presupposed, if we are to enjoy any pleasure from performing benevolent or friendly actions[183]. In that sense, benevolence and friendship are

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[183] In this argument, Hume seems to be mixing elements of arguments made before him by Hutcheson and Butler. On the one hand, Hutcheson considered that the reality of other-regarding affections can be proved by appealing to our shared experience of these affections and the way we commonly describe their corresponding actions. When we act out of love, we understand ourselves as moved by the wellbeing of the other: '(…) but whence the Conjunction of Interest between the Parental Child? Do the Child's Sensations give Pleasure or Pain to the Parent? Is the Parent hungry, thirsty, sick, when the Child is so? "No, but his Love to the Child makes him affected with his Pleasures or Pains." This Love then is antecedent to the Conjunction of Interest, and the Cause of it, not the Effect: this Love then must be disinterested' (*Inquiry* 2004, 113). We must then presuppose the other-regarding desire to make sense of the satisfaction that follows from the performance of the action. To say that we are moved by the satisfaction that it will bring to us knowing that the beloved is well or to avoid the pain that it will bring to us knowing that she suffers is to falsify our experience: 'If our sole Intention, in Compassion or Pity, was the Removal of our Pain, we should run away, shut our Eyes, divert our Thoughts from the miserable Object, to avoid the Pain of Compassion, which we seldom do: nay, we croud about such Objects, and voluntarily expose our selves to Pain, unless Reason, and Reflection upon our Inability to relieve the Miserable, countermand our Inclination; or some selfish Affection, as fear of Danger, overbalances it' (*Inquiry* 2004, 111). Butler, on the other hand, re-describes self-love, so to make of it a practical principle that organizes the satisfaction of the impulses of our particular passions. Since, benevolence is one of these particular passions, the actions done out of benevolence count as self-interested: 'The object of self-love is expressed in the term self; and every appetite of sense, and every particular affection of the heart, are equally interested or disinterested, because the objects of them all are equally self or somewhat else. (*Fifteen Sermons* 123) (…) Thus it appears, that benevolence and the pursuit of publick good hath at least

as much a part of self-love as the desire for bodily satisfactions, revenge or any of the passions associated with self-interest. Hume is thus committed to denying that a desire for pleasure or satisfaction as such is characteristic of human motivation, which seems to be the core of the interpretation of those scholars who attribute to him an egoistic and hedonistic theory of action.

Finally, note that as I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Hume's genetic account of human motives can be read as a sort of conjectural history. Although not announced as such, it is the account of how we come to feel and desire particular external objects, as we enter into contact with the world of experience. Hume would imagine, as a conjectural historian of the human mind, how the self would be previous to any experience in order to identify its most original instincts and passions. In other words, he imagines the 'rude' state of the human mind. Then, he would introduce experience in the form of perceptions of pleasure and pain to explain the psychological variety of content and strength of the desires and passions that we actually attribute to typical full-grown individuals. We might think of this account as the foundational conjectural history, logically prior even to the story of how individuals make up the social world.

3. 'Motivational pluralism' in Hume's theory of motivation

Understanding the role of perceptions of pleasure and pain in Hume's theory of motivation in a non-egoistic and non-hedonistic fashion leads me to read his theory as passion and desire-based. From the discussion until now, we can say that Hume admits at least two categories of motives: on the one hand, original wants, natural instincts and original passions, and on the other, the desires and passions acquired and refined by experience. By itself, this constitutes the broad strokes of Hume's position on the concern about the nature of virtuous motives: human action is causally produced by original and experience-acquired motives, the latter causally refined or calibrated by the intervention of perceptions of pleasure and pain. Whatever gives motives their moral character, it is not true, against Hobbes's and Mandeville's common interpretation, that the

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as great respect to self-love and the pursuit of private good as any other particular passions, and their respective pursuits' (*Fifteen Sermons* 125).

self-regarding ones are more natural or basic or stronger than the other-regarding motives. Hume conceives human motives, as native affections directed at external objects, some of which are self-regarding and others other-regarding.

In this section, I elaborate on this interpretation by stressing the way in which each sort of passion influences the will in a characteristic way. I call this aspect of Hume's account 'motivational pluralism'. By 'motivational pluralism', I mean the view according to which human actions are caused by various sources of motivation, in contrast to the idea that human motives can be reduced to a single category of motive or desire[184]. I present my reading using the 'Humean theory of action' as foil, in Bricke's version of it (1996)[185].

John Bricke's *Mind and Morality* (1996) is an attempt to provide a systematic, 'regimented', and minimalist interpretation of Hume's moral philosophy. This author believes that books 2 and 3 of *Treatise* develop a conativist theory of both non-moral and moral reasons for action. The organizing claim is what Bricke calls 'the centrality of desire thesis', which holds that, provided 'a reason for action' is understood as a compound of desire and belief, desire always plays the major motivational role in both the causation and explanation of action[186]. For Bricke, a desire is a psychological state with goal-setting or practical characteristics, while a

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[184] In the idea and the label of motivational pluralism, I am following Hampton (1986, 17).

[185] More than a fully articulated theory, what has been called among philosophers of action the 'Humean theory of motivation' or also, the 'Humean theory of action', is a general dictum that animate various sorts of theories. These theories commonly differ from each other in the details, yet they would agree on the dictum that 'a belief is insufficient for motivation, which always requires, in addition to belief, the presence of a desire or conative state' (Rosati 2014). Some scholars have adopted this dictum in their interpretations of Hume's theory of motivation. Besides Bricke, Smith 1987 and Radcliffe 1996, 1999, 2012 uphold it in different ways. For Smith, the Humean theory of motivation, in its stronger version, says: 'motivation has its source in the presence of a relevant desire and means-end belief' (Smith 1984, 36).

[186] The passage Bricke uses to support the claim that Hume's conativism allows only desires and beliefs as component of motives for action (SBN- 493; T- 3.2.2.14) actually mentions about 'the affections and understanding', but Bricke promises to show that Hume narrows his comprehension of affections down to identify them with desires (Bricke 1996, 7-8).

belief is an informational state which purports to represent how things are in the world (Bricke 1996, 38).

Bricke's interpretation relies heavily on the assumption that Hume in fact uses this broad characterization of 'desire'. He is well aware that Hume's language invokes different psychological items and that Hume does not resort to 'desire' as one would to a crucial technical term[187]. That is why Bricke has to take some pains to separate those of Hume's claims regarding desire which stems from his 'official theory', prone to 'psychological atomism' and 'associationism', and those which get along with his supposedly conativist argument[188]. As a consequence, Bricke focuses on those passages in which Hume seems to say that desires are properly characterized by identifying the objects towards which they direct the agent's attention. Correspondingly, he downgrades passages in which Hume seems to say that desires are characterized by the hedonic element that constitutes them or that follows upon their satisfaction. At any rate, Bricke claims, desires are central insofar as they provide the conative or practical component of every action.

In explaining the role of the affections[189], Bricke cautions again on Hume's official theory and the corresponding attempt to describe the affections by relying on the causal and associationistic laws connecting thoughts (ideas) and isolable phenomenological qualities

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[187] Bricke constantly compares Hume's conativism with Davidson's theory of action. One of the most important features of this comparison is that Bricke takes Hume's talk of 'desire' as covering the same ground as Davidson's term 'pro-attitude'. It is disputable that Hume uses desire in this sense and, although Bricke acknowledges being 'regimenting' Hume's language, he relies selectively on passages that includes the word 'desire' to argue for claims that seem to cover more than Hume intends with such term.

[188] This is important for Bricke, since he notes that, if the focus is on Hume's psychological atomism and associationism, beliefs and desires are very close relatives given their phenomenological characteristics. Bricke thinks that some of Hume's texts portray desires in isolation of their propositional or representational content, a fact that makes Hume depict desires as lacking intentionality. While recognizing certain appeal to the supposedly Humean claim that desires' hedonic quality explains desires' practicality (Bricke 1996, 39-40), Bricke rejects it because this claim is the 'product of confounding the quasi-bodily feelings sometimes prompted by the presence, the satisfaction or the disappointment of desire with desire itself' (Bricke 1996, 40).

[189] That is, according to Bricke, passions and sentiments, in Hume's terms.

(impressions). He finds it more fruitful to re-describe them along the lines of the conativism argument[190]. In this sense, although the affections have propositional content, they lack direction of fit, and are aroused by the expectation, the fulfillment or the satisfaction of the desires that the agent has. Furthermore, Bricke accommodates the fact that affections are sometimes used in action explanations as elliptical ways to account for actions, ways in which the affections could be properly replaced by their corresponding desires (Bricke 1996, 69).

In my view, Bricke's attempt to 'regiment' Hume's account ends up misinterpreting it. The first aspect in which Bricke's reading diverts from Hume's texts is in the significance of the term 'desire'. For Hume, desire is one of the direct passions, in particular, the direct passion that 'arises from good consider'd simply' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.7)[191]. Since Hume says that all direct passions 'arise immediately from good or evil, from pain and pleasure' (SBN- 399; T- 2.3.1.1) and that all 'pursue good, and avoid evil' (SBN- 419; T- 2.3.6.1), the truly important question to understand the characteristic features of desire and aversion is that of what 'consider'd simply' means. Examining this point reveals that Hume takes desire to be central in a different sense from the one that Bricke believes. It also reveals a different relation between desire and the affections, or in Hume's own terms, between desire and aversion, on the one hand, and the other direct passions, on the other.

But before beginning with this examination, it is fair to say that Bricke is correct in emphasizing the intentional aspect of desires in Hume's account. Since ideas and impressions are the most basic elements of the mind, which differ from each other only in force and vivacity, Hume often characterizes desires by their typical phenomenological qualities. But Hume also identifies desires by their content, i.e., by reference to the objects towards which they draw the mind's attention. Recalling the discussion in the previous section, we can say that, for Hume, desires and aversions are not *of* pleasure or pain, but *of* objects towards which either we are originally disposed by nature or for which we acquire a preference by accumulated experience of satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Indeed, desires and aversions can always be specified by their

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[190] 'That [Hume] attends painstakingly to [the affections'] description, however, is no indication that he assigns them doctrinal pride of place. Desire is theoretically central, a fact of some significance (…) for the interpretation of Hume's views about moral evaluation' (Bricke 1996, 36).

[191] And, similarly, aversion 'is deriv'd from evil' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.7).

formal objects[192], as Hume does when he describes benevolence: 'a desire of the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery' (SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3); anger: 'a desire of the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated' (SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3); malice: 'the unprovoked desire of producing evil to another, in order to reap a pleasure from the comparison' (SBN- 377; T- 2.2.8.12); the desire of showing our liberty (SBN- 408; T- 2.3.2.2); love of fame: 'our continual and earnest pursuit of a character, a name, a reputation in the world' (EPM- 276, SBN- 316, T- 2.1.11.1); the desire of the forbidden or the unlawful (SBN- 421; T- 2.3.4.5); or avidity: the desire 'of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends' (SBN- 491, T- 3.2.2.12), to name a few.

At any rate, when Hume characterizes desire as a direct passion, he does so by describing the causal circumstances that attend its emergence, as he does with all the passions in the *Treatise*[193]. There, after a quick causal description of all direct passions[194], Hume focuses extensively on hope and fear, those direct passions that 'merit our particular attention' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.9). The reason for this unequal interest seems to be that, since hope and fear are caused by the emotional turbulence which probabilities of good and evil produce in the mind, they are the direct passions whose effects are the most complex. This suggestion is confirmed by noting that the common feature of all direct passions is their arising 'from good and evil most naturally, and with the least preparation' (SBN- 438; T- 2.3.9.2). Indeed, hope and fear require a different 'preparation'. Each pair of direct passions differs from the next by the belief of probability which causally precedes its emergence: when there is some *degree of probability* as to the attainment of good and evil, we experience degrees of either hope or fear according to the degree of uncertainty; when good and evil are *certain*, we experience either joy or grief (also called sorrow); and when we consider good and evil *independently of their probability*, we

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[192] Here, I use the definition of formal object made common by Anthony Kenny: 'that characteristic that must belong to something if it is to be possible for the state to relate to it' (de Souza, 2014).

[193] So, although it is not clear that this sort of characterization provides the complete conditions of individualization of every passion, it is at least that this characterization excludes describing the passions in terms of their propositional content or in terms of their conditions of justification or rationality.

[194] Although at the beginning of book 2, Hume lists among the direct passions 'desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security' (SBN- 277; T- 2.1.1.4), in the specific section on direct passions, he does not speak of despair and security at all and touches extensively on volition, or the will, which is not strictly speaking a direct passion.

experience either desire or aversion. Hope and fear, thus, presuppose the entertainment of mixed beliefs about the good and evil to come.

So, on Hume's classification, the distinctive feature of desires and aversions is that they are mobilized as soon as a particular idea of pleasure or pain appear in the mind: ideas whose content is the current or prospect existence of good and evil, independently of any probability. This must be what Hume means by 'consider'd simply' in his characterization of desire and aversion. By contrast, the content of the ideas that provoke other direct passions include an estimation of the probability of the good or evil in question: either the assessment that good and evil are certain (joy and grief) or the estimation of some degree of probability (hope and fear). In consequence, against Bricke, on Hume's view, desire is not a generic pro-attitude, but rather one specific kind of direct passion.

But, even rejecting the idea that Hume's term 'desire' is coextensive with the Davidsonian 'pro-attitude', one can argue that the centrality of desire thesis is still valid in another sense. For example, it might be claimed that the sort of perception that mobilizes the direct passion of desire is less complex than the perceptions that trigger the other direct passions, as it does not include any estimation of probabilities. In this sense, desire is central to motivation because it is the direct passion whose causal origins are the most simple or basic. But there is no obvious reason within Hume's moral psychology to consider desire simpler or more basic because of its causally antecedent perception. After all, that a perception includes an estimation of probabilities does not make it more complex compared with another which does not include any estimation. It only makes it different. Moreover, given Hume's position on the influence of beliefs on the will in book 1, part, 3, section 10, what is relevant for the motivational influence of perceptions is their force and vivacity, and on this score all the perceptions that produce direct passions are equal[195].

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[195] Indeed, they all are beliefs. Notice that the perception in question is the one antecedent to the production of the passion. Once the passion has been aroused, additional beliefs about the means to satisfy the passion might come up to the mind. Regarding these latter beliefs, it might be relevant for the production of action that their content includes some estimation of the probability of obtaining the good or evil in prospect.

Another way to defend the idea that desire is central is the following. Hume's description of the direct passions can be read as an account of the alternative emotions that arise when we perceive good and evil. On this reading, there would be two alternative emotional paths following the perception of good or evil: on the one hand, one might experience joy and grief, or, on the other, hope and fear, depending on whether the prospect of enjoying a desirable object or possessing an uneasy one is either certain or probable. In either case, the hypothesis would say, desire or aversion always arise because the perception of the prospect of *certain* and *probable* good or evil necessarily implicates the perception of good and evil *simply*. In other words, joy, grief, hope and fear would be mere modifications of the primitive passions of desire and aversion: joy and grief would be desire and aversion satisfied or about to be satisfied with certainty, and hope and fear would be desire and aversion with some probability of being obtained. In this sense, desire and aversion are central because they are primitive: they would be our immediate and central reaction to the perception of good and evil[196].

There are some passages that seem to support the idea of desire and aversion as primitives. For instance, when Hume is explaining hope and fear, he states:

> *Suppose*, then, that the object, concerning whose reality we are doubtful, *is an object either of desire or aversion*, it is evident, that, according as the mind turns itself either to the one side or the other, it must feel a momentary impression of joy or sorrow. An object, whose existence we desire, gives satisfaction, when we reflect on those causes, which produce it; and for the same reason excites grief or uneasiness from the opposite consideration: So that as the understanding, in all probable questions, is divided betwixt the contrary points of view, the affections must in the same manner be divided betwixt opposite emotions [i.e., hope and fear] (SBN- 440; T- 2.3.9.11. My emphasis).

Here, Hume opens his explanation of how joy, sorrow, hope and fear are produced with the supposition that we either desire or feel aversion towards a given object. It seems then that desire and aversion need to be present if joy and sorrow would emerge, since when we 'reflect on' the causes of desire and aversion and thus appreciate their certainty, we rejoice or grieve. And similarly, when, provided we desire some object, the understanding 'is divided betwixt the

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[196] This reading might get some appeal from a seeming similarity with Hobbes's account of the passions. In both the *Elements* and the *Leviathan*, Hobbes identifies 'appetite' and 'aversion', along with contempt, as primary drives, intimately related to the origin of the passions.

contrary' probabilities of obtaining such object, we experience hope and fear. Another passage that may support this reading is the following:

> Since passions, however independent, are naturally transfused into each other, if they are both present at the same time; it follows, that when good or evil is placed in such a situation, as to cause any particular emotion, *beside its direct passion of desire or aversion*, that latter passion must acquire new force and violence (SBN- 421; T- 2.3.4.4. My emphasis).

In this passage, Hume is explaining the principle according to which when two passions, produced by independent causes, appear at the same time in the mind, the prevalent passion robs the other of all its emotional agitation. The relevant point is that, judging by the wording, it seems as if desire and aversion are the direct passions that emerge in the mind, as soon as good and evil do. The other passions arise because of the particular situation in which such good and evil are placed later in the mind. So, the passage seems to indicate that desire and aversion appear in the mind every time that we consider good and evil, before the appearance of any other direct passion. Again, the suggestion seems to be that direct passions are modifications of the primitives desire and aversion.

It is not plausible, however, that Hume thinks that desire and aversion are central because they are primitive passions. The suggestion in the first passage according to which desire and aversion need to be present for joy, grief, hope and fear to arise seems to be more the product of Hume's way of exposition than to manifest his commitment to a particular claim about the genesis of the direct passions. In fact, as an intuitive point, there are many situations in which we experience joy or grief for which underlying desires or aversions seem unnecessary — think of joy and sorrow caused by a sudden good or bad fortune. More importantly, Hume's account of the causal origin of the passions seems to exclude the need of causally antecedent desires for the passions of joy, grief, hope or fear. He provides the example of the man who is 'afflicted for the loss of a law-suit, and joyful for the birth of a son' (SBN- 441; T- 2.3.9.14) without indicating that a desire to win in the court and of having a new child are causally needed for these passions to arise. Similarly, when he brings up examples of situations where fear is produced, none of

them includes the causal antecedent of a primitive desire or aversion[197]. Instead, when examining the causes of fear, Hume emphasizes 'the fluctuation or mixture of passions, with any degree of uneasiness', rather than the presence of a desire whose realization is suddenly thwarted. This way of proceeding makes sense, given that Hume is interested in providing a causal story of the passions, rather than inquiring for the propositional content that having an emotion involves. Perhaps, something like a desire to win in law-suits, a desire of having children or the aversion to being physically harmed can be claimed as logical presuppositions, if we are to analyze the conditions that experiencing joy, grief, hope or fear involve[198]. But Hume does not think that the causal account of particular passions involves the previous experience of particular desires and aversions. Joy, grief, hope and fear arise immediately from good and evil, although good and evil may appear in the mind in the guise of beliefs with different probability. In fact, the second passage can be read more naturally if we bear this last thought in mind. Since the presupposition of the case is that desire or aversion arise *independently* of the predominant passion, we have to assume that desire and aversion arise from a perception of good and evil, and the other passion from another perception, and so that the causal chains that produce each passion are not the same.

Bricke's centrality of desire thesis seems wrong, at least if read in these ways. It might be thought, however, that this reading is unfair to Bricke because he meant something different by 'desire' from what Hume does, in such a way that, no matter how Hume uses the term 'desire', Bricke's thesis still would be right, if it is true that Hume resorts to an identifiable state of mind with the characteristics of Bricke's desire in order to explain the production of actions[199]. Further, Bricke still would be right, if such state of mind has the relations with the affections that he claims desire to have.

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[197] The examples appear in SBN- 444; 2.3.9.22; SBN- 445; T- 2.3.9.23; SBN- 445; T- 2.3.9.24; SBN- 445; T- 2.3.9.25; SBN- 446; T- 2.3.9.27 and SBN- 447; T- 2.3.9.30.

[198] Although, in this way of analyzing the emotions, one would have to admit that desires and beliefs are mental states with propositional content, which is bequeathed by the emotions that desires and beliefs help to make up. On whether Hume would accept this implication or not, the classical debate between Davidson (1976) and Baier (1978) remains illuminating.

[199] That is, a goal-setting, practical mental state with mind-to-world direction of fit (Bricke 1996, 8).

However, this alternative is blocked by the fact that Hume's texts advocate for 'motivational pluralism', as I will argue presently. By this I mean that Hume holds the twofold claim that different motives can influence the will — not only desires or any other uniform mental state different from the direct passions — and that such motives affect the will in distinctive ways, so that they cannot be conceived as instances of the same mental state other than that of passions. For Hume the passions are different goal-setting affections that direct the mind and produce action in distinctive ways[200].

I submit that Hume maintains this twofold claim because of the way he conceives the motivational power of the direct passions. Direct passions motivate actions immediately, but not blindly[201]. To be sure, direct passions are relatively simple in structure compared to the indirect ones[202], but they still provide some evaluation of their intentional objects. Hume says that the direct passions are aroused by original instincts or by a perception of good or evil[203], but he also says that the experience of the direct passions includes our awareness of particular features in the objects towards which our attention is drawn[204]. Such awareness originates in the ideas already

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[200] Bricke lumps together sentiments, indirect and direct passions under the name of 'affections', and denies them practical and mind-to-world direction of fit status. So, for Bricke, the passions are not goal-setting entities.

[201] In this, my interpretation differs from Cohon's (2008) and Magri's (2008) at least in how the latter author reads the *Treatise*).

[202] A point stressed by Cohon 2008.

[203] '[T]he direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.8). 'The impressions, which arise from good and evil most naturally, and with the least preparation are the direct passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition'. (SBN- 399; T- 2.3.1.1)

[204] There are two crucial sets of passages that support this idea. First, Hume's characterization of desires in terms of their intentional objects, already cited in the text: benevolence ('a desire of the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery' SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3), anger ('a desire of the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated' SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3), malice ('the unprovoked desire of producing evil to another, in order to reap a pleasure from the comparison' SBN- 377; T- 2.2.8.12), the desire of showing our liberty (SBN- 408; T- 2.3.2.2), love of fame ('our continual and earnest pursuit of a character, a name, a reputation in the world' EPM- 276, SBN- 316, T- 2.1.11.1), the desire of the forbidden or the unlawful (SBN- 421; T- 2.3.4.5), or avidity (the desire 'of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends' SBN- 491, T- 3.2.2.12). Second, Hume's

present in the mind about the particular objects whose current existence we perceive or whose prospective possession we entertain. Hume explains this point in terms of his principle of double association of ideas and impressions. Original instincts can be aroused by many objects, or by the same objects too frequently, and as consequence, the impulse may wane out. In consequence, our response to the potential objects of our instincts requires additional ideas to trigger a specific direct passion towards a particular kind of objects. This makes our responses become selective or, as I have said in the previous section, refined:

> Sex is not only the object, but also the cause of the appetite. We not only turn our view to it, when actuated by that appetite; but the reflecting on it suffices to excite the appetite. But as this cause loses its force by too great frequency, it is necessary it should be quickened by some new impulse; and that impulse we find to arise from the beauty of the person; that is, from a double relation of impressions and ideas (SBN- 396; T- 2.2.11.6).

Beauty here is the idea, gained through experience, that modifies the impulse of the instinct directing it thereby towards a particular person. This is an example of the point discussed in the previous section: the impulse of original appetites or passions is channeled towards particular objects by experiences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The aspect that I would like to stress now is that the fact that the direct passions become refined or calibrated responses to particular objects implies that they allow us to *evaluate* external objects in a way that original instincts cannot. In short, the experience of the direct passions enables the mind to perceive

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description of episodes of fear, in which he stresses how fear affects the way we perceive objects, people or situations: 'A man cannot think of excessive pains and tortures without trembling' (SBN- 444; 2.3.9.22); 'when we tremble on the brink of a precipice, tho' we know ourselves to be in perfect security' (SBN- 445; T- 2.3.9.23); 'a man in a strong prison well-guarded, without the least means of escape, trembles at the thought of the rack, to which he is sentenc'd' (SBN- 445; T- 2.3.9.24); 'Let one be told by a person, whose veracity we cannot doubt of, that one of his sons is suddenly kill'd, 'tis evident the passion this event wou'd occasion, wou'd not settle into pure grief, till he got certain information, which of his sons he had lost' (SBN- 445; T- 2.3.9.25); 'A person, who has left his friend in any malady, will feel more anxiety upon his account, than if he were present' (SBN- 446; T- 2.3.9.27); 'A virgin, on her bridal-night goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, tho' she expects nothing but pleasure of the highest kind' (SBN- 447; T- 2.3.9.30).

particular features in external objects, which given our acquaintance with the world, allow us to experience evaluative perceptions of such objects.

We can see this point confirmed from another perspective in how Hume sees the difference between the experience of passions in humans and in animals. Human direct passions are relatively fine-tuned, compared to animals', because of our more powerful imagination; whereas animal passions remain close to natural instincts, enabling them only to assess objects in terms of sensual, immediate pleasures or pains: 'As animals are but little susceptible either of the pleasures or pains of the imagination, they can judge of objects only by the sensible good or evil, which they produce, and from that must regulate their affections towards them' (SBN- 397; T-2.2.12.3). Humans can even avoid the experience of certain passions or promote the experience of others by entertaining certain ideas. For instance, by nature, we feel resentment towards any object which threatens our personal integrity; but experience teaches us that there are injuries that do not merit our anger, e.g., when we avoid retaliating the scratch caused by our pet cat, or the affront thrown at us by a superficial person. Conversely, there are other injuries that merit resentment even if they do not affect our physical wellbeing, e.g., when the army official feels anger towards the private who walks by without greeting, or when we feel indignation by the debtor who pays late without recognizing any interest. In the first case, the threat to personal integrity produces the anger and is against the same threat towards which the anger directs us to act, but the idea that the threat is immaterial may prevent the emergence of the passion. In the converse case, anger or indignation arises because the idea according to which being treated according to one's rank or with justice are part of our personal integrity provides a further impulse to the instinct, because the existence of social constructions has extended what we should consider a real affront.

We can generalize this idea and affirm that the direct passions influence the will distinctively, depending on their associations with antecedent representational perceptions[205],

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[205] I am using 'representational' in a very broad sense here. By a representational perception in this sense I mean a perception that presents the mind with a quality of the object that this mind naturally recognizes as salient. The presentation of this quality needs neither be conceptual, nor consciously articulated.

i.e., sensations[206] or beliefs[207], which in turn, carry more than sheer hedonic information about particular objects[208]. This seems what Hume aims at when he says that ideas of pleasure and pain 'return upon the soul' and produce new impressions, impressions of reflection or passions, directed at external objects (SBN- 8; T- 1.1.2.1).

We must think of the interaction between sensation and beliefs, on the one hand, and direct passions, on the other, as the interaction between distinctive elements in a larger psychological mechanism that endows the mind's perception of a particular object with evaluative intentionality. The presentational content of a sensation or the representational one of a belief is one element in the larger causal mechanism through which the mind is lead to construe the value of external objects. Hume refers to this mechanism as the 'circumstances' that 'attend' the production of a passion (SBN- 277; T- 2.1.2.1). So, as 'simple and uniform' impressions of reflection, passions lack representational character, but the associations that are required to produce them organize the mind's attention and direct it towards external objects in a distinctive attitude (Schmitter 2009). Beliefs flag forms of hedonic value in external objects or prospective events, but such alerts do not determine by themselves to what object or to what sort of action we are moved: in front of a pleasurable object, our reaction can be admiration, surprise, curiosity, approbation, desire to possess, intent of physical proximity, etc., either for the object or for its creator or possessor.

It is worth noticing that, although typically direct passions are aroused only by sensations or beliefs, and not by any idea that comes to the mind (SBN- 119; T- 1.3.10.3), there are exceptional situations where ideas have the same effect on the passions as beliefs or sensations.

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[206] A sensation, according to Hume's classification of perceptions, is an original impression that arises 'from the application of objects to the external organs' (SBN- 275; T- 2.1.1.1) and presents the mind with a pleasure or pain, i.e., a 'good or evil'. Sensations have the potential to produce direct passions, for example, Hume says, a 'fit of gout' may produce 'grief, hope, fear' (SBN- 276; T- 2.1.1.3).

[207] Hume writes about beliefs: 'Though an idle fiction has no efficacy, yet we find by experience, that the ideas of those objects, which we believe either are or will be existent, produce in a lesser degree the same effect with those impressions, which are immediately present to the senses and perception' (SBN- 119; T- 1.3.10.3).

[208] My reading here, I think, is compatible with Baier's (1994).

An idea that imitates the force and vivacity of impressions has the power to provoke passions, e.g., hallucinatory fancies can produce fear and make us hide from or attack the source of danger. Besides, ideas with less force and vivacity than beliefs can produce passions when we are particularly prone to certain emotional affections. Commenting on the *Treatise*'s passage that refers to this point, Radcliffe (1999, 113) says that the particular passionate background of each person may influence what this person tends to believe, which in turn provides motivational power to ideas that otherwise would not make the next person to act[209]. Furthermore, it can be added that, not only passionate propensities determine what ideas will or will not produce passions in us. Occurrent states of the body or of the mind can also provide the conditions for certain ideas to cause some passions. Under certain conditions, antecedent experiences of pleasure may dispose us to act generously, like when finding a coin on the street primes us to help others in distress. Under other conditions, experiences of pain or of discomfort may prevent actions, like when being in a grieving or depressed mood makes the prospect of enjoying a walk along the waterfront unappealing. In any case, on Hume's view, the relation between the representational perception, on the one hand, and the direct passion, on the other, is original insofar as nature has arranged what kind of direct passion is aroused by what kind of sensation or belief: '[w]hen any affecting object is presented, it gives the alarm, and excites immediately a degree of its proper passion' (SBN 120; T- 1.3.10.4).

In light of the above, it must be said, against Bricke, that desire, or some uniform mental conative state, does not constitute the 'central' motive of the will for Hume. Moreover, it is not true that the passions, or the 'affections' in Bricke's regimented language, maintain only supplementary relations to desires. Instead, for Hume, direct passions, one of which is desire, are the motives of the will, each leading us to act in a distinctive way according to its distinctive character, as we can see if we go over some of them.

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[209] In effect, Hume writes: 'As belief is almost absolutely requisite to the exciting our passions, so the passions in their turn are very favourable to belief; and not only such facts as convey agreeable emotions, but very often such as give pain, do upon that account become more readily the objects of faith and opinion. A coward, whose fears are easily awakened, readily assents to every account of danger he meets with; as a person of a sorrowful and melancholy disposition is very credulous of every thing, that nourishes his prevailing passion' (SBN- 120; T- 1.3.10.4).

Joy and sorrow are the direct passions that are produced by the secure expectation of possessing objects that promise us good or evil[210]. Certainly, the most natural way to think of these pair of passions is in relation to some desire or aversion: joy emerges when we satisfy a desire, and grief when our expectation is disappointed. But this is a frail concession to Bricke, because it is conceivable to experience joy and sorrow by surprise and thus without presupposing a causally prior desire. Besides, joy and grief need not be thought only as effects of the realization or dissatisfaction of desires or of surprising events; they can be causes of action too. The joy that arises from the satisfaction of our desires may cause a new impulse towards the same object or the same kind of objects. Similarly, the sorrow aroused by the realization of an object of aversion can reinforce our loathing for a particular object or kind of objects. Furthermore, joy and sorrow can outlive their corresponding desires and aversions, and even become more intense because of the latter's realization: we can experience joy at the secure prospect of a good, and then once we obtain such good, we can experience more joy. Something similar can be said about grief[211]. Thus, while it is true that joy and sorrow relate in many occasions with previous desires or aversions, they possess an independent motivational potential

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[210] Hume writes: '[w]hen good is certain or probable, it produces joy. When evil is in the same situation there arises GRIEF or SORROW' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.5).

[211] That joy and sorrow outlive the desires and aversions that they accompany may solve a problem raised by Katharine Paxman and Nathan Brett (2008). They note Hume's claim that '[t]he moment we perceive the falsehood of any supposition [on which a passion is founded upon], or the insufficiency of any means, our passions yield to reason without any opposition' (SBN- 416-7; T- 2.3.3.7) and argue that it is intuitively false that when we know that we have no chances of enjoying an object of desire, we simply stop desiring it, as the above claim implies. For example, in grieving the death of a friend, we keep desiring this friend's company, even though we know it is impossible to do so in the future. One problem with this argument is that Paxman and Brett rely on a definition of grief that makes it a desire on its own, whereas Hume, according to my reading, sees grief (i.e., sorrow) as a passion that accompanies and affect our desires and aversions. On my interpretation then, Hume's account can accommodate Paxman's and Brett's intuitions about grief. To keep the example simple and avoid involving hope or fear, suppose that we knew that our friend will die soon, maybe because she was suffering from a terminal disease. Our desire of enjoying her company was then accompanied by the grief that such desire won't be satisfied after a certain time. When our friend's death occurs, our desire for her company 'yields' to reason, in the sense that we know for sure now that it won't be realized anymore; but grief subsists, producing the characteristic longing for her company that, probably, resembles the desire of our friend's actual company, given the relation of grief to the thwarted desire.

as they allow a feedback loop that stirs the desire or the aversion that produced them in the first place.

Another pair of direct passions is hope and fear. If the expectation of possessing or avoiding a good or evil is not certain, the mind wavers between the secure prospect of satisfaction and the secure prospect of dissatisfaction and, consequently, between joy and sorrow. The result of the uneven combinations of joy and sorrow is either fear or hope. For Hume, when we doubt the existence of an object or the occurrence of an event, it is not that the mind subtracts the chances of non-existence from the certainty of existence, and that it thus experiences a reduced amount of joy. Rather, when we are uncertain about the possession of a desirable object or the occurrence of a desirable event, we imagine alternatively the object or event as existing and as non-existing and correspondently we experience joy and sorrow alternatively. The mind repeats this operation several times and given that the passions are 'slow and restive' and the imagination 'extreme quick and agile' (SBN- 441; T- T- 2.3.9.9-12), the joy and sorrow produced by the initial wavering views of the imagination do not fade away as quickly as the imaginations from which they derived. These initial joys and sorrows remain in the mind when succeeding alternating views appear and then combine with the joys and sorrows that subsequently arise[212]. Fear and hope are explained thus as a mixture of the passions produced by succeeding, yet alternating views of the imagination concerning our future good or evil[213]. In this manner, depending on whether we believe we have more or less chances of attaining the pleasurable object, we will experience one passion or the other: if we believe we have more chances of possessing the satisfactory object than not, the mind will rest more easily and often on the prospect of us enjoying the object and so a larger portion of the combination of

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[212] This is happens to be the case, beside the 'slow and restive' vs. 'quick and agile' contrast, because the passions are 'susceptible of an entire union; and like colours, may be blended so perfectly together, that each of them may lose itself, and contribute only to vary that uniform impression, which arises from the whole', whereas the ideas of the imagination 'never admit of a total union, but are endow'd with a kind of impenetrability, by which they exclude each other' (SBN- 366; T- 2.2.6.1).

[213] In effect, for Hume, '[I]f we consider the human mind, we shall find, that with regard to the passions, it is not the nature of a wind-instrument of music, which in running over all the notes immediately loses the sound after the breath ceases; but rather resembles a string-instrument, where after each stroke the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays' (SBN- 440; T- 2.3.9.12).

passions will be on the side of joy; we will then experience hope. Conversely, if we believe that we have more chances of getting the unpleasant object than not, the mind will rest more easily and often on the view of us enduring unease and so the combination of impressions will be more on the side of sorrow. This means that we will experience fear[214]. Once fear and hope are caused in these ways, they affect the will in distinctive ways: fear may prevent actions or render them hesitant, whereas hope may precipitate actions which we would delay otherwise. Yet, unlike the passions of joy and sorrow, fear and hope vanish once the objects of our desires or aversions are possessed or avoided or when we acquire a belief that releases us from the uncertainty that produces them. Depending on which the case may be, hope gives way to joy and fear to sorrow[215].

As a result of this discussion, it seems more faithful to say that, on Hume's view, there is not only one conative state of mind that set the goals of all actions. Rather, against Bricke, what it should be said is that each type of direct passion constitutes a distinctive way in which intentional objects are presented to the mind, moving it thus differently to action. Sometimes, we act out of desires or aversions, and sometimes out of joy, grief, fear or hope. These passions set distinct goals to the mind as each of them presents their object under a different light.

Still, one might wonder why desire receives such a central position in Bricke's interpretation of Hume's theory of motivation, given that Hume himself accords all the importance in the production of action to the 'passions' (especially to the direct ones), rather than to 'desire' in particular. One reason may be that Hume is not always consistent with his use of the term 'desire'. In the section 'Of the direct passions', desire seems to be a technical term for the direct passion that is aroused when good is 'consider'd simply', thereby inviting the interpretation that 'desire' differs from joy and hope in regards to the estimation of probability of its antecedent belief. Yet, in other places, Hume refers to what appears to be direct passions as

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[214] 'That is, in other words, the grief and joy being intermingled with each other, by means of the contrary views of the imagination, produce by their union the passions of hope and fear' (SBN- 441; T- 2.3.9.9-12).

[215] So, in regards to fear and hope, the claim that '[t]he moment we perceive the falsehood of any supposition [on which a passion is founded upon], or the insufficiency of any means, our passions yield to reason without any opposition' (SBN- 416-7; T- 2.3.3.7), seems fully appropriate.

'desires', e.g., benevolence, anger, malice, envy, avidity[216], presumably, when he wants to stress the kind of actions that such passions-desires typically produce.

Another reason may be that Hume places the characterization of desire and aversion right next to a crucial indication about volition, in a single paragraph, and after the characterization of joy, grief, hope and fear in the *Treatise*'s section 'Of the direct passions'[217]. This textual proximity might naturally suggest to the reader that Hume is describing the causal process that ends up in action following its temporal order: first, the agent experiences either joy, grief, hope or fear; then such experience gives rise to a desire or an aversion and then this desire or aversion, along with some means-end beliefs, activates the will, thereby producing action[218].

One reason to reject this causal story is that it implies that desire is a generic impression, which like volition, must precede every intentional action. But, if this is so, the functional role of desire appears redundant. Indeed, as Nagel (1970) criticizes this position, to ascribe a desire to an agent would be just a way to re-describe the fact that the agent pursues a goal[219]. In other words,

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[216] Benevolence is 'a *desire* of the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery' SBN-367; T- 2.2.6.3; anger 'a *desire* of the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated' SBN-367; T- 2.2.6.3; malice 'the unprovoked *desire* of producing evil to another, in order to reap a pleasure from the comparison' SBN- 377; T- 2.2.8.12; and avidity, the desire 'of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends' (SBN- 491, T- 3.2.2.12. My emphasis).

[217] Hume says: 'DESIRE arises from good considered simply, and AVERSION is derived from evil. The WILL exerts itself, when either the good or the absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.7).

[218] This might be the story behind Bricke's assertions that desires provide the conative, practical required component of every action, and that the affections are the emotions of the mind that are aroused by the expectation, the fulfillment or the satisfaction of the desires that the agent might have. Notice that, on this story, the 'consider'd simply' with which Hume characterizes desire and aversion has to be read as indicating causal proximity to action: desire and aversion are the mental states that occur right before volition.

[219] Thus, Hume's account of action would be properly criticized by Thomas Nagel: 'The claim that a desire underlies every act is true only if desires are taken to include motivated and unmotivated desires, and it is true only in the sense that whatever may be the motivation for someone's intentional pursuit of a goal, it becomes in virtue of his pursuit *ipso facto* appropriate to ascribe to him a desire for that goal. But if the desire is a motivated one, the explanation of it will be the same as the explanation of his pursuit, and it is by no means obvious that a desire must enter into this further explanation. Although it will no doubt be generally admitted that some desires are motivated, the issue is whether another desire always lies

to say that a desire causes an intentional action would be equivalent to say that the action was intentional. The proximity in the text between the characterization of desire and the indication about the will can be accommodated by saying that Hume is making good on his promise of going over the direct passions, i.e., joy, sorrow, fear, hope, desire, aversion, and then adding something about the will, which, as he already pointed out, it is needed to understand such class of passions (SBN- 399; 2.3.1.2).

Admittedly, claiming that Bricke's version of 'desire' can be explained away in this fashion raises the further question as to the role of the will and its relation to the direct passions. Maybe, we can dispense with the will on the same grounds as we dispensed with desire. To address this issue, it is worth looking at Hume's treatment of the will in the *Treatise*. Hume's view on the nature of the will is somewhat ambiguous. For example, he clearly denies it to be a faculty, since he constantly characterizes it as an impression. Yet, he keeps referring to it as 'the will', in the singular, and saying things like that beliefs, passions or motives 'influence' it, or that the will 'exerts' itself, as if in fact the will were a faculty. Perhaps, as Owen (1999) indicates, Hume fell in the imprecision, of which Locke and other early modern authors were victims, of referring to the faculty, the activity of the faculty and the result of the activity of the faculty by the same term. If this is so, we should prefer Hume's sporadic characterizations of the will as an impression that is triggered by other perceptions. Then it is plausible to think that by 'will' Hume means, instead of a faculty, instances of willing, that is, volitions. So, when Hume says 'The WILL exerts itself' (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.7), he must be understood as saying that 'a new volition is produced'. This sounds even more plausible if we recall that, though with some reluctance, Hume treats the will as a direct passion. So, in the same way that he uses the term, say, 'joy' to refer to instances of joy and in other places to joy the passion-type, when he talks of the 'will', he is naming sometimes the instance and sometimes the type.

Assuming that this is correct, the first note Hume makes about the will is its close connection with the direct passions, 'as the full understanding of its nature and properties, is necessary to the explanation of' this class of affections (SBN- 399; 2.3.1.2). How understanding

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behind the motivated one, or whether sometimes the motivation of the initial desire involves no reference to another, unmotivated desire' (Nagel 1970, 29).

the nature of the will is needed to understand that of the direct passions becomes clear by the end of the discussion on liberty and necessity. Hume's conclusion there is 'that all actions of the will have particular causes' (SBN- 412; T- 2.3.2.8). Since he relies on the observation that we naturally consider actions as effects of passions and motives — the point he so thoroughly proves in the section on liberty and necessity — his claim is that understanding the will is needed to understand how the passions motivate actions.

In this sense, volitions must be the impressions that most proximately precede particular actions (SBN- 399; T- 2.3.1.2)[220]. Two conditions seem required for volitions to arise: first, the presence of a causally antecedent direct passion, and second, the awareness that one is in position to obtain the pleasurable object or to avoid the unpleasant one by means of one's bodily or mental action (SBN- 439; T- 2.3.9.7). Hume claims that willing is having an 'internal impression', one that '*we feel and are **conscious of**, when we **knowingly** give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind*' (SBN- 399; T- 2.3.1.2. My emphasis in bold). According to this passage then, the experience of willing involves a twofold species of awareness. On the one hand, we are aware of the content of the action, that is, of our bodily motions or mental operations. On the other, we are aware of the fact that the action is being produced by us. This passage suggests, therefore, that Hume considers volitions to be mental states endowed with a content and phenomenology different from that of the direct passions (Magri 2008, 189). In willing, the mind is presented with an action that is about to occur, and moreover, with an action that is effect of our own agency. This reading is further supported by some remarks that Hume makes in the context of his description of our false sensation or experience of liberty of indifference. Hume says that 'we feel that [the will] moves easily every

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[220] Magri (2008) suggests that given the functional role that Hume attributes to the will, he seems close to Hobbes in considering it to be the name for a causal position: the position occupied by the last passion before action in the chain of deliberation. This means that any direct passion might be a volition: 'if actions are to be explained as effects, this can only be done by means of a causal antecedent like the will, determining the mind to pass from desire for good, or aversion to evil, to give rise to particular events, here and now ("the will has an influence only on present actions," T 3.2.3.3). Therefore, the will is nothing else but a direct passion being exerted in action. In this way, it is not different from any particular kind or episode of direct passion, and thus, properly, not [an independent] passion at all. The will is, rather, a role that any direct passion can perform, and the distinctive experience of this role being performed' (Magri 2008, 189).

way, and produces an image of itself even on that side, on which it did not settle' (SBN- 408; T-2.3.2.2). Surely, the experience of willing does not establish that our actions are uncaused; it only proves that when we act, we experience a characteristic feeling to the effect that we performed our actions. Our false experience of liberty is an overextension of such experience. Volitions, therefore, play a distinguishable functional role in action production, which is why they are not as dispensable as Bricke's notion of desire. Whereas direct passions present the mind with external objects or events in characteristic attitudes (e.g., external objects or events are desirable, dangerous, joy or grief worthy), volitions present those same objects or events as subjected to our immediate agency.

This account of the relation of direct passions to the will supports the claim made earlier that the passions are the truly goal-setting entities on Hume's theory of motivation. Recall, the first step to defend this claim was the idea, drawn from the genetic account, that actions are produced by passions and desires, rather than by hedonic expectations; perceptions of pleasure and pain are only instrumental both in the emergence of new desires and inclinations and in the identification of the external objects that satisfy our refined or calibrated passions and desires. From the account of direct passions offered in this section, we can establish now that, on Hume's theory of motivation, intentional actions are the effects of desires and aversions, joy, sorrow, fear and hope and other direct passions. Since, the presence of a given combination of these direct passions implies a distinctive way in which the mind considers its objects of action, it follows that actions are in fact explained by the way each type of direct passion 'gild or stain' its objects (EPM- 294). In this sense, Hume endorses what I have been calling 'motivational pluralism'.

My attribution of motivational pluralism can be supported further by considering the motivational influence of the indirect passions. Certainly, the indirect passions do not affect the will as the direct ones do. Since the indirect passions constitute evaluative sentiments towards people, only some of them prompt action, and only in virtue of their original coupling with specific desires. Still, when the latter desires influence the will, they carry the 'bent' and 'direction' of their passionate causal antecedents and in this way the actions that follow are responses to the 'gilding' and 'staining' of the indirect passions. Since most of the passions that I explore in the reconstruction of the conjectural histories of the next chapters are direct, I leave the explanation of the motivation influence of the indirect passions for Appendix 2.

Chapter 5
The Convergence of ʻAvidityʼ and Virtue

1. Introduction

I propose that in order to find in Hume's text an account that addresses the two concerns of the problem of moral motivation, we need to look at the conjectural histories scattered throughout his writings, particularly throughout some of his essays. In this and the next chapter, I reconstruct these conjectural histories and show the way they make up a plausible account of moral motivation. My thesis is that, on Hume's view, the motivational impulse of virtue derives from the convergence between the concern for happiness and the sense of virtue. This convergence is historical and captured by the conjectural accounts where Hume traces the developmental track of certain motives from their origin as natural and uncultivated passions to their civilized versions when they have grown into regulated and refined virtuous traits. To establish the convergence thesis in this and the next chapter, I build on claims made in chapter 4 and argue that, for Hume, human happiness consists in the regulated and refined exertion and successful satisfaction of the passions. My reconstruction of Hume's conjectural histories will allow us to see how the process of regulation and refinement brings about the virtue of some central passions.

Hume's conjectural histories are better seen for my purposes as showing how the origin and establishment of certain practices and institutions cause certain changes in the dispositions of individuals[221]. I want to argue that each of the practices or institutions to which Hume devotes a

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[221] I must note here a distinction operating in the background of this way of reading Hume's conjectural histories. One thing is the investigation about the incentive or motivation that lead individuals to display the pattern of behaviour that constitutes a practice or institution; another is the investigation about the effects that practices or institutions have on individuals' psychology. I take this distinction from Besser-Jones (2006, 254). She introduces it in the context of her discussion of justice, by noting that a common issue in the scholarly debate around Hume's account of justice concerns the nature of the motive of justice, and thus the relation between the rules of justice and agents' desires. Such inquiry, however, is only one form that the wider question about the effects that justice produces on individuals may take. For sure, one of such effects is that individuals acquire a desire or motive to act according to these rules, but as Taylor (1998) and Darwall (1995) have respectively pointed out, the convention of justice also produces the development of the ability to take up the moral point of view and the acquisition of an

conjectural history produces a double effect on individuals' psychology: on the one hand, they regulate and refine the passion central to the practice or institution, enabling individuals thereby to satisfy these and other passions in ways that promote their happiness more effectively. On the other hand, they equip individuals to gain a certain awareness that there is virtue in satisfying their passions in regulated and refined ways, thereby expanding their conception of virtue and making it consistent with their civilized conception of happiness.

My reconstruction focuses on the conjectural account of five practices and institutions: justice, commerce, government, the arts and sciences, and politeness[222]. These histories narrate the process of regulation and refinement of three central passions: 'avidity'[223], 'curiosity' and a set of passions that I want to call the 'social affections', which includes the 'desire of company and conversation', certain aspects of 'pride' and the passion of 'benevolence'. The conjectural histories of these passions show that each of them presents their intentional objects in different ways at different points in their process of regulation and refinement. As a consequence, and according to the argument advanced in chapter 4, the conjectural histories of these passions show how passions motivate action distinctively, not only relative to other passions, but also relative to their unregulated and unrefined versions. In this sense, my reconstruction of Hume's conjectural

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internal disposition to abide by rules. Besser-Jones (2006) explores other psychological transformations that can be attributed to the institution of justice.

[222] Among Hume's scattered indications about the emergence and development of the passions, these accounts are the most internally coherent and relatively complete. I am deliberately leaving out Hume's conjectural account of superstitious religion in *The Natural History of Religion*. The reason for this is that, although Hume pursues the emergence and development of a passion, or at least, of an original psychological tendency, it is unclear to me, first, that the history of religion presents an account of its *progress*. In effect, Hume seems to conclude that in regards to the tendency to believe in the divine, individuals oscillate between periods of polytheism and periods of monotheism. Second, I doubt that the history of religion presents an account in which a passion is regulated and refined and thus I doubt that the account of superstitious religion exhibits the sort of convergence between happiness and virtue that I look for in my project. Admittedly, *The Natural History of Religion* represents an interesting contrast case for my reading of Hume's conjectural project, but I do not explore here the questions that may derive from this. For two different views as to the nature and significance of Hume's history of religion, see Falkenstein 2003 and Kail 2007.

[223] I am calling 'avidity' a passion, although it is not clear that Hume sees it as such or rather as a passionate disposition that takes on features of several other well-defined passions. I discuss in detail the nature and origin of 'avidity' below.

histories confirms the passion-based character of Hume's theory of motivation and its motivational pluralism[224].

In this chapter, I reconstruct the conjectural histories that trace the regulation and refinement of 'avidity'. In the next, I reconstruct the histories of curiosity and the social affections. On my reading of Hume, in a civilized state of society, that is, at the end of the process of regulation and refinement of the passions, what he calls 'polished' and 'luxurious' societies, individuals are motivated to virtue as an effect of the historical progress through which their passions have been altered so that experiencing and satisfying them coincide with virtue.

Despite their importance to understanding the influence of morality in civilized societies, it is worth noting at this point that Hume's conjectural histories do not amount to a conjectural description of human civilization as a whole. By this I mean, first, that Hume's conjectural histories do not presuppose the existence of a metaphysical principle that guides the unfolding of human history. There is no logic of progress running across his conjectural histories, other than the one derived from features that the particular passions analyzed in each history share *as* passions. This means that while I talk of regulation and refinement of the passions as a process, this should be understood neither as a necessary — perhaps metaphysical — unfolding, nor as the expression of a general law of historical causality. The process of regulation and refinement is a common pattern that passions can exhibit as long as their impulses are susceptible to change

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[224] Note that, with the exception of 'pride', all the passions object of a conjectural history are direct. It is an interesting question why Hume did not write a conjectural history that traced the pattern of development of an indirect passion. I suspect that a case can be made for the existence in Hume's texts of a conjectural history of pride: a history that pursues the rustic manifestations of pride among the ancients ("The Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences"), its relations to heroism and courage (*Treatise*, book 3, part 3, section 3), then its reconfigurations (and lowest point) in modern 'honour', as manifested in the practice of duelling ("Essay on Chivalry"), and then its final civilization as the 'due pride' exhibited in polite settings (scattered passages in both the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*). I elaborate on a small part of this history in my reconstruction of politeness, but there my focus, as I think is Hume's, is on the social affections (desire of company and conversation, friendship and benevolence,). On a different note, I would like to avoid claiming that my convergence argument applies to all direct passions or desires other than avidity, curiosity and the social affections. Hume did not write conjectural histories for passions other than these, presumably because no other passion generates practices and institutions of the importance of justice, commerce, government, the arts and sciences and politeness. Yet, I believe that it is not out of proportion to think that, taking appropriate differences into account, my claims regarding the convergence between the civilization of a passion and virtuousness can be extended to other direct passions.

due to accumulated experience[225]. Within the conjectural framework, such change can be interpreted as progress because it allows greater chances of joint passion satisfaction which would not have been possible had they not been altered by experience.

By denying that Hume's conjectural histories traced the history of civilization as a whole, I also mean that Hume's conjectural accounts are often neither continuous, nor comprehensive. In general, Hume follows the origin and first developments of a passion, providing the general plot of its evolution (its 'rise and progress'), but his histories exhibit gaps that Hume may have considered unnecessary to fill for his immediate purposes. These gaps may obviously affect the continuity of my own reconstruction, but in the end, I do not think they upset the thrust of the argument. Hume did not write either a conjectural history for every human passion or for every human practice or institution, let alone organize the ones he wrote in a clear successive temporal order. This is something I hope to have made clear by my emphasis that the histories of the passions reconstructed here correspond only to 'avidity', 'curiosity' and the social affections. Unlike conjectural projects of more ambitious guise, such as Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774) or Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), Hume's histories look more like snapshots of crucial episodes in the conjectural development of certain fundamental passions. I take it that the reason to focus on the passions Hume actually did has to do with the practices and institutions that the development of these passions produce.

Overall, it might be useful to think of Hume's histories as conjectural, yet incomplete, 'biographies' of particular passions. While in general, Hume focuses on the protagonist passion in each account, unsurprisingly at some points, the protagonist's 'life' intertwines with that of others and then there are overlapping histories with episodes narrating relations between passions[226]. Moreover, there is a general sense of order in the emergence of some passions provided by Hume's distinction between 'universal' and 'delicate and refined' passions —

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[225] The general pattern which I developed in chapter 4 under the rubric of the genetic account of motives.
[226] The most important case of this is the refinement of avidity in the development of government and the emergence and cultivation of curiosity.

which I explain later in the next chapter — but beyond this, there are not other indications on Hume's part as to how we should read his conjectural histories as making up a whole story[227].

On my reading, Hume's conjectural histories do not trace a mere change or alteration in the passions' nature or their forms of expression. Rather, they disclose a history of evolution towards civilized ways of passion satisfaction. Hume takes it that the passions are naturally capable of regulation and refinement, and although this capacity may not be fully realized in actual history[228], it still allows us to understand the transitional steps that led us from the primitive condition of some human practices and institutions to civilized and virtuous forms of happiness. In this sense, Hume's conjectural histories of the civilization of the passions make up a story of moral progress, where the main actors, i.e., the passions, gradually regulate and refine themselves at the same time that they civilize the world they inhabit.

2. Human happiness and the passions

As discussed in the previous chapter, Hume's general theory of action is passion and desire-based, by which I mean that it explains human action as the effect of the passions' natural tendency to 'possess' their formal objects. On Hume's account, our agency is just the expression of the drive to satisfy our passions. I want to claim that Hume's conjectural histories of civilized practices or institutions amount to an account of how the passions — at least the ones that Hume examines in these histories — aim at increasingly regulated and refined forms of satisfaction and

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[227] It is tempting to guess that the conjectural development of passions other than avidity, curiosity and the social affections take place within the practices or institutions produced by these. For example, the conjectural history of, say, fear, might intersect at some point with avidity and the institution of property, so that individuals refine their disposition to experience it, for example, in the face of loss of credit or bankruptcy. At any rate, it would be interesting to explore the reasons why Hume developed his conjectural history project in the way he did. Besides the few methodological considerations made in chapter 3, I do not pursue in detail the character of Hume's conjectural project, its relation to his *History of England* or its relation to the conjectural projects of other authors of his time.

[228] Interestingly, parallel to the story of progress told through conjectural histories, there is a skeptical theme running through Hume's essays. Hume is keen to point out the features of human nature that often halt what otherwise would be the smooth progress of the passions: our natural credulity, our excessive pride, our tendency to prefer the contiguous, our addiction to general rules, our inexperience in politics, etc. In this sense, Hume's faith in moral progress is less unconditional and more skeptical than, say, Kant's in "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View".

that this produces a refined sort of happiness that converges with virtue. So, in a way, my aim in this and the next chapter is to explore Hume's conception of human happiness.

In my view, Hume conceives happiness as the the regulated and refined exertion and successful satisfaction of the passions. For purposes of exposition only, I would like to approach this conception of happiness in a two-stage argument: first, I explore what the idea of the *exertion and successful satisfaction* of the passions[229], next, I complete the analysis by discussing what the *regulated and refined satisfaction* of the passions means. I elaborate on the first approximation by means of a discussion of what Hume calls the 'ingredients' of happiness in the present section, whereas I establish Hume's full conception of happiness through my reconstruction of Hume's conjectural histories in following sections.

In the passage where Hume sets up his case for certain forms of luxury in "Of Refinement in the Arts"[230], he introduces what he calls the 'ingredients' of happiness:

Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients; *action, pleasure, and indolence*: And though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person; yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting, without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but, like sleep, is requisite as an indulgence to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits, which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which, though agreeable for a moment, yet, if prolonged, beget a languor and lethargy, that destroys all enjoyment. Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned, that, where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness (E-RA 269-70. My emphasis).

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[229] My interpretation picks up important elements from Rotwein's "Introduction" to *Hume's Economic Writings* (Rotwein 1955, xxxvi ff).

[230] Hume admits that not all forms of luxury are good, and so he proposes his thesis as the middle ground between two extremes: between the claim that all forms of luxury are beneficial and the claim that no form of luxury is: 'We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes [that every kind of luxury is good and that every kind of luxury is pernicious], by proving, *first,* that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly,* that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society' (E-RA 269).

As it is common in his essays, Hume wants to argue for a particular thesis by evaluating it within a broader psychological and historical context. The psychological context in this case is human happiness and its 'ingredients', namely, 'action', 'pleasure' and 'indolence'. However, what it is that Hume means by calling them 'ingredients' is not obviously clear.

The first point to note is that Hume opposes 'indolence' to the group formed by 'action and pleasure'. The differences between each side of the opposition are enough to conclude that in fact happiness consists of only two aspects: indolence and pleasant activity. Initially, Hume recognizes the difficulty of admitting indolence as an ingredient of happiness, so he moves quickly to justify its presence in the list. Indolence 'seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment', but it is still part of happiness as 'an indulgence to the weakness of human nature'. So although he recognizes its relative pleasantness, Hume thinks of indolence only as the part of the process of activity required for refuelling. That is why, if indolence extends beyond the necessary point, its pleasure turns into uneasiness and then it may produce pernicious affections, such as boredom, idleness, apathy or depression[231]. In short, for Hume, indolence is an ingredient of happiness that is instrumental to activity, but not an intrinsically valuable part of it.

By contrast, 'action and pleasure' constitute the worthwhile 'ingredients' of human happiness. Note that, while listed as separate 'ingredients', Hume speaks of action and pleasure throughout the essay as flip-sides of the same coin. This is not a superficial detail. Since, for Hume, the fabric of our cognitive and emotional life is just a tissue of interrelated perceptions, it follows that any action of the mind always involves some proportion of feeling[232]. Hume believes that such proportions of emotion invigorate the soul and that in that sense are 'better' compared to the idleness or 'languor' of the absence of perceptions[233]. From this the conclusion

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[231] Hume affirms that the degree of indolence bears a definite proportion to the degree of activity: repose 'if prolonged [i.e., if disproportioned to the activity], beget a languor and lethargy that destroys all enjoyment' (E-RA 269-70).

[232] 'I believe it may safely be establish'd for a general maxim, that no object is presented to the senses, nor image form'd in the fancy, but what is accompany'd with some emotion or movement of spirits proportion'd to it' (SBN- 373; T- 2.2.8.4).

[233] I gather that this is Hume's view based on passages as the following, in which he claims that directing the mind's attention to external objects is, by itself, pleasantly invigorating, apparently in disregard of whether the passion produced as a consequence is pleasant or not. In effect, Hume says that the mind, 'naturally seeks after foreign objects, which may produce a lively sensation, and agitate the spirits. On the appearance of such an object it awakes, as it were, from a dream: The blood flows with a new tide: The

is that perceiving the external world and responding to it through action necessarily involve experiencing some degree of enjoyment — if only the enjoyment of the soul's invigoration — even if the experience and response are painful in themselves. This in turn provides a reason to assert that Hume sees a very close relation between the mind being pleasurably engaged in action and our perception of being happy. To be sure, Hume is not saying that we do or should call happiness the engaging of the mind in any sort of action; Hume's point is rather that human happiness is a matter of the kinds of pleasurable activity which the mind is able to establish with the world.

It is worth clarifying that this claim does not commit Hume to a hedonistic theory of wellbeing, for the thought is not that happiness *consists in* the greatest amount of pleasure over pain, but that having more experiences of pleasure than of pain *typically indicates* the degree in which one is happy (Crisp 2013)[234]. In fact, for Hume, the relation between action and pleasure is not the instrumental one of means to end. Action and pleasure relate to each other both intrinsically and causally. First, intrinsically because given the principle stated above, every action of the mind is, at least in some degree, intrinsically pleasant. This is the aspect of the relation between action and pleasure that Hume expresses as that 'quick march of spirits (…) which chiefly gives satisfaction' in the passage above. Second, action and pleasure relate causally because, given that human action is purposeful[235], we derive pleasure from the realization of our goals and the satisfaction of our passions. This does not mean that we act for pleasure's sake, but that we relish the accomplishment of our purposes, as effect of desiring their distinctive objects. Hume summarizes both aspects of the relation of action and pleasure in the context of the institutions of the modern world thus: '[i]n times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and *enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour'* (E-RA 270. My emphasis).

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heart is elevated: And the whole man acquires a vigour, which he cannot command in his solitary and calm moments' (SBN- 352-3; T- 2.2.4.4). And also: 'No matter what the passion is: Let it be disagreeable, afflicting, melancholy, disordered; it is still *better* than that insipid languor, which arises from perfect tranquillity and repose' (E-Tr 217. My emphasis).

[234] Hume's theory of wellbeing seems closer to what Crisp (2013) classifies as a desire-satisfaction theory.

[235] According to the genetic account developed in the previous chapter, this means that the passions set different goals. As Hume puts it in the first *Enquiry*: 'man is a reasonable being' and 'he seldom acts, speaks or thinks without a purpose and intention' (EHU- 33 of the first edition).

Indeed, action is pleasurable both in itself and in its effects, which explains why experiencing pleasure and enjoyment indicates the successful activity of the mind. Human happiness consists both in the pleasant exercise of our passions and in the enjoyment that follows their successful deployment. Interestingly, that action and pleasure are related in this twofold way provides some grounds for understanding Hume's conception of happiness as a process with a self-sustaining tendency. Arguably, at the conceptual level, the pleasure concomitant to the activity whereby we satisfy a passion is different from the pleasure that we obtain from having satisfied it. The former is the phenomenological expression of the successful exertion of a passion, whereas the latter is the effect of perceiving one's success: one is the pleasure of performance, the other the pleasure of achievement. Yet, if seen in terms of the functional roles that each pleasure plays in motivating and guiding action, it becomes understandable why the more enjoyment we derive from an activity, and the more pleasure of success we obtain from it, the more we desire to continue and to perfect its performance. The reason is that the pleasure derived from a passion driving us to perform an activity and doing it successfully feeds back on the passion that caused the impulse in the first place and thus invigorates its impulse, moving us then to keep on performing the activity. Having such experience feels like going through a loop of pleasure: the more one enjoys an activity, the more one wants to continue it, and the more one keeps performing it, the more pleasure one obtains.

To be sure, this mechanism is subject to another one in virtue of which the rate with which the feedback pleasure invigorates the impulse of the passion or desire decreases with each repetition. Such a mechanism for decreasing invigoration of the passion underwrites the phenomenon of marginal decrease of enjoyment. Hume explains this decreasing effect as one of the consequences of custom and habit (SBN- 422; T- 2.3.5.1). In terms of the genetic account presented in chapter 4, both the pleasure of performance and the pleasure of success both guide and motivate the performance of the activity whereby one satisfies a passion. The first sort of pleasure informs and keeps one on going in the current performance, the second adds emotional strength to the desire of performing the activity in the future, and urges us to look for ways of improving the performance or of recalibrating the means of satisfying the passion. For example, the pleasure that I derive from writing a paper — pleasure of performance — typically indicates that I am doing it to the best of my abilities. Experiencing such pleasure thus makes me aware of my relative successful performance. But in doing so, this pleasure also keeps me going through

the activity writing, because enjoying the writing works as an additional incentive to my actual goals in finishing the paper. In turn, the satisfaction of having my paper published — pleasure of success — strengthens my desire of writing papers and motivates me to improve my techniques. It also makes me to look for ways of satisfying better my desire of publishing papers. Admittedly, one often learns better ways of satisfying one's passions through experiences of pain than through experiences of pleasure: more through trial and error than through trial and success. Still, the point is that through the feeling that is effected by the satisfaction of the passions, one may learn something new about how to satisfy the same passions in the future.

On this appraisal, it is plausible to think of the 'ingredients' of happiness as expressions of passion satisfaction. A passion is satisfied when exerted, that is, when it affects the will[236]. This exertion is in itself pleasurable and, if we manage to possess the object of the passion successfully, the exertion besides produces a new enjoyment. Human happiness, on Hume's view, can be defined thus as the *exertion and successful satisfaction* of the passions.

To move forward in my argument, note that the characterization of human happiness as the successful satisfaction of the passions implies that one is happy if one satisfies one's passions on every occasion or in regards to any particular object independently of any other consideration. This characterization is obviously problematic as it entails either that in order to be happy, one must maximize every opportunity of passion satisfaction or that if one wants to be happy, one must be ready to ignore or even to frustrate other people's search for happiness, if theirs happens to get in the way of one's own. In other words, the characterization of human happiness as the exertion and successful satisfaction of the passions makes the search for happiness either a counterintuitively demanding enterprise or a constant source of social conflict. Hume recognizes the limits that human nature imposes on the satisfaction of the passions and the conflicts that unregulated ways of seeking happiness may produce. At the same time, he believes that the passions can be regulated and refined without spoiling the enjoyments that their exertion and their successful satisfaction involve. Hume claims that passions are better enjoyed *if refined* and that some can only be properly satisfied *if regulated*. In Hume's full conception, happiness

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[236] That exerting a passion means that such passion affects the will is true of the direct passions, which are the focus of my present argument. Indirect passions can be exerted and yet fail to affect the will, but I do not mean to claim that their exertion neither involves the experience of some degree of enjoyment, nor that it does not contribute or that it deducts from one's happiness.

consists in the *regulated and refined exertion and successful satisfaction* of the passions. We can see this by examining in more detail the conjectural histories of the progress of the passions under the ingredients of 'action' and 'pleasure'[237].

3. 'Action' and the regulation and refinement of 'avidity'

In the following sections of this and the next chapter, I reconstruct Hume's conjectural histories of the practices and institutions of the modern world and stress what I take to be the two sides of these accounts: on the one hand, each account tells us how a central passion or passions emerge and are refined; on the other, each account tells us the way in which the satisfaction of the central passion becomes virtuous. I organize these histories according to the ingredient of human happiness which the practice or institution predominantly regulates or refines. As it follows from the discussion in the previous section, it is right to say that both action and pleasure are involved in the satisfaction of any direct passion. Yet, I take it that justice, commerce and government are institutions aimed predominantly at the regulation and refinement of 'action' in avidity, whereas the arts, the sciences and the practice of polite conversation are aimed predominantly at the regulation and refinement of 'pleasure' in curiosity and the social affections. Although, for the moment, I leave this division unjustified, I hope that my account in what follows helps to make some sense of it.

Earlier in this chapter, I argued that the exertion and satisfaction of the passions generate two characteristic sorts of pleasure: the pleasure of activity and the pleasure of success. According to this, the successful satisfaction of 'avidity', one of individuals' original passionate dispositions, contributes to individuals' happiness. However, for Hume, the origin and distinctive

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[237] I acknowledge that my talk of passion satisfaction in this section may feel a bit loose. My point is only to indicate that the sense in which a direct passion gets satisfied is twofold. On the one hand, satisfying a direct passion means exerting it, that is, experiencing its characteristic drive towards certain category of objects. This drive is felt, according to Hume, as a pleasant emotion of some degree. On the other hand, successfully satisfying a passion is typically pleasant, and failing to satisfy it uneasy. In this section, therefore, I said little about how specific the satisfaction of direct passions may be or how a passion can be satisfied in different ways. I elaborate more on these topics in my reconstruction of the conjectural histories below. Recall, in any case, that what I say in what follows applies only to the direct passions examined in these conjectural histories: avidity, curiosity and the social affections.

nature of avidity prevent that its unregulated and unrefined satisfaction can ever be successful. 'Avidity' needs regulation and refinement. The plot in the conjectural histories of justice, commerce and government follows the transformation of 'rude' avidity into the civilized expressions of 'avidity': honesty, industry, frugality, the desire of luxury and the motive of alliance to government.

Now, according to Hume's conjectural history of the origin of justice, 'avidity' appears to be one of the passions that human beings possess in their rude and initial state of civilization. However, as I will show presently, this is a problematic status of which the fact that Hume fails to list this supposed passion as one of individuals' original affections is symptomatic. Rather he coyly introduces it under several names, and as if it were genetically related to our original social and partial passions. Still, that avidity becomes a separate and independently powerful passion becomes evident by implication from how the institution produced by such passion emerges. Justice is the convention that regulates *private* property. 'Avidity' is a naturally divisive passion precisely because it drives individuals to possess and accumulate external goods in an *exclusive* fashion, and this is a feature that does not follow necessarily from the original affections that Hume explicitly lists in his story.

In order to satisfy the drive of 'avidity' in an environment of moderate scarcity, individuals had to come up with the convention of justice. This convention regulates the impulse of 'avidity' thereby making its successful satisfaction possible and paving the way for its further refinement in the practice of commerce and the obedience to government. The satisfaction of 'avidity' contributes to happiness only when it has been regulated and refined and thus only when it has been transformed into the virtuous passions of honesty, industry, frugality, the desire of luxury and the motive of allegiance to government. In this sense, in the conjectural histories of justice, commerce and government, we can find evidence in favour of my claim that, in Hume's considered view, human happiness consists in the *regulated* and *refined* exertion and satisfaction of the passions.

One repeated pattern that characterizes the exertion and satisfaction of the refined versions of 'avidity' — perhaps with the exception of the motive to allegiance to government — is that of pleasant activity. The best model to understand this pattern can be found in Hume's

Treatise account of the passion of curiosity. It is thus worthwhile to discuss it briefly to note its most important characteristics before getting into the conjectural histories properly.

According to Hume, curiosity is a sort of love: the love of truth. But, unlike love for people, love for truth is intrinsically motivating. Indeed, for Hume, curiosity is not just love of truth as such, but love of *finding* the truth[238]. Curiosity is, in more general terms, a sort of *love of action*. As Hume's puts it: 'the satisfaction, which we sometimes receive from the discovery of truth, proceeds not from it, merely as such, but only as endow'd with certain qualities' (SBN-449; T- 2..3.10.2). These 'qualities' are rather conditions that make a truth not yet discovered — at least by us — a truth that moves us to pursue its discovery. These are the conditions, in other words, that prompt us to investigate.

Hume lists two conditions of this sort. The first is that finding the target truth must demand some exertion of our 'genius and capacity', given that '[w]hat is easy and obvious is never valu'd; and even what is *in itself* difficult, if we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded' (SBN- 449; T- 2.3.10.3). This is the crucial condition in the exertion of curiosity: we are moved to investigate a subject when finding its truth is relatively difficult. Specifically, it must be difficult to the point of fixing our attention and making us exert our capacities, 'which of all other exercises of the mind is the most pleasant and agreeable' (SBN- 449; T- 2.3.10.3). That we derive enjoyment from action insofar as such action is relatively difficult, Hume stresses, is a natural feature of the mind. In curiosity, as in hunting and gaming, 'the motion, the attention, the difficulty, and the uncertainty' are pleasant feelings for which the mind naturally craves.

However, according to the second condition, the pleasure of activity, in this case of investigating a subject that spurs our curiosity, does not last long unless it is sustained by, first, the 'fancy' that the activity's end (i.e., the sought-after truth) is worthy or of importance for other human beings[239]; and second, the conviction that one has actual possibilities of finding the

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[238] This suggests, in passing, that curiosity is a direct passion.

[239] A requisite that, Hume says, is indispensable 'to compleat the pleasure' of exertion, as it helps 'to fix our attention' (SBN- 451; T- 2.3.10.6).

sought-after truth[240]. Note that this second condition identifies two psychological conditions as necessary as that the passion is triggered by the difficult target. Note also that both requirements are species of beliefs, yet beliefs that we are willing to accept with atypical optimism — presumably this is why Hume refers to the first as a 'fancy'. Our readiness to accept these beliefs is explained by the influence — 'the natural course of the affections' — that the chance of exerting our genius and capacity has on the mind: it leads us to disregard, at least to some degree, our most rigorous estimations of the consequences of pursuing a given course of action:

> Upon this head I shall make a general remark, which may be useful on many occasions, *viz.* that where the mind pursues any end with passion; tho' that passion be not deriv'd originally from the end, but merely from the action and pursuit; yet by *the natural course of the affections*, we acquire a concern for the end itself, and are uneasy under any disappointment we meet with in the pursuit of it (SBN- 451; T- 2.3.10.7. My emphasis).

The pattern of pleasant exertion is not exclusive to the satisfaction of the love of truth. In the context of the conjectural history of commercial exchange, Hume extends his point about curiosity to 'most of our passions and pursuits':

> There is no craving or demand of the human mind more constant and insatiable than that for exercise and employment; and *this desire seems the foundation of most of our passions and pursuits*. Deprive a man of all business and serious occupation, he runs restless from one amusement to another; and the weight and oppression, which he feels from idleness, is so great, that he forgets the ruin which must follow him from his immoderate expences (E-In 300-1. My emphasis).

Admittedly, exerting 'genius and capacity' is almost everything in curiosity. And though, the exertion in other passions might also involve genius, it probably comprehends other qualities of the mind as well. Still, it is remarkable that Hume sees the motivational drive of pleasant activity present in 'most of our passions'. It is not surprising that the 'craving or demand' for exercise and employment is behind the 'universal', constant and insatiable passion of 'avidity', the regulation of which Hume considers so important for society's emergence and stability.

Probably, this craving for pleasant exertion can be traced back to a basic feature of the mind in Hume's view of our psychology. Hume says in the *Treatise* that the mind 'naturally

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[240] As Hume states: '[a] man of the greatest fortune, and the farthest remov'd from avarice, tho' he takes a pleasure in hunting after partridges and pheasants, feels no satisfaction in shooting crows and magpies; and that because he considers the first as fit for the table, and the other as entirely useless' (SBN- 451; T- 2.3.10.8).

seeks after foreign objects, which may produce a lively sensation, and agitate the spirits'. Once the mind's attention is locked on its object, 'it awakes, as it were, from a dream: The blood flows with a new tide: The heart is elevated: And the whole man acquires a vigour, which he cannot command in his solitary and calm moments' (SBN- 352-3; T- 2.2.4.4). If the contact and engagement is with another rational creature, the enlivening is more conspicuous: '[h]ence company is naturally so rejoicing, as presenting the liveliest of all objects, *viz.* a rational and thinking Being like ourselves' (SBN- 352-3; T- 2.2.4.4). Perhaps, this need of the mind to look for objects of entertainment could be related to an even more basic feature of the self. Being only a bundle of perceptions, Hume seems to imply that the self exists at all as the aggregate of the force and vivacity of its ideas and impressions: 'Ourself, independent of the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing' (SBN- 340-1; T- 2.2.2.17). Thus, the purposeful character of the passions, i.e., the fact that they naturally aim at their objects and thereby drive us to act accordingly manifests the peculiar nature of the self: its lack of substantiality, its never-ending need to reach for external objects that provide it with content, and both its relative stability and yet capacity to change.

Be as it may, the point to stress now is that the urge to exercise the passions and the concomitant enjoyment are fundamental features of the mind. Despite the fact that the search for the truth is not always the most materially profitable of our enterprises, for the philosopher, thinking of quitting it is a real loss 'in point of pleasure'[241]. And although in other cases the results of exercise and employment are material, the pleasure of the struggle is not a negligible part of the drive behind it. In short, enjoyable exertion is central to the satisfaction of any passion. This is how 'action' is an ingredient of happiness.

However, not any expression of the 'action' of the passions contributes equally to happiness. Most passions are naturally partial: they drive us to obtain satisfaction in temporally and spatially contiguous and particular objects, and when directed at people, they limit our concerns to those related to us. The passions, besides, tend to go astray in the pursuit of their

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[241] As Hume confesses: 'I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition; and shou'd I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I *feel* I shou'd be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy' (SBN- 271; T- 1.4.7.12).

objects, producing psychological and social conflict. The conjectural histories of justice, commerce and government show Hume's view on the limits that the partiality of human nature and the unregulated activity of the passions impose on the drive for action to contribute to happiness. These institutions regulate and refine avidity, one of the most primitive and powerful drives to action.

3.1. The convention of justice and the regulation of 'avidity'

3.1.1. The origin of justice

To account for the origin of justice, Hume imagines the original instincts, passions and the external situation of individuals in a pre-societal state[242]. Hume compares human beings to other animals and finds that their situation would be disadvantageous, if they were not naturally motivated to associate with each other:

> In man alone, this unnatural conjunction of infirmity, and of necessity, may be observ'd in its greatest perfection. Not only the food, which is requir'd for his sustenance, flies his search and approach, or at least requires his labour to be produc'd, but he must be possess'd of cloaths and lodging, to defend him against the injuries of the weather; tho' to consider him only in himself, he is provided neither with arms, nor force, nor other natural abilities, which are in any degree answerable to so many necessities. 'Tis by society alone he is able to supply his defects, and raise himself up to an equality with his fellow-creatures, and even acquire a superiority above them (SBN- 485; T- 3.2.2.2-3).

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[242] The first question the *Treatise*'s section on the origin of justice is supposed to answer is '*the manner, in which the rules of justice are establish'd by the artifice of men*' (SBN- 484; T- 3.2.2.1). Yet, without much warning, Hume presents his conjectural account of the origin of society. This move reflects Hume's frequent remark that the existence and stability of society are tightly intertwined with the existence of the convention of justice: '[a]ll men are sensible of the necessity of justice to maintain peace and order; and all men are sensible of the necessity of peace and order for the maintenance of society' (E-OG 38). On Hume's conjectural account, the convention of justice is a necessary condition of the existence of society, given that only a human association where justice exists counts as a society. Accordingly, Hume does not believe that all kinds of human associations depend on the establishment of justice. Human beings are naturally endowed with an instinct to associate with each other, although, since such instinct is partial, it does not lead them to form large or permanent social groups. The existence of the convention of justice indicates a rather high level of regulation and refinement of this instinct.

In a pre-societal state, the natural propensity to associate with others is manifested in one instinct and one original passion: the 'appetite between the sexes' and the 'natural affection' toward the offspring, which together explain primitive human associations. The satisfaction of these motives widens the experience of primitive individuals and leads them to realize that '[b]y the conjunction of forces, [their] power is augmented: By the partition of employments, [their] ability encreases: And by mutual succour [they] are less expos'd to fortune and accidents' (SBN-485; T- 3.2.2.3). They further realize that sporadic associations with members of other families are useful in order to multiply the efforts to provide for the nuclear family. This recognition refines the primitive desire for association making individuals seek ties of collaboration with others besides the sexual partner and the progeny. Families then grow by addition of new members. Call this primitive set of social passions comprising lust, love for the offspring and familial love, 'original partial passions'.

Arguably, how nuclear families enlarge is one of the places where Hume seems to leave a gap in the continuity of his conjectural account. In effect, while it is clear that Hume assumes the primitive family is naturally monogamic and nuclear — that is, composed of the father who wields authority and of the mother and the children who obey — he does not tell us by means of what social mechanisms families grow when their members realize the benefits of association. Perhaps, the fathers of several families associate with each other for limited time and for certain purposes, but then by habit, the association becomes permanent. Perhaps, once children reach reproductive age, their sexual couplings bring their families together. Perhaps, families adopt individuals whose families have fallen apart. In any case, the realization of the utility of associations with individuals outside the nuclear family should have generated forms of social organization beyond the natural. It is surprising then that Hume does not consider how these associations, in the middle between the natural and the societal, might have contributed to the establishment of conventions.

In any case, the original partial passions cannot explain the emergence of society, given that their motivational tendency is indeed partial. Lust and the natural affection for the offspring move individuals to actions that exhibit a selfishness of sorts[243]: individuals are strongly

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[243] The sort of 'selfishness' that Hume introduces here is only that of a partial affection directed at the individual's and his family's present interest. Selfishness in this sense only means that every individual has an important concern for their own and his family's preservation and for the satisfaction of their

motivated to actions that benefit the self, their relatives and close acquaintances and very weakly moved to perform services for strangers. For Hume, such natural partiality 'must necessarily produce an opposition of passions, and a consequent opposition of actions; which cannot but be dangerous to the new-establish'd union' (SBN- 487; T- 3.2.2.6).

Certainly, the problem is not the partiality of the passions *per se*, for the fact that each person looks to benefit herself and her own family does not necessarily provoke social conflict. As Hume hurries to clarify, the problem arises given that the goods which people are most in need in the primitive state of humanity are both unstable — i.e., easily removed from the individual's possession — and moderately scarce. To explain, Hume classifies the goods that human beings can possess in three categories: the internal satisfactions of the mind, the external advantages of the body and the external goods acquired by fortune or industry. He believes that only the last category is unstable, given that the satisfactions of the mind and the advantages of the body cannot be separated from their natural possessors *and* enjoyed by other people[244]. External goods are also moderately scarce, insofar as 'there is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one's desires and necessities' (SBN- 488; T- 3.2.2.7). Moderate scarcity is not a peculiar feature of the primitive state of civilization, but given that Hume presumes, according to a common theme in the tradition of conjectural history, that people in the 'rude and savage' state live off 'hunting' and 'fishing' (E-Co 256), the assumption gain relevance to emphasize the

passions. Selfishness here neither means a generic desire for pleasure (it is not hedonism), nor implies the rational ability to maximize the benefits that can be obtained through every action, or in the future (it is not rational egoism). Hume does not believe either that the natural concern for the self of each individual is as overwhelming as to override always other-regarding desires. In fact, concern for the self is frequently overridden by the concern for the wellbeing of others: 'I am sensible, that, generally speaking, the representations of this quality have been carried much too far; and that the descriptions, which certain philosophers delight so much to form of mankind in this particular, are as wide of nature as any accounts of monsters, which we meet with in fables and romances. So far from thinking, that men have no affection for any thing beyond themselves, I am of opinion, that tho' it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet 'tis as rare to meet with one, in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not over-balance all the selfish' (SBN- 486-7; T- 3.2.2.5).

[244] This assumption seems to ignore cases of psychological manipulation or forms of exploitation such as slavery, where someone's mental capacities and bodily advantages are used to the benefit of other people. Yet, note that in these cases, the exploiter receives only the *products* of the other's mental and physical capacities, and is not able to enjoy the exercise of these capacities by himself. Manipulation and exploitation are thus forms of the problem of possessions' instability, though in a different modality: someone forces us to hand out the goods that we acquired through industry. This suggestion, however, does not cover the more recent case of transplant of organs, where someone can actually enjoy the advantages of other people's bodies. But to this, Hume might reply that organs can be treated as if they were a particular species of external good.

difficulties typical of the small-scaled and uncoordinated exploitation of available natural resources.

At any rate, for Hume, it is the combination of the partiality of the passions and the instability and moderate scarcity of external goods what produces situations of conflict. Hume conjectures then that primitive individuals must have come with some sort of solution to prevent the 'partial and contradictory motions' of their passions (SBN- 489; T- 3.2.2.9). This solution is the rule of justice, a rule to commit themselves to 'abstain' from taking what others have acquired through their own fortune or industry:

> when they have observ'd, that the principal disturbance in society arises from those goods, which we call external, and from their looseness and easy transition from one person to another; they must seek for a remedy, by putting these goods, as far as possible, on the same footing with the fix'd and constant advantages of the mind and body. This can be done after no other manner, than by a convention enter'd into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry (SBN- 489; T- 3.2.2.9).

Notice that Hume assumes that the stability of possessions can be achieved only if some form of *private* property is agreed upon. This is a problematic assumption in Hume's conjectural account which allows us, however, to clarify the nature of the passion behind the transition from primitive associations to society. In effect, up to this point, Hume has depicted the motivational endowment of individuals as if it was composed only of a set of partial affections towards relatives and close acquaintances and a growing interest in expanding the boundaries of associations. He has also pointed to the instability and scarcity of external goods as the main obstacles to enlarging associations. But, if these are 'the circumstances of justice' (Rawls 1971, 2000), it seems that primitive individuals are not obviously compelled to come up with *private* property as the preferred rule to secure the stability of possessions. Indeed, if one goes by Hume's description of the predicament that originates justice, primitive individuals could opt for a kind of regulation on the use of external goods that addresses both scarcity and instability, by, say, a form of common property plus a set of rules for priority and limits on usage and consumption[245].

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[245] It is possible to argue that, in fact, Hume's conjectural account of the origin of justice does not rule out this possibility. At least in this *Treatise*'s section, Hume relentlessly argues for the necessity of a rule for

The original motives with which Hume depicts primitive human beings and the external situation in which he places them do not obviously result in private property; yet, Hume concludes that they do because he is in fact accounting for another passion, to name, 'avidity'. Indeed, within the conjectural framework, for possession to become stable by means of the rules of private property, Hume must assume that primitive individuals are, not only selfish and partial, but also jealous of their possessions *and* greedy for additional external goods. Yet, these are indeed two separate sets of psychological features. As Hume describes selfishness and partiality, individuals driven by these motives are chiefly led to benefit themselves and their relatives. But one can be selfish and partial in this way and still be willing to share, or at least to be indifferent, in regards to what one or one's relatives do not need or are not using by the time being[246].

Admittedly, this willingness to share might vary according to the nature of the external good under consideration. Goods that are consumed when used cannot be shared. But, there is no necessary obstacle to sharing or being indifferent in regards to perishable goods that cannot be consumed by their possessor before going to waste or to sources of production of external goods, such as land, animals or tools, provided one or one's relatives are no in a current need of them, or

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the stability of possession, which must generate specific rules for the determination of property, but which does not define their nature by itself. So, one might say that he does not necessarily argue for a rule that stabilizes possession through private property. It could be added that, when he moves to elaborate on the 'particular rules that determine property', his argument for the classical forms of private property rests on the idea that these forms are historically salient and therefore of easy implementation and enforcement, thus freeing him from the assumption that private property is a necessary development in his conjectural account. However, Hume consistently describes the type of behaviour that follows from the rule of stability as one of 'abstaining' from other people's possessions (SBN- 489; T- 3.2.2.9), which suggests some sort of right of exclusion, which is a typical feature of private property. This, along with the fact that Hume's argument for the 'particular rules that determine property' favours classical types of private property, not only on the basis of historical salience, but also on the basis that private property appeals better to the imagination, plus the set of arguments that Hume gives against alternative forms of distribution of property in the second *Enquiry* (EPM- 193-4) indicates that his conjectural account of the origin of society takes private property as one of its major institutions. If this is correct, and according to the methodology of conjectural history, one needs to conclude that alternative forms of determining property (e.g., common, private but equal, etc.) are accidental, that is, effect of particular circumstances of particular peoples and not part of the 'most common and natural order' of the institution of property.

[246] Hume recognizes that this supposition is even more plausible in 'the infancy of society': 'An *Indian* is but little tempted to dispossess another of his hut, or to steal his bow, as being already provided of the same advantages; and as to any superior fortune, which may attend one above another in hunting and fishing, 'tis only casual and temporary, and will have but small tendency to disturb society' (SBN- 539; T- 3.2.8.1).

others' use of them do not destroy them. Moreover, in case that the demands of several people over the same goods produce conflicts, exclusive possession is only one among several forms to resolve the disagreements.

Perhaps, it can be argued, selfishness and the partial affections are sufficient to explain exclusive possession, given that individuals are concerned with their future situation, and this concern motivates them in the present to accumulate and exclude strangers from the use and possession of any external good they may grab, so they can provide for themselves in the future. But against this, Hume explicitly points out that individuals' ability to plan ahead and take present measures to secure future interests is not one of their strongest suits[247]. Human beings' passions are partial also in the temporal dimension. In consequence, there is no conceptual necessity derived from Hume's conception of selfishness and the partiality of the passions that implies a drive to maximize one's own benefits or the impulse to accumulate goods at the expense of the benefit of strangers.

Something like a species of jealousy in regards to external goods or what Hume calls 'avidity', by contrast, do imply these drives. In the *Treatise*'s section on the origin of justice, Hume does not point to the difference between selfishness and the partial affections, on the one hand, and 'avidity', on the other. In fact, his introduction of 'avidity' is surprisingly coy considering the role that this affection plays in his conjectural account[248]. After Hume has

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[247] Prudence is a virtue and therefore an ability that can be hardly attributed to individuals in the rude state of society. In general, for Hume, human beings are not naturally prudent: 'It has been observ'd, in treating of the passions, that men are mightily govern'd by the imagination, and proportion their affections more to the light, under which any object appears to them, than to its real and intrinsic value. What strikes upon them with a strong and lively idea commonly prevails above what lies in a more obscure light; and it must be a great superiority of value, that is able to compensate this advantage. Now as every thing, that is contiguous to us, either in space or time, strikes upon us with such an idea, it has a proportional effect on the will and passions, and commonly operates with more force than any object, that lies in a more distant and obscure light. Tho' we may be fully convinc'd, that the latter object excels the former, we are not able to regulate our actions by this judgment; but yield to the sollicitations of our passions, which always plead in favour of whatever is near and contiguous' (SBN- 535; T- 3.2.7.2).

[248] Moreover, as I note in the text, Hume seems rather uncertain about how to name it. Among the several names that he gives to it I have chosen 'avidity' because, first, it is the one that appears more often in Hume's texts (particularly in the essays); because it avoids the confusion that 'self-interest' and 'the interested passion' might produce among readers, given the connections between self-interest and notions such as self-love, selfishness and egoism; and third, because in contrast to 'the love of gain', 'avidity' denotes not only the desire for gaining stuff, but also for accumulating it. I believe that these considerations favours 'avidity' over all other terms, even despite the fact that in contemporary English,

introduced his main argument for the need of the rule of stability, he goes on to claim that the regulation of 'interest' is 'the most necessary to the establishment of human society' (SBN- 491; T- 3.2.2.12). By this sudden mention of 'interest', Hume introduces the new required affection in the psychology of 'rude and savage' people. As a result, in this and the following paragraph, Hume turns from talking of the 'partial passions', in plural, to talking of one single affection, 'avidity', which is the object of the regulation effected by justice and of which he has supposedly been talking all along. 'Avidity' is successively identified as 'love of gain', 'the interested affection' and 'self-interest' and characterized as 'insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly destructive of society' (SBN- 492; T- 3.2.2.12)[249].

Avidity is truly crucial in Hume's explanation of important institutions in the conjectural account of society. Avidity is a universal passion, object not only of the natural laws of justice, but also of commerce and by extension of government. It is worthwhile then to inquiry a little more about its nature. Hume offers what appears to be a clearer characterization of avidity in his discussion of the rule of present possession. There, he remarks that one of the effects of custom is to 'give us an affection for ['any thing we have long enjoy'd'], and [to] make us prefer it to other objects, which may be more valuable, but are less known to us' (SBN- 503; T- 3.2.3.4). According to this, avidity is a species of partial affection directed, not at people, but at things. Interestingly, according to Hume's portrayal of the effect of custom on our regard for external objects, avidity is a sort of love: as we love the people we are used to live with or treat, we love the external objects which we have grown used to possess: '[w]hat has long lain under our eye, and has often been employ'd to our advantage, *that* we are always the most unwilling to part with' (SBN- 503; T- 3.2.3.4). By extension, we also feel possessive in regards to objects contiguous to us or to objects that we have altered or produced for our use. This aspect of avidity does explain why individuals would prefer to adopt forms of private property, rather than some sort of regulation on the use of what is commonly owned. Individuals, according to Hume, are naturally jealous in regard to things that they are used to possess, that lay near them or that they

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'avidity' seems closer or even synonymous with avarice and thus associated with vice. In what follows then, I ask the reader to bear in mind these considerations.

[249] That Hume is aware of introducing a new affection is manifested in the way he summarizes the conjectural account of the origin of justice in the section 'Of the rules, which determine property'. In this section, Hume explicitly says that the 'chief impediment' to establishing a harmonious society 'lies in the avidity *and* selfishness of [individuals'] natural temper' (SBN- 503; T- 3.2.2.3. My emphasis).

have produced. Hence the need of exclusive rights over external objects to stabilize their possession[250].

Although this account explains the exclusive, even jealous, nature of avidity, we still need to account for the cumulative need that the satisfaction of this passion involves. On Hume's view, avidity not only leads us to be jealous of what one already possess, but also fiercely motivated to acquire more. Let us see then what alternatives there are to complete the full account of avidity. One might suppose that avidity is an original instinct, that is, one of those natural motives that Hume attributes to any human being and which, under certain conditions, are triggered by the presence of their formal objects. In this sense, similarly to hunger, lust, resentment or benevolence, and assuming certain conditions are given, avidity would arise by the prospect of obtaining and accumulating external goods. The problem with this view is that Hume does not mention avidity in his lists of original motives in the *Treatise* or in the second *Enquiry* and he seems reluctant to consider it a well-defined passion as he does with fear, benevolence, envy or respect. Besides, that avidity is an original instinct contradicts the account just proposed, according to which it is a species of love caused by custom and habit. For, if avidity were an instinct, it would exhibit characteristics similar to hunger, thirst or lust, and statements such as the following would be hard to understand: we 'can easily live without possessions, which we never have enjoy'd, and are not accustom'd to' (SBN- 503; T- 3.2.3.4). Finally, if avidity were original, Hume's set-up for the need of the convention of justice would have to be different. He would only have to stipulate the instability of possessions and the scarcity of external goods, for these would be the conditions required for avidity to lead us to accumulate goods and become

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[250] Avidity, as Hume depicts it, drives individuals to love possessions, which through custom and habit, they feel attached to. While in this sense the general analogy between love of people and love of things works well, it may not do so if we consider that love of people comes in several forms, not all of which involve the sort of exclusivity that avidity seems to impose on external objects. Paternal love, friendship or esteem are all forms of love where the lovers 'share' the object of love with other lovers. In its unregulated version, avidity seems rather analogous to sexual jealousy, or at least, to the classical masculine type of sexual jealousy. The individual does not want that any other people enjoy the good that he deems his. Perhaps, what we can say is that rules of justice, of transmission by consent and the institution of promises regulate and refine avidity such that while at the beginning it exhibits the features of sexual jealousy, it gradually becomes more and more like the love of other relations. Moreover, along this process of refinement, individuals may learn to re-calibrate the impulse of their avidity by placing their attachment on abstract valuable objects (goods in trade, money, credit), rather than on actual material goods only.

jealous of the analogous drive in others. He would not need then to include the story of our selfishness and our partial affections towards our relatives.

Alternatively, one could grant that avidity is derived from custom, and then say that its impulse is affected by its connection with selfishness and the original partial affections. That is, avidity arises from the custom and habit of possessing certain external objects, but becomes acutely insatiable, given that in conditions of moderate scarcity and given the instability intrinsic to external goods, individuals are very much concerned with satisfying their own and their relatives' needs[251]. We can suppose then that the fear of experiencing hunger and seeing one's relatives experiencing it too would accentuate avidity's impulse. This story would accommodate Hume's set-up for the necessity of justice. But, apart from the original lack of prudence among 'rude and savage' individuals, this alternative produces another problem, given that Hume says that avidity is 'insatiable' even after the instability and moderate scarcity of external goods are to some extent remedied. To make sense of the full nature of avidity, in consequence, we need another account that explains its typical strength and persistence.

My proposal is to explain the distinctive impulse of avidity as a direct manifestation of the craving for action that Hume takes to be natural to the human mind, and that I introduced in the discussion of the pleasant activity behind curiosity. As it was noted before in this chapter, one of the ingredients of human happiness is pleasant action:

> There is no craving or demand of the human mind more constant and insatiable than that for exercise and employment; and this desire seems the foundation of most of our passions and pursuits. Deprive a man of all business and serious occupation, he runs restless from one amusement to another; and the weight and oppression, which he feels from idleness, is so great, that he forgets the ruin which must follow him from his immoderate expences (E-In 300-1).

Avidity is a natural outlet for this drive. In fact, the conditions that Hume depicts in the initial state of society are ideal for avidity to overtake all the attention of the primitive mind, as much as curiosity can overtake the attention of the civilized one. First, we can suppose that the

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[251] The best passages to support this reading are the following: 'The selfishness of men is animated by the few possessions we have, in proportion to our wants; and 'tis to restrain this selfishness, that men have been oblig'd to separate themselves from the community, and to distinguish betwixt their own goods and those of others' (SBN- 495; T- 3.2.2.16). And 'For as it is evident, that every man loves himself better than any other person, he is naturally impelled to extend his acquisitions as much as possible; and nothing can restrain him in this propensity, but reflection and experience, by which he learns the pernicious effects of that licence, and the total dissolution of society which must ensue from it' (E-OC 480).

uncultivated state of humanity is one where the interest for survival is paramount and where there are few opportunities for individuals to entertain themselves with social or artistic activities, given that they require leisure and security. Second, focused in this way on the need to satisfy their natural appetites, primitive individuals must devote all their endeavours to acquire external goods and to add them to the set of possessions that they have grown used through custom and habit. So, the need to provide for oneself and for the family spurs the impulse of the possessive affection that was already active in their behaviour. Further, scarcity and competition must turn every attempt to possess objects into a challenge, which according to the pattern of pleasant action constitutes an incentive for the mind's activity. Admittedly, we must assume that accumulating new goods is not an impossible challenge, provided individuals manage to associate and work efficiently with their relatives or if they form small associations for the purposes of production and accumulation of external goods. In this way, third, these conditions provide for the belief that there are chances of success, and further, the fact that the goods acquired can satisfy their own and their relatives' needs and desires provides the idea of a useful end that 'compleat[s] the pleasure' of exertion' (SBN- 451; T- 2.3.10.6). Once the convention of justice is in full force, avidity remains a powerful motivator because, although the endeavour to accumulate is now regulated, the development of society brings along new external objects of desire (i.e., luxuries) and thus the possibility of new challenges for accumulation.

This interpretation gains support from the fact that it allows us to make sense of Hume's conception of 'avarice', which he considers the vicious version of avidity. In the essay "Of Avarice" Hume says that avarice is a vice typical of 'men of cold tempers' (E-Av 571), that is, tempers 'where all the other affections are extinct'. So, when an individual, for whatever reason, lacks any regard for 'reputation', 'friendship' or 'pleasure', through which his crave for activity can be satisfied, 'being incapable of remaining without some passion or pursuit, at last finds out this monstrously absurd one, which suits the coldness and inactivity of [his] temper' (E-Av 571). Avarice is here characterized as the vicious channeling of the impulse of other passions. By contrast, in a social context where there are other forms of activity, ''[t]is impossible for a person (…) however bent on any pursuit, to be deprived of all sense of shame, or all regard to the sentiments of mankind. His friends must have some influence over him: And other considerations are apt to have their weight. All this serves to restrain him within some bounds' (E-Av 571). In this sense, the strength of avidity is in inverse proportion to the availability of

means to release the craving for activity. The fewer the outlets, the stronger the impulse of avidity. Interestingly, this explains why a modern and refined society, on Hume's view, allows and should allow for the exercise of a wide variety of roles and activities: such a society must create alternative and coordinated outlets where individuals can exert their minds and thus prevents their craving for employment from causing social conflict.

Going back to the main argument, we can state as a preliminary conclusion that given the predicament in which Hume depicts primitive human beings, if avidity is not regulated it simply cannot be satisfied[252]. If an artifice to secure the satisfaction of avidity is not invented, it goes irremediably astray. Remarkably, the convention of justice regulates avidity *and at the same time* refines the partial passions that fuel its impulse by enabling associations with strangers.

3.1.2. The sources of justice and the effects of justice on individuals' psychology

Justice's regulation of avidity is a case in which the exertion and successful satisfaction of a passion constitutes happiness only if regulated. This regulation is, as Hume stresses, artificial because, not only do we lack the natural passions from which justice may be derived, but there is no providential force leading us towards peaceful associations. So, when Hume says that 'interest' constitutes the 'natural obligation to justice' (SBN- 498; T- 3.2.2.23), what he means is that the psychological features that he associates with 'interest' are conditions for the *origin* of the convention of justice:

> Instead of departing from our own *interest*, or from that of our nearest friends, by abstaining from the possessions of others, we cannot better consult both these *interests*, than by such a convention; because it is by that means we maintain society, which is so necessary to their well-being and subsistence, as well as to our own (SBN- 489; T- 2.3.3.9. My emphasis).

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[252] ''Tis certain, that no affection of the human mind has both a sufficient force, and a proper direction to counterbalance the love of gain, and render men fit members of society, by making them abstain from the possessions of others. Benevolence to strangers is too weak for this purpose; and as to the other passions, they rather inflame this avidity, when we observe, that the larger our possessions are, the more ability we have of gratifying all our appetites. There is no passion, therefore, capable of controlling the interested affection' (SBN- 492; T- 3.2.2.13)

In general, being party to the convention of justice means that one is not to take others' possessions without their consent. The chief effect of this general rule of avoidance is the institution of property: possessions become legally exclusive and only transferable by owner's will. Yet, people do not respect such general rule because they explicitly agreed to do so, but because they gradually find that respecting each other's possessions is more advantageous than leaving goods to be freely taken by anybody. This is Hume's account of the *sources* of justice. He stresses that the realization of the advantageous path that leads to the convention is not difficult, and so that individuals are easily moved to perform acts that communicate to others their willingness to abide by the implicit rule[253]. In a gradual fashion, the common interest in respecting property spreads and the convention gets established 'by our repeated experience of the inconveniences of transgressing it' (SBN- 490; T- 3.2.2.10). The 'slow progression' of this experience, Hume observes:

> assures us still more, that the sense of interest has become common to all our fellows, and gives us a confidence of the future regularity of their conduct: And 'tis only on the expectation of this, that our moderation and abstinence are founded. In like manner are languages gradually establish'd by human conventions without any promise. In like manner do gold and silver become the common measures of exchange, and are esteem'd sufficient payment for what is of a hundred times their value (SBN- 490; T- 3.2.2.10)[254].

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[253] 'I observe, that it will be for my interest to leave another in the possession of his goods, provided he will act in the same manner with regard to me. He is sensible of a like interest in the regulation of his conduct. When this common sense of interest is mutually expressed, and is known to both, it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour. And this may properly enough be called a convention or agreement betwixt us, though without the interposition of a promise; since the actions of each of us have a reference to those of the other, and are performed upon the supposition, that something is to be performed on the other part. Two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other'(SBN- 490; T- 3.2.2.10).

[254] It is remarkable that, for Hume, the establishment of the convention of justice presupposes that individuals are able to achieve, without much trouble, a certain level of awareness about what causes their troublesome situation and the means to get themselves out of it. Hume invokes 'judgment and understanding' as the faculties that allow individuals to find the solution in which the convention consists (SBN- 489; T- 3.2.2.9), and he says that the reflection that avidity is better controlled by itself than by any other passion is so evident that justice must have appeared to the first members of society as a salient solution: the origin of society owes more to the 'sagacity or folly' of individuals than to their moral qualities (SBN- 492; T- 3.2.2.13). These remarks support the claim that the process whereby passions are refined leads individuals to recognize that certain character traits allow more and better satisfactions in view of happiness than others. In the present case, by acquiring the trait of regulated avidity, the impulse of this passion 'is much better satisfy'd (…) than by its liberty'. By 'preserving society, we make much greater advances in the acquiring possessions, than in the solitary and forlorn condition, which must follow upon violence and an universal licence' (SBN- 492; T- 3.2.2.13).

Yet, justice is not only useful for the regulation of avidity. This convention plays an important role in the refinement of other aspects of people's affective lives too[255]. The convention provides a new cause of pride and humility, since once the convention is established, individuals can take pride in the secure and exclusive possession of desirable objects (SBN- 309; T- 2.1.10.1). In this sense, I agree with Besser-Jones (2006, 272) who argues that the well-developed form of society that conventions of justice make possible promotes occasions for well-grounded pride, which would be impossible otherwise. Indeed, in a pre-justice society, passions are generally partial, which means that individuals have their own selves 'at the front of their minds' and so are prone to comparison, rather than to sympathy. Qualities that other people possess only very rarely affect individuals in the way requisite to sympathy, thereby making difficult for the pride that each might take in their qualities or accomplishments to be 'seconded' by the recognition of others (SBN- 316; T- 2.1.11.1). Moreover, given that possession is unstable and competition rampant, individuals can hardly see each other in other light than as antagonists. Following Besser-Jones's interpretation, I also claim that justice solves these inconveniences. It settles possessions into property and thus it changes the way individuals regard one another. Similarly, the convention of justice promotes occasions for love and hatred, because exclusive possession also becomes a new reason for feeling esteem or dislike for other people (SBN- 357; T- 2.2.5.1)[256].

Another psychological transformation caused by the establishment of the convention is the development of individuals' ability to respond to normative considerations. The convention contributes to raising this ability first by giving new meanings to individuals' choices, meanings that they can consciously take into account to guide their behaviour. Prospective actions that respect others' *property* are understood by members of the convention as actions in accordance with an implicit agreement whose benefits are known to be for all, and not anymore as perhaps gratuitous gestures of letting others unmolested in their *possessions*. It is true that even when the

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[255] 'All the other passions, besides this of interest, are either easily restrained, or are not of such pernicious consequence, when indulged. Vanity is rather to be esteemed a social passion, and a bond of union among men. Pity and love are to be considered in the same light. And as to envy and revenge, though pernicious, they operate only by intervals, and are directed against particular persons, whom we consider as our superiors or enemies' (SBN- 491; T- 3.2.2.12).
[256] This is an aspect of a topic which Hume even considers separately in the *Treatise* section entitled 'Of our esteem for the rich and the powerful'.

convention is in full force, the desire to take others possessions is psychologically possible, but then such behaviour is seen as a breach of the implicit and shared understanding that everyone expects others to honour. Furthermore, since once the convention is in force, some courses of action are reinterpreted as expected and failure to behave thus is taken as censurable — not yet in a moral sense, but simply as deviant to the established custom — justice also enables the emergence of a new sort of motivation. Indeed, justice creates an 'artificial' motive insofar as individuals are able to use the new framework of understanding honest behaviour to guide their own actions. Justice, in other words, changes 'the circumstances and situation' of individuals, so that they are then able to respond to the social considerations that justify obedience to the convention[257].

Along these lines, Hume emphasizes two features of the artificiality of justice. The first is that the convention demands individuals take a long view in considering the effects of their actions. Hume introduces this feature of justice by noting a 'singular' connection between the

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[257] The secondary literature on the artificiality of the motive of justice is enormous. Authors mostly agree that the motive behind justice is self-interested, although refined or 'enlightened' (Baier 1994, 1995). This is commonly assumed to mean that the convention of justice turns rational a desire that in its natural form is disruptive and insatiable: the agent regulates his self-interest according to a rule, so that its satisfaction can be coordinated with similar interests of others. The interpretative problem in the secondary literature is that this view seems to conflict with other claims of equal importance in Hume's moral philosophy. Cohon (1997b, 2008b), Harris (2010) and Garret (2007) deal with the difficulty that the very artificiality of a motive entails: according to Hume's 'undoubted maxim' if a motive is artificial, it could not be virtuous; yet Hume holds that rational self-interest is virtuous. Stroud (1977), Gauthier (1979, 1995), Ponko (1983), Baldwin (2004), Costa (1995), Darwall (1993, 1995) and Flew (1995) among others, discuss the claim that the nature of the motive of justice conflicts with Hume's official theory of motivation because, even conceding that self-interest could be turned rational, individuals would obey the rules only when it is convenient for them, a behaviour which in the long run erodes the trust in the convention. In my view, the artificiality of the motive of justice consists in the refinement of the goal that avidity sets. Within the convention, avidity sets us out to pursue the possession of a determined class of external goods, i.e., those that we can validly acquire according to particular rules of property. In contrast, in a pre-conventional state, the goal that avidity sets is the possession of *any* external good. So, I submit, in regards to the first discussion, that the artificiality of the motive does not consists in its novelty in the psychological repertoire of the primitive individual. Avidity is not unnatural in this sense, and thus it does not violate Hume's 'undoubted maxim'. It is the same old avidity. What is new is the ability of individuals to consider refined expressions of avidity as virtuous (as Hume stresses, what is properly new and artificial is the '*sense* of justice') and the re-calibration in the goals of avidity. In regards to the second discussion, since the refinement of avidity is effect of the unpleasant experience of the consequences of trying to satisfy its unregulated version, regulated avidity typically implies a more or less inflexible resolution to comply with the rules of justice. So, that there are agents who obey the rules only when it is convenient to their interest means that there are agents that haven't been able to fully regulate their avidity, not that in its typical manifestation this motive sets us out for selective obedience.

rules of justice and the public interest that they serve: 'A single act of justice is frequently contrary to *public interest*; and were it to stand alone, without being followed by other acts, may, in itself, be very prejudicial to society' (SBN- 497; T- 3.2.2.22). The utility of the convention derives from general obedience, not necessarily from every single act of justice. One implication of this is that the motivation to follow the convention in particular instances does not typically depend on the immediate passionate reactions to the situation at hand[258]. We have to repay a loan, even if its creditor is a 'miser', a 'profligate debauchee' or if we rather wanted to use the money 'to acquire something to [our] famil[ies]' (SBN- 482; T- 3.2.1.13). In increasingly complex societies, the convention requires that individuals' motivations are affected by the reasoning and experience of the long-term consequences of obedience and disobedience to justice on their working system of justice. Regulated avidity exhibits these features:

> When therefore men have had experience enough to observe, that whatever may be the consequence of any single act of justice, performed by a single person, yet the whole system of actions, concurred in by the whole society, is infinitely advantageous to the whole, and to every part; it is not long before justice and property take place. Every member of society is sensible of this [public] interest (SBN- 497; T- 3.2.2.22).

So, in many situations, the benefits of performing just actions are not evident; moreover, just actions may bring inconvenience or actual harm to the agent or to innocent third parties. However, the 'rigid and inflexible rules' of justice require that our interest in the benefits derived from the whole system overcome the motivations that arise from the peculiarities of the present situation[259]. This switch of focus from the short-term to long-term effects of our actions within

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[258] Although in some cases immediate passionate reactions might add some emotional force to the honest motivation, which would be a case of overdetermination. For example, I may be willing to obey the rules of justice and thus pay back a loan both on long-term benefit sort of considerations (e.g., debtors must honour their obligations so to preserve creditors' general incentive to lend money) and also due to my recognition that my creditor needs the money to cover his own expenses.

[259] 'All the laws of nature, which regulate property, as well as all civil laws, are general, and regard alone some essential circumstances of the case, without taking into consideration the characters, situations, and connexions of the person concerned, or any particular consequences which may result from the determination of these laws in any particular case which offers. They deprive, without scruple, a beneficent man of all his possessions, if acquired by mistake, without a good title; in order to bestow them on a selfish miser, who has already heaped up immense stores of superfluous riches' (EPM- 305).

the larger scheme of the convention is fundamental to generate the sense of obligation typical of regulated avidity.

The other feature of the artificiality of justice related to the ability to respond to normative considerations is the convention's capacity to create 'imaginary qualities', qualities that produce claims to action on people (SBN- 527; T- 3.2.6.3). Hume calls attention to this feature by noting the logical order in the emergence of certain concepts: only when the convention of justice is up and running, do ideas of justice and injustice, 'property', 'right' or 'obligation' acquire their meaning: 'The latter ['property', 'right', 'obligation'] are altogether unintelligible without first understanding the former' (SBN-491; T- 3.2.2.11). 'Property' is not a natural quality linking people to objects or a natural association of ideas by means of which we perceive people related to objects. It is a relation imposed by convention between a person, an object and other people. The rules that determine property are thus different arrangements that systematize the intricate relations that follow from imagining that someone 'owns' a particular external good. These rules tell everybody how to act in regards to particular external goods. They give these goods an 'imaginary' status, which individuals agree to respect, given the utility that doing so brings about[260]. The convention of justice provides the conditions where the execution of certain actions (e.g., possessing an object for a certain amount of time, putting work into it, transferring it to another person) generates the expectation that people will act in determinate ways: the possessor as the owner, others as the ones with the duty to respect somebody else's property. In short, being able to respond to normative considerations constitutes a refinement in individuals' motivation as it makes them sensitive to new ways of relating to others and of committing themselves to actions that nobody would be otherwise ready to perform.

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[260] That conventions create 'imaginary qualities' with practical power is also evident in Hume's analysis of the obligation of promises. There, his point is that systems of rules create artificial relations of causality. The rules that constitute the convention of promises create the conjunction between certain people's actions as the effects, and certain linguistic practices as the causes. The utterance of 'I promise' by itself is not a cause, nor does it have any effect by nature, i.e., it expresses no 'act of the mind' of either the speaker or the listener. But once the convention of promising is in force, saying 'I promise', under appropriate circumstances, makes highly probable that the action promised will be performed. Witnesses to the promise will expect that the conjunction between the utterance and the performance of the promise occurs.

3.1.3. The origin of the morality of justice

Hume's answer to the question of '[w]hy we annex the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice' can be understood as another aspect of the transformative role of the convention of justice on individuals' psychology. Hume claims that, once the convention is in force, we are sensitive to the inconvenience of disobedience to the rules of justice because we are able to imagine the impact of violating the rules on the stability of society. Yet, this requires some redirection of our sympathy (Taylor 1998). By contrast with the 'rude and savage' people, members of the convention know that they can produce benefit or harm to people they might not even know by acting in accordance or against the rules of justice. This wider conception of the effects of their passions on others allows them to 'partake of [the] uneasiness' of whoever in society that might have been victim of an unjust act. Our sympathy then switches from particular people to the undetermined member of society who, by the mere fact of being part of the convention, might be harmed by every act against the rules. This extension of sympathy makes us feel disapproval of unjust actions, even if in fact nobody is harmed. As Hume puts it, since 'every thing, which gives uneasiness in human actions, upon the general survey, is call'd Vice, and whatever produces satisfaction, in the same manner, is denominated Virtue; this is the reason why the sense of moral good and evil follows upon justice and injustice' (SBN- 499; T- 3.2.2.24). This sense of morality is then 'forwarded by the artifice of politicians' and 'private education and instruction' (SBN- 500-1; T- 3.2.2.25-6).

3.1.4. Justice and reputation

Hume's claim that the sense of morality is reinforced by politicians, parents and educators points to a further psychological effect of conventions. This is the sort of transformation that Besser-Jones (2006, 263) identifies as the concern for reputation which helps members of the convention to fulfill their social natures. Her claim is that the advantages of social cooperation made possible by justice, along with the capacity to take up the general point of view, generate a peculiar concern in individuals that have been raised in a convention. They not only possess the desire to abide by the rules of justice described in the previous sections — the one derived from

the capacity to respond to normative considerations. Since, they also take a particular pride in seeing themselves acting as beings able to honour their fidelity to conventions, they have a further incentive to be honest: they are honest, not only to keep the system going, but to act in ways that express their identity as cooperative members of their society. Besser-Jones finds initial support for this reading in the *Treatise*'s passage where Hume comments on the members of convention's regard for reputation:

> There is nothing, which touches us more dearly than our reputation, and nothing on which our reputation more depends than our conduct, with relation to the property of others. For this reason, every one, who has any regard to his character, or who intends to live on good terms with mankind, must fix an inviolable law to himself, never, by any temptation, to be induced to violate those principles, which are essential to a man of probity and honour. (SBN- 501; T- 3.2.2.27)

On Besser-Jones' view, this regard for reputation is a reflection of the 'love of fame' that Hume thinks natural to human beings. That is, it is the same desire but once it has been connected to virtue by means of the type of social life that the convention of justice makes possible. She also finds support for this interpretation in the second *Enquiry* discussion of the psychology of 'sensible knave', that is, is the individual who selectively disobeys the rules of justice whenever following such rules impacts negatively his self-interest. Besser-Jones reads Hume as pointing out two problems in the disposition of the sensible knave. On the one hand, the sensible knave 'fails to attain the positive effects that come from the development of a just disposition' (Besser-Jones 2006, 265), and so, he is unable to experience the 'inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of [his] own conduct' (EPM- 283) that follow from obeying the rules of justice. On the other hand, the sensible knave cannot recognize this as a loss: 'he fears not the "total loss of reputation" that comes with unjust behaviour' (Besser-Jones 2006, 266). In other words, the sensible knave is the person who fails to develop the final transformation that comes with the convention, that of redirecting his passions so that he can take pride in acting honestly.

I agree with most of Besser-Jones' reading. In my view too, the typical individual in the convention is able to take pride in his being a cooperating member of society. Yet, I would like to emphasize further the motivational effect of this. According to Hume, other people's reflection of one's pleasure of pride, under certain conditions, produces the reinforcement of the

traits one is proud of. We can find the model of this type of reflection in Hume's explanation of the esteem for the rich and the powerful. He claims that we esteem the rich and powerful because, through sympathy, we are able to enjoy the pleasure that they derive from their wealth and power. This esteem, being caught through sympathy by the rich and powerful constitutes a new source of pleasure for them:

> Thus the pleasure, which a rich man receives from his possessions, being thrown upon the beholder, causes a pleasure and esteem; which sentiments again, being perceiv'd and sympathiz'd with, encrease the pleasure of the possessor; and being once more reflected, become a new foundation for pleasure and esteem in the beholder (SBN- 365; T- 2.2.5.21).

The reflected pleasure that the rich and powerful derive from being esteemed by others constitutes a species of pride, 'vanity', which in Hume's words: 'becomes one of the *principal recommendations of riches*, and is the chief reason, why we either *desire them for ourselves*, or esteem them in others' (SBN- 365; T- 2.2.5.21. My emphasis). For Hume then, the reflection of pleasures just described has motivational effects: the awareness that other people esteem us produces a reason to act in a way consistent with what caused the esteem in the first place. The application of this type of reflection to the moral case is straightforward. When we are the object of other people's moral approval and perceive it through sympathy, we feel a new pleasure, the pleasure of what in some essays Hume calls 'vanity'. This pleasure, in turn, reinforces in us the desire to act in ways consistent with the moral approval perceived. If applied to the case of honest traits, the idea is that once being honest is recognized by other individuals as virtuous, they feel esteem for the prideful member of the convention. The latter, in turn, by reflection of such esteem, experiences a reinforcement in his motivation to respect the terms of the convention. The motive of justice is thus strengthened by a fortunate reflection of individuals' affections:

> [V]anity is so closely allied to virtue, and to love the fame of laudable actions approaches so near the love of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture,

than any other kinds of affection; and it is almost impossible to have the latter without some degree of the former (E-DM 86)[261].

That 'vanity is so closed allied to virtue' motivates an interesting consequence. Because the convention of justice makes a regulated form of satisfying avidity possible, and further a form of satisfaction which people can take pride in, it also contributes to human happiness[262]. If we extend this claim to other virtues, the conclusion is that individuals motivated to acquire and practice virtue are better able to succeed in the social world than otherwise. On the one hand, the practice of virtue brings them the typical benefits of justice, and on the other, the pride that being honest occasions and the esteem that they receive for being so makes for an even more favourable situation in the social world. In this connection, it is worth recalling Hume's description of Cleanthes as a model of 'accomplished merit' (EPM- 269) and note that what others recognize in him as virtues are, not only traits that enable him to be successful in his different social relations, but also qualities for which he receives the esteem and admiration of the people he enters in contact with and of which he is justified in taking pride.

3.2. Commerce and the refinement of 'avidity'

The conjectural history of commerce is the natural continuation of that of justice. Avidity stands at the root of both institutions. Commercial exchange of external goods, however, does not simply regulate avidity. It *refines* avidity: honest individuals' drive to jealously accumulate external goods is transformed by commerce into, first, a desire for luxurious commodities, second, a desire to cultivate and perfect our capacities to produce and exchange external goods, and third, a desire to accumulate money. These are the new three refined forms that avidity takes in the commercial world. In his essays on economics, Hume calls them 'luxury', 'industry' and

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[261] In Hume's time — and maybe also in ours — 'vanity' was commonly taken to denote ungrounded pride. I think that Hume is aware of this use and in most occasions he employs the term to mean its opposite, i.e., grounded pride, maybe to add a provocative effect to his claims and rescue the term to the side of virtue.
[262] This is probably the intuition behind Brown's idea that the sense of duty is produced by the desire to be happy (Brown 1988).

'frugality' respectively. In the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*, he refers to these desires as virtuous.

Hume tells the conjectural history of commerce in two places. First, in the *Treatise*, he recounts the conventional developments that relax a little the stability of possession achieved through property. Transference of property by consent and the convention of promises 'render [individuals] mutually advantageous (…) and serviceable to each other' (SBN- 520; T- 3.2.5.8). Second, in his essays on political economy[263], Hume offers an outline of the rationale of the practice of commercial exchange of goods and the way it contributes to people's happiness. In this section, I bring both accounts together to tell one single, and when possible, continuous story.

After the conjectural history of justice, Hume notes that besides the general rule for the stability of possessions, individuals have to agree on specific rules that determine who owns what. In the *Treatise*'s section 'Of the rules, which determine property', Hume spends some time arguing that the forms of attribution of property which individuals opt for derive from principles of the imagination. That an object must be owned by the one who possesses it in the present responds to the very nature of avidity, which makes us esteem more those objects which we are used to have around than those which we are not. That time reinforces this imaginary connection in the eyes of the possessor and others explains why prescription, i.e., long possession, seems like an obvious way to settle the possession of some objects. Similarly, taking an object as if it were possessed for a long time, i.e., occupation; possessing the fruits or the natural additions of one's property, i.e., accession; and transmitting one's belongings to those with whom one was related in life, i.e., succession, are all forms of assigning property that derive from the tendencies of the imagination to associate people with objects, objects among each other or people with people.

Yet, for Hume, none of these forms of attributing property attends the need or the convenience of the owner. Individuals embrace them because, given their origin in imagination, they are much more easily understood and followed by everyone. But, they do not entail a

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[263] "Of Commerce", "Of the Refinement of the Arts", "Of Money", "Of Interest", "Of the Balance of Trade", "Of the Jealousy of Trade", "Of the Balance of Power", "Of Taxes" and "Of Public Credit".

natural principle of fair distribution of property. They simply express the natural preference of the imagination for the useful:

> The relation of fitness or suitableness ought never to enter into consideration, in distributing the properties of mankind; but we must govern ourselves by rules, which are more general in their application, and more free from doubt and uncertainty. Of this kind is *present* possession upon the first establishment of society; and afterwards *occupation, prescription, accession,* and *succession* (SBN- 514; T- 3.2.4.1).

It is in view of this natural lack of 'fitness or suitableness' between owners and external goods that individuals need to find a way to join goods with those who most need them or most want them, without spoiling the stability achieved through the rules of justice. The obvious artifice in this regard is transference of property by consent: 'there is no medium better than that obvious one, that possession and property shou'd always be stable, except when the proprietor consents to bestow them on some other person'(SBN- 514; T- 3.2.4.1). The rule of transference by consent enables the first developments of commerce. People begin to barter, to exchange one possession for another according to their needs or desires:

> The wool of the farmer's own flock, spun in his own family, and wrought by a neighbouring weaver, who receives his payment in corn or wool, suffices for furniture and cloathing. The carpenter, the smith, the mason, the tailor, are retained by wages of a like nature; and the landlord himself, dwelling in the neighbourhood, is content to receive his rent in the commodities raised by the farmer (E-Mo 291).

This spontaneous exchange of goods, however, presupposes a previous modification in the way individuals live that departs widely from that of 'hunting and fishing' in which Hume assumed them in their 'rude and savage' condition. Probably the first economic change that the institution of property brings about is the differentiation of people into classes according to what they own. Some people own more, some less and some nothing. This differentiation produces, in turn, the emergence of distinctive economic roles:

> When a people have emerged ever so little from a savage state, and their numbers have increased beyond the original multitude, there must immediately arise an inequality of property; and while some possess large tracts of land, others are confined within narrow limits, and some are entirely

without any landed property. Those who possess more land than they can labour, employ those who possess none, and agree to receive a determinate part of the product (E-In 297-8).

Apart from this passage where Hume relates property differences to the increase of the population, he is remarkably silent about the causes of wealth inequality. His arguments against the 'levellers' in the second *Enquiry* (EPM- 193) suggest that he might have wanted to explain inequality as a natural effect of differences in talents and industry across individuals. But if we are to fill in the gaps of his conjectural account, the likeliest story is that in the rude and savage state of humanity, individuals possessed only what they could *physically defend*. Once the institution of property came in and particular rules to determine property, such as present and long possession and occupation gained purchase on the imagination, individuals own what they can *take care of*, in the case of land, what they can cultivate and exploit. Inequalities emerge then as a result of circumstantial facts such as that some owners are more talented and industrious in working the land than others or even perhaps that some owners happened to have larger families or group of associates than others, enjoying thus a greater manpower. Presumably, these initial advantages transform, with time and due to the rule of succession, into remarkable differences of wealth.

Whatever the mechanism, what is clear is that for Hume the stability of possession produces the economic division between owners and workers. Since Hume supposes that the first good on which individuals claim property is land, he concludes that in the order of conjectural history, the first economic division among people is between landlords and paid farmers. The form of exchange that occurs between these two classes of people is driven by their respective passions and interests. On the one hand, the landlord is motivated by his avidity to exploit his possession and add more goods to his property. On the other, the farmer is moved by the simple need to assuage his and his family's appetites. The satisfaction of both motivations, however, requires that some level of knowledge be developed, the level required for the small-scale exploitation of the land, at least that which is sufficient to sustain the owner's and the farmers' families. And this is the way in which avidity refines into industry: the first economic division among members of conventions drives the first developments of techniques for the more intensive exploitation of land.

The satisfaction of landlords' and farmers' motivations also require the establishment of the convention of promises. Hume describes the emergence of this institution, much as he did with justice, as an effect of the partial affections of individuals and the external situation they face. The convention of justice reduced the fear of sudden dispossession and the rule of transmission of property by consent increased the number and kinds of contacts and exchanges with strangers. But individuals are still reluctant to 'perform any action for the interest of strangers, except with a view to some reciprocal [and immediate] advantage, which they had no hope of obtaining but by such a performance' (SBN- 519; T- 3.2.5.8). So, simultaneous exchanges of services among strangers such as rowing a boat together or the simultaneous swapping of possessions are possible, but nobody is willing to perform any action only on the hope that they will be compensated in the future. The partiality of their affections still prevents individuals from extending their trust to what others are willing to do beyond the present:

> Were we, therefore, to follow the natural course of our passions and inclinations, we shou'd perform but few actions for the advantage of others, from disinterested views; because we are naturally very limited in our kindness and affection: And we shou'd perform as few of that kind, out of a regard to interest; because we cannot depend upon their gratitude. Here then is the mutual commerce of good offices in a manner lost among mankind, and every one reduc'd to his own skill and industry for his well-being and subsistence (SBN- 519-20; T- 3.2.5.8).

The convention of promises solves this inconvenience. Individuals learn little by little that there is a common interest in receiving the benefit of actions from others and then reciprocating the service in the future: '[h]ence I learn to do a service to another, without bearing him any real kindness; because I forsee, that he will return my service, in expectation of another of the same kind, and in order to maintain the same correspondence of good offices with me or with others' (SBN- 521; T- 3.2.5.9). Similarly to justice, the convention of promises is not based on an original promise, but in the gradual realization of the benefits of having such rule, so that 'by our repeated experience of the inconveniences of transgressing it' (SBN- 490; T- 3.2.2.10), the convention takes root. Finally, also in the same way as justice, honouring and breaking promises are considered virtuous or vicious due to an extended sympathy with the victims of disappointed promises, a moral sentiment which is backed up too by '[p]ublic interest, education, and the artifices of politicians' (SBN- 523; T- 3.2.5.12).

Remarkably, Hume moves rather quickly when claiming that the convention of promises is backed up by '[p]ublic interest, education, and the artifices of politicians' (SBN- 523; T-3.2.5.12). One reason for this is that as individuals acquire conventional habits by their living under the rules of justice, they gradually gain a certain facility in adopting new conventions. To be sure, the transformations that justice brings about, i.e., the ability to respond to normative considerations, the ability to adopt a disinterested and common point of view to judge one's and others' actions and the redirection of pride towards virtuous reputation, are profound transformations for the first generation of individuals living under justice. But for individuals who are raised after the convention has been established, these psychological transformations are integral part of their upbringing and thus they are more easily disposed to be party to new conventions and to understand the importance of strictly following the rules. Admittedly, disobedience is always possible. But that the psychological transformations produced by earlier conventions scaffold the establishment of new others is in itself a counter measure against typical causes of rule-breaking.

The main benefit brought by the convention of promises consists in making people mutually advantageous and serviceable, not only when the services can be rendered simultaneously, but especially when they need to be performed far in time, alternatively by one and the other parties or by the same person but consecutively in the future. Complicated forms of barter and relations of labour such as the landlord's and his peasants are thus made possible. Now, at the same time that these incipient forms of commerce satisfy the needs and avidity of individuals — probably at the same time that they accentuate their economic inequalities — they also multiply economic roles in society. The landlord who has cunningly exploited his property and managed to accumulate its products becomes rich. And with wealth, his avidity begets desires for luxurious items:

> Of these proprietors of land, some must presently discover themselves to be of different tempers from others; and while one would willingly store up the produce of his land for futurity, *another desires to consume at present what should suffice for many years*. But as the spending of a settled revenue is a way of life entirely without occupation; men have so much need of somewhat to fix and engage them, *that pleasures, such as they are, will be the pursuit of the greater part of the landholders, and the prodigals among them will always be more numerous than the misers* (E-In 298. My emphasis).

According to this passage, landlords, just because they own the most important good for the material production of society, they become the first and major consumers. Their 'prodigality' provides a further impulse to the cultivation of industry and the development of new forms of exchange among those who are not in position to spend. In effect, in order for the desires of prodigal landlords to be satisfied, industry and commerce mediated by money need to appear: 'The bulk of every state may be divided into *husbandmen* and *manufacturers*. The former are employed in the culture of the land; the latter work up the materials furnished by the former, into all the commodities which are necessary or ornamental to human life' (E- Co 256).

The first step in the development of commerce and money has been already given by the landlords themselves. Initially, they exchange the surpluses of their production with their neighbours, but 'after men begin to refine on all these enjoyments, and live not always at home, nor are content with what can be raised in their neighbourhood, there is more exchange and commerce of all kinds' (E-Mo 291). Gradually, the direct exchange of goods becomes more difficult and less profitable, since the goods landlords might want to barter cannot be taken from one place to another, and there is always the problem of finding someone who wants to give what one wants and is willing to receive what one has. The invention of currency corrects this situation. As Hume mentions in passing in his account of the origin of justice, the origin of currency is also the effect of a convention: '[i]n like manner [as the convention of justice emerges] do gold and silver become the common measures of exchange, and are esteem'd sufficient payment for what is of a hundred times their value' (SBN- 490; T- 3.2.2.10). Individuals need a medium to enhance the exchange of their products, a form of representation 'of labour and commodities' (E-Mo 285) that allows them to negotiate their goods even when these are no present[264].

The emergence of currency almost simultaneously generates the emergence of merchants. Along with landlords, peasants and incipient manufacturers, they become necessary to sustain the growing dynamic of commerce:

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[264] Hume's account of the development of the convention of money is rather meagre. Hume says that pieces of gold and silver are made to represent different quantities of value. But he does not provide details as to how gold and silver came to be chosen for such representation or how equivalence rates were established.

when men's industry encreases, and their views enlarge, it is found, that the most remote parts of the state can assist each other as well as the more contiguous, and that this intercourse of good offices may be carried on to the greatest extent and intricacy. Hence the origin of *merchants,* one of the most useful races of men, who serve as agents between those parts of the state, that are wholly unacquainted, and are ignorant of each other's necessities (E-In 299-300).

On Hume's account, the role of merchants is of mediation. Merchants, unlike landlords or manufacturers, neither own products that can be transformed into consumable goods, nor transform any product into a luxury themselves. All their work consists in bringing together producers and consumers[265]. Still, Hume believes that their economic role promotes the industry of society better than any other and thus it is the role that best fosters happiness for all members of society.

The level of commerce that merchants makes possible, moreover, also triggers the desire to accumulate money and invest it in careful ways. Commerce mediated by money and assisted by merchants takes avidity to a new level, enlivening industry and arousing the impulse of 'frugality':

> Commerce encreases industry, by conveying it readily from one member of the state to another, and allowing none of it to perish or become useless. It encreases frugality, by giving occupation to men, and employing them in the arts of gain, which soon engage their affection, and remove all relish for pleasure and expence (E-In 301).

Industry, in the economic context, is the human desire to transform raw materials into objects fitted for consumption. Essentially, the satisfaction of industry is a form of pleasant activity that involves the application of expertise and knowledge to the production of new items. In this sense, the mechanical arts, such as farming, woodworking, metallurgy, building construction, weaving, medicine, etc., are forms of industry. But Hume believes that the incentive to develop these arts is, at the root, a form of avidity: it is a 'craving or demand' for 'exercise and enjoyment' (E-In 300) that, at this point of civilization, does not rest with entering in the possession of things, but extends further to the production of new ones. Industry is indeed a refined form of avidity produced by commerce.

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[265] 'Here are in a city fifty workmen in silk and linen, and a thousand customers; and these two ranks of men, so necessary to each other, can never rightly meet, till one man erects a shop, to which all the workmen and all the customers repair' (E-In 300).

Although Hume understands frugality as the quality opposite to dissipation or to the desire for vicious luxury, it is also a form of avidity. A frugal person remains focused on her work and reinvests the fruits of her labour either in the improvement of her production or in the consolidation of stocks of money that can be profitable by lending at interest. Industry and frugality express thus two of the aspects noted in the initial characterization of avidity. Avidity is a form of love, love for objects. In the form of industry, avidity is the desire to reproduce the objects of such love, and in the form of frugality, avidity manifests the desire to take care of one's property. A frugal person strives to make her possessions grow, either by reinvestment or by gaining from its lending.

Perhaps, one of Hume's major contributions to political economy consists in his account of the relations between the role of the merchants and money, on the one hand, and the growing impulse of luxury, industry and frugality, on the other. Hume develops this account mostly in the essays "Of Money" and "Of Interest" by means of a polemical discussion with some of his contemporaneous' doctrines. According to such doctrines, the amount of money in a state determines the wealth of its people and the interest rate that they pay for loans. Hume claims, by contrast, that the amount of money is not the cause in either case, and that what really determines the wealth of a nation and the interest rate in force in it are the 'manners and customs' of its people — unsurprisingly, a moral cause — i.e., the way in which commerce mediated by money promotes people's industry, frugality and desire of luxury.

Let us go over the argument in "Of Money" to see one instance of Hume's conception of the relation between commerce, refined avidity and money and the fortune of society. The doctrine according to which amounts of money determines wealth assumes that there is a causal connection between the amount of circulating money in a country and the consumption power of its people and is based on the observation that when a great amount of money enters a given state, the prices of commodities decrease at the same time that the spending power of people grows[266]. Hume claims that the inference from this observation is wrong. He starts by noting that money is simply a form of representation of labour and commodities, rather than a separate form

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[266] Given that Hume's argument presupposes that money flows from one country to another without appreciable change in its value, I assume that by 'amount of money', Hume means amounts of gold and silver, rather than an amount of exchange-value represented by paper money issued by a national government.

of wealth. As such, the amount of money circulating in a state cannot produce or destroy wealth, but only serve as indicator of how much of it there is:

> Money having chiefly a fictitious value, a the greater or less plenty of it is of no consequence, if we consider a nation within itself; and the quantity of specie, when once fixed, though ever so large, has no other effect, than to oblige every one to tell out a greater number of those shining bits of metal, for clothes, furniture or equipage, without encreasing any one convenience of life (E-In 297).

To argue that the amount of money in a state has some effect on the wealth of the people is like saying that there is more of a given good because it is accounted in Roman rather than in Arabic numbers (E-Mo 285-6). What explains the observation of the doctrine in question is that a sudden increase in the amount of money in a given territory has a temporary effect on the 'manners and customs' of people. When such sudden increase takes place, it is usually because some individuals bring it into the territory — or because a similar cause suddenly increases the amount of circulating money. At the beginning, these individuals can buy more stuff and accordingly producers and merchants see their goods sold at a quicker pace. This increased selling rate makes manufacturers react by producing more of their items, and if the increase is great and lasting enough, by improving their techniques of production. Subsequent to this process, a greater amount of goods in the market decreases the price that vendors are able to ask for them and so more people are able to buy. If the inflow of new money is great enough to sustain this temporary effect for a while, producers are moved to escalate the improvement in their methods of manufacture and merchants their ways of exchange, whereas consumers' desire for luxury leads them to expect the availability of more items of increasingly luxurious quality, yet at the same or at lower price. As long as this effect of the inflow lasts, it seems that it is true that an increase of money cause an increase in the wealth of a nation. But the causal connection here is only apparent, for inflows of money affect people's incentives accelerating thus the industry, frugality and desire of luxury of the people. Unfortunately, the effect of sudden increases in the amount of money is only temporary, for when all the new money has been put into circulation, given that money only represents wealth, prices settle to a stable point and accordingly the industry, frugality and desire of luxury too. People stop perceiving that what they buy is cheap, their desire for luxury diminishes, merchants sell less and less and, correspondingly, the incentives that spurred producers' industry in the first place diminish. The

upshot in any case is that the real cause of wealth is moral: wealth is the effect of the passions and interests of people under the influence of commerce. The more refined the passions of individuals, the more wealth, and 'luxurious', their society.

In the essay "Of Commerce", Hume offers a similar argument to show the interest that governments ought to have in stimulating commerce if they want to promote the happiness of its subjects and the stability of their authority. The thrust of the argument is that only when the people of a state enjoy a well-developed commerce, can they produce wealth, so that the government can levy taxes without provoking uprisings or disturbing people's industry. In Hume's view, there is a direct proportion among these variables: the more fluid the commerce, the more wealth is produced and the more taxes the state is able to extract. This is the most 'natural and usual course of things' (E-Co 259), the 'common course of human affairs' (E-Co 260). By contrast, when commerce is absent:

> manufactures and mechanic arts are not cultivated, the bulk of the people must apply themselves to agriculture; and if their skill and industry encrease, there must arise a great superfluity from their labour beyond what suffices to maintain them. They have no temptation, therefore, to encrease their skill and industry; since they cannot exchange that superfluity for any commodities, which may serve either to their pleasure or vanity (E-Co 260-1).

As a matter of fact, under the shelter of commerce, industry, frugality and the desire of luxury reinforce one another. The more industry, the more money and commodities circulate. The increase of circulating money tends, due to merchants' industry, to accumulate in a few hands, and thus to stimulate the frugality of both producers and merchants. Once money is gathered into large stocks, there is money ready to go back to commerce, for their owners will want to lend at interest. Borrowers then are attracted to take the money and invest it in new industrial enterprises, offering a new opportunity for the satisfaction of the desire of luxury[267].

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[267] This is the dynamics that can be gathered from the following passages: 'Without commerce, the state must consist chiefly of landed gentry, whose prodigality and expence make a continual demand for borrowing; and of peasants, who have no sums to supply that demand. The money never gathers into large stocks or sums, which can be lent at interest. It is dispersed into numberless hands, who either squander it in idle show and magnificence, or employ it in the purchase of the common necessaries of life. Commerce alone assembles it into considerable sums; and this effect it has merely from the industry which it begets, and the frugality which it inspires, independent of that particular quantity of precious metal which may circulate in the state' (E-In 301-2). 'Where merchants possess great stocks, whether represented by few or many pieces of metal, it must frequently happen, that, when they either become tired of business, or leave heirs unwilling or unfit to engage in commerce, a great proportion of these

Hume thus conjectures how commerce refines avidity. Commerce turns the impulse that justice has regulated into new forms of satisfaction. People of refined avidity are, not only honest, but industrious, frugal and desirous of luxurious enjoyments. Furthermore, people of refined avidity are virtuous. In effect, in the *Treatise*, Hume counts industry and frugality among the virtues that are useful to ourselves:

> If we examine the panegyrics that are commonly made of great men, we shall find, that most of the qualities, which are attributed to them, may be divided into two kinds, *viz.* such as make them perform their part in society; and such as render them serviceable to themselves, and enable them to promote their own interest. Their *prudence, temperance, frugality, industry, assiduity, enterprize, dexterity,* are celebrated, as well as their *generosity* and *humanity* (SBN- 587; 3.3.1.24).

These virtues are useful to ourselves because they promote our 'interest'. By contrast, the vices related to 'extreme' indulgence 'incapacitate[] a man *always* for business, and [are] destructive to his interest' (SBN- 587; 3.3.1.24). Industry and frugality constitute, for Hume, the part of the catalogue of virtue of the qualities that 'capacitate[] a man best for the world, and carr[y] him farthest in any of his undertakings' (SBN- 610; T- 3.3.4.6):

> *Industry, perseverance, patience, activity, vigilance, application, constancy,* with other virtues of that kind, which 'twill be easy to recollect, are esteem'd valuable upon no other account, than their advantage in the conduct of life. 'Tis the same case with *temperance, frugality, oeconomy, resolution:* As on the other hand, *prodigality, luxury, irresolution, uncertainty,* are vicious, merely because they draw ruin upon us, and incapacitate us for business and action (SBN- 610-1; T- 3.3.4.7).

In the second *Enquiry*, Hume also classes industry and frugality as two qualities useful for ourselves: '[t]he best character, indeed, were it not rather too perfect for human nature, is that which is not swayed by temper of any kind; but alternately employs enterprise and caution, as

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riches naturally seeks an annual and secure revenue' (E-In 302). 'An extensive commerce, by producing large stocks, diminishes both interest and profits; and is always assisted, in its diminution of the one, by the proportional sinking of the other. I may add, that, as low profits arise from the encrease of commerce and industry, they serve in their turn to its farther encrease, by rendering the commodities cheaper, encouraging the consumption, and heightening the industry' (E-In 303). In "Of Refinement in the Arts" Hume argues: 'The encrease and consumption of all the commodities, which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantageous to society; because, at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of *storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service. In a nation, where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain or support its fleets and armies, from the industry of such slothful members' (E-RA 272).

each is *useful* to the particular purpose intended' (EPM- 237). By industry, individuals exhibit their 'enterprise', by frugality their 'caution'[268].

In regards to luxury, the Hume of the second *Enquiry* aligns himself with those authors 'who prove, or attempt to prove, that such refinements [i.e., luxury] rather tend to the increase of industry, civility, and [that the] arts regulate anew our *moral* as well as *political* sentiments, and represent, as laudable or innocent, what had formerly been regarded as pernicious and blameable' (EPM- 181). The virtuousness of the desire of luxury is defended at length in "Of Refinement in the Arts". In this essay, Hume displays a two-prong argument to show that the satisfaction of the desire of luxury, i.e., the 'great refinement in the gratification of the senses' (E-RA 268) is actually useful to ourselves and others. Hume organizes the discussion according to whether the effects of satisfying our desires with luxurious items affect private or public life. In private life, the satisfaction of the desire of luxury is both cause and effect of industry and thus a source of satisfaction of our natural desire for employment. The desire for luxury therefore stimulates the development of the mechanical and the liberal arts. This, in turn, motivates people to interact with each other in order to both communicate and exhibit their genius and capacities. The desire for luxury thus promotes the '*industry, knowledge* and *humanity*' (E-RA 270) of people. Indirectly, the desire for luxury also prevents people from seeking the satisfaction of base desires: '[t]he more men refine upon pleasure, the less will they indulge in excesses of any kind; because nothing is more destructive to true pleasure than such excesses' (E-RA 270).

In public life, the satisfaction of the desire for luxury also promotes beneficial consequences. First, consumption of luxurious items stimulates industry, which means that it

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[268] 'What need is there to display the praises of industry, and to extol its advantages, in the acquisition of power and riches, or in raising what we call a *fortune* in the world? (…) A man's time, when well husbanded, is like a cultivated field, of which a few acres produce more of what is useful to life, than extensive provinces, even of the richest soil, when over-run with weeds and brambles. But all prospect of success in life, or even of tolerable subsistence, must fail, where a reasonable frugality is wanting. The heap, instead of encreasing, diminishes daily, and leaves its possessor so much more unhappy, as, not having been able to confine his expences to a large revenue, he will still less be able to live contentedly on a small one (EPM- 237). Other passages in which Hume refers to industry and frugality as virtues is the following: 'Besides discretion, caution, enterprise, industry, assiduity, frugality, economy, good-sense, prudence, discernment; besides these endowments, I say, whose very names force an avowal of their merit, there are many others (…)' (EPM- 242). 'Can it possibly be doubted that industry, discretion, frugality, secrecy, order, perseverance, forethought, judgement, and this whole class of virtues and accomplishments, of which many pages would not contain the catalogue; can it be doubted, I say, that the tendency of these qualities to promote the interest and happiness of their possessor, is the sole foundation of their merit?' (EPM- 277).

creates a '*storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service' (E-RA 272). Second, the increase of industry that follows from consumption, naturally leads to an increase of knowledge, thereby awakening the interest for knowledge of other sorts, such as the knowledge and expertise required to produce reasonable laws and the ability of the subjects to realize the convenience of abiding by them. Industry in this sense paves the way to the motive of allegiance to government and thus to the possibility of stable political societies. Third, luxuries alters the character of nations, making people civilized in their private and political life: '[k]nowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity' (E-RA 273).

The conjectural account of commerce leaves us with a picture of individuals much more civilized and virtuous than the one left after the account of justice. Individuals are not only rule-abiding members of the convention of justice, but active pursuers of their own and others' happiness, within a system that coordinates the satisfaction of everybody's needs and that exploits efficiently their abilities. Relying on the same argument according to which the virtuous member of the convention of justice is able to feel pride in his behaviour, we can say that industrious actors of the commercial world are also able to take pride in their industry, frugality and taste. The pleasure of this pride, reflected in others by sympathy, feeds back on the impulses in their characters that motivated them to industry, frugality and refined enjoyment in the first place. In this way, virtuous motivation gains new force through the moral judgment of others and in this progressive fashion, the demands of both virtue and happiness progressively converge.

3.3. Government and the enforcement of justice

Although the laws of nature provide the conditions for the refinement of avidity, they are not self-enforcing. For sure, the benefits of industry and commerce are by themselves strong motivators for people to respect the particular rules that determine property and the exchange of goods and services, but according to Hume, a certain shortsightedness inherent to human nature easily pushes us off track. Particular acts of justice do not always coincide with the interest of individuals and often even conflict with it. Since we tend to 'yield to the solicitations of our

passions, which always plead in favour of whatever is near and contiguous' (SBN- 534; T-3.2.7.2), we are often tempted to break the rules of justice in favour of our short-term interests[269]. Government is an artifice designed to counter the occasional, yet system-threatening, failures to obey the rules of justice and the convention of promises. Government is primarily the artifice by means of which obedience to these rules is turned into a 'near and contiguous' interest by the threat of punishment.

What is the mechanism by which government emerges? As Hume points out, if it is true that individuals tend to prefer the contiguous over the remote, the breakdown of the system of justice is inevitable because the obvious mechanism that would secure obedience, i.e., 'the consent of men' (SBN- 535;T- 3.2.7.4), would be made useless by the same propensity. In effect, any commitment to overcome the propensity towards the contiguous is futile because honouring presupposes precisely that they are already able to overcome the propensity in question:

> This quality, therefore, of human nature, not only is very dangerous to society, but also seems, on a cursory view, to be incapable of any remedy. The remedy can only come from the consent of men; and if men be incapable of themselves to prefer remote to contiguous, they will never consent to any thing, which wou'd oblige them to such a choice, and contradict, in so sensible a manner, their natural principles and propensities (SBN- 535-6; T- 3.2.7.4).

The institution of government is the effect of a two-stage process in which individuals recognize their shortsightedness and use it to prevent its pernicious effects. In the first stage, individuals become aware of the distorting nature of their propensity to prefer the contiguous over the remote. This propensity, they realize, makes them care equally little for their long-term interests. However, they realize too that as time passes their preferences change and so that they gradually come to care more and more for approaching events, even if they once considered such

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[269] The temptation to break the rules of justice, however, need not always be narrowly self-interested. It can be righteous indignation, or a concern for the person against whom we break the rule or a concern for a third party: 'For what if he be my enemy, and has given me just cause to hate him? What if he be a vicious man, and deserves the hatred of all mankind? What if he be a miser, and can make no use of what I would deprive him of? What if he be a profligate debauchee, and would rather receive harm than benefit from large possessions? What if I be in necessity, and have urgent motives to acquire something to my family?' (SBN- 482; 3.2.1.13).

events of little importance[270]. Reflection on situations like these makes individuals aware of the perils that their propensity towards the contiguous expose them to. They realize that their bias may impact negatively the way they plan and prepare for the future. Still, while recognizing these sorts of problems, individuals also note that there is no easy remedy to cure this 'natural infirmity', given that "tis impossible to change or correct any thing material in our nature' (SBN-537; T- 3.2.7.6).

In the second stage, individuals realize that they can actually use the preference for the contiguous in their own favour, at least in cases that involve the violation of the rules of justice: first, by adopting a species of division of labour, the people who are the most interested in the stability of society are charged with the task of enforcing the laws of nature. They are appointed 'civil magistrates', 'kings', 'ministers', 'governors' and 'rulers' (SBN- 537; T- 3.2.7.6). Second, by endowing these selected people with the power to punish other members of the convention, the immediate interest of everyone in avoiding punishment is associated with their long-term interest in respecting the laws of justice.

In this way, by instituting a fundamental political inequality, the propensity for the contiguous is used to insure everyone's obedience to the rules of justice. Selected individuals, who presumably care most for the stability of society given their economical position, are made into guardians of the law, so that they care not only for injustices that affect them directly, but for any injustice in society at all[271]. Meanwhile, the rest of the population, who presumably want to

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[270] So, for example, if one learns at time t1 that one will have to go to war at time t2, which is away in time, at t1 one may care little or even feel courageous and willing to face the dangers of combat. Yet, as t2 approaches, the dangers of going to war become more real.

[271] In his *Treatise* account, Hume says that, for most people, seeing that justice is always done is a remote interest, but 'with respect to a few (…) who being indifferent persons to the greatest part of the state, have no interest, or but a remote one, in any act of injustice; and *being satisfied with their present condition, and with their part in society*, have an immediate interest in every execution of justice' (SBN- 537; T-3.2.7.6. My emphasis). This passage seems to suggest that Hume considers that the most natural candidates for government are those who already hold some economic position that makes them peculiarly interested in justice. This is somewhat at odds with the account offered in "Of the Origin of Government", in which Hume speculates that 'personal qualities of valour, force, integrity, or prudence', probably exhibited 'during state of war', determined the election of the first magistrates, and that after that, 'birth, rank and station' secured the authority of governors and maintained the distinction between subjects and rulers (E- OG-39). However, note the distinction between explaining the mechanism whereby government come to be and explaining the rationale behind the institution of government made later on in the text.

avoid punishment, are made legitimate target of the administration of justice, so that abiding by the law becomes one of their most immediate interests.

Yet, punishing breaches to the law is not the only way to protect the system of justice. The artifice of government fulfills another two fundamental functions. First, individuals who are resolute enough to regularly obey the laws of nature may be tempted to ignore these laws themselves, if they perceive that others do not comply: 'I should be the cully of my integrity, if I alone should impose on myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others' (SBN- 534; T- 3.2.7.3). So, government also prevents the probable disobedience caused by the lost of trust in fellow citizens, by generating the expectation that law-breakers will be punished[272]. The institution of government guarantees peace and security, so that subjects can develop their own trades and can take care of their own wellbeing[273].

Second, the government can also produce favourable and direct effects on individuals' wellbeing. On Hume's view, a good government has the power to affect the efficiency of commerce, the quality of life and the scope of liberty of its citizens, as well as the progress of the arts and sciences. In this sense, a large aspect of the progress and refinement of the passions depends on the quality of the government under which that individuals live. Indeed, a good government can promote commerce by building the necessary material infrastructure for the exchange of goods, e.g., roads, bridges, harbours, canals and armies for national defence:

> Two neighbours may agree to drain a meadow, which they possess in common; because 'tis easy for them to know each other's mind (…) But 'tis very difficult, and indeed impossible, that a

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[272] Notice the importance of producing this expectation. Given that industry and commerce are essentially competitive activities, based on interactions among people that may not know each other very well, engaging in commerce does not always provide opportunities for individuals to trust each other out of acquaintance or friendship. By creating the expectation of punishment for cheaters, the government creates the reliability needed for commercial interactions and thereby it supplies an important source of social trust.

[273] 'As for the practical arts, which increase the commodities and enjoyments of life, it is well known, that men's happiness consists not so much in an abundance of these, as in the peace and security with which they possess them; and those blessings can only be derived from good government' (E-PG- 55. My emphasis). In a similar sense: '[thanks to governments] men acquire a security against each other's weakness and passion, as well as against their own, and, under the shelter of their governors, begin to taste at ease the sweets of society and mutual assistance' (SBN 538; T 3.2.7.8).

thousand persons shou'd agree in any such action; it being difficult for them to concert so complicated a design, and still more difficult for them to execute it (…) Political society easily remedies both these inconveniences (SBN- 538; T- 3.2.7.8).

A good government can also intervene to fix social and economic inequalities. Hume insinuates along these lines that the gross inequality, typical of ancient monarchies, is thoroughly harmful to the health of the modern state and the wellbeing of the subjects. For instance, Hume believes that the system of values that monarchies and republics tend to promote end up affecting the appeal of certain professions. Hume notes for example that: '[c]ommerce (…) is apt to decay in absolute governments, not because it is less *secure*, but because it is less *honourable* (…) [in absolute governments], [b]irth, titles and place, must be honoured above industry and riches*' (E-CL- 93). Similarly, Hume thinks that a fair system of taxation, in the long-run, is the best policy both for modern republics and monarchies:

> The greatest abuses, which arise in FRANCE, the most perfect model of pure monarchy, proceed (…) from the expensive, unequal, arbitrary, and intricate method of levying (…) by which the industry of the poor, especially of the peasants and farmers, is, in a great measure, discouraged, and agriculture rendered a beggarly and slavish employment (E-CL 95).

At any rate, the fortune of a state is tied to the fortune of its citizens:

> The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent soever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men (E- Co- 255).

This mutual relationship between the fortune and wellbeing of citizens, on the one hand, and the proper operation of the government, on the other, is telling of Hume's conception of political legitimacy. For Hume, a government enjoys a presumption of legitimacy, if it is able to produce peace and security for its subjects, and further if it is able to promote commercial exchange and prosperity. In the end, the political power that governments exert is valid if it is useful. Hume's words on the right to resist in the *Treatise* are relevant here: 'in the case of enormous tyranny and oppression, it is lawful to take arms even against supreme power; and that, as government is a mere human invention, for mutual advantage and security, it no longer imposes any obligation, either natural or moral, when once it ceases to have that tendency'

(SBN- 563; T- 3.2.10.16). Surely, what constitutes and who defines when a government has ceased being of 'mutual advantage and security' for its citizens is a more complicated question.

It might be thought that Hume's account of the origin of government resembles contractarian theories of political power, particularly those where political power is taken as transferred from the people to the sovereign and in which the latter is subject to a sort of fiduciary duty[274]. Political leaders are elected by people's consent so they can rule and secure peace. But, it should be noted that if Hume's theory of government contains any contractarian element, it is not in this part of his account. Hume would like to distinguish two lines of argument about the government: one is the argument that explains why individuals create governments at all. This is the story just told where we find Hume's description of the psychological features and external circumstances that both require and make possible the institution of government. This story is not meant to figure out the probable mechanism whereby actual governments came to be. It simply tells us how to make sense of having an institution of such kind: government is a form of division of labour designed as a safeguard to justice and which operates by exploiting the propensity towards the contiguous that puts justice in peril. By contrast, Hume's account of the the probable mechanisms whereby actual governments came to be is developed in what he calls the 'sources of allegiance'. This is an account that narrates the peculiar conventional origin of government.

Noting the difference between these two lines of arguments about government is crucial to understand why Hume cannot be read as a contractarian. Besides the differences between 'contract' and 'convention' that Hume himself and many of his readers have noted, the distinction between an account of the *origin* and an account of the *sources* of government indicates a difference in how Hume uses of the notion of contract compared to how it is used among contractarians. Typical contractarian authors resort to the contract as a tool for modelling the nature of political obligation (Rawls 1971). Political obligation, they say, is like the obligation that derives from making a contract. One party concedes certain powers over its conduct to the other in the expectation of obtaining certain benefits in return. The model of a contract allows authors to stress, first, the voluntary nature of political obligation; second, the

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[274] The sort of social contract that Hampton calls 'agency social contract' (Hampton 1986, 3-4).

fact that political obligation is rational only on the assumption that it reports appreciable benefits to the subjects — benefits which would be impossible to obtain without government — and finally, it allows authors to set the limits to the rescindable character of political obligation (a.k.a. right of resistance). For contractarian authors, the contract models the *grounds* on which subjects are obliged to obey governments.

In contrast, Hume considers the hypothesis that rulers base their authority on the consent of the people in his discussion of the *sources* of allegiance, where he is trying to reconstruct how governments were possibly instituted. Hume believes that governments are conventional, but not in the same way as the gradual coincidence of wills that he described for justice and promises. The latter two conventions create artificial relations that are conditional and symmetrical: the obligation of each member to behave in the conventionally expected manner depends on the willingness of other members to do the same. The convention of government cannot have originated in a gradual convergence of wills because it creates an asymmetrical and almost inescapable sort of relation[275]. The very point of the institution of government is to endow some people with authority over others. So, for Hume, the gradual process that led to institute government needs to be one where people deferred authority in a single individual and committed themselves to follow his rule. It must be a convention of inequality. It is in this context that Hume sees any point in wondering whether people might have chosen their rulers consensually.

Yet, Hume sees this possibility with scepticism. He estimates that governments must have originated in situations of war, where the necessity of repealing external attacks made individuals trust their lives and actions to the leadership of an outstanding warrior. Hume also conjectures that these wars must have been foreign wars, to account for the fact that there was a 'people' at all that can be led. Warrior leaders were original rulers, and although they must have been 'endowed with superior personal qualities of valour, force, integrity, or prudence' (E-OG 39), their most plausible selling point was their capacity to defeat the enemy: '[c]amps are the true mothers of cities' (SBN- 540-1; T- 3.2.8.2). Once they are chosen in such circumstances, military leaders gradually settled their authority:

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[275] I mean 'almost inescapable' in the sense that only extreme tyranny, on Hume's view, authorizes people to outs their ruler (SBN- 551-2; T- 3.2.9.3-4).

> The long continuance of that state, an incident common among savage tribes, enured the people to submission; and if the chieftain possessed as much equity as prudence and valour, he became, even during peace, the arbiter of all differences, and could gradually, by a mixture of force and consent, establish his authority (E-OG 40).

In light of this account, we can see again how Hume's story differs from most contractarian hypothesis. First, Hume rejects the common description of a state of nature in which conflicts among individuals (or families) belonging to the same social group provoked the need of a central government. He considers that in such a situation it is impossible that a leader could have ever emerged, as there is no reason why politically free individuals would defer so totally to the judgment of a third party. It makes more sense to suppose that the conflicts were external and that a well-formed community, threatened by a foreign attack, had to choose among them a leader who could organize them to repel the menace. For Hume, thus, political government does not create society, in fact, government — or 'political society' — requires an already formed civil society. Second, Hume concedes that there is a species of consent in the election of the leader. But he also stresses that it is not the consensual character of the election that which makes the leader's authority valid. The legitimacy and stability of his power is secured both by his capacity to guarantee security and by sheer custom and habit:

> The prince or leader exclaims against every disorder, which disturbs his society. He summons all his partizans and all men of probity to aid him in correcting and redressing it (…) Habit soon consolidates what other principles of human nature had imperfectly founded; and men, once accustomed to obedience, never think of departing from that path, in which they and their ancestors have constantly trod, and to which they are confined by so many urgent and visible motives (E-OG 39).

Hume thus reduces the explanatory role of the 'consent of men' to its minimum expression. He concedes that it may be possible that in some isolated instances consent might have been the way in which some societies established their governments (E-OC 474-5). But he admits this as a rare occurrence, and even then, he doubts that the consent of the people could have been entirely free[276]. Hume's position, in the end, is that the obligation to obey political

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[276] Hume writes: 'My intention here is not to exclude the consent of the people from being one just foundation of government where it has place. It is surely the best and most sacred of any. I only pretend, that it has very seldom had place in any degree, and never almost in its full extent' (E-OC 474).

authority cannot be modelled in the image of a contract and that consent is not the probable cause of the origin of governments[277].

Rather surprisingly, it is the establishment of a government the event that paves the way to the emergence of the love of liberty, in direct opposition to the contractarian idea that freedom precedes government. As McArthur (2005, 125-6) notes, Hume offers two accounts of the origin of government, one 'much darker [and realistic] in tone' than the other. The first is the account of the *Treatise* in which Hume holds that first rulers were chosen among people peculiarly concerned with the execution of justice. McArthur notes rightly that in the *Treatise* Hume does not touch on the problem that the rulers might become despots who exert injustice against the people. The second account is offered in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences". In this essay, Hume does recognize the problem and in fact seems to look at it as an inevitable consequence of the fact that, as population rises and territory expands, monarchs need to delegate their exercise of power down onto 'lesser magistrates', local judges, tax collectors or provinces governors, who have every incentive to become petty despots.

Indeed, the account presented in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" shows the way in which early monarchical governments must have looked: 'if the people, either by conquest, or by the ordinary course of propagation, encrease to a great multitude, the monarch, finding it impossible, in his own person, to execute every office of sovereignty, in every place, must delegate his authority to inferior magistrates' (E-RP 115-6). The holders of delegated power follow the example of the monarch and rule over their people in 'unrestrained and uninstructed' ways: with full power as if subjects were of their property, but with negligence as if they belonged to another (E-RP 117). The consequence of such rule is the slavery and debasement of the people.

Early monarchies are 'barbarous', yet they are governments nonetheless, given that even under the rule of a tyrant, people still can find 'security against mutual violence and injustice'

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[277] In the *Treatise*'s section 'Of the source of allegiance' and in his essay "Of the Original Contract", Hume develops an impressive battery of arguments against this contractarian position. I need not examine these arguments in further detail for my present purposes.

(E-RP 115). But this is an exiguous level of security[278]. The next step in the conjectural account points to the people's desire that their interests be adjudicated according to 'universal and inflexible' laws — in the sense given to these terms in Hume's discussion of the rules of justice — rather than according to the whims of the local petty magistrate.

Now, in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", Hume points out that such step presupposes a considerable development of the experience of living under a government. Indeed, 'it requires great penetration and experience' (E-RP 116) both to discern that general rules are less inconvenient for the administration of justice than the 'discretionary' decisions of particular magistrates and also to find out which general rules fit best the classes of cases brought before the judges. Paradoxically, such penetration and experience are difficult to acquire in a monarchical environment. Unless an exceptional wise monarch emerges, the debasing policy of barbarous monarchies makes impossible that the king or his petty magistrates can ever become 'sensible of the necessity of balancing his government upon general laws' (E-RP 117). In fact, Hume believes that the realization of the necessity of laws must appear only once the conditions for the cultivation and development of the sciences are given, but this is prevented precisely by the 'barbarous policy' of these sort of governments: 'A people, governed after such a manner, are slaves in the full and proper sense of the word; and it is impossible they can ever aspire to any refinements of taste or reason' (E-RP 117).

What is then the path through which governments can go from barbarity to civilization? Hume ignores this question in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences'. He supposes that the love of liberty, presumably, of stronger nature in some people than in others, along with time and experience, produce sooner or later republics, i.e., governments regulated by general laws. However, in "Of Refinement in the Arts", he suggests that the love of liberty is a consequence of the development of industry and commerce:

> where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property,

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[278] McArthur (2005) provides an insightful interpretation of what Hume might have meant by calling a government ruled through laws a 'civilized government' as opposed to a 'barbarous' one.

and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. These submit not to slavery, like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign (E-RA 277-8).

Love of liberty, it seems, is born out of the typical temper of tradesmen and merchants and their attitude towards the rule of government. This might be why Hume characterizes it in its incipient form as a sort of 'impatience' to 'bear the yoke of tyranny' (E-RP 117), that gradually gives way to 'the necessity to restrain the magistrates, in order to preserve liberty' (E-RP 117). So, apparently, camps are the mothers of cities, and shops are their fathers.

At any rate, as the sciences and arts are transplanted into monarchies, this form of government gradually transforms itself into a 'civilized monarchy', that is, into a form of monarchy where the power of every official, except the king's, is limited by law[279]. Hume sees the vindication of liberty that limits the power of government as a convenient development. He says that 'civilized monarchies' and republics of modern times are more powerful if they establish, first, a system of checks and balances among all parts of the mechanism of government and, second, a system for the exercise of power by means of laws, rather than by capricious commands[280]. Laws regulate, not only the authority of the rulers, but also the liberty of the people. Laws are convenient compromises between the authority that governments need to wield, if they are to rule at all, and the liberty that citizens require, if they are to seek their wellbeing on their own[281].

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[279] Curiously, Hume excludes the king of civilized monarchies from submission to the law: 'In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power, which is not bounded by any thing but custom, example, and the sense of his own interest. Every minister or magistrate, however eminent, must submit to the general laws, which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner, which is prescribed' (E-RP 125).

[280] 'But though all kinds of government be improved in modern times, yet monarchical government seems to have made the greatest advances towards perfection. It may now be affirmed of civilized monarchies, what was formerly said in praise of republics alone, that they are a government of Laws, not of Men. They are found susceptible of order, method, and constancy, to a surprising degree' (E-CL 94).

[281] In this sense, Hume talks of a 'perpetual intestine struggle (…) between AUTHORITY and LIBERTY' as an inherent feature of civilized governments (E-OG 40). This is a struggle that has varied with time: in modern times, Hume suggests, individuals expect more liberty than in ancient ones, and thus governments need to impose their authority with moderation. Hume does not equate free government to the republican form, although he thinks that a republic is by definition a free government. He allows that a monarchy can be ruled through laws and so becomes an instance of free government. As a matter of fact,

Now, although Hume seems to believe that some governments are better than others, he holds that almost every government deserves obedience. The argument to support this claim has two parts. The first is the account of the origin of morality or immorality attached to obedience and disobedience. The story here goes pretty much like the story of the morality of justice and promises[282]. The second part is the account of the measures of allegiance. There, Hume argues that given that interest is the foundation of government, whenever rulers fail to satisfy it, 'carr[ying] [their] oppression so far as to render [their] authority perfectly intolerable, we are no longer bound to submit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must cease also' (SBN- 551; T- 3.2.9.2). Hume extends this reasoning to the moral obligation of obedience and, while conceding, that due to our propensity to follow general rules, individuals may be prone to extend their obedience even when their interest ceases, Hume affirms, once rulers become tyrants, there is no immorality in disobedience. According to this argument then Hume seems to advocate a generous version of the right of resistance.

However, in the next section, Hume qualifies his previous claim. Although, 'in sound politics and morality', there are good arguments for resisting rulers, in practice '[w]e ought always to weigh the advantages, which we reap from authority, against the disadvantages; and by this means we shall become more scrupulous of putting in practice the doctrine of resistance' (SBN- 554; T- 3.2.10.1). The morality of obeying government has thus 'measures', that is, it is a relative obligation. For one, it is an obligation contingent on the rulers' success in securing peace, and yet for another, what being a 'tyrant' is and how convenient is to outs him are both empirical and pragmatical questions that need to be answered in a case-by-case basis (Dees 1992).

That it is so difficult in practice to establish the degree to which individuals must obey their governments makes equally difficult for the agent to know what acting virtuously in regards to allegiance means. Still, given the utility of governments, obedience produced by the motive of

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he believes that Britain is the best example of mixed government, where liberty is best preserved than in any other modern regime (E- BG 47).

[282] ''Tis the same principle, which causes us to disapprove of all kinds of private injustice, and in particular of the breach of promises. We blame all treachery and breach of faith; because we consider, that the freedom and extent of human commerce depend entirely on a fidelity with regard to promises. We blame all disloyalty to magistrates; because we perceive, that the execution of justice, in the stability of possession, its translation by consent, and the performance of promises, is impossible, without submission to government' (SBN- 545-6; T- 3.2.8.7).

allegiance is generally virtuous. Assuming individuals live under a just government, being loyal is a disposition that contributes to happiness. In this as in the case of justice and commerce, developing the trait that enables individuals to perform well in the convention converge with what promotes their wellbeing.

Chapter 6
The Convergence of Curiosity, the Social Affections and Virtue

1. Introduction

I turn now to the conjectural histories that trace the regulation and refinement of curiosity and the social affections. My purpose in this chapter is to complete the argument — started in the previous one — that the motivational impulse of virtue derives from the convergence between the concern for happiness and the sense of virtue. Whereas justice, commerce and government regulate and refine the pleasant activity characteristic of individuals' 'avidity', we will see in this chapter that artistic and scientific practices and the rules of polite interaction regulate and refine the pleasures of curiosity and the social affections.

Hume calls curiosity and the social affections 'delicate and refined' passions, meaning that they are passions typically experienced and cultivated by a fewer number of people compared to 'universal' passions such as avidity, which whether in its 'rude' or regulated and refined versions, it is acted upon by almost everybody in society. That curiosity and the social affections are cultivated only by a few is partly explained by their very nature: these affections presuppose tempers particularly inclined to study and reflection, naturally gifted with creativity or inquisitiveness or particularly inclined to lively and frequent social exchange.

More importantly, however, is that just because how the arts, the sciences and the settings for the display of politeness fit into the set of practices and institutions that constitute society — i.e., modern European societies — not everybody has a chance to cultivate curiosity or the social affections to the same degree. In effect, a robust set of economic and social conditions must be in place for a few to be able to fully enjoy the exercise of these passions: an efficient economic system where the roles of production are sufficiently diversified to allow some individuals the 'leisure and security' required for intellectual and artistic pursuits; a well-developed commerce, domestic and international, able to put individuals from different backgrounds in contact and set the basis for the exchange of ideas; and finally, a relatively peaceful and prosperous social life that permits individuals to gather in cities, and moreover, that facilitates the availability of time

and appropriate conditions to engage in conversation, debate of ideas and the exhibition of talents and possessions.

Given this institutional dependence of the cultivation of curiosity and the social affections on legal, economic and social practices and institutions, it is plausible to assume that in Hume's conjectural account, the development of the 'delicate and refined' passions presupposes the regulation and refinement of the 'universal' passion of avidity and of the establishment and smooth operation of its associated conventions. In other words, in the order of conjectural history, the regulation and refinement of avidity comes before the regulation and refinement of curiosity and the social affections.

In this chapter, before reconstructing the conjectural account of the arts and sciences and politeness, I examine the methodological discussion where Hume indicates this relation between the 'universal' or 'common' passions, on the one hand, and the 'delicate and refined', on the other. Then I move onto the conjectural histories of curiosity and the social affections, which I preface with a short digression on Hume's conception of 'elegant' pleasure or enjoyment.

The reconstruction of the histories of curiosity and the social affections brings my case for the convergence between happiness and virtue to its end. In a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, individuals achieve a degree of regulation and refinement of the passions such that the search for the civilized satisfaction of their affections converge with what they recognize as virtuous. However, on the face of it, my convergence claim seems to suggest that individuals act virtuously for their happiness's sake. At some level of generality, this is correct, but it also might give way to the following objection. If individuals act virtuously for their happiness's sake, my claim might be read as saying either that in a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, virtue is defined in terms of happiness (a species of utilitarianism), or that although virtue is defined independently of happiness, individuals act virtuously only in those occasions in which doing so promotes their own particular happiness (a generalized version of the sensible knave case). To deal with this objection, and at the same time, lay the argument on which Hume's approach to the second concern of the problem of moral motivation is based, I pursue Hume's notion of 'reflection' in the last section of this chapter and claim that there is a form of reflection, not explicitly mentioned by Hume, that explains how individuals come to be motivated by happiness *and* virtue. I show that the real import of my convergence thesis is that in a 'polished' and

'luxurious' society, the regulation and refinement of individuals' passions produce a psychological transformation such that the distinction between acting for virtue's and acting for happiness' sake disappears: individuals' psychology is shaped in such a way that what they see as contributing to their happiness *is* what they see as the virtuous way of acting.

2. 'Universal' and 'common' vs. 'delicate and refined' passions

In "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", Hume classifies curiosity as a 'delicate and refined' passion. The context of this classification is the problem of how to identify 'general and stable causes'[283], which are able to explain 'human affairs', by contrast to accidental causes, which cannot remove chance and therefore leave us in ignorance. Accordingly, as Hume puts it, the key skill of the moral philosopher consists in discerning what can be attributed to 'general and stable causes' and what to 'chance' (E-RP 111). In this context, Hume proposes a methodological rule seemingly intended to tell us which events can be attributed to 'general and stable causes' and thus are plausible object of explanation and which cannot and have to be attributed to chance: 'what depends upon a few persons, is, in great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes; what arises from a great number may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes' (E-RP 112). The reasons that Hume offers to support this rule embody probabilistic good sense[284]. However, Hume implies that if the moral scientist were to follow such rule, he would lose a large part of his subject matter. He could scarcely be able to account for violent revolutions, invasions, 'foreign politics' or for the rise and progress of the

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[283] The problem of identifying 'general and stable causes' of moral phenomena appears once and again in Hume's essays. In some of them, Hume seems to say that the problem is insoluble. See in this sense "That Politics May Be Reduced to Science", "Of Civil Liberty", "Of Eloquence", and "Of Some Remarkable Customs". Arguably, what Hume seems to doubt in these essays is that human experience of political organization is large enough to allow the scientist the formulation of 'maxims' on which to base sound political decisions.

[284] First, it is safer to ascertain the stable patterns of a phenomenon, if one has observed it in a large number of occasions, than if one has done it in a few. The sheer number of the sample would give one the chance to correct possible biasses or deviations. Second, mirroring the previous observation, causes that operate on a large number of instances tend to be the causes less liable to exceptions; by contrast, causes that operate on the few 'are commonly so delicate and refined, that the smallest incident (…) is sufficient to divert its course' (E-RP 112).

arts and sciences — the very topic of the essay! — for all these phenomena depend on a small number of people.

By this implication, I take it, Hume undermines the idea that his proposed rule is a criterion for telling which moral phenomena can be explained from which cannot. It seems more plausible to see the distinction between 'what arises from a great number' and 'what depends upon a few persons' as a difference between classes of moral causes (passions and motives) that deserve distinctive modes of theoretical treatment. The distinction points to two sorts of explanations that are supported by two different sorts of reasoning. The issue would not be so much about the number of people involved in the phenomena, as it would be about the scope of influence that different passions and motives are able to exert. If this reading is correct, the proposed rule calls the moral scientist's attention to the conditions that allow a given set of passions and motives to arise in people's characters and to operate as the moral causes of their actions.

To support this interpretation, note first the set of contrasts that Hume raises in this section of the essay (from E-RP 112 to 115) and by means of which he attempts to clarify the distinction that follows from his proposed rule. Hume opposes: i) 'general and stable causes' to 'chance', ii) 'common affections' to 'peculiar' ones, iii) 'passions of grosser and more stubborn nature' to 'delicate and refined' passions, iv) passions reducible to 'general maxims or observations' to passions accountable for by 'good reasons', v) 'universal passions' to passions of 'limited influence', vi) passions that 'operate at all times, in all places and upon all persons' to passions which require 'external conditions', and finally, vii) affairs influenced by 'general passions and interests' to affairs influenced by 'whim, folly or caprice'.

The contrasts in i) and vii) are equivalent as long as they present the extremes of a full and satisfactory explanation, on the one hand, and that of the absence of explanation, on the other. Affairs produced by 'general passions and interests' are appropriately attributed to 'general and stable causes'. This constitutes the ideal form of explanation on Hume's conception: an explanation that account for the affair by identifying its causes and which allows extrapolation to future events. In contrast, affairs influenced by 'whim folly or caprice' can only be attributed to 'chance'. In this case, explanation by means of moral causes is not possible; the only available form of explanation would be to know the particular temper of the particular people involved in

the affair. Still, although such knowledge might satisfy our curiosity, it leaves us with no lesson for the future.

If we look at the other set of contrasts, however, it becomes evident that 'what depends upon a few persons' is not wholly inexplicable or without general cause. Contrasts ii) to vi) repeat the point of the ideal form of explanation: 'common affections' or 'universal passions' are of 'grosser' and 'more stubborn nature', 'operate at all times, in all places and upon all persons' and thus are easily reducible to 'general maxims or observations'. However, since one of the features of the 'peculiar' affections is that their operation requires 'external conditions', there is a sort of moral cause involved in their activity. The task of the moral scientist is to identify where it is plausible that such 'external conditions' have hold, and then on this basis, figure out the 'good reasons' that might be able to account for their 'delicate and refined' nature[285].

So, the theoretical treatment of 'delicate and refined' affections proceeds by a species of indirect inference from the 'general and stable' causes of the 'universal' affections, as we will see below in the case of the affections behind the arts and sciences. We know that the former affections require the presence of external conditions and that these external conditions are produced by the operation of universal passions. The moral scientist can explain and predict the operation of 'delicate and refined' passions at a given time and place, by establishing whether certain 'universal' passions took place or not. Evidently, the explanation of the emergence and cultivation of 'delicate and refined' passions is indirect and probably of a second-best sort. We are able to explain the operation of peculiar passions only mediately — i.e., to 'good reasons' —

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[285] The distinction between 'common' or 'universal' affections, on the one hand, and 'peculiar', 'delicate and refined', on the other, is not exclusive to the essay on the arts and sciences. The distinction seems at work in several of Hume's texts. In "Of the Standard of Taste", we can see the same distinction operating in Hume's description of criticism — a sort of aesthetic expertise — where the aesthetic sense is described as composed of 'finer emotions of the mind' and of 'very tender and delicate nature' (E-ST 232).

This in opposition to our moral sense, which is 'a general and steady point of view' that presumably everyone can adopt, if not to alter the passions, at least to correct moral language. Furthermore, Hume employs the same distinction in his characterization of delicacy of passion and delicacy of taste in the essay of this name. The same opposition also underlies the difference between our universal propensity towards religion and our preference for artistic pursuits (E-NC 199 fn3), or our general tendency towards overweening conceit and our natural inclination for modesty (SBN- 592; T- 3.3.2.1).

because we cannot reduce them directly to general maxims and observations. Still, it is a better explanation than no explanation at all or than that explanation which pretends to tell why particular characters, such as Homer, Fabius or Scipio were born in such and such a place and time, as Hume comments in the essay (E-RP 114-5).

In the case of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, we will see later in this chapter that curiosity, the passion that grounds these practices, is explained indirectly by means the social conditions that allowed its arising in the tempers of some individuals. For Hume, curiosity is a 'delicate and refined' passion that cannot arise if individuals are reduced to slavery and debasement. Therefore, if we are to explain how some individuals in modern societies can indulge their curiosity and produce works of arts and scientific discoveries, we need to figure out how it might have been possible that pre-modern societies established environments of security and liberty of thought. The account offered by Hume begins with the 'common' and 'universal' passions that produce governments subjected to law. He says that the 'impatience' with which the people, particularly producers and merchants, bear 'the yoke of tyranny' (E-RP 117) starts the chain of events that ends up in modern republics. Once the love of liberty is somewhat established among people brought up under this rule: 'From law arises security: From security curiosity: And from curiosity knowledge' (E-RA 118).

The distinction between 'universal' and 'delicate and refined' passions and the methodological relation alluded by Hume provide a good reason to believe that his conjectural accounts exhibit a particular order regarding the emergence and development of the passions: first come 'universal' and 'common' passions, followed by those that are 'peculiar', 'delicate and refined'. Besides the conjectural history of the arts and sciences, Hume applies the same logic in "Of Refinement in the Arts". Relying on the argument developed in "Of Commerce", Hume affirms that the very possibility of any sort of luxury depends on the existence of a relatively organized and well developed commercial exchange: 'the indulging of any delicacy in meat, drink, or apparel [species of luxury]' (E-RA 269) presupposes the existence of manufacture, industry and a well-spread trade. That is why Hume's case in "Of Refinement in the Arts" proceeds upon the assumption that the goodness or harm of luxury must be evaluated in times 'when the industry and the arts flourish' (E-RA 270). The refinement of the 'universal' passion of avidity, which underlies commerce, set the conditions for the refinement in the

gratification of the senses. Moreover, Hume goes on even farther as to say that 'when industry and the [mechanical] arts flourish', the passions behind the liberal arts emerge and refine as well:

> The same age, which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers, and ship-carpenters. We cannot reasonably expect, that a piece of woollen cloth will be wrought to perfection in a nation, which is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected. The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science (E-RA 270-1).

The fertile soil of times of industry constitutes the condition for the strengthening and refinement of benevolence and the social affections. Then, resorting to the image of a chain, Hume describes the causes of refinement in at least three groups of passions. The grounding link is avidity, regulated and refined by commercial activity, and by the laws of justice and government. Its regulated and refined satisfaction produces the flourishing of industry, and therefore, allows the material and institutional conditions for the refinement in the gratification of the senses and the cultivation of the liberal arts. In such an environment, at least some people are increasingly stimulated to invest their energies in the satisfaction of curiosity. Then, the desire for conversation and mutual exhibition comes in: 'is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations[?]' (E-RA 271) Hume answers:

> They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment' (E-RA 271).

There is thus good evidence to claim that for Hume the cultivation of 'delicate and refined' passions presuppose the emergence and regulation of the 'universal' or 'common'. The existence of governments regulated by laws, which responds to the desire for security and love of freedom, constitutes a condition for the emergence and progress of curiosity and thus a condition

for the arts and sciences: 'According to the necessary progress of things, law must precede science' (E-RP 118 footnote b). The existence of organized commercial activity, which embodies the regulation and refinement of avidity, makes luxury possible, contributing thus to the exercise of curiosity and the strengthening and diversification of sociability: 'Thus *industry, knowledge,* and *humanity,* are linked together by an indissoluble chain' (E-RA 271)[286].

3. 'Elegant' pleasure and the regulation and refinement of the 'delicate' passions

My claim in this section is that Hume considers the practice of the arts and sciences and of polite exchange as a contribution to human happiness insofar as they promote a specific sort of pleasure or enjoyment. This is the enjoyment of the exercise of the mind, either in the form of the pursuit of truth, the appreciation of beauty or the social exchange with diverse kinds of people. To this end, it may be useful to discuss Hume's conception of refined enjoyment behind the 'delicate and refined' passions as it appears in the discourse of "The Epicurean" 'Or, *The man of elegance and pleasure*' (E-Ep 138) and in Hume's own voice in the essay "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion"[287]. Indeed, parallel to my observation that one of the repeated patterns that

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[286] This does not exclude the possibility that the influence of 'peculiar' passions contributes to a further refinement of the 'universal' ones that helped their own emergence. Hume mentions this possibility in his account of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences. Once the sciences begin to be cultivated among the citizens of republics, the first developments of knowledge refine the political skills required to produce better and fairer laws (E-RP 117). That 'universal' passions precede and prepare the appearance and refinement of 'peculiar' ones does not exclude either that the first may become an obstacle for the emergence of 'peculiar', 'delicate and refined' affections. In his criticism to the notion of miracles in the first *Enquiry*, Hume stresses that the universal passions of surprise and love of wonder, joined to religious enthusiasm and vanity, are inimical to the cultivation of judgment: 'But if the spirit of religion join itself to the love of wonder, there is an end of common sense; and human testimony, in these circumstances, loses all pretensions to authority. A religionist may be an enthusiast, and imagine he sees what has no reality: he may know his narrative to be false, and yet persevere in it, with the best intentions in the world, for the sake of promoting so holy a cause: or even where this delusion has not place, vanity, excited by so strong a temptation, operates on him more powerfully than on the rest of mankind in any other circumstances; and self-interest with equal force' (EHU 117-8).

[287] It is a debated matter where to locate Hume's authorial voice in the four essays on happiness. Fogelin has argued that we can find Hume under the 'thinnest possible disguise' (1985, 119) in the Sceptic's speech. This upon the supposition that the Sceptic's role is to show the failures of the three previous sects. I do not find this reading very convincing. Instead, following the lead of Watkins (2014), I believe that it makes more sense to read each of the four essays as presenting some of Hume's actual views. This assumes that Hume's project in the four essays is to subject his views to criticism and moderation in the

characterizes the exertion and satisfaction of the refined versions of 'avidity' is that of pleasant activity, the pattern that characterizes the regulation and refinement of curiosity and the social affections is that of 'elegant pleasure'.

The dialectic of "The Epicurean" is propelled by the narrator's zeal to vindicate the primacy of nature in the search for human happiness. Presumably, against the stoic who advocates some radical version of rationalistic *apatheia,* the Epicurean claims that only 'on my original frame and structure does my happiness depend' (E-Ep 139), a frame and structure naturally designed for the delight of the passions. For the Epicurean, slogans of stoic teaching according to which happiness consists in 'making ourselves happy within ourselves', 'feasting on our own thoughts', 'being satisfied with the consciousness of well-doing, and (…) despising all assistance and all supplies from external objects' (E-Ep 140) appear as nonsensical forms of '*artificial happiness*'. Yet, the target of the Epicurean is not so much the attempt to search for human happiness in intellectual activity, as it is that the stoic ignores the variety of worthy pleasures for which nature has originally designed us, in favour of the pleasure produced by 'pride' or 'glory'[288].

To be sure, what the Epicurean calls pride or glory is slightly different from what Hume refers to by the same terms in other texts. Pride and glory here seem to denote the sort of pleasure taken in the praise that other people give to us upon the appearance that we managed to align our natural desires and passions to the ideals of happiness derived from a philosophical system. In this way, the stoic is the one who craves the praise given to him by others because he apparently leads a rational and non-passionate life. For the Epicurean, however, this effort fails, first, because regimenting one's natural desires in such a way does not 'consult [natural] passions and inclinations' (E-Ep 141). And second, and more importantly, because the pleasure of glory is insufficient to make anyone happy by its own: it is 'impotent', cannot 'support itself', and

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discussion with opposing points of view. In the text that follows, I present some of the Epicurean's positions as if they were Hume's, yet I back up the claim that such positions were really endorsed by him, by pointing to parallel views in "Of Delicacy of Taste and Passion". I follow a similar strategy in section 4 of this chapter when I introduce the views of the Sceptic. I back up the idea that are also Hume's with passages from the second *Enquiry*.

[288] In reading the Epicurean's discourse in this way, I differ to some extent from Immerwahr's interpretation (Immerwahr 1989), which stresses the contrast between nature and artifice throughout the four essays on happiness.

demands 'infinite pains and attention' (E-Ep 140). As the character Damon describes it later in the essay, glory's pleasure is 'an echo, a dream, nay the shadow of a dream, dissipated by every wind, and lost by every contrary breath of the ignorant and ill-judging multitude' (E-Ep 143). The case against the reduction of the natural pleasures of life to the pleasure of pride and glory is threefold. First, the stoic's glory depends for its sustenance on other people's opinions. It is thus a vain pleasure that depends on the stoic constantly flaunting his philosophical composure to convince others of being worthy of their praise and admiration. Second, since the pleasure of pride depends in this way on his external appearance, the stoic ends up shutting his mind down to other people lest he may betray his actual and natural inclinations. Finally, since the intellectual disciple required of the stoic is unnatural, it is not one in which the mind can engage in pleasant activity, and therefore, according to the discussion in chapter 5, it is an activity that cannot be sustained without causing great violence to the agent's mind[289].

Interestingly, a large part of the Epicurean's discourse can be read as a criticism against misguided forms of refining pleasure. The stoic philosopher recognizes that not every sort of pleasure is conducive to genuine happiness. Yet, he errs, in the Epicurean's eyes, by misidentifying the best form of refinement. This reading is confirmed by the fact that the Epicurean neither champions a thoughtlessly hedonistic lifestyle, nor does he advocate that happiness consists in the indiscriminate rejoicing of any sort of pleasure. At least in that, the Epicurean and his target stoic agree. However, the Epicurean advocates a form of pleasure refinement associated with the 'elegant', which given his emphasis on the providence of nature, we must understand as the best natural expression of pleasure. In this regard, the Epicurean seems to understand such natural and elegant pleasure as the effect of indulging the passions with the enhancements, but also within the limits of a shared social world.

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[289] There is some resemblance between the Epicurean's description of his stoic antagonist and Hume's description of the character of clergymen in "Of National Characters": 'It must, therefore, happen, that clergymen, (…) will find it necessary, on particular occasions, to feign more devotion than they are, at that time, possessed of, and to maintain the appearance of fervor and seriousness, even when jaded with the exercises of their religion, or when they have their minds engaged in the common occupations of life. They must not, like the rest of the world, give scope to their natural movements and sentiments: They must set a guard over their looks and words and actions: And in order to support the veneration paid them by the multitude, they must not only keep a remarkable reserve, but must promote the spirit of superstition, by a continued grimace and hypocrisy' (E-NC 199 fn3).

Indeed, the Epicurean tells us that the colours of roses and the flavours of fruits and wines — symbols of the natural enjoyments to which our passions drive us — pale by satiation, if unaccompanied by the virtue and wisdom that one can only cultivate along with others: '[i]n our chearful discourses, better than in the formal reasonings of the schools, is true wisdom to be found. In our friendly endearments, better than in the hollow debates of statesmen and pretended patriots, does true virtue display itself' (E-Ep 142). In fact, the danger of reducing the variety of pleasures naturally pursued by our passions to the 'impotent' pleasure of intellectual pride is not the only one that the Epicurean fears. At the other extreme, the Epicurean warns against the brutish or barbarous pleasures of Bacchus who, unlike the stoic, does focus the passions on their natural external objects, but does so in inelegant and socially disruptive ways: '[f]ear not, my friends, that the barbarous dissonance of Bacchus, and of his revellers, should break in upon this entertainment, and confound us with their turbulent and clamorous pleasures' (E-Ep 142). The refinement of the passions, says the Epicurean, is the effect of shared and *'elegant'* enjoyments, where sympathy enables individuals to undertake a collaborative search for happiness:

> The vapours of this sprightly nectar now again play around my heart; while you partake of my delights, and discover in your chearful looks, the pleasure which you receive from my happiness and satisfaction. The like do I receive from yours; and encouraged by your joyous presence, shall again renew the feast (E-Ep 142).

To confirm this reading on Hume's view on the refinement of pleasure and its relation to happiness, let us turn to "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion", where Hume anticipates some of the themes of "The Epicurean"[290]. Delicacy of passion is the form of sensibility, or rather, hyper-sensibility, towards the objects and situations that we randomly encounter in everyday life. This delicacy is very much counterproductive to happiness, for as Hume says, it 'makes [people] extremely sensible to all the accidents of life' (E-DT 3-4). By contrast, delicacy of taste, although directed at the same objects as delicacy of passion, focuses on their beauty and deformity, and so it motivates us to engage in the practice of criticism and the liberal arts, gradually making us selective of the objects and people we want to appreciate. The activities motivated by delicacy of taste produce a refinement in our preferences and an alteration in our

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[290] "Of Delicacy of Taste and Passion" was published in 1741, "The Epicurean" in 1742.

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perspective of the world: '[by cultivating delicacy of taste] [o]ur judgment will strengthen by this exercise: We shall form juster notions of life: Many things, which please or afflict others, will appear to us too frivolous to engage our attention: And we shall lose by degrees that sensibility and delicacy of passion, which is so incommodious' (E-DT 6).

Remarkably, to make his case in favour of delicacy of taste, Hume again sets a contrast between two extreme ways of pursuing happiness. One extreme is represented by delicacy of passion itself, which fails to secure human happiness because '[g]ood or ill fortune is very little at our disposal: And when a person, that has this sensibility of temper, meets with any misfortune, his sorrow or resentment takes entire possession of him, and deprives him of all relish in the common occurrences of life; the right enjoyment of which forms the chief part of our happiness' (E-DT 4). The other extreme is represented by those philosophers who 'have endeavoured to render happiness entirely independent of every thing external' (E-DT 5). These misguided ways to pursue happiness are similar to Bacchus's and to the stoic philosopher's of "The Epicurean". That is why the failure in each case rests either in pursuing the pleasures demanded by nature in inelegant ways or in running away from them to take refuge in the 'impotent' pleasures of the vain yet isolated mind. The middle ground is marked instead by a sort of epicurean 'elegance':

> nothing is so improving to the temper as the study of the beauties, either of poetry, eloquence, music, or painting. They give a certain *elegance of sentiment* to which the rest of mankind are strangers. The emotions which they excite are soft and tender. They draw off the mind from the hurry of business and interest; cherish reflection; dispose to tranquillity; and produce an agreeable melancholy, which, of all dispositions of the mind, is the best suited to love and friendship (E-DT 6-7. My emphasis)[291].

In "Of Delicacy of Taste and Passion", Hume emphasizes that delicacy of sentiment shields one's happiness from the ups and downs of fortune, but also that such delicacy enables one to properly enjoy the pleasures available in the world of external objects. Furthermore, like

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[291] Or as Hume has previously stated in the same essay: '[E]very wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects chiefly as depend upon himself: and *that* is not to be *attained* so much by any other means as by this **delicacy of sentiment**. When a man is possessed of that talent, he is more happy by what pleases his taste, than by what gratifies his appetites, and receives more enjoyment from a poem or a piece of reasoning than the most expensive luxury can afford' (E-DT 5. My emphasis in bold).

the Epicurean, Hume describes the refinement of pleasure as an effect of genuine interaction with other people in the social world. Delicacy of taste makes us sensitive to the beauty and deformity of human-made artifacts, which by introducing us to the world of humanity, renders us prone to 'the tender and agreeable passions', and makes us 'incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions' (E-DT 6), all of which is 'favourable to love and friendship' (E-DT 7)[292]. So, again as in "The Epicurean", Hume links the refinement resulting from the experience of pleasure to practices of shared enjoyment and cultivation of virtuous and polite activities with others. We will see in what follows that this pattern is enacted in the conjectural histories of the arts and sciences and politeness.

3.1. The arts and the sciences

As a typical conjectural history, that of the arts and sciences begins in 'the first ages of the world' (E-RP 115). The external situation depicted there by Hume is one of barbarous people who designate a bearer of political power according to a somewhat short-sighted sort of convenience: as long as the leader can regulate 'mutual violence and injustice', his rule prevails, even in the absence of laws or any other standard that regulate the violence and injustice that he can impose on his subjects. Hume conjectures then the likely development of this state of affairs, supposing that the people 'encrease to a great multitude' (E-RA 116). Probably, the singular ruler has to choose delegates that exert his power where he cannot. In a situation like this, delegates become petty tyrants who treat people as if they were their slaves. On Hume's account, this condition is inimical to the operation of 'delicate and refined' affections such as curiosity: refinements of taste and reason are impossible for slaves or for oppressed and debased people[293]. Notice that this reasoning does not exclude the possibility of exceptional characters, slaves that

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[292] As Hume writes: 'nothing is so proper to cure us of this delicacy of passion, as the cultivating of that higher and more refined taste, which enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts' (E-DT 6).
[293] A similar idea is expressed by Hume in "Of National Characters": 'As poverty and hard labour debase the minds of the common people, and render them unfit for any science and ingenius profession; so where any government becomes very oppressive to all its subjects, it must have a proportional effect on their temper and genius, and must banish all the liberal arts from among them' (E-NC 198).

are geniuses, or 'a monarch [who] could possess so much wisdom to become legislator, and govern his people by law' (E-RP 118); but the reasoning does exclude that, under plausible and typical conditions, affections such as curiosity can have a real chance to catch on people: 'such supposition seems scarcely to be consistent or rational' (E-RP 118)[294].

The premise that in a situation of human debasement 'delicate and refined passions' cannot arise in individuals leads Hume to formulate the alternative supposition: only in a republic, where the lives and properties of people are protected by laws from the violence and tyranny of rulers and other citizens, can the sciences rise for the first time. Hume describes then a progress where social conditions facilitate the emergence of certain affections: 'From law arises security: From security curiosity: And from curiosity knowledge' (E-RA 118).

As noted earlier, if Hume imagines that the first governments were monarchical and that sovereigns that voluntarily submitted their unlimited power to the rule of law were atypical, it is somewhat puzzling how regimes where people are free from debasement and abuse could ever emerge. It is also puzzling how the social and political conditions for the exertion and cultivation of curiosity could ever be given. To fill this gap in the account of "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", we need to jump momentarily to "Of Refinement in the Arts", where Hume indicates that the love of liberty, which eventually leads governments to subject their power to law, is a consequence of the development of industry and commerce:

> where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, *who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty*. These submit not to slavery, like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, *they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign* (E-RA 277-8. My emphasis).

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[294] This suggests that the primary object of explanation in Hume's conjectural histories are the passions: their conditions of emergence and development, their effects and the practices and institutions that they ground. In this sense, I agree with Margaret Schabas (2007) in rejecting the reading of Hume as a methodological individualist, but then I do not share her claim that Hume gives place of pride to groups in moral explanations. This place is occupied by the passions.

Love for liberty is then first cultivated among the 'middling ranking of men' (i.e., landlords, merchants, proprietors of wealth), given the sort of relations that they are able to hold with both their subordinates and their governments and provided the measure of independence that economic power grants them. This reflects the sort of interconnections that Hume recognizes among passions and among the practices and institutions that they produce. The progress of avidity generates industry and frugality. These are moral causes that, on the one hand, produce wealth, and on the other, awaken passions such as the 'love of liberty', a desire for independence from the impositions of political power. The practice of commerce affects the nature of government and both commerce and government pave the way for the sciences.

Other causes that make free governments a better soil for the arousal or curiosity are the encouragement of eloquence and emulation and the fuller 'scope and career' that are allowed for genius and capacity. Free governments encourage eloquence and emulation presumably because in them positions of power and honour tend to be allocated by how individuals are able to exhibit their genius in front of others. There are thus material and prestige-related incentives for the cultivation of curiosity and the exhibition of its activity. Moreover, neighbouring and independent free states which nevertheless are connected by commerce encourage the arts and sciences by providing obstacles to the easy assimilation of the opinions and sentiments. The rationale here is that curiosity is a passion that thrives in conversation and debate. When opinions turn into sacred doctrine, incentives for cultivating genius becomes scarce. The usual rivalry that tend to arise between peoples of neighbouring countries translates also into a rivalry of ideas which eventually refine the genius of the contenders.

Once the arts and the sciences are born in republics or transplanted into civilized monarchies, their refinement may take different paths: republics are a better soil for the sciences, monarchies for the arts of politeness. As we can see, the question driving this conjectural account is about the possibility of the social conditions that normally promote the development of 'delicate and refined' passions. Once these conditions are established in general, differences in the forms of refinement of the passions can be explained by the differences in the environments where the passions appear. In this sense, Hume investigates the moral cause that make republics a better environment for sciences and monarchies for politeness: 'To be successful in [a republic], it is necessary for a man to make himself *useful*, by his industry, capacity, or

knowledge: To be prosperous in [a monarchy], it is requisite for him to render himself *agreeable*, by his wit, complaisance, or civility' (E-RP 126)[295].

Hume sees the exercise of curiosity as the virtuous satisfaction of our natural talents: just another manifestation of our natural crave for activity and employment, which takes different paths of elegant refinement under different forms of social and political organization[296]. Yet, to appreciate the real dimension of the virtuousness involved in the cultivation of curiosity, we should turn now to its relations with politeness. On Hume's account, individuals fully enjoy the pleasures of the arts and the sciences only when they practice and appreciate them together.

3.2. The practice of polite conversation and humanity

To tell the story of the emergence and progress of the practice of polite conversation, we need to assume that society has achieved a considerable development of commerce, that is ruled by a form of free and civilized government, and that at least some people living under such government pursue the sciences and enjoy the arts with refined taste. In the context of such flourishing commercial and, in Hume's words, 'luxurious' society, the cultivation of curiosity triggers people's desire to share their opinions and sentiments with others. Society then becomes also 'polished'. As Hume asks rhetorically: 'is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations[?]' (E-RA 271). Flourishing commercial societies, where the arts and the sciences are

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[295] Hume's thorough commitment to explaining human affairs by recourse to moral causes is more evident in his avoidance of the providential hypothesis. In this sense, Dugald Stewart's strategy to identify the causes that govern moral phenomena represents a good point of contrast with Hume's. Where Hume appeals to inferences from the typical social conditions that allow the emergence of passions such as curiosity, Stewart appeals to providential intervention in the form of divine proportional distribution of talents. For a nice analysis of Stewart's methodology, see Marusic (2013).

[296] This might be the reason why Hume considers that excluding natural abilities and talents from the list of the virtues is a mistake originated in a verbal confusion. See *Treatise*'s section 'Of Natural Abilities' and Appendix IV, 'Of Some Verbal Disputes' in the second *Enquiry*.

cultivated, spark people's desire for company and, ultimately, extend the range of individuals' benevolence.

However, this form of satisfaction of the desire of company is naturally hindered by another constant feature of the human psychology: '[we] have, in general, a much greater propensity to overvalue than undervalue [ourselves]' (EPM- 264)[297]. Although, there is nothing intrinsically pernicious with this propensity and in one sense it is even virtuous[298], unrefined expressions of pride cause painful impressions in observers because:

> We judge more of objects by comparison, than by their intrinsic worth and value (…) But not comparison is more obvious than that with ourselves (…) *[i]n all kinds of comparison an object makes us always receive from another, to which it is compared, a sensation contrary to what arises from itself in its direct and immediate survey. The direct survey of another's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure; and therefore produces pain, when compared with our own"* (SBN-594; T- 3.3.2.5).

Braggarts' exhibitions of pride provoke the operation of comparison in their audiences, thus causing a disagreeable experience proportional to the pleasure the braggart takes in himself or to the display of pleasure that the audience perceive. Both in the second *Enquiry* and in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", Hume motivates the emergence of the artifices that he indifferently calls 'civility', 'good manners', 'good-breeding' or 'politeness' in the need to pre-empt the conflicts that would arise in 'company', were people free to express their actual pride in front of others. Hume points to parallel features in the convention of justice and in the rules of good manners in the second *Enquiry*:

> As the mutual shocks, in *society,* and the oppositions of interest and self-love have constrained mankind to establish the laws of *justice,* in order to preserve the advantages of mutual assistance and protection: in like manner, the eternal contrarieties, in *company,* of men's pride and self-

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[297] In the *Treatise*, Hume states that everybody is prey of '[t]hat impertinent, and almost universal propensity (…) to over-value [the self]' (SBN- 598; T- 3.2.2.11).

[298] Taking pride in one's qualities and accomplishments is natural and to some point both useful and agreeable: 'The utility and advantage of any quality to ourselves is a source of virtue, as well as its agreeableness to others; and it is certain, that nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes us sensible of our own merit, and gives us a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprises' (SBN- 596; T- 3.3.2.7).

conceit, have introduced the rules of Good Manners or Politeness, in order to facilitate the intercourse of minds, and an undisturbed commerce and conversation (EPM- 261).

In "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", Hume reiterates the point: 'in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, good-manners have been invented' (E-RP 132). Within the context of conjectural history, Hume judges that the practice of good manners presumably emerged first among civilized monarchies, given that in such type of government one's success depends particularly on how one appears to others, specially to one's superiors:

> Where power rises upwards from the people to the great, as in all republics, such refinements of civility are apt to be little practised (…) But in a civilized monarchy, there is a long train of dependence from the prince to the peasant, which is not great enough to render property precarious, or depress the minds of the people; but is sufficient to beget in every one an inclination to please his superiors, and to form himself upon those models, which are most acceptable to people of condition and education. Politeness of manners, therefore, arises most naturally in monarchies and courts (E-RP 126-7).

But given that republics are propitious soil for the arts and the sciences, educated conversation, at least at some point, requires the existence and cultivation of good manners too. In general, for Hume, good manners consist in deferential treatment and respectful consideration to others in settings of face-to-face social interaction. In this sense, 'civility' is a form of mutual complaisance that 'leads us to resign our own inclinations to those of our companion, and to curb and conceal that presumption and arrogance, so natural to the human mind' (E-RP 126)[299]. In this general sense, the rules of good manners demand something like a 'disguise' or the concealing of one's expressions of pride: 'it must be own'd, that *some disguise* in this particular is absolutely requisite; and that if we harbour pride in our breasts, we must carry a fair outside, and have the *appearance of modesty* and mutual deference in all our conduct and behaviour' (SBN- 598; T- 3.2.2.12. My emphasis). To reiterate, the rationale for this 'disguise' and 'appearance' is simply that by avoiding the exhibition of pride in front of others, there is no

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[299] In the same sense: '[w]e must, on every occasion, be ready to prefer others to ourselves; to treat them with a kind of deference, even though they be our equals; to seem always the lowest and least in the company, where we are not very much distinguished above them' (SBN- 598; T- 3.2.2.12).

occasion for the operation of the comparison that produces others' uneasiness (SBN- 594; T-3.3.2.5)[300].

Nevertheless, although Hume is consistent in associating the function of the rules of good manners with the need to avoid the uneasiness that our propensity to self-conceit causes in others, he also admits that these rules have a wider sense. Hume introduces this wider understanding in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences" while arguing against Shaftesbury's complaint that gallantry is mere 'affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity' (E-RP 130-1). Hume first includes gallantry among the instances of 'refined breeding'. Then he characterizes such breeding through four examples. First, the 'infirmities' of the old, which naturally produce contempt from the youth. Here politeness prescribes youngsters 'redouble[d]' instances of respect and deference towards the elderly. Second, Hume says that strangers and foreigners are especially vulnerable among locals, so decency commands 'the highest civilities' in their favour. Third, guests are in a manner subject to the authority of the host, so good breeding makes the latter assume 'the lowest' position and be attentive to the guests' wants. Finally, 'nature' (although, we would say, society) has given men 'superiority' above women; therefore, gallantry advises every man to show 'a studied deference and complaisance for all [a woman's] inclinations and opinions' (E-RP 133). Hume holds then that all these cases of refined breeding correct one of our common 'propensities':

> Wherever nature has given the mind a propensity to any vice, or to any passion disagreeable to others, refined breeding has taught men to throw the biass on the opposite side, and to preserve, in all their behavior, the appearance of sentiments different from those to which they naturally incline (E-RP 132).

On my view, more than only disciplining our pride, Hume's examples show that politeness prevents our passions from driving us to abuse the inequalities inherent to certain social arrangements: '[t]o correct such vices, *as lead us to commit real injury on others*, is the part of morals, and the object of the most ordinary education' (E-RP 132. My emphasis). In other words, politeness works as a first line of defence, so to speak, for those who, given social

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[300] In the *Treatise's* section on 'Unphilosophical probability', Hume provides this explanation in the language of the general rules. I comment on this account in the following section by way of illustration of Hume's conception of reflection.

circumstances, happen to be in a weak social position. Politeness forestalls real harms, not just the discomfort of others' bragging. Mistreating the elderly or the foreign, ignoring the needs of the guest and being rude to women are boorish and blameworthy behaviours, not only because of the disagreeableness suffered by the victims, but because these actions are often the first steps towards more serious evils[301]. Accordingly, good manners or politeness is a genus composed of several species of regulated behaviours, only some of which are designed to prevent incommodious exhibitions of pride.

This is why in the second *Enquiry* Hume has no problem in describing three different virtues related to good manners, but which are not devised to conceal pride. The first is 'modesty'. Hume concedes that modesty 'may be understood in different senses', among which female sexual modesty and the modesty 'opposed to *impudence* and *arrogance*' are prominent (EPM- 263). But he also notes a sort of modesty proper of 'young men' which consists in a demeanour of attention and respect for what others, specially their seniors, have to say. This modesty is neither exactly the polite behaviour that makes people hide their pride, nor the species of respect and deference directed specifically towards the elderly; rather, it is the appearance of being a 'docile pupil' and which benefits its possessors 'by preserving their ears open to instruction' (EPM- 263). The second species of politeness is 'pudor'. Pudor is another sense of

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[301] My claim that manners regulate eventual harm applies even when the social interaction may threaten harm. Think of the contrast between a polite threat and an impolite one. A polite threat, like a duelist's, promises harm, but commits its author to certain ways of inflicting it and to respecting certain prohibitions in favour of his enemy's honour. An impolite threat carries no such implications: its lack of manners risks rather the danger of unrestrained harm and cruelty. In this sense, politeness resembles legal formality, as Jeremy Waldron maintains (1988, 2013). Mandeville defended duelling on precisely these grounds. He claimed that duelling made the rude accountable for his behaviour and in this way it prevented generalized violence: 'if it was out of Fashion to ask Satisfaction for Injuries which the Law cannot take hold of, there would be twenty times the Mischief done there is now, or else you must have twenty times the Constables and other Officers to keep the Peace' (Mandeville 1988, 244). Given duelling's obvious connections with honour and social station, it does not fit very well in my interpretation of Hume's conception of forms of politeness. Duelling prevents violence only among people in the same social rank, failing to make social inequalities bearable. In fact, it reinforces social differences, for rules of honour impede that members of different ranks solve their disputes in the regulated way. In a passage removed from "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", Hume adds the complaint that duelling separates honour from virtue: 'By separating the man of honour from the man of virtue, the greatest profligates have got something to value themselves upon, and have been able to keep themselves in countenance, tho' guilty of the most shameful and most dangerous vices. They are debauchees, spendthrifts, and never pay a farthing they owe: But they are men of honour; and therefore are to be received as gentlemen in all companies' (E-RP 626).

modesty which Hume characterizes as a form of dread in intruding or injuring others. Its benefit consists in constituting a 'sure preservative against vice and corruption' (EPM- 263). Again, pudor does not have to do with pride. Finally, there is 'decency', which Hume describes as a sense of knowing how to behave according to one's 'age, sex, character, and station in the world' (EPM- 266), and which thus relates to one's proper sense of self-presentation in front of others.

Consistent with this wider conception of politeness, in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", Hume takes 'gallantry' to be one of its species, but he notes also that gallantry is special among other forms. Gallantry is a *cause* of the refinement of politeness as a whole: 'If the superiority in politeness should be allowed to modern times, the modern notions of *gallantry,* the natural produce of courts and monarchies, will probably be assigned as the causes of this refinement' (E-RP 131). Hume believes that gallantry causes the refinement of politeness because it is the practice that brings women into the world of conversation and intellectual exchange. This indication provides us with a clue as to what Hume really means by a refinement in politeness. Gallantry exemplifies the way in which polite behaviours generate new and inclusive forms of social relations among human beings. Refined politeness allows individuals to overcome the obstacles to engage with others that social inequalities usually form between categories of people.

To show this without dwelling on Hume's outdated and offensive remarks about women's 'natural' inferiority, I want to focus on the structure of his case for gallantry. Gallantry is the form that politeness takes in relationships between men and women. Hume asserts that the drive behind these kind of relationships is the natural 'affection between the sexes', which he esteems the 'sweetest and best enjoyment (…) among every species of animals'. He notes that, in us rational creatures, this affection is not fulfilled by the mere satisfaction of bodily appetites. Human romantic relationships are rather fuelled by the 'amorous passion', which in turn requires 'reason, discourse, sympathy, friendship and gaiety' for its arousal, enjoyment and satisfaction (E-RP 134). Gallantry provides social rules — similar to those of any other form of politeness — that maximize the chances of obtaining the refined pleasures of a romantic relation.

Hume's point is that gallantry — and politeness in general — refines some of the most deeply natural dispositions to engage with others. Admittedly, the initial motivation behind gallantry is somewhat instinctual, but the regulated and carefully paced interaction that gallantry

imposes on the parties produces new forms of exchange that exercise properly human sensibilities. In that sense, Hume notes that the satisfaction of the amorous passion among humans involves a complex set of elements — 'sympathy', 'friendship' and 'gaiety' — which by their very nature, cannot be obtained but by genuinely engaging ourselves in an empathetic commerce with the other's mind[302].

Gallantry has the potential to open the way to sincerity and to a genuine commerce of minds between men and women, even perhaps, where there is no romantic relation whatsoever. Indeed, Hume goes a bit further on in his case for gallantry as to say that this polite practice is not only propitious to the satisfaction of the amorous passion but, given the interaction with others that it opens up, it also "polish[es] the mind" of men overall, not just in those manners regarding their behaviour with women:

> What better school for manners, than the company of virtuous women; where the mutual endeavor to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softens and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest give offence by any breach of decency? (E-RP 134)

My claim then is that gallantry, as a form of politeness, can operate to enhance our natural social affections, something that we come both to realize and to acquire through experience and practice. Through gallantry, the supposedly distinctive features of each sex are moderated by the qualities of the other. Gallantry transforms sexual differences to make them beneficial to the parties in the relation. Although some men might get satisfaction, as Hume says,

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[302] Two points should be noted here: first, as I hope it is clear, I am not assuming that gallantry can be exhaustively described by a particular set of rules (e.g., that prescribe only heterosexual relationships, or male initiative or women objectification). All I am assuming is the conventionality of the manner in which romantic relationships get started and continue. Second, the rules of gallantry (and maybe all rules of politeness), on my understanding, differ in their degree of conventionality as compared to the rules of justice or of government. Rules of justice and government define the very concepts underlying the practices of property and political obedience and, in a sense, *constitute* these very practices. Rules of gallantry, by contrast, only prescribe strategies to improve the benefits and enjoyments of a natural relation. In this sense, we may say, rules of politeness are social, yet pre-political, in a way that justice and government are not.

from wedding their wives 'with a whip instead of a ring' (E-RP 133), this form of satisfying the amorous passion is a cheap sort of gratification, one-sided, solipsistic, brutish, and unrefined[303].

As a consequence of this interpretation, we can appreciate better the role of the practice of polite conversation in the conjectural history of the progress of the passions. This practice is the refined version of the original social affections with which individuals start in the 'rude and savage' state at the beginning of justice's conjectural history. Recall, individuals are prone to associate with each other in virtue of their sexual appetite and their partial affections. Through the satisfactions of these motives, individuals acquire the experience of the advantages of society, but their partiality and avidity prevent the expansion of their social exchanges. Justice, commerce and government are designed to overcome these obstacles and, on their way, they unshackle human potentialities for industry, knowledge and refined pleasure. In the typical 'polished' and 'luxurious' society that has gone through this conjectural progress, the desire for society emerges under a new guise: people want to share the fruits of their achievements, real or imaginary. An obstacle again originates in the very impulse that drive the desire to reach out to others: when we take pride in our qualities and achievements, we want such pride seconded by the opinion of others. But when everyone wants a similar confirmation for themselves, the result is conflict. The rules of good manners regulate our desire of company and in this way allows it further refinement. Moreover, if my interpretation of politeness is correct, these rules regulate our desire of company in inclusive ways, so that in social exchanges social inequalities weigh less than they would otherwise.

This is the perfect scenario for the appearance of the agreeable virtues: wit or ingenuity, a 'lively spirit of dialogue' (EPM- 262), eloquence, good sense and sound reasoning, noble pride and that 'grace', 'ease', 'gentleness' or 'I-know-not-what' that make people particularly agreeable to others (EPM- 267). This is also the environment where benevolence has the best chance to appear. In civilized societies, where natural antagonisms are regulated and where

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[303] Hume believes that politeness is an accomplishment of human civilization. It appears under certain social conditions and only at some point in human history. Indicative of this aspect of politeness is Hume's set of examples regarding the rusticity of the ancients: Sallust, Horace, Ovid, Lucretius, Juvenal and Cicero pass for him as scurrilous and vain orators. Arguably, the ancient lack of good manners reflects their lack of free government and the excessive power wielded by public (eloquent) discourse. Certainly, Hume considers politeness a modern invention, closely associated with free government, the rise of the sciences and the arts.

institutions exist to promote people's happiness, individuals are easily prompted to perform good offices to others: '[a] good-natured man, who is well educated, practices this civility to every mortal, without premeditation or interest' (E-RP 126). Indeed, it should be no surprise that benevolence is the most representative virtue of modern times. Benevolence is the only quality that can be exerted in almost every human intercourse:

> To his parents, we are apt to say, he endears himself by his pious attachment and duteous care still more than by the connexions of nature. His children never feel his authority, but when employed for their advantage. With him, the ties of love are consolidated by beneficence and friendship. The ties of friendship approach, in a fond observance of each obliging office, to those of love and inclination. His domestics and dependants have in him a sure resource; and no longer dread the power of fortune, but so far as she exercises it over him. From him the hungry receive food, the naked clothing, the ignorant and slothful skill and industry. Like the sun, an inferior minister of providence he cheers, invigorates, and sustains the surrounding world. If confined to private life, the sphere of his activity is narrower; but his influence is all benign and gentle. If exalted into a higher station, mankind and posterity reap the fruit of his labours (EPM- 178).

Whereas all the other virtues are qualities that enable people to play one or other role in society, benevolence is the one that allows them to act like fully virtuous members of the modern world. So, in the environment of a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, where the industry and the arts flourish, individuals have a better chance to become virtuous because the virtues are nothing but character traits that enable them to satisfy their regulated and refined passions. In such a society, being a law-abiding member of conventions, a loyal subject to the government, a productive economic agent, a refined consumer of luxury and artistic expressions, a polite conversationalist and a benevolent person are all social roles whereby people aim at their happiness and at the same time display their virtuousness.

4. The reflective desire towards virtue

I would like to introduce the last part of my argument, by way of addressing an objection that could be raised against the account presented until now. Even assuming that Hume's conjectural accounts of the practices and institutions of the modern world exhibit a convergence between virtue and happiness, the objection might say, that leaves unclear whether individuals' motives are really virtuous, for it looks as if they act virtuously only for their happiness's sake. If this so,

the convergence claim can be understood in either of two undesirable ways: either in the sense that in a modern society, virtue is defined in terms of happiness (a species of utilitarianism), or in the sense that although virtue is defined independently of happiness, individuals act virtuously only in those occasions when doing so promotes their own particular happiness (a generalized version of the sensible knave case).

To deal with this objection in this section I pursue Hume's notion of 'reflection'. I want to establish that one form that this psychological mechanism takes in 'polished' and 'luxurious' societies arises from the desire to acquire passions and character traits that are both virtuous and happiness-producing. In order to do this, I review some of the various senses in which Hume talks about reflection. I submit that by reflection Hume refers to a range of mental operations of varying complexity, where the most complex instances are built upon the simplest ones. My claim is that one complex form of reflection explains how individuals come to be motivated by virtue *and* by happiness. I show that the real import of my convergence thesis is that in a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, the regulation and refinement of individuals' passions produce a psychological transformation such that the distinction between acting for virtue's and acting for happiness' sake disappears. And this is a good thing: it means that, in such society, individuals' psychology is shaped in such a way that what they see as contributing to their happiness *is* what they see as the virtuous way of acting.

4.1. Humean 'reflection'

Hume uses the term 'reflection' in many senses, some of which do not appear technical. And even when Hume wants to give 'reflection' a specialized meaning, it is not always univocal. In fact, it seems that Hume takes advantage of the many senses of this English word to describe different sorts of operations among perceptions and thus different psychological mechanisms. To start with, it is plausible to say that a metaphor of reflection underlies the copy principle, the very foundation of Hume's philosophy. The OED includes among the senses of reflection: '[t]he action of a mirror or other smooth or polished surface in reflecting an image' and in connection with this '[a]n image produced by or seen in a reflective surface'. I agree with Lilli Alanen (2005, 118), who holds that ideas reflect impressions insofar as they are copies of the latter.

Ideas reflect impressions by representing the latter's content, or in other words, ideas are *about* impressions. So, arguably, for Hume, ideas are reflected images of impressions in this mirror-like sense of reflection.

Alanen notes as well the different though related notion of reflection that Hume employs in his conception of the passions, which after all, he classifies as 'impressions of reflection'. The sense in which passions are reflections of ideas and impressions is different from the sense in which ideas are reflections of original impressions because passions are 'original existences' (SBN- 415; T- 2.3.3.5) and thus, they are not *about* anything. Alanen explains the difference between these two senses of reflection by taking a cue from Hume's metaphors: in ideas, the reflective metaphor is visual, whereas in the passions it is musical. As she writes, in the passions, the reflective metaphor 'illustrates how the secondary impressions are resonant of primary impressions and their ideas, prolonging and enforcing their effects as if by vibration and echo in the person perceiving them' (Alanen 2005, 118-9). Her point is that passions add some content to the experience of the object to which the mind's attention is turned. On this interpretation, passions are responses that incorporate an affective dimension to the experience of external objects or of people (Schmitter 2013). Given that passions are related to ideas and primary impressions as their effects, and to the perceptions of their intentional objects as causes, they are pivotal points, i.e., points of reflection, where the content of ideas and impressions are transformed and experienced by the mind as something new.

Remarkably, as Alanen also notes, 'at none of these levels is reflection a matter of deliberate, rule-governed, inferential judgment or reasoning according to independent intellectual standards' (Alanen 2005, 119). Instead, these types of reflection are the product of mechanical laws of association caused and operating at a subconscious level. The following three reflective operations among perceptions also share the characteristics of being subconscious and governed by mechanical laws of association, but since these types of reflection are build upon the basic reflective associations of ideas and passions, they deserve a separate treatment.

The first is the form of reflection that causes belief. In the *Treatise*'s search to find the impression from which our idea of necessary connection derives, Hume wonders why we infer that from a given set of causes must necessarily follow a given set of effects (SBN- 82; T- 1.3.3.9). His answer is custom and experience: the mind tends to pass from a given set of objects to another because a repeated number of resembling instances of a similar 'conjunction' creates

the expectation in the mind that when it perceives one set of objects, the other will follow. How strong this expectation is depends on how uniform the experience of past constant conjunctions is and how similar the pair of objects appear to the mind. As such, the idea of necessary connection is not caused by a direct observation of a power or any sort of efficacy among objects, but by the repeated perception of a conjunction between two types of objects. The idea of necessary connection is, in this sense, a reflection of the observed succession of objects, or in other words, it is a reflection of custom and experience:

> The idea of necessity arises from some impression. There is no impression convey'd by our senses, which can give rise to that idea. It must, therefore, be deriv'd from some internal impression, or *impression of reflection*. There is no internal impression, which has any relation to the present business, but that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant. This therefore is the essence of necessity (SBN- 165; T- 1.3.14.22. My emphasis).

The type of reflection that operates in the production of beliefs is build upon the type of reflection that operates in the production of ideas. In both cases, the resulting perception, i.e., the belief and the idea, reflects our direct experience of external objects. The reflection of belief, however, adds one level of complexity to the representational quality of ideas, for by relying on a wider scope of past impressions, beliefs enable us to project our past experience into the future.

The second type of subconscious and law-governed reflection is sympathy. Sympathy constitutes another type of reflective mechanism through which our experience is expanded. It builds upon the types of reflection operating in belief and the passions. 'When any affection is infus'd by sympathy' (SBN- 317; T- 2.1.11.3), outward expressions of another person's emotions 'appear at first in *our* mind as mere ideas, and are conceiv'd to belong to another person, as we conceive any other matter of fact' (SBN- 319; T- 2.1.11.8). In this first stage of the operation of sympathy, we are led to believe that the other person is feeling one specific passion due to our past experience with how people manifest such types of affection. Our belief in the existence of the other person's emotion thus reflects our past experience of people's affective lives. Yet, in sympathy, another type of reflection emerges in the next stage, for given the 'great resemblance among all human creatures' (SBN- 318; T- 2.1.11.5), the idea of the other's passion is raised to the level of an impression — presumably by borrowing from our always-present and

vivacious sense of ourselves — and then it is felt by us as the very passion that the other person is actually experiencing[304]. Affections transmitted by sympathy reflect, not only our past experience of typical emotional manifestations, but our ability to resonate with other people's passions, given our natural and basic kinship with the rest of humanity[305]. Note that the stage of sympathy in which the received idea of someone else's affection is enlivened resembles the type of reflection of passions mentioned above. The vicarious experience of another's passion is not simply a mirror-like reflection, but a new affective experience. As we can see most clearly in Hume's accounts of the love of fame, of the esteem for the rich and powerful and of moral evaluation, we form a sentimental judgment of the other person through sympathy, which is manifested in the new experience of affections such as esteem, admiration or approbation.

The third and last type of reflection is law-governed and generally subconscious, but Hume seems to allow that at least in some cases it can become conscious. Hume calls attention to this species of reflection by noting the differences in the attention with which we consider our past experience of constant conjunctions before giving assent to certain beliefs:

> In general we may observe, that in all the most establish'd and uniform conjunctions of causes and effects, such as those of gravity, impulse, solidity, &c., the mind never carries its view expressly to consider any past experience: **Tho' in other associations of objects, which are more rare and unusual, it may assist the custom and transition of ideas by this reflexion.** Nay we find in some cases, that the reflexion produces the belief without the custom; or more properly speaking, that **the reflexion produces the custom in an *oblique* and *artificial* manner** (SBN- 104; T- 1.3.8.14. My emphasis in bold).

In this passage, Hume notes the use of a 'reflexion' in order to assist custom and the transition of ideas that produce belief. As he explains, although there are occasions where we have experienced just one instance of conjunction between two events, we are still able to draw the impression of a connection as if we have experienced many instances because we see the

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[304] This is the account of the simplest case, for Hume also notes cases of sympathetic communication of affections where we feel passions that, although the other person *must* feel given her circumstances, she fails to do so due to one reason or another ('partial' sympathy, SBN- 370; T- 2.2.7.5-6), and cases where we feel the passions that the other person is about to feel in the future, and so, that is not feeling when we observe them ('extended' sympathy, SBN- 385-6; T- 2.2.9.13.14).

[305] As Hume states in an often-cited passage: 'the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each others emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may decay away by insensible degrees'(SBN- 365; T- 2.2.5.21).

observed instance as another case of the principle '*that like objects, plac'd in like circumstances, will always produce like effects*' (SBN- 105; T- 1.3.8.14). Hume states:

> The connexion of the ideas is not habitual after one experiment; but this connexion is comprehended under another principle, that is habitual; which brings us back to our hypothesis. In all cases we transfer our experience to instances, of which we have no experience, either *expressly* or *tacitly,* either *directly* or *indirectly* (SBN- 105; T- 1.3.8.14).

The interesting point in this regard is Hume's focus on the use of past experience gathered in the form of a rule or a 'principle' and that is then used by the mind to produce beliefs. 'Reflection', in this sense, foreshadows the meaning of a guiding mechanism in the acquisition of beliefs. Hume explores the character of this psychological mechanism in more detail in his treatment of '*general rules*' (SBN- 146; T- 1.3.13.7), paradoxically, one sort of 'unphilosophical probability' — i.e., one species of unreliable probable reasoning[306].

What Hume first describes as 'general rules' is a propensity of the mind to overextend the use of analogical reasoning. Every belief produced by causal inference is the reflection of a previous more-or-less uniform observation of constant conjunctions between numerous instances of more-or-less resembling pairs of objects. The assent that we give to the belief varies according to the degree of uniformity in the previous experience and the degree of resemblance among the observed objects. Analogical reasoning produces a species of probable belief where the resemblance is much less than perfect, but it is not so low as to destroy the assent altogether. The unphilosophical probability derived from general rules is a case of analogical reasoning where uniformity and resemblance are indeed too low to produce belief, but since there is still some uniformity and resemblance, the mind is led by custom to give assent as if by a sort of inertia (Brand 1992).

It is not clear whether Hume's classing this sort of reasoning under the 'unphilosophical' is evidence of epistemic disapproval[307]. However, the very fact that he associates it with

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[306] Or, as he puts it, forms of reasoning that 'have not had the good fortune' of being 'receiv'd by philosophers' (SBN- 143; T- 1.3.13.1).

[307] I say that this is not clear because whether Hume resorts to any sort of epistemic standard or not in the *Treatise* is a debated issue in the secondary literature. The question is whether Hume's project is one of normative or cognitive epistemology. For a discussion of this issue, see Garret (2002).

prejudice[308] and given the examples and the treatment that he gives to the whole topic, it is plausible to read the 'unphilosophical' as suggesting that good reasoners may gain awareness of the problems involved in drawing conclusions from general rules, although in general people tends to follow the guide of such rules. In other words, although the assent that relying on the general rules of imagination produces is typically subconscious (hence that authors such as Brand call it a form of 'inertia'), the faulty nature of the beliefs acquired in this manner does not escape altogether from the attention of the good reasoner. Because of this, Hume's central example to illustrate the unphilosophical aspect of following general rules of the imagination grants some parallels with practical akrasia. In the latter, we choose against our best judgment; in following general rules, we believe against our best judgment:

> To illustrate this by a familiar instance, let us consider the case of a man, who being hung out from a high tower in a cage of iron cannot forbear trembling, when he surveys the precipice below him, tho' he knows himself to be perfectly secure from falling, by his experience of the solidity of the iron, which supports him; and tho' the ideas of fall and descent, and harm and death, be deriv'd solely from custom and experience. (…) The circumstances of depth and descent strike so strongly upon him, that their influence cannot be destroy'd by the contrary circumstances of support and solidity, which ought to give him a perfect security (SBN- 148; T- 1.3.13.10)[309].

Hume does not mention explicitly the similarity with practical akrasia. Instead, he explains the unphilosophical aspect of the general rules of imagination as the effect of our failing to see that the circumstances of the present case do not resemble the circumstances of the case to which experience has accustom us. He elaborates on the nature of the error by distinguishing

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[308] Hume writes: 'A fourth unphilosophical species of probability is that deriv'd from *general rules,* which we rashly form to ourselves, and which are the source of what we properly call Prejudice. An *Irishman* cannot have wit, and a *Frenchman* cannot have solidity; for which reason, tho' the conversation of the former in any instance be visibly very agreeable, and of the latter very judicious, we have entertain'd such a prejudice against them, that they must be dunces or fops in spite of sense and reason' (SBN- 147; T- 1.3.13.7).

[309] Let me explain my association with practical akrasia. Unphilosophical general rules are effects of custom and experience's influence on the imagination. Indeed, by custom and experience, we have learned that when a set of causes C are given, a set of effects E follow. In the example of the passage, we have learned that if we are placed in 'circumstances of depth and descent', we should expect falling, which naturally produces fear. The customary association between depth, descent and falling influences the imagination such that even in cases where circumstances like the support and solidity of the iron cage should undercut the effect of depth and descent, we still are led to feel the fear associated with the belief of falling. Thus, although we are aware of the circumstances that should change our belief, we cannot help but believing what custom has always made us do: we believe against our best judgment.

between the 'essential' and the 'superfluous' causes of a given event. The first are 'absolutely requisite to the production of the effect', whereas the other 'are only conjoin'd by accident' (SBN- 148; T- 1.3.13.9). Through custom, we identify the causes of an event without noting which of them are essential and which superfluous, and then, when we observe superfluous qualities in a new instance, we expect the effects which could only have been produced if the essential causes were also given. That is why, 'tho' the conversation of [an Irishman] in any instance be visibly very agreeable, and of [a Frenchman] very judicious, we have entertain'd such a prejudice against them, that they must be dunces or fops in spite of sense and reason' (SBN- 147; T- 1.3.13.7).

Relying on general rules of the imagination seems to be what Hume describes as using the 'reflexion' on the principle '*that like objects, plac'd in like circumstances, will always produce like effects*' (SBN- 105; T- 1.3.8.14) to generate the transition of ideas that produce beliefs. But now, having pointed out the problems of following general rules of the imagination, Hume introduces a new sense of reflection as a remedy against the influence of custom and experience on the imagination:

> When an object appears, that resembles any cause in very considerable circumstances, the imagination naturally carries us to a lively conception of the usual effect, tho' the object be different in the most material and most efficacious circumstances from that cause. Here is the first influence of general rules. *But when we take a review of this act of the mind*, and compare it with the more general and authentic operations of the understanding, we find it to be of an irregular nature, and destructive of all the most establish'd principles of reasonings; which is the cause of our rejecting it (SBN- 149-50; 1.3.13.12. My emphasis).

In this passage, Hume explains the nature of another sort of 'general rule', which is not drawn from our custom or experience with objects or events, but from our custom and experience with the operations of the understanding. Hearn (1970, 411) expresses surprise about Hume calling 'general rules' both the species of unphilosophical probability and the rules by which we correct it. But, it is not that surprising if we consider that both sets of rules arise naturally from our acquaintance with aspects of the world. Yet, whereas the first set of rules pertain to our experience with external objects or events, the second has to do with our cognitive

faculties taken as causes of truth and the beliefs that they usually produce[310]. So, the general rules of the understanding are not products of a more accurate observation of the events subject of the general rules of the imagination, but of an attentive observation of the ways in which our reason commonly falls into error. They correct the first set of rules insofar as they make us aware of our own fallibility. That is the sense in which they can be properly called reflective.

The discussion following to the introduction of the general rules of the understanding confirms this reading. It also suggests that the effect of the general rules of the understanding is not always to dispel a misguided generalization, but sometimes to keep us away from conclusions that although true would bring us inconvenience. The case Hume examines in this context is that of the rules of decency or good manners. He notes that the different effects that open slights and concealed slights have on us derive from the opposition between the general rules of the imagination and those of the understanding. When someone directs an insult to us in an open and obvious manner, the connection between her sentiments and her actions is 'general and universal' (SBN- 151; T- 1.3.13.14), and so, it is easy for us, according to the regularities that custom and experience have taught, to infer the other person's contempt and so feel hurt. In this case, we simply follow the general rules of the imagination. But, when the slight is indirect, the connection between the other person's sentiments and her actions is 'more singular and uncommon' (SBN- 151; T- 1.3.13.14). This means that we cannot be completely sure that we are making the right inference in regard to the other person's sentiments. It is possible that, given the fallibility of our faculties, we are missing something or taking her expressions in the wrong way. As a consequence, given the influence of the general rules of the imagination, we may still feel abused, but given that of the rules of understanding, we feel less seriously slighted because we are also unsure of the other's contempt[311]. Rules of decency and good-breeding are based on this circumstance. They prescribe concealed and moderated expressions both of contempt and self-praise to keep the sentiments of people unclear enough to facilitate social interaction. Remarkably, in this case, the effect of the general rules of the imagination is not disproved by the effect of the rules of understanding: our inference about the other person's contempt may

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[310] 'Our reason must be consider'd as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect; but such-a-one as by the irruption of other causes, and by the inconstancy of our mental powers, may frequently be prevented' (SBN- 180; T- 1.4.1.1).
[311] A similar reasoning applies to the example of open and concealed violations of the laws of honour (SBN- 152-3; T- 1.3.13.17).

actually be right. But having things right here only harms our relations with others, which may be a goal of more value[312]. The practice of politeness favours the effect of the rules of understanding, not because that of the rules of the imagination leads us to error, but because being right here is inconvenient.

Going back to the main line of reasoning, it seems that Hume conceives the application of general rules of the understanding, at least to some degree, as a reflective and deliberate action of the mind. Good reasoners may be able to grasp the fallacious or inconvenient reasoning behind the generalizations of the first sort of rules. And although the general rules of the understanding arise gradually, without requiring a purposeful endeavour to discover them — since they are generalizations that we form from the exercise of our own faculties — in some cases it takes a conscious effort to neutralize the effects of the general rules of the imagination by the interposition of general rules of the understanding. Indeed, if we take the clue that Hume drops in his discussion of general rules[313], at least some subset of the rules of the understanding are to be identified with the 'rules by which to judge of causes and effects' (Treatise book 1, part 3, section 15), and of these Hume says they are 'very easy in their invention, *but extremely difficult in their application*' (SBN- 175; T- 1.3.15.11. My emphasis).

I want to argue now that this species of reflection is the basis of the stabilization of judgment that Hume describes as the desired effect of adopting a 'steady and common' point of view. We can see this by examining Hume's characterization of reflection in the adoption of the point of view of moral evaluation in the *Treatise*. Recall, in book 3, part 3, section 1, Hume faces the objection that if it were true that moral distinctions originate in sympathy, then our moral esteem would fluctuate as our sympathy does. But it is a fact that '[t]he sympathy varies without a variation in our esteem' (SBN- 581; T- 3.3.1.14), and so the thesis must be false. Hume's reply consists in a description of the process whereby we correct our moral sentiments, so that they do

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[312] As Hume cites the Cardinal de Retz: '*there are many things, in which the world wishes to be deceiv'd*' (SBN- 153; T- 1.3.13.18).

[313] The clue is the following: 'We shall afterwards take notice of some general rules, by which we ought to regulate our judgment concerning causes and effects; and these rules are form'd on the nature of our understanding, and on our experience of its operations in the judgments we form concerning objects. By them we learn to distinguish the accidental circumstances from the efficacious causes; and when we find that an effect can be produc'd without the concurrence of any particular circumstance, we conclude that that circumstance makes not a part of the efficacious cause, however frequently conjoin'd with it' (SBN- 149; T- 1.3.13.11).

not follow the narrowness of our sympathetic perceptions. He finds it illuminating to compare what we do in correcting our judgments of virtue to what we do in correcting our perceptual judgments: if a person is located twenty paces away from us, we do not jump to conclude that her countenance lacks beauty, just because we cannot perceive it from that distance. Rather, 'we know what effect [the person's face] will have in such a position, and by that *reflexion* we correct its momentary appearance*'* (SBN- 582; T- 3.3.1.15. My emphasis). In the same way, if a person's character is presented to us, but it is located at a too great or a too small temporal, spatial or psychological distance, we do not praise or condemn it immediately; rather, we consider the effect the character has in such a position and by this reflection we correct our moral perception of it:

> Our servant, if diligent and faithful, may excite stronger sentiments of love and kindness than *Marcus Brutus,* as represented in history; but we say not upon that account, that the former character is more laudable than the latter. We *know*, that were we to approach equally near to that renown'd patriot, he wou'd command a much higher degree of affection and admiration (SBN- 582; T- 3.3.1.16. My emphasis). (…) We make allowance for a certain degree of selfishness in men; because we *know* it to be inseparable from human nature, and inherent in our frame and constitution. By this *reflexion* we correct those sentiments of blame, which so naturally arise upon any opposition (SBN- 583; T- 3.3.1.17. My emphasis).

Adopting a 'steady and general point of view' is a matter of becoming aware of the 'inconstancy', or better said, the 'situadedness' of our capacities, as in the case of the general rules of the understanding. The capacity in question in the moral case is our sympathetic sensibility to the happiness and misery of other human beings, for if sympathy is left to itself, our judgments about the characters of other people would be influenced by contiguity, resemblance and self-interest. Thus, the species of reflection that constitutes the general point of view in regards to virtue consists in the reflective operation of realizing the partiality of sympathy and in adopting a corrective attitude as a consequence.

This new reflective attitude is practical insofar as it influences the will and generate some type of actions. In effect, when our sympathy is corrected, we are motivated to change our initial and partial judgment and, in any case, we are moved to issue an outward evaluation in line with the common perspective. To be sure, the effect of correcting our sympathy on the will is weak and thus the sense of 'action' here is a very thin. But even granting, as Hume does repeatedly,

that our passions do not always align with our moral sentiments[314], adopting the steady and common point of view gives the agent a nudge to alter his partial sentiments as effect of his recognition of the normative authority of the reflective perspective, at least in typical cases. Our sentiments in regards to people's character traits *ought* to be altered, and if not completely, at least, 'in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools' (SBN- 603; T- 3.3.3.3).

How conscious of the nudge the agent is and how effective this nudge may be is unclear. Surely, for Hume, altering our sentiments in line with reflection is not the exercise of a rational will. It is rather the effect of our accumulated experience in judging and receiving judgement from others. As such, it is a gradual transition caused by how numerous instances of passing judgment on others and being the object of others' judgment affect our passions[315].

At any rate, the practical effect of the reflective perspective is not very evident in moral evaluation. For one, Hume describes the motivation to take up the moral perspective in pragmatic terms: ''tis impossible we cou'd ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view' (SBN- 581; T- 3.3.1.15). So, recognizing the normative authority of the standard of virtue responds to a practical necessity inherent to social interaction. If we are to have a moral language which we could use to coordinate social action, we need to adopt the steady and common point of view. There is thus a sense in which we are already predisposed to the actions towards which reflection moves us. For another, Hume often repeats that judging other people's characters according to the standard of virtue is something we can do halfheartedly, that is, without immediately changing the actual and partial feelings that we may have for the people object of our evaluation. This is possible because the external commitment to apply moral standards manifested in our language is commonly enough for most purposes[316]. Third, the actions towards

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[314] As Hume writes: 'tho' the *heart* does not always take part with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them, yet are they sufficient for discourse, and serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools' (SBN- 603; T- 3.3.3.3).

[315] It can be said that a similar practical effect takes place in the reflection of the general rules of the understanding. Becoming aware that our cognitive capacities are fallible *ought* to make us more cautious in our conclusions, and consistently, it *ought* to serve us as a standard to correct our inferences. Perhaps, after repeated experiences of how we fall into error when we fail to align our inferences to the rules for judging of causes and effects, we come to acquire certain proclivity to corrective reflection, which makes us more cautious and 'wise'.

[316] Among some passages in this sense there are the following SBN- 583, 592, 603; T- 3.3.1.18, 3.3.2.2, 3.3.3.2.

which the reflective moral perspective moves us are not very demanding on our partial affections. Approving or disapproving others does not necessarily entail a desire to do something for or to the objects of moral assessment. Neither do they necessarily entail a disposition to become virtuous or to refrain vice ourselves. Due to these reasons, the normative authority of the moral perspective does not feel like a heavy burden.

4.2. The reflective convergence of happiness and virtue

In the previous section, I claimed that the type of reflection needed for adopting a steady and common perspective involves the recognition of a sort of normative authority that gradually becomes able to motivate action. In the rest of this section, I want to propose that there is an additional normative perspective, whose adoption involves a similar species of reflection, but whose the practical effect is the desire to acquire virtuous traits and to act accordingly. By reflecting on the experience of happiness-producing traits gained through civilization, individuals are able to recognize that such traits are worth acquiring also in virtue of their moral merit.

Textual support for this claim can be found in the second *Enquiry,* in "The Sceptic" and in "Of Refinement in the Arts". In the second part of the Conclusion to the second *Enquiry*, Hume sets out 'to inquire whether every man, who has any regard to his own happiness and welfare, will not best find his account in the practice of every moral duty' (EPM- 278). In "The Sceptic", he submits the view that 'the happiest disposition of mind is the *virtuous'* (E-Sc – 168), and in "Of Refinement in the Arts", he points to the social and historical conditions needed for individuals to be able to see happiness-producing traits as virtuous ones. In all these instances the implication is that, when human life is taken from the appropriate perspective, the actions recommended by virtue *are* the actions that bring our best enjoyment, and so that it is in our best interest to become virtuous and act virtuously.

The first step to substantiate this reading is to understand what counts as the appropriate perspective for evaluating human wellbeing. To this end, note that in "The Sceptic", Hume raises a similar dichotomy to the one between the '*de gustibus non est disputandum'* dictum and the practice of criticism raised in "Of the Standard of Taste" (E-ST- 231). The speech of the Sceptic opens with an observation that is meant to reflect his sentiments on the discourses of the

Epicurean, the Stoic and the Platonist: there are many ways of leading our lives, but this fact does not imply that the question of happiness has to be answered by a dismissive 'anything goes'. As in the aesthetic case, that there are no real or metaphysical properties in objects to anchor our judgments does not prevent us from distinguishing more desirable lives from the less:

> There is something approaching to principles of mental taste; and critics can reason and dispute more plausibly than cooks and perfumers (E-Sc- 163). Though colours were allowed to lie only in the eye, would dyers or painters ever be less regarded and esteemed? There is *sufficient uniformity* in the senses and feelings of mankind, to make all these qualities the objects of art and reasoning, and to have the greatest influence on life and manners (E-Sc- 166. My emphasis).

Finding the 'sufficient uniformity' to agree on our judgments requires of us the adoption of a 'steady and common point of view'. In judging other people's characters, we adopt a perspective where reflection allows us to correct our sympathy. In matters of aesthetic taste, we defer judgment to the 'joint verdict' of critics. Now, in judging the worth of lives, the point of view of our shared human experience provides a standard of value for assessment. From such a perspective, individuals should be able to note the characteristics of human passions and enjoyments that experience has proved to result in durable and stable pleasures:

> Objects have absolutely no worth or value in themselves. They derive their worth merely from the passion. If that be strong, and steady, and successful, the person is happy (…) *All the difference, therefore, between one man and another, with regard to life, consists either in the passion, or in the enjoyment*: And these differences are sufficient to produce the wide extremes of happiness and misery (E-Sc- 167. My emphasis).

As Hume continues after this passage, lives worth living are those that contain 'neither (…) too violent nor too remiss', 'benign and social', and 'chearful and gay' passions; these are the passions that produce 'steady' and 'constant' enjoyments and 'durable pleasure and satisfaction' (E-Sc- 167). These characteristics turn out to be preferable, given what human experience on different lifestyles tells us. In contrast, philosophical devotion[317], a life dedicated

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[317] 'Philosophical devotion, for instance, like the enthusiasm of a poet, is a transitory effect of high spirits, great leisure, a fine genius, and a habit of study and contemplation' (E-Sc- 167).

to base pleasures[318], to the pursuit of the riches[319] or the 'monkish virtues' (EPM- 270) are examples of lifestyles that ignore what hypothetical judges of life-taste might teach us about durable and rewarding human enjoyment. Those lifestyles are:

> rejected by men of sense, (…) because they serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man's fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment? We observe, on the contrary, that they cross all these desirable ends; stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper (EPM- 270).

Judges of life-taste would prefer passions whose enjoyment can be sustained, even in the absence of a fit of enthusiasm[320], or whose amusements require some effort of the mind or some engagement and action[321] and, in any case, passions that render us as immune as possible to the ups and downs of fortune[322].

In the second *Enquiry*, Hume presents an alternative characterization of the appropriate perspective for evaluating a worth living life through his description of strength of mind[323]. In this text, strength of mind is the virtue 'useful to ourselves' that concerns our long-term satisfaction or well-being. Hume defines it as the character trait that allows us 'to resist the

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[318] 'Though the tempers of men be very different, yet we may pronounce in general, that the life of pleasure cannot support itself so long as one of business, but is much more subject to satiety and disgust' (E-Sc-167).

[319] 'But where the temper is best disposed for any enjoyment, the object is always wanting: And in this respect, the passions, which pursue external objects, contribute not so much to happiness, as those which rest in ourselves' (E-Sc- 167-8).

[320] 'To render the passion [that inclines us to study of the divine] of continuance, we must find some method of affecting the senses and imagination, and must embrace some historical, as well as philosophical account of the divinity' (E-Sc- 167).

[321] 'The amusements, which are the most durable, have all mixture of application and attention in them; such as gaming and hunting. And in general business and action fill up all the great vacancies in human life' (E-Sc- 167).

[322] 'Some men are possessed of great strength of mind; and even when they pursue external objects, are not much affected by a disappointment, but renew their application and industry with the greatest chearfulness. Nothing contributes more to happiness that such a turn of mind' (E-Sc- 168).

[323] As mentioned earlier, I am assuming that we can find some genuinely Humean views in every of four essays on happiness. My strategy to identify which are Humean and which are not, as in my reading of "The Epicurean", is to look for an alternative text in which Hume endorses the same views in his own voice. In the present case, the alternative text that I am using to back up my attribution to Hume of some of the Sceptic's views is the set of passages of the second *Enquiry* discussed in what follows in the text.

temptation of *present* ease or pleasure, and carry them forward in the search of more *distant* profit and enjoyment' (EPM- 239. My emphasis), as well as the quality 'to persevere in a steady adherence to a general and *distant* interest, in opposition to the allurements of *present* pleasure and advantage' (EPM- 205. My emphasis). A character concerned with his own long-term well-being is one who assesses her self-satisfaction from a 'calm' and reflective stance[324]. Hume even goes as far as to identify the effects of strength of mind and those of what is commonly called 'reason':

> Our affections, on a general prospect of their objects, form certain rules of conduct, and certain measures of preference of one above another: and these decisions, though really the result of our calm passions and propensities, (for what else can pronounce any object eligible or the contrary?) are yet said, by a natural abuse of terms, to be the determinations of pure *reason* and reflection (EPM- 239).

This passage may be taken as describing what it means to adopt the perspective for evaluating what form of life best secures our happiness as if it were a disposition. When individuals possess strength of mind, they are able to judge what they should do with their long-term wellbeing in view, i.e., they are able to judge their actions 'rationally'.

So, in both "The Sceptic" and the second *Enquiry*, Hume suggests a perspective, 'steady' and 'common' in regards to one's happiness. It is a view that places one's individual life in relation to the considered standard of happiness achieved by human experience and the satisfaction of desires in the long-term range. It is a reflective view. The analogy of visual correction that Hume usually applies to the adjustment of the deliverances of the senses or of natural sympathy is valid in this case too: we must correct our hurried assessments of pleasure and enjoyment, given that reflection and experience have made us aware of our typical happiness shortsightedness.

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[324] 'A man of a strong and determined temper adheres tenaciously to his general resolutions, and is neither seduced by the allurements of pleasure, nor terrified by the menaces of pain; but keeps still in view those distant pursuits, by which he, at once, ensures his happiness and his honour' (EPM- 239). In *Treatise* Hume describes strength of mind as the prevalence of the calm passions over the violent (SBN T- 418, T- 2.3.3.10).

With all this in place, we can now appreciate the import of my convergence thesis. Hume contends that the life led according to the principles of taste derived from the reflective perspective of happiness and wellbeing *converges* with the virtuous life:

> [a]ccording to this short and imperfect sketch of human life, the happiest disposition of mind is the *virtuous*; or, in other words, that which leads to action and employment, render us sensible to the social passions, steels the heart against the assaults of fortune, reduces the affections to a just moderation, makes our own thoughts an entertainment to us, and inclines us rather to the pleasures of society and conversation, than to those of the senses (E-Sc- 168).

It is not a stretch to see in this description of the 'virtuous' 'disposition of mind' an allusion to the state of refinement of the passions that Hume's conjectural histories describe as typical of modern societies. Institutions such as commerce, the sciences, the arts and manners seem to be the ideal scenarios for employing the mind, entertaining ourselves with the company and the exchange with others and for enjoying the refinement of our own sentiments. As Hume writes in a passage of "Of Refinement of the Arts", on which I have commented earlier:

> In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour; enlarges its powers and faculties; and by an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished by ease and idleness. (…) The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. (…) beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus *industry, knowledge,* and *humanity,* are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages (E-RA 270-1).

An important point to note at this juncture is that the convergence between happiness and virtue is not *mere* coincidence. It is an agreement achieved through history between two perspectives each of which has normative authority over individuals. On the one hand, the historical progress of the passions eventually leads them to recognize certain activities as those that procure them the most durable, stable and lively enjoyment and happiness. On the other, their corrected sympathy enables them to feel moral sentiments that lead them to see the mental

qualities that capacitate them for such activities as virtuous. The convergence between happiness and virtue is an achievement of individuals' reflection on experience and as such they are able to recognize its normative validity. In a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, the regulation and refinement of individuals' passions produce a psychological transformation such that what individuals see as contributing to their happiness *is* what they see as the virtuous way of living and acting.

That Hume assumes the normative implication of the convergence between happiness and virtue explains his confident examination of our 'interested obligation' to virtue in the second *Enquiry* (EPM- 278). There, he shows that the 'happiness of virtue', which in the *Treatise* he promised to develop in a text of a more painter-like 'genius' (SBN- 620; T- 3.3.6.6), consists in the happiness that any 'man of sense' would expect for the whole of his life. Such a person is aware that what virtue asks of him is nothing but what he should do if he is concerned with his long-term well being. Virtue is 'rational', in the good Humean sense. For 'a man of sense', that the perspective of happiness and the perspective of virtue coincide in their demands means that the only claim that virtue makes on him 'is that of just calculation, and a steady preference of the greater happiness' (EPM- 279).

It is wrong then to conclude that in a modern society, virtue is defined in terms of happiness, or that, although virtue is defined independently of happiness, individuals act virtuously only in those occasions when so doing promotes their own particular happiness. In a 'polished' and 'luxurious' society, the regulation and refinement of individuals' passions produce a psychological transformation such that the distinction between acting for virtue's and acting for happiness' sake vanishes. As Hume elaborates in the Conclusion to the second *Enquiry*, happiness is the compound of the immediate pleasures of the appropriately proud temper, of the cheerful mood of the joyful person, of the self-esteem of the accomplished great man or woman along with the social paybacks of behaving politely or courteously, the smooth and durable satisfactions of doing good to others and the feelings of consciousness of integrity of the honest person.

Furthermore, that Hume assumes the normative implication of the coincidence between virtue and happiness explains why he expresses the impotence of philosophy in front of someone who refuses to acknowledge that the happiest disposition of mind is the virtuous:

For my part, I know not how to address myself to such a one, or by what arguments I should endeavour to reform him. Should I tell him of the inward satisfactions which results from laudable and humane actions, the delicate pleasure of disinterested love and friendship, the lasting enjoyments of a good name and an established character, he might still reply, that these were, perhaps, pleasures to such as were susceptible of them; but that, for his part, he finds himself of a quite different turn and disposition. I must repeat it; my philosophy affords no remedy in such a case, nor could I do any thing but lament this person's unhappy condition (E-Sc- 170).

Motivating this person to become virtuous amounts to create in him the desire for his own happiness. This is something hard or impossible to accomplish if such person 'finds himself of a quite different turn and disposition'. The motivation to act according to virtue comes from the reflective realization that virtuous actions coincide with what we should do in order to promote our happiness. Virtuous actions are attractive to people 'of sense' because, once they adopt the reflective perspective of their own wellbeing, they are able to appreciate that what constitutes the enjoyments of happiness is what constitutes the enjoyments of virtue. This is how virtue has motivating value for the agent. This is how, in Hume's naturalistic account, enjoyment and the satisfaction of the passions commit the agent to virtue. When individuals are able to adopt the perspective from which this is revealed to them, happiness and virtue finally converge.

Conclusions

This project attempted to show that Hume's texts contain a plausible account of moral motivation. In these Conclusions, I would like to indicate how the interpretation advanced throughout this project accomplished this aim. To this end, I explain Hume's position regarding the two concerns of the problem of moral motivation. Since I offered this work as a contribution to the history of philosophy and, in particular, to the scholarship of Hume interpretation, I also want to point the ways my reading stands in regards to contemporary discussions of this author's moral philosophy. Finally, I wish to mention some questions raised by the results of this project.

The problem of moral motivation addresses two concerns. The first is the concern about the *nature of the virtuous motives,* which consisted, as I elaborated in chapter 1, in how to explain the production of virtuous behaviour within a naturalistic framework that reflects the phenomenology and the moral language of people's everyday experience of moral motivation. I introduced this concern by reviewing some selected parts of Hobbes's, Mandeville's, Hutcheson's and Butler's texts.

In my assessment, Hobbes's decision to treat the issue of obedience to the laws of nature as a problem of the mechanics of passions inaugurates a commitment to explaining moral motivation within a naturalistic outlook in the tradition of modern British philosophy. In this context, Hobbes's anatomy of the passions was part of his project to discern the actual causes of human behaviour. Eventually, Hobbes's attention to self-preservation and to the passion of glory, along with his rejection of innate social desires, led subsequent authors to read him as advocating that the actual cause of human behaviour, including moral or virtuous behaviour, is some sort of self-interested motivation. Whether a fair interpretation of Hobbes or not, such reception raised the concern among later authors to investigate the nature of moral motives and, particularly, to establish whether or not the motives that typically produce virtuous actions are manifestations of a basic, and perhaps indefeasible, self-interested impulse.

Accordingly, some of the questions grouped under the problem of moral motivation among early modern British authors were the following: What is it that moves people to act according to morality? Is it a passion or a desire? Is it reason? Is it some propensity to obtain pleasure from others' praise? Is it self-interest or self-love? Mandeville's works added urgency

to this quest, given his description of human beings as intelligent praise seekers, which led him further to portray morality as 'the offspring that flattery begot upon pride'.

Certainly, for authors who did not want to see the merit of acting morally in obedience to an externally imposed law — as most eighteenth-century English authors did not — the claim that moral motivation was ultimately self-interested sounded offensive. But such authors could not fail to recognize the intuitive appeal of the 'selfish theory' either. Indeed, many if not most of human actions seem self-interested, at least in the sense that knowing that something will promote our good seems a sufficient reason to attempt obtaining such something. So if, like Hutcheson and Butler, you want to argue that human beings possess innate dispositions towards virtue, you have to deal with questions such as: What is it that makes a motive self-interested? What is it that makes a motive virtuous? Can self-interested and virtuous motives coincide in the direction of action? How does acting self-interestedly affect the merit of a virtuous action?

I took Hutcheson and Butler as two exemplary responses to the concern about the nature of virtuous motives. Hutcheson rejects the view that being motivated by self-interest when acting according to virtue makes the agent virtuous, although he accepts that, in the long run, being a virtuous person promotes such person's self-interest. His position rests on the idea that virtuous motives are special among other human affections and usually lead to actions opposite to those led by self-interest. Virtuous motives are benevolent, which means that they are directed at the good of other people, whereas self-interested motives aim at the good or pleasure of the agent. Moreover, the satisfaction of virtuous motives produce a peculiar and worthy sort of pleasure and arise approbation from the agent's and others' moral sense. To be sure, Hutcheson concedes that motives that promote the good of the agent are not necessarily vicious, but still, given their object, they typically deduct from the virtuous quality of benevolent actions. For this reason, self-interested and virtuous motives are incompatible as sources of moral motivation: if you act virtuously driven by self-interest, your are not acting as a really virtuous agent.

Butler, in his turn, seems willing to accommodate self-interest and virtue, given his conception of the nature of virtue and self-interest. Butler complains about the practice of equating self-regarding and self-interested motives and actions. This practice is based on confusing two distinctions. One is the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding motives and actions, which has to do with whose good a given action is aimed at, whether at the self's or at others'. The other is the distinction between self-interested motives and actions and

motives and actions against such interest. Admittedly, in some occasions — obviously in self-sacrifice — other-regarding actions coincide with actions against one's interest. But this coincidence does not justify the collapse of the above pair of distinctions. Moreover, their reality is grounded, for Butler, in the correct understanding of the human principles of action. In effect, there are three kinds of sources of motivation: the passions, self-love and conscience. The passions can be either self or other-regarding, for their objects are things or objects that we want or shun given our sensible condition. Self-love and conscience always aim at one's own good, given that their function is to regulate the impulse of the passions. Self-love is the principle that regulates the indulgence of the passions, such that satisfying them does not bring harm to oneself in the short or long-term. Conscience is the reflective capacity that enables us to maintain the natural order that God has designed for human agency. It thus regulates self-love and secures the harmony of one's actions in relation to others'. Given this structure of motivation, a well-ordered agency always exhibits harmony between self-interest and virtue. In consequence, according to Butler, the virtuous or vicious character of actions do not depend on features of the action itself or on any intrinsic feature of the motives that produced them, but instead on the way motives — the passions — are regulated by higher principles of action.

Hume's approach to the concern about the nature of virtuous motives concurs with Hobbes's view that human motivation is an issue for a naturalistic investigation. Moreover, Hume's is an investigation of the passions and of how the passions produce actions. Some contemporary readings would have that, like the Hobbes of common interpretations, Hume believed human agency to be primordially hedonistic and egoistic. In chapter 4, I showed that this is mistaken reading. In Hume's considered view, human action originates in a variety of original instincts and passions, none of which aim simply at the agent's pleasure, but rather at generic kinds of objects. Due to accumulated experience, such instincts and passions eventually mutate into a more numerous set of passions and desires directed at particular classes of objects. On Hume's account, human motives, as we know them, cannot be reduced to a generic desire for pleasure, nor even to a generic mental state called 'desire', as Bricke would have it. Hume's passion-based theory of action is 'motivationally pluralistic'.

On my reading, Hume is closer to Butler than to Hutcheson in regards to the nature and the relations between self-interest and virtue. Like Butler, Hume sees particular actions as caused by particular kinds of passions. Hume's motivational pluralism prevents him from believing that

human agency aims only at the individual's pleasure, or even at the individual's good. Nor does he conflate self-regard with self-interest. Instead, for Hume, some passions aim at the good of the individual, others at the good (or evil) of others, and others yet perhaps at the pleasure of the individual or of others. Against Hutcheson then, Hume would say that it is not the self-regarding character of some motives that hinders their being virtuous. Nor is the other-regarding and benevolent character of other passions that which makes them virtuous. For Hume, as for Butler, both the self-interested and the virtuous character of a passion depends on its regulation, that is, on what principles govern the satisfaction of the passions and on how the latter stands in relation to the satisfaction of other passions of the agent's and of the passions of other people.

In Butler, this regulation is effected through conscience, a reflective ability to assess one's passions and, at least in a well-ordered agent, align their impulses to morality. Given that conscience naturally possesses higher authority and, theoretically, more strength than any other principle of action, a virtuous agent, in Butler's view, is an agent whose motives are *naturally* arranged. In this, Hume parts ways with Butler. For Hume, the regulation in question is not possible through the exercise of any of his natural or innate capacities. To be sure, the regulation of motives that occurs in the virtuous agent, as in Butler, involves the exercise of reflection. But for Hume, both the regulation and the type of reflection proper of the virtuous agent are effects of a historical process, in which certain central passions recalibrate their objects and expressions as they help to civilize the social world.

This is, I believe, one of the major and distinctive contributions that Hume makes to the debate of his time on this topic. For Hume, to establish what it is that, in their own turn, self-interest and virtue demand of agents, we need to trace down the natural history of the passions. Perhaps, Hume would concede to Mandeville that human beings are nothing but 'a compound of passions', but he would say that the types of behaviour caused by such passions varies according to the external circumstances that these individuals face and to the state of development of the practices and institutions in which these individuals live.

Still, not any sort of historical investigation is suited for this kind of enquiry. There are obstacles that make the traditional record-based sort of historiography methodologically unfit for tracing the first manifestations of the passions in the human species — particularly, considering the sort of historiography practiced in seventeenth-century England. The first and obvious obstacle is the lack of documentary evidence: there is no record of the actions that passions led

individuals to do before the emergence of written history. But, furthermore, the traditional historiography of Hume's time was not designed to map out the process of development, regulation and refinement of any sort of affection. Its script was one that followed the political actions of outstanding individuals, rather than the processes underlying the progress of human nature. Hume needed in consequence something resembling a philosophical history, but that traced the evolution of human psychological dispositions and their manifestations in the practices and institutions in existence in his society, rather than the life of national characters. Conjectural history was the required tool.

Within the framework of conjectural history, Hume narrates the stories of several fundamental practices and institutions of the modern world. Running through their plots is the chronicle of the evolution of certain central passions. The regulation and refinement of avidity, curiosity and the social passions bring about the existence and stability of the laws of justice, government, the arts and the sciences and the rules of politeness. Yet, more important than the hypothesis about the origin of these institutions is the contention that that which makes up the happiness and virtue of individuals is a function of the state of regulation and refinement of their passions. If we take, as Hume does, the central practices and institutions of early modern European society, the story that Hume tells is one of convergence. As the passions are gradually regulated and refined by the evolution of the practices and institutions that they themselves underlie, the objects that individuals pursue in view of their happiness converge with the objects that they recognize a virtuous agent pursues.

Admittedly, given the constraints of conjectural history, Hume's is not an empirical claim about the reality of modern European societies. Actual modern Europeans were very rarely examples of virtuous and happy people. Nevertheless, Hume's conjectural histories show the character of the moral progress contained in the nature of the human passions, the logic according to which it unfolds, and the limits which the human constitution subjects it to. These histories also show that the regulation and reflection expected in a virtuous agent is only possible, given our human nature, within the boundaries of a human and civilized society. Neither innate, nor possible in isolation, virtue and happiness are thus conquests of human civilization. Probably, editing Mandeville, Hume would say that 'Nature had design'd Man for Society [and for Virtue], as she has made Grapes for Wine'.

The second concern of the problem of moral motivation is the *role of reflection in virtuous behaviour*. The central intuition behind this concern is that from a moral perspective, virtue involves some degree of the agent's reflective endorsement of the motivations which led her to act virtuously. More generally, what is it that allows us to reflect on our own conduct, so that we can assess it and guide it accordingly, resisting the most common sources of vice?

In my review, the Calvinists offered an account of self-examination that made reflection a rigged process. Given that the Calvinists denied that human beings were able to freely aim at the good, whether in the sense of grasping the content of God's moral prescriptions or in the sense of willingly following such prescriptions, self-examination was actually a process of turning attention to one's motives that were expected to result in the realization of one's own wickedness. The practical effect of such self-examination was the abatement of pride and the stirring of the believer's fear of God's or his earthly representatives' punishments. The believer was thus motivated to obey morality more because of the realization of his moral incapacities and his fear of God than because he could appreciate the good contained in moral prescriptions and autonomously guide his behaviour in accord with such appreciation.

Locke reclaimed human agents' free choice, but he still left the barrier between agency and moral good intact. Given his definition of a law as a prescription issued by a power able to impose punishment on his subjects, Locke had to understand moral motivation as the freedom to choose the alternative that avoided punishment for the agent. To be sure, Lockean free agents are able to reflect on their motives and desires, and they can guide their behaviour in accordance with their assessments, but the terms in which these agents see the alternatives are hedonistic, rather than moral.

Shaftesbury rejects this description of human agency and instead proposes that if human beings are moral agents at all, it is because they can perceive moral goods both in the order of the world and in their own affections. For Shaftesbury, virtuous agents are endowed with a moral faculty such that they are able to experience reflective affections. These sort of affections are perceptions of value that provide the motivational impulse for governing these virtuous agents' conduct. With Shaftesbury, reflection is placed at the centre of virtuous agency: a virtuous agent *is* a reflective one.

Hume would side with Shaftesbury in considering reflection as crucial in the characterization of virtuous agency. But the sort of reflection that for Hume would make sense to

attribute to virtuous agents is one generated by the progress and cultivation of these agents' passions in a civilized environment. In the last sections of chapter 6, I examined Hume's notion of reflection to show, first, the variety of psychological phenomena to which Hume applies the term, and second, the way in which the most complex types of reflection are built on the simplest ones. Then, from there, I pointed out the fundamental feature of the complex forms of reflection consisting in enabling the mind to refine its perception of objects through the acquisition of repeated experience of similar certain objects in the past. Belief manifests this pattern: the previous and repeated experience of constant conjunctions of resembling pair of events enables the mind to expect the occurrence of similar conjunctions of events in the future. The operation of general rules, of both imagination and understanding, is also based on the same pattern. Further, adopting a common and steady perspective to assess the moral character of other people's traits is also based on a pattern of reflection: the previous and repeated experience with the effects of certain character traits enables us to foresee the typical effects of the character traits under assessment and then judge them either virtuous or vicious.

My claim in regards to Hume's position in the concern about reflection in virtuous motivation was that the regulation and refinement of the passions, narrated in Hume's conjectural histories, enable individuals living in 'polished' and 'luxurious' societies to adopt a reflective perspective from which they can assess what kinds of life constitute their real happiness. This perspective is similar to that of judging other people's characters, but its object is rather the character traits that by experience they realize contribute best to human long-term enjoyment. Within the environment of a civilized society, the result of taking up such a perspective is the realization that the happiest dispositions are the ones that they recognize as virtuous. In other words, adopting such a perspective allows civilized individuals to understand that the satisfaction of their regulated and refined passions coincides with what virtue demands of them. Given that civilized individuals are raised in an environment such that, by the time when they are adults, their passions are regulated and refined insofar as this is possible, reflection allows them to recognize the way their traits manifest the coincidence of happiness and virtue and to guide their conduct when temptations arise. In this sense, this type of reflection enables civilized individuals to govern their lives in happy and virtuous ways. In conclusion, in civilized societies, individuals' happiness and virtue coincide, and the awareness of such coincidence, guides and strengthens individuals' motivation to pursue both virtue and happiness.

This reading of Hume's account of moral motivation stands in some contrast with traditional interpretations in contemporary scholarship. Indeed, the characteristic note of the latter is to inquire for the moral psychology that explains the production of virtuous actions. In this sense, the central question in mainstream discussions is about the way moral sentiments motivate; or if these sentiments are deemed not to be the immediate causes of virtuous actions, the question is about their role in virtuous action.

I do not think that this is a flawed approach in itself, for Hume's *Treatise* very often offers deeply insightful accounts of several aspects of human psychology, where the object of study is the typical mind of the adult and civilized individual. It is not thus unreasonable to expect that it also provides an explanation of moral motivation in the same terms. But given the current disagreements on the content of such explanation, my approach is somewhat novel and may be more fruitful as a way to look for Hume's views on this topic. On my reading, we must pay attention to Hume's elaborations on the historical development of virtuous motives. This way to look at the problem is neither completely new, nor constitutes a revolutionary discovery in Hume's texts. In fact, almost every reader of Hume recognizes the distinctive way in which this author explains the nature of the motive towards justice, and there is certainly no lack of scholarship on this part of his philosophy. My interpretative contribution consists rather in taking seriously the fact that Hume saw necessary to tell the history of the institution within which the civilized and virtuous motive operates in order to discern the nature of such motive. Accordingly, my investigation consisted in asking whether Hume has or might have done the same for other virtuous motives and what consequences followed if he did.

I found that Hume did tell other histories and that in doing so he explained the nature of other virtuous motives. Remarkably, I also found that the histories that Hume told concerned practices and institutions that made up the fundamental structure of modern societies — at least modern societies as Hume knew them. Hume saw virtuous motives as producing the patterns of behaviour that make civil life possible at all, at the same time that he saw them as the refined expressions of the passions that human beings naturally possess. For this reason, it is not a stretch to claim that the virtues, on Hume's view, are, on the one hand, the forms in which the human passionate nature find its most excellent manifestation, and on the other, the means that enable individuals to thrive in their complex social organizations. I think, in consequence, that

my interpretation allows us to see aspects of Hume's philosophy that might be overlooked by the traditional approach.

It is fair to admit, however, that departing from the usual approach of interpretation and from the typical way to pose the central question of moral motivation may mean that I failed to address many of the discussions that Hume readers expect to find in a project of this kind. I did not examine with much detail either the primary texts, or the secondary literature on the 'motivational argument', the 'practicality of morality' thesis, the 'inertness of reason' claim, the 'artificiality' of the motive of justice account or, finally, the distinction between calm and violent passions. I mentioned these discussions at the points in my argument where I thought they were most likely to emerge, but I did not consider that taking sides on these debates would be crucial to my purposes. Moreover, the literature on these aspects of Hume's philosophy is enormous and complex and so evaluating how my claims here would fare would exceed the limits of my project by far.

There are some questions raised by the findings of this project, questions that might merit their own individual investigations. First, throughout this work, I tried to show the importance that the resort to conjectural or natural history represented for Hume. Given my purposes, I restricted my focus to the topic of moral motivation, but I think it might be beneficial to our understanding of Hume's philosophy if further research were done on his style of conjectural history. I imagine that questions such as the following would be of interest: how does Hume's conjectural methodology compare to that of other authors of his time, both British and continental? What was Hume's role in the development of this historiographical tradition? What place did Hume attribute to conjectural arguments within the context of his wider project of a 'science of man'? What are the relations between Hume's conjectural history and the sort of history contained in his *History of England*?

Second, throughout this project, I found that Hume's practice of conjectural history exhibits the peculiar feature of being developed through scattered particular histories of particular practices and institutions. It might be interesting to explore more deeply what of Hume's historiographical commitments explains his reluctance to write a conjectural history of the type written by Kames or Ferguson: narratives covering the whole arch of civilization of all or most of the practices and institutions of the modern world. Such an exploration might shed light on what was that Hume saw of inordinate importance in institutions such as justice — i.e.,

property — the arts and sciences and politeness, and in turn, why he showed little interest in composing conjectural histories of passions other than avidity, curiosity or company.

Third, one of the aspects of Hume's conception of virtue that my reading illuminates is that virtuous character traits are both refined expressions of our natural passions and abilities by means of which individuals thrive in the civilized world. Hume's clearest instances of conjectural histories treat a few, yet fundamental passions, tracing the happy coincidence between their civilized satisfaction and virtue. But Hume's overall philosophical tone is far from being optimistic. In this sense, it would be worth investigating how Hume's approach to conjectural history could be complemented with analyses of the passions that point where their progress may go wrong and what may cause societies decline or stagnation on their way to civilization. Perhaps, such project would give us a more moderate and skeptical view of Hume's style of conjectural history.

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Appendix 1: Conjectural History and Eighteenth-century British Historiography

1. The context of conjectural history

'Conjectural history' was not a name that Hume or most of the authors of his day used to identify any historiographical practice. Instead, the term 'natural history' was more common[325]. It was Dugald Stewart who gave conjectural history its name and called attention to its distinctive features in 1795, when the genre was already well-established among Scottish authors. Prefacing Adam Smith's writings, Stewart considered that some of this author's works belonged to 'a particular sort of inquiry, which, so far as I know, is entirely of modern origin' (Stewart 1795, xxxv). Stewart recognized that 'conjectural', or as he also called it 'theoretical', history started with Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1750), but he attributed its development and cultivation to Scottish authors, such as Lord Kames (*Sketches of the History of Man*, 1774), David Hume (*The Natural History of Religion*, 1757), John Millar (*Observations concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society*, 1771) and Adam Ferguson (*Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 1767)[326].

Conjectural history was a 'particular sort of inquiry' because of its original motivation and the place it gave to conjecture[327]. On Stewart's account, modern Europeans noted that their intellectual 'acquirements', 'opinions', 'manners' and 'institutions' differed greatly from 'those which prevail among rude tribes', and this made them wonder about the gradual steps that led

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[325] What counted as 'natural history' was not a settled point. For an illuminating contrast between several senses of 'natural history', see Malherbe (1995).

[326] In passing, Stewart also noted conjectural history's resemblance with the French genre of historical writing called *Histoire Raisonnée.*

[327] Poovey (1998, 218) notes that, during the second half of the eighteenth century, the term 'conjecture' carried two 'antithetical' meanings. On the one hand, the term still bore its original sense, from its fourteenth-century introduction to the English tongue, according to which it referred to the practice of producing knowledge about the future by observation of portentous events or by the performance of preordained rituals, such as casting the dice. In its original context, the word denoted a reputable technique of extracting knowledge from nature. On the other hand, around the mid-sixteenth century, the word begins to carry the sense of holding opinions without sufficient evidence or justification. Accordingly, conjecture connoted from then on the idea of irresponsible belief or guesswork. This double signification of the term, according to this author, intersected the eighteenth-century debate as to whether theorists could generate genuine knowledge of society through 'conjecture'.

their societies to such apparent level of civilization[328]. One obstacle in the way of this project was the obvious unavailability of evidence, for civilization's progress must have begun far before societies started keeping any record of their history. In consequence, the very topic of the enquiry forced historians to 'supply the place of fact by conjecture' (Stewart 1795, xxxv). Still, Stewart assures us, conjecture does not mean wild speculation. The progress towards civilization can be reconstructed by relying on 'the principles of [human] nature, and the circumstances of [individuals'] external situation' (Stewart 1795, xxxv).

As Höplf (1978, 20-1) notices, most of the authors that Stewart considered conjectural historians moved almost freely between writing histories that relied on conjecture and histories of the more traditional sort, i.e., composed according to classical and humanistic canons[329]. It is hard thus to tell the extent to which these authors were conscious of introducing a change in historiography or inventing a new genre (Phillips 2000)[330]. What is certain is that conjectural historians willfully bended the established rules of classical historical composition, pushed by their interest in treating topics with which history has been traditionally unconcerned. Phillips (2000) argues, in this context, that in the historiography of the period, there was a mutual dependence between the material that authors thought should be considered worthy of historians'

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[328] Among the typical questions that conjectural historians posed, Stewart lists the following: 'by what gradual steps the transition has been made from the first simple efforts of uncultivated nature, to a state of things so wonderfully artificial and complicated. Whence has arisen that systematical beauty which we admire in the structure of a cultivated language; that analogy which runs through the mixture of languages spoken by the most remote and unconnected nations; and those peculiarities by which they are all distinguished from each other? Whence the origin of the different sciences and of the different arts; and by what chain has the mind been led from their first rudiments to their last and most refined improvements? Whence the astonishing fabric of the political union: the fundamental principles which are common to all governments; and the different forms which civilized society has assumed in different ages of the world?' (Stewart 1795, xxxv)

[329] 'It is plain that Ferguson's *Essay*, Millar's *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man*, several of Hume's essays and his *Natural History of Religion* conform closely to Stewart's account of conjectural history, whereas Hume's *History*, Robertson's *History of Scotland*, Kames's *Historical Law Tracts*, and Millar's *History of the English Government* do not. (…) Smith's *Wealth of Nations* cannot be classified in this way, and Robertson's *History of America* moves with astonishing facility between conjectural and narrative, document-based history' (Höplf 1978, 21).

[330] Phillips defines genres as 'historical formations that mediate the communication of readers and writers (…) [a genre] is a way of mediating and ordering experience, literary and extraliterary' (Phillips 2000, 10-11).

attention and the methods of enquiry and style of writing that they employed[331]. It was not a surprise that conjectural history distinguished itself from mainstream British historiography on both aspects.

Traditional historiography and conjectural history differed in their purposes, subject matters and methods of enquiry. According to Phillips, the chief task of traditional history was to record the 'truth for the instruction of mankind' [332]. By 'truth', however, sixteenth and seventeenth-century British historians usually meant the warlike transactions of peoples' leaders or, the peacetime deeds and accomplishments or kings, statesmen and legislators. Traditional history considered that the 'public action' of remarkable personalities was the only subject worthy of the historian's attention, assuming, not only that the political dynamics of the state determined the history of the whole nation, but that the audience that was worth writing for was that composed of future politicians[333]. Behind this last assumption was a social bias in the understanding of history's didactic duties: only future historical actors would be interested in learning the lessons from the past. As an anonymous advice book of the time states:

> If then history chiefly relates such actions, as the first men of a country have had, and must have, a principal share in; when a young nobleman is reading history, tracing back the great events and revolutions of human affairs to their springs and causes, considering the characters of legislators and heroes (…) he is as much busied and employed in studying his own profession, as a watchmaker, who is viewing the machinery of a clock, and considering its springs and movements; or an anatomist, who is dissecting a human body[334].

Along with this conception of the dignity and tasks of history was the literary orientation of the humanist tradition in which most conventional historians had been educated. The result was a practice in which writing history was more a literary art charged with didactic goals than a

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[331] 'No simple answer is possible [to the question of how eighteenth-century writers reframed historiography] since this reframing involved shifts in the underlying conception of the object of historical study as well as in the modes of representation and tools of analysis' (Phillips 2000, 14).

[332] Taken from Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1965, 259-60), as cited by (Phillips 2000, 14).

[333] 'Thus eighteenth-century readers defined history by the rank and gender of its audience, while "lesser" genres, like romance or biography, had equivalent lower audiences' (Phillips 2000, 24).

[334] Taken from *Letters to a Young Nobleman* (1762, 15) as cited by Phillips (2000, 132).

social science[335]. Traditional historians paid a great deal of attention to transmitting the 'truth' in an eloquent style, that is, a style able to engage members of the privileged class[336]. Their narratives followed traditional rules for telling stories, which prevailed in absence or even against historical evidence. In this sense, a typical historical narrative used to pursue the life and deeds of a few heroic male protagonists, through a predetermined plot arch of battles, obstacles and success. Such histories were commonly enhanced by the interpolation of fictitious letters or discourses to add some dramatic element. For traditional historians, the quality of 'instruction', in consequence, was more a matter of rhetorical persuasion than of critical or philosophical analysis of historical events, let alone of jealous scrutiny of primary sources.

This traditional view of historiography was the result of a compromise between the ideals that divided ancient and Renaissance historians[337]. But by the last half of the seventeenth century, it had become an arrangement full of tensions. On the one hand, that historians still took themselves to be moral educators more than social scientists explains why many of the new eighteenth-century genres of historical writing assumed didactic responsibilities in regard to their audiences[338]. On the other hand, by the end of the seventeenth century, a growing number of historians were less interested in engaging with the well-off and more in keeping a strict record of the past that could be supported on factual and critically-evaluated evidence[339]. They turned

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[335] 'From ancient and Renaissance historians, they [seventeenth historians] absorbed the idea that history was a literary art, combining rhetoric with eloquence, and moral teaching with stylistic beauty' (Leffler 1976, 220).

[336] Although Leffler (1976) examines the evolution of French historiography in the period, much of what he says applies to British historiography as well, in particular, the following sentence that he quotes from LeMoyne: 'Through history, "*Princes* are taught to be *Just* and *Moderate*; *Ministers Intelligent* and *Faithful*; *Captains Wise* before their time, and *Expert* without the *Assistance* of *Experience*"'. Taken from LeMoyne's *On the Art Both of Writing and Judging of History* (1965, 76-7), as cited by Leffler (1976, 222).

[337] 'Greek historians generally emphasized the idea of history as strict mimesis, while Romans - reframing the idea of mimesis to mean political impartiality - gave most weight to the instructive value of history. The Renaissance was heavily indebted to Roman rhetorical traditions, and most writers continue to value history primarily for its persuasiveness and didactic power' (Phillips 2000, 22).

[338] Famously manifested in phrases such as Bolingbroke's: history is 'philosophy teaching by example'.

[339] The tension between these two views on the character of history is nicely illustrated by one of the many episodes of the British 'battle between the ancients and the moderns'. Levine summarizes the core of the quarrel as 'at bottom a dispute over the uses of the past, a quarrel about history' (1987, 155). One episode of the quarrel started with a series of exchanges, in the form of essays and short books published from 1694 through 1705, between the retired politician and diplomatic Sir William Temple and the young

then to antiquarian methods to inform their own practice[340]. In consequence, new eighteenth-century genres of history gave different weights to instruction and mimesis. At the extremes, those who wanted to allow more importance to the instructive aspect of history turned into philosophical historians; whereas those who wanted to stay on the mimetic-record side became precursors of encyclopedias, biographical dictionaries and antiquarian studies.

One reason for this break with tradition was the manifest importance that commerce had acquired in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which mobilized historians to expand their concerns[341]. Historians could no longer ignore the activity which had made England stand out among its peers in Europe. In the event, telling the history of commerce represented a real breakthrough because it threatened the rigid division between the public and the private that traditional historians endorsed. Modern historians, in other words, realized that the conceptual framework of traditional history was inapt to capture England's new patterns of self-recognition. Their audiences were not only princes and ministers, but gentlemen and their wives, who wanted an education paired with their new economic position and a history in which they could see themselves as actors. Consequently, the history of commerce opened the way for

scholar William Wotton. The first launched an enthusiastic defence in favour of the ancients in regards to their performances in the lettres and the sciences, apparently motivated to encourage modern historians to write a much-needed great history of England. In this, Temple was merely reiterating the views of his own generation, which has been raised into a classical and humanistic tradition. Wotton, also a classicist by education, replied by agreeing as to the superiority of the ancients in the field of eloquence and poetry, but noted also that the moderns have improved the sciences and technology. In this, Wotton was displaying the new generation's conviction that progress in the arts and sciences was indeed possible, something that Temple rejected. In further exchanges, the discussion came specifically to the field of history, and in this context, Wotton challenged the conventional belief that the narrative and instructive style of the ancients were a good thing to continue. Instead, Wotton pointed out that the ancients lacked many of the modern techniques that allow a critical and thorough examination of sources and therefore they wanted a balanced and scientific view of facts past. In history, Wotton concluded, the moderns were superior because for them, history is not a matter of rhetoric, but of accurate analysis and careful investigation. Moreover, history was a field committed to the impartiality guaranteed by technical expertise. William Temple died before he could answer the challenge; however, the events proved that any response from his part would have been innocuous to prevent the upcoming changes in historiography.

[340] 'This emphasis on fact reveals an inheritance from sixteenth-century *érudites* who, through their legal perspectives, argued that history was a science, that historical data had to be carefully selected from dusty archival sources, and that accuracy was its own reward' (Leffler 1976, 220).

[341] 'No apology is necessary for introducing the history of Commerce into the history of Britain, which hath derived so many advantages from that source'. Taken from Robert Henry's *History of Great Britain* (1823, Vol. 6, 255), as cited by Phillips (2000, 16).

the history of the whole social world: literature, sciences, arts, 'manners and customs', and opinion and sentiment[342].

Since during the eighteenth century, it was increasingly difficult to think that the task of history was to narrate the deeds of the national heroes, authors began to experiment with styles which made easier for them to tell the history of the emerging social classes. In this attempt, their first move was to challenge the usual style of fictionalized and uncritical narrative focused on the political. Robert Henry, for example, divided his *History of Great Britain* into ten books according to what he judged to be the ten most remarkable British revolutions arranged in chronological order. Each of these books, however, was subdivided in seven chapters which tell parallel histories according to the following plan: i) civil and military histories, ii) ecclesiastical history and history of religion, iii) history of the constitution, governments, laws and courts, iv) history of learning, learned men, and institutions of learning, v) arts, useful and ornamental, vi) history of commerce, prices and commodities, and vii) manners, virtues, vices, remarkable customs, language, dress, diet and diversions. This disposition made impossible for the reader to follow one single string of political facts; rather she was to visit the seven dimensions of the social in one period and only then could she continue forward in time. Another example was Hume's *History of England,* in which he sought to break the line of conventional narrative, by introducing appendices at the end of each great period, devoted to the history of the social world and the 'manners and customs' of the time.

Presumably due to causes similar to those regarding the emergence of the novel, historians also explored with interest the domestic and the sentimental. Hence the revival of biographies and memoirs that exposed the sentiments, not only of local or national political heroes, but of prominent gentlemen. To be sure, biography was hardly a new genre: it had a long tradition in the literary repertoire; but it had always been ranked lower in comparison with history. Biography typically dealt with the private life of public men and was written for the

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[342] Emerson (1984) points to Thomas Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735) as one of the most important examples of the new sort of history that was being written in eighteenth-century England. Blackwell's was a pioneering work on intellectual history which exhibited many of the themes and resources of conjectural history. Its guiding question was: why nobody has equaled Homeric epic despite the 2700 years that separated us from it? According to Emerson, the discussion of this question was intended to further the teaching and promotion of intellectual history in university settings and, in general, to promote the spread of polite letters in Scotland (Emerson 1984, 77).

youth and women, a public not prepared for the serious male adult world of matters of state. The eighteenth century, as Phillips states, 'gradually open[ed] up to adult male readers the same interests and allowances as were more easily acknowledged in women and youths' (Phillips 2000, 133). These interests and allowances related to the peculiar pleasures and insights that the reader could get through a sympathetic contact with characters more or less similar to their own. As Goldsmith, one eighteenth-century biographer, expressed: 'whether the hero or the clown be the subject of the memoir, it is only man that appears with all his native minuteness about him'[343].

The new interest in aspects of people's life not necessarily linked to the political also explains the popularity of travelogues informing Europeans of the customs and manners of people in distant places[344]. Indeed, travellers reports helped satisfy the eighteenth-century voracious curiosity for knowing the 'manners and customs' of far-away peoples. Take for example the following list of popular book titles of the time: 'Barrington, *A Voyage to New South Wales; with a description of the country; manners, customs, religion, and of the natives in the vicinity of Botany Bay* (1796); Bartholomew Burges, *A series of Indostan letters by Barw. Burgess containing a striking account of the manners and customs of the Gentoo nations* (1790); John Ogden, *A tour through Upper and Lower Canada…containing a view of the present state of religion, learning, commerce, agriculture, colonization, customs and manners among the English, French, and Italian settlements* (2nd edition 1800)' (Phillips 2000, 148).

In this context of new interests and approaches to historical writing, conjectural history was the new genre that most radically broke with the established historiographical tradition and, as Phillips puts it, 'the most ambitious development in eighteenth-century historical writing'

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[343] Taken from *The Life of Richard Nash* (1762, 2), cited by Phillips (2000, 134-5). Biographers developed their own literary devices to reinforce the effect of intimacy. William Mason, in his *Life of Gray*, tells the life of a poet using only letters and journals. Part of the reason for looking for innovative ways of telling someone's life was that biographers took as their subjects people whose life hardly abounded in public, military or stately action. To tell the life of scholars, poets and literary men, biographers had to pitch a different note. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, to add a famous example, chooses the limitless fund of conversation of its character as the drive of the narrative.

[344] As Hume writes at the beginning of his *History:* 'The only certain means, by which nations can indulge their curiosity in researches concerning their remote origin is to consider the language, *manners and customs* of their ancestors, and to compare them with those of the neighbouring nations'. Taken from Hume's *History of England* (1825, Vol. 1, 4), cited by Phillips (2000, 148. My emphasis).

(Phillips 2000, 171). Like other new genres, it included among its concerns the whole of the political, commercial and social world, but conjectural historians' main distinctive interest was to uncover the dynamics that underlay the evolution from 'rude'[345] to modern societies as authors of the time knew them. In this sense, Emerson defines conjectural history as: 'any rational or naturalistic account of the origins and development of institutions, beliefs or practices not based on documents or copies of documents or other artifacts contemporary (or thought to be contemporary) with the subjects studied' (Emerson 1984, 63). In another manifestation of conjectural history's rejection of the traditional prescriptions for narrating history, its accounts did not follow the deeds of a definite set of particular actors, but rather the life of *typical* individuals, groups or nations. As Adam Ferguson writes at the beginning of one of his conjectural works:

> Mankind are to be taken in groupes, as they have always subsisted. The history of the individual is but a detail of the sentiments and the thoughts he has entertained in the view of his species: and every experiment relative to this subject should be made with entire societies, not with single men (Ferguson 1782, 6)[346].

Furthermore, conjectural historians adopted a storyline where the events that claimed attention were associated with what was 'natural', 'the most natural order of things', 'the

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[345] 'Rude societies' was a piece of technical jargon in conjectural histories, albeit with several variants: 'The beginning is a condition variously referred to as "man's primeval state," "rude and unpolished hordes" (Ferguson), "original and most simple state of society" (Robertson), "very early age of society", "nascent society" (Kames), "rude ages", "barbarians" (Millar), "first origin", "the first ages of the world" (Hume), "rude, uncultivated ages", "first ages of society", "early and rude state" (Smith), "rude tribes" (Stewart), and so forth (…) All these terms were used interchangeably for variety's sake, but the epithet "rude" was considered particularly apposite' (Höplf 1978, 24).

[346] In this sense, Höplf (1978, 23) compares conjectural and mainstream historiography and concludes that whereas traditional historians narrated sequences of facts that they took as 'unique' and 'particular', the sequences sketched by conjectural historians were 'typical'. Höplf states: '[t]he point to be stressed here is that the subject of conjectural history is not this or that society, or (still less) the human race, but the typical "society", "nation" or "people"' (Höplf 1978, 25). This fact, in Höplf's view, allows to distinguish conjectural history from the 'grandiose schemes of "human evolution" of the nineteenth century' (Höplf 1978, 25). Arguably, the sequences of causality told by conjectural historians were arranged according to certain 'narrative', and in this sense, what they specifically dispensed with was the recourse of heroical narrative common among classical historians. On this note, Palmeri (2006, 66) argues that the narrative developed by conjectural historians was permeated by elements of satire, by means of which they challenged (and sometimes inverted) previous authoritative historical understandings thereby helping form the new identity of Scotland's middle classes.

progress that is most simple', or 'the natural result of a state of the world'. The script of conjectural history was meant to capture the large forces of causality that produced human civilization, although its authors were perfectly aware that actual history not always followed such logic[347].

In this attempt, conjectural historians divided the periods of human progress in different ways to mark distinctively the changes they were pointing out[348]. They also recognized that certain broad conditions of material kind were necessary for the emergence of some institutions. Ultimately, their deepest motivation for tracing the development of civilization was a patriotic urge to improve the standards of taste, education and polish of what they saw as a backward Scottish population. In this sense, it was part of a larger political project to bring the ascending middle classes up to the challenges that the general modernization of England was posing (Emerson 1984, Poovey 1998, Broadie 2003).

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[347] As Jennifer Marusic (2013) comments of Stewart's conjectural history: 'Stewart's claim that "the real progress is not always the most natural" suggests that the aim of conjectural histories is not in the first instance to hypothesize about the actual transitional steps by which the target phenomenon developed but to "ascertain the progress that is most simple" and even "the most natural." This suggests that the aim of conjectural history is not always to hypothesize about how things actually came about but to describe the simplest and most natural way that they could have. This, in turn, suggests that conjectural history may appropriately have a somewhat wider scope than it initially seems. If there is value in understanding the simplest or most natural way things could have developed, even in cases where the actual progress is not the most natural, then surely there is value in understanding the simplest or most natural way things could have developed even in cases where one has *direct evidence* about how things actually developed' (Marusic 2013, 5).

[348] Some twentieth-century commentators take this penchant for periodization to be the crucial characteristic of conjectural history (See for example Forbes 1967 and Meek 1971, and more recently Harris 2007), as if it were a framework that all conjectural historians followed. These commentators claim that conjectural historians adopted the 'four stages theory', which described the economic development of humanity as the transit from hunting, through pasturage and agriculture, to commerce. Yet, historians' commitment to the four stages theory was not uniform, let alone a dogma that characterized their practice. Take for example Hume's alternative versions of the beginning and progress of human civilization, which not always turn on the economical. In "Of Commerce", the periodization starts by a 'savage state' of fishing and hunting and moves forward into the times of husbandry and manufacture. But in his political essays, e.g., "Of the Origin of Government", he starts by the barbarous times where people congregate around a warlike leader and moves forward into the times of habituation of peaceful authority regulated by general laws. In the account of the origin of the laws of nature in the *Treatise*, the periodization starts by the uncultivated state of familial associations and moves forward into the period of establishment of property, contracts and government. Thus, periodization, at least in Hume's case, seems to be at the service of explanation, rather than being the framework that constrains the latter.

2. The typical script of conjectural histories

To tell the history of the progress of human practices and institutions, conjectural historians took inspiration and evidence from a variety of sources. Emerson (1984, 66) argues that the Bible, the classics (as presented by modern revised editions and commentators), modern works on moral philosophy and travel accounts constituted their major references. Relying on this material, they imagined a starting point of history in the most remote antiquity. They commonly claimed that the 'rude state' of civilization was actual — and so of historical interest — in contrast with the contractualists' thought experiment of the state of nature. Adam Ferguson, for example, in his *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, criticizes Hobbes' and Rousseau's accounts of the state of nature because they overlooked the evidence that observation and history provide about the natural characteristics of human beings: 'Among the various qualities which mankind possess, we select one or a few particulars on which to establish a theory, and in framing our account of what man was in some imaginary state of nature, we overlook what he has always appeared within the reach of our own observation, and in the records of history' (Ferguson 1782, 3)[349].

To be sure, what conjectural historians meant by claiming that the 'rude' initial state was actual was that, according to their methodology, it was the likely and typical starting point of every human progress; something they liked to support on the experience contained in travellers' reports[350]. In this sense, the rude state of humanity had more the character of a plausible

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[349] Presumably with Rousseau and Hobbes as his targets, Ferguson states: 'Among the writers who have attempted to distinguish, in the human character, its original qualities, and to point out the limits between nature and art, some have represented mankind in their first condition, as possessed of mere animal sensibility, without any exercise of the faculties that render them superior to the brutes, without any political union, without any means of explaining their sentiments, and even without possessing any of the apprehensions and passions which the voice and the gesture are so well fitted to express. Others have made the state of nature to consist in perpetual wars kindled by competition for dominion and interest, where every individual had a separate quarrel with his kind, and where the presence of a fellow-creature was the signal of battle' (Ferguson 1782, 2-3).

[350] Ferguson is again a good example of this practice. Complaining about the prejudices that the moderns have regarding the capacities of rude peoples, Ferguson resorts to the reports of travellers: 'Yet these particulars [that rude peoples possess the same cognitive and social capacities as the moderns] are a part in the description which is delivered by those who have had opportunities of seeing mankind in their rudest condition: and beyond the reach of such testimony, we can neither safely take, nor pretend to give, information on the subject' (Ferguson 1782, 126). Later on, defending his general claim that the moderns can discern the universal characteristics of human beings by looking at impartial descriptions of themselves, he appeals again to the valuable observations of travellers: 'and if ever an Arab clan shall

postulate, than of an assertion that they were willing (or able) to fully prove[351]. That there must have been a 'rude' state, in any case, revealed conjectural historians' assumption that all human accomplishments were the result of a long and gradual progress and refinement, and as a consequence, that what they thought as 'backward' societies (e.g., American or African colonies or peoples in Asia) did not represent static forms of human association, but the starting point in the history of such peoples (Höpfl 1978, 25)[352].

Conjectural historians followed their description of the rude state of civilization with an account of what natural faculties and skills human beings might have had. The idea was to depict individuals as possessing basic psychological capacities which made them fit for survival, yet placed in such predicaments, whether subjective or of external nature, that they were forced to use their abilities to improve or change their ways of living. Among some authors, it was a commonplace to imagine first individuals as subjected to the highest cruelty of nature, for example, as Hume puts it, nature seems cruel to man 'in the numberless wants and necessities, with which she has loaded him, and in the slender means, which she affords to the relieving these necessities' (SBN- 485; T- 3.2.2.2). Individuals then had to face challenges posed by nature itself

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become a civilized nation, or any American tribe escape the poison which is administered by our traders of Europe, it may be from the relations of the present times, and the descriptions which are now given by travellers, that such a people, in after-ages, may best collect the accounts of their origin. It is in their present condition that we are to behold, as in a mirrour, the features of our own progenitors; and from thence we are to draw our conclusions with respect to the influence of situations, in which we have reason to believe that our fathers were placed' (Ferguson 1782, 133-4).

[351] Emerson (1984, 68-70) calls attention to the fact that, with the exception of Hume, all Scottish conjectural historians were confessed Christians. He argues that the Genesis story in the Bible could have inspired the idea of the first beginning of human history and the plot that follows. On a related note, Baier (1994) comments that Hume's account of the origin of justice follows the Genesis' storyline, yet secularizing its meaning and challenging some of its underlying values. In general, evidence of the influence that the biblical account had on conjectural historians can be seen in the kind of problems that they saw as demanding a response. For example, the problem of accounting for changes in numbers of population through the progress of humanity seemed to be inherited from scholarly debates in Biblical interpretation. Revealingly, according to Emerson, the answers that the conjectural historians offered resembled the answers typical among Biblical scholars.

[352] Höplf notes that there is a trace of circular reasoning here. Rude European societies were pictured in the image of contemporary 'backward' societies, which at the same time, were supposed to evolve towards a civilization very much like the European. Höplf, besides, does not believe that Scottish conjectural historians succeeded in making their rude states different in any important way from contractualists' state of natures. Although he concedes that conjectural historians emphasized that their rude state was supported by experience, since they invoked travellers descriptions of contemporaneous societies in their initial stages of progress, he also believes that, in practice, rude states worked as assumed premises (Höplf 1978, 26).

in the form of scarcity of goods, harsh climates, or natural catastrophes; or they had to overcome their own subjective predicaments, such as selfishness, a low level of benevolence, unsociable character, or absence of natural political structures. Their progress was thus composed of accumulative leaps as they overcome these challenges. Among other authors, the history of civilization was one of gradual change where individuals, initially indolent and generously fed by an abundant nature, turn themselves into rapacious warriors and power and glory seekers who looked to accumulate goods and govern their neighbours as external conditions turn harsher. Ferguson, for example, writes about the dawn of civilization:

> These particulars accordingly take place among mankind, in passing from the savage to what may be called the barbarous state. Members of the same community enter into quarrels of competition or revenge. They unite in the following leaders, who are distinguished by their fortunes, and by the lustre of their birth. They join the desire of spoil with the love of glory; and from an opinion, that what is acquired by force justly pertains to the victor, they become hunters of men, and bring every contest to the decision of the sword (Ferguson 1782, 164).

In any case, conjectural historians took it that the engine of human progress was a certain disequilibrium between what the species naturally has and what it naturally needs. Civilization is the human response to challenging environments. Accordingly, the bulk of the historian's account consisted in a reconstruction of the transitional steps through which, by working cleverly with what they had, rude human beings came gradually to polish themselves, that is to say, to acquire notions such as property and contract, to gather around a publicly recognized political authority, to institutionalize practices such as the worshipping of divinity, the pursuit of knowledge and the refinement of artistic expressions.

The quality of the conjectural account, in any case, depended on its being 'natural', that is, in its ability to explain the features of the civilized practice or institution subjected to analysis without invoking any supernatural or unlikely intervention, but only the 'principles of human nature'[353]. This 'ground rule' of conjectural methodology (Höplf 1978, 29) encouraged the tendency to privilege 'unintended consequences' kind of accounts. In effect, it was just not

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[353] According to Emerson (1984, 71), for this kind of account, conjectural historians were inspired by classics such as Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* and by the humanists who commented or expanded on those works such as Juan Luis Vives in *De Tradendis Disciplinis*.

plausible to endow rude individuals with a long-view of the future of their species. The success of a conjectural account rested on that, while attributing a short-term agency to its actors, it unfolded the marvellous complexity of what appears to be a designed development of humanity. That being the case, conjectural historians found the hypothesis of exceptional law-givers improbable (Höplf 1978, 30), as it reproduced in small scale the idea of supernatural intervention, as well as being at odds with conjectural history's rejection of the traditional narrative of national heroes, and the conjectural emphasis on typical human beings[354].

Conjectural historians also gave prominence to the interconnectedness that several aspects of civilization had on their way to progress. Consistent with their complaint against the kind of history that depicted humanity as shaped by outstanding personalities, conjectural historians held that the development of one institution was the combined effect, and at the same time, part of the cause of the development of others. For instance, as presented by Hume in his essays on economics, commerce does not appear out of nothing, nor is it the engine of civilization. Instead, it is the effect of the natural human tendency to find pleasure in exchange with other people along with the motive of self-interest and of external circumstances that made possible surpluses of production. At the same time, commerce reinforces the circumstances and tendencies that originated and supported other institutions such as government and the sciences. For conjectural authors, the history of human civilization is the result of the relations that throughout time different human practices and institutions hold one with another. Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writing of Homer* (1735)*,* to add another example, was a mix of conjectural and antiquarian reconstructions of the manners, arts, politics and religion of ancient

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[354] Along with exceptional law-givers, conjectural historians tended to reject anything exceptional. Höplf (1978, 33) notes that this was the price that the method exacted: cases of peculiar inventiveness, spontaneity, initiative or unusual gifts had the flavour of the unlikely. For Höplf, Hume seems to acknowledge this in his distinction between 'what depends upon a few persons' and 'what arises from a great number'. The first associated with chance or ignorance of the cause, whereas the second with what can be causally explained (Höplf 1978, 33). Phillips (2000, 48-9) gives this passage a different interpretation. I discuss it later on chapter 6. Avoiding the hypothesis of exceptional personalities, however, was no obstacle for conjectural historians to denounce the formation of groups of individuals, who presumably took advantage of natural circumstances to settle and strengthen their own power over others within society. Although the period and location of conjectural history that Palmeri studies covers more than eighteenth-century Britain, he notes that '[t]he agents behind historical plots vary in such natural histories: sometimes they are politicians (as Mandeville) or the rich (as in Rousseau); in several cases, the schemers are priests who first consolidate their power through the access they claim to the divinity (Hume, Diderot, Condorcet)' (Palmeri 2006, 66).

Greeks that showed how all these aspects 'are all linked together, and necessarily influence each other' and which ultimately produced a genius such as Homer[355].

The final stage in the account of progress was always depicted as something very much like a modern European society[356]. Yet, conjectural historians did not uniformly believe in inevitable progress, nor they ruled out the possibility of setbacks or reversals[357]. In fact, they thought of accidents or failed experiments of ancient societies as opportunities for later generations to learn and apply the lessons to their own benefit. In this sense, it was a commonplace to think of the decline of the Roman empire as the combined effect of a corrupted government and the uprising of loving-freedom peoples. The lesson was the necessity of creating political mechanisms to prevent the corruption of authority and mechanisms to facilitate the expression of individual liberties. In any case, in accepting setbacks and reversals, it was important that these could be also explained through 'natural' causes. Thus, both progress and reversal were products of the unintended consequences of the actions of typical agents that the theorist was in a privileged position to appreciate.

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[355] Taken from Thomas Blackwell's *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735, 14), as cited by Emerson (1984, 77). Blackwell's answer to the question of why Homer has not been surpassed by any ancient or modern poet was that Homeric epic was a product of his time and so it could not have been reproduced in any other place or period. The practices, institutions and the character of the Greek so fortunately worked together to produce something that could not be paralleled by any other society.

[356] Pearce (1945) emphasizes the relation between conjectural history and the European awareness of cultural relativism, along with the increasing recognition of the virtues and shortcomings of ancient and modern times. Yet, he notes that, among conjectural historians, there was a clear tendency to favour their own modern and polished form of life over what they took to be the 'barbarous' life of ancient times.

[357] Note, for example, Hume's observation in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences": '*when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally, or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive in that nation, where they formerly flourished*' (E-RP 135. Italics in the original). Ferguson devotes a whole part of his *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* to treat the 'decline of nations' (Ferguson 1782, 342). Kames believes that when society achieves maturity, an ever-increasing concern for luxury gradually debilitates the patriotism that sustains the political union and this leads inevitably to society's decline: 'In all times luxury has been the ruin of every state where it prevailed (…) Nations originally are poor and virtuous. They advance to industry, commerce, and perhaps to conquest and empire. But this state is never permanent: great opulence opens a wide door to indolence, sensuality, corruption, prostitution, perdition' (Home 1778, 333).

Appendix 2: The Motivational Influence of the Indirect Passions

The content of this appendix is meant to complement the argument for attributing motivational pluralism to Hume's general theory of motivation. The claim here is that, although the indirect passions influence the will in particular way, i.e., by mobilizing desires naturally linked to them, such influence varies according to the sort of evaluation that each type of passion involves. This means, against Bricke, that the goal-setting function in the mechanism of action production is not played by a generic state of mind called desire, but by the variety of passions.

The crucial distinction that guides Hume's account of the indirect passions is between their objects and causes[358]. Hume resorts to this distinction to prove that the indirect passions emerge in the mind according to the principle of the double association of ideas and impressions. In general, the object of an indirect passion is the idea towards which the passion directs the mind's attention: '[h]ere the view always fixes when we are actuated by [the indirect] passions' (SBN- 277; T- 2.1.2.2). For example, the object of pride and humility is the self, whereas the object of love, hatred and the compound passions (pity, malice, envy, respect, contempt) is another rational being. The cause, in turn, is the external object or state of affairs that triggers the passion. Whereas Hume believes that the objects of the indirect passions are 'original', that is, that we fix our attention on the self or another person when we experience the indirect passions by a feature of our constitution of which we could not give any further explanation, he thinks that the causes of the passions are only 'natural'. For this reason, the number of potential causes of the indirect passions is unlimited, although it is possible to account for all of them by pointing to their most common characteristics. All varieties of mental qualities and bodily shapes and all forms of external possessions and indications of wealth or social importance meet two characteristics: first, they relate in a particular way to the person who is object of the passion in question, i.e., one self in the case of pride and humility and others in the case of the other indirect passions. For example, for the cutting-edge design of my car to be cause of my pride, I must

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[358] Cohon (2008a) argues that the distinction between cause and object, which articulates Hume's division between direct and indirect passions, constitutes this author's original contribution to the theories of the passions of the early modern period.

actually own the car and this fact must be visible to other people[359]. Similarly, for the charming behaviour of a person to be the cause of our love towards her, charm must be a trait that actually belongs to this person's character, rather than an episodic or artificially produced conduct of hers. Second, a potential cause of an indirect passion must have the capacity to produce a sensation of pleasure or pain independent of the sensation in which the resulting passion consists — a 'separate pleasure' or a 'separate uneasiness' in Hume's own terms. For instance, my car's cutting-edge design raises pleasure in any observer who appreciates its utility, and that pleasure is evidently different from the pleasure of my pride. In the same sense, a charming action raises pleasure, even if the charm was accidental and not intended or part of the person's personality[360].

According to the principle of double association of ideas and impressions, the 'separate pleasure' or the 'separate uneasiness', produced by a 'quality' in an external object or person's trait triggers the emergence of indirect affections. If the object or quality meets the first condition, that is, if it relates in a particular way to the person object of the passion, the idea of this relation naturally associates with the idea of this person. This constitutes the association of ideas. Further, the separate pleasure or uneasiness associates with the pleasure or uneasiness in which the passion consists: the actual pleasure caused by a pleasant quality of us associates with the characteristic pleasure of pride, or the actual pleasure caused by a pleasant quality in other person associates with the characteristic pleasure of love towards her. This constitutes the association of impressions. It is worth noting that both associations reinforce one another to produce any indirect passion. The triggering impressions associate precisely with the

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[359] Hume seems to add the further condition according to which the relation between the cause of pride and humility and the self must be evident to possible audiences by stating: '[o]ur reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not *seconded* by the opinions and sentiments of others' (SBN- 316; T- 2.1.11.1. My emphasis). While it is certain that Hume considers the principle of double association of ideas and impressions a necessary condition for the arousal of pride and humility, it is less clear whether he thinks of this 'seconding' either as a required condition or as a sufficient one, or perhaps only as a reinforcing circumstance of pride.

[360] In book 2 of the *Treatise*, Hume establishes that virtue and vice, beauty and deformity, external advantages and disadvantages, property, wealth, and fame are all able to cause a 'separate pleasure' or a 'separate uneasiness', and later on, he implies the same for the causes of the compound passions, pity, malice, envy, respect and contempt (SBN- 331; T- 2.2.1.6).

characteristic impressions of the resulting passions, given that a parallel association of ideas between the idea of the object and the idea of the person object of the passion takes place. If one of the four perceptions in this double association of ideas and impressions is missing, either a different or no passion is aroused[361].

For my purposes, it is crucial to stress that the indirect passions are 'person-valuing' sort of affections (Cohon 2008, 170). Indeed, the most remarkable feature of Hume's double association principle is that it captures the fact that whereas the causes of pride, humility, love or hatred are qualities or objects that belong to people, the intentional objects of these passions are the entire persons for whom we feel pride, humility, love or hatred. That is, I might feel pride because of whatever quality of my car, but if I feel pride, it is my whole self that is object of it. Certainly, I might also take pride in myself as a whole if I consider that everything in myself, or myself taken overall, is pride worthy. In this case, both the cause and the object of my pride coincide[362]. At any rate, the point remains that the indirect passions allow us to direct sentiments at the entire person on the basis of qualities or objects that they have or possess, which are only parts of the full set of qualities or objects which they might have. The principle of double association explains this as a turn in the mind's attention produced by the association of perceptions: from a given hedonic charged quality, the mind is led to fix its focus on a person. This explains the way in which these passions allow us to make assessments of people: when I feel pride, I take myself in a positive view, and when I feel humility in a negative one. When I feel love for someone, I see her under a positive light, and when I hate someone, under a negative.

The person-valuing character of the indirect passions becomes relevant for motivation insofar as Hume allows that, at least for some indirect passions, passionate assessments can be expressed through action. The following passage in crucial in this sense:

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[361] The *Treatise*'s section 'Experiments to confirm this system' is devoted to test the different scenarios that would follow from the possible changes in the relations among the four perceptions involved according to the principle.

[362] Still, one can say that this is only the limite case where the aggregate of all my qualities cause me to take pride in my self. Note that this form of pride is different from being a prideful person, for in this case what is meant is that I happened to be the kind of person who tends to feel pride of my particular qualities or achievements more than others do in theirs. In this case, self-conceit or something like it constitutes one of my character traits, one that makes me pay uncommon attention to my good qualities.

The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoined with benevolence and anger. It is this conjunction, which chiefly distinguishes these affections from pride and humility. For pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action (SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3).

The first thing to note from this passage is Hume's separation between the indirect passions that move to action (love and hatred), and the indirect passions that do not (pride and humility). Surely, pride may prompt outward expressions such as a haughty countenance or the tendency to look down upon other people, whereas humility may make us blush or hide from others' sight. But, according to Hume, there are no particular desires that can be set off by these passions. Furthermore, this is not to deny either that pride and humility exert a powerful influence in people's dispositions and behaviour. Hume writes, for instance, that '[n]othing invigorates and exalts the mind equally with pride and vanity' (SBN- 391; T- 2.2.10.6) and that 'nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes us sensible of our own merit, and gives us a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprises' (SBN- 596-7; T- 3.3.2.8)[363]. Still, what this indicates is that Hume views the motivational influence of pride and humility on behaviour as having to do more with the way these passions are instrumental to individuals' character formation and sustenance than with how these passions prompt particular actions.

By contrast, the rest of the indirect passions exert some degree of influence on the will, though not directly, but, as the passage above indicates, by eliciting originally related desires. For instance, when we experience love for someone, we naturally tend to act in ways that benefit that person, in a similar way as when we experience pity or compassion. On Hume's account, it is not love which directly moves us to act on our loved ones' behalf, but benevolence, a desire that we can conceptually separate from either love, pity or compassion. Likewise, we naturally tend to desire the misfortune of those we hate or hold malice for, if not to act in ways that may actually hurt them. Yet, again, it is not hate or malice which prompts the action directly, but a analytically distinguishable desire, i.e., anger. Hume's point here might have been intended to save the facts, such as when love and hatred are manifested through actions that have nothing to

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[363] He also rejects humility as a virtue on the grounds that 'they serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man's fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment' (EPM- 270).

do with acting with the beloved's happiness or misery in view[364]. But perhaps, his point also obeys the fact that passions which on his account are different, i.e., caused by different principles (such as love and pity, or hatred and malice), nonetheless tend to produce the same kind of actions. His explanation could be that there are separable middleman-desires (benevolence, anger, etc.), which are aroused by different indirect passions.

To explain how the indirect passions arouse desires, Hume invokes a property of impressions mentioned in his general account of the production of the indirect passions: impressions relate to each other only by means of resemblance (SBN- 283; T- 2.1.4.3). Indeed, associations among impressions are unlike associations among ideas, in that impressions actually blend or mix perfectly: 'impressions and passions are susceptible of an entire union; and like colours, may be blended so perfectly together, that each of them may lose itself, and contribute only to vary that uniform impression, which arises from the whole' (SBN- 366; T- 2.2.6.1)[365]. There are different ways in which impressions can blend among each other according to the several dimensions of their resemblances. One of these dimensions is 'when their impulses or

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[364] The obvious case is when loving or feeling affection for someone does not lead us to do anything for them, or even to wish anything specific for them. Hume might be also thinking of cases where the person who feels love has a distorted or unusual way to express it, like when the stern father in the movie *Character* (1997) goes out of his way to put every obstacle in the path of his son's career, sometimes bordering on cruelty, so to build a strong and resolute personality in him. Presumably, if love were originally linked to benevolent desires, such actions would be inexplicable. Hume writes: 'The passions [love and hatred] may express themselves in a hundred ways, and may subsist a considerable time, without our reflecting on the happiness or misery of their objects; which clearly proves, that these desires are not the same with love and hatred, nor make any essential part of them' (SBN- 368; T- 2.2.6.5). Being closer to a coincidence between the impulses of two passions than to a necessary relation between them, Hume recognizes that the motivational influence of love and hatred is contingent, in the sense that being moved to benevolence for the person loved or anger for the person hated does not follow from the essence of either love or hatred (SBN- 368; T- 2.2.6.6). Love could be expressed by contrary desires or by no desire at all. Still, the desire for the happiness of our loved ones and the anger for those we hate are typical and the common effects of love and hatred.

[365] It is this capacity of impressions which explains that, when two independently caused passions appear in the mind at the same time, the predominant swallows the inferior's force, causing an increment in the emotional violence of the former (SBN- 420; T- 2.3.4.3). A phenomenon mentioned earlier in connection with the direct passions.

directions are similar and correspondent' (SBN- 381-2; T- 2.2.9.2)[366]. By this, Hume means that, for one, the indirect passion and the desire share the same intentional object, and second, that they have a similar evaluative stance towards it. The consequence is that the character of any indirect passion involves a sentimental judgment directed at a person, which is extended or completed by the impulse towards action typical of the correspondent desire. This quality of the passions, in virtue of which they unite with each other according to their 'whole bent or tendency', explains why love — an indirect passion — is usually followed by benevolence — a direct one — or why hatred is followed by anger. The principle of the 'whole bent or tendency' also explains the way in which pity and malice can mutate into love and hatred:

> Now pity is a desire of happiness to another, and aversion to his misery; as malice is the contrary appetite. Pity, then, is related to benevolence; and malice to anger: And as benevolence has been already found to be connected with love, by a natural and original quality, and anger with hatred; it is by this chain the passions of pity and malice are connected with love and hatred (SBN- 382; T- 2.2.9.3).

This account of the motivational influence of the indirect passions confirms my claim that the passions produce evaluative stances of external objects, in virtue of which they are able to play a goal-setting role in action production. Although the influence of the indirect passion on the will is not immediate, they are sentiments which make their mark on the will through particular desires towards the persons who stand in the position of their formal objects. Perhaps more evidently than in the case of the direct passions, the indirect passions 'gild' or 'stain' the

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[366] Other dimensions in which passions can blend with each other is along the agreeableness disagreeableness spectrum: 'All resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, till the whole circle be compleated. In like manner our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other resembling affections' (SBN- 283; T- 2.1.4.3). Another is along degrees of intensity: 'Now it has been observed, that impressions or passions are connected only by their resemblance, and that where any two passions place the mind in the same or in similar dispositions, it very naturally passes from the one to the other (…) But it is observable, that this repugnance may arise from a difference of degree as well as of kind; nor do we experience a greater difficulty in passing suddenly from a small degree of love to a small degree of hatred, than from a small to a great degree of either of these affections' (SBN- 344- T- 2.2.2.22).

view of their intentional objects: the sentiments that they produce in us about other people provoke actions that express the content of such sentiments. This lends further support to my claim that Hume upholds motivational pluralism. Actions towards people are explained by distinctive desires, which possess their own content and which express distinctive sentimental stances towards their objects. Therefore, there is no one unique desire or characterization of motivational state under which every human motive would fall. Against Bricke, human conduct, on Hume's account, is caused by a plurality of motivations.

Incidentally, against this background of the motivational influence of the passions, we can make sense of Hume's assertions according to which our sentiments constitute the value that we perceive in the world: '[taste] has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, [it] raises in a manner a new creation' (EPM- 294)[367]. Hume defends a subjective theory of value and a naturalistic theory of motivation. What value is, what forms it takes and how it moves us are questions answered by looking at how our mind perceives its objects:

> If we can depend upon any principle, which we learn from philosophy, this, I think, may be considered as certain and undoubted, that there is nothing, in itself, valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that *these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection* (E-Sc- 162. My emphasis).

Since the passions direct the mind towards pleasurable objects or repel it from painful ones, Hume's claim about motivation is that we always act moved by the objects that our passions present us as distinctively enjoyable or unpleasant in various ways. If we extend the claim made earlier in relation to the genetic account according to which our experience of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with particular objects eventually refine our tastes and our conception of self-interest, we can see how the passions that we experience more often and their

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[367] In a similar sense, Hume writes: 'But the case is not the same with the qualities of beautiful and deformed, desirable and odious, as with truth and falsehood. In the former case, the mind is not content with merely surveying its objects, as they stand in themselves: It also feels a sentiment of delight or uneasiness, approbation or blame, consequence to that survey; and this sentiment determines it to affix the epithet beautiful or deformed, desirable or odious' (E-Sc 164).

corresponding circumstances determine the conceptions of happiness and misery that we end up having.

Appendix 3: A Note on 'Vanity' as a Source of Moral Motivation

The 'man of sense', who reflecting on 'his own happiness and welfare', finds 'his account in the practice of every moral duty' (EPM- 278) is steadily motivated to acquire virtuous character traits and to act accordingly. This person differs greatly from the vain stoic who tries to achieve happiness by displaying the virtue of *apatheia,* and thus whose moral motivation depends on others' praise. But, Hume considers that others' praise still plays some role in the motivation towards virtuousness. Such role, I claim, is one of reinforcement. Due to an additional type of reflection, others' admiration of one's virtue becomes a sort of supplement to one's desire to be virtuous and act virtuously.

We can find the account of this type of reflection, in Hume's explanation of the esteem for the rich and the powerful. As presented earlier in chapter 5, the awareness that other people esteem us produces a reason to act in a way consistent with such esteem. When we are the object of other people's moral approval and perceive it through sympathy, we feel a new pleasure, the pleasure of pride taken in justified social approbation, which reinforces in us the desire to act in ways consistent with the moral approval perceived:

> Another spring of our constitution, that brings a great addition of force to moral sentiments, is the love of fame; which rules, with such uncontrolled authority, in all generous minds, and is often the grand object of all their designs and undertakings. By our continual and earnest pursuit of a character, a name, a reputation in the world, we bring our own deportment and conduct frequently in review, and consider how they appear in the eyes of those who approach and regard us. *This constant habit of surveying ourselves, as it were, in reflection, keeps alive all the sentiments of right and wrong*, and begets, in noble natures, a certain reverence for themselves as well as others, which is the surest guardian of every virtue (EPM- 276. My emphasis).

In this passage, we can appreciate some of the characteristics that Hume attributes to the sort of pride taken in justified social approbation. First, it is effect of a type of reflection, i.e., sympathetic reflection. It is either because we in fact sympathize with the opinion that others have of ourselves, or because we imagine what opinion they would have, that we develop the 'habit of surveying ourselves' which 'keeps alive all the sentiments of right and wrong'. Second, Hume indicates in this passage that such pride produces, not simply an occurrent desire to act virtuously, but a more or less permanent disposition: 'we bring our own deportment and conduct

frequently in review'. Third, Hume stresses that this disposition arises in 'all generous minds' or 'noble natures', and so, that the desire to act virtuously requires an antecedent disposition in that direction. A certain concern for our virtuous character, as Hume ends this paragraph, is the 'guardian of every virtue'.

This last point bears some elaboration because while the species of 'moral pride' to which Hume refers in this passage has been taken by many commentators as *the* source of moral motivation, in my reading, it is only a seconding factor. Pride taken in justified social approbation only *reinforces* a tendency to virtue that the agent *already* possesses. My reasons for adopting this position are as follows. First, in the passage above, Hume opens by saying that 'love of fame' 'brings a great *addition* of force to moral sentiments' (my emphasis); he does not claim therefore that 'love of fame' *produces* the desire to act according to our moral sentiments from scratch; instead, it reinforces a motive already present. Second, there is a good reason for saying that love of fame reinforces such desire and not that it produces it, a reason which is also evident in this passage: the pleasure resulting from love of fame is not exclusive of acting virtuously. As Hume remarks, such pleasure 'is often the grand object of all their designs and undertakings', not of only those related to virtuous behaviour. Thus, in the same way that love of fame might strengthen, say, the bullying dispositions of the thug who wants to belong in the famous criminal organization, it also strengthens people's virtuous motives. Third, as Hume explains in the *Treatise*'s section on love of fame, the 'desire of fame' is not derived from an original instinct (SBN- 321; T- 2.1.11.11), and so, that the virtues become its object must be something that has happened through history and experience. Recall here the genetic account of the passions. The practice of moral evaluation and the historical experience needed for attributing virtue and vice to some mental qualities and behaviours are required, if it is true that being a virtuous person can generate the esteem of others and provoke pride. Only in this way, can virtue and pride become associated. Fourth, as Hume also elaborates in the *Treatise*'s section on love of fame, not every manifestation of esteem works equally to satisfy our pride. On the one hand, we appreciate better the manifestations of those whom we consider to be in a good position

to judge our characters[368]. On the other hand, other people's manifestation of approbation, even if they are good judges, fail to satisfy our vanity if we do not agree with their judgments[369]. Accordingly, if the agent is able to appreciate virtue in his traits and actions, it must be because he already possesses an antecedent desire to act virtuously. Fifth, pride cannot produce actions by itself, according to Hume's moral psychology (SBN- 367; T- 2.2.6.3). The most Hume can admit that this passion causes is a sort of invigoration of the soul (SBN- 391; T- 2.2.10.6) towards the practice of virtue, which again presupposes an antecedent desire of it.

For all these reasons, the type of reflection by means of which the esteem or approbation of others reinforces our desire to become virtuous and act accordingly produces a motivational effect that is parasitic on the desire that individuals gain from taking up the reflective perspective of wellbeing. But this is not to say that the motivational reflection of others' approbation is negligible. Given that human beings are deeply social creatures, it is 'unjust' to chastise 'vanity in a laudable action'[370].

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[368] '[w]e are not only better pleas'd with the approbation of a wise man than with that of a fool, but receive an additional satisfaction from the former, when 'tis obtain'd after a long and intimate acquaintance' (SBN- 321-2; T- 2.1.11.12).

[369] '[t]he praises of others never give us much pleasure, unless they concur with our own opinion, and extol us for those qualities, in which we chiefly excel' (SBN- 322; T- 2.1.11.13).

[370] Hume writes: 'it has always been found, that the virtuous are far from being indifferent to praise; and therefore they have been represented as a set of vain-glorious men, who had nothing in view but the applauses of others. But this also is a fallacy. It is very unjust in the world, when they find any tincture of vanity in a laudable action, to depreciate it upon that account, or ascribe it entirely to that motive. The case is not the same with vanity, as with other passions. Where avarice or revenge enters into any seemingly virtuous action, it is difficult for us to determine how far it enters, and it is natural to suppose it the sole actuating principle. But vanity is so closely allied to virtue, and to love the fame of laudable actions approaches so near the love of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture, than any other kinds of affection; and it is almost impossible to have the latter without some degree of the former' (E-DM 86).