EMOTIONS AND HUME'S MORAL THEORY
by
MARCIA SUSAN LIND
A.B., Brooklyn College
1971

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY
at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY
February, 1968

Signature of Author...........................................
(Department of Linguistics and Philosophy)
September 30, 1987

Certified By...................................................
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted By...................................................
Chairman, Departmental Committee
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Acknowledgments** .......................................................... 4  
**Abstract** ............................................................................. 6  
**Preliminary Note** ............................................................... 8  

**Introduction** ........................................................................ 9  
1. Motivation ........................................................................... 9  
2. Naturalism and Atomism ...................................................... 10  
3. Benefits of a Naturalist Reading ........................................... 14  
4. Structure of the Thesis .......................................................... 17  
   A. Chapters 1-3 ..................................................................... 17  
   B. Chapter 4 .......................................................................... 19  
   C. Chapter 5 .......................................................................... 20  

Chapter One ............................................................................. 21  
1. The Arguments .................................................................... 21  
2. Conclusions ......................................................................... 27  

Chapter Two ........................................................................... 30  
1. Introduction ......................................................................... 30  
2. Natural ................................................................................. 36  
   A. Interpretation I .................................................................. 37  
   B. Interpretation II ............................................................... 41  
   C. Natural/Normative .......................................................... 44  
3. Solution? ............................................................................. 47  
   A. Natural Connections and Hume's Text ............................. 47  
   B. Taylor's Account ............................................................. 50  
   C. Conclusion ....................................................................... 52  

Chapter Three .......................................................................... 55  
1. Indirect Passions and Moral Emotions ................................. 55  
   A. Clues in the Text ............................................................. 56  
   B. Structure of Indirect Passions and Moral Emotions ........ 59  
   C. Causes and Objects of Moral Approbation ......... 64  
2. Subjectivity and Objectivity ................................................... 66  

Chapter Four ........................................................................... 75  
1. Introduction ......................................................................... 75  
2. The Standard Reading and the Knave .................................. 76  
3. Biographical Evidence ......................................................... 81  
4. Aristotle and Cicero ............................................................. 84  
5. Character ............................................................................. 86  
   A. Good Character ............................................................... 87  
   B. Character Creation .......................................................... 88  
   C. Results ............................................................................. 90  
   D. Good Character and Human Nature ............................ 95  
   E. Happiness ...................................................................... 102  
6. Conclusion .......................................................................... 107  

Chapter Five ............................................................................ 112  
1. Introduction ......................................................................... 112  
2. Hume's Response to the Skeptic .......................................... 115
Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank for help with this thesis.

First, I want to thank my dissertation advisor, Professor Joshua Cohen. The time he has spent on the thesis and on my work prior to the thesis has been extraordinary, and his comments have been invaluable. I am also indebted to him for providing me with a glimpse of what it is to care about ideas enough to treat them critically and yet use them for good and important ends. I hope someday my work will reflect that.

I also want to thank my second reader, Professor Ned Block, for comments and conversations which challenged, with perceptiveness and perpetual good humor, what I was saying and why.

Lawrence Blum and Martha Nussbaum also helped more than I suspect they knew, by having the courage to produce work which questions dominant philosophical prejudices.

Many dear friends also helped -- I want to thank in particular, Brian Smith, for always believing in me; Jonathan Adler, for caring so much; Thomas Uebel, for companionship and sanity; Suzie Russinoff, Doug Winblad, Jeff McConnell, Jerry Samet, Ken Albert, Buzzy Chanowitz, Susan Sidlauskas, and Sharon Klein and Pete Turner, for always finding time to listen. I also want to thank Katherine Womack and Jay Lebed
for much-needed votes of confidence towards the end.

George Boolos, Sylvain Bromberger, Virginia Valian, and John Moses provided words of encouragement over a rough period. Eric Chivian helped me find a clarity which I like to think will deepen over the years, and has provided an endless supply of energy, commitment, and always, hope.

And finally, I want to thank my parents, Dorothy and Charles Lind, and my brother, Warren Lind, for their love. I am especially indebted to my parents for teaching me, through their own lives, about survival, stubbornness, and making something out of nothing.
ABSTRACT

**Emotions and Hume's Moral Theory**

Marcia Lind

Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy on September 30, 1987 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

There has been much interest recently in exploring whether there can be a viable alternative to a Kantian -- or primarily reason-based -- view of ethics. David Hume's moral theory is an important and often overlooked attempt to construct a non-reason based system. I argue in my thesis that it is important, in part, because it has a complex view of emotion, a view which I believe counters a common kind of attack on emotion-based moral theories: they are subjective in that they preclude moral criticism.

In the first three chapters of my thesis, I argue that a naturalistic approach to Hume's moral theory best highlights his philosophical insights, and that using such an approach we can understand the way in which he thought emotions were complex. That is, we can come to understand through this approach the sense in which emotions, in Hume's theory, can be seen as having appropriate (and inappropriate) objects and
causes. I go on to show how this view, when applied to moral emotions, contributes importantly to a response to the problem of subjectivism.

In the fourth and fifth chapters of my thesis, I discuss the condition[s] which must be satisfied in order for Hume to sustain this view of emotion as complex, and explore whether he has indeed satisfied them. I argue that Hume must be able to show that "natural" is a normative term. More specifically, he must be able to show that to function naturally is to function correctly. I argue that he attempts to show this through a larger project; through (what he thought of as) a modern version of the central insights of Greek and Roman ethics. But I claim that this attempt at re-working classical moral theory is dependent on a "considerable uniformity" (as Hume calls it) of moral and aesthetic reactions through the human species, and that his arguments fail to show that such uniformity exists.

I end the thesis by suggesting that the problems Hume encountered in attempting to revive a version of a classical moral theory are problems that certain current attempts at emotion-based moral theories must also contend with.

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Joshua Cohen

Title: Associate Professor of Philosophy
PRELIMINARY NOTE

In what follows, all references to the following texts will be included parenthetically. Please check the bibliography for full publication information on these citations.

**Hume**

T: *A Treatise of Human Nature*

E: *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*

ST: "Of the Standard of Taste"

I: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

PA: "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences"

Letter from a Gentleman: *A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh*

Letter Physician: *Letter to a Physician*

LHH: *Letters Hume to Hutcheson*

LHHome: *Letters Hume to Henry Home*

D: "A Dialogue"

DM: "Of the Dignity and Meanness of Human Nature"

**Aristotle**

NE: *The Nicomachean Ethics*

**Cicero**

DO: *De Officiis*

**Butler**

S: *Sermons*

**Hobbes**

L: *Leviathan*

**Kant**

Gr: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
INTRODUCTION

1. Motivation

Of late, there have been various objections [1] to Kantian moral theories. Primary among these objections is the claim that Kantian theories are inadequate because they fail to recognize the important role of emotions in morality. Worked-out alternatives to Kantian theories in which emotion plays a core role are few. Of those few, Hume's moral theory is clearly one of the most important.

Hume has a rich and well worked-out psychological theory of the emotions [2] and a view about the role of emotions in moral theory. This focus on the emotions is, of course, part of a more general project in which Hume, seeing himself as doing something "entirely new"[Txvi], seeks systematically to overturn the assumptions and biases of previous philosophy, in particular as regards the place reason can have in philosophy. It is the idea that the essence of man lies in his rationality that he is challenging. Hume's is a very radical attempt, both in morals and epistemology, to put philosophy on a "new footing" [Txvii].

But exactly what that new footing is, at least as regards moral theory, is still barely, or badly, understood. This is in part Hume's own fault -- his writing, although apparently
simple, is actually quite difficult to understand -- and in part the fault of many of his commentators. At least as regards the moral theory, Hume's commentators often seem to have given Hume the silliest possible interpretations. Ignoring many of his subtleties, they seem determined to once again show that Hume's theory fails and that emotions could not possibly serve as a base for morals.

This thesis is an attempt to give a reading of Hume's views on emotions and morals in a way which tries to make the most sense possible of what Hume could have meant and wanted. I believe this approach will allow us to learn from Hume's theory; in particular, to learn what concept of emotion would have to be employed by a successful moral theory. With such information, perhaps it will be possible to come up with a real alternative to a Kantian theory, an alternative which is based on emotion, and not on reason.

2. Naturalism and Atomism

I argue in this thesis that Hume's emotion-based theory is more coherent and more philosophically appealing when his naturalism rather than his atomism is emphasised. But what is Humean naturalism? And why would it provide the preferable interpretation? We can begin to see this through acquiring a preliminary understanding of both the naturalist and atomist readings of Hume.

The atomist reading focuses on Hume's analyses of various
notions we have and judgments we make -- virtue or pride, for instance -- in terms of which atoms they consist in. For an atomist, pride would consist in the atom of feeling we have in the front of our minds when we are experiencing that emotion. Further, according to atomism, all atoms are connected either analytically or causally. And if two atoms are connected analytically, they are not separable, whereas if two atoms are causally connected, the relation between them is (only) a contingent one. Since the connection is contingent, it is -- according to the atomists -- possible, at any time, for this connection to cease holding.

Emphasising the contingency of the causal connections -- emphasising that we can never be sure these connections will continue to hold -- can and has led to reading Hume as the arch-skeptic. It has also led, I believe, to claims that he has a radically subjective moral theory. These results make Hume's theory look both simpler and much less interesting than it can be read as being.

But as Kemp-Smith and others have pointed out [4], Hume never meant the atomism to be taken alone, but rather to be supplemented by what has come to be known as his "naturalism". It is therefore the naturalist element in Hume I want to emphasise, in an attempt to offset the prior readings. For when Hume's naturalism is emphasised, I believe we will get a reading of Hume yielding not only interesting philosophical insights, but one which is also
closer to his own philosophical intentions, and, in addition, is not subject to the attacks arising from the atomist reading.

Kemp-Smith traces Hume’s naturalism mostly to Hutcheson. Although I agree that Hutcheson was indeed an important influence on Hume, I trace his naturalism back considerably further: I trace it to the Stoic attempt to revise Aristotle. In any case, Hume’s naturalism, as we will be using the term here, can be -- at least preliminarily -- characterized as follows: it presents us with a theory of human nature which: (1) is concerned with what is the case for humans as they are presently constructed; (2) in particular, focuses on the conditions, both internal and external, under which humans get, for example, certain emotions and (3) is married to a Newtonian method, which yields few, very general, very basic principles, principles which explain how humans think, feel and behave across a very broad spectrum.

The structure of the thesis will, I hope, lead the reader gently through both what a naturalist interpretation is and why it might be valuable. To this end, I have structured my material as follows. In Chapter 1, I will show Hume’s commitment to the study of man’s nature. In Chapter 2, I will consider one instance of such a study: what the proper causes and objects of emotions are for humans and why. We will see in this chapter that Hume believes that an emotion has its particular causes and objects, its "natural" causes
and object, built into the very structure of the human mind. In Chapter 3, I will show how this applies to moral emotion. I argue there that it wards off at least one important criticism from the atomist camp: that Hume’s moral theory is a radically subjective one. This is because, as we will see, the atomists believed Hume could not legitimately have a notion of "proper" and "improper" objects and causes for an emotion. In Chapter 4, I show that Hume believed there was another or second "sense", as he put it, of what it was for something to be natural -- second that is, from the use of "natural" discussed in Chapter 2. I argue that Hume believed this second sense is built up from , and continuous with, the first, and that such a building process is what transforms something like limited benevolence, which is natural in the first sense, into extended benevolence, which is natural in the second. Further, I also argue that those things natural in the second sense are unique to humans; that they are, in other words, what separates us from the animals. And as we will see, behaving in accordance with that which is natural, in both senses, allows people to "flourish" or to do well.

And finally, in Chapter 5, I show that a naturalist reading , although valuable in many ways, leaves Hume with some serious problems that it is unclear he has solved or can solve. And if this is true, someone might argue that my reading has revealed only that Hume’s emotion-based theory is not really viable. Given this, why is such a reading nonetheless an extraordinarily valuable one? I believe that
emphasising Hume’s naturalism highlights those elements in his theory which make it both philosophically interesting and plausible. Let’s see why.

3. Benefits of A Naturalist Reading

Hume considered himself an "anatomist" of human nature. And he said:

   An anatomist...is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter; and tis even impracticable to excell in the latter art, without the assistance of the former. We must have an exact knowledge of the parts, their situation and connections, before we can design with any elegance or correctness. And thus the most abstract speculations concerning human nature, however cold and unentertaining, become subservient to practical morality; and may render this latter science more correct in its precepts, and more persuasive in its exhortations.[T621, emphasis in original]

What are some of the things Hume’s naturalist anatomy can teach the painters of "practical morality", or as Hume puts it elsewhere, those "paint[ing] in their true colors all the genuine charms of the social virtues"[E10]? And why would such teaching matter?

For one, emphasising Hume’s naturalism allows him to be interpreted as having a view where an emotion does not consist merely in an atom, but rather is (what I call in the thesis) a complex. Such a complex will, under usual circumstances, consist of a feel, object and cause.[5] I believe this interpretation of emotion is philosophically
interesting for a number of reasons.

First, I believe emotion interpreted as a complex represents the kind of view about emotions one would want if one wanted emotions to play a central role in a moral theory. For if emotion is seen as a complex -- a complex having a proper cause and object -- it will allow us to say that someone is having the right emotion at the right time. Allowing us to do this both (i) puts to rest the idea that Hume's theory -- at least regarding emotions and moral emotions -- is a radically subjective one, and (ii) perhaps most importantly, allows us the possibility of constructing our character in accordance with what is natural to humans. For once we know the proper objects and causes of an emotion, we can begin to correct deviations. And this contributes to the sort of shaping of character Hume thought opened the way for great happiness.

Thus, a naturalist reading allows us to reap both anatomical benefits -- those of learning what, for example, emotions are -- and, in addition, the benefits of beginning to understand the painting of practical morality. For through paying attention both to Humean anatomy, and to the reasons he exercised his anatomical skills, we can come to see how, through emotion, people can train themselves to be in harmony (in a way Hume believed the "ancients" understood) both with themselves and nature.

And finally, there is a further benefit to a naturalist
Although a naturalist reading will allow us to overcome some of the criticisms arising from the atomist perspective, it will raise (as I mentioned above) a whole array of other problems. Why is this to be counted as a benefit? Because seeing and trying to solve these problems, which arise only from the perspective of a naturalist reading, will stimulate thinking about what conditions a modern, emotion-based moral theory must satisfy. And with the answer to these problems will come the possibility of putting into practice Hume's vision; a vision of a moral theory in which:

...virtue...[can be]...approach[ed]...with ease, familiarity and affection. The dismal dress falls off, with which many divines and some philosophers have covered her, and nothing appears but gentleness, humanity, beneficence, affability, nay, even at proper intervals, play, frolic and gaiety.[E99-100]

And this is very important because:

...what hopes can we ever have of engaging mankind to a practice which we confess full of austerity and rigor? Or what theory of morals can ever serve any useful purpose unless it can show, by a particular detail, that all the duties it recommends are also in the true interest of each individual? The peculiar advantage of the foregoing system seems to be that it furnishes proper mediums for that purpose.[E100]

By giving a sympathetic reading of Hume's texts -- by trying to understand, rather than criticise, what Hume is
doing and what his vision was — perhaps it is possible to accelerate the workings within that medium, and to allow a theory of morality, finally, to indeed serve some useful purpose.

4. Structure of the Thesis

A. Chapters 1, 2, 3

If one looks closely at the texts where Hume departs from the 'official' (atomist) theory, it yields three interrelated claims:

(1) passions are complex;

(2) the parts of the complex are linked via natural connections; and

(3) natural connections have normative force.

The details of each of these claims are presented in the body of the thesis. Here, I will briefly describe the substance and importance of these claims and how they relate to both traditional and current Hume literature.

I argue that passions for Hume are complex — meaning that under normal conditions, every passion is made of (its proper) cause, object, and feel. If either the proper cause, object, or feel is missing, something is wrong. My claim is that (a) if we can say emotions are complex in this way, we can have an objective moral theory; but that (b) in order to
say emotions are complex, we need to posit what I call natural connections. Let's go through (a) and (b) in turn.

(a) Why might we think emotion analyzed as complex might preserve objectivity?

A necessary condition on objectivity is that we at least be able to say that not every possibility is equally legitimate. If, under normal conditions, an emotion just consists in a phenomenological feel, with no object or cause considered more proper or improper than any other, then people can have the same emotion in relation to radically different objects and causes, and there would be nothing we could say to them, no matter how strange the object or cause of the emotion. Therefore we are left with a subjective theory.

Emotion analyzed as complex, however, need not similarly yield a subjective theory. This is because to analyze emotion as complex is to say that, under normal conditions, more than a phenomenological feel must be present for something to be that emotion. Emotion seen as complex will give Hume the tools to say that something is a proper or improper cause or object of a particular emotion.

(b) In order to claim that emotions are complex in this way, however, Hume must be able to say that there is a kind of connection between the "proper" parts of a passion which is both (a) not analytic [for as we will see, Hume tells us
these connections could not be a "relation of ideas"] and yet (b) strong enough to allow us to say that these parts, under normal conditions, must always be part of that emotion. I argue that we can find such a non-analytic connection in Hume. It is a natural connection. In brief, a natural connection is a connection arising from basic laws of the human mind. I will argue that Hume attempts to give such laws normative force.

My claims in Chapters 2 and 3 are an extension of already existing literature on Hume. A growing number of philosophers interpret Hume as having a theory of the passions in which passions have intentional structure. These philosophers all see the connections among the various parts of an emotion as being causal, but do not think that is incompatible with such intentional structure. I try to apply this insight about emotions to Hume's moral theory in order to see how it might strengthen his theory. In particular, I believe it can guard the theory from at least one sort of objection, one which claims the theory is a subjective one.

Chapter 4

Here I return to the claim (at the end of Chapter 2) that in order to make his notion of objectivity feasible, Hume must be able to show that "natural" is a normative term. I argue that Hume does attempt to show this, and situate his attempt in Hume's larger project of reconstructing certain classical ethical theories. My claim in this chapter is that
Hume himself saw his moral theory as a modern re-doing of some central tenets of Greek and Roman ethics: namely (a) virtue is natural, and (b) being virtuous is a necessary condition for doing well. Seeing Hume as attempting a modern version of a classical moral theory is a reading of his project much different from the one usually given. The more usual reading sees him, especially as regards his theory of justice, as a kind of Hobbesian. According to my view of Hume's ethics, then, "natural" is a normative term because to act in accordance with your nature is a necessary condition for doing well.

C. Chapter 5

In Chapter 5 I ask whether Hume can coherently carry off this attempt to meld Greek and modern ideas in ethics. I argue that this attempt has the following problem: Hume must be able to say to someone who claims acting virtuously bears no relation, for them, to doing well, that their behavior is unnatural (and therefore wrong). My claim in this chapter is that Hume's views about what is natural require that there be a uniformity in moral reactions across the species that his argument fails to support. I end the thesis with a short discussion of why any of these issues might be philosophically valuable and, in particular, why my approach to Hume may shed light on current emotion-based theories.
CHAPTER ONE

Hume argues that morality has its origin in sentiment and not in reason. My object in this chapter is to show that the way he argues for this conclusion indicates his overriding interest in what I have characterized above as his naturalism. If this is true, we will, at this early point, have some reason for believing it proper to proceed with a naturalist, rather than an atomist, reading of Hume. I will argue that this is so by focusing on a particular part of Hume's argument that morality is governed by sentiment; his "fancied monster" example. For I believe this example demonstrates his lack of interest, as regards the study of morality, in what is logically possible or impossible for all creatures. The example highlights, instead, his interest in morality as a study both conditioned by and limited to the structure of the human mind.

1. The Arguments

To argue that judgments of virtue or vice originate in our sentiments, Hume first shows that such judgments could not possibly come from our reason. Reason, Hume claims, can only have two functions: it either judges relations of ideas or matters of fact. He argues that moral judgments are the result of neither. Therefore, moral judgments cannot originate in our reason. Therefore, (since for Hume reason
sentiment is an exhaustive dichotomy) moral judgments must originate with a sentiment.

What I am concerned with here is Hume’s claim that virtue or vice are not matters of fact (or facts in the world). For it is within this claim that the fancied monster example occurs. But before we go on to Hume’s arguments, I want to try to make clear the position he is arguing against. It is (briefly) that: "[Morality]...consists not in any matter of fact which can be discovered by the understanding."[T468]

What does this mean? For Hume, morality being a fact in the world (or something which is in objects) means one of two things. It must satisfy one or both of these two conditions. Either (a) virtue or vice will be observable by one of our five senses, or (b) virtue or vice can be inferred by our reason from what is observable.[1] If neither condition can be satisfied, as he argues, then morality is not a fact in the world.

(i) Argument 1

Hume gives the following argument to show that virtue is not observable in the world: "Where is that matter of fact which we here call crime; point it out, determine the time of its existence, describe its essence or nature; explain the sense or faculty to which it discovers itself."[E 106]

That is, Hume is arguing that none of our five senses can discern crime. Thus that is what he means when he says that
virtue is not observable, for he claims about virtue that we can neither say where it is, nor point to it, nor determine its time or essence. And since none of our five senses can perceive virtue, there is no "impression of sensation" of virtue.

However, one might imagine an opponent of Hume's who insisted that he had an impression of virtue or vice. Virtue or vice, such a person might claim, is observable in the world. He can point to it. "Look", he might say, "there is the vice, right there where John is hitting Mary over her head". If you press this man by saying: "But look, you don't understand, that is not an impression of vice you are getting, just some facts", the man may very well reply: "One of the impressions I am getting, through sympathy, is Mary's pain; and I further observe that John is hurting her for no reason. What more could vice consist in?"

In order to respond to such a person, Hume must show that whatever we can perceive about the world through our senses, whether unwanted pain, or usefulness, cannot be what virtue or vice is. He must show that virtue or vice is not identical with any observable fact. And critical to this claim, as we will see, is argument 2.

(ii) Argument 2

Argument 2 claims that virtue or vice is always a separate substance from anything observable in the world. If Hume
shows that virtue or vice is a separate substance from
anything observable in the world, virtue or vice cannot be
identical with anything observable in the world.

The way Hume attempts to prove this claim is as follows:
two ideas constitute separate substances if and only if they
are separable in thought without a contradiction. Hume's
claim is that it is always possible to separate any
observable data -- any fact in the world -- from the
responses humans typically have to this data. His proof of
this is that fancied monsters -- creatures we could have been
but are not -- could always separate the facts from such
usual (human) responses.

Let us suppose a person originally so framed so as to have no manner of concern for his fellow
creatures, but to regard the happiness and misery
of all sensible beings with greater indifference
than even two contiguous shades of the same
color.... The consequence, I believe, must be
allowed just that such a person, being absolutely
unconcerned either for the public good of a
community or the private utility of others, would
look on every quality, however pernicious or
however beneficial, to society or to its possessor,
with the same indifference as on the most common
and uninteresting object. [But if, instead of this
fancied monster....] [E60]

The fancied monster case might be thought of as an instance
of a more general argument [2] -- which works like this:

1. A and B can be thought of separately without a
contradiction;
2. Therefore, A and B are separate ideas in thought;

3. Therefore, A and B are distinct ideas;

4. Therefore, A and B can exist separately;

5. Therefore A and B are not the same substance.

The appeal of such an argument here seems obvious, that is, one might understand why Hume would have thought it made clear that virtue and any fact are "separate substances". For compare this case with another: try to imagine a fancied monster who could claim that "x was an unmarried man" and "x was not a bachelor" without contradiction. It's not -- or at least Hume thought it was not -- do-able. Thus Hume would take this as very persuasive in allowing us to conclude that virtue and facts really can be thought of separately in this way and thus are indeed separate substances.

But I believe the fancied monster example has a second, more philosophically interesting point. And that point is this: humans have a capacity which ensures that they must make value judgments upon making certain factual ones, despite the facts and values not being conceptually connected. Hume tells us that "a man [has a] plain foundation of preference when everything else is equal...there must still be a choice or distinction between what is useful and what is pernicious. [And]... this distinction is the same, in all its parts, with the moral distinction..." [E60]
Further, Hume hints in the fancied monster example at why this is, what makes it, in other words, be the case that: "...the sentiment of disapprobation ...by the structure of human nature [is something] we unavoidably feel on the apprehension of barbarity or treachery." [E111] The hint Hume gives us is this: whatever that capacity is in humans (or at least well-functioning humans, as we will see) has something to do with sentiment. For sentiment is that which humans have and the fancied monsters do not. This sort of monster, we saw above, was "originally framed so as to have no manner of concern for his fellow creatures...". But in what way does sentiment control our having moral reactions? And further, under what conditions do such sentiments themselves occur -- and why? These are some of the questions raised by the fancied monster example.

That sentiment is what is involved in humans making moral judgments is further confirmed in Hume's third argument. For it is there that Hume claims to have a proof that moral judgment involves sentiment.

(iii) Argument 3

Hume's third argument confirms our speculation above that sentiments are the ground of morality. Hume argues here from the power morals has to concern and motivate us. He says about factual judgments: "What is intelligible, what is evident, what is probable, what is true, procures only the
cool assent of the understanding."[E56] However, of moral judgments he says: "What is honorable, what is fair, what is becoming, what is noble, what is generous, takes possession of the heart and animates us to embrace and maintain it."[E5]

If moral judgments indeed "take possession of the heart and animate us to possess and maintain it" and Hume thinks he has independently shown [T413-416] that only sentiments can move us, then moral judgments must consist in, at least partially, a sentiment. This argument has obvious -- and often discussed -- problems. [3] But rather than discussing objections to this argument, I am more interested in what can be concluded. If moral judgments and observable facts were indeed shown to be separate substances, what conclusions could be drawn?

2. Conclusions

I believe the general conclusion which could be drawn from the above is this: If moral judgment and facts were shown to be independent substances, then neither condition (a) nor (b) above could be satisfied. And therefore Hume will have proved that virtue is not a fact in the world. Let's see, therefore, whether he has indeed shown that neither (a) nor (b) can be satisfied.

If observable facts and moral judgments are separate substances, then no observable fact is identical with any moral judgment. Thus condition (a) cannot be satisfied;
virtue cannot be a fact in the world because it cannot be observed nor is it identical with anything that can be observed.

Further, condition (b) says something is a fact if it can be inferred from what is observable. What do arguments 1, 2, and 3 tell us about this? If by inference we mean can we infer by our reason the values from the facts -- the answer is that such an inference cannot be made. For if, as Hume thinks he has shown, morals and observable facts are separate substances, then, because they are two separate substances, it is certainly possible that: "Anything may produce anything. Creation, annihilation, motion, reason, volition; all these may arise from one another, or from any object we may imagine."[T173] Thus condition (b) cannot be satisfied. Since neither condition (a) nor condition (b) can be satisfied, Hume has shown that morality is not a fact in the world.

But what is the importance of this conclusion? Has this argument shown, as we promised, Hume's interest in what we have been calling a naturalist approach? I believe so. It has shown this for two reasons. First, the above argument has demarcated the domain in which one studies morality: the argument tells us that the study of morality is the study of humans. For we said earlier that if morality was neither a fact in the world, nor a relation of ideas, then it had its origin in sentiment. But if moral judgments are indeed the
product of sentiment, then to study morality one must study humans rather than deities or fancied monsters. For:

... nothing but Experience can assure us, that the Sentiments are the same[to all rational creatures]. What Experience have we with regard to superior Beings? How can we ascribe to them any sentiments at all? [LHH, 1740]

Thus it is not conceptual connections (which would hold for all "rational creatures") that Hume will go on to study when he studies morality. Rather, he will study connections of another sort, having to do with properties peculiar to the human mind. As Hume himself says, if the foundation of moral judgment is sentiment, then "...like the perception of beauty and deformity [it is]...founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species"[E4].

Second, if we know that moral judgments are the product of human sentiment, then we can go on to ask what about the human constitution ensures that people get certain sentiments in response to certain facts. To ask this question would be an instance of the sort of naturalistic inquiry -- one concerned with the conditions under which humans make certain judgments and engage in certain behavior -- that we outlined earlier. As we will see, such a (naturalistic) question is exactly what the next chapter will explore.
CHAPTER TWO

1. Introduction

We know from the preceding chapter that Hume was interested in a naturalist approach to morality, and that he believed that to judge someone virtuous or vicious is to have a particular sort of sentiment. But what is a sentiment (or passion) for Hume?

I will argue here that a naturalist reading offers a more subtle and viable treatment of the passions in Hume's theory than does an atomist one. For a naturalist reading will allow us to interpret Hume as having a theory in which emotions are "complex" — where by complex I mean that an emotion is something which, under normal conditions, is made of various elements, with the object and cause of the passion among them. And that further, when the emotion does not have these components, something is wrong. I believe that this view of emotion as complex will both protect Hume from a potentially devastating objection to his ethical theory and accord better with important passages in Hume's texts than the atomist reading.

However, before we go on to argue here that emotion is indeed a complex, we must outline the atomist reading of Hume a bit more fully than we did earlier.
A. The Atomist View

The atomist view, which is the standard received view of Hume [1], is that emotions in Hume's theory consist only and entirely in an atom of feeling. How is this conclusion reached? Anthony Kenny [2] for example, relies on such passages in Hume as the following:

[the] very being and essence [of passions is]...the sensations, or peculiar emotions they excite in the soul....Thus pride is a pleasant sensation and humility a painful; and upon the removal of the pleasure and pain, there is in reality no pride nor humility. Of this our very feeling convinces us; and beyond our feeling, tis here in vain to reason or dispute. [T286]

And he then argues that Hume believed that:

1. Although passions have objects and causes, these objects and causes are not connected to the passion analytically (that is, in Humean language, through any kind of "relation of ideas"). Rather, the connection is only a causal one; and,

2. Since these objects and causes of passions are connected to passions only causally, they are connected only contingently; and,

3. Those things contingently connected to the emotion cannot be part of the emotion; and,

4. Given the sort of passage cited above [T286], the
emotion itself consists in is its "sensation" or feeling component.

5. Therefore, the passions consist in (and only in) an atom of feeling.

Kenny's view was very influential. Following him, Patrick Gardiner[3] and Phillipa Foot[4], also interpreted passions in Hume's theory as consisting entirely in their feeling component. And as in Kenny's interpretation, Foot and Gardiner also claimed that this component was causally and (therefore) contingently connected to the object of the emotion.

Further, Kenny, Gardiner, and Foot all believed this (supposedly) Humean view of the passions was wrong. For passions, they argued, have an intentional structure, which could not possibly be captured by this Humean schema. Foot, for example, said that Hume was "...[trying]...to explain what it means to say that an action or quality...[was] virtuous in terms of a special feeling..." [5]. And her complaint, which was echoed by the others [6] was that "...a feeling [of pride] requires a special kind of thought about the thing of which one feels proud." [7]

Hume does say the sorts of things Kenny attributes to him. But he also makes other claims, claims incompatible with the atomist interpretation. I will go on to argue here that once Hume's naturalism is emphasised it will turn out that he can
capture the intentionality of emotions -- although not via what we will see Foot call a "connection of meaning" -- that is, a conceptual connection.

The atomist reading of Hume denies the possibility of emotion as a complex. The atomists claims that since: (1) emotions are feeling-atoms which are only contingently connected to their proper object and cause, it follows that (2) we can have no (evaluative) standards for when something is the correct or incorrect object or cause of the emotion. Foot, for examples, makes this explicit when she says:

...since Hume has denied all logical connections -- all connections of meaning -- between moral approval and the objects of moral approval, and would have to allow anyone to assert any kind of action he chose to be virtuous on the strength of the supposed feeling [of approbation], it follows that no one could get at an opponent [who professed weird "moral views"]. [8]

But without such evaluative standards we could not say that emotion is a complex. For saying that emotion is a complex requires that we claim there are correct and incorrect components for an emotion. So it is important to decide whether the atomist claim here is correct. Is it?

As to the claim that emotions have parts which are only contingently connected, the atomist interpretation is entirely correct. Hume did argue the connection between the parts of an emotion is causal and not analytic. For he believes he has shown (as we saw in the last chapter) that
when we separate the feel of an emotion from either (the thought of) its characteristic cause or object, we do not get a contradiction.

And we also saw earlier that therefore, Hume thought the feel of an emotion and the object and cause of the emotion were all separate substances. Thus the connection here could not be analytic. And since, for Hume, connections are either analytic or causal, it must be causal.

Further, Hume plainly tells us such a connection is causal when he says, for example:

The nerves of the nose and palate are so disposed as in certain circumstances to convey such peculiar sensations to the mind; the sensations of lust and hunger always produce in us the idea of those peculiar objects, which are suitable to each appetite.[T287]

But it is not at all clear that it follows from this -- from the claim that these connexions are causal -- that such connections can yield no normative standards. Let's see why the atomists might think this.

Their argument is that when two atoms are connected causally, then it is always possible that one atom could exist without the other existing. This is held to be true whether the connexion is seen as very contingent -- as Foot sees it -- or, as Kenny sees it, a strong connection: one having to do with the very nature of the human...
constitution.[9] This is very unlike two atoms connected analytically, where neither can exist without the other, and therefore it might be said that one atom "must" be connected to the other.

But why would the contingency that occurs when atoms are only causally connected -- whether of Kenny's variety or Foot's -- imply a lack of normativity? I believe the reason is that conceptual connections are believed to be, by the atomists, the only sorts of connections which can confer normativity. They are the only sorts of connections which must be bound together. And this, I believe, is because on the atomist view, there is no further division within the realm of contingency that could allow us to say that some contingent connections are, in some way, correct, and others incorrect.

However, we might be made suspicious of this view of contingency and thus the force of this objection when we notice Hume saying the following sorts of things: emotions, despite being (only) contingently connected to their objects and causes, must have certain sorts of objects and causes. He says for example that: "tis absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind, that these passions should ever look beyond self..."[T286], and that when someone has an emotion without its proper objects or causes, the people having those emotions are "perverted". [E53-4, E41n]

Thus Hume does seem to be invoking a distinction between
correct and incorrect objects and causes for an emotion, despite the parts being only contingently connected. So the question arises as to whether there is a kind of normativity which can be derived from mere contingency. For if this is so, it is one that the atomist reading of Hume has overlooked.

I think there is. I think there is another reading of Hume's texts -- a naturalist one -- where there is a distinction to be made in addition to the one between analytic and contingent connections. And that is a distinction within kinds of contingent connections. I believe Hume held there were analytic connections and two sorts of contingent ones; "natural" [T280 and next section] and "capricious" [T281]. And one of these sorts of contingent connections -- the natural connections -- will account for the sort of "must" we spoke of above in a way the atomist picture cannot. And, through doing that, it will allow us a picture of emotion as a complex. What, then, is this natural connection?

2. Natural

The term "natural", in the theological tradition Hume was coming from, was a normative term. That is, "natural" was what God wanted us to be -- and therefore it was what was (morally) right. Hume's problem, as I see it, was this: How
was it possible to translate this into non-theological terms? So whatever "natural" turns out to mean, for Hume, it will have this normative import, but in a non-theological way.

That said, what is natural and how and why is it a normative term?

Hume says of the natural that it is:

1. Universal and inseparable from the species [T225d and Introduction to the Natural History of Religion];

2. The foundation of all our thoughts and behavior and that without which human nature would crumble [T225];

3. "Requisite" that it hold and, even further, "absolutely impossible" that it not hold [T278,T286]; and

4. Correct, while the non-natural is "perverted" [T225-6,E53-4].

Is it possible to come up with a satisfactory interpretation of all the above?

A. Interpretation I

Let's start with the claim that what is natural is "universal and unavoidable in human nature". We know what it is to say that something is universal. But what does it mean to say of a trait that it is "unavoidable"? Perhaps we can find a hint by looking at Hume's saying that: "...by natural
we understand what is common to any species or what is inseparable from the species". [T484]

Suppose that what is unavoidable in human nature is what is inseparable from the human species. For something to be inseparable from the species is, literally, for it to be the case that the species could not remain the same species if we separated this trait off from it. So it looks like we might say, as a first approximation, that natural traits and principles of human beings would be those without which creatures would not be human.

We might see this reading of what it means to say something is natural as confirmed by Hume’s characterizing of natural traits and principles as: "...principles which are permanent, irresistible, and universal....(They) are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately go to ruin". [T255]

Barbara Winters [10] argues that "go to ruin" in the above quotation means that the species would no longer be the human species without these traits. These traits are, on her reading, seen as those which define human nature. So one possible interpretation is to say that if something is natural to humans it is essential to humans. For something to be natural is thus for it to be essential.

Further, on this reading it makes sense that Hume would say that such (natural) connections are requisite or that it is
absolutely impossible that they not hold. This is because, on the above reading, such a connection must hold because without it, the creatures would not be human: the connection must hold because its holding is essential to the kinds of creatures we are. And, of course, if these traits are essential to our being human, they would indeed be foundational.

This interpretation would also account nicely for the claim that natural is a normative term. If that which is natural is that which is essential to us, then to do what is natural is to do that which most expresses what we are. And that, it could be argued, is a good thing to do.

However, there are problems with such a reading. These problems emerge if we look seriously, for example, at other claims Hume makes about what which is natural -- claims which would seem to indicate that any essentialist reading of natural must be incorrect. Hume says, for example, that:

1. Emotions and their various "conditions", as Hume puts it, are connected naturally. And yet, whatever conditions surround the emotions -- as we observe the situation for humans -- need not be the case for other creatures. This is because Hume believes morality is a product of human sentiments. Therefore, what constitutes the appropriate cause and object for an emotion is, for Hume, based "entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species". We already saw him say that:
If morality were determined by reason, this is the same to all rational beings: But nothing but Experience can assure us, that the sentiments are the same. What experience have we in regard to Superior Beings? How can we ascribe to them any sentiments at all? They have implanted those sentiments in us for the conduct of life like our bodily sensations, which they possess not themselves. [LHH, March 16, 1740; Burton, Vol. I, pp. 119-20]

Further, the thought of an emotion without its usually accompanying desire produces no contradiction. When speaking of love and hatred, for example, Hume says:

This order of things, abstractedly considered, is not necessary... If nature had so pleased, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love. I see no contradiction in supposing a desire to producing misery annexed to love and happiness to hatred. [T368]

What are the implications of Hume’s saying the above about those things which are natural? It seems that whatever interpretation of natural we come up with, these two must act as a constraint. What, more directly, does that tell us here?

For one, it tells us that any essentialist reading of natural, where by "essential" we mean that what is essential must hold for all creatures, must be incorrect. For it seems that it is not the case that pride must have these components in order to be pride for all creatures if the gods could have different components for pride. Further, as we also saw in
the last chapter, Hume believes that to imagine that the two propositions are separable without a contradiction is a test which proves that the two are not logically connected. That is, again, the two need not be so connected for all creatures. We know both from the last chapter and from (2) above that it is possible to imagine the feel of an emotion without its usual cause or object without contradiction. Thus it need not be the case that emotions have the components for all creatures that they usually do for humans. However, the connections between components are natural. What could it mean to say that the connection is a natural one, then, short of meaning that there is a logical connection, but still asserting that this connection must hold?

B. Interpretation II

My claim is that we can get a satisfactory interpretation of natural as meaning something like a law of nature. Let’s see why.

Hume says, at the end of his "Dissertation on the Passions," that he hopes he has shown the existence of principles of the mind parallel to the laws governing physical objects. That is:

It is sufficient, for my purpose, if I have made it appear, that, in the production and conduct of the passions, there is a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition,
as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy.

One might guess, then, that the way the human mind works is analogous to the way laws of nature work. This seems the most reasonable reading of the analogy with physical laws that Hume makes. Perhaps, then, it is requisite that emotions have a certain object in the same way that other laws of nature require things to occur. How exactly might this help us here?

Let's start with an analogy with a current "law of nature" or physical law, for example, gravity. It is not unlikely that we would say something like: "Objects whose weight is above \( x \) cannot fall upwards". All we would mean by this statement is something like: Under the usual physical conditions in this world, gravity ensures that such objects must fall downwards. But notice that we only mean this "cannot" to hold in this world, with these physical laws, operating as they usually do. I believe we can explain Hume's claim that emotions must have a certain sort of object or cause in much the same way: given laws of mind, as Hume knew them, operating as they usually did, it is requisite that emotions have the sorts of objects and causes they do, and absolutely impossible that they have different ones. Indeed Hume seems to indicate that some such reading is what he had in mind when he tells us that: "It is absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind, that it be otherwise". So, so far it seems we can say that what
is natural are laws or traits of the mind which hold universally.

So we can say, under Interpretation II, that such laws of nature must hold. But why are these laws then foundational, or inseparable from the species? Or even more perplexing under this reading, why are they the correct laws? I believe there are plausible answers to these questions.

What is natural is foundational for the following reason: a law of nature, for Hume, is a regularity which has, as far as our observation shows, always been the case. Such laws of mind, if they really do operate with the kind of regularity Hume describes -- laws of mind such as association of ideas -- form the basis of the patterns in which we think, perceive, and ultimately, even behave. It is in this sense that they are the foundation of our being, and indeed, this is the same sense in which Hume refers, explicitly, to the laws of association being the "cement" of our world.

As to why these laws are inseparable from the species, or correct, as we will see, the answer to these two will be the same. The rough outline of such an account is this: these laws of nature are those which, among other things, allow us to survive -- that is, to get our ends satisfied -- and that is the sense in which they are correct. It is also a plausible reading of why they are inseparable from the species. For if these laws are those by which we at least survive, then to take them away, to separate them from the
species, would be to ensure the species' downfall. Or, as we saw Hume say: without them the species would perish. We will look at the details of such an account in Chapter 4, but let's see now, very tentatively, how such an account might work.

C. Natural/Normative

Hume says that whenever we have an unnatural cause or object accompanying the feel of an emotion we are malfunctioning. It would be natural, for instance, to have as an object of fear something which we believe can harm us in some way. But if we fear something which we do not believe -- even when pressed -- can harm us, that is to have an unnatural object of fear. Hume says, for example: "...[O]ne who is tormented, he knows not why, with the apprehension of spectres in the dark, may, perhaps, be said to reason, and reason naturally too; but then it must be in the same sense that a malady is natural [T225-6]."

Such a person, a person who is afraid and tormented but has no beliefs which might justify such a fear or torment has, Hume said, something like a "malady". And he says of Timon, who as we will later see has unnatural objects for moral approbation, that he: "...probably more from his affected spleen than any inveterate malice, was denominated the manhater...[and had] perverted sentiments of morals..."[E53-4]
Hume thinks that Timon's inappropriate approbation and the tormented person's fears are both cases of mental processes not in accord with a natural principle. They are also both cases of malfunctioning. What is Hume's argument, if any, that when we operate in accordance with non-natural principles we are malfunctioning?

First, let's look at what Hume's argument for this cannot be: he cannot say (1) that to function unnaturally is to malfunction (and natural is proper functioning) because functioning naturally is what most of us do most of the time. Saying this would render proper functioning a matter of according with what most others do. But the fact of others doing it is not an argument for this behavior being proper. Whatever argument Hume gives for why natural is proper and unnatural wrong must be independent of what others do or don't do.

Hume also cannot argue that unnatural inferences do not accord with the way we were designed (by, for instance, God or Nature) to function. According to such an argument, there is a way we are supposed to work: it is the way we were designed to work. But Hume could never say these things, for he thought that only conclusions emerging from experience were legitimate. But from experience we can only know how we do in fact work, and that is not identical with how we should work. So he needs an argument that non-natural functioning is malfunctioning which is independent of both what most
people happen to do and any theological speculations. How might Hume provide such an argument?

One possibility is this: Start from the premise that an organism is not functioning properly if its ends, whatever they are, are constantly being frustrated. Hume argues that making unnatural inferences does result in frustrating a person's ends, whatever they may be: Hume believes that a prerequisite for achieving whatever ends people can possibly have is stability and strength of belief and judgment. And he says that only making natural inferences give us this stability and strength [11]. Therefore, we can say to whoever is not acting naturally that they are acting in a way which will not promote whatever desires they may have. So, in non-natural inferences, the mechanism is malfunctioning that whatever ends it has will be frustrated by this behavior.

In addition, Hume points out that acting in accordance with natural laws of mind is a necessary condition for happiness. So, a second reason for thinking a person who acts unnaturally is malfunctioning is that they live a life with less -- or no -- happiness. [12] Therefore, there appears to be some account of why Hume thought there was an argument that to reason unnaturally was to be malfunctioning.

So, it seems that we can get a definition of natural to work which indeed does account for all the relevant citations. Also, the latest interpretation is in accord with the metaphysical biases -- that is, the anti-essentialism --
that Hume demonstrates in Book I of the *Treatise*. Therefore there seems to be good reason to accept this interpretation of natural. And so, interpreting that which is natural as that which is an instance of a law of nature does seem to be most satisfactory. Let's see whether this interpretation of what it is for something to be natural we can understand -- as we originally set out to do -- the way in which emotion may be seen as complex.

3. **Solution?**

So, given the above, is a natural connection of the appropriate sort for us to say of it that it must hold? What are the implications of the fact that unnatural reasoning only occurs when we are malfunctioning? Let's see if the idea of a natural connection -- now that we can characterize it more fully -- really does solve our earlier problem. That is, we want to see here first whether a natural connection has accommodated the sort of "must" Hume meant and second, what that tells us about the inadequacies of the atomist reading.

**A. Natural Connections and Hume's Text**

Recall Hume's comment about pride: "...tis absolutely impossible that these passions should ever look beyond
"Does a natural connection indeed explain -- as I posited it would -- why the relation between parts of an emotion must hold in the allowed way? That is, can we say a natural connection is a connection which (a) is not analytic and yet (b) nonetheless must hold?

(a) To say the connection between parts of an emotion is a natural one is to say it is not an analytic connection. This is because, unlike an analytic connection, a natural one does not follow from the idea or concept involved: for it follows neither from the idea of the emotion nor from the idea of a human being. Therefore, to say a connection is natural is to say only that creatures who are well-functioning humans must have these constituent parts for an emotion.

(b) If the connection between the parts of an emotion is natural, can we say that this connection must hold?

To answer (b) we must first determine what we mean by saying a connection must hold. Suppose there is a connection between A and B; suppose we say that the connection must hold for well-functioning humans. We are making two interconnected claims: (1) that, in well-functioning humans, whenever A has appeared, B has appeared and (2) that it is not possible, in well-functioning humans, for A to appear without B. To say an emotion must have as constituent part a particular object, therefore, is to say: (1) whenever this emotion occurs, it has had this object, and (2) the emotion cannot ever occur, in well-functioning humans, as that
emotion without this object. Can we assert both (1) and (2) of a natural connection?

Condition (1) seems to be easy to satisfy, given how a natural connection has been defined. That is, to say the connection between the feel of an emotion and its object is natural is to say humans are built so that, when they are well-functioning, whenever they have had the feel of this emotion, it has been accompanied by a particular object. That is, having this object is in accord with a built-in law of mind.

If the connection between the parts of an emotion is natural, can it satisfy condition (2) as easily? That is, can we say not only that the connection has always held, but that it is impossible for it not to hold? For one of the things we are trying to account for is Hume’s saying "...Tis absolutely impossible that ...these passions should ever look beyond self...." A natural connection explains why it is impossible: The reason is that if the connection is natural, then (a) humans are constructed so that whenever they have the feel of the emotion, they have its associated object and, (b) if humans don’t have this associated object, they are broken. That is, the only conditions under which a well-functioning creature could have a different object -- or no object at all -- accompanying the feel of this emotion is if it were a creature with different basic laws of mind, in other words, a non-human creature. For humans, if a
connection is natural, and they are well-functioning, then it is absolutely impossible that they have a different object for this emotion. That is the sense in which a natural connection is one which must hold.

So, I believe we have shown above the sense in which emotions must have certain sorts of objects and causes. We have also given the beginnings of an explanation of its normativity. What are the implications of this? For one, we can now begin to understand how I could claim earlier that under a reading emphasising Hume's naturalism, emotion was a complex. What I said earlier was that by complex I want to mean that under normal conditions, emotions (for humans) are composed of certain parts, and when it has anything other than those parts, the people involved are malfunctioning. We can now see, given a natural connection, that we can say this. For if a connection is natural, then it is a connection which holds -- indeed must hold -- unless a person is malfunctioning.

_B. Taylor's Account_

I want to take a short detour before completing my argument to show how another philosopher, Gabriele Taylor, deals with some of the same issues I have been discussing above. My hope is that the difference between her account and mine will make even more clear what my view is.

Gabriele Taylor, in her book _Pride, Shame and Guilt_ [13]
discusses Hume's views on pride. Although acknowledging that Hume has a "framework of various feelings tied together by association allow[ing] him to speak of the relevant conditions as merely holding 'normally' when some agent experiences pride" [14], she thinks that this can be easily translated into necessary conditions for pride in people -- or as she says, the conditions "quite naturally present themselves as candidates for a set of necessary conditions which must obtain if a person is to feel pride" [15] I think this is incorrect and want to make clear how my analysis differs from this.

I think it is incorrect because to posit necessary conditions for an emotion is to say that it is not the self-same emotion if those (necessary) conditions are not satisfied. But Hume seems quite clear that something can be a particular emotion for humans even without its proper cause or object, which are the things Taylor would put forth as the necessary conditions. Look at Hume's saying, for example, that: "Thus the same beauty, transferred to a different sex, excites no amorous passion where nature is not extremely perverted" [E41n]

While such a case confirms the sort of analysis I have been giving above, that is, we can say something is the selfsame emotion even without its usual cause or object if we say the person is malfunctioning (or, here, "perverted"), it is a direct attack on the sort of analysis in terms of necessary
conditions that someone like Taylor wants to give. This is because if Taylor were correct Hume would describe these cases as being cases of something which is not the emotion, or as Taylor says: "...in that case we should be inclined to say that whatever his feelings on this occasion may be, they cannot be feelings of pride...[16]" But Hume does not say that. Again, he says, rather, that it is the self-same emotion and that the person is perverted for having the emotion with these components.

So again, I take this as confirming my interpretation: by an emotion being complex I mean that these are the conditions which normally hold for people in order for something to be a particular emotion. Although not as strong as the Taylor claim, we will see in the next chapter that this claim is strong enough to ward off at least one kind of subjectivity often attributed to Hume.

C. Conclusion

Before moving to the next chapter, I want to briefly look again at why the atomists thought Hume could not analyze emotion as a complex -- and with our new knowledge and understanding of natural connections -- pinpoint what their account missed.

The original objection was roughly this: Because Hume is committed to the theory of ideas, he is prevented from having any analysis of emotion where emotion is complex. This is
because the theory of ideas allows only two sorts of connections: analytic ones and causal ones. Hume explicitly says the connection in question is not analytic. But a causal connection, according to the atomists, cannot get us what we need in order to say emotion is complex because causal connections can supposedly not yield normative claims. But to claim that emotion is complex is to claim that, barring unusual circumstances, a particular emotion in humans consists in certain components, and that when it does not, something is wrong. Therefore emotion as complex does require us to be able to say -- at the least -- that there is something unusual in the connection not holding, and, as we have seen, what Hume wants to be able to say is that a person having such an experience is malfunctioning.

Now we saw that Hume does seem to think there is something at least unusual when a natural connection does not hold. He believes that people in such a case are indeed perverted -- or, as I have put it here -- malfunctioning. Therefore it does seem we can claim emotions are complex. But what does that tell us, if anything, about the original objection? Is it the case that contingent connections can yield normative claims?

Once again, my view is this: I believe that once we have seen -- as we have -- that there can be contingent connections as stable and as basic to us as natural connections, we can see that this can imply a sort of
normativity. Thus, on my reading -- the naturalist reading -- there is an important distinction within the realm of contingency, the distinction between natural connections and other ones, and it is this distinction the atomists do not make, and this distinction which allows us to analyze emotion as a complex.[17]
CHAPTER THREE

In the last chapter I discussed what it meant within Hume's theory for an emotion -- any emotion -- to be complex. I presented this as an alternative to the more usual atomistic interpretation of Hume. I suggested in that chapter that this reading of emotion as a complex could be used in the service of showing that Hume's moral theory could be rendered objective. In this chapter I want to see how such an argument might proceed.

I will first argue that moral emotions are complex. I will then go on to apply this understanding of moral emotion to a criticism which is the extension of the criticism by Professor Foot we saw in the last chapter: her claim that because of his general commitment to atomism, Hume is committed to a subjective moral theory.

1. Indirect Passions and Moral Emotions

Hume draws a distinction between direct and indirect emotions. What the distinction roughly amounts to is this: Direct passions are generally considered as arising immediately from antecedent pleasures and pains. Hume lists desire, aversion, joy, grief, hope, fear, despair and security. Indirect passions also arise from antecedent pains and pleasures but in conjunction with, Hume thinks, some
other qualities. The relevant other quality is usually considered relation to self -- that is, these passions, unlike the direct ones, all must have, as Kemp-Smith [1] puts it, "some kind of reference to self" [see also T292]. Sometimes Hume speaks as if there are only four basic indirect passions [T337]; pride, humility, love and hate, with the others all being versions of these four. Other times he seems to think there are passions which are indirect and not reducible in this way, and they are ambition, vanity, envy, pity, malice and generosity. [T276-277]

The emotions we have been discussing so far as complex have been indirect emotions. And I will argue here that moral approbation has the same structure as an indirect emotion. However, I prefer to remain uncommitted as to whether or not direct emotions in Hume can be seen as complex as well.

I will present a version of a well-known argument [1] claiming there is reason to believe that moral emotions have a structure similar to that of the indirect passions. I will argue that moral emotions are objective variants [2] of the indirect passions of love and hate.

A. Clues in the Text

Hume first hints that there is an important relation between the indirect passions and the moral passions when he tells us that the causal conditions are the same for moral emotions and for indirect emotions. He says:
Pride and humility, love and hatred, are excited, when there is anything presented to us that both bears a relation to the object of the passion, and produces a separate sensation, related to the sensation of the passion. Now, virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances. They must necessarily be placed either in ourselves or in others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore must give rise to one of these four passions [pride, humility, love, hatred] which clearly distinguishes them from the pleasure and pain arising from inanimate objects, that often bear no relation to us; and this is, perhaps, the most considerable effect that virtue and vice have on the human mind. [T473]

and again:

We have already observed, that moral distinctions depend entirely on certain peculiar sentiments of pain and pleasure and that whatever mental quality in ourselves or others gives us a satisfaction, by the survey or reflection, is of course virtuous, as everything of this nature that gives uneasiness is vicious. Now, since every quality in ourselves or others which gives pleasure, always causes pride or love, as every one that produces uneasiness excites humility or hatred, it follows that the two particulars are to be considered as equivalent, with regard to our mental qualities, virtue and the power or producing love or pride, vice and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge the one by the other, and may pronounce any quality of the mind virtuous which causes love or pride, and any one vicious which causes hatred or humility. [T574-5]

Since the moral passions were not mentioned in his initial classification of passions [T276-7] as indirect passions, this is perplexing. But there are even more statements of this sort. For example:
Actions themselves, not proceeding from any constant principle, have no influence on love or hatred, pride or humility; and consequently are never considered in morality.\[T575\]

That is, if something does not produce one of the four indirect passions, it also cannot produce the moral passions. This certainly seems to confirm that Hume believes the causes for one are the same as the causes for the others.

How could this be? Here [3] is one suggestion: there is a passage where Hume tells us that love is a generic term and that there are many manifestations of it:

\[[\text{Love}]\text{ may show itself in the shape of tenderness, friendship, intimacy, esteem, goodwill and many other appearances; which at the bottom are the same affection, and arise from the same causes, though with a small variation...\[T448\]]\]

Add to this Hume’s baldly saying that moral approbation is a kind of love:

\[[\text{...the pain or pleasure which arises from the general survey or view of any action or quality of the mind, constitutes its vice or virtue, and gives rise to our approbation or blame, which is nothing but a fainter and more imperceptible love or hatred}\[T614\]]\]

But if moral approbation is a kind of love, what kind of love might it be? Perhaps moral approbation can most profitably be understood as the objective variant of the
subjective passion of love. Let's see how.

B. Structure of Indirect Passions and Moral Emotions

Hume says that we can give an account of the causes and objects of all indirect passions in terms of what he calls a "double relation of impressions and ideas". (T286) Let's look at the way in which an indirect passion like love could adhere to such a scheme and still be, in an important sense, subjective.

For an indirect passion to operate via a double association of impressions and ideas is for its proper cause to be related to its proper object in two ways: (1) the cause must bear some relation to the object [a relation of ideas] and (2) the cause -- which breaks down into subject and quality-- must possess a feeling quality which is related, via resemblance, to the feeling of the emotion [a relation of impressions]. Or, as Hume put it:

....That cause, which excites the passions, is related to the object, which nature has attributed to the passion; the sensation, which the cause separately produces, is related to the sensation of the passion; From this double relation of ideas and impressions, the passion is derived.[T286]

The way this works in pride, for example, is this: Let's say that you have a beautiful house which makes you very proud. You own the house, and so you bear a close relation to it. The relation of ideas here is therefore between the
idea of the house and the idea of yourself as possessor.

Further, the house has the pleasing quality of being beautiful, which is related, by resemblance, to the feeling of pleasure involved in pride. Thus the relation of impressions here is between the impression of pleasure from the beauty of the house and pleasure of pride. Or again, as Hume puts it:

A man, for instance, is vain of a beautiful house, which belongs to him, or which he has himself built and contrived. Here the object of the passion is himself, and the cause is the beautiful house; which cause again is subdivided into two parts, viz., the quality, which operates upon the passion, and the subject, in which the quality inheres. The quality is the beauty, and the subject is the house, considered as his property or contrivance. Both these parts are essential....[T279]

Love, another indirect passion, has the same general structure. Hume puts this very strongly when he says:

Twould be tedious to trace the passions of love and hatred, thro all the observations which we have formed concerning pride and humility and which are equally applicable to both sets of passions. Twill be sufficient to remark in general, that the object of love and hatred is evidently some thinking person; and that the sensation of the former passion is always agreeable, and of the latter uneasy. We may also suppose with some shew of probability, that the cause of both these passions is always related to a thinking being, and that the cause of the former produce a separate pleasure, and of the latter a separate uneasiness.[T330-331]

Love, too, then, works via this double association of
impressions and ideas. But notice what Hume says about possible causes of love (or hatred):

Nothing is more evident, than that any person acquires our kindness, or is exposed to our ill-will, in proportion to the pleasure or uneasiness we receive from him, and that the passions keep pace exactly with the sensations in all their changes and variation....

If the general of our enemies be successful, it is with difficulty we allow him the figure and character of a man. He is a sorcerer: He has a communication with daemons....he is bloody-minded, and takes a pleasure in death and destruction. But if the success be on our side, our commander has all the opposite good qualities, and is a pattern of virtue, as well as of courage and conduct. His treachery we call policy: and his cruelty is an evil inseparable from war.[T348]

What Hume is saying here is that although the cause of such emotions as love must be a quality the lover finds pleasurable, it need not be a quality that anyone would find pleasurable. In fact, it might even be the case that what I find pleasing in others would not be something I would find pleasing in myself. An example of this might be someone’s being a flatterer. For in the same passage Hume says:

...whoever can find the means, either by his services, his beauty, or his flattery, to render himself useful or agreeable to us, is sure of our affections; as, on the other hand, whoever harms or displeases us, never fails to excite our anger or hatred.[T348]

The general point, then, is this: in the indirect passions our biases can legitimately govern what we find pleasing.
However, according to Hume, this cannot be true of moral emotions. Contrast, for example, the above passage [T348] with the following one:

Now tis evident, that those sentiments,[sympathy] whence-ever they are derived, must vary according to the distance or contiguity of the objects; ....yet [when making a moral judgment] I do not say that I esteem the one more than the other....[T581]

Or again:

[in judging morally]...we consider not whether these persons, affected by the qualities, be our acquaintance or strangers, countrymen or foreigners. Nay, we overlook our own interest in these general judgments...[T582]

Unlike the indirect emotions cited above, then, moral approbation must be caused by qualities anyone, abstracting from their own preferences, would find pleasurable. Thus, appeal to idiosyncratic preferences is ruled out. Rather, Hume argues: "We fix on some steady and general points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation" [T581-2]

That is, in moral evaluation, we take the stance of the impartial spectator. This stance distances us equally from all those whose pleasure and pain we are assessing. It therefore allows us an unbiased assessment of the amount of pleasure or pain produced. And then, still in the stance of
the spectator, we respond in the way which Hume thinks is basic to humans; with moral approbation to pleasure and disapprobation to pain. We both assess the amount of pleasure and pain and react to such an assessment with the aid of impartial or extended sympathy.

And yet, despite this introduction of the impartial spectator, notice the similarities in general structure between moral approbation and indirect passions. Describing moral approbation, Hume says: "Tis only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil." [T472] and:

> We ought not to imagine, because an inanimate object may be useful as well as a man, that therefore it ought also, according to this system, to merit the appellation of virtuous. There are a numerous set of passions and sentiments of which thinking rational beings are, by the original constitution of nature, the only proper objects....[E41n]

Thus as in love (and pride)[see T330-331 cited earlier], moral approbation takes for its object some thinking being. And again, as in love and pride, the cause of moral approbation must be something related to a thinking being, in this case, qualities of character. And there is yet another similarity. The cause of moral approval, like the cause of pride and love, divides into a subject and its qualities, and has qualities which produce a separate pleasure or pain.
Hume says that in moral approbation:

We reap a pleasure from the view of a character, which is naturally fitted to be useful to others, or to the person himself, or which is agreeable to others, or to the person himself. [T591]

The conclusion, then, is obvious: the same general structure which operates in love, or pride, operates in the case of moral emotions: a double association of impressions and ideas. But only in the case of the moral sentiments must the cause be impartially viewed. I believe then, that the moral emotions have a structure sufficiently similar to the structure of indirect passions that they, like indirect passions, can be seen as complex.

C. Causes and Objects of Moral Approbation

I want to highlight some parts of the above discussion for use later on. First, it is important to note that the object of moral approbation (like the object of pride, see T280) is "original" [E41n], that is, irreducibly fixed as a part of man's mind. (For we saw directly above that Hume says that moral approbation takes character to be its object "by the original constitution of nature".)

However, this is not the case with the (proper) causes of moral approbation. Rather, the causes of moral approbation are so numerous that unless the mind possessed a "monstrous heap of principles", as Hume put it [T282], it is unlikely
that each proper cause was originally separately specified in the mind. An analogy with what Hume says about pride is illuminating here:

.... tho the causes of pride and humility be plainly natural, we shall find upon examination that they are not original, and that tis utterly impossible they should each of them be adapted to these passions by a particular provision, and primary constitution of nature....

[For]...Tis absurd to imagine, that each of these was forseen and provided for by nature and that every new production of art, which causes pride or humility; instead of adapting itself to the passion by partaking of some general quality, that naturally operates on the mind is itself the object of an original principle....[T281]

And we saw above that there are general qualities which the causes of moral approbation can be fit under: a character which, when viewed impartially, has the disposition to produce use or pleasure to some or all. Such a character produces pleasure, which through the association of impressions causes the pleasure of moral approbation. And all of this -- the correct causes, objects, and feelings -- constitute, under normal conditions, the complex emotion of moral approbation.

Why does any of this information about the correct cause, object and feel of moral approbation matter? In the next section, I will show that seeing moral approbation as complex in this way has important implications on the subjectivity or objectivity of Hume's moral theory. In particular, I believe
seeing moral approbation as complex will shield Hume from at least one important criticism often leveled at him.

2. Subjectivity and Objectivity

There is a criticism of Hume's moral theory which is based on the view of emotions in Hume I have been attempting to undermine. This is Professor Foot's criticism in "Hume on Moral Judgment". I will argue here that her criticism represents a misunderstanding of Hume, regarding both his general view about emotions and his view about moral emotions.

We saw in the last chapter what the atomist attack on Hume consisted in. And we even saw the point at which Foot took the ramifications of the standard interpretation further than the others. It is where she says:

...this theory of Hume's about moral sentiment commits him to a subjective theory of ethics. He could not consistently maintain that a man calls qualities virtues when he happens to feel towards them this peculiar sentiment, and that statements of virtue and vice are objective....

But since Hume has denied all logical connexions -- all connexions of meaning -- between moral approval and the objects of moral approval, and would have to allow anyone to assert any kind of action he chose to be virtuous on the strength of the supposed feeling of approbation, it follows that no one could get at an opponent who professed weird 'moral views'.[4]
That is, Foot took the atomist critique and applied it to Hume's moral theory: she tells us that Hume's view of emotion as feeling-atom necessarily yields a subjective moral theory. Indeed, she even goes on to claim that Hume is a radical subjectivist about morals, or as she says "accepts this subjectivism with ease and even with relish" [5].

But this can't be correct. For Hume certainly does not think he has a subjective moral theory. We saw, for example, what he said of Timon of Athens, when Timon approves with what seems to be moral approval of enormous destruction and pain for many people: Hume says that Timon had "perverted" his "natural sentiment of humanity". One would think that someone as careful as Hume, were he committed to subjectivism, indeed "subjectivism with relish", would not be saying quite this sort of thing.

I want to claim that my reading of Hume -- as I've been presenting it in the last two chapters -- can account for Hume's saying this of Timon in a way the standard reading of Hume cannot. In order to do this, let's first see exactly what Hume says of Timon.

Hume says of the kind of person Timon illustrates that:

...Whatever contributes to the good of mankind, as it crosses the constant bent of his wishes and desires, must produce uneasiness and disapprobation; on the contrary, whatever is the source of disorder and misery in society must, for the same reason, be regarded with pleasure and
complacency. Timon, who, probably from his affected spleen more than any inveterate malice, was denounced the man-hater, embraced Alcibiades with great fondness. 'Go on, my boy!'; cried he, 'acquire the confidence of the people: you will one day, I foresee, be the cause of great calamities to them.' [E53]  

As I read this passage, at least, Timon is an instance to show how "perverted" people can get, for Hume is taking him as a case of "interest or revenge or envy" perverting someone. He is an instance, although perhaps not as radical a case, of a creature "absolutely malicious and spiteful [who is] worse than indifferent to the images of vice and virtue." [E52] Such a creature has, Hume says: "uneasiness and disapprobation" in relation to mankind's good and "pleasure and complacency" to disorder and misery. And Hume is explicit about presenting Timon as embracing Alcibiades "with fondness" upon the thought that he will cause great calamities. What is going on in this passage?  

First, it is important to establish that Hume is talking about moral, rather than non-moral, approbation and disapprobation, when he speaks above of "uneasiness and disapprobation", or "pleasure and complacency". There are a number of reasons I think this is so, some of them more convincing than others. For one, the term "disapprobation", at least, is rarely, if ever, used except to describe a moral reaction. Even when Hume is speaking of beauty and deformity [see T298-303] he talks about "uneasiness", and not "disapprobation" in the face of deformity.
Second, the context of the "disapprobation and uneasiness" here is that it occurs after Hume speaks of an "inverted" reaction to vice and virtue: that is, Hume says "whatever contributes to the good of mankind", which usually, as we have seen, produces moral approbation, produces here what Hume calls "disapprobation". And so the reason to assume this is moral disapprobation is that only if it were moral disapprobation would his point about an inversion hold.

Further, when he is embracing Alcibiades, we can infer that Timon has tallied up pleasure and pain in a way which is usually the case with moral approbation or disapprobation: namely, impartially. For it does not seem as if the claim that Alcibiades would cause great pain would be nearly as effective in this context if it were only from Timon's or Alcibiades' point of view that such displeasure was believed to be produced. It must, rather, be judged that this would be the likely result from something like an impartial point of view. So I do think, on balance, that it is a fairly safe assumption that it is moral approbation Hume is speaking of here.

Second, if it is moral approbation and disapprobation that is being discussed, what is being said of it? What is being discussed are creatures who get what certainly seem to be moral approbation to what are clearly not the natural causes of moral approbation. For they get moral approbation at the thought of someone producing great pain for many people.
And what, exactly, does Hume say of this? Hume tells us this is a case of: "...interest, or revenge or envy pervert[ing]... our disposition." [E54] For where: 
"...interest, or revenge or envy perverts not our disposition, we are always inclined, from our natural philanthropy, to give the preference to the happiness of society." [E54]

But Timon, at least, is not so inclined -- for interest or revenge or envy is indeed perverting his disposition. Let's see if we can better understand what is going on here.

First, let's look at it the situation just described in terms of what we now know are the natural causes and objects of moral approbation. Normally, the object of moral approbation is character and the cause of moral approbation is that trait of character which, when judged impartially, is likely to produce things or situations which are either useful or pleasureable for some or all. And we saw above that the law of mind which accounts for this relation between the characteristic cause and the characteristic feel of moral approbation is an associational law: the association of impressions via resemblance. For Hume claims to have found that in the normal workings of mind, the association of impressions ensures that pleasure leads to pleasure, and pain to pain.

The way this works in moral approbation, as we saw, is that the "spectator", after gathering the correct information
about the amount of pleasure or pain produced, reacts in the following way: to great pleasure with the pleasurable emotion of moral approbation, and to great pain with the painful emotion of moral disapprobation. The spectator is able to do this because he has so distanced himself from his own desires that nothing but sympathy remains, and so he can resonate fully with others' pains and pleasures.

But there is a "bent" in the creatures being described. They are incapable of allowing themselves to be a conduit for others' pains and pleasures in this way. For whenever they try to do this, envy or some other bias "perverts" them, bending their response to the very opposite of the natural one. Thus for Timon, at least, after he has impartially gathered up the right information about the amount of pleasure and pain produced, a peculiar thing happens. The associationist mechanism does not work in the usual way, but in the opposite of the usual way, having as a result that great pain (for many people) produces pleasure (of moral approbation). Thus there is, in Timon and these other creatures, a decided "perversion" of what Hume takes as a law of human nature.

If this is indeed the correct analysis of the Timon example, it coheres well with my claim about what it means for an emotion to be complex. In particular, it illustrates my point in the last chapter about complex emotions having parts which are naturally connected, where by naturally
connected is meant, in part, that to have anything other than these connections is for something to be wrong. And we have just seen in Timon, who does not have the natural causes for moral approbation, that something is indeed wrong: his associative mechanism is bent, and yields the opposite outcome from the natural one. Thus we can now give content to Hume's calling Timon perverted, content borne out by the story about what it is to see emotion as complex. So my reading can explain why Hume says this of Timon, and further, what he means by saying this.

What implications does this have on Foot's interpretation? For surely she must be wrong, since she thinks Hume has no way to "get at" someone with, as she puts it, "weird" moral views. But we have just seen that Hume thinks he does have a way to get at such people: he can claim they are perverted, or, as we can now see, their minds are not operating properly. But where exactly, did Foot's argument go wrong? Let's re-trace her claim and its origins.

As we said, her claim presumes the received -- or standard -- view of Hume on emotions. And as we also said, under that view, emotions consist entirely in their phenomenological feel. Foot's extension of this claim is that, since Hume is an atomist about emotions, he must be a subjectivist in ethics. She might then, be seen as arguing:

1. If passions just consist in their feeling component with only contingent connexions to their objects and causes,
then people can legitimately have different objects or causes for any passion (for the passion just consists in its feeling), and;

2. If moral judgment is completely determined by whether or not someone has a particular (moral) passion, then different people could have moral approbation or disapprobation to different objects and they would each be equally correct.

But once we take away the atomist assumption about emotions, and substitute for it something like emotion as complex, we can see that her conclusion -- that is, that Hume has a radically subjective moral theory, that he has embraced subjectivism "with relish" -- no longer holds. For under the view of emotion as complex, if someone has an unnatural cause or object accompanying a feeling, it is an incorrect cause or object that they have because they are malfunctioning. Thus we are no longer in the position of having nothing to say to someone who happens to have, for example, the feeling associated with moral approval towards the murder of innocents. Rather, we can say to him, as Hume said of Timon, that there is something wrong with him, or he is perverted insofar as he has unnatural connections of mind. Thus we get to avoid radical subjectivity while preserving the important role of sentiment.

However, I do think there is a problem with Hume's attempt to avoid a subjective moral theory, although I do not think it is the problem Foot is focusing on. Rather, I think the
real problem is whether Hume can sustain, with the philosophical equipment he has, the distinction he so wants and needs between what he calls "natural" and what he calls "capricious". Another way of putting the problem is this: to say something is natural is to say, as we saw earlier, that it is correct, that it has, as we put it then, normative force. But can Hume say this? We speculated in the first chapter about how Hume might be able to answer this. Let's go on to see, in the next chapter, if there is a broader story behind his attempt to use the notion of natural normatively, and whether that attempt is successful.[6]
CHAPTER FOUR

1. Introduction

What is clear from the last chapter is that Hume needs to show that whatever is natural can justifiably be said to be, in some sense, correct. I believe that his argument for this is best understood when seen as part of a larger project: that of reviving many of the insights of Greek and Roman moral theory. For if Hume did adhere to a kind of "classical" moral theory -- as we will call this revival here -- and if, in particular, he believed that: (1) virtue is natural, and (2) to be virtuous is a necessary condition for happiness; then he would be able to claim that acting naturally would give us a chance for a life worth choosing, a life with happiness. And were this true, Hume would indeed be justified in using "natural" as a normative term, more specifically, as a term indicating that something was, in some way, correct. This chapter will, therefore, be devoted to showing that Hume did hold such a classical theory, and consequently did have such a justification.

As in previous chapters, the way I will motivate my reading of Hume's text is to first present the standard reading, and then to show its inadequacies. I will begin by focusing on the standard reading of Hume's account of why people ought to be just, for this is where, I believe, it is most clear that
the standard reading simply does not accord with Hume's text. Further, beginning with justice will turn out to give us the key to Hume's larger project -- his re-doing of classical moral theory. And once again the alternative interpretation I will argue for emphasises Hume's naturalism in a way the standard reading does not.

2. The Standard Reading and the Knave

The standard reading of Hume's theory of justice is to see him as a kind of Hobbesian. That is, many commentators have seen Hume as arguing that self-interest is the only reason to be just.[1] But in order to understand better what it means to say someone is a Hobbesian about justice, it might help to look at what Hobbes himself says about the reason[s] to be just. In a famous passage, Hobbes says to the Foole, who:

... hath saith in his heart, there is no such thing as justice; and some times also with his tongue, seriously alleging that, every man's conservation and contentment being committed to his own care, there could be no reason why every man might not do what he thought conduced therein to; and therefore also to make or not make, keep or not keep covenents was not against reason when it conduced to one's benefit. [L,ch.15, p.120]

that:

... in a condition of war, wherein every man to every man, for want of a common power to keep them all in awe, is an enemy, there is no man who can hope by his own strength or wit to defend himself from destruction without the help of his
Hobbes responds to the Foole, then, that injustice is irrational because it contributes to the destruction of the unjust person's life, and everyone wants to preserve his/her own life. He is thus told to be just for prudential reasons. Or as one commentator has characterized this reply, "covenants are binding only because it is in one's interest, based on reasonable expectations, to keep them."(2) To see Hume as having a kind of Hobbesian theory about justice is thus to see him as giving primarily, if not solely, this sort of reason to be just.

John Mackie is among the philosophers who I take to have a standard reading of Hume on justice. According to Mackie, Hume claims that people are just only from the motive of self-interest. The clearest case of Mackie's believing this is where he cites four very different reasons Hume can give for being just. The reasons Mackie gives are (1) the long-range benefits of acting on the general scheme of artificial virtues, of which justice is a part. (This consideration, Mackie tells us, can't really have any effect on us because it is a consideration involving remote eventualities); (2) the fact that one might be punished, whether by law or by lack of trust from one's peers, which,
Mackie tells us, only applies if the dishonest acts become known, and not if the agent could properly conceal his crime; (3) the possible inability of keeping such crimes from oneself, which therefore, assuming one has internalised values like honesty, would result in the agent suffering pangs of conscience; and finally, (4) the probability that the selective dishonesty which would be needed in order to avoid being caught is nearly impossible to have. For, Mackie says, a person who would try to get away with dishonesty whenever he could, is likely to eventually be sufficiently dishonest to become known as dishonest. For he is likely to act dishonestly even when he shouldn’t. Mackie then goes on, surprisingly, to classify all of these reasons as "egoistic". [3]

On my reading Mackie’s interpretation of Hume as having an egoistic theory is wrong. For if it is the case that Hume’s main project was a kind of classical moral theory -- that is, an attempt to combine classical and Newtonian ideas to produce a moral theory which had more in common with Greek and Roman moral thought than it did with Hobbes’ ideas [4] -- then one consequence of Hume’s having such a project is that he endorsed non-egoistic reasons for being just. [5] If this is right, then Mackie is wrong.

What evidence is there against the view that Hume’s account of why someone should be just is basically Hobbesian? First, let’s look at why someone adhering to a version of the
standard reading might argue that Hume is indeed a Hobbesian egoist, and second, why they cannot.

Someone with the standard reading will argue, as we have seen, that Hume's response to why someone ought to be just is self-interest. And the reasoning behind such an interpretation of Hume will most likely be this: although it is true that Hume, unlike Hobbes, does posit natural sympathy and benevolence, it is a limited sympathy and a limited benevolence. In order, therefore, for sympathy and benevolence to play a substantive role in motivating someone to be just, their naturally limited capacity for sympathy and benevolence must be extended. But what could the motivation be for such an extension? Hume certainly writes as if it is self-interest. So self-interest must be the reason we establish justice and it is probably the reason we obey it as well. [6]

However, this (standard) hypothesis as to what Hume's response is about why people should be just could not be correct. For look at Hume's answer to the sensible knave:

...in particular incidents [the knave] may think that an act of iniquity or infidelity will make a considerable addition to his fortune without causing any considerable breach in the social union and confederacy....And he, it may perhaps be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom who observes the general rule and takes advantage of all the exceptions.

Hume's response is that:
...Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity; a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances very requisite to happiness...Such a one has, besides, the frequent satisfaction of seeing knaves, with their pretended cunning and abilities, betrayed by their own maxims; and while they purport to cheat with moderation and secrecy, a tempting incident occurs -- nature is frail -- and they give into the snare, whence they can never extricate themselves without a total loss of reputation and the forfeiture of all future trust and confidence with mankind.

But were they ever so secret and successful, the honest man...will discover that they themselves [the knaves] are, in the end, the greatest dupes, and have sacrificed the invaluable enjoyment of a character, with themselves at least, for the acquisition of worthless toys and geegaws.[E102-3]

That is, there are two sorts of reasons Hume gives for being just. The second, and more minor, reason, that is, that knaves will be found out, for they will be "betrayed by their own maxims", is indeed a version of an egoistic reason for being just. But the primary reason -- having a "character with yourself" -- has nothing to do with self-interest in the Hobbesian sense.

So an interpretation other than the egoist one seems called for here. I will argue that what is needed is an interpretation emphasising Hume's naturalism [7] in a way the standard reading does not. Certainly what we need is an interpretation where what Hume says to the knave is compatible with whatever larger story we attribute to Hume about why we should be just. On the interpretation I suggest, Hume's answer to the knave will turn out to follow
from the core of his project: his attempt, as a
self-consciously modern philosopher, to borrow from and
transform classic Greek and Roman ethics. And the way in
which he borrowed and transformed, I will argue, was
profoundly influenced by his reading of Cicero and Aristotle,
and, in particular, two tenets characteristic of their
ethical views, namely: (1) virtue is natural, and (2) to be
virtuous is a necessary condition for happiness. Thus,
Hume's adherence to (1) and (2) is what I will mean when I
speak of his holding the "classical" view.

3. Biographical Evidence

That Hume held a version of the classical view is made at
least plausible by what we know about his life. We know, for
example, that Hume read a lot of Cicero. He claims, in fact,
that it was Cicero he was most interested in when he was
writing the Treatise, that he had Cicero's Offices "in my Eye
in all my Reasonings". [LHH, September 17, 1739; Burton,
Vol.1, pp.114-5]

Further, we know Hume started reading Cicero at an
especially delicate point in his life, a point which began
what I believe was an abiding interest in the connection
between virtue and happiness. Hume got very sick and very
depressed in late adolescence. As he describes it: "...about
the beginning of September, 1729, all my ardour seemed in a
moment to be extinguished, and I could no longer raise my
mind to that pitch, which formerly gave me such excessive
pleasure..."[Letter to physician; Burton, Vol. 1, pp. 30-9]

He tried to cure himself of this state by reading classical moralists, Cicero among them, hoping to acquire the calmness and tranquility of mind that these "ancients" said could come from being virtuous:

Having read many books of morality, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch and being smitten with their beautiful representations of virtue and philosophy, I undertook the improvement of my temper and will, along with my reason and understanding...[ibid.]

This exercise didn't work. Hume finally did come out of his depression [8], probably as a result of following his doctor's advice. [9] And when he was able to think clearly again, when he had "cooled his inflamed imagination" [ibid], he declared of the ancient moralists that:

The moral philosophy transmitted to us by antiquity labored under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience. Every one consulted his Fancy in erecting Schemes of Virtue and of Happiness, without regarding Human Nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This therefore I resolved to make my principal study...[ibid.]

Thus, Hume took as his job, his "principal study" the merging of the scientific study of human nature -- which for Hume meant using the Newtonian method to study human nature -- with the ancient systems. That he still believed, to the
end, in the connection between virtue and happiness, that he held fast to the two claims we saw above, is shown in the second *Enquiry*, a book which he wrote late in his life and which is considered the most mature and representative of his works on morality.

Were this hypothesis right, it would bring together such disparate elements as Hume's high praise both for the ancient philosophers, for example, his saying that they had the "best models" for moral theory [E134] and his likening his project to theirs [E4], while at the same time, seeing himself as involved in a "new scene of thought" in , for example, bringing science into moral theory. [10]

Another thing that would fall into place, if this interpretation were correct, is Hume's interest in Bishop Butler, in his wanting Butler, more than anyone else, to approve of his work. [LHHome,1738; Burton, vol. 1, pp. 64-5,143.] Butler is often considered 'the poor man's Aristotle'; his arguments are often extraordinarily close to Aristotle's, especially as regards the two points above.

How might one prove such a broad claim, prove, that is, that Hume was indeed engaged in creating a neo-classical moral theory? Methods are limited and familiar. One hopes that one's claim coheres with the facts we know of the person's intellectual influences, conforms reasonably well to his stated intentions, and actually does work to illuminate the text, preferably more than any other general interpretive
strategy. But before we explore the Hume texts, I want to substantiate my claim that what I am calling the classical view was indeed held by Aristotle and Cicero.

4. Aristotle and Cicero

In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that he is looking for what the good for man consists in [NE1094a25]. What is clear, Aristotle thinks, is that whatever this good is, we know certain things about it: it must be final rather than instrumental[NE1097a22]; and it must be satisfying across a whole life. [NE1097b15]

But what is this good for man, and how is it related to virtue? And how might that, in turn, be related to man's nature?

There are a number of accounts of the human good, and Aristotle considers several. [1095b15-1096a10] The one that he is most interested in is eudaimonia -- which is sometimes translated as "happiness" and sometimes as "flourishing". Everyone wants this, but there is disagreement about what it consists in [NE1095a20]. What Aristotle suggests is that we look to man's nature or function to find out what makes him most happy. And the way Aristotle thinks we can best discover what man’s nature, is, is through looking at his characteristic function. Man’s peculiar function is his capacity for practical reasoning.[NE1106 b36-38] And to use one’s capacity for such reasoning, tu properly and fully
exercise that capacity, will be (if fortune cooperates) a happy life. It will also be a virtuous one, for to make choices guided by practical reasoning is to be virtuous. Thus, for Aristotle, to act in accordance with one’s special nature, or function, is a necessary condition for happiness. And to act this way, in accordance with man’s nature, is what it is to be virtuous. Thus Aristotle does hold the two tenets cited above.

Cicero too, held to these two claims. Concerning the thesis that virtue is in accordance with nature, he said:

"If we follow nature as our guide, we shall never go astray, but we shall be pursuing that which is in its nature clear-sighted and penetrating (wisdom) that which is adopted to promote and strengthen society (justice) and that which is strong and courageous (fortitude)... (DO, p. 103)"

He also says:

"We must realize also that we are invested by nature with two characters, as it were: one of these is universal, arising from the fact of our being all alike endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brute. From this all morality and propriety are derived.... (DO, p. 107)"

Cicero also believed that virtue was at least necessary for happiness. Consider, for example, a passage remarkably similar to Hume’s knave passage cited earlier:

"... What is there that your so-called expediency can bring to you that will compensate for what it
can take away, if it steals from you the name of a "good man" and causes you to lose your sense of honour and justice? For what difference does it make whether a man is actually transformed into a beast or whether, keeping the outward appearance of a man, he has the savage nature of a beast within? (DO, p. 355)

Clearly, the fact that Cicero held the classical doctrine is not sufficient reason for Hume to say, as we saw that he did, that he "held Cicero in his eye in all his reasonings". There were many other ways in which Cicero had great influence on Hume. [13] But it is Cicero's adherence to these two claims which are most important to showing the way in which Hume might have had a non-egoistic moral theory.

Let's go on, then, to show, through Hume's texts, the way in which he was committed to the classical view.

5. Character

I believe that Hume's views about character and character formation will show that he embraced the classical view. I will discuss three aspects of Hume's views about character. First, I will look at what a good character is. Second, I will look at how someone might come to have a good character. And third, I will look at what Hume thinks happens if you succeed in forming this sort of character and why it is that those things happen. My discussion of the first and second of these will be very brief, for it is Hume's answer to the third that gives us the key to seeing the way in which Hume held the classical view.
5A. Good Character

A person with a good character is a virtuous person. And Hume tells us that virtue requires a "steady preference of the greater happiness". There are thus two components to someone's being virtuous: Preferences must be steady and the objects of the preferences must be the greater happiness. A steady preference is most often had in stable characters, characters not swayed by the thought of immediate pleasure when weighed against long-term good. And for Hume, such a character is governed by what he calls "calm passions". [T418] A person governed by the calm passions is a person with what Hume called 'strength of mind' [T418].

Further, a virtuous person is not only able to put aside their immediate pleasure for their own long-term good, but also can put it aside for the long-term good of all. Most of the time, Hume tells us, our own interest and the interest of all are not in conflict:

...the interest of each individual is in general so closely connected with that of the community, that those philosophers are excusable who fancied that all our concern for the public might be resolved into a concern for our own happiness and preservation.[E46]

But these interests sometimes are in conflict. Hume tells us this is most likely to happen in the case of justice [E102]. And when they are in conflict, virtuous people are people who can, "...whenever disputes arise, either in
philosophy or common life, concerning the bounds of duty....decide ....by ascertaining, on any side, the true interests of mankind".[E12-13] To be able to do this, and to do it in a stable, reliable way, is the result of having developed, and extended, one's natural, but weak, "sentiment of humanity", or as Hume also refers to it, one's "benevolence". Let's see how and why this might occur.

5B. Character Creation

We each have at least a bit of this sentiment of humanity in us just in virtue of our being human; "...that there is some benevolence, however small, infused into our bosom, some spark of friendship for humankind; some particle of the dove kneaded into our frame, along with elements of the wolf and serpent".[E92]

Having this "particle of the dove" leads to: "a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind above what is pernicious and dangerous".[E92]

But how might one come to to have a character in which this benevolence is extended beyond its natural limited form, and stably maintains that extension? Hume's answer is that we can each teach ourselves to develop this capacity through imitation and habituation. When our "passions do not readily follow the determination of [our] judgment..."[T583] we can develop the control the calm passions can have over our personality, for they and they alone are that "reason which
is able to oppose our [violent] passions". One way to begin is to imitate, or do by rote, that thing which one judges is right. Hume says, for example:

...a person, who feels his heart devoid of that [virtuous] principle, may hate himself on 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.

Someone might do this in order to become the sort of person whose sentiments will, after practising this behavior, fall into line with what they know to be right. This sort of habituation, or practice, is effective, because: "Nothing has a greater effect both to encrease and diminish our passions, to convert pleasure into pain, and pain into pleasure, than custom and repetition." And this is because, Hume tells us, repetition produces an ease of feeling and action and this ease is itself pleasurable, thus encouraging us to perform this sort of action again and again. Hume says this repetition is an "infallible source of pleasure" and this: "...pleasure of facility...will sometimes be so powerful as even to convert pain into pleasure, and give us a relish in time for what at first was most harsh and disagreeable."

Thus can we come to have a character with these two traits.
5C. Results

What happens when someone does develop and maintain a character with these two traits? I will argue that Hume thinks such a person then has a possibility for happiness he did not have before. This is because developing and maintaining such a character -- a virtuous character -- is most natural to us as humans; and because it is natural it will make us most happy. Let's go on go explain these claims. We said earlier that having these two character traits was what it was to be virtuous. I want to show here how this works; how the two traits provide the ability and assurance that one will be virtuous.

(i) Natural Virtues

Hume often speaks as if such natural virtues as "beneficence and humanity, friendship and gratitude, natural affection and public spirit"(E10) were just instinctual. That is, he says that we just react in accordance with the natural virtues because of our human nature:

The social influences of humanity and beneficence exert their influence immediately by a direct tendency or instinct, which chiefly keeps in view the simple object, moving the affections, and comprehends not any scheme or system, nor the consequences resulting from the concurrence, imitation, or example of others.[E120]
But to be a truly virtuous person would be to manifest all of the natural virtues, not just humanity and beneficence. And at least some of the others require both stability and acting from a non-egoistic benevolence.

Consider, for example, friendship. A virtuous person will be a good friend. For Hume tells us that the way we judge whether or not someone is virtuous is by looking at how he is regarded by those close to him and asking ourselves whether or not we would like to occupy such a position: We are to ask ourselves, in other words, whether or not we would like to be this person's friend, neighbor, or lover. And friendship, at least, will sometimes require a sacrifice of one's self-interest to the interest of the other: "...extraordinary delicacy in love or friendship, where a person is attentive to the smallest concerns of his friends, and is willing to sacrifice to them the most considerable interest of his own..."[T604]

In such cases, there is a conflict of interest which a person without both of these character traits is likely to crumble under. For if a person is missing the stability, he may only sometimes act in this way, and sometimes not. Such a person is not likely to be a reliable friend. And if the object of his stable affections is his own good, rather than his friend's good, he will not act this way at all. And so such a person will be missing the ability to act, as we saw Hume put it before, from a "steady preference for the greater
happiness”. Thus without these two traits, a person could not act in accordance with the natural virtues.

(iii) Artificial Virtues

And what about the artificial virtues? I believe stability of character and acting from a strengthened, and in this case, extended benevolence is needed to have these virtues as well. Let’s first see how artificial virtues get established at all, so we can see more clearly why this might be the case.

Hume says we all have basic desires which could not be satisfied without a broad (political) association with others. But certain of our passions, like avidity, can interfere with the long term good of all. In order, therefore, to act in a way which does not open the possibility for undermining the necessary political association, each person must control passions like avidity. And they can do this only by having a character of the sort described above. Let’s present Hume’s argument about how these artificial virtues first get established; and then we can see the need for this sort of character, a good character, in order to adhere to them.

The larger social structure first gets established for selfish motives. That is, man has an abundance of needs which he cannot, by himself, satisfy:

Of all the animals with which this globe is peopled there is none towards whom Nature seems, at
first sight, to have exercised more cruelty than towards man, in the number less wants and necessities, which she has loaded him and in the slender means, which she affords to the relieving these necessities.[T484]

Man needs, Hume tells us, "food, cloaths and lodging"[T485] and he is provided with neither "arms, nor force, nor other natural abilities"[T485] by which he can acquire them.

Further, his limited altruism actually makes the situation worse by causing each man to want to stockpile even more than he would for just himself, in order that he may, in addition, satisfy his loved ones.

The solution to this situation is to restrain our passion of avidity, our interest in stockpiling goods, for "this avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, is insatiable, perpetual,universal and directly destructive of society."[T491-2]

We come to see on reflection, Hume says, that only by restraining the passion can we best satisfy it: "Tis evident, that the passion is much better satisfied by its restraint, than by its liberty"[T492] That is, by restraining the unimpeded movements, the violent assertions, of the passions we can ultimately get these passions best satisfied, both for us and our friends. Thus we agree, Hume says, to establish "stability of possessions". Acting in accordance with rules which establish such stability is then denominated a virtue -- an "artificial" virtue. These "artificial" virtues are
understood to be essential to the perpetuation of a broader social association.

It is at this point that the need for the sort of character that we spoke of earlier becomes evident. For even though the initial construction of the extended social association is done for egoistic reasons, such reasons will not be sufficient for each of us to keep obeying these rules. For there are cases, as we mentioned, in which it would be to our advantage to not abide by the rules of justice while other people do abide by them [T497]. But we said in the beginning of this section that Hume believed that if someone had a character which was stable and in which they were motivated to act for the greater good of all, that even in cases of such conflict, people with such characters would be just. But if it is not to their advantage, at least not in a way which is immediately apparent, why would they ever develop a character which would have such tendencies? What would ever motivate someone to develop a character which would cause them to, say, obey rules of justice when there seems to be no advantage to it and they could clearly get away with not obeying?

Here is a hint. Hume says:

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.[E64]

Let’s go on to see why maintaining the sort of character we have been discussing, even when it does not seem to be to your advantage, indeed, "ensures... happiness and... honour".

5C. Good Character and Human Nature

I will argue in this section and the next that developing and maintaining a good character -- that is, a character organized around a settled preference for the greatest happiness -- is a necessary condition for both happiness and honour because developing and maintaining such a character is what is most natural to us, that is, most in accordance with our human nature. To this end, I will show in this section that the development of these two traits is indeed natural, and in the next, that it therefore brings happiness.

Why is having a good character in accordance with our nature? Let’s look again at what Hume thinks it is for something to be natural, and then see if a good character, as we have described it above, is an instance of this.

(i) Human Nature

As we said earlier, Hume believed that prior notions of man’s nature were not adequately scientific. When he is criticising egoistic morality, for example, he says:
...Such a philosophy is more like a satire than a true delineation or description of human nature, and may be a good foundation for paradoxical wit and raillery, but is a very bad one for any serious argument or reasoning. [E119]

Hume believed he was presenting "true delineations" of human nature which could indeed work as a foundation for serious argument and reasoning, and not satire. How did Hume derive his conclusions about human nature? He tells us that:

Men are now cured of their passion for hypotheses and systems in natural philosophy, and will hearken to no arguments but those which are derived from experience. It is full time they should attempt a like reformation in all moral disquisitions, and reject every system of ethics, which is not founded on fact and observation [E8]

How does his commitment to fact and observation play a role here? What are some of the conclusions he comes up with using this method?

Using this method led him to what he took to be central principles about the workings of the human mind: discoveries, as we have seen, such as which causes and objects certain emotions must have and why. So far, a trait was a natural one if it was a law of the human mind which held universally in well-functioning creatures.

But if I am right about Hume holding to a version of classical ethics, it would not be strange for him to also claim that something could be natural in another way, a way which we will see is built up from and continuous with the
first. When things are natural in this other way, they are characteristic of humans, as were those traits of mind we have so far discussed, but made yet a further claim. In addition, things natural in this second way were things which distinguished humans from animals. Both Aristotle [NE 1097b97] and Cicero [DO Bk I, Chpt. iv], for example, treat that which characterizes man’s nature as that which separates men from animals.

Hume does talk about a second way (or at least another "sense") of something being natural. He says, for example, when speaking of justice, that: "Justice, in another sense of the word, is so natural to man, that no society of men, and even no individual member of any society, was ever entirely devoid of all Sense of it..." [Letter from a Gentleman, p. 123] And what is that other sense? It seems that it: "... require[s], along with a natural Instinct, a certain Reflection on the general interest of Human Society, and a combination with others. In the same Sense, Sucking is an action natural to Man, and Speech is Artificial". [Ibid. p 123]

Could this help us here? That is, could this lead us to a way for something to be natural which is like the Greek and Roman one -- one which perhaps differentiates people from animals and yet is still sufficiently continuous with the first so that Hume is not just equivocating on the term? Here are some reasons to believe it might.
For one, Hume has told us in the above citation that something which is natural in this other sense is built up, through the aid of reason, from an instinct which is universal. Further, it is just that process which characterizes other traits which he believes differentiate humans from animals. He is most explicit about this when speaking of extended benevolence. He says, for example:

The principal advantage .... in the extensive capacity of the human species is that it renders our benevolence also more extensive and gives us larger opportunities of spreading our kindly influence than what are indulged to the inferior creation [E10]

And he also says that such a trait is what separates the more animal-like, that is, savage men, from the worldly ones:

...a rude, untaught savage regulates chiefly his love and hatred by the ideas of private utility and injury, and has but faint conceptions of a general rule or system of behavior.....But we, accustomed to society, and to more enlarged reflections, consider that this man is serving his own country and....that in general, human society is best supported on such maxims.[E95 .note]

And how is such extended benevolence created? Unsurprisingly, it is built up from something like a universal instinct using reason. Hume says, for example, that limited benevolence is, indeed, something like a universal instinct:
To the most careless observer there appears to be such dispositions as benevolence and generosity, such affections as love, friendship, compassion, gratitude. These sentiments have their causes, effects, objects and operations marked by common language and observation and plainly distinguished from those of the selfish passions. And as this is the obvious appearance of things, it must be admitted till some hypothesis be discovered which, by penetrating deeper into human nature, may prove the former affections to be nothing but modifications of the latter.[E115-116]

Second, Hume says that reason is what extends natural benevolence beyond its limited scope. How? Human beings have a set of reasoning powers which are far superior in many ways to those of animals and which allow them to accomplish this extension. He says, for example, that "Men are superior to beasts principally by the superiority of their reason"[T610] And he also says, in a passage which might be seen as expanding on this thought, that:

The causes of the passions are likewise much the same in beasts as in us, making a just allowance for our superior knowledge and understanding. Thus animals have little or no sense of virtue or vice; they quickly lose sight of the relations of blood; and are incapable of that of right and property.[T326]

Since animals are "incapable of right and property", and right and property, he tells us in another part of the text,[T503] require perception of how men must alter their behavior to secure the stability of society, one might guess that this perception, afforded to people because of their "sagacity" must consist in something like the ability to
think in long causal chains, both into the future, and about strangers. That this is so is confirmed when we see Hume saying that people are:

...endowed with such sagacity as immediately to perceive, that the chief impediment to this project of society and partnership lies in the avidity and selfishness of their natural temper, to remedy which, they enter into a convention for the stability of possession, and for mutual restraint and forbearance. [T503]

So people can understand and think through consequences which extend far into the future and which involve strangers. And this allows them to build up from a natural instinct what Hume thinks most characteristic of our human nature, that is, extended benevolence.

Thus this is at least one confirming case where something seems to be natural in this second way, that is, (a) it is built up from a universal instinct; (b) it is built up using reason; and (c) the product represents that which separates men from animals.

But if something can be natural in either, or both, ways, if there is, as we saw Hume say, another "sense" of natural, how are the two related? For they are not equivalent: what is natural in the first sense -- say, associative laws -- need not be peculiar only to humans, or at least Hume nowhere says that they are. Also, what is natural in the first sense are traits which are part of the very structure of the human
mind: we are set up, for example, so that whatever is perceived as useful is pleasing to us. But what is natural in this second sense -- traits separating us from animals -- could not be part of the very structure of the mind in that way. For they are built up from universal instincts. As we have seen, traits like extended sympathy take extensive reflection and training in order to have them be part of our character. So again, how might these two be related?

Here is my hypothesis about their relation: Those things which are natural in the second way are outgrowths of what is natural in the first way, in the way that extended benevolence is an outgrowth of limited benevolence. But surely there are many different ways to expand universal human instincts? Is there something peculiar about this sort of expansion? Perhaps those expansions that result in something being natural in the second way are arrived at by our reflection on what would contribute to the general good of mankind. And if this is so, then not only does such reflection on a natural instinct result in something uniquely characteristic of humans, but the process used to arrived at that development -- like justice or language -- which separates us from the animals is itself arrived at by using those faculties, like imaginative reasoning, which seem to be possessed only by humans. Thus I believe we can, and have, isolated out a second sense of natural that Hume uses, and I believe we can say it is a development of the first. So perhaps this is indeed the other sense in which justice, for
example, is natural. But why is any of this relevant to explaining why having a good character might be natural?

Let's look again at the two character traits we said comprised a good character. They are: (1) having steady preferences, (2) whose object is the greater happiness of all. We have said repeatedly that what is needed in order to develop these two traits is to expand and stabilize our benevolence so that it is neither limited to our friends and family, nor swayed by our own immediate desires. But this is done through reasoning -- in the way we just spoke of when we saw how extended benevolence was built up from natural benevolence. Further, we just saw that such expansion is what characterizes humans in that it is what separates them from animals. It is therefore most in accord with their human nature. That is the sense, then -- what we have been calling an other, more developed way in which something can be natural -- in which having a good character, a character with these two traits, is natural.

5E. Happiness

But even if having these two character traits is natural (in some sense) why is it necessary for happiness? Hume asserts that having such a character is indeed necessary for happiness:
All men, it is allowed, are equally desirous of happiness; but few are successful in the pursuit. One considerable cause is the want of strength of mind, which might enable them to resist the temptation of present ease or pleasure, and carry them forward in the search of more distant profit and enjoyment. Our affections, on a general prospect of their objects, form...certain measures of preference of one above another; and these decisions [are]...really the result of our calm passions and propensities (for what else can pronounce any object eligible or the contrary)...

But why would this be so? Why would it be the case that a character with the two traits above -- a character which, indeed, has the calm passions (properly) organizing pursuit of its objects in a way other than that which would yield immediate pleasure or avoidance of immediate pain -- why would this be necessary for happiness? Again, my argument will be that it is because having such a character is (most) natural to us.

Let's begin exploring this by going over what Hume can't say about why having a virtuous character brings happiness, and why he can't say it. Bishop Butler, who we have already cited as being of great influence in Hume's thought, made the following (in)famous claim: virtue, he said, even justice, is never really incompatible with man's happiness.[S.2, section 226] The only reason why we think of these two as incompatible is because we have a false conception of man's nature, and therefore a false conception of what constitutes his happiness.[Preface, section 192] When we see that what is natural for man is what separates him from the animals,
rather than that which he just happens to do most often, we will see what his true nature is.

So far, this sounds like just the sort of argument we have been attempting to trace through Hume's texts. But when Butler goes on to say why behaving and thinking naturally brings happiness the divide between Butler and Hume becomes apparent. Butler claims that it is in our interest to act in a way which is in accordance with our true nature because if it is our true nature, then it is God's will that we act this way. He says, for example, that: "If the real Nature of any creature leads him and is adapted to such and such purposes only, more than any other, then this is a reason to believe that the author of that Nature intended it for those purposes." [S.2 section 211]

The point is this: if it is God's will that we act virtuously, then ultimately we will go to heaven if we act this way. So there is an obvious sense in which it is indeed in our best interests to be virtuous, once one adds the missing theological assumptions. Therefore, given this framework, a small, or even large, material gain is not worth what one would lose, namely, eternal happiness. Or again, as Butler puts it: "Duty and interest are perfectly coincident, for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future and the whole...." [S. 11, section 226]

But obviously, Hume cannot argue this way. Whatever he
claims has to be about a kind of benefit that would happen on earth, and cannot rely on theological assumptions about an afterlife. I believe what Hume is saying is that when one has one’s character, thoughts and behavior, naturally ordered, there is a kind of pleasure taken in that for itself alone. This kind of pleasure is probably closest to the pleasure one might have in a machine working in a well-oiled and efficient way. And this holds for both the more instinctual and more developed sorts of things which are natural, for not only is one’s mind working as it is best suited to, but one has shaped oneself to manifest those capacities most peculiar to the human organism, and therefore most revealing of the kinds of creatures we are. This notion of what is natural for humans, therefore, comes as close as a non-theological one can to saying we are working in the way we were ‘designed to’. And the evidence for this is that all the transitions are smooth, and the very workings of the mind and body itself, are found to be pleasurable.[see, eg T269, 225-6] [16]

Further, it seems that a person with such a character, one in which all the transitions are smooth and easy and pleasurable, may well have an easier time in getting his desires satisfied. This might be because Hume thinks that the workings of a natural character are composed of natural transitions, which, because they are smooth, are more stable. [T225-6]
In addition, my interpretation allows Hume to impose limits on what are allowable ends for a person to pursue. For a person with a character in accordance with his deepest human nature is a virtuous person. And having such a character -- because of its constituent parts -- puts constraints on ends. This is because a virtuous person is one who has cultivated the capacity for extended benevolence and has habituated himself (through calm passions) to acting on this in a stable way. It is unlikely (that is, 'out of character') that such a person will have ends incompatible with these two traits. And if they did, it would be an instance of disorder -- of non-natural choice of ends, which risked, if not ensured, the loss of the created character. Further, because it would be an instance of disorder, none of the conditions which held to make desires arising out of natural character be satisfied more easily would hold. Therefore an unnatural desire would not be easily satisfied.

So, the combination of knowing that (1) having a virtuous character is pleasurable in itself, and (2) having such a character also allows us the possibility of both having our ends satisfied better and ensuring, to a certain extent, that they be the right ends, greatly aids in helping us to overcome the lure of immediate pleasure. This is why Hume can say that having such a character, or being virtuous: "...may interest every principle of our nature, in the embracing and cherishing that noble quality..."[T620]
I asserted earlier that if we looked at Hume's views about character, and, in particular, his views about the result of having a good character, we would understand the way in which Hume holds a version of the classical view.

The classical view was composed of two parts. The first was that virtue is natural. We have seen that Hume believes that creating the kind of character which allows someone to act virtuously is natural, because creating and having that kind of character is what most separated us from the animals. The second claim was that being virtuous satisfies a necessary condition for happiness. And we have also seen that Hume believes that someone with a good character is assured of a necessary condition for happiness. Therefore through his views about character, we have shown the way in which Hume holds the classical view.

In addition, Hume's answer to the knave coheres with this general (neo-)classical moral theory. For if being virtuous is having the two traits of character above, then of course Hume would tell the knave that he would lose that which is most valuable were he to not be just. For to disobey justice even once would be to lose this stable character. And without that, the knave could never be happy.

But even so, have we proven what we originally said we would? That is, we said we would show that Hume's theory of
justice was not an egoist one. Let's break this down into two claims: (1) The motivations Hume posits for being just do not reduce to Hobbesian egoism and (2) that to speak of Hume's claims as egoistic in a much broader way is trivial. Let's consider each of these claims in turn.

(1) If I am right in what I have argued above, then for Hume the motivation to be just does not reduce to what he calls "private" interest as it does with the Hobbists. This is because what resolving everything into private interest meant for Hume was that the motivation to be just was furthering one's own interest. But we have seen above that Hume does not think that. Rather, he believes the motivation for acting justly is the interest of the other. Or, as Hume puts it: "...a man that grieves for a valuable friend who needed his patronage and protection -- how can we suppose that his passionate tenderness arises from some metaphysical regard to a self-interest..." [E117]

But couldn't someone object that this is only so when one has a good character, and that the motivation to create such a character itself is egoistic? After all, Hume says it will bring happiness. But I think it would be a misinterpretation to call such motivation egoistic. For even if it is the case that such a character brings happiness, it is not the case that one creates it in order to have the happiness. And it would be the latter that would need to be so if Hume were a Hobbesian egoist. Hume focuses on just the latter
distinction, in fact, in one criticism of his predecessors:

In my opinion, there are two things which have led astray those philosophers that have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. In the first place, they found that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure; whence they concluded that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.[DM 145]

But couldn’t someone still object that Hume’s view is egoistic in another sense, a sense much broader than Hobbesian egoism? I believe Hume’s response would be of the following sort: to call his view and that of the Hobbists both egoistic is to lose an important distinction between the two sorts of theories. For to call a theory egoistic just because it satisfies some interest of the self is to abuse the term: under that reading of egoism, all actions, because they satisfy some interest of the self, would be egoistic. And this just is not what is meant when a theory reduces all of morality to, as Hume puts it, "private" interest.[17]

(3) And how does the above discussion contrast with Mackie’s?

We listed earlier the reasons Mackie thought Hume could give for people being just. The only possibility on that list for something which could be a non-egoistic motive was an appeal to conscience. What Mackie says exactly is,
"...the agent will hardly be able to conceal his crimes from himself ... and if he has acquired the tendency to disapprove of honesty he will suffer pangs of conscience."  [18] Now since Mackie does say this is an "egoistic" reason, a natural reading of this might be that by being just we could avoid the pain and discomfort (the "pangs") associated with a bad conscience. But, given what we have shown above about the way in which Hume wants to distance himself from the Hobbesians, avoiding such pair just is not the motive for justice. So if this is what Mackie means, he is wrong.

But if, on the other hand, Mackie means to be saying that Hume thinks that satisfying our conscience is a good in and of itself, and has to do with acting out of a regard for the other, then, for the reasons discussed above, this position is not properly called an egoistic one. Therefore there is no sense in which obeying justice, for Hume, is egoistic.

4. And finally, if we have shown that (a) Hume's theory as to why we are just is not an egoistic one; but rather, (b) is indeed a version of a classical theory; and (c) that therefore any version of the standard interpretation which paints him as a Hobbesian is wrong, then can we now claim (for this was the point of the whole chapter) that Hume does have an argument for why "natural" is a normative term? I believe on the interpretation I have offered, he can. For on this interpretation, Hume can claim that what is natural is correct because, if we act in accordance with our nature, we
will act virtuously. And acting virtuously, as we have seen above, allows us at least the possibility of doing well -- for it is a necessary condition for happiness. This is indeed, then, a way of life which is choice-worthy and thus justifies the claim that to act naturally, is, in some sense, superior.

5. There is, however, a final perplexity. If the story above is correct, why hasn't it been emphasized before? I believe there is a good reason. The story above requires explaining what would happen if someone were virtuous. But Hume considered speaking of this an "inducement" to virtue, and considered this "a work apart" (T620) from what he was meant to do. His job, an infinitely more scientific one, was to be an anatomist, to explore the causes which led men to judge something virtuous or vicious. He wouldn't allow himself to: "...recommend generosity and benevolence, or to paint in their true colors all the genuine charms of the social virtues." [E10]

But I believe one has to see why Hume might have thought virtue could indeed be recommended in order to fully understand his connection to classical claims. Hume gave us only hints. It is those hints, and the underlying view they are pointing towards, that I have tried to articulate here. [20]
CHAPTER FIVE

1. Introduction

I argued in the last chapter that Hume's moral theory is best understood as a version of a classical moral theory. And I characterized a classical theory there as having two components: C1: virtue is in accordance with human nature; and C2: virtue is a necessary condition for happiness. What I want to examine in this chapter is whether the version of such a classical theory that Hume wanted -- a modern version -- could sustain the sort of claim we have seen throughout this thesis that Hume both wants and needs: certain sorts of characters (or habits of mind) are what he has called "perverted".

First, then, what was it to have a modern version of the sort of classical moral theory we have described above? For Hume, it meant that C1 and C2 were not to be defended by appealing to either telology nor theology.[1] But why was it important to Hume that he have a non-teleological, non-theological theory? A bit about Hume's history might help here. Hume first understood the possibility of such a theory in reading about Strato, a peripetatic atheist. In a very early notebook Hume wrote:
Strato's Atheism the most dangerous of the Ancients, holding to the origin of the World from Nature, or a matter endued with Activity.... A Stratonian could retort the Arguments of all the Sects of Philosophy... [Burton, Volume I, p. 125]

It was this "matter endued with Activity", originating only from Nature itself, that Hume wanted as the basis for his naturalism. For as a philosopher at the transitional point between medieval and modern thought [2], he was trying to argue that laws of nature were not manifestations of God's will nor of a final end. Rather, laws of nature just were the way the world worked. There was neither any reason the world worked in accordance with these laws, nor any assurance that the world would always continue to so work. But is such a modern conception of nature compatible with the classical picture outlined earlier? Let's try to understand why this might be a problem.

On an Aristotelian conception of nature, everything in nature has an essence. The essence of something was determined by its function [see, e.g. Physics Bk. II, Chapt. 8], and the essence of something was its essence eternally. [3] Thus beliefs, for example, about different notions of function, did not determine what the essence of something was, but at best provided clues. For the functions themselves were fixed biological facts, independent of any beliefs about them. It follows from this view of nature that the essence of a human being was derived from facts about the function of a human being, and that what this function was had a determinate (biological) answer.
Aristotle argued that the function of a human being was having a life organized around the exercise of the distinctively human capacities, a life in accordance with (practical) reason. When someone, then, had a life not in accordance with (practical) reason, Aristotle could appeal to a notion of human essence to say that such a person had made the wrong choices about how to live. Such a person was not fully human.

And so it would follow that for Aristotle, a person who claims to have a radically different notion of what flourishing is, for example, that virtue would obstruct flourishing, could be said to be wrong. For such a person -- call him the "objector" -- either has the facts about human function wrong, or misunderstands what living a life in accordance with the virtues consists in. So Aristotle could say, with this sort of (metaphysical) backing, that only certain sorts of lives were properly speaking human lives, and the life the objector wanted was not a proper life for a human being. But faced with the same sort of objector, could a naturalist such as Hume have any satisfactory response?

Let's take this question, then, as the real challenge to Hume's attempt to integrate the ancient and modern systems in ethics. With God's will and teleology gone, could Hume legitimately say, as he both wants and needs to say, that a person's moral judgments and choices were "perverted"? Or that he had, in some way, chosen a life which is the wrong
sort for a human being? Let's see.

2. Hume's Response to the Skeptic

One way of understanding the above challenge to Hume is that he has to satisfactorily answer the question of why it is correct that someone respond in one way rather than another. To use terminology we used earlier, what makes one kind of response a sign of well-functioning and another a sign of malfunctioning?

I believe Hume thinks he has an answer. This answer is presented in the guise of the ideally human response. In the ethics this is the response of the impartial spectator and in the aesthetics it is the response of the good critic. Hume uses the idea of an ideally human response to represent how anyone, free of bias, and simply in virtue of being human, would respond. And it is out of such responses that Hume will derive his normative claims.

What I will do here is, first, present Hume's response and then, argue that it is inadequate. To this end, I want to start by examining his aesthetics. For as we will see, his aesthetics focuses explicitly on just this problem.

Aesthetics

In "Of the Standard of Taste", Hume sees himself as providing a response to someone who believes there are no right or wrong answers to ethical or aesthetic questions.
This "skeptic"[ST 6] sees ethics and aesthetics, unlike other domains, as governed by sentiment, and thinks complete subjectivity is the consequence of this fact. Hume imagines such a person saying:

...a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right; because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind;...[ST 6]

And the same person might go on:

Beauty is no quality in things themselves; it exists merely in the mind which contemplates them and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others...To seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an inquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter.[ST 6]

But Hume's response to this is that he can ascertain "real beauty", that he can tell us which sentiments are correct and which incorrect. This response to the skeptic -- whether moral or aesthetic, is not unusual for Hume. For he is interested, throughout his work, in universal truths about how people think and behave, and thinks these universal truths will provide the basis for such a response. This will indeed be so if the universal claims do yield normative ones.
We can easily confirm that Hume was, throughout, interested in discovering universal truths about man, although he thinks such truths are often hidden beneath superficial differences. He says, for example:

Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men, in all varieties of circumstances and situations and furnishing us with material from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behavior. [I 55]

And similarly, in the second Enquiry, he tells us he is looking for: "universal principles from which all censure or approbation is derived". (E8)

This search for universal principles is at work in his aesthetics as well. He says, in "Of the Standard of Taste":

It appears then, that amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities from the original structure of the internal fabric are calculated to please, and others to displease...[ST 9]

But why would finding such universal truths about the structure of the mind -- assuming we could -- help us to answer the skeptic above? And how could Hume ever find such truths? An important clue to Hume's answer to both of these
questions can be found in his use of the following story from Cervantes:

It is with good reason, says Sancho to the squire with the great nose, that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: this is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hogshead, which was supposed to be excellent, being of old and of a good vintage. One of them tastes it, considers it; and, after mature reflection, pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for a small taste of leather which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favor of the wine, but with the reserve of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying the hogshead, there was found at the bottom an old key with a leathern thong tied to it. [ST 11]

Hume goes on to spell out for the reader the analogy with the issue at hand:

The great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Tho it be certain that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external, it must be allowd, that there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. [ST 11]

What we need to do then, is find those qualities in objects -- those natural qualities -- which are "fitted by nature" to produce the feeling that the object is beautiful or ugly. And the way to do this, Hume thinks, is to find the "universal rules of composition", those things which have been
"universally found to please in all countries and in all ages". But some people have been deemed within their own cultures as better able to discern such (natural) facts. By focusing on such people's responses, then, we will then be able to find those rules which justify some aesthetic judgments and allow us to disregard others. For "to produce those general rules or avowed patterns of composition is like finding the key with the leathern thong, which justified the verdict of Sancho's kinsmen". [ST 11]

Finding The Rules

How can we find these rules of composition? As we said directly above, Hume's answer is to look to the good critics for this. For, as we will see, people who are judged good critics are judged within their own cultures to have the ability to perceive the presence of such rules of composition -- the objective quality involved -- even when such qualities are present only in very minute amounts.[4] Let's then, look at Hume's argument for the fact that critics can do this.

Hume claims that implicit in the practices of his culture is a way to distinguish good critics from bad. For people make distinctions between good and bad critics all the time. They are making such a distinction, for example, when they ignore those who claim a democracy of sentiment:

[those]...who give the preference to the former authors rather than to Milton and Addison
have...no one pay[ing] attention to such a taste; and we pronounce, without scruple, the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot...[ST 7]

But what characterizes good critics? Why believe they are particularly skilled at detecting "those qualities in objects...fitted by nature to produce...particular feelings" -- and to then indeed have the appropriate feelings?

Good critics have, Hume says: "a perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object..."[ST 8] This allows them to be clear and unbiased enough so that their organs can properly react to the natural qualities in the object. Or as Hume puts it, such critics can be pleased by: "...particular forms or qualities [which] from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please".[ST 9]

Importantly, the analogy Hume uses is to health;

A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavors; nor would one affected with the jaundice pretend to give a verdict with regard to colors. In each creature there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment.[ST 9]

This serves to underscore the point that Hume thinks such critics can pick up on what humans are made to react to in a way which goes beyond any particularly culture-bound reaction
-- just as physical diseases are distortions in a universal, not culture-bound way. Good critics, then, are well-functioning, in that they can pick up, even in minute amounts, the relevant natural qualities in objects. This ability is what made Hume believe that they, more than most people, could be said to be in a "sound state".

But what exactly is it be in a "sound state"? Or to put it another way: what characterizes these people -- the critics -- who are in such a state? Hume gives us five characteristics of such people.

1. They have delicacy of taste; [ST 11-12]
2. They have sufficient practice in judging; [ST 13]
3. They have made adequate comparisons; [ST 14]
4. They are unprejudiced or impartial; [ST 15]
5. They use their "good sense" to check that they have, to the best of their abilities, engaged in (1) - (4) (above). [ST 16]

Or as Hume puts it:

When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object; the finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation, where no comparision has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are
perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discuss the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. [ST 17]

Lacking these five, one will be blocked from perceiving what, from the "original structure" of humans, is "calculated to please". Again, describing these five, Hume says:

Many and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depend our sentiment of beauty or deformity....it is not to be expected that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception. [ST 10]

But critics can, and good critics do, have the proper sentiments:

...a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character. [ST17]

And how can such ideal reactors help Hume answer the skeptic? By looking at the way they uniformly react. Hume says, for example: "If in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty." [ST 10] And he also says: "....the joint verdict of such [good critics] wherever they are to be found, is the true
standard of taste and beauty." [ST 17] Thus uniformity among critics is very important, Hume thought, for answering the critic. For only armed with such a "joint verdict", such "entire or considerable uniformity" could Hume infer, as he wants to, which qualities we are "fitted by nature" to react to as if they are beautiful or ugly. [5]

But it is important to be clear, before we go on, about why such uniformity among critics is important. It is not because they are some arbitrarily chosen group the members of which possess superior abilities. Rather, they are recognized within their culture are being the correct, that is, more subtle reactors of the way most people would work were there no distorting influences. And so for Hume to look for uniformity among critics is really for him to be looking for the uniformity across the human species, that is, uniformity at the mass level.

Let's go on, then, to see if such uniformity exists.

ii. Uniformity

What I will do here is argue that such uniformity of reaction does not exist. I believe it does not exist at the gross level (among the general populace), even if we could somehow subtract for the distortions the general populace is subject to. And given the relation that the critics are said to hold to the general populace, it follows that I also believe that such uniformity of response will not exist among
the critics either. Since the lack of agreement among the critics is, then, derivative from the lack of agreement at the gross level, the most direct way of arguing that there is no uniformity of response would be to argue that there is no such uniformity at the gross level. The problem with this approach is that Hume thinks that whatever is examined at the mass level is always riddled with what appear to be deep differences, but are really only reflections of distortions or biases -- and therefore do not undermine the claim of underlying agreement in reaction. He says, for example:

The Rhine flows north, the Rhone south; yet both spring from the same mountain, and are also actuated, in their opposite directions, by the same principle of gravity. The different inclinations of the ground on which they run cause all the difference of their course.[D150]

And so showing lack of agreement at the gross level would just represent, for Hume, more of the Rhine/Rhone case. It would not be an argument that when superficial differences, or distortions, are taken away, there is no agreement, no one way that all people do indeed respond to certain natural qualities. Therefore, I believe the only way to show that there is not sufficient uniformity of the sort Hume needs, is to show that there is no such uniformity at the level of the critics. For were we to show this, Hume could not respond by saying that such lack of uniformity is simply a result of bias or distortion, whereas he could respond this way were we to show this lack within the general populace. And further,
if there is no uniformity of response at the level of the critics, I think we are justified in inferring that there is also no uniformity of response at the gross level. Therefore my strategy here is to show first, that what looks like uniformity of judgment among critics is not legitimately derived; second, to show why Hume might have thought there was such uniformity; and third, to show that this problem shows up in his ethics as well, and then look at how this affects his ability to respond to the skeptic.

Let's begin by looking at cases in which there seems to be such uniformity among critics, and look at who it is that is uniformly agreeing. For if the critics manifest a particular bias, replicating the reactions of only certain sorts of people and not others, then the agreement such critics reached would not be legitimate agreement in that it would have been reached by limiting who was agreeing. Let's see if this is the case.

As I have said above, Hume says that critics are distinguished by five factors. I want here to focus on one: the notion of adequate comparisons. We saw Hume say that one mark of a good critic is that they must make adequate comparisons. And he goes on to say that "Indians" or "savages" could not possibly have made such comparisons. Why? Their experience, Hume tells us, is not wide enough. The way he puts it is this: "a man who has had no opportunity of comparing the different kinds of beauty is indeed totally
unqualified to provide an opinion..."[ST 14] For, as he goes on to say, even though, "the coarsest daubing contains a certain lustre of colors and exactness of imitation... which would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration..."[ST 14], and "even vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature..."[ST 14], it is nonetheless the case that; "none but a person familiarized to superior beauties would pronounce their members harsh, or narration uninteresting".[ST 14]

But who sets up the criterion for "superior beauties"? For surely the Indian has one range of experiences, one sort of basis for comparisons, and other people, for example, eighteenth century critics, another. Why is one sufficiently broad and the other not? Let's see.

iii. Bias?

Again, my worry is that Hume was artificially constructing agreement among critics by limiting who was agreeing. And that, further, he was using this (artificial) agreement to prove that there was agreement at the level of the general populace, were they somehow to be relieved of their biases and distortions. And he used this claim, in turn to infer which reactions were built into the structure of the human brain.

Were someone to artificially construct agreement among a group like Hume's critics, one obvious way to do it would be
to limit who was agreeing. This is what I am concerned that Hume is doing with his notion of adequate comparisons cited above. Let's consider some examples of how this might work. I will start with a hypothetical example, and then proceed on to a real one.

Imagine, for example that varying tone was a major factor in judging verse to be beautiful, more important, than, say, semantic content. Thus the *Iliad* would be considered beautiful because of its musicality as much as because of its story line. Further, imagine that it was hard to develop a refined perception of such musicality, and required a particular range of experience. It would then stand to reason that people with experiences in tone-languages would have the most developed capacities for such judgment. Now further imagine that Indians have such tone languages and therefore the appropriate range of experiences. How might this matter to an assessment of whose organs properly picked up the relevant natural qualities, and thus to who could count as a good critic?

On initial investigation, it wouldn't look as if it did matter. For Hume might say that both for his notion of beauty and for the one just proposed, the story remains the same; persons with properly working organs -- the good critics, in other words -- would have the five traits above. For only then would their organs be working clearly enough to properly pick up on what is beautiful.
But although all good critics would still have to have the same five characteristics, the new definition of beauty will produce an important difference, a difference regarding who is considered a good critic. For imagine, in accordance with our new definition of what is beautiful, that we try to determine who will be included as having had experience with the proper sorts of comparisons. Most likely, it would be just those Indians who were left out of the class of good critics previously. This is because now they are the ones more acquainted than other groups might be with the relevant data.

Or take a real, not hypothetical, case. Appreciating beauty in Japanese pottery requires a subtlety of perception not ordinarily had by European or American critics well versed in the arts and crafts. For understanding and properly appreciating Japanese pottery requires a particular kind of comparison, an exposure to differences of subtle shades, textures and shapes not usually available to Westerners, no matter how sophisticated or subtle. A notion of "adequate comparison", then, which did not include this non-Western range of experience may well leave out the finer examples of Japanese pottery in the assessment of what is beautiful, choosing instead what is more familiar to the Western eye.

My point is this: the agreement among critics cannot be artificially derived by constructing a group of critics who
will agree because they share biases. And as Hume’s description of who is to count as a good critic -- at least regarding what is considered "adequate comparisons" -- now stands, I believe this is a real risk.

But perhaps we are being unfair to Hume. For couldn’t someone defend him by saying: This is not really a problem. Hume is not really artificially constructing agreement -- rather, you misunderstand his claim. For Hume knocked out the Indians, for example, as good critics, not from bias, but because the science of his day told him Indians were not competent judges. Like children or idiots, Indians were believed to have underdeveloped mental capacities. And surely one wouldn’t object to his similarly leaving out children or idiots. And, such a person might go on, any scientific claim, like the one about the mental capacity of Indians which is in question here -- can be shown to have been wrong two hundred years later. This is then merely a mistake of fact, and not one that has any bearing on the legitimacy of Hume’s enterprise or method.

But what I believe the above discussion has revealed is that Hume needs, as he himself put it, "considerable uniformity" in judgment to get his method to work. Because without such uniformity, without such agreement -- at least by the critics -- on what is beautiful or ugly, we cannot infer how the human mind is structured to work. But whether such uniform judgments are forthcoming in aesthetics (or
ethics) is unclear. And the fact that Hume has narrowed his group of critics so that it excludes those who might be most likely to disagree -- whether for (psuedo) scientific reasons or any others -- makes one even more suspicious that such agreement, derived legitimately, is possible. And, for the reasons we pointed out earlier, if we can't get agreement among critics, we can't infer there is a way all humans, were they free of bias, would react.

But Hume certainly believed he could find such uniformity. Why? I think Hume's belief in such agreement was part of the way in which he held standard Enlightenment views of man's nature [8]. Humans had superficial differences, but as we saw him say earlier, at bottom they all functioned alike. And further, many of these differences were due to cultures at varying stages of development. But once we were all civilized, our needs and interests as humans would be remarkably similar.

Therefore it is not surprising that Hume would think that what all humans find beautiful, for example, would be fairly uniform; nearly as uniform as judgment of causality, and certainly uniform enough to make inferences about what was built into the structure of the mind.

But with the shattering of the Enlightenment view of human nature, it seems much less certain that humans all have, by nature, when fully developed, the same set of interests, or preferences, or moral and aesthetic reactions.[9] And there
is certainly very little evidence for the sort of agreement Hume needs if we look at the history of what has been thought beautiful. For nothing like a "standard of taste", coming out of agreement by critics, or even agreement as to who should count as the critics, seems to have ever existed both across time and across cultures. One need only to look at debates in our own culture about, say, Jasper Johns, or Antonin Artaud, or even Sappho, to be aware of this. However, to attempt to conclusively argue such a point, as opposed to merely stating it, would be outside the domain of this essay. What, remaining short of making such a conclusive argument, can be concluded from the discussion above?

I believe two things can be concluded from this discussion: (1) it is important to understand the extent to which Hume's claim about what is part of the structure of the human mind is dependent on a uniformity of reactions among people when they are undistorted, and this is supposed to be best reflected in a uniformity of reactions among critics. And (2) I believe it is unclear that such uniformity can exist or has ever existed. And if this is true, then Hume's attempt to answer the objector has been placed in serious jeopardy.

Let's go on to see (1) if this same problem shows up in Hume's ethics; and (2) what implications this all has on Hume's ability to answer the earlier objector.
I will argue here that in Hume's ethics the impartial spectator plays the same role as the good critic did in his aesthetics, and encounters many of the same difficulties. That is, here too, Hume believes he is getting at reactions people have simply in virtue of being human; and here too, I want to claim, he concludes something is universal which is not sufficiently proven to be universal. But in order to argue this, I must first explain how the device of the impartial spectator operates in Hume's moral theory.

One thing Hume took himself to be doing in his ethics was explaining the origin of moral pronouncements. [see, e.g. T 573-586] He argued that judgments of right and wrong were derived from sentiment and not reason. [see, e.g. T 455-476] But he then had to explain how universal -- or near universal -- agreement in ethical judgments was possible. For as we just saw in the aesthetics, he took such universality as a fact. And he worried that this fact threatened his claim about sentiment, and especially his claims for the critical role of sympathy. For he worried that someone might argue as follows:

...But as this sympathy is very variable, it may be thought, that our sentiments of morals must admit of all the same variations. We sympathise more with persons contiguous to us, than with persons remote from us; with our acquaintances, than with strangers; with our countrymen, then with
foreigners. But not withstanding this variation of our sympathy, we give the same approbation to the same qualities in China as in England....Our esteem, therefore, proceeds not from sympathy.[T581]

Hume worried then, that this fact of the variability of (natural) sympathy would be taken as a decisive argument against moral reactions being a result of sentiment. For how could such variable sentiments be the origin of such uniformity?

The problem was further complicated by there being two sorts of agreement to be explained in order to explain agreement in moral judgment: (1) agreement about the amount of pleasure or pain produced, and (2) agreement in response to the amount of pleasure or pain produced. (2) was the agreement in moral judgment Hume thought was all around him, but (1) was necessary because Hume thought this agreement of judgment was a universally similar response by people to what they all perceived as being the same facts. But given that different people all had different perspectives and different biases, there had to be an account of how they could even come up with agreement about what the facts were about the amount of pleasure and pain in any situation. The stance of the impartial spectator, then, was a construction intended to account for how it was possible, through sentiment, to account for how we could have both sorts of agreement. Let’s see how it worked.

First, how was it possible for us to all have the same
assessment of the amount of pleasure or pain produced? Hume argued that we assess the amount of pleasure or pain produced in any situation by sympathy. Sympathy transmits to us the pleasure or pain of others. But as we saw above, sympathy is originally limited and therefore biased. Such biased sympathy clearly cannot be the source of uniformity. Hume's hypothesis, then, intended to save the role of sympathy, was this: it must be that each of us, in thought, imagines we are an equal distance away -- both in time and space -- from every person affected by the character we are judging. Or as Hume himself put it:

...in order, therefore, to prevent those continual contradictions and arrive at a more stable judgment of things, we fix on some steady and general points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation...[T581]

Thus by moving, in our imagination, from person to person in the situation, and by being careful to maintain the same distance from each, we can resound, through extended, impartial sympathy, with the pleasure or pain of each. Thus every "spectator", as someone is called who takes this imaginative stance, can come up with the same calculation about the amount of pleasure or pain produced by such a character.

But there is a second sort of agreement which we must account for in order to explain agreement in moral praise or
blame. For it would be entirely possible for us all to have
the same assessment of the amount of pleasure or pain
produced in a situation and still each have radically
different sentiments in response. This would be possible if
there were no assurance that, at some level, our sentiments
all worked in the same way. However, Hume thinks there is
such assurance. For as we pointed out early on in this
thesis, Hume believed that we were not fancied monsters, and
that we were not such monsters in that we did all share a
basis of sentiment which dictated that we all react similarly
to perceptions of the pain or pleasure of others. Given this
basis of sentiment, then, we are all able to "prevent those
continual contradictions and arrive at a more stable judgment
of things...". And this can happen because:

The final sentence, it is probable, which
pronounces characters and actions amiable or
odious, praiseworthy or blameable...
probably...depends on some internal sense or
feeling which nature has made universal in the
whole species.[E6]

Thus, taking an impartial stance, a stance, in other
words, in which we abstract ourselves from any biasing
conditions, can also account for agreement in moral
response.

It is useful to think of this double impartiality in terms
of the following analogy; one which Hume, in some form,
often uses. When we are judging the merits of a painting, we
adjust, say, the lighting and the distance we stand from the painting. This is because we want to get the right information about what colors and shapes are being used. This is analogous to (1) above; that is, getting the right information is part of what the impartial spectator does through extended sympathy. However, then the viewer must be similarly impartial about the assessment of whether the painting is a good or bad one -- and this is what we have called (2) above. He must not let his biases enter into the aesthetic judgment. Having determined, for example, that the body of the painting is orange and not the yellow it first appeared to be, the viewer, if he happens to hate orange, can't therefore call the painting ugly. He must hold that bias in suspension. Thus there is a double impartiality; both in gathering the information and in reacting to it.

My point in showing that the moral stance has these two components is this: I believe that, once again, Hume is claiming that it is unproblematic to make universal claims in an area in which it is very unclear that such universal claims are forthcoming. He has done this by claiming that it is universal that we all respond with moral approbation to great pleasure and with moral disapprobation to great pain -- and, moreover, that it is part of the structure of the mind that we respond this way. This is important because he goes on (e.g., the Timon case [E53-4] from Chapter 3) to accuse people with other responses of being "perverted", that is, of not being well-functioning. But if people with responses
other than this universal one -- universal, at least, from
the stance of the spectator -- are being classed as
"perverted", then it is very important to not have a skewed
notion of what is universal. Has Hume shown that the
response he claims is universal is indeed universal?

As in the aesthetics, Hume attempts to empirically gather
information about how people do indeed respond. He tells us
that his project is:

...collecting and arranging the estimable or
blamable qualities of men. The only object ... is
to discover the circumstances on both sides which
are common to these qualities -- to observe that
particular in which the estimable qualities agree,
on the one hand, and the blamable, on the other;
and thence to reach the foundation of ethics and
find those universal principles from which all
censure or approbation is ultimately derived.[E8]

And to this end, says , for example:

We may observe that in displaying the praises of
any humane, beneficent man there is one
circumstance which never fails to be amply insisted
on -- namely, the happiness and satisfaction deemed
to society from his intercourse and good
offices.[E11]

He also tells us that: "the social virtues are never
regarded without their beneficial tendencies, nor viewed as
barren and unfruitful"[E14], and indeed, concludes in the
Treatise that:
Every quality of the mind is denominated virtuous, which gives pleasure by the mere survey; as every quality, which produces pain, is called vicious. This pleasure and this pain may arise from four different sources. For we reap a pleasure from the view of a character, which is naturally fitted to be useful to others, or to the person himself, or which is agreeable to others, or to the person himself. [T591]

But once again, as in the aesthetics, there is a presumption of uniformity in reactions, a presumption that there is sufficient uniformity across history and culture to infer that such reactions are part of the structure of the mind. And once again it is unclear that this presumption can be borne out. For it is obvious by only a brief glance at the history of ethics that Hume’s claims about what universally characterizes moral psychology are problematic. For example, on a (crudely) Kantian picture of moral psychology, it would not be the case that a person judged virtuous — a person with a "good will" — need be a person who has the disposition to produce great pleasure or happiness. [Gr.394,398ff] And while some have claimed [9] that it is exactly this which marks Kant’s theory as unintuitive and incorrect, certainly Kant thought that he was properly capturing the notion of morality by ideas of duty and not happiness [Gr.397].

The larger point I am making then, is that in both cases, in the aesthetics and the ethics, Hume does not adequately argue that the psychology presented as supposedly universally true of humans, is indeed universal. If my criticism is
justified, then, neither the impartial observer (in the ethics), nor the good critic (in the aesthetics) is the look it appears to be at how people respond just in virtue of being human.

3. Implications

Where does the above discussion leave Hume regarding his ability to respond to the earlier objector? Let's begin with a review of the problem.

In order to be able to talk about having the right emotion at the right time, one has to be able to argue why, or in reference to what, an emotion is the right emotion. Theologians can say one response is the right one and one the wrong one because it is God's will that we have one response rather than the other. Another way to claim that one response is the right one is to say that that response enables us to better behave in accordance with our essence -- or our most characteristically human activities -- where the notion of what constitutes a characteristically human activity is a determinate one.

But Hume, following a naturalist model, wanted to do neither of these. Rather, his answer to why something was the correct emotion was that it was correct because it was the one that was built into the structure of the mind. Further, as we have just seen, Hume tells us how we can come to know what is part of the structure of the mind: it is
whatever we have found that people, when their faculties are
undistorted, do universally, or with, at least, near
uniformity.

But for this response to the objector to even have a chance
to work, it must be the case that Hume has shown the
existence of such uniformity. And what I hope I have shown
is that it is unclear whether Hume really has shown the
existence of such uniformity among supposedly undistorted
people, or whether he has gotten whatever agreement he has
gotten by biasing his sample. Further, if it is the case
that Hume is indeed guilty of biasing his sample, then one
might suspect this renders even more dubious the possibility
of legitimate uniformity.

And so, if Hume intended his response to the objector to be
that we know by virtue of what is uniform among the unbiased
what is part of the structure of the mind -- and that such
reactions are correct because they are part of the structure
of our minds -- if only something this strong can work as
Hume needs it to, then he has failed to provide an answer.
For my point above has been that he has shown neither in his
ethics nor in his aesthetics that there are reactions which
are, by his own criteria, ones we are "fitted by nature to
have".
CONCLUSION

This thesis has been an exploration of Hume's moral theory with an eye to the following question: what condition(s) does an emotion-based moral theory have to satisfy to be a philosophically viable moral theory, and how does Hume attempt to satisfy such conditions. Along the way, I believe my argument has revealed an unexpected aspect of Hume's thought; his attempt to construct a neo-classical moral theory.

I have argued that at least one such condition is this: an emotion-based theory -- as was the one Hume had -- must operate within a broader theory about what constitutes a well-functioning person. For only with such a notion could we know what counts as being the proper emotion in a situation, and thus avoid the radical subjectivity often attributed to emotion-based moral theories. But I argue that Hume has not succeeded in providing us with an adequate notion of what counts as a well-functioning person. I want to trace here how I arrived at this conclusion and why it might be of interest.

In the first half of the thesis (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) I have argued that Hume's main interest is in understanding what it is about people which causes them to have the reactions they do. And I have argued (in Chapter 2) that
this (naturalistic) inquiry has provided Hume with a general theory of emotions in which emotions are complexes, complexes composed, under normal conditions, of a cause, object and feel. Further, this view of emotion as complex, in turn, allows Hume to have a notion of the proper object and cause of an emotion.

Once we know what the proper (and improper) causes and objects are for an emotion, we can know what it is to have the proper emotion at the proper time. But why might this, in turn, be philosophically important? In particular, why might an emotion-based moral theory need such a notion?

The reason is this: One grave risk to an emotion-based theory is that all emotion-based claims work like claims of taste. If this were true, it would mean that we would no more be able to say that someone is having a correct or incorrect emotional response than we could say that a preference for chocolate is more correct than a preference for vanilla. Were such radical subjectivity the necessary adjunct of any emotion-based moral theory, such a theory would be no more than a catalog of preferences. There could be no pretension to objectivity, to any notion of claiming someone has correct moral views and another person incorrect ones. But I do believe Hume wanted -- and thought he had -- a moral theory with a claim to this sort of objectivity. And that he believed he could support such a theory through a view of emotion as complex.
Thus one condition an emotion-based theory must satisfy is this: In order to avoid radical subjectivity, it must be able to sustain a notion of what it is to have the correct emotion at the correct time.

The second half of the thesis explores the question: can Hume succeed in satisfying the conditions which must, in turn, hold in order to be able to (justifiably) say that emotion is a complex, and therefore maintain his idea of having the right emotion at the right time? I argue that in order to do this Hume must be able to argue that what is natural is also, in some sense, correct. Or, in other words, Hume must argue that to operate in accordance with natural principles is to be well-functioning, whereas to operate in accordance with non-natural ones is to be malfunctioning.

But arguing that what is natural is proper, or as I put it in the thesis, has normative content, will be very difficult for Hume. This is because the traditional way such arguments were made either appealed to God or teleology, both ways not open to him. I argue in Chapter 4 that despite not being able to use the traditional ways to prove that what was natural was correct, Hume nonetheless did try to argue that this was so. He did this as part of a larger project, an attempt to construct a modern, scientific version of classical moral theory.

If I am correct about a re-vamping of classical moral theory being the way Hume attempts to claim that what is

- 143 -
natural is correct, we are left with a number of interesting conclusions besides the ones needed for the main argument of the thesis. Most important among such conclusions is that Hume was not -- as he is most often interpreted as being -- a Hobbesian about justice. This thus places him in an entirely different philosophical tradition than the one he has usually been seen within: He becomes, under my reading, a sort of neo-Aristotelian moral theorist.

And finally, in Chapter 5 I ask whether this neo-classical solution is a viable one. Can Hume support his claims without the metaphysics that the classical theories rely on? I argue that Hume's response presumes a uniformity of sentiment through the species that his argument cannot support, and that it is unclear that such uniformity is indeed forthcoming in the domain of either ethics or aesthetics.

I believe that both this exploration -- and my conclusion -- are interesting for a number of reasons. First, I believe it is time to try to construct an emotion-based moral theory. Such a theory is demanded from various fronts: philosophical, psychological, psycholanalytical; and perhaps most urgently, from those members of these communities who feel their own experiences as moral beings denied by presently existing moral theories. But to construct such a theory, one must find some way to solve the problem of what criteria we can use. for what constitutes a well-functioning
person. For without this, as I have pointed out above, we cannot have anything like an objective moral theory. If this thesis has, at the least, pointed to the necessity of this idea for an emotion-based moral theory, then I have done what I set out to do.

David Hume's vision of a moral theory was one in which, as humans, we had the ability to merge reason, imagination, and empathy to a noble end: an end of allowing us to feel others' experiences as our own, and making this the basis for morals. For only then, he believed, could we know what it is to react to others and their desires as being of equal importance to our own. But many modern emotion-based theories, which often work from the same core intuition as Hume's theory did: that emotions are a way to connect with and deeply understand others, fail to understand the gravity of the problems facing them. It is too often assumed that the sorts of problems I am pointing to will, in time, work themselves out, or that the answer to these problems are somehow obvious.

But an answer is not obvious, and not easy, given modern tools. Hume saw that. If we want an emotion-based moral theory, we must attempt to learn from Hume, and to continue to engage in his enterprise: we too, must attempt to come up with a viable notion of a well-functioning person. Further, we must do this, as Hume attempted to, without metaphysical notions that our (philosophical) culture no longer wishes --
or perhaps is able to -- support. If we go on with Hume's sort of naturalism, we should heed his stumblings, allowing them to strengthen our project. Or force us into contemplating another.
Notes for Introduction


2. Following Hume, I will use "passion", "sentiment", and "emotion" interchangeably.

3. I am thinking mainly of T.H. Green's Hume and Locke (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1968) and C.D. Broad's Five Types of Ethical Theory (New Jersey: Littlefield Adams, 1965) -- but there are many others.


5. We could also say (that is, I believe it is also compatible with Hume's texts) that when we say emotion is complex we mean (and Hume meant) that an emotion is usually identified with the feel, but is connected with regularity (by virtue of the structure of the mind) to its proper object and cause. Either formulation will work against the charge that Hume cannot have proper objects and causes for emotions -- and that he is therefore a subjectivist about morality by virtue of being a subjectivist about moral emotions.

Notes for Chapter 1

1. Stroud, op.cit., p.177, for an explanation of this. This chapter has been influenced by Stroud's treatment of these issues, pp. 176-180.

2. Ibid. p.47.

Notes for Chapter 2


2 Kenny, op. cit., p. 25.


4. Foot, op. cit.

5. Ibid., p. 76.

6. See Gardiner, op. cit., p. 39, where he says: “But it may reasonably be asked... whether the ‘circumstances’ which Hume treats as being only empirically related to the phenomenon of pride as its exciting causes do not, on the contrary, constitute part of its essence.”

7. Foot, op. cit., p. 76.


9. E.g., Kenny, op. cit., p. 24, where he says: “The connection here affirmed is a contingent one. It is because our minds happen to be made as they are that the objet of pride is self, not because of anything involved in the concept of pride: just as it is because our bodies happen to be made as they are that our ears are lower than our eyes, not because of anything involved in the concept of ear.”


11. Ibid.


13. Ibid., p. 21.


15. Ibid., p. 23.

16. This chapter has been very influenced by Davidson’s "Hume’s Cognitive Theory of Pride". I want to thank Profs. Joshua Cohen and Ned Block for helpful discussions regarding changes.
Notes for Chapter 3


2. Ibid., pp. 120-121.

3. Ibid., p. 113.


5. Ibid., p 77.

6. I am indebted to Professor John Deigh, of Northwestern University, for helpful comments on a version of this chapter and the preceding one presented at the American Philosophical Association, May, 1987.
Notes for Chapter 4


There are also commentators who do not read Hume as having a theory in which motivation to be just is egoistic. I see myself as continuing the work of such commentators. None of them, however, has exactly the same view I do -- although Charles Hendel, in his *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925) comes closest. The other book most influential on this chapter has been David Miller's *Philosophy and Ideology in Hume's Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981).


4. Barry Stroud, op. cit., also says this in that he characterizes just these passages (that is, the knave passage and surrounding paragraphs at E103) as a "platonic thread". We agree, therefore, that there is some Greek influence. We disagree about whether it is merely a "thread".

5. It might be objected that Aristotle has an egoistic moral theory. But I believe such a claim would make the same mistake that will be examined later in this chapter, namely, calling the satisfaction of any desire of the self "egoistic".

6. No one really argues quite this way. But see, for example, Stroud, op. cit., p. 210, where he says: "Hume thinks he can explain what recommends [justice] to our avidity or self-interest alone, and that is what I think he fails to do."

7. Although, as we will see further on in this chapter, "natural" here is not identical to how it was used earlier.

8. See text in Letter to a Physician, cited in *Burton Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, p. 36. In this letter he speaks of falling into a depression again, when he found he did not have the strength to: "bring the idea he comprehended in gross, nearer to him, so as to contemplate its minutest parts, and keep it steadily in his eye, so as to copy these parts in order". But he "would rather live and die in obscurity than produce his thoughts maimed and improper".
9. ibid., p. 33.

10. As is often pointed out, but still bears repeating, the full title of the Treatise is: *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*.

11. I want to thank Prof. Cass Waller for help with Aristotle.

12. It is true that Cicero meant more than human nature here -- but he did mean at least human nature.

13. See Hendel, op. cit., pp. 91-92, for an account of the ways in which this is so.

14. Notice that this citation speaks of a person who looks at his own behavior and finds it lacking, and therefore seeks to develop certain traits of character. I believe this passage is good evidence, then, that Hume thinks there are at least some cases in which someone is capable of assessing and changing his own character. It is not as obvious in the case of justice, but I do not see what he says there as being incompatible with this account.

15. The above section (creating a good character) has been very influenced by Professor John Rawls' lectures on Hume.

16. This material was originally brought to my attention in Winters, op.cit.

17. See Butler, op. cit., Prelude, for a version of this argument. I also want to thank Prof. Jonathan Adler for helpful discussion on this point.


19. Again, with a proviso about Hendel and Stroud.

20. The idea for this chapter was initially set into motion by Professor John Rawls' lectures on the relation between Hume and Butler. I have also profited greatly from reading Hendel, op.cit., especially chapter 3. I discovered Hendel's book after an initial draft of this chapter. I am happy to say that it suggests some of the same general themes. I also am grateful to Professor Joshua Cohen for reading and commenting on many drafts of this material.
Notes for Chapter 5

1. See Hume's letter to Hutcheson, September 17, 1739, in which he says:

"I cannot agree to your sense of Natural. Tis founded on final Causes: which is a Consideration that appears to me pretty uncertain and unphilosophical. For pray, what is the End of Man? Is he created for happiness or for Virtue? For this life or the next? For himself or his Maker...."

2. See, for example, Peter Gay. *The Enlightenment* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1967) where he claims that Hume's attempt at a non-theological sense of law of nature was pivotal in the move from a medieval to a modern sensibility.


4. Thanks to Professor Joshua Cohen for making this point clear.

5. This is important despite Hume's claims (p. 19-24) that there is some allowable deviation; notice he still thinks there is a core of judgments in ethics and aesthetics running across all time and culture. He says, for example: "But where ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation, this must be allowed to disfigure the poem and to be a real deformity." (ST 21)

6. Thanks for a demonstration of this point by Michelle Rhodes.

7. Thanks to Harvey Cormier for defending this.

8. See, for example, Christopher Berry's *Hume, Hegel and Human Nature* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982) especially Chapter 4, where he talks about the 18th century quest for a universal human nature.

9. See, for example, Alistair MacIntyre's "Hume on Is and Ought" in *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) where he says:

"We have moral rules [Hume thinks] because we have common interests. Should someone succeed in showing us that the facts are different from what we conceive them to be so that
we have no common interests, then our moral rules would lose their justification. Indeed the initial move of Marx's moral theory can perhaps be best understood as a denial of the facts which Hume holds to constitute the justification for social morality, Marx's denial that there are common interests shared by the whole of society in respect of, for instance, the distribution of property meets Hume on his own ground."

10. See, for example, Foot's "Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives" in her Virtues and Vices (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) for arguments which I consider extremely powerful as to why this aspect of Kant is indeed unintuitive.
Notes for Conclusion

1. See, in particular, Carol Gilligan's work, e.g., in *In A Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) she clearly wants an emotion-based moral theory, but will not acknowledge that she must commit herself to what constitutes a healthy or well-functioning human being. When pressed (in conversation, 1985) as to the choice between, say, Nancy Chodorow's view regarding what Chodorow calls "relational" notions of the self and more (psychoanalytically) traditional, egoist ones, Gilligan insists she can remain neutral regarding which view is the correct one, and not have such neutrality damage her own theory. But if the argument presented here is correct, it is exactly such a choice which will in turn dictate which emotion is the proper one in a given situation. And without such a notion of proper emotion I don't think an emotion-based view regarding ethics is either interesting or plausible.
Bibliography


Hume, David. "Of the Dignity and Meanness of Human Nature", in Of the Standard of Taste and Other Essays. New York:


Rawls, John. Lectures, Harvard University, 1979, 1980 (unpublished) on ethics of Butler, Hume and Kant, and handouts from course on social and political philosophy.


