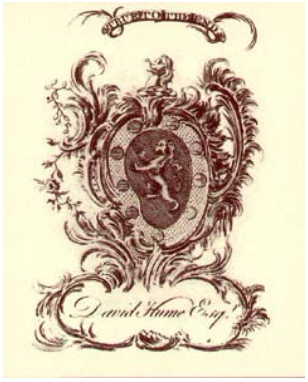

**Morality as a Back-up System: Hume's View?**
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## MORALITY AS A BACK-UP SYSTEM: HUME'S VIEW?

> The sense of duty is a useful device for helping men to do what a really good man would do without a sense of duty....
>
> Nowell-Smith[1]

A certain picture of morality -- arguably a Humean one -- has come to have a prominent place in contemporary philosophy. On this picture, morality, as Richard Brandt asserts, is "a back-up system, which operates when spontaneous personal caring fails to motivate us to do as we ought."[2] Morality -- at least in the form of moral principles, whose force is felt through one's sense of duty -- is, on this view, ideally superfluous. As a guide for one's own conduct it is needed only insofar as the agent's affective network is deficient. If one only spontaneously desired a, cared about b, cared for c, felt aversion towards d as, ideally, one should, moral principles and a sense of duty would be of no use.

There are good reasons for supposing that this is Hume's view. After all, his characterization of acting from duty is more than a little disparaging:

> When any virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person, who feels his heart devoid of that motive, may hate himself upon that account, and may perform the action without the motive, from a certain sense of duty, in order to acquire by practice, that virtuous principle, or at least, to disguise to himself, as much as possible, his want of it.[3]

I will argue, however, that there is tension in Hume's ethics between two lines of thought. According to the first line of thought, and the one

usually associated with Hume, good conduct is conduct which is spontaneously prompted by virtuous desires. Unless our desires either are not what they should be or are motivationally weak, there is no need for mediation or tempering by a sense of duty or moral principles. According to the second line, the very good desires of a very good person may nonetheless need to be filtered, tempered, redirected or checked. This line is most evident in "Of the Origin of the Natural Virtues and Vices."

Before arguing that these strains of thought are in tension in Hume's ethics, I need to clarify what is at issue and to develop the two competing pictures of moral motivation. First the issue.

The issue is not 'Who is better: someone with a sense of duty but corrupt desires or someone with no sense of duty but ideal desires?' Nor is the issue one of the moral worth of actions ('Can an action have moral worth if it is not performed out of duty?') The issue, rather, is how to characterize morally good (or right) conduct. What role, if any, does a sense of duty or a Butlerian principle of reflection, i.e., an overarching, guiding conception of what is right or good which is 'juridically' supreme within the self, play in good conduct? Is morally good conduct ideally a matter of acting as one should <u>from the proper desires</u>? Or should the desires be governed and guided by moral principles?

Consider two models of moral conduct.

<u>Model I: Morality as a Back-Up System</u>

On this picture, wrongness in conduct is traceable to an affective deficiency. The claim underlying this picture seems to be as follows: One

acts wrongly because one's passions are not quite what they should be. One person cheats in her business dealings because she cares too little about the welfare of others (and too much about her own); another is harsh and abrupt to a student because he cares too little about his students' concerns and is jealous and possessive when it comes to 'his time.' In each case the problem can be traced to an affective deficiency.

Hume appears to be supporting this view when he asserts, "it may be establish'd as an undoubted maxim, that no act can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from a sense of its morality" (T 479). A few pages later he writes, "[E]very immorality is deriv'd from some defect or unsoundness of the passions" (T 488). He illustrates as follows:

> We blame a father for neglecting his child. Why? because it shews a want of natural affection, which is the duty of every parent. Were not natural affection a duty, the care of children cou'd not be a duty... (T 478).

The passages cited, together with the one I quoted earlier concerning the sense of duty, seem to support the picture of morality as a back-up system. According to this picture there is a perfect correspondence between the goodness, appropriateness or (in some instances of the view) 'naturalness' of the agent's unmediated desires and affections, and the moral rectitude of her conduct.[4] If the affections are what they should be, the ensuing actions will be morally right. Morally wrong action can be traced to some affective deficiency.

A clarification is in order. It may be misleading to characterize this model as one in which morality is a back-up system, since that seems to

suggest that in the 'ideal' situation -- where, because the passions are what they should be, the back-up system is not engaged -- the conduct is amoral. While one might see morality as 'transcended' by ideal affections, this need not be the view held; rather, the term 'morality' in 'morality as a back-up system' has a narrower sense than that of 'moral' in 'moral conduct.' 'Morality' in the narrow sense refers to (roughly) moral principles, attention to them, willingness to act in accordance with them and to revise them if that is called for. In the broader sense it means acting as one should from the proper motives (which, on the back-up system view, are good desires and other affective motives). Insofar as Hume's view mirrors Model I, it understands morality in the broad sense as ideally not requiring morality in the narrow sense.

## Model II: A (Somewhat) Kantian View

Moral principles and reflection on matters of morality play a far greater role in the conduct of a good person on Model II than they do on Model I.[5] That one's desires and feelings are impeccable would not, on Model II, guarantee that actions prompted by them are morally right. One's aims, aspirations and desires need, on this view, to be coordinated and sometimes corrected by an overarching sense of what is worthy or right. Without claiming that this is all that Kant means when he speaks of acting from duty, I believe that the affinities are strong enough to warrant calling the model Kantian, and using the terminology of acting from duty.[6]

What is distinctive about the model is its requirement that one's conduct (by which I mean not

merely individual acts, but conduct viewed diachronically) be governed and informed by some overarching conception of value. Whether the terms in which it is couched are deontic or not is not critical; what is critical is that the agent be committed to acting as he ought (is best, is virtuous, etc.) and to seeking to determine what, in the circumstances at hand, this means. This notion of acting from duty is easier to understand if we distinguish between duty as a primary motive and duty as a secondary or limiting motive. When duty operates as a primary motive, one's primary interest in performing the act in question is that it is right. In contrast, duty can operate as a limiting motive. Here other interests may attract the agent to the proposed activity, action or course of conduct, and duty constrains one's choices. If the motive of duty is effective, the agent does not do what she proposed to do if she sees it to be wrong. I have drawn up Model II in such a way as to place no special value on duty as a primary motive. What is important, rather, is duty as a secondary motive. The agent's conduct is governed by a commitment to acting as she should. (This does not mean that she is always thinking about morality; but she is, perhaps without being conscious of it, on the alert for indications that the circumstances call for reconsideration, for relfection on whatever it is that she is up to.)[7]

Model II rejects the picture of morality as a back-up system. For it is not only when desires are not what they should be -- i.e., when they point to a character defect -- that moral reflection is needed; it is also needed when the desires, though they be perfectly good, prompt one to act in a way which is morally objectionable. Since one cannot generally say in advance <u>which</u> good desires will motivate one

to act wrongly (or when), the agent must always be attuned to the possibility that what he is considering doing may be morally objectionable.

I have already indicated reasons for thinking that Hume's view fits the first model. But there are complexities which reveal that the correct understanding of his view cannot be arrived at so easily.

A complexity which comes to mind immediately is that of the artificial virtues. Since one feature which differentiates them from the natural virtues is that a person can fail to possess an artificial virtue without this pointing to and deriving from any defect in his or her natural passions, the artificial virtues seem clearly to deviate from Model I.[8] I will not utilize this point in making my case. Although I will have something to say about them later, artificial virtues will not be the focus of my attention. I want to suggest that even if we ignore the artificial virtues -- which we might <u>expect</u> to deviate from Model I -- Model I is at odds with Hume's view of moral motivation. There are elements of Model II in Hume's sketch of the motivation associated with the natural virtues, and it is to them that I now turn.

In the third part of Book III, explaining the origin of the natural virtues and vices, Hume emphasizes that we must, in forming evaluative judgments, <u>correct</u> many of our sentiments. It is not that the sentiments are themselves not what they should be; Hume does not suggest that a better person would have <u>different</u> sentiments. (Were this his suggestion, it would not conflict with Model I.) There is a gap, in many instances, between the feelings which one quite properly has and the stance

that one should take towards the objects in question. Hume develops this point in connection with judgments about the character of another, or praise or blame of another; but his point would, I think, equally apply to our thoughts about how we should act. "In general," he writes,

> all sentiments of blame or praise are variable, according to our situation of nearness or remoteness, with regard to the person blam'd or prais'd, and according to the present disposition of our mind. But these variations we regard not in our general decisions, but still apply the terms expressive of our liking or dislike, in the same manner, as if we remain'd in one point of view. Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments, or at least, of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and inalterable. Our servant, if diligent and faithful, may excite stronger sentiments of love and kindness than Marcus Brutus, as represented in history; but we say not upon that account, that the former character is more laudable than the latter. We know, that were we to approach equally near to that renown'd patriot, he wou'd command a much higher degree of affection and admiration (T 582).

Throughout this chapter Hume speaks of "reflexion," by which we correct our passions or at least avoid reading off from them any evaluative judgments. This is at odds with Model I, for there the suggestion was that there is an alignment between the feelings that one ought to have, and the actions that one should perform. Here, in the last part of the Treatise, Hume offers a different conception of the moral relevance of one's feelings (as they ought to be and "naturally" are) from that suggested on Model I. Our sentiments are, on the view presented here, not the

final word on how we should view things. ("The passions do not always follow our corrections; but these corrections serve sufficiently to regulate our abstract notions, and are alone regarded, when we pronounce in general concerning the degrees of vice and virtue" (T 585)). That being the case, I take it that our passions are also not to be the final word as motives. If reflection is needed for a proper judgment of merit or demerit, it is all the more important before taking action prompted by resentment, approval, outrage and so on.

That Hume's claims in this chapter do not fit Model I is now evident. They allow the possibility that one's passions be all that they should be, yet that one's conduct be objectionable if one bases a judgment of virtue or vice (on which one then acts) on a passion which neither has been "corrected" by reflection nor has arisen in the first place from "steady and general points of view" (T 581-2). It is not, of course, just this chapter that is in conflict with Model I. The same claims are reiterated in the Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, amplified and accorded several illustrations.[9]

Still, it is not clear that the view in the Enquiry and in the last part of the Treatise bears much affinity to Model II. The 'mediation' between passion and action demanded by the Kantian model seems to be quite different from that described so favorably by Hume. On that model, one's conduct is to be governed by a sense of duty, a commitment to doing whatever is right. This commitment is a constant mediator, filtering out maxims on which it is impermissible to act. But is there a Humean analogue to this? Hume's view asks only that the agent not give credence to an evaluative judgment which arises from a "peculiar point of view" (T 581),

but instead consider the matter from a general or common point of view. This would hardly seem analogous to the Kantian demand, but I want to suggest that there is a meaningful similarity.

Part of the reason why the Humean picture seems so remote from the Kantian model is that we construe the latter much too narrowly. We conflate 'duty' in the Kantian sense with 'duty' in the colloquial sense, according to which the notion is largely institutional and rule-oriented (as in the duties of a parent, a mayor, a teacher, etc.). In addition, we suppose that to consider what one's duty is (or to act from a sense of duty) must involve thinking precisely in those terms -- 'Is this my duty?'. If we sever Model II from loose associations with the word 'duty,' we get a clearer picture. The actual terms employed by the agent, on that model, need not involve 'duty' or any other deontic terms; and when we keep this thought before us, the model looks different. What is central is not the terminology employed by the agent, but rather that the agent is committed to subjecting her conduct to moral appraisal and to guiding her conduct accordingly. The agent has to have some overarching conception of virtue, goodness, the right, or duty (and there are probably other possibilities) which she sees as taking precedence over her desires. The overarching conception has a regulative function. It serves to harmonize her ends (or her desires), recommending revision for some because they are unworthy, others because although in isolation they are irreproachable, they clash with other, equally unobjectionable ends. Still another desire may betoken an admirable character trait, but nonetheless need to be corrected because it would be wrong to act as the desire bids in the situation at hand.

If it is granted that the overarching conception which the agent is to have need not be one which he articulates in deontic -- or any distinctively moral -- terms, then it can be shown that the Humean agent as described in the last part of the Treatise and in the second Enquiry is expected to have something very similar to such an overarching conception and to give it precedence over his felt desires. On Hume's view, when we adopt a general or common point of view, we see the objects in their proper perspective and value them as they should be valued. "When we consider any objects at a distance, all their minute distinctions vanish, and we always give the preference to whatever is in itself preferable, without considering its situation and circumstances" (T 536). The relatively insignificant features of the object vanish or fade rather than looming too large and leaving us with a lopsided, unbalanced image of it. Moreover, the sentiment we feel on such a view will have interpersonal validity, for we will have moved "some universal principle of the human frame," touched "a string to which all mankind have an accord and symphony" (E 272). In adopting a vantage-point which is shared by others, we place ourselves in a situation in which (ideally, at least) the sentiments elicited are those which anyone who viewed the situation properly and without prejudice would feel. (Or, as suggested at T 585 and E 272, if we don't feel as we should, at least we know how we should feel, and we form our evaluative judgment accordingly.) The importance of these sentiments (or 'extrapolated' sentiments) cannot be overstated. Hume writes in the Enquiry,

> What more, therefore, can we ask to distinguish the sentiments, dependent on humanity, from those connected with any other passion, or to satisfy

> us, why the former are the origin of morals, not the latter? ... The distinction ... between these species of sentiment being so great and evident, language must soon be moulded upon it, and must invent a peculiar set of terms, in order to express those universal sentiments of censure or approbation, which arise from humanity, or from views of general usefulness and its contrary. Virtue and Vice become then known; morals are recognized; certain general ideas are framed of human conduct and behaviour; such measures are expected from men in such situations. This action is determined to be conformable to our abstract rule; that other, contrary. And by such universal principles are the particular sentiments of self-love frequently controlled and limited (E 273-4).

The "universal principles of the human frame" are to govern our particular passions; and this notion, that what is common to (virtually) all of us and is the source of unity is to take precedence over what divides us, aligns Hume with Kant.

I have said that there are meaningful similarities between the overarching conception that is to govern our conduct on Model II and Hume's "general view"; but there are also meaningufl differences. According to Model II, the agent is to be committed to subjecting her conduct to moral appraisal and to guiding it accordingly; but I don't think that Hume expects any such commitment. The reason is that while Hume does believe that an overarching conception is needed against which one's sentiments are refined and corrected, it is not a conception which the agent needs to see <u>as</u> a conception of value (of whatever sort -- duty, virtue, etc.). Indeed I doubt that the agent would have to be aware of it as a standard at all. The

following is probably the case: When I take the general view, I need not be aware that I am doing so; I need have no notion that there is such a standard. I may not even be aware that I am correcting my sentiments.

What would motivate someone to take the general view? Hume's answer is that we need to adopt a common perspective in order to converse (coherently) with others and indeed to be coherent to ourselves, since our own "situation, with regard both to persons and things, is in continual fluctuation" (T 581). Nor can we abandon the general view in favor of the "peculiar" one once we cease conversing and act; for, as the quote above indicates, it is expected that everyone conform to these general principles -- and we care deeply about the judgments of others concerning our conduct.[10] We additionally have a need to bear our own survey (T 620); "[i]nward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct ... are circumstances, very requisite to happiness..." (E 283).

These differences between his position and Model II notwithstanding, Hume appears in the Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals and in Treatise III, 3, i to be much more closely aligned to Model II than to Model I. Yet in earlier passages of Book III he seems firmly aligned with Model I. How is this discrepancy to be resolved?

One way to resolve the problem is to adopt what I take to be Annette Baier's position (as suggested in her "Hume on Heaps and Bundles"), according to which the artifices which form the backdrop for the artificial virtues are necessary for recognition of the natural virtues.[11] On Baier's view, the social artifices must be in place before

one can have a general, common perspective, and thus before one can correct one's passions by reflection. If we accept her position, we have a ready explanation for the apparent inconsistency. On this reading, the discrepancy is due to the temporal progression and to the evolution of our reflective capacities as social conventions develop. Prior to the social artifices there is no way to mediate or correct our sentiments, and so there is no moral standard other than that supplied by the 'natural,' ordinary course of the passions. The only possible mediation would be that of a sense of duty seeking to imitate a proper passion. We may know that we should, in these circumstances, be overcome with joy, and so we act as if we are, and try on similar occasions which seem to call for joy, to feel joy. The conventions associated with the artificial virtues supply a new and more intricate standard, against which one's sentiments may be measured and corrected. We now have, thanks to the artifices, a perspective from which to judge generally (and impartially); we have a common perspective rather than merely a plethora of particular perspectives. The discrepancy between Models I and II can thus be explained as a temporal one: prior to the introduction of the artificial virtues, Model II would have made no sense, since at that stage there was no perspective from which to mediate or correct passions.

Intriguing though this explanation is, there are reasons for doubting the claim, on which it is based, concerning the relation between the artificial and natural virtues.

One difficulty is that the common perspective which Baier says is first made possible only once the artificial virtues are generally recognized as

virtues is in fact needed before the artificial virtues (and vices) can be recognized as virtues (and vices). This is evident from Hume's account of how we come to approve of justice and disapprove of injustice. It is through partaking, "upon the general survey," of the "uneasiness" (T 499) of those whose interests are hurt by injustice, that we come to "annex the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice" (T 498). We would not be able to see injustice as a vice if we could not take up the general perspective.

Another reason for thinking that the general perspective predates the conventions is that we need this perspective, Hume says, for conversation with others and stability in our own judgments.

> In order ... 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 (T 581-2).
> ...'twere impossible we cou'd ever make use of language, or communicate our sentiments to one another, did we not correct the momentary appearances of things, and overlook our present situation (T 582).

Presumably people do, prior to the conventions of property, promising, etc. communicate their sentiments and use language. If so, it cannot be the case that the general perspective is only available after the conventions emerge.

It is nonetheless true that the general perspective is not very general in the 'pre-social' state, and becomes more general the larger and more diverse the group of people that one knows, and knows of. As one's society increases, so does the generality of the general view available to one; and

as the artifices come into being, there is more impetus to adopt that perspective.[12] So, the general perspective is both more general and more likely to be adopted after the artifices have come into being.[13] But this difference in degree is not enough to explain the discrepancy between the view apparently taken in the second part of Book III, and that presented in the third part of Book III and in the Enquiry.

Finally, even if Baier's position were correct, it is not clear that it would supply a resolution to the apparent conflict in Hume's view. Her account solves the problem only if we assume that Hume's claims about the sense of duty, the relation between virtuous actions and virtuous motives and other claims suggestive of Model I are supposed to apply only prior to the emergence of the conventions. Yet no such qualifications are given or hinted at in the text, and there is every indication that none is intended.

How, then, are we to resolve the difficulty? I suggest that we reexamine the passages in the Treatise that seemed to support Model I. I want to claim that unless the passions in Model I are understood to include such sentiments as those founded on or corrected by reflection, Model I is not Hume's view. If the word 'passions' is understood broadly, Model I is transformed into something other than a view of morality as a back-up system. What was distinctive about Model I was its notion that good conduct is guaranteed if one's affective responses and natural desires are not deficient. Moral principles or an overarching sense of the good or the right is never needed to correct or redirect virtuous desires, but only to inhibit faulty ones (or make up for the absence or weakness of virtuous

desires). Once we alter the model so that the passions upon which good conduct depends include those corrected by reflection, Model I no longer depicts morality as a back-up system.

If this is right, Hume does not subscribe to a back-up view of morality at all. Instead, he is aware that it is possible for one's spontaneous desires to be flawless, and yet for one's conduct to be in some instances morally objectionable. This is not because wrong actions can issue from a perfect character -- I am not denying that Hume believes all immorality in action to derive from defects of character -- but rather because there are defects of character other than those of spontaneous sentiment. I may be thoughtless and rash. Wrongness in my conduct may be traceable to a failure to remove myself from my particular situation and ask what I would (or should) feel from a general point of view, or from a composite of the relevant particular points of view. (Would I, for example, think that the situation warranted my taking revenge?)

It might still seem that Hume's position qualifies as a view of the sort that Brandt and Nowell-Smith hint at. After all, it is sentiment that supplies the perspective from which other sentiments, intrinsically good but not invariably sentiments which should determine our conduct, may be checked. The difference between this view and the back-up system picture is this: On the back-up system view, it is impossible that my affections be just what they should be, while my conduct is not. A clash between what I feel that I should do, and what I feel most inclined to do, shows my affections to be somewhat defective (or else shows my judgment of what I should do to be in error). But on a Humean view, it need not. Indeed, there are times when the

absence of such a clash would be worrisome. Let me illustrate the point by using an example based on one which Bernard Williams has used to make a different (and opposing) point.[14]

Imagine a man whose wife, along with a stranger, is in a bad accident. His wife is safe from serious danger, but is very shaken up and in considerable pain. The stranger's life is in jeopardy. What is the husband, the only other person at the scene, to do? Should he focus on alleviating his wife's pain? Or should he first try to save the stranger's life? His wife is badly in need of comfort and reassurance; the stranger will die unless she receives immediate first aid. Assuming that there is reason to think that he can help the stranger (whether by administering first aid or fetching someone who can), the answer is clear. It would be positively wrong for him to tend first to his wife, whom he knows to be in no real danger, neglecting the person who will die without prompt attention. Yet while this is clear, it is not the case that he ideally should, without any reflection or without experiencing any conflict of desires, feel like acting as he should. Very likely he will, in tending to the stranger before his wife, act contrary to felt inclination. He acts as he knows he would want to act if his motive or desire were what Hume sometimes calls a 'calm passion,' a passion "founded on some distant view or reflexion" (T 583).

In saying this we need not imagine that he has no feeling whatsoever for the plight of strangers, nor that there is anything amiss in his regard for his wife, nor even that the strengths of these two feelings relative to each other are not what we would think optimal. On the contrary: if it were easier for him to turn his back on his wife's

anguished moans and focus his attention on reviving or bandaging the stranger, we would (without a special story) think the less of him. If his affective network were such that he just naturally and spontaneously tended to the more seriously injured person, seeing the two people simply as people in need, we would not be especially impressed. We do not share Epictetus's view that one should think of one's loved ones just as some mortals, and respond to their deaths as one would respond to the report that someone one only distantly knows has died.[15] Yet while we expect people to be deeply moved by the misfortunes of those close to them, and moved much less by those of strangers, we do not think it desirable that they always act in accordance with such feelings. We do not want the husband to do as his 'best desires' bid; we think it preferable that he do what he can for the person whose life is in jeopardy. Hence the gap between the desires and the affective responses we think of as good, and the actions we think are right: There are circumstances in which the latter will not issue from the former, unless moral principles or Humean reflection intervenes.

Let us now determine whether my proposed solution squares with the passages in the Treatise that appear to support the back-up view. One such passage is T 479, where Hume explains that the sense of duty may produce an action without any other motive if the agent, hating himself for his lack of some virtuous motive, performs 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." These are cynical remarks, especially if compared with Kant's rapturous

discussion of the sense of duty; but they deride the sense of duty only insofar as it is seen as a substitute for the motive or quality of mind that should prompt the action. Hume believes that since what matters is not the outward action, but what it expresses, the fact that I get myself to do the outward act which should be, but in my case isn't, expressive of gratitude, is not very impressive. I am not doing my duty, for my duty is not just to go through certain motions, but to be grateful. Hume clearly thinks less of acting purely from the motive of duty than Kant does; still, that he thinks less of it in no way shows him to believe that we should always act exactly as the good motive inclines us, or that proper sentiments and motives are never in need of tempering by some sort of principle of right, call it a sense of duty or a principle of reflection. Nothing he says about a sense of duty shows him to view morality as a "back-up system."[16]

More problematic for my solution are the examples that Hume gives of virtuous motives (that is, motives in virtue of which certain actions that they prompt are virtuous). In his argument that justice is an artificial virtue and in the very similar argument concerning promises, Hume gives as an example of a virtuous motive the "natural inclination" (T 519; "natural affection" at T 478) which a father has to take care of his children. Both the example and the repeated use of the word 'natural' lend themselves to the narrow reading of 'passion' and 'affection,' a reading which excludes passions corrected by reflection, and thus to Model I. So, at least initially, does his other example in the same arguments, the example in which the motive is our "natural sentiments of humanity." After offering a test -- "where an action is not requir'd

by any natural passion, it cannot be requir'd by any natural obligation" -- Hume says, "[t]ho' there was no obligation to relieve the miserable, our humanity wou'd lead us to it; and when we omit that duty, the immorality of the omission arises from its being a proof, that we want the natural sentiments of humanity" (T 518).

A lot hangs on how we are to understand 'natural' in these passages. It is certainly tempting to read it as synonymous with 'spontaneous,' i.e., as meaning that one did not solicit the feeling or arrive at it through reflection. This reading would strongly support the back-up picture of morality and leave us in a quandary over how to reconcile these passages from the second part of Book III of the Treatise with the later ones and with the Enquiry.

In the hope of escaping this quandary, I favor a different reading of the word 'natural.' In calling a passion or affection 'natural' Hume means that it is common, readily accessible to humans, a motive that we quite properly expect everyone to have. Moreover, it is part of human nature in the sense that we do not need to have the motive instilled in us by educators. But although it is a motive that is part of the human fabric, it need not be readily accessible without reflection. Some natural motives are; some are not.

Consider the motives which Hume speaks of as "natural motives." Are all or even most of them readily accessible without reflection? No. It is true that one of Hume's examples, that of paternal affection, is a motive which does not require reflection. Another, our sense of humanity, appears not to, but I think sometimes does. In a footnote to the Enquiry Hume writes that it is "wisely ordained

by nature, that private connexions should commonly prevail over universal views and considerations" (E 229n). Hume thus thinks it a good thing that we are far more concerned about the welfare of those dear to us than about that of strangers. Yet he also says in a passage cited above that our sentiments of humanity prompt us to aid the miserable. So clearly reflection may be needed for the natural sentiments of humanity to prompt us to look beyond those we care about most, and help others.

Another of Hume's examples of a natural motive is gratitude (T 479). Here it is particularly clear, I think, that one may need to alter one's perspective in order to feel and be actuated by the motive of gratitude. Imagine for instance that while travelling abroad you visit friends who present you with a bulky gift for which you have little use. The prospect of lugging the item about with you makes it hard to feel and to express gratitude. Or suppose that you are done a favor which you would rather not have received. It may take some switching of perspectives, some reflection on the motive behind the gift-giving, to arouse a sense of gratitude. We needn't be ingrates if gratitude doesn't always come to us spontaneously.

I have been arguing in this section that passages suggestive of the back-up view of morality -- Model I -- do not in fact lend much support to that view. They are consistent with the passages which support a version of Model II, and so the apparent inconsistency in the texts disappears.

There is a new romanticism in and out of philosophy which, I hope I have shown, cannot look to Hume for a philosophical foundation. The new romanticism is invoked by people of diverse persuasions, from Lord Devlin, who has argued that society

has a right to outlaw modes of conduct solely on the ground that the conduct inspires in "the ordinary man [person?]" feelings of "intolerance, indignation and disgust,"[17] to the many Americans on the Far Right who, with far less sophistication, hold roughly the same view; to Sonia Johnson, the People's Party candidate for U.S. President in 1984, who has applauded the tendency women allegedly have to act "instinctively," without deliberation or reflection;[18] to American jurors who have been peculiarly lenient in some recent murder trials for the reason that the criminal's motives were, they felt, "understandable," and they could imagine themselves feeling inclined to act as the accused did.[19] Similarly, one hears people argue that if it is 'natural' and unobjectionable to feel sexually attracted to people other than one's spouse, it must be all right to act as these feelings of attraction seem to dictate.[20]

In their different ways, these views all romanticize feelings. In most cases they suppose that if it is not wrong to feel x, it must not be wrong to act accordingly -- and more generally, that the rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness of the feeling transfers pretty exactly to the act that it prompts. Although Hume said a lot of things which seem to suggest this view, he did not hold it. From the thesis that x cannot be obligatory or virtuous unless we have some motive within us to prompt us to do x, it does not follow that an act cannot be wrong if there is some natural motive which would incline many of us towards acting in that way (even assuming it to be a motive or an affective response which we are happy to have and would not want to lack). Even if our desires are impeccable, it is not always best to act as we just feel like acting, and Hume knew

this, although he deplored invoking a reason/sentiment dichotomy to express the point. Instead he invokes a distinction between calm passions, based on a general view, and violent passions, based on a particular view. The result is that despite the very different tone and terminology, his views concerning moral motivation are considerably closer to Kant's than is usually thought. Hume's view is less firmly aligned with Model II than Kant's is, and Kant's version of Model II differs from the version which Hume's position approximates. But both Hume and Kant reject the notion that moral principles and critical reflection on one's conduct are needed only insofar as our sentiments are not what they should be. Hume's ethics has the advantage of according value to views and feelings from the particular perspective, rather than treating these as mainly just a hazard to moral conduct.[21,22]

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1. P.H. Nowell-Smith, Ethics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 259.

2. Richard Brandt, "Fairness to Indirect Utilitarianism," presented at the 1984 conference on moral theory at Loyola University, Chicago. See also Lawrence Blum, Friendship, Altruism and Morality (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); Philippa Foot, Virtues and Vices (University of California Press, 1978); Bernard Williams, Moral Luck (Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," Journal of Philosophy (August 12, 1976): 453-66. Foot and, at times, Williams, seem to have doubts as to whether the sense of duty is of any value at all.

3. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 479. Further references to the Treatise will be cited as 'T' followed by the relevant page number(s). References to Hume's second enquiry will be from his Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, 3rd ed., ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), cited as 'E' and followed by the relevant page number(s).

4. I want to emphasize the parenthetical comment: someone who supports the back-up picture need not say that there is a perfect correspondence between the naturalness of the agent's unmediated desires and affections and the moral rectitude of her conduct. Richard Brandt, for instance, would not accept that version of the view, since he holds that (as he put it in correspondence) "if one's desires were what they would be if one had absorbed a good normative ethics, then nothing more would be needed." So, he denies that good desires in this sense can prompt one to act in a way which is morally unobjectionable, but does not deny that untutored, or unrefined good desires can do so. My reasons for doubting the position he espouses will become clear later.

5. This needs clarification: Is it only with respect to one's own conduct, or also with respect to another's (or perhaps primarily with respect to another's) that moral principles and reflection play a greater role in the conduct of the Model II agent than that of the Model I agent? My answer is that I am focussing on reflection on one's own conduct. So, it is primarily with respect to one's own conduct (though it may prompt one to reflect critically on that of others as well, insofar as doing so is just a part of grappling with moral questions and working through one's views). I assume, though, that the good person, on Model II, would not be any more prone to subject the conduct of others to scrutiny than to reflect evaluatively on her own conduct.

   A second question that one might ask is this: if I have in mind reflection on one's own conduct when I say that it plays a greater role in the life of the Model II agent than in that of the Model I agent, do I mean reflection on what one is thinking of undertaking, or reflection on

one's past conduct? It is the former that I primarily have in mind, but I take it that a good person (or otherwise good person) who does not reflect on the moral character of something she is undertaking or is considering undertaking would not be likely to reflect on the moral character of her past conduct. So, the Model I agent is less likely to reflect on her past conduct than is the Model II agent. I cannot adequately defend my assumption here, but the thought is that (a) a good person who did reflect on her past conduct would not be doing so only in order to congratulate herself on her goodness (for if she did, she wouldn't qualify as a good person); (b) anyone who reflected for good reasons on her past actions (and again, someone who reflected for bad reasons wouldn't be good) would be equally prompted to subject to moral scrutiny her present conduct and her plans.

6. I have articulated this more fully in "The Alleged Moral Repugnance of Acting from Duty," Journal of Philosophy (April, 1984): 197-220, although I do not there argue that the conception of acting from duty I develop in that paper is close to Kant's own view. After completing the paper I came to think, largely through reading Barbara Herman's work, that my view was closer to Kant's than I had thought. See Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," Philosophical Review 90 (July 1981) and "Integrity and Impartiality," Monist 66 (April 1983): 233-250.

7. I have borrowed the classification of primary and secondary motives from Herman, "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty" with, I believe, slight modification. I discuss the distinction in my "The Alleged Moral Repugnance of Acting from Duty." I do not share Kant's sense that duty as a primary motive has a special value; it is duty as a secondary motive (which can, in case of a conflict between duty and inclination, assume the role of a primary motive) which I think is critical in moral conduct.

8. See T 518-519:

> If we thought, that promises had no moral obligation, we never shou'd feel any inclination to observe them. This is not the case with the natural virtues. Tho' there was no obligation to relieve the

> miserable, our humanity wou'd lead us to it; and when we omit that duty, the immorality of the omission arises from its being a proof, that we want the natural sentiments of humanity. A father knows it to be his duty to take care of his children: But he has also a natural inclination to it. And if no human creature had that inclination, no one cou'd lie under any such obligation. But as there is naturally no inclination to observe promises, distinct from a sense of their obligation, it follows, that fidelity is no natural virtue....

9. See especially E 225-230 and E 271-276.

10. See, for example, "Of the Love of Fame" in the Treatise.

11. Annette Baier, "Hume on Heaps and Bundles," American Philosophical Quarterly (Oct., 1979): 285-295.

12. I know of one passage in Hume's writings which lends support to Baier's claim: the footnote on E 274-275. Hume there contrasts the "rude, untaught savage," who "hates heartily ["the man who stands opposite to him in battle"], not only for the present moment, which is almost unavoidable, but for ever after," with us. We, Hume says, "accustomed to society, and to more enlarged reflections, consider, that this man is serving his own country and community; ... that we ourselves, in like circumstances, observe a like conduct; ... and by these suppositions and views, we correct, in some measure, our ruder and narrower passions." Although this footnote lends some support to Baier's position, it equally supports my claim that as the conventions take hold, the generality of the general view increases, and there is more impetus to take the general view -- but that the general view is available prior to the emergence of the artifice.

13. If the family, as Hume envisions it, were not sharply hierarchical in form, with a very definite "head" of the family, the general perspective (though not very general) would be adopted much more often. A general perspective is in order when agreement, not obedience, is desired.

14. B.A.O. Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality," in The Identities of Persons, ed. A. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 214-215. The example was originally presented by Charles Fried in An Anatomy of Values (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) in connection with yet a different point.

15. Epictetus writes in the Enchiridion (Section XXVI; trans. Thomas W. Higginson): "The will of life may be learned from things upon which we are all agreed. As when our neighbor's boy has broken a cup, or the like, we are ready at once to say, 'These are casualties that will happen'; be assured, then, that when your own cup is likewise broken, you ought to be affected just as when another's cup was broken. Now apply this to greater things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say, 'This is an accident of mortality.' But if anyone's own child happens to die, it is immediately, 'Alas! how wretched am I!' It should be always remembered how we are affected on hearing the same thing concerning others." I take it to be a virtue of Hume's account that he recognizes the importance of taking the impersonal standpoint in evaluative judgment (and in acting accordingly) without supposing, as Epictetus does, that our feelings, i.e., the way we are affected, should be molded by the impersonal perspective.

16. I note parenthetically that I have been focussing on Hume's incidental and somewhat derisive comments on the sense of duty because it is these, if any, that would lend some support to Model I. His main point in this passage is that an action is virtuous only insofar as it proceeds from a virtuous motive (T 480) and this motive cannot be the sense of duty, since the sense of duty is derivative, presupposing some other motive in virtue of which the action in question is a duty. This claim does not lend any support to Model I.

17. Patrick Lord Devlin, The Enforcement of Morals (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

18. In a lecture at the 1986 meetings of the National Women's Studies Association in Urbana, Illinois. In saying this Johnson speaks for many, though by no means all, who think of themselves as radical feminists. For a useful, albeit slightly uncharitable, discussion of the

view, see Ch. 1 of Janet Radcliffe Richards, The Sceptical Feminist (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).

19. I have in mind in particular the case of San Francisco Supervisor Dan White, who confessed to killing Mayor Moscone and a fellow supervisor, Harvey Milk. Various features of the case -- e.g., that White had entered the City Hall through a window, rather than the door, where his gun and ammunition would have been discovered -- pointed to the case being one of premeditated murder; but apparently because they could easily imagine themselves feeling moved to murder a gay activist (Milk), the jurors took pity on him and found him guilty of a drastically lesser charge.

As this paper goes to press, another trial comes to mind: that of Bernard Goetz.

20. To take another example: on a news broadcast recently parents, demanding that a child who tested positive for AIDS be barred from attending school, defended their position against the point that there is no evidence that the child poses a risk to the health of other schoolchildren. Their defense? "It's natural to want to protect one's child."

21. Two qualifications: I am not saying that Hume's ethics is on the whole superior to Kant's, but only that in this one respect, Hume's has the advantage. Second, it is easy to exaggerate the extent to which Kant failed to accord value to feelings. For an excellent discussion of this and related questions, see Susan Mendus, "The Practical and the Pathological," The Journal of Value Inquiry 19 (1985): 235-243. I take up similar objections in "Was Effi Briest a Victim of Kantian Morality?" forthcoming in Philosophy and Literature.

22. I would like to thank Annette Baier, John Davis and Richard Brandt for their comments on earlier drafts, and the Hume Society members who discussed the paper when I presented it at the International Hume Society meetings in Edinburgh (August, 1986).