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Hume's Internalism¹

Dorothy Coleman

Hume is typically taken to be an internalist, that is, one who maintains that motivation is built into the acceptance or affirmation of a moral judgement.² However, Hume did not provide any systematic defence of the internalist view, and consequently his views about moral motivation are problematic. Recently, for example, it has been argued that Hume is an externalist, one who maintains that the acceptance of a moral judgement does not itself motivate but requires independent desires to do so.³ This suggests that clarification is needed to determine more precisely Hume's position on the issue of moral motivation.

Since the distinction between internalism and externalism is a twentieth-century one,⁴ something should first be said about the wisdom of describing Hume in these terms. The contemporary debate between externalism and internalism concerns both the nature of moral motivation, whether moral judgements are themselves motivating, and the reason for this concern: internalists hold that motivation must be built into moral judgements because it is "essential for an action's being or being shown to be obligatory."⁵ As Nagel puts it in *The Possibility of Altruism*, the problem with externalist accounts of motivation is that they cannot justify the requirement to perform one's obligations, "for they permit that someone who has acknowledged that he should do something and has seen *why* it is the case that he should do it, to ask if he has any reason for doing it."⁶ Seen in this way, the debate is about how to justify morality, how to account for our obligation to be moral at all, and how to answer the question, "Why ought I be moral?" Hume, on the other hand, was a thoroughgoing naturalist. He intended not to justify morality but rather to provide its "natural history," a narration of the origin of moral concepts out of a set of social and environmental conditions together with passions that constitute human nature. For example, concerning what he called the artificial virtues, such as justice or the regard for the public good, Hume argued that while the original motive to be just is self-interest, once individuals are educated and socialized into a community regulated by rules of justice, they come to "internalize" or moralize these norms so that their motive for being just is no longer self-interest but simply a regard for the public good, the sense of justice itself. Hume's concern with internalism, then, seems far removed from the problem of justifying morality that propels the current debate.

Even though the internalist-externalist distinction applies only anachronistically to Hume, as long as those engaged in the contemporary debate insist on identifying historical figures as exemplars of one or the other of these viewpoints, and even disagree about who does and why,⁷ clarification of the extent to which this distinction can apply to Hume would be of assistance. Since the justification of morality is not a problem Hume addressed, for the purpose of this paper I will use the terms internalism and externalism to refer only to theories about moral motivation.

To defend this interpretation of Hume, it will help first to clarify his terminology: what he meant by moral judgement, moral sense, and action from a sense of duty. Hume claimed that moral judgements are based on feelings of pleasure or displeasure arising from impartial or disinterested reflection on the general influence of motives or traits of character. Those motives or passions that produce impartial feelings of approval are judged to be virtues; those that produce impartial feelings of disapproval are judged to be vices.⁸ By moral sense or moral passions Hume meant feelings of approval and disapproval by which passions are judged to be virtuous or vicious.⁹ In defining duty or obligation, Hume stated that these are actions or qualities of mind whose neglect or non-performance causes disinterested displeasure or disapproval (T 517). To act from a *sense* of duty or virtue would then be to be motivated by the *sense* which judges what our duties are, namely, by moral passions, the feelings of disinterested approval or disapproval of motives and the actions of which they are signs.

The Evidence for Hume's Internalism

Hume's commitment to an internalist theory of ethical motivation is nowhere made explicit, but is generally taken to be evidenced in his argument for why moral judgements must be based on feeling or sentiment rather than reason (T 457).¹⁰ This argument takes its departure from the practical nature of morality and the inactivity of reason. Hume argued that if moral judgements influence conduct and reason alone has no motivational force—since reasoning informs us of what is but does not incline us towards ends—then moral judgements must be based on sentiment or passions which do have this capacity. Hume's conclusion follows only if he had adopted the thesis that an internal connection between moral judgements and motivation must exist. For if acceptance of moral principles were based on reason alone and reason were itself non-motivating, one *could* infer the externalist thesis that one can acknowledge that an action is one's duty to perform and yet not have a motive to do it except through some desire that is external to or independent of moral judgement. But if one assumes both that reason is inactive and that there is an *internal* connection between

the recognition of obligation and motivation, this connection could be explained, as Hume did, by saying that moral principles are based on motivating passions.¹¹

Clarification of the motivational force Hume ascribes to moral sentiments can come from considering some problematic aspects of his internalist commitments.

Objection I: Hume claims that virtue can never be the sole motive to action.

The internalist reading is *prima facie* difficult to reconcile with Hume's letter to Hutcheson in which he claims that his *Treatise* proves that "virtue can never be the sole motive to any action."¹² The letter reiterates the point he had made in the *Treatise* that "*no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality*" (T 479).¹³

The conflict here is only apparent, as can be seen by the argument behind Hume's claim. According to Hume, virtues are motives moral sense approves. The sense of virtue thus presupposes motives—in human nature generally, though not necessarily in oneself—distinct from the sense of virtue. Thus, to be motivated by a sense of parental obligation presupposes—in human beings generally, though not necessarily in oneself—the motive of natural benevolence towards one's children that moral sense in disinterested reflection approves. When Hume wrote Hutcheson that virtue can never be the sole motive to action, he was not contradicting those passages in which he maintained that the sense of duty *can* alone motivate, since they do not imply that *a particular individual* must first experience natural affection for his or her children or some other non-moral motive before he or she can be moved to act from the sense of parental duty. They imply only that the motive of benevolence towards one's children must first exist in human nature; the sense of parental obligation arises from an agent's feeling of approval produced by his or her disinterested reflection on the *general influence* this motive has on people's lives. An individual lacking in this natural motive may yet disinterestedly approve the influence of this motive, and as a consequence of this approval, provide parental care from a sense of its virtue alone:

When any virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person, who feels his heart devoid of that principle, 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. (T 479, emphasis added)¹⁴

Objection II: Hume does not think moral passions are motivating passions.

Some have found Hume's internalist commitments more difficult to reconcile with his account of the connection between moral sense and the passions of love and hatred, of which he claims moral passions are a species (T 614). The problem presented by this account is that Hume seems to argue that not all passions are motivating passions. If not all passions are motivating passions, merely arguing that moral judgements are based on passions does not explain why moral judgements are motivating.

Love and hatred, Hume maintained, are passions caused by feelings, respectively, of pleasure and displeasure taken in qualities of mind or actions belonging to others (T 330). These passions, he claimed, are not desires. Desires, according to Hume, are goal-oriented passions, that is, those directed towards ends (T 367-68), as benevolence is the desire for the happiness of others, as malice is the unprovoked desire of causing harm to others, or as vanity is the desire for reputation. As Annette Baier has pointed out, Hume would be against the trend in contemporary philosophical psychology to analyse all passions as desires, since he maintained that some, like love, hatred, pride and humility, are passions for which desire is not an essential component.¹⁵ As Hume himself put it, while these passions have a *cause*, namely pleasure and pain, and an *object* to which they are directed, namely a person or qualities belonging to persons, they lack, unlike desires, an *end* or goal (T 367-68). Not taking them to be desires, Hume asserted that these four passions do not "immediately" excite action (T 367), though he did say that two of them, love and hatred, produce passions that do: respectively, the desire for the happiness of the one loved and the desire for the misery of the one hated. Even in these cases, however, Hume argued that while these desires are perhaps the most "obvious and natural" sentiments of love and hatred, "these desires arise only upon the ideas of the happiness or misery of our friend or enemy being presented to the imagination, and are not absolutely essential to love and hatred" (T 367). Love and hatred, he explains, "may express themselves in a hundred ways, and may subsist a considerable time, without our reflecting on the happiness or misery of their objects; which clearly proves, that these desires are not the same with love and hatred, nor make any essential part of them" (T 368). Moreover, Hume argued that benevolence and malevolence conjoin with love and hatred only "by the original constitution of the mind" (T 368), which "abstractedly consider'd, is not necessary. ... If nature had so pleas'd, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love" (T 368). In short, Hume argued that there is no analytic connection between passions of love and hatred and desires relating to the objects of these passions.

Love, for example, is a feeling of attachment and affection; this feeling can express itself in ways other than benevolence to the one loved, for example, in feelings of admiration or joy, or in desires for companionship or sexual gratification. Why love also expresses itself in the form of a desire for the happiness (as opposed to the misery) of the one loved Hume did not attempt to explain, but simply claimed it is a universal, albeit contingent, fact of human nature (T 368).

From Hume's comments on the connection between love and hatred and desire, some have inferred that, since he did not take love and hatred to be desires, he did not take them to be motives of action.¹⁶ From this some further conclude that moral passions for Hume must also lack motivational force: insofar as love and hatred are passions caused by feelings of pleasure and displeasure taken in qualities of mind or actions belonging to others, and insofar as moral passions are feelings of approval and disapproval (pleasure and displeasure) caused by reflecting upon qualities of mind or actions generally, Hume identified them as a species of love and hatred.¹⁷ Because they are *disinterested* feelings of pleasure and pain, he described them as "a fainter and more imperceptible love or hatred" (T 614). Because Hume identified moral passions as a species of love and hatred, and claimed that love and hatred are not themselves desires but at best only related to desires, moral passions, for Hume, must also lack motivational force.¹⁸

These conclusions do not follow. Desireless passions may be internally motivating insofar as they cause desires that do motivate.¹⁹ The need for intermediary motivating desires between moral passions and actions is consistent with internalism provided these intermediary desires are caused by moral passions themselves rather than by passions or desires having an independent or "external" origin. Concerning love and hatred, Hume maintains that these passions are not "completed within themselves, nor rest in that emotion, which they produce, but carry the mind to something farther" (T 367), namely, to a desire for the happiness of the one loved or the misery of the one hated. Although factors external to love and hatred may cause the same desires, an internal connection holds between love and hatred and those desires provided they can be caused by love and hatred independently of any mediating passion. Now, insofar as Hume claimed that moral passions are a *species* of love and hatred, one can infer that he would have maintained that a similar connection holds between moral passions and desires. Like love and hatred, moral passions would not be "completed within themselves" but would causally produce desires that motivate action.

Those sceptical of this internalist reading might reply that this defence does not go far enough. Just as Hume said that the benevolence

towards one's beloved is not an essential component of love, since love can express itself in myriad ways "and may subsist a considerable time, *without reflecting on the happiness or misery of their objects*" (T 368, emphasis added), so too he could have said that a desire to fulfil one's obligation is not an essential component of moral approval, since moral approval can express itself in ways other than desire to be virtuous. For example, moral approval may cause feelings of shame or pride in one's actions without producing motivating desires.²⁰ Moreover, even if moral passions necessarily result in desires, they need not be desires to perform one's obligations. If one believes one should keep one's promises, for example, such a belief may well cause one to have certain desires, but these desires may extend no further than desires for making verbal proclamations about one's moral beliefs; for example, the desire to proclaim "I ought to keep a promise." So, by saying that moral passions cause desires, this objection concludes, Hume was not committed to saying that moral passions cause a *desire to do one's duty*.

This objection shows only that for Hume motivation is not an analytic component of moral passions and that moral passions may have a variety of effects. Whether moral passions have the effect of motivating conduct will depend upon a set of background conditions being fulfilled, though these conditions need not consist of any independently motivating desire. On Hume's maxim that "different effects require different causes" one must assume that some intermediary condition explains, for example, why love expresses itself as benevolence at one time and simply as joy at another, but there is no reason to assume that the intermediary condition that causes benevolence towards the one loved must be a *desire* that originates independently of love. This condition could just be some state of affairs; for example, thinking about the loved one's happiness, knowing what will contribute to it, and being in a position to procure it (cf. T 367). Considered as a special type of love, moral approval is love of motives or actions that are impartially pleasing—that is, it is love of virtue. Though love of virtue expresses itself in many ways, such as in feelings of pride or shame, or desires to make moral proclamations, it *can*—by an original instinct of human nature, one that is independent of any mediating desires—also cause a desire to secure its object, that is, a desire to do one's duty. Just as he had argued that benevolence conjoins with love only "by the original constitution of the mind," which "abstractly consider'd, is not necessary" (T 368), so too he can conceive the connection between moral approval and the desire to do one's duty as a non-analytic, though universal, fact about human nature.²¹ Similarly again, on the maxim that different effects have different causes, the presence of intermediary causes would explain why moral approval expresses itself only as a desire to make moral pronounce-

agents in some instances and as a desire to do one's duty in others. For example, background beliefs about how and when one's obligations can be satisfied may also be required: I may believe I ought to keep my promises, but I will not be motivated or desire to keep a promise unless I believe that I have a promise to keep and the necessary background conditions presenting the opportunity for keeping my promise are met. Provided these background beliefs and conditions are present, it is perfectly appropriate to say my keeping my promise is motivated by my moral judgement that I ought to keep my promise, or in Humean terms, by my feeling of approval of promise-keeping, which, though not itself a desire, in these circumstances produces a desire to keep a promise. So, just as loving someone does not *consist in* any specific set of desires concerning the one loved, but *causes* various desires depending upon background beliefs and opportunities for action, so too moral passions are not desires but causes of desire depending upon beliefs about what one's duties are and how they can be fulfilled. Although moral passions motivate action via specific desires they cause, their motivational role can still be understood in an internalist way: the mediating desires that produce action are caused by these passions themselves rather than having an independent origin in other passions. If Hume had held that moral passions motivate only through the mediation of desires that are causally independent of these passions, then he would be an externalist. But this is not what we find him arguing.

Objection III: Hume believes the desire for happiness externally motivates action.

A third difficulty with the internalist reading of Hume claims that the desire Hume took to mediate between moral passions and action is in fact an external desire, one that is not causally dependent on moral passion, namely, the desire for happiness.²² Hume had stated that a person who lacks a motive approved by moral sense may feel self-hatred or humility on that account (T 479); by implication, one who possesses a motive approved by moral sense may enjoy self-esteem or feel proud. Hume also claimed that, "Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct," all of which are associated with pride and self-esteem, are "very requisite to happiness."²³ These considerations lead some to conclude that, for Hume, "what makes the disapproval of the moral sense matter to a person is the fact that individuals want to be proud of their character and that this is associated with being happy. This is not an internalist view."²⁴ Though less explicit in citing happiness as the relevant, external desire, Gilbert Harman, noting that in Hume's view "a moral agent acts largely out of self-interest or out of habits for which there is

a self-interested justification," concludes that "this is an outer-directed motivation—the agent is concerned with the reactions of others because he or she wants them to continue dealing with him or her."²⁵

In his major writings, most of Hume's remarks about the connection between virtue and happiness appear in section 9, part 2 of the *Enquiry* in his account of our "interested obligation" to act justly.²⁶ This account is intended as a response to the challenge raised by the "sensible knave."²⁷ Sensible knaves ask why they ought to be just when not doing so will bring considerable gain to themselves without causing any significant harm to the social order on which the protection of their self-interest depends. Hume's answer, very briefly, is that these sensible knaves will be lacking in those things that are "very requisite to happiness," namely, a "peaceful reflection on one's own conduct," "trust and confidence" from others, and "reputation," or the esteem of others (E 283-84).

Granting that Hume's reply to the sensible knave provides an external motive for being just, one can still resist concluding that he maintained that the sense of virtue motivates *only* by serving as a *means* to the satisfaction of one's desire for happiness.

One should first note that Hume's reply to the knave's challenge is unconvincing²⁸ and that Hume himself found it so. Those who lack a sense of justice are precisely those who will not view justice as essential to their happiness. Knaves will enjoy a "peaceful reflection" on their just conduct only when obedience of rules of justice serves their self-interest; provided they are "sensible" enough, their breaches of duty will go undetected and so they will continue to enjoy a good reputation and the trust and confidence of others. Conceivably, sensible knaves might be willing to forgo good reputation and the confidence of others if they take greater pleasure and pride in being feared and having power over others. Virtue cannot be taken as a means to happiness if one lacks the appropriate sentiments that make one care about being virtuous. Hume clearly saw this weakness in this account of our "interested obligation" to be just. In his earlier discussion of justice, he explicitly argued that interested motives can never give rise to an unconditional approval of justice: although justice is an artificial virtue, arising initially out of self-interested needs, the moral approbation of rules of justice, he argued, arises from *the impartial approbation* of the naturalized sympathy with public interest made possible in an established system of justice. Although the original motive for establishing a system of justice is self-interest, self-interest cannot explain the motivation to obey rules of justice in every instance, since in some circumstances they may work against self-interest. Hume maintains that once such a system is established, a person nevertheless may, in "his civiliz'd state, and when train'd up according to a certain

discipline and education," repay a debt simply from a "regard to justice," or "sense of duty and obligation" (T 479). Thus, "Tho' justice be artificial, the sense of its morality is natural" (T 619), and the "sympathy *with public interest*," not the advantage to self-interest, "is the source of the moral approbation, which attends that virtue" (T 499-500). Sensible knaves, however, do not impartially approve of the sense of justice and then ask why they ought to be just. Alienated from that "civiliz'd state" that cultivates a natural "sympathy with justice," they dwell, if only psychologically, in that "rude" and uncultivated condition in which the sole motive for approving or complying with rules of justice is self-interest.

Hume, in short, viewed human happiness psychologically, not objectively: happiness does not consist in such things as "trust and confidence" from others, "reputation," or the esteem of others, unless they are goals one desires. Sensible knaves may be happy, though they will not experience the pleasures of a "cultivated" moral sense. As he put it in his essay, "The Sceptic,"

where one is born of so perverse a frame of mind, of so callous and insensible a disposition, as to have no relish for virtue and humanity, no sympathy with his fellow-creatures, no desire of esteem and applause; such a one must be allowed entirely incurable; *nor is there any remedy in philosophy* ... Should I tell him of the inward satisfaction which results from laudable and humane actions, and delicate pleasure of disinterested love and friendship, the lasting enjoyments of a good name and an established character, he might still reply, that these were, perhaps, pleasures to such as were susceptible of them; but that, for his part, he finds himself of a quite different turn and disposition. I must repeat it, my philosophy affords no remedy in such a case.²⁹

This suggests that Hume's reply to the knave is intended to serve a purpose other than to argue that the desire for happiness externally motivates one to be moral. An *interested*, external justification of obligation, however unsound, may nevertheless have a salutary effect on these non-socialized knaves, provided of course, their self-interest in happiness exceeds their philosophical acumen, and the fallacy of Hume's reply goes undetected by them. At the same time, Hume's reply to the knave is not wholly disingenuous: he does believe that those with the right psychological constitution, properly educated and disciplined, will find compliance with rules of justice essential to their happiness.

However, even for those who do find happiness in virtue, their desire to act dutifully need not depend on an independent desire to

acquire happiness. Happiness, for Hume, just is the satisfaction of desire. To desire something is to have a motive to procure it. To be motivated to procure the object of one's desire does not require that one desire to satisfy one's desire. This would in fact generate an infinite regress: if to be motivated to procure the object of one's desire requires a desire to satisfy one's desires, then the motive for satisfying *that* desire must be a desire to satisfy desires to satisfy desires, and so on. Therefore, moral motivation does not depend on an external desire for happiness to which moral action serves only as a means.

The parallel themes of Hume's remarks in the closing section of the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, in which he addresses the knave's challenge, and those in the introduction to the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* reinforce the view that Hume's reply to the sensible knave is disingenuous. His introduction distinguishes between two species of philosophy, one "accurate and abstruse," the other "easy and obvious"; the former examines human nature "in order to find those principles, which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments, and make us approve or blame any particular object, action, or behaviour" (E 6); the latter "enters more into common life; moulds the heart and affections; and, by touching those principles which actuate men, reforms their conduct" (E 7). Hume likened these two species of philosophy to anatomy and painting. Without the anatomizing eye of abstruse philosophy, easy and obvious philosophy, which paints in vivid, enticing colours the advantages of virtue, "can never attain a sufficient degree of exactness in its sentiments, precepts, or reasonings" (E 9; cf. 12-13). Even so, he claimed, the "easy and obvious philosophy will always, with the generality of mankind, have the preference above the accurate and abstruse; and by many will be recommended, not only as more agreeable, but more useful than the other" (E 6-7). Hume concluded these introductory remarks expressing the hope to "unite the boundaries of the[se] different species of philosophy" (E 16), but one must keep in mind the potentially corrupting influence of such a union. This hope is echoed in the opening remarks to the concluding section of the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* where Hume took up the knave's challenge. While he believed himself to have explained "the moral *approbation* attending merit or virtue" in a way that "will stand the test of reasoning and inquiry" (E 278-79), in short, the standards of the "difficult and abstruse" philosophy, Hume said that this account will still lack merit if it cannot also promote "the interest of society" (E 279), the criterion of merit belonging to the "easy and obvious" philosophy. Hume is thus aware that a moral system, however unsound, which can profess to secure human happiness will be more persuasive than a sound one that does not, at least to those who are not

accurate and abstruse thinkers. To paint morality in pleasing colours that will appeal to inexact, easy reasoning, Hume naturally pointed to the connection between virtue and happiness. Again, the connection is not entirely disingenuous, since Hume did not believe that virtue, for the virtuous person at least, is essential to happiness: for the one who approves virtue from a sense of virtue, the neglect of virtue will be the source of self-hatred. But happiness cannot be the motive for being moral because whether or not acting virtuously contributes to one's happiness presupposes one is motivationally predisposed towards virtue. The disingenuous aspect of his answer to the knave lies in its faulty implication that the knave, who lacks this sense of virtue, will also necessarily experience such self-hate and other qualities antithetical to happiness. Though fallacious, the edifying rhetoric alone may be sufficient to have a salutary effect on the knave's conduct.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that alleged textual inconsistencies in Hume's internalist theory of moral motivation can be resolved.³⁰ Before concluding this paper, however, I would like to make two final observations concerning the motivational role of the moral passions in Hume's moral theory. First, though believing that moral passions can function as motives, Hume did not insist that the "best" type of morality is one in which moral passions are sole or even predominant motives. With respect to the natural duties, for example, Hume believed that for the most part the passions that moral sense approves, rather than the approving, are and should be the motivating principles of conduct. Most people care for their children, for example, because they love them and desire their happiness, not because it is their duty to care for them. Though one may care for one's children out of a sense of duty alone, one's action would be virtuous only because such a sense of duty presupposes in human nature generally, if not in oneself, a benevolent instinct distinct from the sense of duty which moral sense approves. Hume believed it is best to be naturally predisposed to this benevolence. Moreover, when the sense of duty is opposed by the more "violent" desires moral sense disapproves, he believed its influence on conduct frequently requires the support of the non-moral but humane sentiments, such as benevolence and the love of approval or fame, to add to its force. At the same time, Hume believed that the sense of duty can equally reinforce the strength of these humane sentiments and correct their natural partiality.³¹ Following Hutcheson and shunning the path of Kant, Hume found morality *par excellence* to consist in this mixture of motives: "Here is the most perfect morality with which we are acquainted," he wrote, "here is displayed the force of many sympathies" (E 276). Second, Hume wavers between optimism and

pessimism about the strength of moral motivation. While in some places he cheerfully observes that people are “*often govern’d by their duties*” (T 457, emphasis added), in others he claims that while morality requires impartial conduct, “ ’tis seldom we can bring ourselves to it, and that our passions do not readily follow the determination of our judgment” (T 583). But however weak a motive moral passion may itself be in any particular instance, the fact remains that Hume believed motivation to do one’s duty is its consequence:

Let these generous sentiments be supposed ever so weak; let them be insufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body; they must still direct the determinations of our mind, and where every thing else is equal, produce a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind, above what is pernicious and dangerous. A *moral distinction*, therefore, immediately arises; ... a tendency, however faint, to the objects of the one, and a proportionable aversion to those of the other. (E 271)

Summing up, I hope to have shown that Hume can be read consistently as an internalist. I hope further to have shown that Hume’s account of the relationship between moral passions and actions is more complex than is generally acknowledged. As a species of love and hate, moral approval and disapproval are not desires to be virtuous but cause desires to be virtuous. This connection between moral passion and moral motivation is an internal connection insofar as the desires that produce moral actions can be caused by moral passions independent of any external desire. Lastly, I have argued that while Hume believed that the desire to be virtuous is related to the desire for happiness, the desire for happiness is not required as an external, triggering motive to be virtuous.

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1. This paper is a substantially revised version of an earlier paper presented at the Central Division American Philosophical Association Meetings in New Orleans, April, 1990, under the title, “Placing Hume in the Internalism/Externalism Debate.” I would like to express my thanks to Annette Baier, Michele Moody-Adams, and David Norton for their comments.
2. See, for example, William K. Frankena, “Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy,” in *Essays in Moral Philosophy*, ed. A. I. Melden (Seattle, 1958), 49n; Thomas Nagel,

- The Possibility of Altruism* (New York, 1970), 10; Barry Stroud, *Hume* (London, 1977), 173; Philippa Foot, *Virtue and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Berkeley, 1978), 79; J. L. Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory* (London, 1980), chap. 4; and Stephen Darwall, *Impartial Reason* (Ithaca, 1983), 51-61.
3. Charlotte Brown, "Is Hume an Internalist?" in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 26 (1988): 69-87.
 4. The terms were first introduced into the literature on moral motivation by W. D. Falk and William Frankena. Falk used the terms "internal" and "external" to refer to types of motives. See " 'Ought' and 'Motivation'," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, n.s., 48 (1947-48): 137. (Reprinted in *Readings in Ethical Society*, ed. W. Sellars and J. Hospers [New York, 1952].) Frankena (above, n. 2) was the first to use the terms to refer to *theories* of motivation.
 5. Frankena (above, n. 2), 41.
 6. Nagel (above, n. 2), 29.
 7. Frankena classifies Hume as an internalist because he reads him as a subjectivist; he calls Kant an externalist because Kant maintains that moral judgements are independent of subjective motivations. Contemporary Kantians, like Nagel, tend to classify themselves as internalists. Nagel distinguishes between rational internalism and irrational internalism, placing himself and Kant in the former category and Hume in the latter. See Nagel (above, n. 2), 10.
 8. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2d ed., rev., ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1978), 471-72 (hereafter cited as "T").
 9. Virtues such as benevolence, generosity, and justice might be called moral passions in a derivative sense insofar as they are passions moral sense approves, but when Hume uses the terms "moral sentiment" and "moral passion" it is always the feelings of disinterested approbation and disapprobation that he has in mind.
 10. Frankena notes that while the is/ought passage can be read as an internalist argument, it is actually the argument cited here that unambiguously shows Hume's internalist commitments. See Frankena (above, n. 2), 49n.
 11. Thus Mackie, and Brown following him, rightly argue that, without this internalist assumption, Hume's argument for the claim that moral judgements must be based on sentiment rather than reason would be invalid: its premises could be true and yet the conclusion false. See Mackie (above, n. 2), chap. 4; Brown (above, n. 3), 75.

12. J. Y. T. Grieg, ed., *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1969), 1:35.
13. The real point behind these statements concerns whether moral sense is an original instinct of the mind; Hutcheson argued it is, whereas Hume argued that moral sense emerges out of non-moral sentiments and so is not original. If moral passions are feelings of approval and disapproval, they are dependent on non-moral passions that are the objects of approval and disapproval and so can't be original.
14. This passage is somewhat ambiguous. Some have argued the passage is evidence that Hume thinks self-hate, not the sense of duty, is the real source of motivation. But consider more closely: Hume says here that the recognition that one lacks a natural virtue may produce two results: (1) a feeling of self-hatred, and (2) being motivated to act from a sense of duty instead of from the natural virtue one lacks. Nothing he says implies that (2) follows only from (1). In fact, Hume seems to suggest that self-hatred may follow from one's sense of duty: recognizing that one is lacking a motive moral sense approves can result in disapproval of one's character, that is, in self-hatred.

However, another difficulty emerges in interpreting the last part of the passage: Hume says a person might perform an action from a sense of duty (1) in order to acquire the missing natural virtue by practice, or (2) in order to disguise to himself his want of it, suggesting the real motive is not the sense of duty but one of these two ulterior motives. If one's ultimate motive is self-deception to avoid self-hatred, it is difficult to see how this is really action from the sense of duty. However, if it is our duty to try to acquire natural virtues, (1) may be analysed as another form of acting from the sense of duty.

Some of these ambiguities were brought to my attention by Elizabeth Radcliffe in "Hume's Theory of Moral Motivation," unpublished.

15. That Hume does not attempt to reduce passions and motives to desires is noted by Annette Baier in "The Ambiguous Limits of Desire," in *The Ways of Desire*, ed. Joel Marks (Chicago, 1986), 53-56. Baier characterizes the Humean sense of desire as "the passion we feel when, to the thought of a future pleasure, we respond positively and purposively, and thus have a tendency to act now in such a way as to tend to make that pleasure occur in our own future" (p. 56). Desire-less passions, she argues, may yet motivate action in cases in which actions express passions without being directed by any desires (p. 56). While agreeing with her that

- Hume does not reduce passion to desire, I believe these desire-less passions function as motives only by causing desires.
16. See, for example, Páll S. Árdal, *Passions and Value in Hume's "Treatise"* (Edinburgh, 1966), 126; and Brown (above, n. 3), 77.
 17. As opposed to pride and humility. Pride and humility are passions caused by feelings of pleasure and displeasure taken in qualities of mind or action belonging to oneself. Since moral passions are feelings of approval or disapproval caused by reflection upon qualities of mind or action generally, not just those belonging to oneself, they are a species of love and hatred rather than of pride and humility.
 18. Brown (above, n. 3), 77. Commenting on the connection between moral passions and the indirect passions, Árdal (above, n. 16) states:

none of the four indirect passions ... is for Hume a motive ... He obviously means us to understand 'approval' and 'disapproval' as naming passions; and indeed, he has told us that they are nothing but a species of love and hatred ... This also makes it clear that Hume could not give an analysis of approval or disapproval in terms of a disposition to behave in a particular way.
 19. If this view is correct, a defence of Hume's account of motivation against cognitivist accounts would have to be more complex than it is generally taken to be. The usual characterization of the "Humean" theory of motivation is that motivation requires the presence of desire and means-end belief. Defending the Humean theory, Michael Smith argues against cognitivism on the grounds that desires motivate—whereas beliefs alone do not—by virtue of differences in their "direction of fitness." What would be further required for a defence of Hume's anti-cognitivism is an account of why desire-less passions but not beliefs can cause desires. If passions that are not desires do not have the same direction of fitness as desires, something other than direction of fitness explains motivational force. See Michael Smith, "The Humean Theory of Motivation," *Mind* 96 (1987): 36-61.
 20. See Baier (above, n. 15), 56: "Hume sees the passion which distinguishes moral beings such as we are from nonmoral sentient beings such as other animals we know to be a 'sentiment' of approval and disapproval, not a special motive, desire, or goal. The specifically moral feeling, which 'excites' us to express moral judgments, is not a desire or any sort of goal-directed motive, but a reactive sentiment, issuing in expressive rather than goal-directed actions."

21. Thus, Hume would not argue, as do some internalists, that the connection between moral judgement and motivation is analytic. Compare David Brink, "Moral Realism and the Sceptical Arguments from Epistemic Queerness," *Australian Journal of Philosophy* 62 (1984): 11-25.
22. Another externalist approach that might be taken is to posit, as did intuitionists such as Ross and Pritchard, the desire to do one's duty as an external, triggering motive. But this approach would be inconsistent with Hume's other views. If this desire is external to moral sense, it must be an independent, original instinct of human nature. Hume could not argue that it is an original instinct because the desire to do one's duty presupposes first having a conception of duty, and this arises from approval of pre-existing motives (see n. 15). So, on the Humean view, the desire for duty would not be original, but dependent on or internal to the sense of duty itself.
23. David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3d ed., rev., ed. P. H. Niddich (Oxford, 1975), 283 (hereafter cited as "E").
24. Brown (above, n. 3), 82-83, cf. 86. The reason Brown argues that Hume's account of motivation requires the desire for happiness *in addition to* feelings of pride and humility is that Hume claims that pride and humility are not motivating; they are "pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action" (T 367).
25. Gilbert Harman, *Moral Agent and Impartial Spectator*, The Lindley Lecture (Lawrence, Kansas, 1986), 7.
26. Hume also asserts a connection between virtue and happiness in the conclusion of book 3 of the *Treatise*, but says he will "forbear insisting on this subject," since, "The anatomist ought never the emulate the painter: nor in his accurate dissections and portraitures of the smaller parts of the human body, pretend to give his figures any graceful and engaging attitude or expression" (T 620-21). The implication seems to be that there is something "inaccurate" about connecting the desire to be moral with happiness.
27. Some have taken the sensible knave's challenge to be directed against the whole of morality, not only against the obligation to be just. The sensible knave's challenge can be said to go beyond a challenge simply to rules of justice insofar as the artifices of justice support a complex set of social structures that direct and regulate the exercise of even the natural virtues. Even so, to the extent that natural virtues are distinct from artificial virtues, a challenge to the former cannot be taken to be equivalent to an attack on the latter. Hume argues that there are two ways we can be morally

faulted: either for our lack of humanity, the absence within us of natural, humane sentiments common to our species; or for our lack of cultivated morality, the ability, through custom and education, to act from the sense of duty itself when these natural sentiments are absent in us or to correct the natural partiality of these humane sentiments by redirecting them to the public good.

28. For a perspicacious criticism of Hume's response to the sensible knave's challenge, see Gerald J. Postema, "Hume's Reply to the Sensible Knave," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 5 (1988): 23-40. Postema maintains that Hume thought his argument to be adequate because he assumes that not even the sensible knave can escape socialization into the convention of justice, from which point of view an adherence to the rules of justice will be essential to one's sense of happiness. Postema thus faults Hume because he "exaggerates the force of habit" (p. 37). I argue that Hume could not have assumed that the knave is socialized into the convention of justice, since it is his lack of socialization that makes his challenge possible.
29. David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, vol. 3 of *The Philosophical Works*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, 4 vols. (Darmstadt, 1964), 222 (emphasis added).
30. Since the focus of this paper has been to address alleged textual inconsistencies with Hume's internalist commitments, I have not mentioned the more familiar conceptual objection that Hume's ideal spectator theory of moral judgement cannot explain how moral motivation is possible, since there is no necessary connection between what impartial spectators approve and what motivates partially-inclined agents. A solution to the objection is given by Darwall (above, n. 2), 51-61.
31. For more on this point, see Marcia Baron, "Morality as a Back-up System: Hume's View?" *Hume Studies* 14, no. 1 (April 1988): 25-52.