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# The Moral Theories of Kant and Hume: Comparisons and Polemics<sup>1</sup>

*James King*

## 1. Introduction

Kant stands at one of the great dividing points in the history of ethics. For perhaps the majority of later philosophical writers, including many who are self-consciously anti-Kantian, ethics is defined as a subject in Kantian terms. For many who never heard of philosophy, let alone of Kant, morality is roughly what Kant said it was.<sup>2</sup>

Kant's ethics has come to represent for many contemporary philosophers the canonical moral theory, with the result that Kantian presuppositions may influence our moral thinking, and even our concept of ethics as a philosophical discipline, in subtle and unnoticed ways. I believe that comparing Kant and Hume<sup>3</sup>—or Kant and any other classical figure, for that matter—is not an undertaking which professional philosophers readily approach without prejudice. The prejudice is the widespread belief that in ethics Kant has transcended his predecessors, and especially the British. A result of being in the grip of this prejudice is the conception that Hume's ethics is of historical interest surely, but that if one is morally serious one reads Kant. (But even in doing history of ethics our picture of other historical figures already construes them as either leading up to Kant or as flawed by deficiencies which consist just in the respects in which they differ from Kant.) It comes as little surprise, consequently, that it is hard to find a modern writer who defends Hume's theory of morals against Kant's ethics (though interestingly there is no lack of writers, at least among English-speaking philosophers, who argue that Hume outstripped Kant in epistemology).

Why, then, should we now attempt a philosophical comparison of the moral theories of Hume and Kant? For these two reasons: first in that Kant is a polemicist who believed that he had refuted previous moral theories, it is intriguing to see just what component of his ethics is supposed to reveal the superiority of his approach over Hume's; and second, I venture that critically examining the contrast will bring us

closer to undoing the prejudice that what Hume offers in ethics is basically of only historical interest.

In what follows I accept the contemporary state of the question for the purpose of putting it to the test. I seek a fundamental differentiation between the moral theories of Kant and Hume (something seminally significant and not a matter of mere emphasis or degree) which does the double duty of also justifying the ranking which contemporary opinion has assigned these two moral theorists. Thus, we have a compound question. To address the first component I begin by reviewing a variety of ways in which scholars have set these theories against each other (almost always to the detriment of Hume). Inasmuch as I contend these attempts fail to capture a contrast of the sort we are seeking, this portion of the paper has what I think is the welcome outcome of showing that Hume and Kant are not so far apart in moral theory as scholars have thought. I then lay out what I find to be the basic difference, namely, that Kant essays to furnish morality a *ground* while by contrast Hume refuses morals a *ground* (in the sense of the term which figures in Kantian thinking). Then moving on to the second component I critically examine the contention that Kant succeeds where Hume fails in providing a philosophical account of ethics, and after finding that there is no differentiation which does the requisite double duty,<sup>4</sup> I conclude that this contention is unproven. Thus, the question of which is the preferable moral theory is opened up afresh, and in an effort to right the scales, at the end I offer some observations intended to show that, theories aside, Hume's vision of the moral life is in no way eclipsed by Kant's.

## 2. In Search of the Contrast: Five False Starts

In considering five attempts to identify the fundamental difference between these two moral theories, I shall apply these tests: (1) an interpretation must not falsify the position of either thinker, and (2) it must fasten onto an issue the resolution of which affords a radical criticism of either theory.

### A. *The Authenticity of the Moral Order*

The charge may be advanced that Hume neglects to establish boundaries between the moral order and other realms of feeling or sentiment. And this lack of definition signifies that Hume's ethics fails to vouchsafe the authenticity of the moral order. As evidence for this charge it may be noted that Hume in fact includes among moral qualities characteristics of natural endowment or of personal habit that today we do not believe belong to the moral order.<sup>5</sup> (See 3.3.4-5; and *Enquiries*, sec. 8, appendix 4.) In contrast Kant, by identifying the moral order with pure practical reason, sharply sets it off from every

other and assures its integrity. This criticism is interesting because, if defensible, it suggests that an empiricist approach to ethics can be merely descriptive and not a genuinely philosophical account of morality (a charge surely familiar to the reader of the *Fundamental Principles*).

But this interpretation is not defensible, at least as applied to Hume. Morals are not the object of just any feeling but of very particular impressions. Moreover, the authenticity of the moral order is quite particularly provided for in that these impressions, in being *immediate*, are not derivable from either beliefs or feelings of some other sort. Thus, the moral order is not only circumscribed by moral sentiment but its authenticity is assured in sentiment's being a pure interaction with its object. Hume likens the moral sentiments to "sounds, colours, heat and cold" (T 469). That we acquaint ourselves with all these through perception in no way diminishes our everyday conviction that these orders are distinct and do not run together, or our conviction that judgements of comparison between the characters of different persons are any less objectively valid than our judgements of comparison between different colours or sounds.

A related charge is that for Hume the mind in arriving at the moral sentiments can be only heteronomous. So to characterize Hume's approach to morals is another mistake, for in moral perception the mind is subject to no interest or inclination<sup>6</sup> and the sentiment springs from one's innermost self (the constitution of one's nature) (T 469). That the sentiment should be a response to a temporal object no more amounts to heteronomy than that for Kant a maxim's bearing on temporal action makes its being willed as a universal law heteronomous.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, it is correct that Hume does give the catalogue of virtues a much wider scope than does Kant, but variations in the scope of what counts as morality are a source of minor contrast among a variety of moral theories, more symptoms of, rather than the key to, the deep differentiation among theories we are seeking.

### B. *Non-cognitivism*

Assuredly one important disagreement between Hume and Kant has to do with *ought*. The Kantian *ought* is said to be a priori, but since Hume has no formal doctrine of the a priori, it might be said that he can have no consistent account of *ought* and thus no genuine moral theory at all. Does *ought* have any place in Hume's account of morals?

While Hume's theory of morals is, I submit, basically a theory of virtue and vice, it is not true that obligation has no place in his thinking. Attention to part 2 of book 3 of the *Treatise* shows that he recognizes obligation as the modality in which men stand to authoritative rules,

specifically to the artificial rules of justice (T 490-91). Moreover, the commonplace sense of *ought* such as figures in everyday moral language should be in no way problematic to Hume.

It is true that part 1 of the same book witnesses Hume's scepticism regarding a certain deployment of *ought*, but the object of his scepticism is something of quite a different nature, namely, the philosophers' *ought* distinctive of rationalist approaches to ethics with which Hume was familiar (though interestingly not the Kantian ought).<sup>8</sup> However we construe the fundamental difference between Hume and Kant, it is assuredly not that Hume has no place for *ought* in his theory of morals.

It might be thought that the respect in which Hume's sceptical theory of morals differs from Kant's rationalist theory is captured in the distinction of moral non-cognitivism and moral cognitivism. Apart from the disputed question whether Hume is a non-cognitivist, it should be plain that Kant is, since it is not his view that the moral rightness of an action is an object of knowledge. (It is for this reason that many of the arguments Hume aims at ethical rationalists leave Kant untouched.) Of course it can seem odd to classify Kant a non-cognitivist since reason is for him the source of the moral determinations. But what reason furnishes is the pure forms of universality and necessity, which while intelligible do not constitute an object of knowledge either in themselves or when originally applied to maxims. Kant's ethics is a kind of *constructivism* in which the activity of reason is more on the order of designing than it is of cognizing.<sup>9</sup>

Hume dispenses with the traditional vocabulary of reason and will when he is doing theory of morals. *Will* does not play a major role in book 3 of the *Treatise* or in the second *Enquiry*. Functions, moreover, traditionally associated with *reason* in morals Hume identifies otherwise, assigning them either to particular powers or to the mind itself. The power whereby we distance ourselves from the given, form comparisons, generalize and formulate rules he attributes to *imagination*; the ability to fashion beliefs and sentiments according to standards he identifies with *judgement*; the power to question, challenge, criticize and doubt belongs, he says, to *reflection*; the capacity to overcome partiality and self-interest he lays to *sympathy, understanding* and the *social sentiments*; the power to love and perform virtue he attributes to the *heart*; and the capacity to do what virtue requires when one's "heart is devoid" of the motive of virtue he assigns to "a certain sense of duty" (T 479). But like Kant he does not hold that the way we relate to morality is through cognition. The difference between them would seem to be sought in what according to Kant reason contributes to morality.

C. *Universalization*

A fairly common complaint about Hume's moral theory is that it lacks a formal apparatus for universalization. Not only Kant but moral philosophers generally insist that universalization is a basic component of any moral theory. If Hume makes no allowance for it, then it would follow that he fails to give us a moral theory. Herein we have an element of Kant's ethics that appears to yield a refutation of Hume, and thus meets our second test. But does it?

Hume of course offers no account of universalization in ethics. While he does acknowledge the generalizing propensity of the imagination, he does not seem to trust it; he frequently cautions against the tendency to form conceptions based on too general an overview or on too narrow a survey of the manifold differences among things.

The context in which Hume discusses general rules is justice, and he does indeed treat the artificial rules of justice (such as judges must apply) as unexceptionable. But this is not because he thinks moral rules must be universal but for an altogether different reason: that to make exceptions (as would a judge inspired by Aristotelian equity) would be socially objectionable, destabilizing, upsetting expectations and inviting men to do the same in their own thinking about justice.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, I do not think that the sense in which moral philosophers have concluded that any moral theory must admit universalization is a sense which Hume disallows. Let us take Hare's universalism as an illustration. The universalization requirement stipulates that if the relevant features of an object of one moral judgement are realized in any other object, then that other object, and any relevantly like it, must be judged in the same manner, under sanction of irrationality.<sup>11</sup> Not only has Hume no reason whatsoever to reject a universalism like this but his approach to the possibility of a moral language as a medium of *communication* in fact presupposes it. Hume's accepting universalism in this sense is perfectly compatible with his mistrust of generalities—the distinction between generality and universality being a point in fact that Hare himself makes.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, we may conclude that Hume is not guilty of rejecting universalism in the sense that it forms an essential ingredient in any moral theory. And consequently this contrast fails the first test.

In Kant universality can be construed not just as a logical property of maxims but as characterizing rational agents as the subjects of practical reason and the objects of maxims willed as laws. To explore this theme we must shift our attention to the topic of human nature.

D. *Moral Community*

Moral community is based on something which can plausibly be said to be the same in everyone. Kantian practical reason's being the

same in every rational being is the foundation of what is deemed to be a perfect form of moral community. The ground of self-esteem in critical morality, however, not only does not oppose one to others but affirms something which, Kant holds, is identically realized in all rational beings. In contrast, the inclinations are presented as being variable from person to person and often taking such a direction as to render men rivals if not enemies. Since the inclinations afford no comparable form of moral community, the superiority of Kant's ethics is then said to be manifest.

The trouble with contrasting Hume and Kant on the basis of this contention is simply that, while indeed it satisfies the second test, it fails the first, for as we have already seen Hume simply does not fashion his theory of morals out of the inclinations. Further, Hume has an interesting conception of moral community no less complex than Kant's. The moral sentiments spring, he says, from the constitution of our nature, which is alike in all; moreover, the moral judgement must be undertaken from a general point of view (the standpoint of Everyman) such as to be entered into by any other. Thus, with respect to the source of the moral determinations, Hume affirms a commonality among men. Further, with respect to mutuality, Hume acknowledges an original equality among men reflected in the fact that the principles of morals give priority to neither self nor others (a consideration which brings to mind the Personalist Formulation of the Categorical Imperative). In short, there is no element of Humean morality that is not shareable or capable of producing moral community.

Beyond talk of the concept of moral community, it might even be remarked that he adds an element absent in Kant precisely because Hume's is a community of feeling. Once the formal apparatus of critical morality is in place, it appears there is little that Kant should allow to reinforce it (save perhaps to bring the institutions of society into conformity with it). But for Hume the moral sentiments spread themselves by the *contagion* of sympathy and communicate themselves, thus extending and strengthening moral community. To determine whether men find moral community in feeling or in rational conceptions would take us too far, but one does not have to be a Tolstoy to appreciate the very real force of community of feeling.

But it still might be objected that Hume's account of morals is overly dependent on the particular constitution of human nature. It is true that Hume often refers to human nature and, in fact, treats tracing some principle up to what he calls "the constitution of our nature" as providing an explanatory ultimate. And it is true that he presumes, or frequently appears to presume, considerable uniformity of human nature. But it is not at all clear that Kant dispenses with the particular constitution of human nature. Indeed, he and Hume construe

differently the sources of the moral determinations, but it appears that reason is an ultimate constituent of human nature for Kant in just the way that moral sentiment is for Hume, namely, as a brute underived fact. Further, in the fashioning of a legislation for a moral community (kingdom of ends), Kant does not appear to dispense with assumptions about human nature, either directly—as when he falls back, in his account of imperfect duties, on what we can and cannot will—or indirectly, as when he assumes, in his treatment of the perfect duty of promise-keeping, the existence of practices or institutions of which no account can be given apart from the particular constitution of human nature. Nor can Kant be said to presume less uniformity across human nature than does Hume. Doubtless there are points of contrast between Hume and Kant on the topic of human, but I do not think that it is from considering these that we shall arrive at what most fundamentally separates these two thinkers.

#### E. *Moral Sentiments and Moral Motives*

Perhaps the most serious charge brought against Hume's account of morals is that it precludes the possibility of conflict between morality and personal interests—a conflict considered an unquestioned element of any ethics whatsoever. Those who favour analysis by way of psychological reductionism claim that even Humean sympathy and the social sentiments are really just self-interest. They construe Hume's acknowledgement of formal standards governing the moral judgement—standards such as impartiality and generality—as either tokens of the instability of empirical ethics or as a feeble anticipation of critical morality. Moreover, such standards as Hume might admit are interpreted as having force deriving merely from convention and not having the necessary uncompromising rigour requisite in moral philosophy.

The first part of this criticism of Hume stems from interpreting the sentiments which are sources of the moral determinations as being on all fours with the ordinary passions, desires and aversions aroused in the human breast.<sup>13</sup> But such an interpretation is erroneous. The moral sentiments are not desires or inclinations to anything and are not even motives original in human nature, whether self-interested or social in character; the moral sentiments are *sui generis*. Moreover, they are perfectly distinguishable from the determinations of self-interest or of benevolence. Reductionist analyses of this nature are not based on a careful reading of Hume.

Further, the claim that the empiricist cannot consistently acknowledge standards is a prejudice bespeaking an artificially narrowed conception of how it is that we have standards. Hume's finding standards exemplified in the moral institutions of social life

should be no different from Kant's doing so—so long as the standards are really there to be found. As for the claim that the empiricist cannot account for standards having absolute *necessity*, since this relates to the thesis of the paper, I shall take it up below.

In sum, exploration of the themes of universalization and moral community, as well as definition of the moral order and possibility of conflict between the demands of morality and personal interests shows that Hume and Kant are in fact not as far apart as is frequently thought. Thus, we still seek a differentiation which doubles as a justification for the opinion that in ethics Kant overshadows Hume.

### 3. Kant's Treatment of Necessitation of the Will

The ground of Kant's critical morality must be in and from reason itself, not by intuition of a moral *quale* or by furnishing an object of knowledge (Hume and Kant alike deny the derivability of *ought* from *is*), but by providing the pure concept of law, or more precisely, the pure intelligible forms of universality and necessity. The ground must consist, then, either in what these forms contribute by way of informing certain maxims of the will or in the nexus between maxims so informed and the will itself. But as we have seen, universality does not set off Kant's ethics from its rivals, and so we must turn to the remaining pure form. The thesis of this paper is that the point on which Hume and Kant fundamentally disagree in their theories of morals bears on the consideration of *necessity*, an aspect incidentally of Kant's thinking that scholars too often neglect. And it is quite plausible that necessity should help us get clear about Kant's intentions, since this concept underlies the ideas of law, of ground and of justification.

I find at least two quite different senses in which this factor figures importantly for Kant. First, it is a logical property of maxims of action in just the same way that *universality* is a logical property of maxims of action. To see how this is so, let us consider the set of maxims which corresponds to one of the comprehensive formulations of the Categorical Imperative, namely, act on a maxim which can be part of a legislation for a kingdom of ends. Taken together all such maxims constitute a *Universal Legislation*, and to this legislation corresponds what we might call a Possible Moral World.<sup>14</sup> Here necessity is understood as a property *internal* to a set of maxims or a legislation.

But for Kant there must be another sense of necessity, one relating to the will such that it is necessary that the entire legislation be affirmed practically.<sup>15</sup> This second sense is a relational property captured in such terms as *obligation*, *imperative*, *command* and *requirement*. I shall refer to it as *external* necessity.<sup>16</sup> Necessity in this sense is supposed to transform a merely possible Moral World into a Moral World affirmed and made practical by an actual agent.<sup>17</sup>

Whether the first of these senses of necessity would be denied by Hume or just passed over is not an issue of crucial importance, but the second sense is assuredly something of which Hume would be most sceptical, for he argued vigorously against the idea of a necessitation of the will of a sheerly rational sort. Here we have arrived at a point of utmost disagreement between these two thinkers. Since I presume on the part of the reader a familiarity with Hume's sceptical contentions, I shall turn to examine the case Kant makes for necessity in connection with the will (what I have called external necessity).

To begin, we should appreciate the problem confronting Kant. Absolute necessitation is not a property that belongs to the will by logic alone (it cannot even be said without *petitio* to belong by logic alone to the *moral* will) nor can it be established by appealing to our notions of common morality or the ordinary sense of *obligation*. That some sense of *ought* or of *obligation* is recognized as part of everyday morality is a point of consensus between Kant and those who, like Hume, deny that the proper characterization of the relation is one of absolute necessity.<sup>18</sup> The challenge to Kant would be to show that non-absolutist interpretations of obligation must fail, but this turns out to be the same as showing that there is external necessitation of the will. Nor can the problem be dismissed as a side issue, since the matter of external necessity is utterly central in Kant's moral theory—unless he can establish a nexus between the Universal Legislation and the individual, he will have delivered merely a vision of a possible system of behaviour. Moreover, it would seem that Kant's claim to have furnished a *ground* to morality depends on his making a convincing case for external necessity. To appreciate the problem, let us first take up some of the ways that the Kantian cannot expect success in attempting to establish external necessity.

- (1) Kant cannot argue that necessity attaches to the will because reason is practical, that is, *legislative*, for either the point refers to the first sense of necessity (which is all that analogy with the law-imposing or system-creating function of theoretical reason amounts to)<sup>19</sup> or it constitutes a *petitio* (presupposes that the set of maxims *binds* necessarily, which of course is just what he is called upon to establish). To appreciate this point, we need but be reminded that Kant's critics can acknowledge that there is such a thing as the moral *ought*, but interpret it as operating in a modality weaker than Kantian necessity. This is a move Kant cannot accept, since he affirms the moral ought as absolutely necessitating (for example, on the first page of section 1 of *Fundamental Principles!*).
- (2) Nor can Kant hold critical morality ransom until his claim about necessity be granted—though he frequently seems to do just this,

arguing in so many words that the legislation of reason would be in vain were there no relational necessity attaching to the will.<sup>20</sup> Again, it is precisely of this that he must convince the reader. Moreover, the strategy of holding critical morality ransom will surely backfire, for the opponent will opt for everyday morality and let Kantian critical morality perish. The same applies to the argument that only through necessitation of the will can morality be the same in all and to the argument that only in this way can perfect moral community be established, for as we have already remarked, there are alternative interpretations of uniformity in morals and of moral community.

- (3) Nor can Kant, as he is only too well aware, derive necessity from the concept of freedom, since freedom just is necessitation of the will by practical reason.<sup>21</sup> (Suffering the same fate would be a strategy of linking the universal legislation to will by just positing a Will-necessitated-by-practical-reason.)
- (4) Nor, finally, can Kant argue, as in the *Fundamental Principles* he appears to do, that necessity must be attributed to common morality with a view to its being taken seriously by mankind,<sup>22</sup> since this would condition the desideratum on a maxim of political prudence inadequate on his own terms to establish necessity.

We must now seek the ground Kant claims to have provided for morality. We should not take it for granted that Kant in fact succeeded in his aim. In the famous preface to *Daybreak*, Nietzsche broadcast that there is no ground for Kant's ethics—the ground is a myth.<sup>23</sup> We must proceed carefully, for there is no more important question to be asked about Kant's ethics.

If avenues such as those detailed above are closed off to Kant, is there any way left for him to develop an argument for a ground for critical morality? Perhaps a case for external necessity can be fashioned out of one leading element of critical morality that we have not yet discussed, namely, autonomy. Again, however, we must acknowledge that Kant cannot argue *from* autonomy, since this is just necessitation by practical reason by another name, and consequently should be dealt with in the same way that we have treated any attempt to argue from freedom. Can the importance of autonomy be expressed in terms independent of Kant's system, so as to set his approach apart from Hume's and vindicate his claim to have grounded morality? I submit an argument might go along the following lines.

Kant can premise that, even if Hume satisfactorily provides for the possibility of overcoming inclinations, he must nevertheless acknowledge that the source of moral determinations is a brute fact of nature; and then Kant can argue that, in thinking about oneself, the

individual stands over against this fact as being something other, as being *non-self*. Hence, it would be entirely to be expected that the self, standing over against the moral sentiments, should at some point pose the fundamental question, *Why should I be moral?* precisely in terms, *Why should I realize in myself what the moral sentiment prompts?* And it is just the apparent openness of this question, deriving from what Kant sees as the duality of the thinking self and the feeling self, which reveals that Hume had not succeeded in evincing the necessitation of the will.

Continuing the argument in a positive vein, Kant would take the question, *Why should I be moral?* being in point of fact a closed question to testify to the necessitation of the will (external necessity).<sup>24</sup> The closedness of this question also has to do with the source of the moral determinations being not something set over against the thinking self but the thinking self itself.<sup>25</sup> And just this is the force of his claims that the moral determinations spring from reason and that in reason he has provided a ground for morality. On this view the groundedness of morality signifies the identity of the source of the moral determinations and the thinking self. The thinking self, moreover, who disposes and orders praxis and the thinking self who wills and acts are, Kant avows, one and the same.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, the necessitation of the will that we have been seeking is just the groundedness of morality in a self identified as the thinking self. This consideration supports Kant's belief that he has removed morality forever from the reach of scepticism—for scepticism, being very distinctly a modality of the thinking self, enfolds within it, Kant believes, the source of the moral determinations.

Assuming the soundness of this reconstruction as capturing part at least of what is involved in Kant's notion of necessitation of the will, we can turn our attention to Hume and ask whether it is correct to say, as his Kantian critics have it, that by contrast Hume does not provide morality a similar ground.

One thing is immediately clear: for Hume the question, *Why should I be moral?* is not a closed one, and this represents an important difference with Kant's official doctrine. At the same time Hume maintains that a quite adequate answer can be given to this question and one which does not reduce the moral to the non-moral or make *being moral* conditional on the considerations adduced in answering the question.<sup>27</sup> Further, Hume does not accept the identifying of the source of morality with the thinking self. In short, Kant and Hume construe differently how the self stands relative to morality: for the one being moral consists in being a will necessitated by reason, while for the other this is not the case (the will is not necessitated by reason nor can sheerly rational considerations account for our being moral). In short, we have completed our first task: the fundamental difference in

the moral theories of Kant and Hume bears on the affirmation by the one and denial by the other that the will has the feature of *necessitation by reason*, which has been interpreted to mean, more specifically, the one affirms and the other denies that the source of morality is identical with the thinking self. And if by *grounded* one means *rationally grounded* exclusively, Hume of course has not grounded morality—and would aver that not having done so is by no means a shortcoming, for it suffices to show the *reasonableness* of morality.<sup>28</sup>

This sharp disjunction between the moral theories of Kant and Hume having been reached, the question before us is whether Kant's claim to have accounted for external necessity is plausible. We now move beyond exposition to critique.

#### 4. Persuasiveness of Kantian Rhetoric

The question is whether the crucial step in the Kantian dialectic is convincing; namely, his construal of external necessity in terms of an identity of the thinking self and the moral self. We do not need to object to the Kantian strategy of identifying the thinking self and the self who originates the universal legislation (wherein necessity is internal only), for even if that were granted, it does nothing to solve the problem concerning external necessity. With regard to the issue at hand, the Kantian might argue that Kant has succeeded admirably in showing how the self who is an actor in a Possible Moral World must be conceived, that is, as will acting necessarily on maxims having the form of law. But conceding even this does not imply that the I who actually think and will just am that Kantian actor in a Possible Moral World.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, we reach the conclusion that, at least in terms of the reconstruction discussed above, the case for external necessity is far from satisfactory.<sup>30</sup> Kant's effort to identify the moral self with the thinking self is a failure.

Although Kant seems not to have confirmed necessitation of the will nor to have provided morality a ground, I venture he has succeeded in doing something that comes in a not too distant second, namely, in fashioning a characterization of the moral self that some may find most compelling. Even though the Kantian moral actor stands over against reflection technically as *non-self*, it may indeed be that the reflecting individual should recognize that, to the extent that she directs her own life, Kantian selfhood represents what she should aspire to be.<sup>31</sup> Or that Kantian moral theory represents a condition (I would argue that it is a mistake to say, "the condition") under which one can make morality one's own. Indeed, considerations such as these may account for the force and appeal that reading Kant exercises on us.<sup>32</sup> Following this up, we may now reformulate the contrast between the two thinkers by presenting the Kantian side of the disjunction as follows: Kant proposes

an engaging and inviting form of moral identity, one in which the will lets itself be determined by reason and interprets itself to be under the command of reason.<sup>33</sup> Though this is a weaker statement of what distinguishes Kant's ethics, in being more attractive and, I venture, more plausible, it better explains why Kant has proven so persuasive a moral theorist.

To complete the contrast, we need to specify the form of moral identity proposed on the Humean side of the disjunction. Can this also be said to be an inviting form of moral identity? In the following section I can only outline a response to this somewhat unusual question (one which transfers us to the question *What is the self?*).

### 5. The Humean Form of Moral Selfhood

- (1) The Humean moral self is of course not a metaphysical given. Rather selfhood is wrought in time, an historical reality fashioned in particular settings with relationships to other people and to society at large. Historical selfhood admits of no simple definition: life involves an irreducible complexity of beliefs, habits, feelings, reflections and sentiments.
- (2) Humean moral selfhood is not presented in the modality of *ought*—it is a matter of actual feelings and sentiments. Thus, the considerations which answer the question, *Why should I be moral?* function as reminders of one's membership in a moral community and reinforcements of one's social identity, not inducements to assume a new form of identity. Humean moral selfhood stands forth as an alternative not only to the life of the sensible knave (the selfish hypothesis: E 282-83, 296) but likewise to the lives of social recluses—whether the ego-centred philosopher or the self-obsessed saint (E 342-43).
- (3) The Humean moral self is and is not *non-self*. It is *non-self* to the thinking self,<sup>34</sup> for there is scarcely anything for which Hume is so well known as for overturning the hegemony of the thinking self. (It is very much part of Hume's scepticism regarding reason in morals to challenge the rationalist dogma, shared by Kant of course, that the "true self" is reason within us.) But the moral self is not *non-self*<sup>35</sup> to the self as Hume, rejecting the dualism of thought and feeling, conceives it; namely, to the self as a complex which, while not identifiable with any *single* thing, is very much to be visualized as comprising sentiment and feelings.<sup>36</sup> Thus, despite that rationalists' charge, it is obviously false that the Humean moral agent must qua agent be determined by something other than self. And with the primacy of the feeling self acknowledged, the sort of answers that the Humean gives to the question, *Why should I be moral?* may not be answers such as will

satisfy the rationalist thinking self, but being moral is, Hume would say, a matter of the heart, and the heart has its own reasons.<sup>37</sup>

- (4) Accordingly, Hume would find Kantian moral agency is not only based on a mistaken conception of human nature but represents something neither inviting nor worthy of approbation. Rather, it resembles the manner of *artificial life* criticized in *A Dialogue* (the short work appended to the second *Enquiry*) as hardly being a moral life at all. In what follows I shall expand on this point.

## 6. Completion of the Polemical Loop

There is a way of doing the history of philosophy that is so common I venture to describe it as the standard approach. This is to expound the discipline's past sequentially, taking the temporal order as the real order. A minimal warrant for this approach consists in the fact that the later thinker ordinarily has the work of earlier writers before him as setting the problem. Further, given the generally critical character of philosophy, it is not surprising that later developments comprise penetrating examination and refutation of earlier work. Thus, there emerges a picture of the history of philosophy *as having a linear character*; a picture has taken hold perhaps because it flatters the generation which is latest and thus most advantaged. I maintain, however, that such a picture is a distortion.

In the history of philosophy there occur a few moments which represent new beginnings, and in some cases even revolutions. The figures we think of as *classical* have a standing independent of their historical epoch and become a point of reference detachable from their setting not merely because we can always profit from going back to them but because their positions are so important that they put at risk any later thought which ignores them. These figures challenge the linear model because comparison with them represents an occasion whereby any other philosophical writer is *tested*. Thus, we reach a point where time runs backwards as well as forward: the grip of the linear model is overcome.

Modern moral philosophy is amply familiar with the Kantian polemic against alternative moral theories, including what Kant called moral sense theories. I find, however, that Kant's own position has not been tested against Hume's polemic, as indeed it should. To complete the comparison, I embrace anachronism and essay the following Humean critique of Kantian ethics.

Hume would doubtless contend against Kant, as he did against ethical rationalists generally, that he has fabricated a philosophical construction alien to the moral self and attempted to substitute it in lieu of the homelier but nevertheless real character of human lives. A

Humean *Contra Kant* would not be limited to asserting that Kant's view of human nature is mistaken and that the determination to impose that conception on the will as practical necessity (itself challengeable as a piece of metaphysical obsession) will produce dispirited, atrophied lives and a distorted, unfree society. Hume's Copernican Revolution is perhaps even more far-reaching than is Kant's, for it would circumscribe Kant's ethics: Hume's revolutionary aim is to subvert the view that reason is the centre of life. In breaking with the rationalist tradition and according importance to the feeling self, he arrives at a position impossible for Kant,<sup>38</sup> that of passing judgement on the artificial self which represents the embodiment of a philosophical ethics—a position in which, by high irony, practical reason is itself transcended.<sup>39</sup> By virtue of *this* revolution Hume can assess the Kantian moral self and can judge it morally deficient.<sup>40</sup>

In Humean morals there is assuredly a place for norms and for *ought*, but this is not in the forefront. Normative relationships, such as are often found in the area of justice, are essentially *mediated* (for example, typically by rules), and thus are derivative from something more basic. This something more elementary that so impressed itself on Hume is an immediate modality of person-to-person relationships. *Thus*, what morals map is the way people squarely and directly relate to one another: admiration, praise, love, repulsion, blame and disapprobation are modalities of interconnectedness that form and inform the social union. That among a civilized people this is the realm of feeling does not mean that feeling may not be as refined and cultivated as through reflection and circumspection is the realm of educated belief. But the reality of morals is the way human beings feel about human beings, and this is a reality too rich to be characterized as merely normative.

In short, given the failure of Kant's endeavour to ground morality through identifying the moral self with the thinking self, both Kant's and Hume's moral theories can be interpreted as essays on the form of moral selfhood we should assume or confirm in ourselves. Discussion here has been limited to showing that both theorists offer plausible depictions of forms of moral selfhood. To explore which version of morality is the sounder is a task that lies beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>41</sup>

## 7. Summary and Conclusions

In the first part of this paper I examined a number of suggestions as to what essentially separates the moral theories of Hume and Kant. I went on to argue that their fundamental difference is to be found in one of the elements of the categorical imperative, but in *necessity* rather than *universality*. Having distinguished necessity internal to a

Universal Legislation from necessity which links the will to the affirmation of that legislation, I explored how Kant might account for the latter, that is, external necessity. After listing what appeared to be a series of non-starters, I suggested that a promising possibility would fasten on to how it is that the question, *Why should I be moral?* is for Kant a closed question. This led to exploration of whether the Kantian moral self is or is not identical to the reflecting self. I concluded that it is *non-self* and that Kant had failed to account for external necessity. I remarked that nonetheless Kant did succeed in proposing a picture of morality and of the moral self which many find attractive.

Considering Hume I noted that the question, *Why should I be moral?* is of course not a closed one, and I argued that his way of answering it does not succumb to the usual Kantian objections. Conceding that the Humean moral self is, from the Kantian perspective, *non-self*, I advanced the view that part of Hume's revolution in morals consists precisely in overturning a perspective like the Kantian, that is, one in which life is centred on reason (or on a particular conception of reason). I suggested that there is a certain persuasiveness, not to be confused with rational necessitation, to the case Hume makes for morals, a persuasiveness appreciated when the moral self is recognized as being, among other things, the feeling self. I stated that the clash between Hume and Kant is, in the last analysis, a profound one, since each raises moral objections to a life such as would be determined by the ethics of the other, and each claims a vantagepoint which transcends the foundation of the position of the other.

Having done this, I arrived at no conclusion as to the superiority, moral or otherwise, of Kant or Hume as a moral theorist. (Long as it is, this paper has limitations!) To have made it out, however, that Hume is not refuted by Kant but rather poses radical objections to Kant's moral theory strikes me as something of an accomplishment, since Kant is widely thought to have eclipsed Hume, as well as a host of others, in moral theory.

I have proceeded on the assumption that these two classical figures may be tested against one another. Some may not be satisfied with a conclusion which yields a dead heat, but my aim has been the limited one of opening up a question that was mistakenly thought to have been answered. I trust that I have motivated the further exploration by showing that in morals Hume is a far more significant figure than he has been taken to be.

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## THE MORAL THEORIES OF KANT AND HUME

1. This is a polemical paper, and for some time I hesitated to give it over for publication because, asking for comments on drafts, I learned readers found it inevitably provocative of controversy. What finally led me to release it (the paper was originally delivered in abbreviated form at the Fifteenth Hume Conference in Marburg, West Germany) is the recognition that the two figures whom it compares were each thinkers who did not shy away from controversy. By entitling it as I have, the polemical character is advertised from the start.
2. A. C. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York, 1966), 190.
3. Citations from David Hume's works are from the following editions: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2d ed., rev., ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1987), hereafter cited as "T"; *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3d ed., rev., ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975), hereafter cited as "E." Citations from Immanuel Kant's works are from the following editions: *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis, 1969), hereafter cited as *Fundamental Principles*; *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis, 1956), hereafter cited as *Critique*.
4. Perhaps it bears emphasizing that I am obliged to demonstrate not that there are not myriad ways of differentiating these two moral theories, but merely that there is none which justifies the prevalent prejudice. Moreover, I do not have to show that Hume's moral theory is to be preferred to Kant's but merely that the case for preferring Kant's is inconclusive. I am satisfied to persuade the reader that the question which is the superior approach to morals is an open one. My aim, in other words, is to re-introduce a question which moral philosophers have mistakenly thought has been satisfactorily answered.
5. This objection relies on an unsupported premise that every quality Hume classifies as a *virtue* is a quality Hume classifies as a *moral* virtue. It is no simple task to justify this claim. (See below, n. 41.)
6. Construing along Kantian lines what Hume means by "principles of morals" can obscure this point, since there is a sense in which pleasure/utility to self/others are objects of *interests*. But the Humean principles of morals do not originatively inform or ground moral judgement but are derived from the moral judgements we actually make. For Hume we can discover the principles of morals only from examination of our common moral judgements.
7. For Hume we are passive in the perception which issues in the moral sentiments, but Kant claims that we are active, that we fashion the moral law (and this slides into the doctrine that we are

self-determining). I see two problems here. First, unquestionably the Kantian reflective thinker is passive to the pure source of law, viz. the forms of universality and necessity. Further, the contrasting points are functionally parallel: the passivity of Humean moral perception is the assurance of its objectivity; in Kant the assurance is the purity of the a priori. Second, the "self" in "self-determination" turns out, by Kant's official doctrine, to be the same in everyone, so that the actual self is not involved in a very interesting way. (A contention to the contrary depends on the dubious claim that the self just is practical reason. On this claim and on the topic of autonomy more will be said in the body of the paper.)

8. While Hume would have been strongly sceptical of the Kantian *ought*, the famous argument designed to show the non-deducibility of *ought* from *is* does not refute Kant because in his moral writings Kant does not appear to *derive* the *ought* but rather in effect posits the *ought* as a primitive in the moral order. See *Critique*, 48 [47]. (Alternatively, if Schopenhauer is right in saying that in the first *Critique* Kant in fact sought to establish the categorical imperative by way of deduction, then Kant is a target not only for that author's criticism but for Hume's as well. See *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne [New York, 1969], 1:523.)
9. It is true that maxims willable as universal laws, taken together as a set or a *Universal Legislation*, determine a Possible Moral World of which we have a conception, but this *archetype* can be said to be a determinate object of knowledge only after practical reason's legislating has occurred. Moreover, if this is what cognitivism means in Kant, then Hume and myriad others must be cognitivists too, for Hume would avouch that the civilized person knows the morality of his community and is conscious of the moral distinctions within himself. Morals, once constituted, are certainly objects of study, reflection, knowledge. On the sense in which Kantian morality can be said to be a matter of knowledge, see *Critique*, 4, 4 n. 1 [4]; also see 29 [29-30].
10. It is tempting to think that Hume's treatment of the possibility of a common language as a medium of communication of the sentiments commits him to some form of universalism. When he writes, "'tis impossible we cou'd ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view" (T 581), one naturally thinks of the standardization of the object of moral discourse such as universalization is designed to secure. But I think Hume's concern lies rather with how moral language functions to knit individuals into a community. The text continues,

"In order, therefore, to prevent those continual *contradictions*, and arrive at a more *stable* judgment of things, we fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation" (T 581-82). I do not think that this text and others like it bespeak a commitment to universalism so much as a concern for stable community and perhaps for the *fairness* towards others without which community is not possible. On the richness of the Humean conception of moral community, see E 273.

11. R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (New York, 1965), chap. 3, pp. 30-50. It is noteworthy that what separates Hume and Hare is not the latter's universalism but his prescriptivism.
12. *Ibid.*, chap. 3, secs. 4, 6-7. This contrast between Hume, wary of generality, and Kant, whose examples of maxims are fashioned in highly general terms, does not seem sufficient to constitute the basic differentiation of their moral theories.
13. This is a mistake that one readily falls into when one reads only Hume's arguments against ethical rationalism and neglects his positive account of the moral judgement. Indeed, Hume's anti-rationalist arguments are typically phrased in dualist terms, and it is natural enough for the rationalist to treat all *non-reason* as being of a sort. The dualism of the arguments is a device Hume uses in an *ad hominem* fashion in the dialectic against ethical rationalism, which is of course this dualism's incunabulum. (On Hume's shifts of authorial voices, see John Richetti, *Philosophical Writing: Locke, Berkeley, Hume* [Cambridge, 1983].)
14. See *Fundamental Principles*, 20 [403], 58 [439]. Also *Critique*, 44-45 [43].
15. Although in the *Critique* the distinction of these two senses of necessity emerges fairly clearly, Kant's wording of the transition from hypothetical imperatives to a Categorical Imperative in the *Fundamental Principles* obscures it. See *Critique*, 29 [30]; *Fundamental Principles*, 38-39 [421-22].
16. A crude analogy is this. Necessity internal to a computer's operations pertains to the programs by which it functions; necessity external to a computer's operations pertains to its being plugged in and turned on so as to operate at all.
17. There is also a derivative deployment of universality attaching to necessity in this second sense, according to which the condition that makes for external necessitation of one will is thought to make for the external necessitation of every other will as well.
18. In both the *Fundamental Principles* and the *Critique* Kant goes out of his way to say that the essentials of the critical morality he elaborates are present in the common man's understanding of

- morality. Perhaps his baldest claim is, "Everyone must admit that a law, if it is to hold morally, i.e., as a ground of obligation, must imply absolute necessity" (*Fundamental Principles*, 5 [389]). I do not think it takes much argument to show that this opinion is gravely misplaced. A nice question, but one far too complex for me to explore here, is whether as a theorist of morals Hume or Kant has the greater right to claim common morality as his own. Alan Donagan makes an effort, far from successful, to show that an ethics inspired by Kant is reinforced by common morality (*The Theory of Morality* [Chicago, 1977], chap. 7). See *Critique*, 94 [91].
19. "In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant shows that we are conscious of these *a priori*, and that by virtue of such consciousness we can express beforehand an unconditioned *must*, valid for all experience possible for us. But the difference between this *must*, this necessary form of every object already determined in the subject, and that *ought* of morality is so immense and obvious, that we can make use of their agreement in the criterion of the non-empirical form of knowledge as a witty comparison indeed, but not as a philosophical justification for identifying the origin of the two." Schopenhauer (above, n. 8), 1:523.
  20. "Mere conformity to law as such ... serves as the principle of the will, and it must serve as such a principle if duty is not to be a vain delusion and chimerical concept." Later he adds, "Unless we wish to deny all truth to the concept of morality and renounce its application to any possible object, ... we must grant that it must be valid with absolute necessity." *Fundamental Principles*, 18 [402], 24 [408].
  21. *Fundamental Principles*, 64-65 [446]. See *Critique*, 29 [29].
  22. In section 2 Kant uses arguments fashioned in terms such as the following: "one cannot better serve the wishes of those who ridicule all morality as a mere phantom of human imagination overreaching itself through self-conceit than by conceding to them that the concepts of duty must be derived only from experience," and "nothing can secure us against the complete abandonment of our ideas of duty and preserve in us a well-founded respect for its law except our conviction ... that reason of itself and independently of all appearances commands what ought to be done." Further, Kant explains the indispensability of a metaphysics of morals in that without a supreme principle, "conformity is merely contingent and spurious." *Fundamental Principles*, 23-24 [407-8], 6 [389-90]. Also see above, n. 19.
  23. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge, 1982), 1-5 (preface).

24. That this question is closed is manifest if we substitute for *be moral* the Kantian construction, *act out of respect for unconditional law*. To this question there can be no answer other than to repeat the substitution in different terms.
25. "Now a man really finds in himself a faculty by which he distinguishes himself from all other things, even from himself so far as he is affected by objects" (*Fundamental Principles*, 70 [452]). Of the source of autonomy he writes, "This principle, however, needs no search and no invention, having long been in the reason of all men and embodied in their being. It is the principle of morality" (*Critique*, 109 [105]).
26. *Fundamental Principles*, 8 [391]; *Critique*, 110 [106].
27. Hume's treatment of the question may be found in E 278-84. The reader will note that throughout Hume's discussion is conducted entirely within the context of morality: Hume does not believe that reasons of a non-moral sort can persuade a person to morality. The case he makes for morality is not one which subjects being moral to any particular inclination or objective of the agent nor of course one which reduces the moral to the non-moral. Thus, Hume avoids the force of Kant's dichotomy of unconditioned/conditional. In fact, his treatment brings to mind the structure of argument found in Aristotle's discussion of the modes of self-relation of the virtuous and the vicious person (*Nicomachean Ethics* 9.4, 8), a type of argument that transcends the terminology of Kantian ethics. (On the "dignity of virtue," see T 620.)
28. We must conclude that, perhaps in a sense different from that intended by David Fate Norton (*David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician* [Princeton, 1982]), Hume is indeed a sceptic in morals, for he resists that component of ethical rationalism which emerges most clearly in the Kantian demand for a *ground* of ethics. (See also below, n. 39.)
29. Bernard Williams' criticism of Kant is that the account of rational freedom "fails to apply to practical deliberation, and to impose a necessary impartiality on it, because practical deliberation is first-personal, radically so, and involves an *I* that must be more intimately the *I* of my desires than this account allows." Expanding on this criticism, he remarks, "The *I* that stands back in rational reflection from my desires is still the *I* that has those desires and will, empirically and concretely, act" (*Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* [Cambridge, 1985], 67, 69). Unsurprisingly, at stake in the contrast between the moral theories of Hume and Kant are differing conceptions of the person.
30. The series of critical attacks on Kant within Germany in the period of his own lifetime is chronicled by Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of*

- Reason* (Cambridge, 1987). Beiser shows how much of the inspiration for these attacks is traceable to the influence of Hume.
31. Why should this be the case? The Kantian side to the several contrasts considered at the beginning of this paper might conform to one's received conceptions or might otherwise appeal. But more likely, the very unconditionedness of Kant's ethics might satisfy a yearning in some for absolutism. In particular, Kant's answer to the problem of freedom, understood at the personal level, might be attractive to some, while its theoretical elegance and simplicity might make it appealing to the philosophical mind. And it is possible that a parallelism between Kantian ethics and the dynamics of certain forms of religion could contribute to its persuasiveness.
  32. It may be that Kant's philosophical rhetoric is structured in such a way that, should we choose not to realize Kantian moral agency or even should we let ourselves think that the Kantian moral actor is *non-self*, we have thereby betrayed morality and become morally culpable. This rhetoric has as its object to make *immorality* the sole alternative to external necessity, and is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York, 1960); see "Observation" near the opening of book 2 (17-21, including notes). It should be noted that, though the question, *Why should I be moral?* may be a moral question, the question whether the reflecting self is identical to the Kantian moral self is not a moral question. And not being such, it is immune to the rhetoric described above.
  33. Perhaps a performative element is involved in choosing or willing a maxim as a universal law. Political legislating is, after all, a performative. Admittedly, the term *legislation* is rather stretched when it is applied to critical morality, but something of that performative character may nonetheless survive in Kant's thinking. On this view it is not the sheer suitability of the maxim for inclusion in a Universal Legislation that counts but the activity of the mind in stopping to think about the maxim, testing it out, and approbating the result that captures what Kant means by self-determination, for it is in these performances that the Kantian moral self is foremost. I do not find anything inconsistent with this reading of Kant, but by the same token, if the fallacy of disparity is to be avoided, we must extend to Hume the same privilege of distinguishing the sheer fact of arriving at a moral sentiment from that of critically examining and testing a moral judgement: the minimal or passive presence of the mind in the first differs considerably from the mind's active involvement in the second. The

latter captures something of what self-determination means in Hume's moral thinking.

34. But can it not be argued that the Humean moral agent must qua agent be determined by something other than himself? This of course depends on what counts as "himself." Kant posits, dogmatically but, given the prevalence of this belief in the rationalist tradition perhaps also understandably, that the "true self" is reason within us, and thus heteronomy becomes determination by anything but reason. But the Humean person (or "true self"), while not identifiable with any *single* thing, is to be visualized as sentiments and feelings, as well as beliefs and the logical apparatus of the mind.
35. This assertion must be qualified as applying to civilized persons generally, but not to those in whom nature is, in Hume's phrase, perverted. Beyond this, moreover, Hume acknowledges there are examples—the disingenuous disputant, the asocial philosopher (embodying enthusiasm), the saint (embodying superstition)—of persons who have assumed a form of selfhood relative to which the moral self is indeed non-self. Hume does not argue for the sort of connection between morality and humanity which the advocates of a natural law theory attempt to forge; for him morality remains an historical achievement—and thus something which in particular cases may fail to obtain.
36. Whatever the force of the persuasion Kant marshals for the identity of the moral self and the thinking self, moreover, Hume can be at least as persuasive (perhaps more) with respect to the identity of the moral self and the thinking-cum-feeling self.
37. Autonomy cannot mean for a non-rationalist what it does for a rationalist because the former does not grant that favourite claim of the latter, namely, that our true self is just reason in us. Once the moral import of the term is detached from a narrow Kantian context and its significance in common moral understanding restored, it is possible to make out how a life guided by the moral sentiments such as Hume visualizes qualifies as autonomous, and how impetuosity, indecision, lack of reflection, or life uncorrected by general rules, would constitute examples of something akin to heteronomy, as this notion figures in Kant.
38. It is an ineliminable part of Kant's approach to ethics that the moral law cannot be evaluated, for there is no superior standard which applies to it. At *Critique* 65 [63], Kant asserts that "the concept of good and evil must be defined after and by means of the [moral] law." Not so for Hume, who provides a structure for moral judgements of good and evil antecedent to the considerations that go into a moral code. Thus, Hume's approach can achieve a moral

transcendence over one like Kant's. This and the arguments that follow draw on the following two articles: "Hume and Ethical Monism," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 5 (1988): 157-72; and "Hume on Artificial Lives," *Hume Studies* 14, no. 1 (April 1988): 53-92.

39. Hume's Copernican Revolution does not consist only in transcending reason as it figures in the rationalists' thinking. It involves abandoning certain questions and shifting away from habits of thinking of an outworn way of doing Philosophy (including the pursuit of a *ground* or of certain forms of justification); and moving to different questions approached from the perspective of a new outlook and methodology. To appreciate Hume's revolution there is required a *discipline of the thinking self* (more radical than any contemplated by Kant) which the dramatic action of the *Treatise* was intended to inculcate. (That the Humean discipline moderating the life and business of reason is too little exemplified in our philosophical world may be one explanation for the underappreciation of Hume remarked in the Introduction to this paper.)
40. It would be a mistake to say that from the Humean perspective we pass judgement on the *moral* self that corresponds to the Kantian ethics, for the point is that a life or a form of selfhood determined by that system does not qualify as *moral* for Hume; rather, we pass moral judgement on the self embodying Kantian ethics. See "Hume on Artificial Lives" (above, n. 38).
41. It is not my view that there is no way to determine which form of moral selfhood is the preferable. I hasten to point out, however, that to achieve an answer involves more than ascertaining which theory better maps on one's "moral consciousness" or makes better sense of one's "moral experience," since for two reasons what these terms refer to is ambiguous. First, to settle on how the term *moral* is to be used in the Humean context requires clarifying the relation between the natural and the artificial virtues—a complex topic in Hume research, and one which I think the best work remains to be done. Second, what counts as "moral consciousness" or "moral experience" may be informed by prejudices of the sort we had occasion to remark in the Introduction to this paper. (Thus, it would be a truism that the student of Kant's ethics, for example, will find that Kant's ethics maps onto her moral consciousness.) In this regard it should be noted that the very great persuasive force of Kant's moral writings, since not logically satisfactory, would seem to derive, poor opinions of his writing abilities notwithstanding, from his considerable rhetorical skills. As Nietzsche noted, the security of morality "reposes far more in a

certain art of enchantment it has at its disposal—it knows how to ‘inspire.’” Under the seduction of this “Circe of the philosophers” and in the grip of “German pessimism” Kant saw himself obliged to posit an undemonstrable world, a logical ‘Beyond’ in order “to render the ‘moral realm’ unassailable, even better incomprehensible to reason—for he felt that a moral order of things was only too assailable by reason!” (Nietzsche [above, n. 23], 2-3).