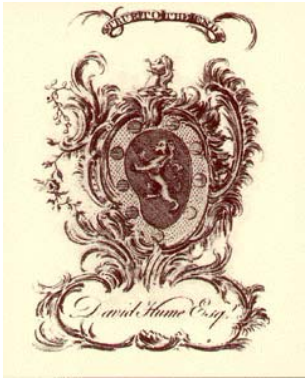

On an Unorthodox Account of Hume's Moral Psychology
Rachel Cohon
Hume Studies Volume XX, Number 2 (November, 1994) 179-194.

HUME STUDIES
Volume XX, Number 2, November 1994, pp. 179–194

SYMPOSIUM

A version of this paper was presented at the symposium on *A Progress of Sentiments* by Annette C. Baier, held at the Pacific Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association, Los Angeles, March 1994.

On an Unorthodox Account of Hume's Moral Psychology

RACHEL COHON

One can learn a great deal about Hume's *Treatise* from Annette Baier's fascinating book, *A Progress of Sentiments*.[1] It is in places dazzling, in others revelatory, occasionally puzzling, and everywhere interesting. Having said that, I proceed to criticize one aspect of it.

Belief and the Passions

My topic is Baier's interpretation of Hume's moral psychology. First I sketch out the striking differences between Baier's View of Hume's moral psychology and what I call the Standard View. Then I consider some of Baier's reasons for her unorthodox reading. I argue that Baier's View of Hume's moral psychology is motivated in part by a particular, unstated understanding of Hume's theory of the passions. As a consequence of this, I argue, Baier denies Hume the use of an especially strong argument against the moral rationalists' theory of motivation and morality, for that strong anti-rationalist argument (sometimes called the influence argument) depends upon a support that is incompatible with Hume's theory of the passions as Baier implicitly understands it. But without the influence argument, Hume's case against the moral rationalists would be much weaker. The relevant portion of the Standard View, on the other hand, makes better sense of Hume's campaign against Samuel Clarke and others, because it embraces the support Hume offers for the influence argument. So, in this one respect, I shall argue that a portion of the

Rachel Cohon is at the Department of Philosophy, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305 USA.

Standard View of Hume's moral psychology is superior to Baier's View. But whether we should reject Baier's View in favor of the relevant portion of the Standard View depends, of course, upon whether we can consistently reject the unstated interpretation of Hume's theory of the passions on which Baier's View seems to be based.

Baier explicitly sees her version of Hume's moral psychology as shaped by the account of the passions in Book II. And Baier's discussion of the role of belief in the causation and individuation of the passions is illuminating. It helps guard against a common oversimplification of Hume's claim about the motivating power of reason. Baier reminds us that passions are impressions of reflection, and hence must be introduced in the mind by an impression or an idea; i.e., each passion is caused by certain ideas or impressions. Passions are "thought-caused" and "idea-mediated" (160). Anger, for example, "is always directed at someone for some perceived insult, injury or harm" (161). It has a "subject" or cause, the injury the person is thought to have done one. In one place Baier refers to the causes of passions as their "appropriate reasons" (164). The causes are "thoughts about what is or is likely to become the case" (161). For something to be a passion at all rather than a mere pleasure or pain, some idea must be present to cause it. Passions do, indeed, have their hedonic components, such as the two pleasures included in pride. But for pride to be the passion it is, rather than some other, "one must believe the fine thing to be one's own" (161). A particular belief is what identifies the passion. Even desire is influenced by a belief or idea, and subsequently is often called "preference" (164). Thus, since reason produces beliefs, and beliefs are the crucial, identifying causes of passions, reason has a thorough-going influence on passion. And since passions are what move us to act, reason provides indispensable causal input into volition and action. It is easy but inaccurate to describe Hume as saying that belief, or reason, does not cause action.

Furthermore, besides having a characteristic cause, many passions have an intentional object distinct from their cause. For anger, this "object" is the person one is angry with. The "object" of pride is oneself. And a few passions, including benevolence and anger, have not only a cause and an object but also an end, and direct our view to all these things. The passions, then, refer or direct our attention beyond themselves to a great many ideas.

Baier also reminds us of the neglected section of Book I, "Of the influence of belief," which, she says, "directs our attention...to the dangerous potency of thought" (158). This is where Hume explains why our many ideas about the sources of pleasure and pain do not all actuate the will. Only those that achieve sufficient vivacity to become beliefs engage our ruling passions and influence our will; the less lively ones, fortunately, do not. But beliefs, the products of causal or demonstrative reasonings, do influence the will, although "mediately, through effect on our passions" (159).

In what follows, we should keep these points in mind, and consider

whether neglect of Book II has led interpreters of Book III to misread Hume's views about reason, motivation, and morality.

The Standard View

Before proceeding, let us recall the traditional understanding of Hume's moral psychology. The following sentences from Alasdair MacIntyre's *Short History of Ethics* are fairly typical:

> Moral judgments, so Hume argues, cannot be judgments of reason because reason can never move us to action, while the whole point and purpose of the use of moral judgments is to guide our actions. Reason is concerned either with relations of ideas, as in mathematics, or with matters of fact. Neither of these can move us to act. We are moved to act not by this or that being the case, but by the prospect of pleasure or pain from what is or will be the case. It is the passions and not reason which are aroused by the prospect of pleasure and pain. Reason can inform the passions as to whether the object they seek exists and as to what the most economical and effective means of seeking it may be. But reason cannot judge or criticize the passions...reason cannot in any sense adjudicate between the passions.[2]

I call this interpretation the Standard View. To put it in sharp relief, here is a summary, albeit one that over-simplifies the View, and in fact crudely runs together several, subtly distinct but related, interpretations. According to the Standard View, Hume holds the following nine theses:

1. Reason consists of demonstrative reasoning, which discovers relations of ideas, and probabilistic reasoning, which discovers matters of fact.
2. The products of the faculty of reason are beliefs that something is the case. Passions, volitions, and actions are not, strictly speaking, the products of either demonstrative or probabilistic reasoning.
3. A belief (a product of reason) cannot move us to act without assistance from a perception of another kind. A belief cannot cause a volition directly; nor can it, entirely by itself or solely in conjunction with other mere beliefs, cause a *passion* to come into existence, which would in turn cause volition and action.
4. Only passions can move us to act. A passion will need to be directed to its specific object by a belief; so belief typically (perhaps always) plays a role in the production of action. But (a) a passion is indispensable as at least a contributing cause of every volition. And (b) the role of passion is to provide the motivating force, which belief can only channel.

5. Passions and beliefs are perceptions of distinct kinds. Beliefs are ideas, and have cognitive content. Passions are impressions, and furthermore have no cognitive content; they are, in a way, blind.
6. The expectation of pain or pleasure stimulates our passions to produce volition and action by providing a specific object for our general appetite to good (pleasure) or our general aversion to evil (pain).
7. There is no combat between passion and reason, and no possibility of reason exerting control over passion, because (a) passions cannot conflict with reason, since reason cannot evaluate and reject passions for failing to fulfill reason's requirements, and (b) reason cannot exert force against passion to counteract passion's influence, since reason by itself has no motivating force—no access to the will.
8. The point of moral judgment is to guide action, in particular to lead us to do the actions judged virtuous or obligatory and avoid the actions judged vicious or impermissible.
9. Moral judgments (therefore) cannot be beliefs.

Perhaps no single interpreter holds all nine theses exactly as stated here; adherents of the Standard View, of course, disagree with one another. But many of us will recognize most of the theses on this list as ones we accept or have accepted as interpretations of Hume. I list them all in order to sketch a total picture to contrast with Baier's total picture. I will not defend (or even discuss) them all.[3]

Baier's View

Contrast the Standard View with Baier's account. Baier's interpretation of Hume's moral psychology is found in various places in her book, but mainly in Chapter 7, "The Direction of Our Conduct."[4] Putting the pieces together, we can see that she attributes to Hume the following views:

First, the products of reason, beliefs, are themselves causes of passions, and also make particular passions the passions that they are. It is the content of my beliefs about a certain man that make what I feel toward him hatred, for example, or fear or esteem.

Second, although the influence of beliefs on the will is mediated through the production of passions, reason does not lack access to the will. Beliefs do not move us to act directly, but they do cause passions, which in turn move us to act. Since passions incorporate the influence of reason, reason consequently has plenty of influence on action.

Third, many particular passions, certainly all the indirect ones, refer to a

great many things outside themselves, specifically their intentional objects and their causes. Passions are replete with cognitive content.

Fourth, combat between reason and passion is impossible solely for the following reasons. Beliefs, the products of reason, cause passions and give them their identity; and passions sometimes also cause beliefs (they convert less vivid ideas into more vivid ones, according to T I 3 x). Baier says:

> Since passions incorporate the influence of reason, since they presuppose beliefs, they would be in combat with themselves if they resisted the influence of belief. (159)

Of necessity, then, passion and reason are thoroughly intertwined with one another; they change one another, and belief in part determines the nature of passion. Consequently, it makes no sense to claim, as have moral philosophers ancient and modern, that passion and reason are separate forces at war with one another. They are inseparable. *This* is why we cannot use our reason to subdue our passions.[5]

Finally, moral evaluations of actions as virtuous or vicious rarely move us to perform virtuous actions and refrain from vicious ones; more often, they merely move us to speak in certain ways, praising or blaming, and to encourage or discourage virtue or vice in others. What motivates virtuous action is not moral approbation, but rather a (usually natural) sentiment that then receives moral approbation. There is, of course, the famous influence argument of III 1 i against the moral rationalists that says: morals influence passions and actions; reason alone cannot influence passions or actions; therefore, morals are not the products of reason alone. But this is an *ad hominem* argument merely. Its first premise, that morals themselves motivate action, is not Hume's own thesis, Baier claims, but rather the view of his moral rationalist opponents, which he takes over from them only for purposes of the argument.

This picture is indeed strikingly different from the Standard View. It is, at two points, not entirely clear to me just how far the difference goes.

First, does Baier assert, or deny, that on Hume's view reason alone can motivate action? She certainly *seems* to say that for Hume reason alone, in the narrow sense, cannot motivate (159, 164–165), although reason in the enlarged, "social and passionate" sense (278), apparently can. But does she mean this in the same way as do adherents of the Standard View? On Baier's View, can an exercise of causal or demonstrative reasoning be the first item in a causal chain (or, for that matter, a chain of reasoning) that leads in a straight line through passion to action, without any additional, independent contribution? This is what can*not* occur, according to the Standard View. It is not clear to me what Baier says to this, given her claims that "It is mediately, through effect on our passions, that beliefs...influence our will," that

"passions incorporate the influence of reason" (159), and that "The...claim....that reason alone is insufficient as a cause of action...does not require the expulsion of the influence of reason from what does cause action, namely passion" (164).[6] Perhaps Baier agrees with the Standard View here, and the difference is one of emphasis. But these remarks suggest that on her interpretation, belief alone might cause a passion, which in turn causes action. On this account, passion becomes a necessary intermediate step on the causal path from belief to action, all right, but not a separate contribution to the result, in the way that dough is a necessary intermediate step on the causal path from flour mixture to bread, but is not a separate contribution to the result. Ultimately, I imagine Baier would say, this distinction matters little; in the *Treatise*, the reason of the rationalists is shown by Hume to be deficient in various ways, and is later enriched with, and supplemented by, the passions, to give us the whole knowing mind. The "reason that [is] limited to fact-finding, fact-relating and fact-predicting" (279) can do little without the help of passion, and so it cannot bring about volition without passion either. This seems to be Baier's explanation for the fact that Hume denies motivating power to reason alone, in this narrow sense of 'reason'. But Baier is not explicit about precisely *why*, on her view, Hume sees fit to deny that reason alone has motivating power, and we shall see that she rejects one of the usual explanations.

Secondly, does Baier think that the beliefs or other ideas that help to define the various passions are component parts of those passions? On her view passions have cognitive import. She does not say at any point that the defining beliefs or other ideas are component *parts* of the passions that they identify, even though she says they are "essential" and "crucial" to them and make them what they are. It is compatible with her view that they should be components. Are they? If they are component parts of the passions, then one may naturally wonder whether, on Baier's View, a passion could have a truth value. Certainly its belief-component would have a truth value. However, a passion also has a hedonic component, which might preclude the whole passion from being true or false.[7]

Samuel Clarke and the Standard View

It seems a safe guiding assumption in any interpretation of Hume's ethics that he disagrees with Samuel Clarke. So let us recall what Clarke thinks, and how the Standard View takes Hume to attack Clarke and his fellows. Then we may consider where Baier disagrees with this portion of the Standard View.

Clarke claims that there are certain eternal relations to be recognized in the nature of things, and certain fitnesses and unfitnesses between these relations and human actions and sentiments. Any intelligent being can recognize the fitnesses and unfitnesses, and to assert their nonexistence is like

asserting an obvious falsehood, or even a manifest contradiction, in mathematics or physics. Furthermore, certain actions are rationally required of us by the eternal fitnesses of things, so that we are guilty of accepting an obvious untruth or even a contradiction not only if we fail to *believe* that these actions are required, but also if we fail to *perform* them. For example, Clarke says,

> He that refuses to deal with all men equitably, and with every man as he desires they should deal with him: is guilty of the very same unreasonableness and contradiction in one case; as he that in another case should affirm one number or quantity to be equal to another, and yet that other at the same time not to be equal to the first.[8]

So immoral actions and volitions are literally unreasonable, in the way that self-contradictory and other obviously false beliefs are unreasonable. These fitnesses and unfitnesses, once people are aware of them, have the power to determine human volitions and actions.[9] The conformity of an action to eternal reason has a strong influence on our will. Since we have free will, we *can* act against reason. But we are naturally disposed to will in accordance with reason, and it takes quite a strong and stubborn passion to move us to act otherwise.

> [B]y this understanding or knowledge of the natural and necessary relations, fitnesses, and proportions of things, the wills likewise of all intelligent beings are constantly directed...; excepting those only...whose wills are corrupted by particular interest or affection, or swayed by some unreasonable and prevailing passion.[10]

Both Hume and Francis Hutcheson reject this view that immoral volitions and actions are literally unreasonable. Hutcheson explicitly says that reasonableness is conformity to truth and argues (with limited success) that one action can be no more true than another.[11] Like Hutcheson, Hume intends to show that the mere awareness of relations can neither independently motivate nor rationally require action of any kind, and that some sort of sense or sentiment is needed. According to the Standard View, Hume offers one clearly original argument, exhibiting great logical subtlety, to show that volitions, actions, and particularly passions are not the kinds of things that can be true or false, thus not the kinds of things that can be shown to be true or false by any argument, and so they cannot be required or ruled out by truth and reason. This is the third argument Hume gives in II 3 iii (T 415), in which he says that passions have no "representative quality." As the Standard View understands this argument, in it Hume in effect accuses Clarke and his fellow moral rationalists of a category mistake. The only things that can be contrary to real relations or fitnesses are beliefs, and these are ideas. Passions, volitions,

and actions are not ideas, not faint copies of real relations, and so they cannot be contrary to real relations, any more than a rock or a tree can be contrary to real relations. Only what represents or purports to represent real relations can be conformable or contrary to them. Even if there were eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, our passions and actions could not agree with or match them, for passions and actions are of the wrong ontological category to agree with or match anything.[12]

Since the psychological entities that purport to represent other things are ideas for Hume, he formulates the argument in terms of the difference between ideas and impressions. But we should note that the argument does not ultimately depend upon Hume's theory of ideas. The argument depends upon the distinction between those mental entities that do, and those that do not, purport to stand for other things. One can (and many do) make this distinction without any reference to ideas and impressions.

Furthermore, the same point can be made even by those who, while they do populate the mind with ideas and impressions, would claim that some impressions (in particular, sense impressions) represent objects outside the mind. For Hume's point in this argument to be correct, the boundary between psychological states that do and that do not represent anything else need not correspond to the boundary between impressions and ideas. The point is that, whatever else may represent things in the world, passions, volitions, and actions do not. Consequently they are not the right sorts of things to be true or false, conformable to reason or contrary to it.

According to the Standard View, in II 3 iii Hume makes this argument about passions, and then repeats its claims forty-three pages later in III 1 i (T 458), where he extends his denial of any "representative quality" to volitions and actions as well as passions. On the Standard View, the thesis he defends in these two passages is the inertia-of-reason thesis, the claim that reason alone cannot give rise to passions, volitions, and actions. Since passions, volitions, and actions cannot be true or false and cannot be conclusions of arguments, they cannot be produced, supported, or endorsed by demonstrative or causal reason. This is why reason alone cannot motivate, on Hume's view: in order for it to motivate, it would have to generate or support or endorse passions, volitions, and/or actions; but these are not the kinds of things reason "of itself" can generate, support, or endorse.

This inertia-of-reason thesis becomes a crucial premise in Hume's first argument against the moral rationalists, the influence argument of III 1 i (T 457). (Incidentally, *this* premise of the influence argument is not one that Hume could be taking over from his moral rationalist opponents for the limited purposes of an *ad hominem* argument, since it is not one they subscribe to.) According to the Standard View, this inertia-of-reason premise is Hume's most successful weapon against the moral psychology of the moral rationalists. Hume depends upon the thesis that passions and actions have no

representative quality to refute the moral rationalists and make room for a moral psychology utterly incompatible with theirs.

If Hume does *not* argue that passions and actions are ontologically the wrong sorts of things to be conformable to reason, then the inertia-of-reason premise of his influence argument lacks support. In that case, his only supported argument against the moral rationalists would be his second argument of III i 1. That second argument claims to show that there are no eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, because none of the relations or matters of fact that reason discovers have the properties these fitnesses are supposed to have. And this second argument is by its nature inconclusive. All Hume can claim to show there is that none of the relations or matters of fact that *he considers* could be moral properties; it remains possible that his opponents should suggest some other relation that he does not consider. Hume admits as much (T 464), and challenges his opponents to discover any other relation that both has the properties Clarke ascribes to eternal fitnesses and is not vulnerable to Hume's objections, such as his objection that any relation between human beings could also obtain between animals. Given how complex relational properties can be, however, a resourceful moral rationalist might propose some very elaborate relational property as an eternal fitness or unfitness, perhaps even one that withstands Hume's criticisms.[13] So the success of the second argument depends upon (one might say) the lack of ingenuity of Hume's moral rationalist opponents. For the success of the first argument, however, according to which no action or passion can be conformable to any relation of ideas whatsoever, it does not matter how ingenious moral rationalists may be.[14]

What does Baier make of the passage in II 3 iii that, according to the Standard View, contains the argument that passions are of the wrong ontological category to be conformable to reason?

Hume's "one very silly paragraph"

This is the passage Baier (160) describes as "one very silly paragraph that has perversely dominated the interpretation of [Hume's] moral psychology." Here it is in full:

> A passion is an original existence, or if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possest with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this passion can be oppos'd by or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent. (T II 3 iii; 415)

Baier says this claim that passions have no reference to any other object is unrepresentative of Hume's analysis of the passions in all the surrounding sections of Book II, and contributes to readers' misunderstanding of the principal subject matter of this section, which she takes to be Hume's argument against the combat of reason and passion. She attempts to explain away his remarks here by saying that perhaps Hume was temporarily thinking of emotions, which for him and his contemporaries (she says) were a bodily disturbance, rather than passions such as anger;[15] and also perhaps he was carried away by excessive anti-rationalist zeal to make a misstatement that he does not repeat in later writings.

Obviously, Baier and the Standard View see different things going on in this paragraph. On the Standard View, the paragraph gives a central argument on which much else depends; on Baier's view, it is a momentary aberration that plays no further role for Hume, however much it has obsessed his readers.

Why does Baier discount this paragraph?

Baier apparently reads Hume's denial that passions have a "reference" to anything else as the denial that passions have intentional objects, which would indeed contradict so much Hume has just said in this Book about the passions. This seems to be Baier's chief reason for thinking the paragraph a blunder; I come back to it below. But Baier also explicitly takes the claim that passions are "original existences" to be saying that passions are impressions of sensation ("original impressions") rather than impressions of reflection. Thus, Baier (173) says, "...in Book Two...[p]assions suffer sudden transport from being secondary impressions to being original existences, then back again." And this, I think, is an avoidable misreading, on any understanding of whether passions have intentional objects; in correcting it I *may* reconcile Baier with the passage.

The paragraph at T 415 need not be read as saying anything about impressions of sensation. It can consistently be read, not as insisting that passions such as anger are impressions of sensation, needing nothing mental to introduce them into the mind (that is, lacking causes that are perceptions), but rather as insisting that passions are *impressions* (of whatever kind) rather than *ideas*. Ideas represent something else, some non-idea—an object in the world, or rather, an impression. Ideas *stand for* something else. They are signs or symbols. Ideas can consequently be regarded as accurate or inaccurate representations of that which they purport to represent. Impressions, or at the very least *these* impressions (passions, volitions, and actions), do not stand for something else; they simply are. Consequently they cannot represent or symbolize or signify inaccurately, since they do not perform these functions at all.

For this to be the import of the paragraph on *any* account of whether passions have intentional objects, Hume must recognize a distinction that he

does not explicitly state but seems to have clearly in view. The distinction is between two senses in which a mental state can "refer" to something else: (1) the something else can be its intentional object (my envy of X can in this way "refer" to X) and (2) the something else can be what the mental state stands for or symbolizes, so that reference here is the same relation that obtains between names and the things they denote (Jane is referred to by the word 'Jane', and also by my thought of her, or by my thought that she is tall). I take Hume's denial here that passions "refer" to anything else to be the denial that they refer in the latter sense of stand for or symbolize something else. It is quite consistent with this that Hume should nonetheless think that passions have intentional objects—that passions are about something, or of, or directed toward, something.

We should note in passing that something can stand for or symbolize something else in two ways: (a) the symbol can represent the object by *resembling* it, in the way that a drawing of the White House represents the White House, or (b) the symbol can represent the object in some other way, without resembling it, as the words 'White House' represent the White House but do not resemble it. Because a picture or mental image of Jane resembles Jane herself in having two eyes, a nose, and so on, it is easy to forget that the picture is a symbolic representation of Jane, just as her name is. Hume, of course, thinks our ideas represent or symbolize other things (impressions) by resembling them, by being faint copies of them. So when he wants to tell us that a passion does not symbolize or represent anything else, and so cannot be true or false to what it stands for, he says it is not a copy of anything, as he does in this paragraph. This seems to me conclusive evidence that what Hume means to emphasize here when he says that passions are "original existences" is simply that they are not ideas, but rather (nonrepresentational) impressions. They are "originals" by contrast with copies.

According to the Standard View, Hume denies that passions represent or symbolize anything else, in order to be able to conclude that passions have no truth value and so cannot be conformable or contrary to truth and reason. He denies that they are or purport to be copies or likenesses of anything else so he can deny that they are true or false copies.[16] The conclusion he seeks in no way hinges on passions not having any intentional objects and not directing our attention or "view" to things other than the passions themselves. In light of this, Hume might so far be quite content to grant that passions refer to various things in my first sense of having those things as intentional objects.

The Passions as Containing Ideas

Is it really so simple to reconcile the paragraph at T 415 with the rest of Hume's account of the passions? I suspect Baier will say no. Perhaps Baier will claim that a mental state that has an intentional object must contain as a part

of it a symbolic representation (indeed, an idea) of that object. If my love of Jane, or my envy of Jane's superior height, is to be directed at Jane as its intentional object, then the idea of Jane must be part and parcel of the love or envy, Baier might say. Elsewhere Baier has rejected the theory that for Hume the passions are propositional attitudes (to envy Jane's height thus being to be envious *that* Jane is so tall).[17] But Baier may still wish to say that the passion of envy of Jane must contain within it, as a part, the idea of Jane. Indeed, she may wish to say that the passion of envy or anger or love must contain in it a relevant belief, for example, that Jane is taller than I am, or that she has harmed me, or that some splendid thing or trait is hers. If this is Hume's understanding of the passions, then his claim at T 415 that passions do not refer to or represent other things contradicts his theory of the passions, and must somehow be discounted, and so a careful interpreter would seek ways to discredit it. This cognitive theory of the passions seems to be the assumption driving Baier's rejection of the "silly paragraph," and so greatly distancing her overall interpretation of Hume's moral psychology from this portion of the Standard View.

However, Hume does not have to accept this cognitive-inclusion theory in order to give an account of the intentional objects of passions. The intentional object of a passion *does* need to be before the mind, either as an impression (I look at Jane towering over me and envy her) or as an idea (my idea of myself arises and comes to my attention whenever I feel pride or humility). The feeling, for example of pride, itself need not include this idea as a part; rather, the feeling could be linked to it causally. The feeling of pride could be such as reliably to turn my attention to my idea of myself. That account of the intentional object of a passion looks to be entirely consistent with what Hume says in Book II, as, for example, that pride "when excited, turns our view to another idea, which is that of self" (T 278), and it is consistent with Hume's overall stance as the causal theorist par excellence. And, it avoids any contradiction with Hume's claim that passions do not refer to other things, in the sense of symbolize or represent them.[18]

What is there to be said in favor of instead attributing a cognitive-inclusion theory of the passions to Hume? Why should we say that the passion of envy or anger itself contains a representation of its intentional object, instead of saying that the passion, a simple impression, reliably causes the idea of its object to arise in our mind and come to our attention? I cannot treat this subject in detail here, but we may briefly consider three reasons:

1. On the purely causal account, the intentional object of a passion, and its cause as well if that is distinct, must be determined empirically, and is linked with the passion contingently. It is a contingent and not a conceptual truth that the intentional object of pride is oneself. Twentieth century philosophers find such a thesis absurd;

we would not call it pride, they say, if the feeling did not have oneself as its intentional object, and so the connection between pride and the idea of the self is conceptual, not merely empirical.

2. On a purely causal account, the passion itself is rather like a pain or a tickle, albeit one with very special causal relations to other perceptions. But this is an implausible phenomenology of such feelings as anger, pride, envy, and even joy. These sentiments are not merely pangs or flashes of feeling that happen to be preceded or followed by certain thoughts, current authors would say; they have a complex internal phenomenology that encompasses their directedness to their objects.

3. Hume does say, about pride, that its intentional object is oneself, by an "original and natural instinct, and ...'tis absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind, that these passions shou'd ever look beyond self..." (T 286). He goes on to say that "[f]or this I pretend not to give any reason; but consider such a peculiar direction of the thought as an original quality." These remarks may be taken as partial evidence that Hume thought the intentional object of pride and humility could be discovered a priori.[19]

None of these reasons is conclusive in the absence of strong textual evidence for the cognitive account. Twentieth century theorists think the connection of pride with oneself is a logical, not a causal one, known a priori and not a posteriori. But Hume need not have believed this even though we do. Similarly, it is implausible to us that pride or hatred should resemble a tickle or pain in being just a simple impression with a certain characteristic feel, and should be set apart from other simple impressions mainly by its distinctive causes and effects. But this may not have seemed implausible to Hume.[20] And to say that the connection between the feeling of pride and turning our "view" to ourselves is wrought by the primary constitution of the mind is not yet to say that the idea of ourselves is part of the primary constitution of the *passion*.

Furthermore, we should be reluctant to attribute to Hume the view that ideas are constitutive parts of passions. For Hume quite clearly classifies passions as impressions, and it is difficult to see how an idea can be a constitutive and defining part of a whole that is an impression. And then there are the awkward bits of text in which Hume labels even the most intricately-analyzed passions "simple and uniform impressions" (for example, at T 277), suggesting they have no parts at all.

The Two Alternatives

My conclusion is disjunctive.

If we wish to say that Hume held a cognitive-inclusion theory of the passions, then we must indeed discount the "one very silly paragraph," which is incompatible with such a theory. If we do this, we deny Hume a clever argument against the moral rationalists that would undermine their project at a very early stage, and we leave him with impoverished resources to combat their position. Also, we leave it rather mysterious why Hume should claim that reason alone cannot motivate or require action.

On the other hand, if we wish to preserve the reading of this paragraph given by the Standard View, with the strong and cleverly argued anti-rationalism that depends upon it, we must attribute to Hume a purely causal theory of the passions, which makes them out to be like tickles and pains (although elaborately enmeshed in a specially defined causal matrix), and treats as contingent the connection between pride and the thought of oneself, and other analogous connections.

Either one of these positions can consistently be adopted. Different horns of this dilemma will appeal to different interpreters. On either interpretation, something is lost. I hate to reclassify something I regarded as an ingenious argument against Clarke as a "very silly paragraph"; others will, no doubt, hate to attribute to Hume a view of the internal structure of the passions, especially the indirect passions, that they themselves find implausible.

In any case, I owe to Baier the recognition that one cannot have it both ways. So in my role as critic of *A Progress of Sentiments*, I continue to learn from it.

NOTES

I am grateful to Elijah Millgram and David Owen for comments on an earlier version of this paper, and to Annette Baier for discussion. Where I have responded to their comments, the paper has been greatly strengthened.

1 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), hereafter cited in the text; Annette C. Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), hereafter cited in the text.

2 Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 169.

3 I do not even hold them all. While they are coherent and make a total picture, some of them are independent of others, so in subscribing to one an interpreter is not committed to all the rest.

4 Some important points are made in Chapter 8, "The Contemplation of Character." Baier's analysis of the moral sentiments, which is not my special concern here, is found in Chapters 6, 8, and 9; Chapter 9 discusses the particular virtues, with special attention to the natural ones.

5 Although I do not discuss it here, one of the most dramatic departures from the Standard View occurs in the reasons Baier adduces for Hume's denial that reason and passion are in conflict. On Baier's View, reason and passion cannot be at war because they interpenetrate each other and are not sufficiently distinct. Contrast thesis (7) of the Standard View, which says they cannot be at war because they are too distinct to interact causally: reason can have no influence on passion's control of the will, and so cannot combat passion.

6 Baier also describes Hume's own moral theory both as an "alternative to rationalism" and as "*apparent* antirationalism" (175, my emphasis), and says that Hume's "antirationalist mask slips revealingly" (277).

7 If beliefs are components of passions, we may wonder whether the hedonic aspect is a separable component. One could claim that some beliefs simply are passions, and to have them (for example, to have the belief that Jane harmed me) is to have a certain sort of feeling of pain (namely, anger). Presumably, though, a passion-belief identity thesis is not a reasonable interpretation of Hume, since Hume says that beliefs are ideas and passions are impressions.

8 Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse...of Natural Religion*, excerpted in *British Moralists*, vol. 1, edited by D.D. Raphael (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991). 200. Here Clarke is talking about justice. When talking about obligations of other kinds he does not insist on self-contradiction; the cognitive defect can be equivalent to denying what is obviously true, instead.

9 Clarke, 200. Indeed, Clarke suggests that our awareness of some of them has the power to cause passions in us; in particular, our recognition of the fitness of benevolence to the mutually dependent condition of humankind has the power to make us love one another.

10 Clarke, 198–199.

11 Francis Hutcheson, *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, edited by Bernard Peach (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), Section 1, 120. Hutcheson argues for this on the grounds that there are just as many true propositions about wrong actions as about right ones, and just as many false propositions about each as well.

12 How standard is this interpretation of the representation argument? What I say here, admittedly, especially fits my own interpretation of it in "Hume and Humeanism in Ethics," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 1988: 99–116, where I indicate what I take to be the argument's strength and its shortcoming. I take it, however, that my own interpretation is not unusual, but in its main outlines is close to that of Mackie and others.

13 Perhaps the property "being done on a maxim that one cannot, without contradiction, will to be a universal law" is such a property.

14 Hume himself seems to think his second argument rather more conclusive than I have made it sound. (However, when he says "this argument...is entirely decisive" (T 468), I do not take him to be referring to the second argument as a whole, but just to the subsidiary argument about animals and their reasoning powers.) In his own voice, Hume has great confidence in the second argument.

because of his confidence in his arguments in Book I identifying the four philosophical relations as the only relations susceptible of demonstration. But for purposes of the anti-rationalist argument he goes on to set aside this earlier result and consider other candidate relations (such as "inflicting harm on one's benefactor"); it is here that the inconclusiveness enters, as he acknowledges.

15 I do not see Hume consistently using 'emotion' to mean a bodily disturbance. He seems to use it quite often in the *Treatise* as a synonym for 'passion', as at T 120, 305, 414.

16 He might seem to be in trouble in saying they do not resemble or copy anything, since many passions resemble one another. But he does not mean just resemblance here; he means representation by resemblance.

17 Annette C. Baier, "Hume's Analysis of Pride," *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1978).

18 I claim no originality for this construal of the intentional objects of passions in Hume. It is the interpretation of the intentionality of the passions given by Páll S. Árdál, *Passion and Virtue in Hume's* Treatise, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 23ff.

19 Baier seems so to take them in "Hume's Analysis of Pride," 28.

20 Some phenomena are perfectly adequately distinguished from others by their causes; for example, a harvest of berries is so distinguished from wild berries. In other cases, something can be only partly, but significantly, distinguished from something else by its effects, for example, a poison from an innocuous compound. Presumably the poison and the innocuous compound also differ in their chemical composition, but to call one a poison and the other not is to distinguish them by their effects. Similarly, pride may be distinguished from love by its causes and effects, but the two passions might also differ in their felt quality—in the sorts of pleasure they are. See, especially, Philippa Foot, "Hume on Moral Judgment," in *David Hume: A Symposium*, edited by David Pears (London: Macmillan, 1963).