



## **Pride and Hume's Sensible Knave**

James King

*Hume Studies* Volume XXV, Number 1 and 2 (April/November, 1999) 123-138.

Your use of the HUME STUDIES archive indicates your acceptance of HUME STUDIES' Terms and Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.humesociety.org/hs/about/terms.html>.

HUME STUDIES' Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the HUME STUDIES archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Each copy of any part of a HUME STUDIES transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

For more information on HUME STUDIES contact [humestudies-info@humesociety.org](mailto:humestudies-info@humesociety.org)

<http://www.humesociety.org/hs/>

# Pride and Hume's Sensible Knave

JAMES KING

It follows, that these two particulars are to be consider'd as equivalent, with regard to our mental qualities, *virtue* and the power of producing love or pride, *vice* and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge of the one by the other. (T 575)

## 1. The Question

Whether the sensible knave can take pride in herself is a question not merely curious but potentially devastating for Hume's moral theory. Hume assuredly classifies knavery a vice, but given his doctrine that it belongs to virtue to produce pride, then if she can take pride in herself qua knave, the knave is positioned to claim that knavery is, and ought to be recognized as, a virtue. And if this is true, then either Hume is mistaken to have classified knavery as a vice or, if he is not mistaken, his moral theory yields incoherencies—the same quality being both a virtue and a vice.

Let me enter a few clarifications. The "sensible knave" is identified by reference to the famous text at the end of the second *Enquiry* (IX ii), and pride is identified by reference to Books II and III of the *Treatise*; the question, in other words, is whether the knave we identify as Humean can take a pride we identify as Humean.<sup>1</sup> To this question the readiest answer is, it must be conceded, that indeed, she can: lacking in sympathy the knave may well be, but not, evidently, lacking in pride.

In proposing that it is false that the knave can take pride in herself, I concede I face a formidable challenge. Even if pride be understood as Humean pride, it seems undeniable that, given her character, the knave will be proud of pulling off a very challenging task: to capitalize, in the face of general social commitment to unexceptionable rules of justice, on every opportunity for self-aggrandizement, including instances involving violations of those rules. Granted that she cannot broadcast her self-congratulation, she will nonetheless feel it, and arguably might prize it as all the more her own just because she cannot broadcast it.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, those writers who have felt that the sensible knave case constitutes a problem for Hume will naturally be inclined to credit the knave with the resources for taking pride in herself. In point of fact, the present question portends perhaps more of a challenge to Hume than many of the criticisms of his account of the sensible knave in currency. These take Hume to task for giving only an unconvincing treatment of the problem of responding to the sensible knave; our question challenges whether Hume was in fact inconsistent in condemning the sensible knave. Assuming a material equivalence between the personal qualities that produce pride and the qualities of virtue, it would seem to follow that if the sensible knave can be proud of herself qua knave, Hume should not have condemned but rather have praised her. Accordingly, it appears more is at stake in answering this question than has so far found its way into the commentaries on Hume's treatment of the sensible knave theme.

Nonetheless, my claim is that for Hume she cannot take pride in herself. And if I can show this to be true, interestingly the sensible knave case is shown to be *less* of a problem for Hume than commentators have taken it to be. One cannot move too swiftly to a conclusion, however, for there is a further aspect of knavery that is problematical. It appears that knavery shares with an important Humean virtue, namely greatness of mind, the characteristic of self-affirmation in the face of resistance to us on the part of others. We shall also have to determine whether there is a resemblance such as to make knavery a virtue.

In the following sections, first Hume's accounts of knavery and of pride that support the premises of the argument are taken up, then scholarly controversies regarding these—notably the work of Árdal, Baier, Chazan, and Taylor—that might tend to undercut those premises are reviewed, and finally the argument is laid out for the thesis here defended. At the end, the relation of knavery and greatness is examined and a potential objection disarmed.

## 2. Knavery, What?

Hume gives only a sketch of the character of the sensible knave. In it, two features seem essential: first, self-aggrandizement, presumably material (“profit or pecuniary advantage”) (EPM 283), even if obtaining it involves breach of society's rules of justice; and second, an overriding desire not to lose one's reputa-

tion in society or one's "trust and confidence with mankind," which desire leads one to "purpose to cheat with moderation and secrecy" (ibid.). Still, as presented in the text, knavery is underdetermined and we must attempt to fill in some gaps contextually. Inasmuch as Hume prefaces (EPM 280–282) that there can be little genuine dispute over them, we may take it that the knave acknowledges virtues agreeable or useful to self and virtues agreeable to others, and does so genuinely. Accordingly, no pure misanthrope nor antisocial egoist is Hume's knave, and her desire to appear upstanding in the eyes of others need not invariably be construed as a mere strategy for maximizing opportunities for exploitation, but may bespeak a recognition that the goods that sociability brings are fully worthwhile. (She is, after all, the *sensible* knave.) She does not personally accept justice as imposing a genuine obligation on her, but still she wants to see the institution of justice succeed in the world, since she is benefited by it, and so she thinks it good that others believe it imposes genuine obligation on them. She does not publicly advocate knavery and does what she can to keep it from being associated with herself. In short, she is of two minds: she will do injustice to benefit herself, but only if it will not deprive her of the goods which come from enjoyment of society. As Hume puts it,

That *honesty is the best policy*, may be a good general rule, but is liable to many exceptions, and he, it may perhaps be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom, who observes the rule, and takes advantage of all the exceptions. (EPM, 282–283)<sup>3</sup>

In a *Treatise* passage interestingly paralleling the *Enquiry* sketch, Hume raises to the reader the question why anyone should repay a loan:

I ask, *What reason or motive have I to restore the money?* It will, perhaps, be said, that my regard to justice, and abhorrence of villainy and knavery, are sufficient reasons for me, if I have the least grain of honesty, or sense of duty and obligation. And this answer, no doubt, is just and satisfactory to man in his civiliz'd state, and when train'd up according to a certain discipline and education. But in his rude and more *natural* condition, if you are pleas'd to call such condition natural, this answer wou'd be rejected as perfectly unintelligible and sophistical. (T. 479–480)

The knave and precivilized person seem somewhat alike; or, better put, materially the maxim of the knave resembles that on which one might say she acts whose idea of morality is, as Hume puts it, sheerly natural, that is, one concerned solely for self or for self and self's narrow circle. Neither has a genuine

motive to sacrifice self-interest to common interest—the motive that actuates the honest man is absent from both their personalities.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the material resemblance, there is a significant difference between their conditions, however, for the sheerly natural personality is, and has no reason not to be, open about her rapacity, whereas the sensible knave is, and must be, secret about herself.<sup>5</sup> She could have opted for the less complicated course of an outlaw who just disregards the rules of society and risks the consequences, but instead she wants, like the personality spoken of by Plato's Adeimantos, to enjoy the benefits of seeming just while acting unjustly when her cleverness advises she can get away with it. Duplicity is inherent in the program the knave sets for herself, and a part of the satisfaction she gains results from her being, in a way, two selves. It would be gravely to underestimate her self-congratulation to think she simply counts up her unjust acquisitions (as might the bandit who disregards the rules of justice or, leaving aside the matter of the injustice of the acquisitions, as might the pre-civilized personality successful in her rapacity). The knave's self-satisfaction comes precisely from knowing that she has succeeded with a double life, and for this project secrecy is a component that enhances the pleasure. It remains to determine what is Humean pride so as to decide whether the knave can take pride in herself.

### 3. Pride, What?

Utilizing for purposes of this paper Davidson's treatment of Hume's theory of pride, the following may serve as

a summary of Hume's theory, more or less as he gives it: the cause of pride is a conjunction of the idea (of a house, say) and a quality (beauty). The quality causes the separate and pleasant passion, which under the right conditions causes (by association) the similar pleasant passion of pride. The passion of pride itself always causes the idea of self to appear, and this idea must be related (causally, by association) to the idea of the object (the house) on which the quality is placed.<sup>6</sup>

It is noteworthy that what initiates the generation of pride or love in the standard case is a ground that causes a *separate pleasure*, that is, a cause that has value independently of its relation to its possessor. Pride toward something unpleasant, ugly, or immoral is naturally precluded. Thus Humean pride would not originally cover those innumerable situations where we, in ordinary usage, designate as pride the satisfaction one takes in a situation entirely dependent on a special relation—for example, pride in something of such neutral value as one's infant's first steps.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, Hume's account of pride proceeds, as Davidson puts it, from “a judgment that everyone who exemplifies a

certain property is praiseworthy and a belief that one exemplifies that property oneself" (751). To that extent, a disinterested social perspective is built into the basic structure of Hume's theory of pride and humility, as well as love and hate, and of course the moral virtues.

From premising that character related to one as possessor quite undeniably causes pride, it is a short passage to claiming that the knave may feel pride, for her successful knavery qualifies as a cause external to herself inasmuch as it is describable as a property any person might have, and her consciousness of having acquired it herself confirms it as related to herself. Further, it is an object which, when she reflects on it, she finds pleasing, and thus there is evoked in her a feeling of self-congratulation or, it seems, pride. On this view, and assuming this is all there is to Humean pride, it appears the knave does feel pride in her knavery.

But these operational technicalities are not all there is to Humean pride. The *Treatise* abounds with references such as the following:

Since then the same qualities that produce pride or humility, cause love or hatred; all the arguments that have been employ'd to prove that the causes of the former passions excite a pain or pleasure independent of the passion, will be applicable with equal evidence to the causes of the latter. (T 332)

Reasoning such as this suggests that Hume subscribed to what we might term a Principle of Self-Other Parity<sup>8</sup> (for brevity's sake, "the parity principle"), according to which a quality independently deemed of value necessarily causes love or pride as it is realized interchangeably in other or self.<sup>9</sup> Davidson acknowledges the parity principle in his framing of pride: "if someone is proud that he exemplifies a certain property, then he approves of, or thinks well of, others for exemplifying the same property" (748). Integral to Hume's account of pride, the parity principle requires that no quality can count as a source of pride that, when realized in another, is not a source of love. If there be forms of pleasant feelings about the self that do not share this structure, they will not count as instances of Humean pride. This principle underlies the account of the virtues Hume gives both in the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*.

The parity principle bespeaks a demotion of the importance of the first person that is characteristic of Hume's approach to philosophy generally. The phenomena of life on which he applies the experimental method of reasoning are aggregated data belonging to a public world, or as he so understatedly puts it in the closing paragraph of the Introduction to the *Treatise*:

We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in

the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. (T xix)

Of this insistence on the common or public point of view, the parity principle is but one example.

#### 4. The Knave's Project and the Parity Principle

Hume expressly applies the parity principle to the virtues. In Book II, he declares virtue and vice the most obvious causes of pride and humility (T 295), and he specifically includes justice among the causes of pride (T 279). In Book III, after reviewing the doctrine of the indirect virtues, he writes:

Now virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances. They must necessarily be plac'd either in ourselves or others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore must give rise to one of these four passions. . . . And this is, perhaps, the most considerable effect that virtue and vice have upon the human mind. (T 473; see also T 575, quoted at the head of this paper, and T 473)

Now the knave might argue that her case satisfies the parity principle inasmuch as not only can she prize her own accomplishment but she can prize the same quality in any other where it is found, yielding the requisite parity of pride and love. The conventional moralist response is that such a contention is factually mistaken: like the classical free rider, the knave likes breaking the rules when the results are positive for her but resents breaches of the rules when it is she who is being taken advantage of. The Humean perspective goes beyond this conventional argument and fastens onto the doublemindedness inherent in the knave's program. The question concerning the knave is framed thus: does the satisfaction she takes in succeeding at her life program through duplicity qualify as Humean pride? Before exploring the argument that it does not, we should examine the premises in the light of scholarly controversies concerning Hume's account of pride and the parity principle.

#### 5. Challenges to the Humean Premises

The claim that one cannot naturally take pride in something unpleasant, ugly, or immoral does not go unchallenged. Four dissenting views will be examined: two authors question the doctrine that the object of pride must be independently valuable and two challenge the parity principle.

Pauline Chazan holds that, on condition that "there is an audience to convey feelings of pleasure on viewing something connected to myself," one may have a feeling akin to pride toward "qualities that are *in fact* evil or vicious."<sup>10</sup>

Chazan does not say just who in her scenario is cognizant of the viciousness—is it known to the possessor of the quality but not to those in the audience experiencing feelings of pleasure on viewing it, or possibly only to an impartial third party not a member of the audience? Because only a perverse audience would be gratified at evil, it seems the spectators would have to be ignorant of the vice, and either of the first two options may be presumed to anchor the claim that the quality is vicious. What drives Chazan's case, then, is differing responses in different persons.

Audience error in mistaking vice for virtue has some analogy to the case of the duped associates of the sensible knave, but there are also several compelling differences. First, in Chazan's case what controls is entirely the audience's response in mistakenly attributing to the vicious agent the grounds for pride proper to virtue. The first-person point of view of the possessor of the quality seems absent or submerged into that response, and any independent evaluation by the possessor is a nonfactor. (Such must be the case, for otherwise the agent's knowledge that the cause is vicious would block the feeling of pride.) But the sensible knave's program, being driven by her independent evaluations, is powerfully first-personal. Second, Chazan says the feeling the agent experiences is not pride but what she terms *proto-pride*, something belonging to "an infantile being that can randomly latch onto feelings of pleasure and pain" (59)—in this case, the feelings of the mistaken audience. But the sensible knave's satisfaction at pulling off her secret project springs from herself and does not depend on the reactions of others. Further, Chazan adds that "on the self's entrance into the moral domain proto-pride does not, and cannot remain" (*ibid.*); but of course the knave's project presupposes a well-developed moral domain and counts on other people taking their moral obligations seriously.

When Chazan leaves the topic of proto-pride and goes on to consider Hume's account of pride, she acknowledges the parity principle, and her position overlaps with the present thesis. Genuine Humean pride must be, she insists, well-founded, based on a general point of view, corrected against solid standards, and controlled by an interpersonal perspective, "so that our judgments are ones which others can understand and with which they can agree" (60). Since the account of proto-pride does not fit the sensible knave situation, we may set it aside as presenting no serious challenge to the argument that follows.

Annette Baier maintains that one may take pride even when the cause receives opposing evaluations from one and the same person, though indeed by reference to different sequential states. "If pride in my illicitly financed fine house persists despite recognition of its immoral manner of acquisition, this will be a case, for Hume, of that 'inertia' he finds typical of the emotions, of their lag behind the judgments that ground them."<sup>11</sup> Though Baier does not submerge the owner's independent evaluation into that of an audience, as

does Chazan, the swing between pride and dejection that interests her must be on the part of the owner, and the influence of sound moral judgment, either her own or the spectators', is part of that swing. Since the immorality's discovery would cancel love toward the owner on the spectators' side, the parity principle is vouchsafed.

But the sensible knave situation does not resemble the Baier case, for the moral judgments regarding justice that the knave voices have little or no directive influence on her; since they do not touch the heart, it seems they would not produce the swing Baier mentions. Further, her example does not gainsay the present thesis, for the cause of pride is the fineness of the house, and unquestionably not the knavish injustice of its acquisition. I conclude, accordingly, that neither Chazan nor Baier should be counted as lending support to the view that the sensible knave can have Humean pride in her knavery.

Gabriele Taylor rejects Hume's parity principle. She considers and dismisses the third qualification Hume places on his general account of pride, namely, "that the pleasant or painful object be very discernible and obvious, and that not only to ourselves but to others also" (T 292), and complains that he was mistaken in basing pride and love on "an objective view of the situation; that is, he completely ignores the relevant beliefs of the agent himself."<sup>12</sup> Taylor's preference for framing pride in terms of nonobjective agent beliefs leans toward that person relativism whose transcending I have suggested is a strength of Hume's approach. As it will not do to claim Hume completely ignores the beliefs of the candidate for pride, I propose rather that he intends to *correct* agent beliefs by the best standard available to him, the measured judgments of properly qualified belief-formers. While Taylor is interested in what it is to be proud in the context of our contemporary usage, she aptly interprets Hume to be concerned with the conditions making for a person's being "in some sense justified in his pride" (401). Inasmuch as she offers only contrast, not arguments against Hume, I conclude that Taylor fails to overturn the parity principle.

Far more serious is the case put forward by the foremost authority on Hume on the passions, Páll Árdal. Contesting Donaldson's account of Humean pride, he denies that the cause of pride need be of positive value. With respect to the now standard example of the satisfaction in a splendid manor on the part of its owner, Árdal claims one can take pride in an ugly house.<sup>13</sup> (To make for a genuine dispute, it must be that the house is ugly and that the owner feels its ugliness—in other words, the situation may not to be reduced to the comparatively uncontroversial case of pride based on an erroneous belief of which Árdal wrote in *Passion and Value in Hume's Treatise*, 28.)<sup>14</sup> If the controversy bears on the way we in the twentieth century use the terms *pride* and *proud*, I should let the point pass; but if it concerns Hume's account of pride, Árdal's considerable authority on this topic must be challenged, for without the external cause giving rise to a *separate pleasure* that triggers pride or love, it is

mysterious what can originate the *pleasantness* of the feeling whose object is the self, that is, the *feeling* of pride. It seems to me that Hume stipulates as a limit that the cause involved in pride or love must be such as to strike any observer as pleasant independently of its relation to a particular person. If a house is such that any observer would be ashamed of it, no amount of willed self-affirmation on its owner's part can make it something of which to be proud.<sup>15</sup> This is why owners of ugly houses cannot generate pleasant feelings of ownership by willing it to be true that their houses are beautiful. Davidson's position seems closer to Hume's, though I do not know that I would go so far as he does in saying "the relevant attitudes—approval of beauty, strength, wit, power and possessions—are, Hume thinks, universal."<sup>16</sup> I think "broadly uniform" might be more accurate, and even this needs to be fine-tuned with attention to the distinctions Hume draws in the "Standard of Taste." But the important thing is that it is presumed that the causes of pride will be pleasant not just to the possessor but to all and sundry. Humean pride thus has a public character.

Árdal also challenges the parity principle. He proposes a case of a caring person as a counterexample to this principle. "Benevolence and kindness are clearly the most lovable qualities, but one does not expect a person endowed with these virtues to be proud of possessing them" (390). As an argument I find this unpersuasive, for such a person may be said either to lack self-understanding or to fail to appreciate her own virtue. I would rather assume Árdal is thinking of impropriety not in the caring person's *feeling* due pride, but in her *showing* her pride (he remarks on "the impropriety of displaying pride in one's benevolence"). There is something to this, but if we distinguish between the caring person's characteristic motivations and her accurate judgment as to what is or is not proper to show to others, I confess I fail to see anything *improper* in her choosing not to cloak her pride. Indeed, such a person's benevolence informs her judgment with special sensitivity to the impact on others of exhibitions of pride and affords her motivation not to display her pride indiscriminately. But since it is seldom that a display of pride *in benevolence* is hurtful to others, this caution will not be very constraining. Accordingly, I venture that the person proud of her benevolence will be right to feel due pride, but she will sometimes show her pride, sometimes not; and when she does not, though cognizance of her own worth should be undiminished, still, hidden pride is passionately weak, being unseconded by the admiration of others.<sup>17</sup>

Árdal is to be commended for drawing attention to a class of interesting cases where *an agent's not exhibiting pride is a requirement of virtue*. I would argue that acknowledging such cases would actually afford him a way to block the mistaken view that the sensible knave can take pride in her knavery, since the reason why the knave keeps her self-congratulation secret is by no means a requirement of virtue or a concern for other people. Finally and perhaps most

importantly, let us note that Árdal says the counterexample is not supposed to show that Hume did not subscribe to the parity principle, but rather to evince his judgment that Hume was in error to have done so (390). Happily, Árdal's authority need not be construed as opposed to the interpretation of Humean pride here advanced. Rather, his criticisms address the issue whether what counts as Humean pride translates readily to what in our usage qualifies as pride and the conditions for its display. Accordingly, we may proceed to the argument.

## 6. The Argument Against Pride in Knavery

The knave cannot take Humean pride in herself because in fact the project is not one to which the parity principle is applicable: knavery is not and cannot be an object of love, esteem or admiration by a disinterested spectator. To test this claim, it is necessary that knavery be first *an object*, and anything that is an object must be discernible so that we may notice it, attend to it. The side of itself that knavery presents as discernible is only the knave's appearance as justice-serving, and this can be an object of love and approbation;<sup>18</sup> but here knavery is not an object because what is presented is not what knavery is. Indeed, knavery can be an object, but to this end it must show itself as the object, knavery, that is, as duplicitous. Once this happens, however, it shows itself as other than lovable, and what is not lovable when placed in another cannot, when placed in self, constitute an object of Humean pride.

This will scarcely come as a surprise to the knave, who knows full well that her character qua knave is not socially lovable.<sup>19</sup> But she may counter that her character is lovable to another knave. Whether this be so is a question as ancient as Plato, but not one we need address in Hume, since for Hume what is distinctive about pride and love is that their causes be of value independently of their relation to a particular self.<sup>20</sup> Hume's theory has publicity or, if one prefers, shareability built in, and it is of this feature of his approach that the parity principle is an extension. We have arrived at a straightforward answer to our question.

This conclusion may be frustrating for admirers of knavery, open or secret, who insist that she does experience something in the order of pride, a felt self-satisfaction distinctive of having pulled off duplicity successfully. This may be so, though it be not Humean pride. Let us call it a "secret relish." I do not deny the knave can feel a secret relish in her knavery, but I do deny she can feel Humean pride in her knavery.<sup>21</sup>

## 7. A Possible Counter: Knavery and Greatness

To this, however, the likeliest response on the knave's part would be to throw over the parity principle (perhaps as crediting others with too much control

over how she may think of her own life) and re-affirm an across-the-board priority of self to others. While this move provokes much of far-reaching philosophical interest, I shall explore an alternative response, one that can likewise be given the form that Hume would be inconsistent to deny knavery is a virtue.

Anchoring this argument is the treatment of greatness of mind as a moral virtue (T III iii). The knave might note that in his discussion of the great figures in history, Hume acknowledges as a virtue or admirable quality the high-minded person's elevating herself above the patterns of everyday conduct and rising, when circumstances require such of her, to heroic status affirming herself in the face of powerful opposition on the part of others. The knave might then claim that, in affirming herself with disregard to what others would think of her knavery, she also realizes the quality of greatness of mind.

What makes this argument attractive to the knave is that greatness of mind seems to side-step the parity principle that underlay the argument that the knave cannot take pride in knavery. Greatness of mind is powerfully first-personal, for when the rest of us approve of it, we are won over to that first-personal understanding of what it was that, really, the object of our admiration was about—and this manner of priority of the first person seems to transcend the parity principle.<sup>22</sup> May the knave avail herself of this avenue to showing that knavery constitutes a Humean virtue? Two questions may be distinguished: first, whether Hume's classification of greatness as a virtue is indeed an exception to the parity principle, and second, whether the attitude of mind of the person possessing such a virtue involves an actual repudiation of that principle. If the answers to these questions are negative, the knave's avenue is blocked.

I contend that Hume's classification of greatness as a virtue constitutes no breach of the parity principle, for when the rest of us admire the great hero, the same quality, were it realized in us, would have the same potential to cause pride. By contrast, there is neither love of knavery when it is uncovered in another nor pride when one possesses it oneself. An important difference in the cases is that what the great person is shines through to others, causing admiration, whereas what the knave is must be cloaked from others. In fact, even the great person's self-affirming resistance to us can shine through and be an object of admiration (as can be, and by Hume's terms ought to be, the valor and skill of the general of an army opposing us); but the resistance to us of the knave does not shine through, or if it does become detected, it is no object of admiration.

Turning to the second question, I find no reason to think that the high-minded person repudiates the parity principle, for it is presumed that the great would, if called upon, admire or love the same quality of greatness when it shows itself in another. Still, it might be argued that the very structure of greatness seems to belie self-other parity, for greatness elevates the great above

ordinary people. It would be a mistake, however, to think that what defines greatness is that the great should identify their project precisely in terms of differentiating themselves from the common run of people (a motive that, I take it, sounds decidedly Nietzschean). Although comparison can reinforce pride, Humean greatness is not the same as comparison and is not identified with placing oneself higher than others. The great do not achieve greatness, according to Hume, by making it a maxim to despise ordinary people or by making it a maxim to set themselves over against the ordinary—maxims that do not correspond to Humean virtues—or probably even by making it a maxim to be or become great. Rather, the great simply affirm their own characters, most typically showing steadfastness, strength and courage in the face of severe adversity, and to others their characters shine or *dazzle*, to use Hume's language (T 601). That the great do not repudiate ordinary people is clear, moreover, from the explanation of how they gain a sense of their own worth: this comes when the great person sympathizes with the admiration of her character that other people feel—which serves as the *independent* pleasure arising from her character entering into the production of pride.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

We now conclude that, although she can enjoy a secret relish, Hume's knave may claim neither that she may take pride in her knavery nor that Hume's treating greatness as a moral virtue requires that he withdraw his condemnation of knavery. And these conclusions strengthen Hume's case against knavery and his classification of it as a vice.

As I have addressed questions concerning consistency, it has not been necessary to defend Hume's key doctrines as true or plausible. Still, a few brief comments might be appropriate. The thesis that the cause of love or pride must be something of positive value, I consider defensible to philosophers as presenting a solid baseline for examination of the less typical cases controlled by odd agent beliefs (like the example that Árdal discussed). More in need of elaboration, in my opinion, is the parity principle itself, since this lacks intuitive appeal to philosophers steeped in the tradition that affords epistemological priority to the first person singular. This principle is a powerful weapon in Hume's advocacy for the perspective of common life. The author of judgments to which the principle applies may not affirm her position solely on her own authority (even if she should be prepared to universalize her judgment), but, by reflexivity of the principle itself, must acknowledge the position of any other or others. She may not hold her judgments to be the standard by which others are gauged, but must acknowledge that those judgments may be measured against judgments authored by others (appropriate qualifications applying in each case—hers and theirs). The rejection of pride in knavery shows it is not enough, for example, that the owner of the ugly house should love or

admire the owner of a similar house (one falling under the same story she uses to cover her pride in her house), but it is required that the perspective of any other or other persons in the entire judgment situation (again, appropriate qualifications applying) should be fully credited. Doubtless this makes for a more challenging epistemology, but at the same time I think it offers a richer philosophical outlook.<sup>23</sup>

## NOTES

Citations are taken from David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) abbreviated by "T"; and David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed. revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), abbreviated by "EPM"; both followed by the page numbers in the those editions respectively.

2. The claim is that she cannot broadcast her self-congratulation consistently with her program, not that she cannot discuss the topic publicly at all; she can do so, but best by keeping it at a distance from herself—treating it as a question for speculation—and with this limitation she can even discuss the question whether the knave can feel pride.

3. Taken by itself, this single sentence, highly crafted and even cadent, may give rise to a misconstrual if "exceptions" be interpreted as "loopholes." The exceptions of which the knave takes advantage are private and secret exceptions she makes in her own favor, not loopholes owing to ambiguity or poor wording in a publicly promulgated rule. Of loopholes it is possible to take advantage justly.

4. "The idea of justice can never serve to this purpose [of controuling the partial affections and making us overcome the temptations of self-aggrandizement], or be taken for a natural principle, capable of inspiring men with an equitable conduct towards each other. That virtue, as it is now understood, wou'd never have been dream'd of among rude and savage men. Our natural uncultivated ideas of morality, instead of providing a remedy for the partiality of our affections, do rather conform themselves to that partiality, and give it an additional force and influence" (T. 488–489).

5. It may be objected that the sensible knave does not have to achieve perfect non-detection. First, she can divulge her program to friends who are also knaves, and second, she can survive detection so long as suspicions do not stick, that is, so long as she can enjoy—to use a piece of distasteful contemporary political jargon—*deniability*. I concede the latter point, but as a degradation of the more important truth that ordinarily her aim should be complete nondetection. I deny the first point, except where, in addition to friendship, she has leverage over the parties to whom her knavery is divulged such that under any foreseeable circumstances they stand to lose more by publicizing the story than to gain—a condition that I think is rather hard to satisfy.

6. Donald Davidson, "Hume's Cognitive Theory of Pride," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976): 744–757; the present citation is to 748.
7. I say "originally" because once the account of pride is established and a standard case is settled, resembling cases can be addressed in light of it. For instance, allowing close propinquity in family relations to function as a separate source of pleasure would accommodate the case of the infant's first steps (generalizable to any proud parents, grandparents, etc.). Care must be exercised, however, in establishing the standard case, since through it the very idea of the self is produced (T 287) that is presupposed to such a phenomenon as *one's own* infant's first steps being a separate source of pleasure.
8. By itself, the parity principle has the look of a formal requirement. Hume gives it a full-dress content by showing how it is operationalized through sympathy and by emphasizing how our evaluations of things and persons wither unless supported by the evaluations of others, including often our self-evaluations. In so brief a paper as this I must abstain from drawing on these interesting elaborations on the theme of self-other parity.
9. Two cautions should be noted. First, although this idea of parity is widely acknowledged in a variety of descriptions (see, e.g., Stewart Sutherland, "Hume on Morality and the Emotions," *Philosophical Quarterly* 26 (1976): 19 ff.), the "Principle of Self-Other Parity" is a term of my invention. Second, neither the idea nor the principle is to be taken to require parity in the *degrees* of the passions experienced when a quality is presented in self or in another. Hume remarks that some qualities, for example, benevolence or personal beauty, "have a peculiar aptitude to produce love in others; but not so great a tendency to produce pride in ourselves" (T 392).
10. "Pride, Virtue and Selfhood: A Reconstruction of Hume," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 22 (1992): 59.
11. "Hume's Analysis of Pride," *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1980): 35. A perhaps better contemporary example would be onetime pride in art heirlooms one discovers are illegal Nazi booty.
12. "Pride," in A. O. Rorty, ed., *Explaining Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 388.
13. "Hume and Davidson on Pride," *Hume Studies* 15 (1989): 387–394.
14. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966.
15. Not put off by the suggestion of a pride that must be secret, Ardal wisely cautions that the owner must have some story how she takes pride in an ugly house; but if the parity principle is rejected, it is not clear why having a story should be important. What should go into such a story is unspecified, but in allowing that the party to judge whether the story is satisfactory be the same owner claiming pride—and not any observer—Ardal seems to admit a person relativity where Hume, it seems to me, insists on uniformity of valuations.
16. "Hume's Cognitive Theory of Pride," 748.
17. On the union of pride with virtue, see the brilliant treatment in Annette Baier, "Master Passions," *Explaining Emotions*, in A. O. Rorty, ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

18. It might be thought that the question whether the knave can feel Humean pride in her appearing as a justice-serving person is an interesting one, but a moment's reflection suffices to show that the knave's inward smugness at having duped the justice-minded is a far cry from a feeling of pride. The knave's self-satisfaction derives not from her serving justice but from her not serving justice and still reaping the benefits of deceiving the justice-minded, with the emphasis placed on the latter.

19. The knave's not being able to uncloak her knavery to others has the consequence of cutting her off from those reinforcements of pride that persons of virtue gain in their life in common with others. Knavery's isolation makes for a contrast with the taking of authentic pride in an artificial virtue such as justice which, as Baier puts it, "cannot exist in one person unless others also possess it, so that there is a sense in which the virtue is a community virtue, a necessarily shared virtue in which shared pride may be taken:" "Master Passions," 417.

20. It is still interesting to ask whether a sensible knave will approve of and love knavery in other knaves. A condition for such approval would be that the knavery is directed exclusively at other people, for if the knave visualizes knavery as directed at her—or even potentially directed at her—then the same desire for self-aggrandizement that characteristically motivates her will induce her to respond negatively to that quality in another agent. In contrast, let us imagine a *very* sensible knave who, recognizing disinterestedness as required in the habits of moral thinking she shares with other people at times and to some degree, contemplates whether she can disinterestedly love knavery in other knaves. Even as we recollect that she prefers that the institution of justice thrive than that it wither, a negative answer seems likely, for disinterestedness is not natively at home in her character *qua* knave and as she *gains nothing* through approbation of knavery in others, there is no motivation characteristic to the knave *qua* knave to exercise disinterestedness.

21. There is, of course, also the possibility of a decadent case, namely, taking pride in what others dislike *just for the sake of being deviant* (a motivation perhaps too contemporary to have occurred to Hume). Although, of course, such would not qualify as Humean pride, there is no reason to deny it might, in certain persons, generate a certain sense of self-satisfaction. Let such be termed relish, and I would add that the approbation of fellow deviants in a smallish community within the community at large does not transform it into Humean pride.

22. This is especially evident in the great hero who resists the tyrant, for the conflict is not merely between wills but between interpretations—and to be recognized, the great must achieve victory in the contest of interpretations.

23. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the 24th International Hume Conference, Monterey, California, 1997. Very special thanks are owed my commentator, Eleanor Witttrup. The present version owes improvements to discussion of the sensible knave theme by students in my graduate seminar on Hume, namely, R. Hoffman, M. Lu, and P. Schermerhorn.