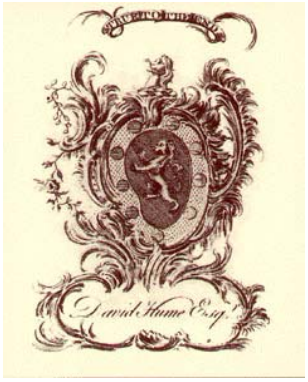

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Hume on Regulating Belief and Moral Sentiment

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There have been numerous discussions in recent years of Hume's general point of view. Some of the issues raised have been (1) Is the general point of view *the* moral point of view? (2) Is the general point of view necessary in order for a judgment to count as a moral judgment? (3) Does the general point of view provide a justificatory perspective or is it a psychological explanatory concept that explains how moral judgments are made without necessarily offering a standard or normative basis for moral judgments? (4) If a general point of view yields some notion of impartiality, then how does it do so without introducing rationalistic elements that would undermine the sentimentalist approach Hume defends?[1]

In this paper I offer an interpretation of Hume's general point of view in morals as, employing a photographic analogy, a kind of focusing activity. It allows for strengthening of sentiments for those remote *and*, through contrariety, weakening of sentiments for those near such that we are moved to focus on those effects that are typical and, through conversing with others, arrive at general principles of praise or blame. I also examine the general point of view in comparison to what Hume has to say about regulation of belief. The comparison with belief sheds new light, I think, on how production of contrariety through the general point of view is regulative in morals. On my interpretation of the general point of view, it does not undermine Hume's sentimentalist thesis in morals, but rather is a device by which sentiment is properly aroused and directed. The comparison with the belief-regulating

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mechanism of Book 1 of the *Treatise* also suggests some ways in which Hume's treatment of the general point of view is part of a unified or systematic treatment of regulation, that for Hume regulation is itself a kind of virtue—cognitive, passional, or moral.[2]

In what follows I will first briefly discuss the notion of regulation with respect to belief about matters of fact, that is, causal relations. This will be helpful in setting up the scope of regulation in morals, since the latter involves, but is not limited to, regulation of belief. The discussion of belief will be followed by a longer discussion of the general point of view and the issue of regulation in morals. Finally, I will draw explicit comparisons between the two kinds of regulation that both illuminate moral regulation and secondarily suggest that Hume has a unified treatment of regulation.

1. The Generalizing Propensity and General Rules

In *Treatise* 1.3.13 Hume explicitly discusses what he calls "general rules" (T.3.13.7–12; SBN 146–50).

> Shou'd it be demanded why men form general rules, and allow them to influence their judgment, even contrary to present observation and experience, I shou'd reply, that in my opinion it proceeds from those very principles, on which all judgments concerning causes and effects depend. Our judgments concerning cause and effect are deriv'd from habit and experience; and when we have been accustom'd to see one object united to another, our imagination passes from the first to the second, by a natural transition, which precedes reflection, and which cannot be prevented by it. (T 1.3.13.8; SBN 147)

There are two tendencies that Hume identifies under "generalizing." The first is an error-prone generalizing tendency of the imagination and the second is the tendency to form corrections, in the understanding to form general rules for regulating inferences. Hume calls both these tendencies species of "generalizing" because in each case the mind moves beyond what is immediately present before it and supplements with an idea or a device from its own activity.[3]

There is some debate among commentators about whether Hume makes a sharp distinction between reflective, deliberate generalizing (such as that involved in the formation of the rules by which to judge of causes and effects) and the careless, "loose," unreflective generalizing, whereby the former is identified with the understanding and is regulated, whereas the latter is unregulated and identified with the imagination.[4] I incline to the view that

the distinction is not a sharp one. Hume himself sometimes treats the understanding as one, regulated, exercise of the natural propensity, or imagination. For example, he says,

> Nothing is more dangerous to reason than the flights of the imagination, and nothing has been the occasion of more mistakes among philosophers. . . . But on the other hand, if the consideration of these instances makes us take a resolution to reject all the trivial suggestions of the fancy, and adhere to *the understanding, that is, to the general and more establish'd properties of the imagination*; even this resolution if steadily executed, wou'd be dangerous, and attended with the most fatal consequences. For...the understanding, when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or in common life. (T 1.4.7.6–7; SBN 267. Emphasis mine.)[5]

Moreover, some regulative devices could not strictly be said to be a product of the understanding, following reflectively formed causal rules. Hume explicitly attributes the fiction of ideal equality to the imagination (although he vacillates between calling it regulative and *merely* a fiction).[6] That there may be a dual character to a generalizing propensity would not be surprising in an association-based, naturalized conception of mental functions. On the one hand, the error-prone generalizing tendency tends to be "destructive of all the most establish'd principles of reasoning" and that by which the "vulgar are commonly guided" whereas the regulative, "the more general and authentic operations of the understanding" guide "wise men" (T 1.3.13.12; SBN 150). On the other hand, the imagination or the generalizing tendency may itself be a source of at least some regulative supplementations or some legitimate evaluations.[7]

At *Treatise* 1.3.15, "Rules by which to judge of causes and effects," Hume enumerates eight regulative rules of the understanding and says of them "Since therefore 'tis possible for all objects to become causes or effects to each other, it may be proper to fix some general rules, by which we may know when they really are so" (T 1.3.15.2; SBN 173)[8] The eight general rules specify that cause and effect must be contiguous, that we must distinguish between essential and accidental conjunctions and the like.[9] These rules are the "logic" to employ in reasoning, but they "might have been supply'd by the natural principles of our understanding" (T 1.3.15.11; SBN 175). Hume says "the following of general rules is a very unphilosophical species of probability," yet

it is "only by following them that we can correct this, and all other unphilosophical probabilities" (T 1.3.13.12; SBN 150).[10]

> [T]ho' custom be the foundation of all our judgments, yet sometimes it has an effect on the imagination in opposition to the judgment, and produces a contrariety in our sentiments concerning the same object . . . In almost all kinds of causes there is a complication of circumstances, of which some are essential, and others superfluous; . . . we may observe, that when these superfluous circumstances are numerous, and remarkable, and frequently conjoin'd with the essential, they have such an influence on the imagination, that even in the absence of the latter they carry us on to the conception of the usual effect, and give to that conception a force and vivacity, which make it superior to the mere fictions of the fancy. We may correct this propensity by a reflection on the nature of those circumstances; but 'tis still certain, that custom takes the start, and gives a biass to the imagination. (T 1.3.13.9; SBN 148)

The reflection that allows one to correct the generalizing propensity in the understanding is itself guided by associationist principles. The mind discerns patterns in the flux of experience and on the basis of those patterns generates rules for discriminating those connections that are "essential" (which "really" determine the mind to a belief that there is a necessary connexion) from those that are "superfluous." In doing so, causal reasoning, reasoning about matters of fact, can proceed in a regulated fashion; maybe the rules even yield truth about matters of fact, as far as we know;[11] in any case, they make experience and belief coherent.[12]

These rules are articulated and specifically flagged as regulative by Hume, and for good reason; causal reasoning is pervasive in all aspects of human life, including morals. I shall not consider the adequacy of these rules as guidelines to reliable belief in matters of fact.[13] My interest here is only to note how they contribute to an understanding of what regulation of belief consists in for Hume. The need for such regulation arises not only with respect to the possibility of science or "experimental inquiry," but in ordinary life, where the need for regulation would be most vivid for most of us. Thus, following associationist principles, I shall consider examples from ordinary life in which Hume describes how regulation of belief would take place. (Presumably, a systematic inquirer, a scientist, would have a well-established discipline or habit of making regulated inferences, although both in inquiry as well as in ordinary life, she, too, would experience the need to check over-generalizing propensities.)

2. Belief-Regulation: Reasoning About Matters of Fact

One illustration of the error-prone propensity of the imagination is the famous example of the prejudice by which an Irishman lacks wit, and a Frenchman solidity at *Treatise* 1.3.13.7 (SBN 146–7).

> An *Irishman* cannot have wit, and a *Frenchman* cannot have solidity; for which reason, tho' the conversation of the former in any instance be visibly very agreeable, and of the latter very judicious, we have entertain'd such a prejudice against them, that they must be dunces or fops in spite of sense and reason. Human nature is very subject to errors of this kind.

In this example, the judgment of individual character is distorted, even in the face of contrary present evidence, by a generalization formed on previous experience and custom; even if the evidence from prior experience were limited, the mind still has a tendency to ("over-") generalize. We are error-prone due to the mind's tendencies to follow what is easy and effortless, typically under the influence of custom, but sometimes of resemblance or other principles of association. We thus do not pay close enough attention to what is discernible, indeed actually present before us, but are swept along by the "natural" tendencies of our mental activity, to "supplement" what is immediately present to us and in so doing make a (mis-) judgment of fact.[14] In this case, appropriate regulation has not taken place.

Now a case where belief-regulation does occur:

> [L]et us consider the case of a man, who being hung out from a high tower in a cage of iron cannot forbear trembling, when he surveys the precipice below him, tho' he knows himself to be perfectly secure from falling, by his experience of the solidity of the iron, which supports him; and tho' the ideas of fall and descent, and harm and death, be deriv'd solely from custom and experience. The same custom goes beyond the instances, from which it is deriv'd, and to which it perfectly corresponds; and influences his ideas of such objects as are in some respect resembling, but fall not precisely under the same rule. (T 1.3.13.10; SBN 148)[15]

There is a conflict between two beliefs, but one is error-prone while the other is not. While we may not be able to entirely eliminate the belief that we might fall or the fear of doing so, we can to some extent "correct" or regulate the belief. Through appealing to the general rules of the understanding the mind can mitigate the fear even if not wholly eliminate or replace it. Regulation

consists not necessarily in ridding oneself of a false belief (or unreasonable passion), but in mitigating its influence. As Hume puts it in discussing the man in the iron cage:

> This difficulty we can remove after no other manner, than by supposing the influence of general rules. We shall afterwards [T 1.3.15] take notice of some general rules, by which we ought to regulate our judgment concerning causes and effects; and these rules are form'd on the nature of our understanding, and on our experience of its operations in the judgments we form concerning objects. By them we learn to distinguish the accidental circumstances from the efficacious causes; and when we find that an effect can be produc'd without the concurrence of any particular circumstance, we conclude that that circumstance makes not a part of the efficacious cause, however frequently conjoin'd with it. But as this frequent conjunction necessarily makes it have some effect on the imagination, in spite of the opposite conclusion from general rules, the opposition of these two principles produces a contrariety in our thoughts, and causes us to ascribe the one inference to our judgment, and the other to our imagination. The general rule is attributed to our judgment; as being more extensive and constant. The exception to the imagination; as being more capricious and uncertain. (T 1.3.13.11; SBN 149)

"Correction" or regulation in this case consists in the reflective awareness that the verdict of judgment is the (more probably) correct one and that awareness mitigates, or at least prevents, any further increase in the vivacity of the opposing belief and fear. The regulative general rules function as procedures that would sort out the essential from the accidental in any alleged causal connection; they interrupt or allay the vividness of the specific resembling content, which in the particular case leads to the faulty belief.[16] At the same time, the corrected judgment is less vivid in these circumstances than it might be under calmer ones. Compare Hume's comment on correcting the senses:

> A like reflection on *general rules* keeps us from augmenting our belief upon every encrease of the force and vivacity of our ideas. Where an opinion admits of no doubt, or opposite probability, we attribute to it a full conviction; tho' the want of resemblance, or contiguity, may render its force inferior to that of other opinions. 'Tis thus the understanding corrects the appearance of the senses, and makes us imagine, that an object at twenty foot distance seems even to the eye as large as one of the same dimensions at ten." (T 1.3.10.12; SBN 631–2)

If correction or regulation is successful the general rule outweighs, even if it does not necessarily replace or eliminate, the influence of a vivid impression or the unregulated generalizing tendency of the imagination. If the habit of regulation really takes hold, perhaps the vivacity of the passion of terror will be weakened sufficiently that it won't bother one at all. But, it is also possible that the fearful belief (and passion) may be so vivid that no contrariety can be produced, or regulation achieved, in which case thought and action would be phobic. Which of these possibilities obtains with regard to a particular individual would depend on a variety of specific factors, including the overall character and disposition of the person (e.g., temperament and mental habits, cultivated or uncultivated, disciplined or undisciplined, and the like), their past experience, and the immediate circumstances of the situation. Without the contrariety produced by the operation of the regulative general rules and the reflective assessment of them as what ought to be believed, the error-prone generalizing tendency would operate unimpeded and unregulated belief and passion would persist unabated. Given our passionate natures, regulation would rarely, if ever, completely eliminate incorrect beliefs or sentiments and replace them with corrected ones. Rather, regulation consists in the mitigation, not the wholesale elimination, of the influence of uncorrected beliefs and passions.[17]

What gives a rule or a supplementation regulative status is how it functions in the understanding.

> But here it may be objected, that the imagination, according to my own confession, being the ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy, I am unjust in blaming the antient philosophers for making use of that faculty, and allowing themselves to be entirely guided by it in their reasonings. In order to justify myself, I must distinguish in the imagination betwixt the principles which are permanent, irresistible, and universal; such as the customary transition from causes to effects, and from effects to causes: And the principles, which are changeable, weak, and irregular; such as those I have just now taken notice of. The former are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin. The latter are neither unavoidable to mankind, nor necessary, or so much as useful in the conduct of life; but on the contrary are observ'd only to take place in weak minds, and being opposite to the other principles of custom and reasoning, may easily be subverted by a due contrast and opposition. (T 1.4.4.1; SBN 225)

The guidance of the general rules concerning cause and effect reasoning are indispensable to empirical inquiry and sound practical reasoning. To the extent that practical reasoning, belief and inquiry into matters of fact are "inseparable" from the species, then so too are the principles, namely, general rules by which to judge causes and effects. I'm not entirely sure what Hume means by "inseparable from the species." It could mean, not that every member of the species practices or follows the rules, but that the species would be unrecognizable if no one followed them (if there were no such practice as empirical inquiry) and if they were not commonly recognized as legitimate standards or guidelines even when not followed by particular individuals.[18]

Regulative devices ensure the possibility of reliability in belief, or alternatively put, the possibility of "wise men," of persons of sound judgment, of reasonable persons. It is a process that involves *both* conscious attention or effort to be "reasonable" and the operation of custom, habit, and natural propensity to restrain reasoning from tending toward excessive skepticism or excessive confidence in our beliefs (or sentiments) or from tending to follow and reinforce an unregulated passion (e.g., fear). Regulation consists in the mitigation, that is, the weakening of the influence, not the elimination of unregulated belief and passion through the production of a contrary belief.

3. Regulation in Morals

Hume explicitly argues that reason alone is not sufficient, but sentiment is necessary, to account for the origin of moral distinctions. In claiming that moral distinctions do not have their origin solely in reason, Hume means to reject both (1) the idea that moral distinctions derive from rational intuition or insight or from rational a priori principles or innate ideas; and (2) the idea that moral distinctions derive solely from even his own associationist account of reasoning about matters of fact.[19] Yet, Hume explicitly affirms that reasoning about matters of fact, namely, the tendencies of action and disposition, is indispensable in morals. Therefore, general rules for cause and effect reasoning are relevant to the processes that culminate in moral distinctions.[20] But, since morals is not, on Hume's view, reducible to or derivable from reasoning (either about matters of fact or relations of ideas), but requires the activation of sentiment, there are regulative issues with respect to sentiment that are not managed, so to speak, simply by regulated causal reasoning. In morals regulative devices allow for the arousal of moral sentiments of approval and disapproval with some degree of independence from partiality.[21]

The basic story about moral evaluation is well known. Roughly, through sympathy, I come to feel sentiments of approval or disapproval when I view the tendencies of qualities or character traits.[22]

> The approbation of moral qualities most certainly is not deriv'd from reason . . . but proceeds entirely from a moral taste, and from certain sentiments of pleasure and disgust, which arise upon the contemplation and view of particular qualities or characters. (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581)

Through sympathy I feel approval for character traits that tend to be useful or agreeable to someone (myself or others). One issue then is, how do I feel approval when the others I am viewing are not connected to me (e.g., through causal relations, resemblance or contiguity). Rules regulating causal reasoning, while relevant to moral evaluation (T 1.3.15.11; SBN 175, and EMP Appendix 1.11; SBN 290), would not by themselves regulate my tendency to either disregard those who are not connected to me or to favor those who are. If moral sentiments were based on the unregulated tendencies of sympathy towards indifference and partiality, there would be no possibility of common morality. The function of the general rules regulating causal reasoning in morals is to ensure that the "reasoning" about matters of fact pertinent to moral evaluation is correct. But, in addition, sympathy must be regulated because its "natural" tendency is toward partiality.[23] In that sense the first distinctively *moral* general rule is that one ought to adopt a "general point of view" from which one views things "steadily" and as distinct from one's own particular interests and perspectives (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581-2). In morals, then, regulation concerns *both* accurate discernment of the general tendencies of actions (the typical effects of traits) and adoption of the appropriate "point of view" from which appropriate moral sentiment will be aroused.

> The case is here the same as in our judgments concerning external bodies. All objects seem to diminish by their distance: But tho' the appearance of objects to our senses be the original standard, by which we judge of them, yet we do not say, that they actually diminish by the distance; but correcting the appearance by reflection, arrive at a more constant and establish'd judgment concerning them. In like manner, tho' sympathy be much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and a sympathy with persons remote from us much fainter than that with persons near and contiguous; yet we neglect all these differences in our calm judgments concerning the characters of men. Besides, that we ourselves often change our situation in this particular, we every day meet with persons, who are in a different situation from ourselves, and who cou'd never converse with us on any reasonable terms, were we to remain constantly in that situation and point of view, which is peculiar to us. The intercourse of sentiments,

> therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general unalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners. And tho' the *heart* does not always take part with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them, yet are they sufficient for discourse, and serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools. (T 3.3.3.2; SBN 603)

Another issue is the overall fluctuating tendencies of mental activities.

> Now 'tis evident, that these sentiments, whence-ever they are deriv'd, must vary according to the distance or contiguity of the objects; nor can I feel the same lively pleasure from the virtues of a person, who liv'd in *Greece* two thousand years ago, that I feel from the virtues of a familiar friend and acquaintance. Yet I do not say, that I esteem the one more than the other: And therefore, if the variation of the sentiment, without a variation of the esteem, be an objection, it must have an equal force against every other system, as against that of sympathy. But to consider the case aright, it has no force at all; and 'tis the easiest matter in the world to account for it. Our situation, with regard both to persons and things, is in continual fluctuation; and a man, that lies at a distance from us, may, in a little time, become a familiar acquaintance. Besides, every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and '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 3.3.1.15; SBN 581)[24]

We similarly alternate between immediate sense perception and memory, for example, when we have a present impression of an object as large and a memory of it as small when we were (presume ourselves to have been) farther away from the object. Or, when other passions are involved, the same experience can be in one respect fearful and in another not. (Sometimes, as in the case of the man in the iron cage, the prevailing of two mental states may be a good thing in that one counteracts the other to good overall effect such that a kind of constancy or balance is struck.) In the understanding, the conflict between fluctuating points of view is internal to the individual, in other words, the conflict is between different ways in which I take my own mental activities and contents. In morals, there are at least two levels of conflict. My different manner of taking things (points of view) follows from the fluctuations and variations in my mental activity itself that can be due to many factors, such as fortune, one's own mental disposition at any time, the

vivacity of a particular impression of one's situation, one's shifting interests, and the like. The second problem is that of partiality (and its converse, indifference) and conflict between persons who have different passionate attachments and interests, as well as the difficulty of communication between persons with particular points of view.

What is needed, then, for morals is a steady and "impartial" evaluation such that the sentiments that one experiences are those that any [normal] person experiences when s/he, too, takes the objects in the same way.[25] This "universality" or intersubjective agreement might ideally involve convergence of sentiments in both kind and degree, but in practice different evaluators may approve of the same object (the moral sentiment or evaluation would be the same), even as their respective moral sentiments might differ in strength or degree. "Universality" is also sensitive to social context and allows for variation in where the line is drawn, so to speak. As Hume puts it:

> Love between the nearer relations is contrary to reason and public utility; but the precise point, where we are to stop, can scarcely be determined by natural reason; and is therefore a very proper subject for municipal law or custom.[26]

A general point of view, then, eases inner or intra-individual conflict (inconstancy and variation) as well as the tendency toward partiality in one's sympathy by focusing attention on relevant character traits and their typical effects so that the appropriate moral sentiments can be aroused via the mechanism of sympathy.

> Every quality of the mind is denominated *virtuous*, which gives pleasure by the mere survey; as every quality, which produces pain, is call'd *vicious*. . . . One may, perhaps, be surpriz'd, that amidst all these interests and pleasures, we shou'd forget our own, which touch us so nearly on every other occasion. But we shall easily satisfy ourselves on this head, when we consider, that every particular person's pleasure and interest being different, 'tis impossible men cou'd ever agree in their sentiments and judgments, unless they chose some common point of view, from which they might survey their object, and which might cause it to appear the same to all of them. Now in judging of characters, the only interest or pleasure, which appears the same to every spectator, is that of the person himself, whose character is examin'd; or that of persons, who have a connexion with him. And tho' such interests and pleasures touch us more faintly than our own, yet being more constant and universal, they counter-ballance the

> latter even in practice, and are alone admitted in speculation as the standard of virtue and morality. They alone produce that particular feeling or sentiment, on which moral distinctions depend. (T 3.3.1.30; SBN 591. See also EPM 9.6; SBN 272–3)

The continual flux of the mind and the difficulty of engaging in social intercourse motivates us to find another, steadier, viewpoint.

> 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 3.3.1.15; SBN 581–2. See also EPM 9.6; SBN 272–3)[27]

Having formed such points of view and placed oneself in them, one evaluates someone's character in virtue of the influence it has on those with whom the person interacts, irrespective of their connections to the evaluator, that is, irrespective of the (partial) interests one might have in any of them (or conversely, the utter indifference one might have towards them):

> 'Tis therefore from the influence of characters and qualities, upon those who have an intercourse with any person, that we blame or praise him. We consider not whether the persons, affected by the qualities, be our acquaintance or strangers, countrymen or foreigners. Nay, we over-look our own interest in those general judgments. (T 3.3.1.17; SBN 582)

This "forming" and "placing" of oneself in a general point of view is the work of imagination reflecting on the operations of sympathy and other mental operations.[28] Sympathy is necessary for morality because it makes possible communication, shared experience and feeling for others; but it is not sufficient because its operation tends to be partial, that is, it tends to favor those "near and dear" (due to contiguity, blood relation, resemblance, and the like). The broader one's intercourse with others, the more one comes to realize the need for a common point of view.[29] The imagination is supposing something ("supplementing") in order to facilitate the activation of appropriate sentiments.[30]

But just what does the mind do when it creates this general point of view? I suggest that it is a kind of imaginative act of focusing. An apt analogy might be to a photographer selecting and focusing and in so doing creating a subject matter, which when viewed arouses moral sentiments of approbation or

disapprobation. The moral sentiments aroused have their origin in the natural sympathetic responses of human beings, which when corrected or regulated by the appropriate selection and focus are "impartial." The point of view itself is something invented ("fixed") and in which one places oneself in reflection as that reflection is itself influenced by social experience. Since correction depends on social intercourse and discourse, the process may involve a kind of socialized imagination generating general or common points of view. Nor is focusing necessarily equivalent to narrowing. The photographic analogy allows for a number of possibilities:[31]

(a) Just as one can widen a focus by using a wide-angled lens, the general point of view can make sympathy more extensive. A general point of view allows the operation of sympathy to be more inclusive (even if not perfectly impartial) than it would be in the natural position of partial benevolence and limited generosity and to provide a position from which to generate general standards of virtue to compensate for the limitations in the operation of sympathy in communication between actual persons.

(b) Just as one can, using a telescopic or zoom lens, bring a distant object into closer and more detailed view, a general point of view, by rendering one's relation to the persons involved more intimate, allows sympathy to produce the appropriate vividness in the idea of the (eventually, typical) effects of a person's character traits.[32]

(c) In addition, the analogy of focusing may also explain how the general point of view might facilitate the process of causal reasoning about the matters of fact in question (e.g., about who is causing what [benefit/harm] to whom and about the general tendencies of actions), by bringing to the spectator's attention relations that were not noticed from a more situated or partial view.[33]

Let us look more closely at how this might work. Consider the example of the servant and Marcus Brutus (T 3.3.1.16; SBN 582). I would be likely to mistakenly judge what are the effects of interacting with Brutus's character traits because when remaining in my particular perspective, I am not likely to feel the effects of Brutus's character and therefore would feel no or less approval for Brutus than for my servant. By remaining in my present situated perspective and being close to the servant I could mistakenly judge my servant to be more virtuous than Brutus (I feel more approval for the servant as having traits that are love-producing or beneficial).

Hume suggests that the general point of view is supposed to put me in a perspective whereby I am more intimate to Brutus and thus able to more accurately assess the effects of his character traits. But, the mistake might also be on the side of the servant; perhaps I overestimate the servant because of closeness, or because the servant satisfies a self-interested need of mine that

blinds me, e.g., suppose in my survey I have failed to notice all the ways in which the servant's character trait affects the relevant others. Hume tends to emphasize the defects in our judgment on those distant from us due to weakness of their impact on us compared to the vivacity of self-interest and partiality in assessing those who are close, rather than the defects in our judgment about those who are close to us where the problem might be an overly vivid assessment of their character. His language then often suggests that the solution is to, in imagination, move closer to those who are distant so as to make more vivid the effects of the character traits in question.[34] But his repeated emphasis on having to move away from our own self-interest suggests that we might also have to correct defective judgments of overestimation (excessive approval) of those close to us.

The principle of vivacity is at work in Hume's concern to provide an account of how ideas of those distant from us become enlivened such that moral sentiment is aroused. At the same time, as we saw in the treatment of belief-regulation in the understanding, regulation involves a mitigating or weakening of an incorrect (e.g., fearful) belief through the contrariety produced in the mind when another belief about the relevant causal relations is introduced and that I come to recognize as the "correct" belief. Perhaps a similar process takes place with sentiment regulation through the general point of view. My hypothesis is that by (imaginatively) moving closer to those who are distant, thereby strengthening the vivacity of the effects of their character traits, a contrariety in our sentiments is produced that thereby weakens the vivacity of the sentiments for those closer to us. It is by this dual movement of strengthening for those remote and of weakening for those near that we come to settle on, to focus on, those effects that are typical and, mediated by conversing with others, arrive at general principles of praise or blame. Thus, instead of merely conflict between two comparable feelings, the dual movement shifts our attention to the character traits and their usual effects, rather than attending to our connection or lack of connection to the persons themselves. This shift of attention provides for a more stable focus so that agreement on general principles can be forged.[35]

Thus, the general point of view enables the spectator:

1. to attend to those to whom s/he might otherwise be indifferent (and thus underestimate their character),
2. to be more judicious in assessing those to whom s/he might be partial (and thus overestimate their character),
3. to make more accurate discernment of the causal relations involved as attention settles on the character traits or qualities and their tendencies rather than the particular persons,

4. to have the moral sentiments of praise and blame aroused by the steady contemplation of the character traits and their usual tendencies,

and finally,

5. (with reasonable discourse) to generate more general principles by which to assess character traits, that is, by which to apportion praise and blame.

The standard for apportionment of praise and blame (step 5) cannot be a matter of reason deciding what is appropriate. Rather, facilitated by reasonable discourse, it is a settled formulation of step 4, of the sentiments of praise and blame that are felt upon the steady contemplation of character traits and their tendencies. Following the photographic analogy, the general point of view is an imaginative act of focusing on or attending to (e.g., by bringing into closer view as in step 1, or by putting into more distant or wider view as in step 2, or by refocusing on traits and their tendencies as in steps 3 and 4) the relevant relations and effects. When it is adopted, it allows for disinterestedness in both the operation of sympathy and the arousal of moral sentiments. In conjunction with "reasonable conversing with others," general principles are formulated. This process is not necessarily linear; nor does the production of "corrected" moral sentiments at steps 1, 2, and 4 necessarily replace or eliminate the sentiments, strong and weak for those close and distant respectively. Rather, the "corrected" sentiments may prevail with the originals; "correction" consists in producing contrariety such that one's situated sentiments are neither the sole possibilities nor themselves incorrigible.[36] I do not permanently remain in a general point of view, but I can re-enact or re-adopt it. I might still love my servant and praise him/her more warmly than Brutus, but I might also agree that according to general principles my servant and Brutus are equally morally praiseworthy because from a general point of view I feel that their relevant traits are.

Thus, on my reading, Hume's emphasis on the need to compensate for our partiality making us indifferent to those distant (step 1) rather than what I above identify as step 2 does not entail that his account lacks the resources to correct our partial judgments.[37] Hume may have been more gripped by the problem of showing how to get sentiments going when we are not close and there is no self-interest or other immediate source of vivacity to draw on. This would be consistent with his concern to refute the implications of self-love theories, namely, that there could be no genuine concern for an other and therefore no moral sentiment in the absence of or disconnected from (the vivacity of) self-interest. But, the interpretation I offer is compatible with the principle of vivacity and with what Hume says does occur in making moral

evaluations (e.g., "One may . . . be surpriz'd, that amidst all these interests and pleasures, we shou'd forget our own, which touch us so nearly on every other occasion" [T 3.3.1.30; SBN 591]).

Some commentators read Hume as identifying the moral sentiment as the one that is made from the general point of view (for example, for Cohon, as involving steps 1 and 3 in particular; for Hearn as involving steps 1, 3, and 4).[38] Others argue that incorrect moral sentiments may precede and are corrected by the adoption of a general point of view.[39] The former interpretation is supported, for example, by T 3.1.2.4 (SBN 472) ("only when a character is consider'd in general . . . [does it cause] such a feeling or sentiment, denominates it morally good or evil"). But Hume characterizes our assessments of characters close to us (e.g., the servant) in moral terms as virtuous. That these assessments are not the final word as far as "general principles" of praise and blame go would not entail that they are not moral assessments. While my interpretation of the operation of the general point of view does not turn on this point, it does seem to me that just as one can make unsound causal inferences, so too can one make unsound moral evaluations. I may come to realize that my basis for approval is not typical and therefore not an appropriate basis for moral sentiment, but that is just to say that appropriate moral evaluations are ones that have a less idiosyncratic basis and admit of intersubjective agreement. A general point of view functions as a mental device for correcting them, but if it is not required for experiencing moral sentiments per se, then it would seem doubtful to attribute to Hume the view that the reflective step is required in order for one's sentiments to count as moral.[40] A general point of view explains both how it is possible to make common moral appraisals (as a psychological process) and what the source of the standard for such appraisals would be (as a substantive moral standard), but it may not be required for moral appraisal per se.

4. Unified Treatment of Regulation

This account of the general point of view in morals conforms to the earlier account of regulation of belief on several counts:

(1) The general point of view in morals is prompted, in some respects, by the same kinds of problems that affect belief and causal reasoning, that is, fluctuation, inconstancy, following whatever comes easiest, contradiction and mental conflict.

(2) Just as the general rules of the understanding are meant to guide the mind in sorting out the vivacity associated with resemblance and contiguity from that associated with causation (or constant conjunction)

and in sorting out essential from accidental connections, the general point of view is meant to sort out the vivacity of love, hatred, and interest from the vivacity peculiar to the moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation and among moral sentiments to even out the over- and under-estimation that tends to occur due to proximity and remoteness from the persons surveyed.

(3) Depending on the individual and the situation, the adoption or placing of oneself in a general point of view can be a deliberate, conscious act or it can be an unconscious or unself-conscious habit. This point parallels the case with belief. In belief, "the wise man" apportions belief to the evidence and presumably does so as a matter of habit, while "the vulgar" habitually make unsound inferences. For the former ("wise man"), the following of general rules in causal reasoning has been cultivated so that it comes, much or at least some of the time, naturally or unself-consciously to the believer; as habit of mind, it has become like a natural virtue. For the latter, presumably conscious effort would be needed to cultivate more cautious habits of causal reasoning. At the same time, "the wise man" is never wholly immune to the influence of passions and unregulated principles of association that tend to lead to unsound beliefs and in some circumstances may need to exert conscious effort to follow general rules. Thus, the man in the iron cage, even if in more ordinary circumstances inclined to follow general rules of causal reasoning, in this circumstance has to make considerable effort to apportion belief to the evidence. (A modern version might be the otherwise generally reasonable person who has a palpable fear of airplane flight.) Similarly, then, with morals and the general point of view. An individual could have cultivated the habit of adopting a general point of view in moral evaluation such that its adoption need not always involve self-conscious effort to displace partiality (or to be sensitively disposed rather than indifferent), while for the same individual there may be circumstances in which adopting such a point of view is a conscious, deliberate act—for instance, circumstances in which partiality or self-interest is particularly strong or urgent. The alternatives are not mutually exclusive: a general point of view can be cultivated as a mental habit *and* sometimes its adoption is a matter of conscious, deliberate attention.[41]

(4) Nor is partiality necessarily eliminated in Hume's conception of the regulation that can be achieved by framing and adopting a general point of view (T 3.3.1.18, 3.3.3.2; SBN 583, 603). Rather, it is opposed and in reflection, if all goes well, outweighed by more stable and widely shared moral sentiments of esteem and disapprobation.[42] Again, this is parallel to the treatment of regulation in belief: recall the discussion

of the person suspended in a cage in *Treatise* 1.3.13, where regulation consisted not necessarily in eliminating the fearful beliefs and passions altogether but, through the application of general rules in reflection, producing contrariety and thereby weakening their vivacity.

(5) The regulative status of a general point of view depends on its necessity and inseparability (nonarbitrariness) for sound moral evaluations. A general point of view is presumably necessary for the making of *common* ("universal") moral distinctions. It provides a point of view from or within which the moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation can be *appropriately* aroused and enlivened and in reasonable discourse formulated as general principles of praise and blame. To the extent that morality in this sense is "inseparable" from the species, then so too is a general point of view, not because everyone adopts it, but because without it there would be no common morals at all, but only confused and vacillating passions, partial interests, and prejudicial moral evaluations.

On the other hand, there are some differences in the cases of regulation with regard to belief and with regard to morals because the problem is also not the same. The conflict, uneasiness, or inconstancy is not just within my own mental activity or for myself *qua* knower or believer, but is social.[43] In other words, morals are concerned with relations between and among people and the problem is not (only) what is warranted for a believer and what will facilitate inquiry and ordinary life, but (also) what will regulate conflict, discourse, and social relations between people. In Hume's characterization regulation in morals requires in some respects an opposite move from that required in causal reasoning. In the latter, the tendency of the mind is to overextend itself by not distinguishing carefully between accidental and essential connections. Regulation requires a narrowing of focus to picking out just those connections that are essential. In morals, the case is more complicated in that one has to *both* employ the regulative rules of causal reasoning that involves narrowing, *and* form a general point of view that requires a *broadening* of one's point of view, and an *intensifying* of focus so that the relevant object(s), that is, persons, can appropriately affect one's sympathy. Not only must one identify the relevant "facts" (of character), but one must correct for one's tendency to take too narrow a view, for one's partiality (or indifference).[44]

The following chart displays the pattern in the main:

BELIEF/CAUSAL REASONING	MORAL JUDGMENT
1. the mind is confronted by problems of inconstancy, facility	1. in addition to being confronted by inconstancy, the mind is also confronted by problems of partiality, indifference, conflict
2. in response, the mind invents rules, artifices, devices (rules regulating reasoning about cause and effect)	2. in response, and in addition to the rules regulating casual reasoning, the mind seeks a general point of view, a general basis for formulating common standards
3. the mind sorts out vivacity of essential from that of accidental connections, vivacity associated with resemblance and contiguity from that of causation	3. the mind not only sorts out essential from accidental connections and resembling and contiguous relations from causal relations, but also sorts out the vivacity of love, hatred, and interest from that of approbation/disapprobation
4. this narrowing of attention enables the mind to focus on what is essential	4. in addition to narrowing its attention as in casual reasoning, in moral judgment, the mind is able to weaken partiality (by pulling back), to get the moral sentiments going (by intensifying its focus), and to make its judgments more inclusive (by widening its focus)
5. the mind can then mitigate, but not eliminate, unregulated (e.g., fearful) belief; overcome skepticism in practice by allowing regulated belief	5. the mind can then mitigate but not eliminate partiality in sentiments; overcome indifference by putting one close enough that sentiments will be aroused

Concluding Remarks

While Hume may disavow ultimate rational justification for any empirical beliefs or moral evaluations, he nevertheless holds that human beings can and do make distinctions between correct and incorrect, probably true and merely superstitious beliefs (EHU 9–13). Thus, whether one takes Hume to be a thoroughgoing skeptic or a skeptical realist about causal belief, regulation of belief

is still needed or desirable, at least on pragmatic or practical grounds. The account of regulation as something desirable stands independently of the take on skepticism with regard to causal connection. In each case of regulation—cognitive and moral—there is on the one hand a typically error-prone natural propensity (unregulated generalizing or partiality/indifference) producing beliefs or sentiments, and on the other hand supplementations produced by the mind by which belief and moral evaluation are to be regulated. Regulation or "correction" consists not in the wholesale replacement of an incorrect belief or of a biased evaluation by the correct or impartial one, but rather in the production of a judgment or evaluation, which in reflection is recognized as correct/impartial even though an incorrect belief or sentiments of partiality and self-interest may still continue to be felt.[45]

Hume's treatment of regulation should be understood as an attempt to articulate the psychological and mental mechanisms in play in the life of the reasonable, albeit not perfect, person. In belief formation, Hume's "reasonable" person (the "wise man") would be the person who exemplifies intellectual or cognitive virtues, such as the virtues of attending to relevant evidence, of proportioning cause and effect in causal reasoning, of distinguishing between reliable and unreliable testimony, of being cautious about making hasty generalizations and generalizing from weak resemblances, and so on; in morals, Hume's "reasonable" person, the "judicious spectator," would be the person who, in adopting a general point of view, exemplifies the moral and cognitive virtues of focusing on the relevant social and agential facts, of putting oneself in the point of view that will allow the moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation to be appropriately aroused and enlivened, of engaging in communication and social intercourse at least some of the time from this point of view, and so on. Of course, Hume is only too keenly aware that human psyches are rather messy affairs. The prevailing of sound judgment and impartial moral evaluation even in those rare individuals who are disposed thereto by temperament and disciplined practice does not entail the elimination of the natural human propensities toward hasty judgment, powerful emotional responses, and partiality.[46]

> Beside these calm passions, which often determine the will, there are certain violent emotions of the same kind, which have likewise a great influence on that faculty. When I receive any injury from another, I often feel a violent passion of resentment, which makes me desire his evil and punishment, independent of all considerations of pleasure and advantage to myself. When I am immediately threaten'd with any grievous ill, my fears, apprehensions, and aversions rise to a great height, and produce a sensible emotion.

> The common error of metaphysicians has lain in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles, and supposing the other to have no influence. Men often act knowingly against their interest: For which reason the view of the greatest possible good does not always influence them. Men often counter-act a violent passion in prosecution of their interests and designs: 'Tis not therefore the present uneasiness alone, which determines them. In general we may observe, that both these principles operate on the will: and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according the *general* character or *present* disposition of the person. What we call strength of mind, implies the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent; tho' we may easily observe, there is no man so constantly possess'd of this virtue, as never on any occasion to yield to the sollicitations of passion and desire. From these variations of temper proceeds the great difficulty of deciding concerning the actions and resolutions of men, where there is any contrariety of motives and passions. (T 2.3.3.9–10; SBN 417–8)

NOTES

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1 See, for example, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, "On Why Hume's General Point of View Isn't Ideal—and Shouldn't Be," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 11 (1994): 202–28; Elizabeth S. Radcliffe, "Hume on Motivating Sentiments, the General Point of View, and the Inculcation of Morality," *Hume Studies* 20 (1994): 37–58; Rachel Cohon, "The Common Point of View in Hume's Ethics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57 (1997): 827–50; William Davie, "Hume's General Point of View" *Hume Studies* 25 (1998): 275–94; Kate Abramson, "Correcting *Our* Sentiments about Hume's Moral Point of View," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 37 (1999): 333–61; Christine Korsgaard, "The General Point of View: Love and Moral Approval in Hume's Ethics," *Hume Studies*, 25 (1999): 3–41; Charlotte Brown, "Is

the General Point of View the Moral Point of View?," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 62 (2001): 197–203; see also Don Garrett's "Reply to Charlotte Brown," in the same issue, 209–15. I am also indebted to the late Jean Hampton. Her penetrating questions on whether the general point of view were a product of reason at a session of the Hume Society, the exact date and occasion of which I've now forgotten, aroused my interest in this issue.

2 Note on major primary sources:

An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals: Quotations from David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford Philosophical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), cited in the text as "EPM," by section and paragraph number. Followed by page references to Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding: Quotations from Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford Philosophical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), cited in the text as "EHU," with section and paragraph number. Followed by page references to the *Enquiries*.

A Treatise of Human Nature: Quotations from Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford Philosophical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), cited in the text as "T," with section and paragraph number. Followed by page references to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

3 Wilbanks argues that the imagination has two functions, one in forming ideas and the other in "supposing" (rather than "supplementing"). Wilbanks's discussion is an interesting one on the nature and function of imagination in Hume. The distinction between "supposing" and "supplementing" is not crucial for my argument here since the main point is only that the imagination supplies something from its own activity that is not merely a copy of or separating and uniting of impressions. See Jan Wilbanks, *Hume's Theory of Imagination* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968).

4 Hearn suggests that the tension between these two is, with respect to the understanding, an opposition between imagination, understood as a generalizing propensity, and judgment, understood as reflective causal reasoning, and, with respect to morals, an opposition between the judgment and the sympathetic affections. Hearn argues that the regulative rules are those which are reflective and that the generalizing propensity of the imagination is always the source of error (Thomas K. Hearn, "General Rules in Hume's *Treatise*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 8 [1970]: 407). This section of the *Treatise* (1.3.13) would support that interpretation, but Gill points out that Hume does not condemn *all* products of unreflective generalizing, nor regard the generalizing propensity as always a source of error. Rather, regulative generalizing, or general rules we ought to live by versus those we ought to avoid may not perfectly track the distinction between reflective and unreflective general rules (Michael Gill, "Fantastick Associations and Addictive General Rules: A fundamental difference between Hutcheson and

Hume," *Hume Studies* 22 [1996]: 23–48, 47). (See also T 3.3.1.20; SBN 585.) Brand argues that each is a species of the same generalizing propensity of the mind to go beyond, to "generalize," or supplement immediately present impressions and ideas; that the error-prone generalizing tendency itself may have a role to play in generating regulative rules in morality (Walter Brand, *Hume's Theory of Moral Judgment: A Study in the Unity of A Treatise of Human Nature* [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992], 68). Brand, especially in chapters 1 and 2, provides an excellent detailed exposition of the operation of the generalizing tendency, which he terms "imaginative supplementation," throughout the *Treatise*. Williams, too, sees imagination as the key, suggesting that for Hume the mind makes its transitions, its "inferences," in the case of causal inference via habit-assisted imagination and in the case of "moral inference" via sympathy-assisted imagination (Christopher Williams, *A Cultivated Reason: An Essay on Hume and Humeanism* [University Park: Penn State University Press, 1999], 17).

5 See also T 2.3.9.10 (SBN 440): "The imagination, or understanding, call it which you please, fluctuates betwixt the opposing views; . . ." I think this means that the understanding is the imagination operating in a particular, i.e., regulative, way. See also John Passmore, *Hume's Intentions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 118; Robert J. Fogelin, *Hume's Skepticism in the Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 62; Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. by Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 56.

6 See T 1.2.4.24 (SBN 48) and T 1.2.4.22 (SBN 637, 47). Ideal equality is a fiction, but has a regulative role to play. While Hume sometimes use the term 'fiction' for those ideas that are merely illusory and unregulated products of the imagination, 'fiction' is actually a broader category. If Traiger is right that "imaginary standards are part of the fabric of our conceptual scheme,"—and ideal equality functions as a corrective or a standard in measurement, even though at the same time, it is "loose" and the product of a mental propensity of the imagination to supplement what is discernible—then there may not be a strict demarcation between the judgment as the source of regulative guidelines and the imagination. See Saul Traiger, "Impressions, Ideas, and Fictions," *Hume Studies*, 13 (1987): 381–99, 388; also Traiger provides an illuminating analysis of different types of fiction in, Saul Traiger, "The Authority of the Imagination," presented at APA Colloquium on Hume on Reason and Imagination, Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, San Francisco, April 1, 1999. McRae suggests that there is a logical sequence of fiction generation in *Treatise* I. While I don't quite see such a systematic interrelation of fictions in Hume, McRae's identification of two mechanisms by which fictions are produced lends support to the interpretation that some fictions are errors while others serve a "regulative" function. See Robert McRae, "The Import of Hume's Theory of Time," *Hume Studies* 6 (1980): 119–32.

7 Similarly, note here that in discussing moral sentiment, Hume does not condemn all products of unreflective generalizing, "The imagination has a set of passions belonging to it . . . [which] are moved by degrees of liveliness and strength which are inferior to belief . . . where a character is, in every respect, fitted to be beneficial to society, the imagination passes easily from cause to effect, *without*

considering that there are still some circumstances wanting to render the cause a compleat one. General rules create a species of probability, which sometimes influences the judgment, and always the imagination" (T 3.3.1.20; SBN 585, emphasis mine.) Here general rules we ought to take as guides "may not perfectly track a distinction between reflective and unreflective general rules" (Gill, "Fantastick Associations," 47). This is the passage to which Gill makes reference; see note 4 here, above.

8 See also EHU 9.5; SBN 107.

9 Specifically, in the *Treatise* the rules state that cause and effect must be (1) contiguous in space and time and (3) in constant union; that (2) a cause must be prior to an effect; that (4) "the same cause always produces the same effect, and the same effect never arises but from the same cause"; that (5) where there are different objects producing the same effect, there must be a common quality in the causing objects, and (6) where there are different effects of "resembling objects" there must be particular differences in the causes; that (7) in compound causes and effects, proportionality must guide inferences; and that (8) an inactive cause is not a sole cause (T 1.3.15.2–10; SBN 173–4). Rule 5 is appealed to in the passage at EPM 1.10 (SBN 173–74). These are not the only "regulative" guidelines, but they are the ones Hume explicitly flags as such and attributes to the generalizing tendency of the imagination. Hume further refines and develops the rules regulating causal reasoning in subsequent works (for example, in the first *Enquiry* as well as in the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*).

10 Brand characterizes them as inductive generalizations derived from experience about what is most reliable in guiding inference (Brand, *Hume's Theory of Moral Judgment*, 53). See also Hearn, "General Rules," 407, 414. In speaking of morals he uses similar language "[g]eneral rules create a species of probability, which sometimes influences the judgment and always the imagination" (T 3.3.1.20; SBN 585).

11 See Fred Wilson, *Hume's Defence of Causal Inference* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

12 See Hearn, "General Rules."

13 Others have already done a fine job of that. See, for example, Hearn, "General Rules," Brand, *Hume's Theory of Moral Judgment*, and Wilson, *Hume's Defence of Casual Inference*.

14 See Hume's essay "Of National Characters" (in David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, revised edition, ed. Eugene F. Miller [Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987], 197–215) where he distinguishes between the vulgar tendency to take the judgments of national character to extremes and the judgments of "men of sense" who make more careful distinctions.

15 For an illuminating discussion of this example, see Saul Traiger, "Reason Unhinged: Passion and Precipice from Montaigne to Hume" (forthcoming). See also Hume's account at EPM 5.14 (SBN 217) of a similar example. Traiger also notes that resemblance is often the source of error. Saul Traiger, "Beyond Our Senses: Recasting Book I, Part 3 of Hume's *Treatise*," *Hume Studies* 20 (1994): 241–59, 250–1.

16 Conversations with Walter Sinnott-Armstrong were helpful in articulating this point.

17 See T 1.3.10.4 (SBN 120) for Hume's discussion of the mechanisms of belief of the fearful person. See also EHU 9.5 (SBN 107) on various influences on the likelihood of sound reasoning. Hume notes the same sort of thing with respect to moral evaluations (see section 5). On the interpretation of regulation which I am offering, there is considerable latitude in the degree of regulation achieved. There is something mechanical about it, although not entirely, for regulation is not guaranteed. See also Baier (general rules do not determine "judgment") for a possibly related point (Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's* Treatise [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 191], 281).

18 Some additional support for this interpretation of "inseparable" may come later in Hume's characterization of justice as "inseparable" from the species and therefore, not "arbitrary" (T 3.2.1.19; SBN 484). This interpretation of inseparable would have to be further refined by a genealogy of the development of the species to identify what would remain inseparable throughout development and what would be inseparable to particular stages of development. That Hume thinks there is some kind of species development is clear from his treatment of religious belief in the *Natural History of Religion* and even from his treatment of philosophical positions in T 1.4 (Fogelin, *Hume's Skepticism*, 80 and chapter 11).

19 EPM, Appendix 1 and T 3.1.1.

20 He is also explicit that the general rules regulating causal reasoning have a great influence on regulating the indirect passions, which have the tendency to go "beyond just bounds" (T 2.1.6.8; SBN 293).

21 By "partiality" I mean not merely an incomplete selection of the relevant facts, for presumably that could be the case with causal judgments as well, but a selection that reflects personal ties, interests, affections, and so on.

22 I interpret Hume as distinguishing between approval and disapprobation as the moral sentiments that are evaluative of character traits and the indirect passions of love and hatred. For an alternative interpretation of the moral sentiments as species of love and hatred, see Páll Árdal, *Passion and Value in Hume's Treatise* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982) and Korsgaard, "The General Point of View."

23 One might object that Hume hasn't demonstrated why external sources of regulation wouldn't be sufficient in regulating partiality. ("External" in this context just means external to the individual; it is not invoking the internalist/externalist distinction as found in epistemology or in accounts of moral value.) Hume seems to reject the idea that regulation could be effected *solely* by external or mechanical means; rather, education, "politicians," parents, and the community more generally interact with dispositions and tendencies in human nature to produce regulation within the individual. I take it that his point is that the individual human being's mental disposition must be such that it allows for regulation to become a habit, a natural disposition of the individual. In this sense, the issue of regulation is part of Hume's conception of virtue. This is how I understand the import of the passages, for example in the second *Enquiry*, section 5,

in which Hume asserts that moral distinctions are "founded on the original constitution of the mind" (EPM 5.3–4; SBN 214). Hume seems to think that sound moral evaluation involves adjustment or "regulation" in the evaluator's *own* sentiments. The failure of the sensible knave is presumably a case in which the appropriate regulation has not taken effect as a disposition or virtue of the individual, even though she or he might be quite well aware of and even prudentially take into account "external" guidelines for behavior.

24 See T 3.3.3.2 (SBN 603) and also EPM 5.41 (SBN 227). See also Cohon, "The Common Point of View," for discussion of the problem of fluctuation in morals. One is reminded of the activity of the mind that leads to the production of the idea of substance: "But when we alter our method of considering the succession, and instead of traceing it gradually thro' the successive points of time, survey at once any two distinct periods of its duration, . . . in that case the variations, which were insensible when they arose gradually, do now appear of consequence, and seem entirely to destroy the identity. By this means there arises a kind of contrariety in our method of thinking, from the different points of view, in which we survey the object, and from the nearness or remoteness of those instants of time, which we compare together. . . . In order to reconcile which contradiction the imagination is apt to feign something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to continue the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a *substance, or original and first matter* (T 1.4.3.4; SBN 220).

25 See EPM 9.6 (SBN 272) and 9.8 (SBN 274). I like Garrett's recommendation to use "evaluation" terms rather than "judgment" terms in order to avoid the association of judgment with the affirmation of propositions. Garrett argues that Hume does allow for moral judgments, or the affirmation of propositions, which occur as part of the broader process of moral evaluation. See T 3.1.1.26 (SBN 469), where Hume refers to one's own sentiment of disapprobation, discerned through reflection, as a "matter of fact" that is the "object of feeling, not of reason"; and Don Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), chap. 9, 190 ff.

26 "A Dialogue," para. 28 in EPM (SBN 334).

27 It is noteworthy that he uses the plural here, *points* of view. As Sayre-McCord argues, a general point of view is *not* the notion of an ideal observer or a view from nowhere (Sayre-McCord, "Hume's General Point of View"). Also at T 3.3.1.18 (SBN 583), "When we form our judgments of persons, merely from the tendency of their characters to our own benefit, or to that of our friends, we find so many contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation, and such an uncertainty from the incessant changes of our situation, that we seek some other standard of merit and demerit, which may not admit of so great variation." Williams characterizes a general point of view as involving "the selection of a particular perspective that we deem to have a normative authority" and in so doing an evaluator places herself "at the right imaginative remove." Williams goes on to suggest that the influence of general points of view is to make us uncritical with respect to our own beliefs, although not those of others. I am arguing just the opposite, that a general point of view has the function of regulating moral evaluations. That is not to say that a general point of view, as with any product of

the imagination, couldn't overextend itself. It may be possible to overextend the influence of a general point of view if it were not appropriately mixed with other propensities, although intermingling seems to be the norm on the Humean account. However, I do not think that weakens the claim that the intended function of a general point of view is to effect correction or regulation and I would not go so far as to adopt Williams's interpretation of the influence of general points of view. See Williams, *A Cultivated Reason*, 97–8.

28 In the *Treatise* Hume explicitly attributes the regulative function to the imagination. The first *Enquiry* employs rules of causal reasoning without explicating their origin. In the second *Enquiry* Hume tends to downplay the role of imagination and to emphasize our responsiveness to utility, to what is beneficial to society and to emphasize almost exclusively the role of sympathy and social intercourse to account for the generation of a general point of view and general standards. (Mackie makes this point when discussing the difference between the *Treatise*'s and the second *Enquiry*'s treatments of property: J. L. Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980], 95. See also Terence Penelhum, *Hume* [London: Macmillan, 1975], 148.) I do not think this represents a disavowal or abandonment of the earlier view, but a shift in emphasis and a concern for economy in the *Enquiries*.

29 See also Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste" for a similar description of the point of view the critic must take for his taste to conform to the "true standard" (*Essays: Moral Political, and Literary*, 237–9).

30 In so far as this activity serves a regulative function, it might be thought of as, at least in part, the understanding, i.e., a regulated exercise of the imagination. In so far as this activity serves to regulate sentiments distinct from belief, it might be confusing to identify it as the understanding. Thus, I prefer to retain the term imagination, with the understanding being *a* regulated exercise of the imagination.

31 Thus imaginative supplementation and regulation is not always by means of a particular idea, but could consist in a process. Traiger made this suggestion as well in Traiger (1999). See also Sayre-McCord who suggests in "The General Point of View" that the general point of view is a way of seeing rather than a particular position or something fixed. The photographic analogy need not be confined to still photography, but could include moving photography. The latter would capture the idea that one needs a thorough gleaning of the relevant facts in order for the appropriate sentiment to be aroused. Thanks to Walter Sinnott-Armstrong for explicitly raising this point.

32 Hume characterizes a general point of view, as surveying the "narrow circle" of persons affected by the tendency of a quality. See also Cohon, "The Common Point of View," for a discussion of a need to view the object from a point of view in imagination close to the object. But "narrow circle" may depend on the social context and more likely means relevant others, which could be fairly broad (hence, my [a]).

33 Correction specifically of causal reasoning is emphasized by Cohon.

34 As Penelhum puts it, Hume appears to have an account of how we compensate for indifference, but not for correction of partiality due to closeness (Penelhum, *Hume*, 142–3). In EPM Hume refers to the process as one of increasing the other's humanity (e.g., EPM 5.43; SBN 230).

35 This interpretation is similar to "double rebound" accounts, although I emphasize that contrariety is important in effecting an eventual "correction," that is, an eventual attending to traits and their usual effects. For various discussions of "double rebound" accounts, see, for example, Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, Radcliffe, "Hume on Motivating Sentiments," and Sayre-McCord "The General Point of View."

36 Hearn distinguishes "four rules for the correction of moral sentiment. (1) Our sentiments must reflect a point of view which abstracts from accidental relations in space and time between the observer and the object of evaluation. (2) The moral sentiments must be founded upon a general and impartial conception of their objects. (3) They must reflect an entirely adequate conception of the object. (4) They must have the motives and characters of the agents as their ultimate object" (Hearn, "General Rules," 61). On my account, the process of correction is gradual and may involve a moving back and forth (on the photographic analogy, a zooming in and out) between more and less intimate views of characters and qualities. It also involves "reasonable conversing" with others to reach step 5.

37 This was Penelhum's criticism. See note 34.

38 Cohon, "The Common Point of View"; Hearn 1976. See also Korsgaard, "The General Point of View," and Jamie Ferreira, "Hume and Imagination: Sympathy and 'the Other'" *International Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1994): 39–57.

39 Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*; Sayre-McCord, "The General Point of View"; or that this is the best way of making sense of correcting our sentiments, Radcliffe, "Hume on Motivating Sentiments."

40 There are some interesting discussions of the issues around reflexivity, which are beyond the scope of this paper. But see, for example, Gill's critique of Baier's and Korsgaard's reflexivity readings of Hume (Michael B. Gill, "A Philosopher in His Closet: Reflexivity and Justification in Hume's Moral Theory," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 26 [1996]: 231–56; Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*; Christine Korsgaard, "The Sources of Normativity," in *The Tanner Lectures* [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994]). See also Gill, "Fantastick Associations"; Susan Purviance, "The Moral Self and the Indirect Passions," *Hume Studies* 23 (1997): 195–212; and Nicholas Capaldi, *Hume's Place in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

41 But see Marcia Baron, "Morality as a Back-Up System," *Hume Studies* 14 (1988): 25–52; John P. Wright, "Butler and Hume on Habit and Moral Character," in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, ed. M. A. Stewart and John P. Wright (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1995), 105–18; Williams, *A Cultivated Reason* ("we occupy a general point of view effortlessly," 98); and Davie, "Hume's General Point of View." Davie also suggests that the general point of view is not necessarily unique to human beings. While it may be true that animals, too, engage in self-correction of their mental habits and transitions, that general resemblance would

not entail that animals have the same mechanisms of correction as human beings do. See Hume's discussion of differences between human and animal reasoning in the long note on EHU 9.5 (SBN 107). See also, Antony E. Pitson, "The Nature of Humean Animals," *Hume Studies* 19 (1993): 301–16.

42 Cohon, in "The Common Point of View," similarly argues that the moral sentiments felt from a common point of view prevail with the more particular situated sentiments that one feels. Moreover, this aspect of the operation of a general point of view would be consistent with the idea that impartiality or objectivity is something we can approach to a greater or lesser degree (see also Radcliffe, "Hume on Motivating Sentiments").

43 Traiger argues that even with belief, Hume is advancing a rudimentary social epistemology. If Traiger is right about this, then the patterns of regulation of belief and moral sentiments may manifest even more similarity than what I have suggested. Saul Traiger, "Humean Testimony," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 74 (1993): 135–49. See also Traiger, "Beyond Our Senses," and Peter Jones, *Hume's Sentiments: Their Ciceronian and French Context* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1982).

44 Deleuze suggests that with respect to the understanding the tendency of the imagination to exceed is a source of error (*Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 66–72), whereas with respect to morals the exceeding tendency of the imagination is necessary for the transformation of the passions from partial to extensive (55–64). While the latter transformation is necessary it is also necessary that it be corrected by the rules of the understanding, which are "contracting" rules, rather than "extending" rules (69).

45 That there is an affinity between Hume's moral theory and epistemology was recognized by Kemp Smith and others since then. See, for example, Hearn, "General Rules," and "General Rules and the Moral Sentiments in Hume's *Treatise*," *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1976): 57–72. While I do not necessarily fully endorse Kemp Smith's naturalistic interpretation of Hume, I do think there is evidence of systematic continuity between the epistemology and the moral theory.