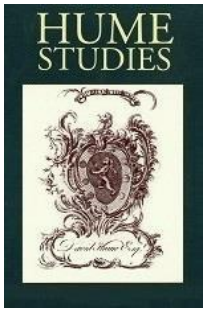

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Abstract: On a standard reading of David Hume, we know two things about his analogy of morals to secondary qualities: first, it responds to the moral rationalism of Clarke and Wollaston; second, it broadcasts Hume's realism or antirealism in ethics. I complicate that common narrative with a new intellectual contextualization of the analogy, the surprising outcome of which is that Hume's analogy is neither realist nor antirealist in spirit, but quietist. My argument has three parts. First, I reconstruct Hume's argument against rationalist moral ontology in *Treatise* 3.1.1, revealing his attention to the Intellectualism/Voluntarism debate in rationalism. Second, I present evidence of Hume's familiarity with the debate between Intellectualist moral realists and Voluntarist moral antirealists, notably Pufendorf. Third, I establish that Hume's analogy undermines a key assumption structuring that debate, and that the analogy consequently signals his quietist abstention from his rationalist contemporaries' realism/antirealism debate in ethics.

Introduction

In this paper, I offer a new interpretation of Hume, on which his analogy of morals to secondary qualities is neither realist nor antirealist in spirit, but quietist.[1] My argumentative strategy is twofold. First, I argue for an historical claim, on which the analogy is properly intellectually contextualized, at least in part, as a response to a debate within moral rationalism between Intellectualist moral realists, such as Clarke and Wollaston, and Voluntarist moral antirealists, such as Samuel Pufendorf. Second, I argue for an interpretive claim, on which Hume's analogy announces a kind of quietism about moral ontology, on which he jettisons his rationalist

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contemporaries' distinction between ethical realism and antirealism as conceptually flawed and practically unnecessary. A major topic that I do not take up is the present-day version of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics that his analogy helped to generate. This limitation is due not simply to reasons of space, but because my interpretation indicates that much of the untapped resources of Hume's analogy lie orthogonal to moral realism and antirealism, in the relatively under-theorized region of quietism. To be sure, there are present-day quietists such as Ronald Dworkin and Christine Korsgaard who conceive of quietism as the blanket withdrawal from all metaethical inquiries.[2] However, my claim is not the Whiggish one that Hume is an interesting precursor to a view that we have today. Rather, I argue that because Hume abstains merely from a particular metaethical debate, he models a more nuanced variety of quietism that we do not have.[3]

A sprawling literature exists on the analogy. I would be loath to add to it if part of the reason why Hume thinks it (as he put it in a letter to Francis Hutcheson) so "very momentous" to conceive of morals as human-mind-dependent phenomena had not been lost to history (*Letters*, 1:39). Readers of that literature would be excused for replying that the reason—or at least its general outline—has long been known: the momentous consequence of the sentimentalism illustrated by the analogy is some kind of antirealism (or perhaps realism) about the ethical. On a still widely espoused interpretation, Hume's analogy announces his ethical antirealism, on which colors and values are analogous in being merely psychological projections onto a world that is really color- and value-free.[4] Other readers hold that Hume is an ethical realist and that his analogy signals a refusal to concede that mind-dependent phenomena are anything less than fully real.[5]

There is much to be said for these contrasting metaethical interpretations, and I shall not challenge them directly. Rather, I wish to complicate a point of historical consensus on which the realist and antirealist interpreters of Hume are agreed: that his analogy is to be understood as a strike on behalf of sentimentalism in the wars between moral rationalism and sentimentalism.[6] Call this, the standard reading. The standard reading is fundamentally correct. Hume is hostile to moral rationalists, such as Samuel Clarke and William Wollaston, who claim that values originate in reason alone and are "relations" or "fitnesses of things" that exist independently of human minds or social conventions, and he defends a version of the moral sentimentalism promulgated by Hutcheson, among others, on which values originate in part in human sentiments. This standard historical contextualization, moreover, explains the allure of enlisting Hume in present-day iterations of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics. For instance, as many (but not all) standard readers of Hume see it, rationalism is a kind of realism that conceives of values as mind-independent, whereas Humean sentimentalism is a kind of antirealism that conceives of values as mind-dependent.[7]

The standard reading, however, is incomplete. I present evidence that Hume's analogy also needs to be understood as targeting a realism/antirealism debate within moral rationalism itself. The outcome of my arguments is that Hume's analogy is a far more complex sentimentalist weapon against rationalism than commentators have usually recognized, although

what makes the analogy so dialectically effective also entails that Hume prescinds from his contemporaries' understanding of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics.

Here is a synopsis of the paper. In section 1, I reconstruct the dialectic in which Hume embeds the analogy in *Treatise* 3.1.1. My analysis shows that in the paragraphs preceding the analogy, he engages with a once marquee debate between moral rationalists that turned on the relation of morals to attributes of the divine mind. Using Clarke, Wollaston, and Pufendorf as representative figures, section 2 presents that debate between the rationalists, beginning with their points of agreement. I argue that these rationalists subscribe both to a semantic claim, on which truth-apt moral judgments cannot be made about human-mind-dependent phenomena on pains of absurdity, and to a moral ontological claim, on which values are instead dependent on the divine mind. Rationalists disagree, however, on which attribute of the divine mind to prioritize—intellect or volition—and this disagreement leads to the realism/antirealism split within moral rationalism. Clarke and Wollaston are examples of Intellectualist moral realists, insofar as they hold that morals are immutable rational entities or laws of nature independent of God's will, and hence beyond God's power to change, while Pufendorf is a kind of Voluntarist moral antirealist, holding that changes to morals' existence and moral judgments' truth-values are not absolutely impossible for God.

Section 3 presents evidence of Hume's engagement with this debate and Pufendorf's Voluntarist moral antirealism specifically. In section 4, I argue that Hume's cognitivism about color and moral judgments empowers him to reject the key semantic presupposition driving the rationalists' realism/antirealism debate, as he argues that truth-apt judgments *can* be made about phenomena that exist merely in human minds. Hume's rejection of the rationalists' semantic claim allows him, in turn, to jettison the framework of their moral ontological distinctions as unintelligible. I conclude by explaining why Hume's abstention from that debate is best characterized as 'quietist' rather than 'skeptical,' before ending with some tentative remarks about the relevance of Humean quietism to contemporary metaethics.

1. Hume's Argumentative Strategy in *Treatise* 3.1.1

In this section, I contextualize the analogy as part of Hume's argument against moral rationalism. Although his animadversions against Intellectualist moral realists are well documented, that standard interpretation is incomplete. My reconstruction of his argument reveals that Hume also targets Voluntarist moral antirealists.

1.1. The Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology

In *Treatise* 3.1.1, the analogy resides at the far side of a dense thicket of argumentation, the general purport of which is clear enough (to show, as the section's title indicates, that "Moral Distinctions [are] not deriv'd from Reason"), but whose precise dialectical arrangements defy easy categorization (T 3.1.1.1; SBN 455).[8] Hume introduces the analogy with a statement

that suggests it somehow rounds out the second part of a two-part argument against moral rationalism:

> Nor does this reasoning only prove, that morality consists not in any relations, that are the objects of science; but if examin'd, will prove with equal certainty, that it consists not in any *matter of fact*, which can be discover'd by the understanding. This is the *second* part of our argument; and if it can be made evident, we may conclude, that morality is not an object of reason. (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468)

The analogy follows shortly thereafter. It is not immediately clear to which of his arguments Hume refers. The preceding twenty-five paragraphs of *Treatise* 3.1.1 contain a myriad of arguments: for example, moral psychological arguments that purport to establish the motivational inertness of reason alone (T 3.1.1.5–3.1.1.10; SBN 457–58), epistemological arguments according to which judgments of good and evil are not equivalent to the true and false judgments, respectively, that can arise from actions (T 3.1.1.11–3.1.1.16; SBN 458–63), and a final barrage of arguments blending considerations of epistemology (how are moral facts or properties known: by reason or sentiment?), ontology (what are moral facts or properties: are they rational entities independent of human minds, or sentiment-based entities dependent on human minds?), and moral psychology (can necessary causal connections be established between values *qua* rational entities and the will of any rational being?) (T 3.1.1.17–3.1.1.25; SBN 463–68).

The analogy comes on the heels of this last battery of arguments, and so, to judge from textual propinquity, the analogy plays some role in its dialectic. Hume's initial overview of that last set of arguments appears to confirm that interpretation:

> If the thought and understanding were alone capable of fixing the boundaries of right and wrong, the character of virtuous and vicious either must lie in some relations of objects, or must be a matter of fact, which is discover'd by the understanding. This consequence is evident. As the operations of the human understanding divide themselves into two kinds, the comparing of ideas, and the inferring of matters of fact; it must be an object of one of these operations. (T 3.1.1.18; SBN 463)

Hume distinguishes two major topics—relations of ideas and matters of fact—and to each of these topics corresponds one part of his final argumentative array. Introducing the analogy, he says it illuminates a consequence of "the *second* part of our argument," concerning whether morality lies in some "*matter of fact*" discoverable by reason alone (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468). Diligent cartographers of the dialectic of *Treatise* 3.1.1 will find nothing new in my locating the analogy in the second part of Hume's concluding two-part argument against moral rationalism. In what follows, however, I argue that aspects of that part of the dialectic concerning matters of fact have not yet been sufficiently appreciated, and that attending to them reveals hitherto unrecognized contours of one of Hume's more important arguments in moral philosophy.

My reconstruction of the two-part argument in question will emphasize its moral ontological aspects—which, in turn, provide the framework for understanding its moral psychological aspects—although I take this to be compatible with readings focusing on its moral epistemological dimensions. For simplicity's sake, I refer to it as Hume's Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology, and will usually abbreviate it further as the Argument against Moral Ontology.

Given my remarks so far, it can seem as though my reconstruction of the Argument against Moral Ontology is already amassing too many components: relations of ideas, matters of fact, moral ontology, and moral psychology. Hume, however, separates the argument into two strands, one of which uses relations of ideas to tackle moral ontology, and the second of which employs matters of fact to discuss moral psychology. He announces his two metaethical foci toward the beginning of *Treatise* 3.1.1 (to which I add the numbering):

> [1] Those who affirm that virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason; that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them; [2] that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation, not only on human creatures, but also on the Deity himself. (T 3.1.1.4; SBN 456)

I say more about these rationalist views later. For present purposes, however, in [1], Hume targets an ontological view, on which values are eternal rational entities, while in [2] he addresses a psychological view, on which those eternal moral facts or properties are motivationally binding on any rational will, including God's. As we shall see, Hume associates these moral ontological and psychological themes with his distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact, respectively. To anticipate, on my reading, these are the two parts of his Argument against Moral Ontology (T 3.1.1.18–26; SBN 463–69): part one rejects rationalism's moral ontological claim, arguing in terms of relations of ideas (T 3.1.1.18–21 and 24–25; SBN 463–65 and 466–68), while part two rejects rationalism's moral psychological claim, arguing in terms of matters of fact (T 3.1.1.22–23 and 26; SBN 465–66 and 468–69).

1.1.1. Part One: Rejection of Rationalist Moral Ontology

After reminding us that the "operations of human understanding divide themselves into two kinds, the comparing of ideas, and the inferring of matter of fact," Hume explains why he takes relations of ideas to be a helpful way of parsing the rationalist moral ontological claim. On Hume's view, relations of ideas are connections between ideas that "depend entirely on the ideas, which we compare together" (T 1.3.1.1; SBN 69). Because relations of ideas track intrinsic and hence unalterable qualities of ideas, they pertain to relations as "eternal [and] immutable" as the moral entities envisioned by rationalists (T 3.2.2.20; SBN 496). Moreover, our judgments of relations of ideas can be known with certainty because their denial is impossible to conceive without contradiction, and so would be the building blocks of such "perfect and infallible science[s]" capable of demonstration as "algebra and arithmetic" (T 1.3.1.6;

SBN 71).[9] When Hume turns to the rationalists' conception of "eternal" and "immutable measures of right and wrong," he accordingly translates their talk of rational entities into the language of relations of ideas.

> There has been an opinion very industriously propagated by certain philosophers, that morality is susceptible of demonstration; and tho' no one has ever been able to advance a single step in those demonstrations; yet 'tis taken for granted, that this science may be brought to an equal certainty with geometry or algebra. Upon this supposition, vice and virtue must consist in some relations [of ideas]. (T 3.1.1.18; SBN 463)

Hume then offers a series of loosely spun reductios designed to show that no relation of ideas can capture all and only morally salient phenomena. Relations of ideas exist between "internal actions" or psychological states, but it is absurd to suppose "that we might be guilty of crimes in ourselves" by making, say, cognitive errors, as when I swallow a spoiled oyster that I mistakenly thought was edible (T 3.1.1.21; SBN 465). Relations of ideas also exist between "external objects" such as non-human animals or inanimate objects, but Hume thinks it is absurd to label parricidal trees and incestuous animals as vicious just because they can instantiate relations deemed homicidal or oedipal in human circumstances (T 3.1.1.24–25; SNB 465–67). Summarizing the results of the first part of his two-part Argument against Moral Ontology, Hume says: "Thus it will be impossible to fulfil the *first* condition requisite to the system of eternal rational measures of right and wrong, because it is impossible to show those relations, upon which such a distinction may be founded" (T 3.1.1.23; SBN 466). Thus far, Hume's argument is well known, but our brief tour of its familiar landmarks will prove helpful when examining the unfamiliar contours of its second half.

1.1.2. Part Two: Rejection of Rationalist Moral Psychology

In reconstructing the second part of Hume's Argument against Moral Ontology, in which rationalism's psychological claims are scrutinized through the lens of matters of fact, our initial task is to locate the beginning of this half of the argument. I confess that the way in which Hume frames the opening of the paragraph containing the analogy once tempted me to think that the second part of the argument begins there, for it can sound as though Hume is only now pivoting to the second part of his argument: "This is the *second* part of our argument; and if it can be made evident, we may conclude, that morality is not an object of reason" (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468). However, the second stretch of argument begins earlier with stress on a moral psychological agenda:

> But it will be still more difficult to fulfil the *second* condition, requisite to justify this system. According to the principles of [the rationalists] . . . , 'tis not only supposed, that these relations, being eternal and immutable, are the same, when consider'd by every rational creature, but their *effects* are also suppos'd to be necessarily the same;

> and 'tis concluded they have no less, or rather a greater, influence in directing the will of the deity, than in governing the rational and virtuous of our own species. (T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465)

> And 'tis as impossible to fulfil the *second* condition; because we cannot prove *a priori*, that these relations [of ideas], if they really existed and were perceiv'd, wou'd be universally forcible and obligatory. (T 3.1.1.23; SBN 466)

The rationalist moral psychological claim would seem to be that there is a necessary causal connection between reason and the will, such that rational perception of values would ineluctably engage the levers of motivation. Although Hume does not explicitly appeal to matters of fact here, there are terminological connections. When he refers back to this argument in the paragraph containing the analogy, he reminds us that the term 'matter of fact' refers to the "real existence" of an object (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468; see also T 3.1.1.9; SBN 458). Now, as Hume understands it, conceiving of the existence of an object can also include consideration of its real or supposed qualities, including its causal powers. Three further points are relevant: (i) He insists not only that all reasoning about the causal powers of an object be cashed out in terms of matters of fact, but (ii) that all reasoning about matters of fact be cashed out in terms of cause and effect, and (iii) that such inferences all rest on experience. The following passages make each of these points in turn:

> 'Tis evident, that all reasonings from causes or effects, terminate in conclusions, concerning matter of fact; that is, concerning the existence of objects or of their qualities. (T 1.3.7.2; SBN 94)

> 'Tis evident, that all reasonings concerning *matter of fact* are founded on the relation of cause and effect. (T Abs 8; SBN 649)

> [A]ll inferences concerning Matter of Fact be thus resolved into Experience.[10]

Reasoning about matters of fact, then, would include the putative causal "connexion betwixt the relation and the will" supposed by the rationalists "so necessary, that in every well-disposed mind, it must take place and have its influence" (T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465). And that is the precisely the claim in Hume's crosshairs in the second part of his Argument against Moral Ontology.

Hume's rejection of that moral psychological claim consists in pointing out a couple of different ways in which it fails to receive empirical corroboration. First, he notes that "'Tis one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it," and that "I have already prov'd, that even in human nature no relation can ever alone produce any action" (T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465–66). Hume is referring us back to (what I call) his Argument from Inertness, on which neither demonstrative nor probabilistic reasoning alone can engage the will unless it serves some antecedent passion or interest (T 2.3.3, 3.1.1.5–10; SBN 413–18, 457–58). Second, he

adds that any investigation of causality—including that "connexion of cause and effect" internal to minds—is limited by, and "ought never to extend beyond[,] experience" (T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465–66). Hume is here presupposing the reader's acquaintance with his empirically grounded analysis of necessary causal connections. On that analysis, no such necessary connections (and *a fortiori* those *a priori* connections between reason and the will envisioned by the rationalists) can be established because "however strong the proof [of such causal connections] may be from experience," the contrary of any matter of fact is always conceivable (T Abs 18; SBN 652–53).

Hume's rebuke of the rationalists' moral psychological argument in these two paragraphs receives negligible attention from commentators. The neglect is understandable, for Hume appears to be merely repeating arguments—for example, establishing the motivational inertness of reason alone—that he developed at greater length and more exotically elsewhere. While Hume is admittedly appealing to previous arguments, there is a subtle and important difference when they reappear in the second part of his Argument against Moral Ontology. Previously, Hume framed his arguments for the motivational inertness of reason alone in terms of "*human* passions and actions" (T 3.1.1.5; SBN 457, emphasis added). Thus, he speaks of the chimerical conflict between "*our* reasoning" and "*our* passion" (T 2.3.3.3, 2.3.3.4; SBN 414, 415; see also T 3.1.1.7 and 3.1.1.9–11; SBN 457, 458–60; emphasis added), refers to the ways in which "*our* understanding" can be influenced by instincts "in *our* natures" (T 2.3.3.6, 2.3.3.8; SBN 415, 417; emphasis added), and notes the difficulty of discerning "the actions and resolutions of *men*" (T 2.3.3.10; SBN 418; emphasis added). In the second part of his Argument against Moral Ontology, however, Hume widens his focus, referring to "every rational being," "the will of the deity," and "every rational mind." Hume also refers to "our own species" and to "human nature" as well, but only to signal a recalibration of his earlier arguments to encompass in their scope "every well-disposed mind. . . tho' the difference betwixt these minds be in other respects immense and infinite" (T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465–66). The second part of his Argument against Moral Ontology, therefore, deals not with human, but *divine*, psychology.[11] The divine target is in keeping with the strategy Hume announces at the outset of *Treatise* 3.1.1, in which he declares his intention to attack a rationalist view on which "the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation . . . on the Deity himself" (T 3.1.1.4; SBN 456). On my reading, the second part of Hume's argument is therefore a rejection of the rationalist moral psychological claim that God's intellectual perception or "know[ledge]" of those mind-independent moral entities necessarily bind His will (T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465).

1.2. The Evocation of Voluntarism

At this juncture, standard readers may object that my reconstruction thus far does not change the bottom line: As Hume remarked to Hutcheson, the rejection of rationalism—regardless of its human or theological permutations—clears the field for moral sentimentalism, on which morality "regards only human Nature and human Life," and that sentimentalism is illustrated by the analogy of morals to phenomenal secondary qualities (*Letters*, 1: 40). This standard reading is not wrong, but it is incomplete. In the scholarly literature, the analogy

exerts a gravitational pull that rushes us past the immediate upshot of the Argument against Moral Ontology: Voluntarism.[12] Voluntarists hold, roughly, that values exist independently of divine intellect as somewhat arbitrary constructs of divine volition. To see that Voluntarism is the conclusion of Hume's argument, consider the following recapitulation: if values are not mind-independent rational facts or properties (as part one of the argument demonstrates), and if God's volition is not necessarily bound by His intellect (as part two of the argument establishes), then—assuming that values' existence depends on the divine mind—values are entities dependent on divine will.

Hume himself gestures toward the Voluntarist upshot of his Argument against Moral Ontology on at least two occasions. (1) In part one of that argument, after providing some illustrations of why the "duties and obligations of morality" are not equivalent to relations of ideas, Hume adds that even if values were somehow to consist of such rational entities, the rationalist would still be no closer to solving the moral psychological puzzle of how the mere perception of them "*ought* to restrain [someone] to his duty" (T 3.1.1.25; SBN 468). As he explains, "we cannot prove *a priori*, that these relations, if they really existed and were perceiv'd, wou'd be universally forcible and obligatory" (T 3.1.1.23; SBN 466). Value recognition would therefore seem to rest in the "appetite, and will," rather than the intellect: "But still this discovery supposes a separate being in these moral distinctions, and a being, which depends only on the will and appetite, and which, both in thought and reality, may be distinguish'd from the reason" (T 3.1.1.25; SBN 468). The claim that values ultimately depend on a will that is distinct from reason echoes Voluntarist claims about the dependence of values on a divine will not necessarily bound by reason. While that remark is embedded in examples of humans and non-human animals, Hume tells us that he chose these examples to make the preceding point "more clear and convincing" (T 3.1.1.24; SBN 466). By Hume's lights, we have no experience of God, so his selection of examples from the palette of experience is consistent with his remarks also having a Voluntarist import.

(2) In his 1740 letter to Hutcheson, Hume alludes to an objection leveled against Hutcheson's providential moral sentimentalism. Essentially, Hutcheson had argued that (i) humans make moral distinctions not through reason, but through the sentiments afforded by a moral sense, (ii) moral sentiments, not reason, engage the will, (iii) God implanted this moral sense in human nature, and (iv) by analogy to human moral psychology, we can infer that God's choice to do so was not a determination of His intellect, but of a corresponding *divine moral sense*, the sentiments or affections of which engaged His will. The objection concerns (iv):

> I wish . . . , I could avoid concluding, that since Morality, according to your Opinion as well as mine, is determin'd merely by Sentiment, it regards only human Nature and human Life. This has been often urg'd against you and the Consequences are very momentous. . . . If Morality were determin'd by Reason, that is the same to all rational Beings: But nothing but Experience can assure us that the Sentiments are the same [in all rational beings]. What Experience have we with regard to Superior beings? How can we ascribe to them any Sentiments at all? (*Letters*, 1:40)

Two things stand out in this passage. First, Hume distinguishes between a "conclu[sion]" and the "Consequences" of that conclusion. This wording is not careless verbosity. The *conclusion* is the sentimentalism captured in the analogy; viz. that morality "regards only human Nature and human Life." The "very momentous" *consequences* of that conclusion are theological, pertaining to "Superior beings." Taking Hume's distinction seriously reveals something telling: The theological consequences of the critique of rationalism are not identical to, and hence, not coextensive with (although certainly related to) the sentimentalist conclusion captured in the analogy, which means that the theological consequences of the critique of rationalism are not exhausted by the pivot to sentimentalism. I shall shortly explain why those theological consequences involve Voluntarism. For the moment, I want to suggest that Hume retains this distinction between the theological consequences of his critique of rationalism, on the one hand, and the sentimentalist conclusion of the analogy, on the other, in *Treatise* 3.1.1, although he reverses the order of presentation.

Second, Hume mentions that Hutcheson's claim that God has a moral sense has come under attack.[13] As Frederick Beiser and Peter Carey have noted, Hutcheson was attacked by his contemporaries for supposedly having Voluntarist sympathies. Specifically, Hutcheson's critics allege that his talk of a divine moral sense amounts to nothing but divine volition unchecked by reason, which is a Voluntarist view. Given the theological context of Hume's remark, it is reasonable to conclude that he is referring to that body of critical literature.[14] Here are three representative samples of the anti-Voluntarist criticism that Hume might have encountered:

> [Burnet:] I own, indeed, we cannot but conceive something in the Deity, in some measure analogous to our kindest affections; as that he takes infinite pleasure in communicating good to his creatures. But this consideration by itself would only lead us to conclude him infinitely happy, and not good in a moral sense. We esteem him essentially good, because he knows all truth, and always acts according to it. He infallibly knows what is best; and will always do what is best upon the whole, all things considered.[15]

> [Glover:] Moral sense, or kind affection, as some affect to speak, is either necessary to all rational minds, or not. If necessary; it differs not from what I call moral capacity, or perception of moral truth: if not, then God might possibly have given the rational mind contrary perceptions and affections; and there is no foundation at all for morality, or reasonableness, or unreasonableness of actions, or truth and falsehood in the necessary nature of things; but the will of god might arbitrarily have determined them as He pleased; . . . all of which is evidently absurd.[16]

> [Grove:] Will any one [Grover identifies Hutcheson in a footnote] say that there must be *natural inclinations* in God, because there can be no *exciting reason* to action without them? . . . Then] *why does God favor the righteous more than the wicked?* . . .

> No farther answer is to be return'd, than because he was inclin'd to it, or because it was necessary for some end . . . which he was inclin'd to promote *without any reason*.[17]

If, as seems likely, Hume is referring to these critiques of Hutcheson in his letter, then we have further evidence that Hume associated the theological consequences of their joint anti-rationalism with Voluntarism.

What is the philosophical significance of Hume's evocation of Voluntarism in the second part of his Argument against Moral Ontology? In the remainder of the paper, I develop the following recommendation: Hume is engaging the debate *within* moral rationalism between Voluntarism and Intellectualism. This debate had a metaethical dimension. Intellectualists were adherents of what we might now call a kind of moral realism, on which values exist independently of, and necessarily bind, divine volition. Intellectualist moral realists alleged that Voluntarists' insistence on untrammeled divine volition allows for the possibility that God could change His mind and alter or destroy values, which is the line of attack we see deployed against Hutcheson. By Intellectualists' lights, Voluntarism is therefore a kind of moral antirealism. In ensuing sections, I reassemble the framework of that internecine rationalist controversy, before showing how Hume—having invoked its specter with his Argument against Moral Ontology—uses the analogy to reject the framework of its realism/antirealism debate in ethics as unintelligible.

1.3. Summary

On my reading of *Treatise* 3.1.1, Hume offers a two-part Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology. In that argument, Hume first rejects the rationalists' ontological conception of values as mind-independent rational entities; second, he rejects the rationalists' moral psychological claim that God's intellectual perception of those values necessarily bind His will. He then offers the analogy between morals and secondary qualities to illuminate a consequence of this two-part argument, and I presented evidence that this consequence concerns the moral-theological issues at stake in the debate between Intellectualism and Voluntarism.

2. Two Kinds of Moral Rationalism

This section provides an overview of the ethical realism/antirealism debate in rationalism. I structure my presentation of that debate around three rationalist claims. First, a semantic claim, on which truth-apt moral judgments are possible, but would not be possible if morals were merely human-mind-dependent phenomena. Second, a moral ontological claim, on which values must consequently be dependent on the divine mind. Third, a theological claim, concerning which attribute of the divine mind to prioritize: intellectualists insist on God's intellect, while Voluntarists emphasize God's volition.

In developing these claims, I survey three representative figures—Clarke, Pufendorf, and Wollaston—whom I choose because there is evidence, presented at the end of the section, of

Hume's acquaintance with their views. I therefore note at the outset that I do not intend my survey of moral rationalism to be comprehensive.

2.1. The Semantic Claim

Ultimately, the rationalists split into opposing metaethical camps, but I begin by identifying a presupposition that unites them. This presupposition is the semantic claim that the truth-apt moral judgments that (according to rationalists) we in fact make would be impossible if values were merely human-mind-dependent phenomena. Before examining their texts, it will be useful to preview the common argument that I extract from them. As Catherine Wilson has shown, the rationalists argue that human mind-dependent accounts of value lead to moral relativism; other commitments then prompt them to equate relativism with an antirealist view on which there are no moral facts or properties.[18] Thus, while it may seem trivially true to some of us that human-mind-dependent accounts of value are antirealist (that is, moral properties have no existence independent of human minds), the rationalists work their way to this conclusion through their semantic claim, arguing that relativism is incompatible with moral truth or falsehood because it denies the existence of any entities that could secure meaning to moral terms.

We can see the semantic claim at work in Clarke's analysis of the possibility that values only exist insofar as they are constituted by human minds. He worries that disagreement between people on what is right and wrong is inevitable, and claims that this relativity leads to intolerable absurdities: "[If] Humane Laws and Constitutions have Power to make *Light* be *Darkness*, and *Darkness Light*; to make *Sweet* be *Bitter*, and *Bitter Sweet*[, then] one Absurdity will naturally lead to another, . . . [and] the signification of Words is arbitrary" (*Discourse*, 633; R 220–221).[19] Clarke's use of the term 'absurdity' is instructive: He thinks that human-mind-dependent accounts of value are unacceptable because they can yield contradictions. He deepens his complaint when sketching an example: If "murder is wrong" is true today (or for us), but could be false tomorrow (or for others), then "*goodness* and *mercy* . . . would be *empty words* without *any signification* at all" (*Discourse*, 627; R 213). We can surmise that Clarke understands moral 'truth' to be equivalent to "true everywhere and always." His point is that if we adopt a human-mind-dependent account of value, we cannot foreclose scenarios in which the truth-values of moral judgments contradict each other. Moral terms would thereby lose their meanings and consequently there would be no moral truth or falsehood—which is obviously absurd, he thinks, because "murder is wrong" *is* true everywhere and always. These contradictions stick because *ex hypothesi* there is no standard external to human-mind-dependent phenomena to arbitrate the conflicting truth claims.[20]

Wollaston is similarly suspicious of the view that morals are constituted by nothing but "custom and agreement among people" (*Religion*, 12; R 242).[21] He responds by developing a version of the semantic claim that also traces an arc from the absurd consequence of relativism to a kind of antirealism.

> Designedly to treat things as being what they are not is the greatest possible absurdity. It is to put bitter for sweet, darkness for light, crooked for straight, etc. It is to subvert all science, to renounce all sense of truth, and flatly to deny the existence of any thing. For nothing can be true, nothing does exist, if things are not what they are. (*Religion*, 15; R 245)

Wollaston's thought is that not only are claims with contradictory truth-values semantic absurdities, but that the properties at issue in those conflicting claims must be (if the contradictions are genuine) ontological absurdities or, effectively, nullities. On this view, the subject of a proposition is the particular thing it is because it has a determinate essence, and hence to make genuinely contradictory claims about this thing is to speak of properties that do not exist.[22] Although Wollaston is a quirky thinker, on this point—concerning the antirealist stakes of the semantic claim—he is in good company; Cudworth, Malebranche, and Shaftesbury all show signs of sharing this view.[23] To apply it, let us grant that a human-mind-dependent account of morals can generate intractable contradictions that would evacuate moral language of meaning and hence of truth-evaluability; for example, "murder is moral" and "murder is immoral." To Wollaston, this outcome reveals that the defender of such an account is committed—whatever she may say—to ethical antirealism, or the non-existence of either moral property. Put differently, he thinks that if we cannot resolve a contradiction about the properties a thing has, it is because the properties do not exist.

Pufendorf also accepts the semantic claim that human-mind-dependent accounts of morals are incompatible with moral judgments' presumptive truth-evaluability. Here are three passages that, taken cumulatively, serve notice of that commitment:

> [1] [I]f the law of nature were only that of society, it would be merely voluntary, arbitrary, and changeable (LNN, ix).[24]
>
> [2] Now these differences between the laws and customs of different peoples have undoubtedly given some [people] excuse for alleging that there is no such thing as natural law (LNN 2.3.10; 217).
>
> [3] [A]lthough [law's] advantage is most manifest, still it alone could never lay so firm a restraint upon the spirit of [people] that they could not forsake such dictates if they should find satisfaction in disregarding this advantage. . . . [These dictates] abide only so long as the agreement of these [people] continues in force (LNN 2.3.20; 143).[25]

Pufendorf is making the point that because moral judgments just are classifications of the relations of actions to a law, it would be semantically absurd to speak of classifications without a fixed law to which those judgments can be indexed.[26] Yet, human-mind-dependent norms are only relatively fixed and hence can conflict, yielding semantic absurdity and hence (Pufendorf implies) a kind of moral antirealism.

In short, Clarke, Wollaston, and Pufendorf all endorse the rationalist semantic claim, according to which values cannot, on pains of absurdity, be human mind-dependent enti-

ties. A distinctive feature of their analysis is that neither takes it to be definitionally true that a mind-dependent account of values is antirealist. Rather, they argue that such an account would generate semantic absurdities *only if* moral entities do not also exist independently of the relativistic flux of human phenomena. This point is important for the rationalists because it allows for the possibility that realism is compatible with the mind-dependence of values—albeit not *human* mind-dependence.

2.2. The Moral Ontological and Theological Claims

To insulate moral judgments' truth-aptitude—and hence, per the semantic claim, values' reality—from the flux of the human mind, the rationalists introduce a moral ontological claim: Values are indexed to the divine mind. Their moral ontology is thus entwined with theological claims about which attribute of the divine mind is paramount: God's intellect or volition. Clarke and Wollaston defend the Intellectualist view that God's will is always bound by the determinations of divine intellect. Pufendorf defends a moderate form of the Voluntarist view that if God is absolutely powerful, then divine will cannot be constrained by anything, including reason.

As I argue, the moral significance of this theological controversy turns on the rationalists' tacit equation of 'reality' with "being eternally true." Clarke and Wollaston lay claim to the mantel of moral realism because, on their Intellectualist account, morals' existence and truth-value are unequivocally eternal objects of reason, which not even God could change. Pufendorf's conception of 'eternal' contains an intentional ambiguity that prompted adversaries to label him a moral antirealist. To anticipate, he allows for a sense in which values are 'eternal' insofar as they are true until God changes human nature and so alters or negates the existence and truth-values of moral facts and properties accordingly.[27]

2.2.1. Rationalist Moral Realism (Intellectualism)

Clarke and Wollaston were members of the Intellectualist school of rationalism, according to which God's volition is always governed by His intellect.[28] Here are two representative passages in which they strike Intellectualist notes:

> [Clarke:] [God] needs do always what is Best in the whole, . . .[which is] a Necessity consistent with the greatest Freedom and most perfect Choice. For the only Foundation of this Necessity, is such an unalterable Rectitude of Will and Perfection of Wisdom, as makes it impossible for a Wise Being to resolve to Act foolishly, or for a Nature infinitely Good, to choose to do that which is Evil. (*Demonstration*, 551; V 51)

> [Wollaston:] from Him must be removed . . . , *ignorance, impotence, acting inconsistency with reason and truth*, and the like. Because these are *defects*; defects of knowledge, power &c. (*Religion*, 94)

Each passage alludes to the galvanizing insight of Intellectualism. If God's will could be exercised without rational guidance, and hence blindly, then we are faced with a pair of unsavory implications: the paradox that God's will is both infinite and limited by lack of rational foresight, and the heresy that God could choose evil. Both implications are blocked by the Intellectualist view that God's will is governed by (what they call) moral necessity.[29] Moral necessity characterizes the volitions of free beings whose actions cannot (insofar as they are rational) be otherwise than in accordance with what is reasonable and best.[30] Consequently, while divine will and intellect may be analytically separable, they are necessarily intertwined in practice insofar as God's will perforce accords with reason. As Clarke puts it, "in *God*, Will and Reason are *one and the same* thing" ("Of the Omnipotence of God," 54).

Intellectualists worry that Voluntarists' insistence on God's untrammeled will leads to ethical antirealism because it renders morality a function of divine fiat. If something is only good because God wills it, and if God has no reason to will one thing over another, then God can arbitrarily change the truth-values of moral judgments by negating or otherwise altering their objects. Voluntarism therefore leads to a reoccurrence of the semantic absurdities that beset human-mind-dependent accounts of morals, as Clarke argues in this set of remarks:

> Thus have I endeavoured to deduce the *original obligations* of *morality*, from the *necessary and eternal reason* and *proportions of things*. Some have chosen to found all difference of good and evil, in the mere positive will and power of God; but the absurdity of this, I have shown elsewhere. (*Discourse*, 630; R 216)

> For if every thing that power can do is just, what, then, is justice but mere power only, and not anything really in the nature of things? And so, the worst and most cruel being in the world, with sufficient power annexed, would in these senses be as just as supreme goodness itself. . . . The effect . . . is the confounding the whole nature of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong, and making every thing to be unintelligible and without meaning. . . . [Voluntarism therefore] subvert[s] the nature of things, taking away the intrinsic difference between good and evil. ("Of the Justice of God," 100–101)[31]

On the Voluntarist view, Clarke argues, it is in principle possible that God could alter ethical facts and properties at whim. The inexorable contradictions in moral judgment that would then arise would—per the rationalists' semantic claim—rob moral terms of their meaning. Consequently, there would be no moral truth or falsehood because there would be no values transcending God's mercurial volition to which appeal could be made. For Intellectualists, a value that is not eternally true everywhere and always is not real, and so Voluntarism's divine-mind account of morals is as antirealist as human mind-dependent accounts.

In order to prevent that recursion of semantic absurdities and ethical antirealism, Clarke and Wollaston insist that divine intellect is the foundation of value and that God's volition is always determined by His intellect.[32] Both Intellectualists hold that God orchestrates the

good in creation through morally salient relations between things, such as equity or benevolence, and that these values are grounded in unchangeable determinations of divine intellect. Consider these representative remarks:

> [Clarke:] The original *Obligation* of all . . . is the eternal *Reason* of Things; *That Reason*, which God himself who has no Superior to direct him, . . . yet constantly *obliges himself* to govern the World. (*Discourse*, 614; R 202)

> [Clarke:] This eternal Rule of Equity . . . is of universal extent and everlasting duration . . . [And] is of the same original with the eternal Reasons and Proportions of things, and the Perfections and Attributes of God Himself. (*Discourse*, 624–25; R 212–13)

> [Wollaston:] Things cannot be denied to be what they are, . . . without contradicting axioms and truths eternal. . . . And then if those truths be considered as having always subsisted in the Divine mind, to which they have always been true, and which differs not from the Deity himself, to do this [i.e., reject these truths] is to act . . . in opposition . . . to His *nature*. (*Religion*, 14–15; R 145)

> [Wollaston:] His attributes of *mercy*, *justice*, andc . . . in him . . . are *one*. Perhaps they may more properly be called together *Divine reason*. (*Religion*, 116)

On this Intellectualist account, for God's will to be necessarily governed by divine intellect does not constrain, but precisely enables, His infinite power, for only then is God free from choosing evil. Accordingly, once God created the universe, certain values and moral truths necessarily follow from the relations of things as cognized by His intellect. Values are therefore "real" in the sense that our true judgments of them are timelessly true.

2.2.2. Rationalist Moral Antirealism (Voluntarism)

Given how unattractive a portrait Clarke and Wollaston paint of Voluntarism, it can seem scarcely credible that anyone would defend it. One reason that some early moderns nevertheless sought to rehabilitate Voluntarism is because it can seem the only way adequately to account for God's absolute power. As Pufendorf explains this motivation, the Intellectualism/Voluntarism debate amounts to a version of the Euthyphro dilemma: Is φ good because God wills it, or does God will φ because it is good?

> Those who search for the prototype of natural law in God himself fall into two classes. The one finds its prime origin in the divine will, and since this is in the highest sense free, they conclude that the law of nature can be changed by God, nay, its very opposite can be enjoined. . . . The other maintains that it is based on the essential holiness and justice of God . . . and from this proceeds also the immutability of natural law, because the justice and holiness of God reject all alterations and change. (LNN 2.3.5; 185)

Intellectualists, Pufendorf explains, choose the second disjunct and hold that "things forbidden by natural law are not improper because God forbade them, but God forbade them because they were of themselves improper" (LNN 2.3.4; 183). The worry, according to Voluntarists such as Pufendorf, is that the Intellectualist view makes morals independent not only of God's will, but of His intellect as well, for the truths of morality would seemingly hold—that is, be immutable truths discoverable by some intellect or other, even if only in principle—regardless of whether God grasps them with His intellect.[33] As Pufendorf puts it, "they who set up an eternal rule for the morality of human actions, beyond the imposition of God, seem to me to do nothing other than to join to God some co-eternal extrinsic principle which He Himself had to follow in the assignment of forms of things" (LNN 1.2.6; 27). *Pace* the Intellectualists, the divine mind, and *a fortiori* the divine intellect, would then not be needed to ensure moral realism because values would instead be dependent on (as Calvin put it) "something greater and higher than God's will, which cannot be found" (*Institutes*, 2: 949).[34]

Voluntarists such as Pufendorf try to retain pride of place for God's power, while deflecting the Intellectualist accusation that God's moral determinations would then be arbitrary and capricious. To see how, we need to distinguish between extreme and moderate forms of Voluntarism. In the extreme Voluntarism that had its heyday in the medieval period and is often associated with William of Ockham, God's will, as M. B. Foster notes, is "not wholly determined by reason."[35] On this view, God's omnipotence is only contingently bound by rationality, which allows for a degree of arbitrariness that would allow God to suspend or invert the moral law, so long as doing so did not entail contradictions. In the more moderate Voluntarism developed by Pufendorf and others in the early modern period, the focus shifts from divine psychology to God's administration of the moral (and physical) laws of nature.[36] This change in emphasis allows moderate Voluntarists to conceptualize those laws as, to cite the title of one of Pufendorf's works, "Covenants with Mankind" that God would never abrogate—not because God *could* not, but because God is perfect and would not commit the imperfect act of breaking a promise.[37]

In reconstructing Pufendorf's moderate Voluntarism, I start by establishing his pivot away from a human-mind-dependent account of moral phenomena (and its semantic absurdities) to the moral ontological claim that morals are dependent on the divine mind. I then establish how Pufendorf modifies that Voluntarism by adopting a distinction between God's absolute and ordained power, which makes room for a sense in which moral truths are "eternal" that fundamentally retains morality's dependence on the divine mind while using the notion of ordained covenants to block Intellectualist worries about God's shifting humors. However, this rehabilitation of Voluntarist ethics did not satisfy Pufendorf's adversaries. I therefore conclude by showing that while Pufendorf did not take himself to be an ethical antirealist, some of his critics alleged that his Voluntarism commits him to ethical antirealism nonetheless.

As we saw earlier, Pufendorf agrees with his Intellectualist counterparts, such as Clarke and Wollaston, on the semantic claim that ethical antirealism (by way of relativism) is the unsatisfactory result of tethering moral values to the human mind. Like Clarke and Wollaston, Pufendorf also seeks to avoid ethical antirealism by anchoring values in the divine

mind. Pufendorf claims that "it must be suppos'd that God hath laid an Obligation on Man to obey this [natural] *Law*, as a *Means* not arising from human Invention, or changeable at human pleasure, but expressly ordained by GOD himself" (LNN 2.3.20; 144). Pufendorf's moral ontological claim therefore has a superficial resemblance to Clarke and Wollaston's, for all three hold that we ultimately judge the truth or falsity of moral claims by reference to God's law, the immutability of which makes moral truth possible. However, Pufendorf's version of the moral ontological claim differs significantly from Clarke and Wollaston's Intellectualist formulation. Whereas the latter stress divine intellect as the foundation of morality, Pufendorf retains the (albeit moderated) Voluntarist focus on divine volition, as we see in his theory of morals as "modes."

According to Pufendorf, God created a physical universe that in itself is value-free: "all the movements and actions of [humans], if every law both divine and human be removed, are indifferent" (LNN 1.2.6; 27). Pufendorf's view stands in contrast to that of Clarke and Wollaston, who hold that values are hardwired into the fabric of the universe because value-entailments follow necessarily from the relations that things in the universe bear to one another. He conceives of morals as "modes," which are properties of physical objects or events that we can conceive independently of particular instantiations, but that do not exist independently of all physical objects or events. Pufendorf thinks that *physical* modes "flow, as it were, from the very nature of the thing itself," and hence are ontologically necessary in some sense (LNN 1.1.3; 5). However, he denies that *moral* modes are of that sort. The existence of moral entities is contingent, for moral modes are "superadded" onto physical nature by the "imposition" of "intelligent beings" (LNN 1.1.3–5; 5–6).[38] Humans invent moral modes as they make distinctions in response to the exigencies of life (LNN 1.1.3; 5, 1.7.5; 116). However, Pufendorf insists—in keeping with the rationalists' semantic claim—that all those socially constructed moral modes are ultimately judged true or false by reference to one mode created by God. That moral mode is the present constitution of human nature (LNN 1.1.6; 7, 1.1.12; 11):

> [T]he absolute existence of any natural law is tested by its necessary agreement or non-agreement *with rational and social nature*. And yet [humans] received this social nature not from any immutable necessity, but from the pleasure of God. Therefore, the morality of actions as well, whether they do or do not suit [a human] as a social being, must be derived from the same source. (LNN 1.2.6; 30)

Pufendorf is not claiming that the content of morality is arbitrary, as it reflects human nature, but rather that moral principles require an act of divine legislative will to be binding. Yet, God was not necessitated to create human nature and hence was, in a counterfactual sense, free not to institute morality. At this fundamental modal level, Pufendorf concedes, morality thus owes its "beginning [to] the pleasure of God" (LNN 2.3.5; 185).

Recall the Intellectualist worry about Voluntarism: if morality is founded in God's will, and God's will is fickle, then semantic absurdities result because there are no moral facts or properties that would survive these arbitrary changes in divine volition. It is noteworthy, then,

that Pufendorf argues that the divine law constituting the ultimate standard of moral truth and falsehood is "eternal" (LNN 1.2.6; 27). Modern readers might understandably wonder, then, why disputes about which divine attribute gives rise to that eternal law are ethically significant; far from having any bearing on a rationalist realism/antirealism debate in ethics, the intellect/volition split can seem a mere family squabble among theological moral realists. However, Pufendorf's use of 'eternal' is not straightforward, and this ambiguity opens the door to ethical antirealism (as Intellectualists understood it).

Voluntarists since Ockham operate with two somewhat archaic distinctions. The first renders 'eternal' ambiguous between "absolutely eternal" and "eternal assuming the continuity of the present dispensation of things." The ambiguity of 'eternal,' in turn, is explained by a second distinction between God's absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) and ordained power (*potentia ordinata*).[39] 'Absolute power' refers to God's ability to do anything that does not entail a contradiction; for instance, creating another universe with different physical or moral laws. 'Ordained power' refers to the divine power governing the present order of things; for example, insofar as God chooses to act—and, in the case of morality, has entered into a covenant to act—within the established order, He is bound by the moral laws structuring it. Crucially, the moral rules instituted by God's ordained power are only contingently necessary because God could (through an exercise of absolute power) stop playing by them.

These Voluntarist distinctions shape Pufendorf's writing. Pufendorf appeals to the absolute/ordained power distinction in the following passage, though he uses the terminology of "absolute" and "hypothetical" necessity:

> Grotius . . . had not considered this matter thoroughly, when he refers the wickedness of some human actions to the class of things to which the power of God Himself does not extend, because they involve a contradiction. . . . But surely such a contradiction does not appear in the case of actions which are opposed to natural law. . . . [M]an received this social nature not from any immutable necessity, but from the pleasure of God. . . . And so morality is fittingly attributed to these actions, not of an absolute necessity, but of a hypothetical necessity. (LNN 1.2.6; 30)

Because moral values are contingent upon the kind of nature that God has ordained for humans, and because the existence of human nature as it is presently constituted is itself (in a theologically deep modal sense) only contingent, it is only a "hypothetical necessity" that values are what they are. Pufendorf thinks that this sense of 'necessity' suffices to render "idle and childish" the worry that God might "have commanded just the opposite of what now prevails" in morality (LNN 2.3.4; 184). After all, although it is not absolutely necessary that humans exist (or continue to exist) as they do now, *if* humans exist (and continue to exist as they are now), then certain moral duties follow, and we know that God has actualized this hypothetical necessity. However, Pufendorf acknowledges that God remains free to change human nature and hence values (LNN 2.3.4; 183–85). Our references to the 'eternality' of the divine moral law, Pufendorf notes, must be tempered accordingly:

> From all this it is evident that the familiar and oft-repeated saying, "The precepts of the natural law are of eternal verity," should be limited to this extent, that such eternity should not reach beyond the imposition of God, or the origin of the race of man. Although, as a matter of fact, the eternity which is attributed to natural law should be measured and defined in terms of its opposition to positive laws, which are subject to change. (LNN 1.2.6; 31)

What Pufendorf concedes in this passage is the initially bewildering thought that the "eternal verity" of moral judgments is compatible with their falsification by a divine (absolute) fiat that modifies or eliminates human nature. To be sure, God would not invert the moral order, because He has entered into a covenant, the breaking of which would be an imperfection incompatible with His perfect nature. Thus, "whilst" God acts solely within his ordained power or covenant, moral truths are eternal. An attenuated form of Voluntarism remains, however, in Pufendorf's understated claim that covenanted moral truths are—in point of metaphysical speculation that brackets the issue of covenants—only *contingently* eternal. This contingency is due to the fact that God has the absolute power to change human nature in any way not generating contradictions, meaning that God could change the content of divine law, and hence moral truths are not *absolutely* eternal.

These guardrails that Pufendorf lays down perhaps should have been enough to block the charge of ethical antirealism—indeed, they could even cohere with some form of moral realism—but they fail to mollify Intellectualists. As an exasperated Pufendorf exclaims, some Intellectualists would apparently only be satisfied by a kind of ideological purity that insists on the "impious and idiotic theory" that moral principles would exist even if God did not exist (LNN 2.3.19; 315).[40] Pufendorf's refusal to accede to that impious hypothesis fails to satisfy Intellectual purists such as Leibniz:

> Neither the norm of conduct itself, nor the essence of the just, depends on [God's] free decision, but rather on eternal truths, objects of the divine intellect, which constitute, so to speak, the essence of divinity itself; and it is right that our author [Pufendorf] is reproached by theologians when he maintains the contrary; because, I believe, he had not seen the wicked consequences which arise from it. (. . .) It would follow from this, . . . that God could with justice condemn an innocent person, since he could make it such that precisely this would constitute justice. (*Principles of Pufendorf*, 71–72)

As Leibniz notes, if moral claims track nothing but the possibly conflicting determinations of divine will, then they do not—by Intellectualist lights—track anything at all.[41] To Intellectualists such as Leibniz, the charge of ethical antirealism therefore sticks to Pufendorf despite his moderate Voluntarism: if God's absolute power allows for changes in His will (about human nature and thus morals), then the risk of semantic absurdity resurfaces at this divine-centric level, as it is not absolutely impossible *that murder is wrong* is true today, yet false tomorrow.

Moral terms would then become semantically vacuous because there would be no moral truth or falsehood if there are no moral entities existing independently of arbitrary fluctuations in God's will.

2.3. Summary

The divide between ethical realism and antirealism has not always been where most present-day moral realists and antirealists locate it. In the early modern period, we can distinguish two different versions of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics. On the *human centric* debate, rationalists such as Clarke, Wollaston, and Pufendorf agree that values are not human-mind-dependent facts or properties. They think this because they endorse both the semantic claim that values cannot be human-mind dependent, on pains of absurdity, and the consequent moral ontological claim that values are dependent on the divine mind. On the *divine centric* debate, however, rationalists disagree over whether values are independent of God's will. Intellectualist moral realists such as Clarke and Wollaston claim that morals possess existence and truth-values that not even God has power to change. In the opposing camp are moderate Voluntarist rationalists such as Pufendorf. While Pufendorf seeks to distance himself from the antirealist implications of earlier, more extreme Voluntarist moral theory, his Intellectualist opponents judge his view to collapse into ethical antirealism regardless, insofar as it seems to leave morals dependent on God's will or pleasure.

3. Hume on Rationalism's Realism/Antirealism Debate

Hume's engagement with Clarke and Wollaston's variety of Intellectualist moral realism is copiously established by commentators and confirmed by Hume himself.[42] I therefore concentrate instead on assembling the neglected evidence of Hume's encounters with the Voluntarist moral antirealism exemplified in Pufendorf. There are at least three pieces of evidence, all from the period in which Hume was composing Book 3 of the *Treatise*.

3.1. Ferguson

Among the contents of Hume's library was Robert Ferguson's *A Sober Enquiry into the Nature, Measure and Principle of Moral Virtue*, signed "D. Home."[43] According to M. A. Stewart, Hume stopped spelling his name "Home" by 1732.[44] If Hume read Ferguson's book before finishing the *Treatise* in 1739, he would have found a broadside against Voluntarist moral antirealism. Notably, Ferguson discusses each of the rationalists' three claims. Here he rehearses their semantic claim, on which values cannot be human-mind dependent:

> If all things be in themselves adiaphorous, and good and evil only regulated by customs and civil constitutions; Then if men please they may invert the whole moral frame of things, and make what the world hitherto thought Vertues, to be adjudged

> Vices, and Vices to come into the place of Vertues. . . . So what is *Truth* to day, may be *Falshood* tomorrow. (*Sober*, 75–76; see also 72–73)

Concluding that "Humane Reason is not an adequate Rule of Moral Vertue," Ferguson then develops the Intellectualist realists' version of the moral ontological claim (*Sober*, 49, 231, 276). Of special interest is that, in doing so, he criticizes the Voluntarists' theological claim, which he states renders values mere creatures of divine volition *qua* "arbitrariness" and allows morality to become annihilated by possible "contradictions" (*Sober*, 56–57). In short, in his formative philosophical years Hume owned, signed, and possibly read Ferguson's reconstruction of the rationalists' three major claims, including the charge that the Voluntarists are committed to a kind of ethical antirealism.

3.2. Memoranda on King and Law

Hume's early memoranda also show signs of his interest in the rationalists' realism/antirealism debate. While the dating of Hume's memoranda is imprecise, the consensus is that the portions of them with greatest topical overlap to the *Treatise* are "coterminous with the end of Hume's main work on the *Treatise*," or 1739–1740.[45] Of interest here are Hume's entries on William King's *An Essay on the Origin of Evil*, perhaps on the 1731 translation, with copious commentary in the footnotes by Edmund Law. These entries have not yet been sufficiently appreciated.[46] The crucial section for us is *Origin* 5.1.4, in which King and Law cite Pufendorf in order to defend Voluntarism from the charge of antirealism by appealing to the *potentia absoluta/potentia ordinata* distinction that also shapes Pufendorf's ambiguous sense of 'eternal.'[47] Indeed, *Origin* 5.1.4 contains—to be the best of my determination—three of the four references to Pufendorf in that work.[48] Upon correlating Hume's memoranda with *Origin*, we find that his notes run straight through *Origin* 5.1.4:

Hume's *Memoranda* on King	Corresponding sections of King's *Origin*
18	2.¶2; 73
19	3.¶3n.30; 84–89 and 4.1.4.¶3n.46; 114
20	5.1.4¶15n.75; 193–94
21	3¶3n.30; 86–89 and 5.1.4¶18n.76; 197
22	5.1.1¶7; 152, 5.1.2¶5; 167, 5.1.3¶22; 184, and 5.1.5¶8; 202–203
23	5.5.2¶8; 233 and 5.5.2¶17n.90; 241
24 *and* 25	5.5.2¶9–10; 233–34

Here are Hume's two memoranda dealing with content from *Origin* 5.1.4:

> 20. Those, who solve the Difficultys concerning the Origin of Ill by the Apology of general Laws suppose another Motive beside Goodness in the Creation of the Worlds.

> 21. What Necessity then for harmful Motions or disagreeable Perceptions? Many Plans upon which the Universe might be form'd. Strange that none shou'd be better than the present. Baile. (*Memoranda*, 501)[49]

Entry 20 pertains to King and Law's Voluntarism, while in entry 21 Hume comments on material associated with their attempt to decouple Voluntarism from moral antirealism, as I shall now show.

In entry 20, Hume indicates that the author he is reading rejects any other "Motive besides Goodness in [God's] Creation of the Worlds." To determine what that other motive might be, one of Law's footnotes proves instructive. Law explains that King's conception of God's goodness should be understood as synonymous with "bare" volition:

> [W]hat do we mean by His *goodness* here? Is it any thing more than an intent to exercise his Attributes . . . ? . . . To say then that God is determin'd by his Goodness, is saying, that he determines himself; 'tis assigning his bare Will and Inclination for a Cause of his Action; which is all that we contend for. (*Essay*, 5.1.4¶8n.74; 189)

According to Law, then, divine goodness just is untrammeled divine volition. Law's rhetorical query after "any thing more" than divine goodness or volition is thus, in context, an oblique reference to God's intellectual cognition of values existing independently of divine volition. We may infer, then, that when Hume's memorandum references another "Motive besides [God's] Goodness," he is referencing King's repudiation of the Intellectualism that (Law adds) "is advanc'd by Dr. *Clarke*" (*Origin*, 5.1.4.¶3n.73; 186). Here is King's censure of Intellectualism:

> We must not therefore attend to such as declare that God chooses things because they are Good, as if Goodness and the greater Good, which he perceives in Objects, could determine his Will. . . . [Things] are so far from being made on account of any agreeableness antecedent to the Divine Will, that, on the contrary, they are necessarily agreeable and pleasant because they are made by his free Choice. (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶4; 186–87)

Augmenting King's repudiation of Intellectualism, Law adds a footnote aligning himself and King with Pufendorf's moderate Voluntarism. Significantly, however, Law claims that Pufendorf's covenant theology obfuscates the ordained moral order's dependency on divine volition, which Law thinks should be defended more forthrightly than King or Pufendorf acknowledge:

> Thus all *moral Obligation* is ultimately referr'd to the *Will of God*, . . . from which I think it may be deduced with much more clearness and consistency than from that *Hypothetical Necessity* of the relations of things, which evidently presupposes . . . and is itself only founded on the Will of God. See . . . *Puffendorf of the Law of Nature and Nations*. (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶15n.75; 194)

In brief, Memoranda 20 provides reason to believe that Hume was attentive to King and Law's Voluntarist specification of the rationalists' moral ontological claim, and that he would have recognized Pufendorf as a major player in that coterie.

Entry no. 21, in which Hume muses on God's "strange" selection of this world out of the "Many Plans upon which the Universe might be form'd," can seem unpromising as an indication of Hume's interest in Voluntarist antirealism. However, Hume's note echoes a topic that Law pursues in footnotes designed to block the Intellectualist characterization of Voluntarism as moral antirealism. Law opens his discussion with a proof that "there can be no better System . . . [than] the present one," which is the topic of Hume's note. What spurs Law to furnish this proof is the Intellectualist objection that Voluntarism bottoms out in semantic absurdities tantamount to moral antirealism: "[If] all Good and Evil depen[d] upon the *Arbitrary Will* of God, then it would not be impossible for God to will that Vice be Virtue, that two and two make five, andc." (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶17n.76; 195). To block this objection, Law wheels out the *potentia absoluta/potentia ordinata* distinction. To be rid ourselves of Intellectualist anxiety over accepting that "the *Will of God*, . . . [is] the only sure and adequate foundation of [morality]," Law argues, we need only distinguish between two kinds of divine power (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶15n.75; 194). Whereas God's "absolute Power" can do anything short of that which would lead to a "contradiction," once (and so long as) God ordains that a certain order of things exist, God will respect the "certain consequences and relations [that] arise" from human nature (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶15n.75; 193–94). Thus, Law concludes, despite being divine-volition-dependent, values are relatively eternal, and this is sufficient to turn aside the Intellectualist charge that Voluntarism flubs the rationalist semantic claim:

> Vice must be Vice, &c . . . while things are as they are. . . . To stile this *Eternal* and *Immutable* can therefore only mean this much, *viz.* suppose things to be at any time what they are now, and at the same time the very same consequences would flow from them which we now find. (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶17n.76; 195; see also 5.1.5¶12 and 16–17)

We find such constancy of the moral order, Law notes, in examples drawn from "the very frame of our Nature and Constitution, [and the]. . . . Instincts, Affections, andc . . . [that] oblige [us] to pursue" pleasures and avoid pains in a system that regularly secures our "Happiness and Preservation" (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶15n.75; 193–94). Accordingly, Law concludes, "there can be no better System . . . [than] the present one, and [therefore] there can be no reason in Nature for this Change" (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶17n.76; 196–97). This is the reflection on our neurophysiological hardwiring that finds its way into Hume's reference to "harmful Motions or disagreeable Perceptions" in memoranda no. 21.

Entry no. 21 is therefore drawn from a discussion in which Law utilizes the *potentia absoluta/potentia ordinata* distinction to decouple Voluntarism and moral antirealism. In reading those passages, Hume would also have encountered Law's appeals to Pufendorf to supply additional caulking to block the equation of Voluntarism with moral antirealism. Here are the two remarks from that footnote in which Law cites Pufendorf:

> [To rebut the charge that Voluntarism is a kind of moral antirealism] 'tis sufficient to shew that these Relations are not *absolutely necessary in themselves*, but only conditionally and consequently to the present Order of the Creation. See *Puffendorf*. (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶17n.76; 196)

> If the Objection goes yet farther, and it be urg'd, that according to us it will not be impossible for God to change his *primary* Will, . . . and so alter the whole System together . . . and shake the foundation of Morality. . . . Nay, I think . . . we may assert, that the forementioned supposition is impossible. . . . [T]here can be no reason in Nature for this Change, and therefore there will be none, tho' such a Physical Power of changing it were allow'd to be inherent in the Deity: Nor need we be so much afraid to allow that Being to be in the strictest sense *Arbitrary*, which we have before proved to be *absolutely perfect*. Upon this Subject see *Puffendorf*. (*Origin*, 5.1.4¶17n.76; 196–97)

These passages not only incorporate all three rationalist claims—semantic, moral ontological, and theological—but position Pufendorf as an authority for (moderate) Voluntarists. Overall, then, while Hume's official topic of entry no. 21 seems to be theodicy, the remark contains clues indicating that the theodicy in question is of the special sort associated with the attempts of moderate Voluntarists, such as Pufendorf, to avoid commitment to ethical antirealism.

To summarize the significance of these two memoranda entries, entry 20 shows signs of Hume's familiarity with the contrasting Intellectualist and Voluntarist theological specifications of rationalism's moral ontological claim, and entry 21 contains notes on topics associated with Voluntarist attempts to ward off ethical antirealism.

3.3. Letter to Hutcheson

Hume's awareness of Pufendorf's Voluntarist specification of the moral ontological claim also appears in a 1739 letter to Hutcheson. It is noteworthy that, before referring to Pufendorf, Hume quotes from Horace. Here is a translation of the passage that Hume excerpts in Latin: "Those whose creed is that all sins are much on a par are at a loss when they come to face facts [*verum*, truth]. Feelings and customs rebel, and so does Expedience herself, the mother, we may say, of justice and right" (*Satires*, I.3.96–98; 40–41).[50] Horace seems to be resisting a proleptic version of the rationalists' semantic claim, on which truth-apt moral judgments are not possible if values are human-mind-dependent. Yet, Horace goes on (in a passage that Hume does not cite) to suggest that this pessimistic semantic claim is unwarranted if we look more closely at the structure of human sentiments: "Between right and wrong Nature can draw no such distinction[, but Nature can] between things gainful and harmful, what is to be sought and what is to be shunned" (*Satires*, I.3.114–117; 40–41).

It could be a mere coincidence that the same lines Hume excerpts from Horace are also quoted by Pufendorf as he catalogues various versions of the semantic claim, on which truth-apt moral judgments cannot be made about human-mind-dependent phenomena. Reflecting on instances of apparent moral relativity, Pufendorf writes: "Now these differences between the laws and customs of different peoples have undoubtedly given some men excuse for alleging that there is no such thing as natural law, and that all law has arisen from the convenience of individual states, and cannot be measured in any other way. So Horace, *Satires* . . ." (LNN 2.3.10; 194). Pufendorf then cites the same passage from Horace as Hume. While possibly a coincidence, the context of Hume's references to Pufendorf and Horace suggests otherwise. Those references occur toward the end of a paragraph that opens with Hume's worries about a conception of natural law whose foundations are divine: "I cannot agree to your Sense of *Natural*. 'Tis founded on final Causes; which is a Consideration, that appears to me pretty uncertain and unphilosophical. For pray, what is the End of Man?" (*Letters*, 1: 33). Pufendorf's conception of morality is, of course, based in a conception of natural law in which God ordains or institutes covenants consistent with the divinely appointed ends of human nature. Rejecting such a view on the grounds that it "depends upon solving. . . . Questions, which are endless," Hume says that he takes Horace's path of seeking a non-theological origin to morality: "*Atque ipsa utilitas justi propre mater and aequi*. [Translation in the second sentence from Horace cited *supra*.] Says one of the best Moralists of Antiquity. *Grotius and Puffendorf*, to be consistent, must assert the same" (*Letters*, 1: 33). This remark seems to make the most sense if we assume that Hume encountered Pufendorf's citation of Horace, but thinks that Pufendorf failed to appreciate the wisdom of the verse he cited—thus, "to be consistent" with the metaethical moral to be drawn from his own citation of Horace, Pufendorf must jettison the theological foundations of his moral ontology.

This letter is important, in part, because it yields further confirmation that Hume associated Pufendorf with moderate Voluntarism. More importantly, however, it gestures at how Hume himself proposes to bypass a theological iteration of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics that he disdains as being "quite wide of my Purpose" (*Letters*, 1: 33). His recommendation is that there is a way to take seriously Horace's proleptic version of sentimentalism, on which moral distinctions are grounded in our sentiments, *without* conceding (with the rationalists) that such a view amounts to a kind of antirealism on which "all sins are much on a par" because there are no moral distinctions. More precisely, I shall argue that Hume is suggesting that the rationalists' realism/antirealism debate in ethics can be bypassed if we reject their semantic claim, on which truth-apt judgments cannot be made about human-mind-dependent phenomena. In the rest of the paper, I retrieve Hume's proposal for rejecting that semantic claim.

3.4. Summary

In the period when Hume composed Book 3 of the *Treatise*, his reading acquainted him with a divine-centric iteration of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics. While his hostility to

Clarke and Wollaston's Intellectualist moral realism is well established, there is evidence that he also had critical encounters with the kind of Voluntarist moral antirealism associated with Pufendorf. Overall, the evidence indicates that Hume wants to abstain from this divine-centric iteration of the realism/antirealism debate, and in his 1739 letter to Hutcheson he says he has found a way to reject the semantic claim motivating it. In the concluding section of this paper, I assemble Hume's rejection of the rationalists' semantic claim.

4. The Analogy and Rationalist Moral Ontology

I argue that Hume's analogy rejects the semantic claim about moral truth presupposed by the framework of rationalism's realism/antirealism debate. After attending to signs that the analogy is intended to bear on that debate, I show that Hume regards judgments of sensible secondary qualities as truth-apt, yielding a cognitivist reading of the analogy. I then argue that we best understand Hume as a kind of quietist about moral ontology, and conclude by suggesting some Humean lessons for present-day metaethics.

4.1. The Analogy and Rationalism's Semantic Claim

In *Treatise* 3.1.1., Hume offers the analogy of morals to secondary qualities at the end of his two-part Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology. The first part of that argument assails Intellectualist moral realism by discrediting its ontological identification of values with rational relations. In the second part of that argument, Hume attacks Intellectualist moral realism again, this time with a moral psychological consideration. He claims that even if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that morals were equivalent to rational relations, analysis of the extant matters of fact still provides no basis for assuming that such relations necessarily bind the will, including the will of God. This part of Hume's argument conjures up Voluntarist moral antirealism: If values are not constructions of divine reason or intellect that bind God's will, then (by the logic of a simplified version of the Intellectualism/Voluntarism debate) values are nothing but determinations of divine volition. Why would Hume, intent on exorcising moral philosophy of its rationalist theological ghosts, summon the rationalist spirit of Voluntarist antirealism to his aid?[51] On my reading, Hume does so in order to flush out the faulty presupposition on which rests the framework of rationalism's realism/antirealism debate in ethics: the semantic claim that truth-apt moral judgments cannot be made about human-mind-dependent phenomena. The analogy pinpoints the mistake in that semantic claim.

The way Hume structures the paragraph containing the analogy supports my interpretive proposal. That paragraph makes three moves, which I reproduce and number:

> [1] Nor does this reasoning only prove, that morality consists not in any relations, that are the objects of science; but if examin'd, will prove with equal certainty, that it consists not in any *matter of fact*, which can be discover'd by the understanding. This is the *second* part of our argument.

> [2] But can there be any difficulty in proving, that vice and virtue are not matters of fact, whose existence we can infer by reason? Take any action allow'd to be vicious: Wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call *vice*. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case.
>
> [3] Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind: And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics . . .has little or no influence on practice. Nothing can be more real, or concern us more, than our own sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness; and if these be favourable to virtue, and unfavourable to vice, no more can be requisite to the regulation of our conduct and behaviour. (T 3.1.1.26; SBN 468–69)

In [1], Hume instructs us to read the analogy in light of his Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology, which ends by gesturing toward the Voluntarist claim that the existence of values is contingent on non-rational volitional phenomena in the mind of God. If we heed that injunction, then [2] and [3] have dialectical import for both Intellectualists and Voluntarists. This is because in [2] Hume runs a human-centric version of that Voluntarist claim, noting that values exist only insofar as they are "passions, motives, volitions and thoughts." The parallel Hume adduces here between values' dependence on non-rational factors in the divine-mind and human-mind would make Voluntarists such as Pufendorf queasy, for it implies that Voluntarism's divine-mind-dependent conception of values is—in kind, if not in degree—no different from the human-mind-dependent conception of values that Voluntarists themselves agree would lead to semantic absurdity and hence collapse into ethical antirealism. Intellectualists would find cold comfort in [2], for although it confirms their suspicion that Voluntarism is committed to a kind of ethical antirealism, Intellectualist moral realism has already been fatally wounded by the first part of Hume's argument.

Having now flummoxed both Intellectualism and Voluntarism, Hume indicates in [3] that the rationalist realism/antirealism debate in any event rests on a problematic assumption. As I read Hume, in stating that "nothing can be more real . . . than our own sentiments," he denies the rationalists' semantic claim that truth-apt moral judgments cannot be made about human-mind-dependent phenomena. An objection to my interpretation is that Hume's use of the word 'real' seemingly takes sides in a realism/antirealism debate. The objection would be fatal if 'real' always signifies 'existence,' but 'real' does not always have those ontological connotations in Hume. There is also an established use of 'real' to signify 'truth,' and this epistemological usage is present in Hume himself.[52] Don Baxter notes that in Hume's discussion of space and time he uses 'real' to "tal[k] about what is really true of the world as it appears," as "opposed to how it is falsely supposed to be."[53] Hume's other epistemological uses of 'real' include talk of a "true and real cause" (T 1.3.8.8; SBN 101–102), "something solid and real, certain and invariable" (T 1.3.9.7; SBN 110), "less certain and [less] real" (T 1.3.13.2; SBN 143–44), and how "morality is a subject that interests us . . . [which] concern must make our

speculations appear more real and solid" (T 3.1.1.1; SBN 455–56, emphasis added). If I am correct that Hume deems judgments of human-mind-dependent phenomena to be truth-apt, then his appeal to such phenomena in the analogy would tender his repudiation of rationalism's semantic claim that moral truth is incompatible with human-mind-dependence. As I interpret Hume, he consequently prescinds from the realism/antirealism debate as his Intellectualist and Voluntarist contemporaries understood it on the grounds that we do not need rationalism's ontological claims to speak of truth. However, Hume uses 'real' himself to mean true judgments in a given domain, and is to that extent a kind of cognitivist or epistemological realist.

There is further evidence of Hume's epistemological use of 'real' in the context of phenomenal secondary qualities, such as color. In "The Standard of Taste," he speaks of judging things by "their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses" (*Essays*, 234).[54] (Hume follows the eighteenth-century use of 'phantasm' to refer to the phenomenal objects of the senses [*Encyclopedia*, 2:800].) Although Hume wrote that essay about fifteen years after the *Treatise*, the earlier text laid the groundwork for his talk of true judgments of phenomenal colors. Colors are in one of the *Treatise*'s first examples of a true judgment. After dividing all the "perceptions" of the mind into two classes, impressions (vivid perceptions) and ideas (fainter "images" of impressions), Hume further distinguishes between simple and complex impressions and ideas (T 1.1.1.1–2; SBN 1–2). Taken jointly, he argues, these distinctions license the Copy Principle, which claims that simple ideas are "exact copies" or resemblances of the simple impressions that caused them (T 1.1.1.5 and 7; SBN 3–4). The language of exact representations is Hume's way of talking about the truth or falsity of representations (T 3.1.1.9, 2.3.3.5; SBN 458, 415). Here is his example of a true representation: "That idea of red, which we form in the dark, and that impression, which strikes our eyes in sun-shine, differ only in degree, not in nature" (T 1.1.1.5; SBN 3). Given that Hume employs 'idea' in the proprietary sense of a "faint image" of an impression, both the idea and the impression of *how red looks* are exactly resembling sensible perceptions of a secondary quality (differing "only in degree" of intensity), and hence the idea of *how red looks* is a true representation of the impression of *how red looks*. Judgments of secondary qualities such as colors, in short, are one of Hume's paradigmatic examples of judgments that are at least sometimes true.

Phenomenal secondary qualities also appear in Hume's discussion of a source of knowledge that he calls "intuition."[55] According to Hume, "intuition" is the discovery of relations of resemblance, contrariety, or qualitative degree "at first sight, without any enquiry or reasoning." For example, we can intuitively know the qualitative degrees of difference in secondary qualities: "And tho' it be impossible to judge exactly of the degrees of any quality, such as colour, taste, heat, cold, when the difference betwixt them is very small; yet 'tis easy to decide, that any of them is superior or inferior to another, when their difference is considerable" (T 1.3.1.2; SBN 70). Hume states that judgments of qualitative differences in phenomenal colors can be true: "I believe it will readily be allow'd, that the several distinct ideas of colours, which enter by the eyes . . . are really different from each other. . . . Now if this be true of different colours, it must be no less so of different shades of the same colour" (T 1.1.1.10; SBN 5–6). On Hume's

view, then, although reason may be required for a "second examination" in cases in which the relations that secondary qualities stand to each other are very minute, in straightforward cases intuition is sufficient to know that faded pink is qualitatively different from hot pink, that red is contrary to green, or that two shades of red resemble each other (T 1.3.1.2; SBN 70). Judgments of phenomenal secondary qualities such as color are therefore not only one of Hume's stock examples of true judgments, but of truths that can be discerned intuitively without the use of reason.

Hume's cognitivism about judgments of secondary qualities unlocks the analogy. The analogy is that the discovery of values' human-mind-dependence, like the discovery that secondary qualities are "perceptions in the mind," has negligible "influence on practice." My suggestion is that while "practice" minimally refers to the sentiments motivating us in the "Conduct of Life," it also refers to the practice of judgment (*Letters*, 1:40). Consider three parallels. First, despite the human-mind-dependence of morals, we can make correct judgments of them (as we do with colors).[56] Moral judgments are "founded on the pleasure or pain, which . . . cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, [and therefore] . . . there is just as much vice or virtue in any character, as every one places in it, and that 'tis impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken" (T 3.2.8.8; SBN 546–47).

Second, correct judgments of morals can be made without the use of reason, similar to how correct color judgments can be made by an intuitive perception of relations. Just as difference or contrariety is one of the relations tracked in color judgments, moral judgments "mark the difference betwixt" vice and virtue (T 3.1.2.1; SBN 470). Spontaneously-formed moral judgments track distinctions usually known through a hedonic feeling, for we typically do not "regard the happiness and misery of all sensible beings with greater indifference than even two contiguous shades of the same colour" (EPM 6.4; SBN 235).[57] What that pleasure or pain registers is a relation between an external object (an action or character trait) and an internal response (usefulness or agreeableness of that object to self or others) (T 3.1.1.21; SBN 464–65; EPM 9.16; SBN 278). Moral judgments in general therefore track the difference between (what Hume calls) impressions of reflection, that is, between good and pleasurable, or bad and painful, impressions of that relation. It would therefore seem that, on Hume's view, the correctness of spontaneously-formed moral judgments—that about which "'tis impossible . . . we can ever be mistaken" (T 3.2.8.8; SBN 546–47)—concerns their valence.[58]

Third, spontaneous moral judgments are akin to intuitive color judgments inasmuch as they can require a "second examination" by rational reflection. It can be a bit mysterious to see why, if spontaneously or intuitively formed judgments are in some sense correct, they should be subject to further reflection. One reason Hume thinks this is redolent of the rationalists' semantic claim: He agrees that (i) judgments about human-mind dependent phenomena can generate contradictions, and (ii) these contradictions undermine the preconditions of linguistic intelligibility. In the moral case, for example, Hume notes that judges are subject to biases based on selfish "interests" and parochial points of view (T 3.3.1.14–17; SBN 581–82). These perceptual variations can lead to someone making judgments that contradict not only the determination of other judges, but with what she herself may judge in other circumstances.

Left unresolved, Hume argues, these contradictory judgments annul the semantic stability that makes communication possible: "'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).

Unlike the rationalists, however, Hume does not hold (iii) that wrestling with these semantic worries requires us either to regard as invidious the human-mind-dependence of the objects of certain classes of judgment, or to seek an extra-human (divine) standard of truth. Rather, he argues that reflection reveals a procedure that we use to overcome these perspectival distortions: "[T]o prevent those continual *contradictions*, and arrive at a more *stable* judgment of things, we fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view" (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581–82). This general, or as Hume will later say, "common" point of view can serve as a procedure to identify and bypass at least those distorting prejudices of judges that would otherwise imperil the meaningfulness of words (EPM 9.6; SBN 272–73).[59] For instance, although my immediate judgment about burpees is that they are painful, bad, and to-be-avoided, I can reflect that 'badness' refers to what is harmful or disagreeable or useless from a general or common point of view (not just my own parochial view), and so reflectively override my initial verdict at least to the extent that I conform my language to common practice (T 3.3.1.16; SBN 582). Hume maintains that some version of this process of "correctio[n] [is] common with regard to all the senses" (T 3.3.1.16; SBN 582). In the "Standard of Taste," he gives an example of how reflective correction might work in the case of intuitive color judgments. Those who make color judgments in unusual conditions, such as in dim or artificial lighting or while suffering certain health conditions affecting the eye, will make a color judgment that *could* be correct, but may well be incorrect when the distorting influences are bracketed: "the appearance of objects in day-light, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses" (*Essays,* 234).

Hume's view, then, is that while color and moral judgments can be made at first sight, these judgments are fallible and may need to be adjudicated by reason.[60] In correcting our moral judgments, "a very accurate *reason* or *judgement* is often requisite, to give the true determination, amidst such intricate doubts arising from obscure and opposite utilities" afforded by actions or character traits (EPM App. 1.2; SBN 286). By 'reasoning,' Hume means the process of determining truth or falsity by means of the discovery and comparison of relations (T 1.3.2.2; SBN 73). Thus, human-centric worries about conflicting judgments, far from impugning the metaphysical reality of the objects of color and moral judgments, admit of a human-centric solution that accounts for their epistemic reality. As Hume does in the analogy in *Treatise* 3.1.1, in the version of the analogy in "The Sceptic" he claims that the mind-dependence of morals and phenomenal secondary qualities does not detract from their "reality," and continues by glossing 'reality' epistemologically: "Though colours were allowed to lie only in the eye. . . . There is a sufficient uniformity in the senses and feelings of [human]kind, to make all these qualities the objects of art *and reasoning*" (*Essays*, 166n3, emphasis added). The analogy of morals to secondary qualities is therefore Hume's escape-hatch from the presupposition about moral truth impelling rationalists into a realism/antirealism debate in ethics.

To summarize, Hume's analogy states that the discovery that morals and secondary qualities are human-mind-dependent makes little difference to practice. The practice in question includes moral and color judgment, and I presented several passages in which he holds that human-mind-dependence is orthogonal to truth-aptitude in both cases. Contextualized against the backdrop of his Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology, the analogy is a rebuke of the presupposition driving the rationalists' realism/antirealism debate in ethics: viz. that moral truth is incompatible with values' dependence on the human mind. Hume disarms the rationalists' anxiety by reminding us that we already credential cognitivist judgments of mind-dependent phenomena, such as colors. In so doing, Hume's analogy is what John Passmore calls a "disproof by reminder," in which someone reminds us "not of something we once knew but have now forgotten, but rather of something we now need to notice but never before have needed to notice."[61] Indeed, even Clarke once took solace in the thought that just as "Colours may really differ as much as can be, not only in degree but entirely in kind, as red and blue, or white and black: So . . . [too we can] define exactly the bounds of Right and Wrong" (*Discourse*, 611; R 197).

4.2. Quietism about Rationalist Moral Ontology

We can now discern what Hume thinks is the "very momentous" consequence of sentimentalism illustrated by the analogy: with respect to his contemporaries' moral philosophy, Hume is an epistemological realist but an ontological quietist. Before addressing the pertinence of my historical findings to contemporary metaethics, I explain what I mean by 'quietism' and why Hume's view qualifies as quietist.

'Quietism' etymologically pertains to an attitude of quietude or tranquility of mind, and the term appears in a myriad of settings: surrender to God, detachment from worldly affairs, self-abnegation, acceptance of the limits of human understanding, and aversion to conflict.[62] The sense of 'quietism' to which I appeal, however, is often associated with Wittgenstein.[63] Crispin Wright glosses Wittgensteinian quietism as the diagnosis of "ill-conceived" dilemmas, with the subsequent realization that there is "no constructive philosophical work to do by way of attempting to steer between its horns."[64] John McDowell similarly describes this kind of quietism as a "therapeutic" dissolution of questions by "showing that they are not necessary," adding that "there is no guarantee that it will be easy to discover a forgetfulness of something obvious, underlying the conviction of being under an intellectual obligation to engage in one of those [ill-conceived] tasks."[65] Abstracting from its Wittgensteinian heritage, I shall use 'quietism' to refer to the abstention from certain philosophical debates on the grounds that their frameworks are unintelligible.[66]

Given this definition, Hume's moral ontology is quietist. *Treatise* 3.1.1's analogy comments on the rationalists' configuration of the realism/antirealism debate in ethics, from which he prescinds on the grounds that its guiding presupposition—that human-mind-dependence is inimical to truth-aptitude—is erroneous. Hume's approach to this particular debate is therefore a species of the argumentative strategy of quietism more generally, on which one of the

tasks of philosophy is to expose pseudo-problems and, having punctured their attractiveness, make the smart choice to withdraw from them. This choice also explains why Hume's stance toward rationalist moral ontology is quietist, not skeptic. To the question, "are morals real?," run-of-the-mill skeptics allow that there might be a genuine answer, although we can never (certainly) know it. In contrast, quietists reject the question, not because the answer is unknowable or uncertain, but because the question is unintelligible. The latter is Hume's approach.[67]

But what, one might object, is the relevance of Hume's quietism today? Geoffrey Sayre-McCord limns the divide between contemporary realists and antirealists in ethics as follows: "moral realists . . . all share the view that there are moral facts in light of which our moral judgments prove to be true or false."[68] Michael Dummett notes that many realists furthermore conceive of these moral facts as originating in "a reality existing independently of us"; antirealists deny these claims.[69] Nothing here requires us, *pace* eighteenth century rationalism, to conceive of the debate as hanging on facts about the divine mind.

Although it emerges from my analysis that Hume engages with a realist/antirealist debate whose contours are quite different from most current iterations of that quarrel, the quietist nature of his intervention in that antiquarian debate allows us to deduce a Humean lesson applicable to our own. Quietism in metaethics is a somewhat elusive beast, for in contrast to the sustained attention it receives in metaphysics and epistemology, metaethical quietism has only nascent and dubious formulations. Two notable defenders of quietism about the realist/antirealist fracas—neither of whom relish the label—are Ronald Dworkin and Christine Korsgaard.[70] Both propose to do away with metaethics entirely. Dworkin recommends abandoning metaethical disquisitions because they are "exhausted" by, and nothing but, ardent pleas for normative views dressed-up in "silly figures of speech."[71] Korsgaard suggests that the very idea of metaethics is premised on the unsustainable assumption "that there is a difference between doing 'meta-ethics' and doing 'normative' ethics."[72] These sweeping condemnations of metaethics have come under fire from critics, who argue that quietism so-construed betrays a willful ignorance of the cogency of many metaethical distinctions.[73]

Against this backdrop of the vicissitudes of contemporary quietism, the fact that Hume's quietism is tailored to a particular (if largely obsolete) target reveals itself as a virtue. Far from counseling the wholesale erasure of a domain of inquiry, he merely rejects as spurious a presupposition organizing a particular configuration of the realism/antirealism imbroglio, with a view to shifting the focus of argument away from pseudo-problems and toward problems that matter. In the final sentence of the *Treatise*'s book on morals, Hume reflects that his goal had been to make "the most abstract speculations concerning human nature, however cold and unentertaining, become subservient to *practical morality*; and [to] render this latter science more correct in its precepts, and more persuasive in its exhortations" (T 3.3.6.6; SBN 621). Seen in this light, the significance of Hume's quietism is twofold. First, his targeted disarming of rationalist moral ontology is immune to the attacks leveled against contemporary metaethical quietists, and to that extent offers a model to ongoing efforts to develop that position. Second, Hume's quietism focuses on dissolving pseudo-problems that can obfuscate the solutions of genuine problems (as when we table debate about what justice

requires, pending resolution of intractable questions about the divine mind). His brand of quietism thus most resembles the pragmatic variety of quietism espoused by Richard Rorty. Rorty might have been describing Hume's deconstruction of the rationalists' realist/antirealist divide when he writes that the goal is to "recount how those various vocabularies come into existence" so that "we are not burdened with obsolete ways of speaking."[74] On my reading of Hume's quietism, his focused disengagement from particular philosophical dichotomies, coupled with his eye for the practical vistas opened up by their dissolution, fills a distinctive niche in contemporary metaethics.

Coda: Is Hume's quietism about rationalist moral ontology compatible with the analogy's realism or antirealism about moral ontology generally? I take no stand on this question as it pertains to *Treatise* 3.1.1 because my findings indicate that ontological interpreters of Hume have too often shorn the analogy of its intellectual context. However, there is a suggestive remark in the second *Enquiry* that I flag as an invitation to further research into Hume's quietism, although I cannot here develop the suggestion.

In the second *Enquiry*, Hume chastises those who debate about the reality of morals:

> Those who have denied the reality of moral distinctions, may be ranked among the disingenuous disputants; nor is it conceivable, that any human creature could ever seriously believe, that all characters and actions were alike entitled to the affection and regard of everyone. . . . Let a man's insensibility be ever so great, he must often be touched with images of Right and Wrong. (EPM 1.2; SBN 169–70)

The reason why Hume refuses the moral ontological debate is not immediately clear, but it seems bound up with his claim that no one *lacks* moral distinctions (although there may be variations in sensitivity or accuracy in moral judgment). Now, if we bear in mind that, as I have argued, Hume holds that nothing "puts us in contact with anything ontologically different in kind from our perceptions," then his view would apparently be that all values are, *qua* perceptual objects, equally "real."[75] We should not rush to conclude that this view—or Hume's criticism of "those who have denied the reality" of morals—is an endorsement of realism. On the contrary, Hume may be claiming that the debate about moral ontology is "disingenuous" because 'real' lacks the contrast to 'unreal' that would give it meaning. The important work of moral theorizing, on this view, is not whether morals are ontologically real, but whether they are epistemologically real (or true).

4.3. Summary

Hume designs his analogy of morals to secondary qualities to illuminate a consequence of his Argument against Rationalist Moral Ontology. What the analogy pinpoints, on my reading, is the faulty semantic claim structuring the rationalists' realism/antirealism debate in ethics. Hume holds that truth judgments can be made about human-mind-dependent phenomena, such as *how colors look*. It is precisely that, however, that rationalism's semantic claim denies.

By comparing moral judgments to judgments of secondary qualities, therefore, Hume refuses to accept the semantic claim at the root of the debate between Intellectualist moral realism and Voluntarist moral antirealism. Hume's analogy thus has quietist implications in metaethics, for in it he tenders his rejection of the framework making the rationalists' realism/antirealism debate intelligible.

Conclusion

Hume describes his analogy of morals to secondary qualities as illustrating "very momentous" consequences of his sentimentalist critique of moral rationalism, and it is so platitudinous to think its momentousness is ethical realism or antirealism that one textbook, for example, introduces him as one who holds that "there is no moral reality to describe."[76] In this paper, I attempted to see what sense we can make of Hume's analogy of morals to secondary qualities if it is not offered in an ontological spirit. A surprising consequence of my historical contextualization of Hume's analogy is that its legacy in metaethics is neither realism nor antirealism, but quietism. The analogy is key to his disarming of the semantic presupposition orienting rationalist moral ontology, and is intended not to enter the lists, but to show us how to withdraw from the fray.

NOTES

1 My finding will be less surprising to those scholars who argue that Hume's account of secondary qualities similarly rejects his contemporaries' realist/antirealist distinction as unintelligible. See Baier, *Progress of Sentiments*, 194, Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment*, 218; Fisette, "Hume on Lockean Metaphysics," Morris, "Hume's Conclusions," 100–108, and Swain, "Passionate Objectivity," 488.

2 See Dworkin, "Objectivity and Truth," and Korsgaard, "Realism and Constructivism."

3 I owe this way of putting things to Zed Adams.

4 Prominent antirealist interpretations include McDowell, "Projection and Truth," Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory* and *Ethics*, Stroud, *Hume*, and Winkler, "Hutcheson and Hume."

5 Notable realist interpretations include Kail, *Projection and Realism*, and Norton, *David Hume*.

6 See Brown, "Is Hume an Internalist?," Capaldi, *Hume's Place in Moral Philosophy*, 37–38, Cohon, *Hume's Morality*, 71–72, Hursthouse, "Hume," 182 and 198n4, Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory*, 47–48 and 55, and Stroud, *Hume*, 264n2.

7 There was another kind of realism/antirealism debate at the time, turning on whether the difference between virtue and vice is natural (real) or artificial (unreal). See Gill, *British Moralists*, 295n2, and Perinetti, "The Nature of Virtue."

8 References to "T" are to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, followed by Book, part, section, and paragraph numbers from the 2005 Norton and Norton edition (references to paragraphs in the Abstract, Appendix, and Introduction are preceded by "Abs.," "App.," and "Intro.," respectively). Each of these citations is followed by the corresponding page numbers in the 2009 Selby-Bigge edition revised by Nidditch ("SBN").

9 For discussion, see Garret, *Hume*, 188–89.

10 Letter from a Gentleman, 25.

11 Hume's introduction to "Of the influencing motives of the will" mentions "every rational creature," but he does not address supra-human psychology in that section (T 2.3.3.1; SBN 413).

12 But see Schneewind, "Hume and the Religious Significance of Moral Rationalism."

13 Hume himself objects to Hutcheson's claim (iv) because we lack the requisite experience that would warrant the postulation of "any Sentiments at all," and *a fortiori* the moral sense supposedly affording those sentiments, in "Superior beings" (*Letters*, 1: 40).

14 Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason*, 309–15; Carey, "Francis Hutcheson's Philosophy," 46. The question of Hutcheson's actual relationship to Voluntarism is a difficult one that is beyond the scope of this paper.

15 Burnet and Hutcheson, *Letters*, 78; see also vii.

16 Glover, *Discourse concerning Virtue and Religion*, 4–5.

17 Grove, *Wisdom,* 18–19 and 18n.

18 Wilson, "Relativism and Realism."

19 References to "*Demonstration*" and "*Discourse*" are to the 1978 edition of Clarke's *Works*, followed by (where applicable) the corresponding page numbers in the 1998 Vailati edition of *Demonstration* ("V") and the 1991 Raphael edition of *Discourse* ("R").

20 To some extent, Hume shares the rationalists' concern to avoid contradictions in moral judgments (T 3.3.1.14–16; SBN 580–82). I say more about the issue in Section 4.1. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

21 References to "*Religion*" are to the 1738 edition of Wollaston's *Religion of Nature Delineated*, followed by (where applicable) the corresponding page numbers in the 1991 Raphael edition ("R").

22 We could be making claims about a class of properties that the thing does not have, but I follow Clarke and Wollaston in setting aside this possibility.

23 See Cudworth, *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, 16–17, Malebranche, *Search*, 586 and 650, and *Treatise on Ethics*, 45–46 and 56–57, and Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, 181.

24 References to "LNN" are to Pufendorf's *Law of Nature and Nations*, cited by book, chapter, and section numbers, followed by page number in the 1729 edition.

25 It might sound in (3) as though Pufendorf is talking about moral obligation rather than truth. However, it is only after these comments that he turns to obligation, which would indicate that the lines I cite address a different worry.

26 I thank Don Garrett for helping me to formulate this point.

27 While the labels I introduce—Intellectualist moral realism, Voluntarist moral antirealism—are my own, my analysis of the realism/antirealism debate among early modern rationalists draws on the interpretative findings of Darwall, *British Moralists and the Internal "Ought"*; Gill, *British Moralists and the Birth of Secular Ethics*; Irwin, *Development of Ethics*; Haakonssen, "Divine/Natural Law"; and Schneewind, *Invention of Autonomy*.

28 Shapin, "Of Gods and Kings," argues that Clarke is not a consistent Intellectualist because he thinks that God's pleasure is the sole explanation of some natural phenomena. However, Clarke merely holds that God can choose arbitrarily between alternatives that are rationally and morally indifferent; see *Discourse*, 640 and "Dr. Clarke's Third Reply," 606–607.

29 See Perinetti, "Ways to Certainty," 267–69.

30 See Clarke's "Letter to the Gentleman," 717 and *Discourse*, 603.

31 See also Wollaston's *Religion*, 14–15; R 145.

32 Wollaston is less concerned than Clarke to trumpet his Intellectualist moral realism, but his contemporaries recognized it; see John Clarke, *Examination*, 35–36 and 42–43.

33 My thanks to Rachel Cohon for helping me appreciate this objection.

34 Calvin qualifies his Voluntarism at *Institutes*, 1: 214. Clarke and Wollaston might respond that the truths of morality still depend on God's intellect, for values would not exist if the universe did not exist, and so values are dependent on God's creation and preservation of the universe.

35 Foster, "Christian Theology," 5n1. For critical discussion (and rejection) of this common reading of Ockham, see McGrade, "Natural Law and Moral Omnipotence." McGrade reads Ockham as adopting a proleptic version of covenant theology, on which the laws of nature—while impositions of tacit divine commands—are covenants that God would not abrogate.

36 I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for helping me with this point.

37 For discussion of covenant theology in relation to figures such as Pufendorf, see Stackhouse, "Moral Meanings of Covenant."

38 See Buckle, *Natural Law*, 60–61, Haakonssen, "Divine/Natural Law," 1335–36, Irwin, *Development of Ethics*, 284–91, and Krieger, *Politics of Discretion*, 77–79.

39 See Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination*, 124–52, and Oakley, "Absolute and Ordained Power."

40 For discussion, see Leonard Besselink, "The Impious Hypothesis Revisited."

41 See Hunter, "Conflicting Obligations," Johns, "Leibniz, Pufendorf," Korkman, "Voluntarism and Obligation," Lipscomb, "Power and Authority," and Schneewind, "Barbeyrac and Leibniz."

42 *Letter from a Gentleman*, 30.

43 Norton and Norton, *David Hume Library*, 16.

44 Emerson, *Essays on David Hume*, 85n27.

45 Stewart, "Dating of Hume's Manuscripts," 280 and 305. See also Harris, *Hume*, 509n11 and Miller, "Hume's Citation," 201.

46 Pittion suggests that Hume may have read King second-hand, through Bayle, which is possible, but his argument seems to rest on the fact that the Law translation also contains references to

thinkers other than Bayle whom Hume does not cite, which does not strike me as a decisive point. See his "Hume's Reading of Bayle," 374.

47 References are to King's *Origin*, cited by chapter, section, subsection (when applicable), and paragraph number, followed by page number in the 1731 edition.

48 The fourth reference to Pufendorf occurs at 5.5.2¶12n.*/236.

49 References are to Mossner's "Hume's Early Memoranda."

50 Fairclough translates *verum* as "facts." I translate it literally as "truth."

51 Hume reproves those who, having "establish[ed] the being of a God," draw moral inferences from that supposed conclusion (T 3.1.1.27; SBN 469). For a similar reading of that remark, see Winkler, "Hutcheson and Hume," 17.

52 See the examples for (9a) and (11a) of "real," adj.2, n.2, and adv. of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Chambers' 1728 *Encyclopedia* does not distinguish between the metaphysical and epistemological senses of 'real,' defining it only as a term "applied to a Being that actually exists; in which Sense it coincides with *Actual*" (*Encyclopedia*, 2:963).

53 Baxter, "Hume's Theory of Space and Time," 137n56 and 145n64.

54 References are to Miller's edition of Hume's *Essays*, hereafter cited as *Essays* and by page number.

55 See Owen, *Hume's Reason*, 82–92. Significantly, although Hume holds that "Reason is the discovery of truth of falshood," he never states that all truth or falsehood is discovered by reason (T 3.1.1.9; SBN 458).

56 For cognitivist interpretations of Hume, see Baier, *Progress of Sentiments*, Cohon, *Hume's Morality*, and Garrett, *Hume*.

57 References to "EPM" are to *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, followed by section and paragraph numbers from the 2003 Beauchamp edition, and the corresponding page numbers in the 2006 Selby-Bigge edition revised by Nidditch ("SBN").

58 I thank an anonymous reviewer for this point as well as their suggestions concerning the next two paragraphs.

59 There is a vast interpretive literature on the general or common points of view, which is beyond the purview of this paper. See Abramson, "Correcting *Our* Sentiments about Hume's Moral Point of View"; Cohon, *Hume's Morality*, 126–58; Garrett, *Hume*, 152–59; and Sayre-McCord, "On Why Hume's 'General Point of View'."

60 See Garrett, "Philosophy and History," 60–61.

61 Passmore, *Philosophical Reasoning*, 10–11.

62 Magee, "Quietism," 1–2. Religious quietism existed in Hume's time; see Walsh and Lennon, "Malebranche and the Quietists."

63 For a dissenting view, see Blackburn, "Wittgenstein."

64 Wright, "Rule-Following," 489.

65 McDowell, "Wittgensteinian 'Quietism'," 371–72.

66 This is the definition of quietism adopted by Leiter, "Introduction," 2 and 18, and Virvidakis, "Varieties of Quietism."

67 My thanks to Rachel Cohen and Dario Perinetti for raising this question.

68 Sayre-McCord, "Moral Realism," 40.

69 Dummett, *Truth and Other Enigmas*, 146.

70 Other ethical quietists include Price, "Intuitions of Fittingness." Copp, "Ontology of Putnam's *Ethics*," and Timmons, "Ethical Objectivity," acknowledge that Putnam's *Ethics without Ontology* invites the quietist label, but the issue is controversial. McPherson, "Against Quietist Normative Realism," reads Thomas Scanlon as espousing quietism. Virvidakis, "Varieties of Quietism," reads Jonathan Dancy as a quietist about normative ethics.

71 Dworkin, "Objectivity and Truth," 101 and 108. He rejects the quietist label in his "Replies to Critics."

72 Korsgaard, "Realism and Constructivism," 121n44.

73 See Hussain and Shah, "Metaethics and its Discontents" and "Misunderstanding Metaethics," as well as McPherson, "Metaethics and the Autonomy of Morality."

74 Rorty, "Naturalism and Quietism," 148.

75 Fisette, "Hume on Lockean Metaphysics," 96.

76 Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, 277.

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