

THE ROLE OF HUMAN NATURE IN HUME'S ETHICS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

ŞENGÜL ARSLANOĞLU ÇELİK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

MAY 2008

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

---

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members (**

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Prof. Dr. Sabri Büyükdüvenci	(A.U., PHIL)	_____
Doç. Dr. David Grünberg	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Doç. Dr. Erdal Cengiz	(A.U., PHIL)	_____

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**Name Surname: Şengül Çelik**

**Signature:**

## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF HUMAN NATURE IN HUME'S ETHICS

Arslanođlu elik, Őengöl  
Ph.D., Department of Philosophy  
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam

May 2008, 288 pages

This dissertation aims to determine the role of human nature in moral problems by examining “human nature” in Hume’s moral philosophy. It will examine how moral motivation arises when one takes human nature as the basis of moral philosophy.

What is maintained here is that Hume uses the methods of his rival rationalist philosophers whom he criticised for drawing on metaphysics and rational methods in building the foundation of their ethics.

Hume’s “science of man” attempts to isolate the basis of ethics from metaphysical and rational elements. However, this paper demonstrates that in doing so, Hume actually resorts to reason. Further, certain inconsistencies in Hume’s argument can only be resolved by recourse to metaphysics.

To make this clear I examine how the passions that Hume puts forward as the basis of human nature cause sympathy and build a sense of morality.

Since the most basic feature of human nature exists within the concept of “being-human”, the necessity of metaphysical and ontological explanations will be shown. Hume’s position on the goodness or wickedness of human nature is examined.

As a result, the purpose of this research is to show that it is not possible to isolate ethics from metaphysical elements by constructing a science based on Newtonian methods.

Keywords: David Hume, Human Nature, Passions, Reason, Metaphysics.

# ÖZ

HUME'UN

AHLAK ANLAYIŞINDA İNSAN DOĞASININ ROLÜ

Arslanoğlu Çelik, Şengül

Doktora, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam

Mayıs 2008, 288 sayfa

Bu tezin amacı Hume'un ahlak felsefesinde "İnsan Doğası"nı inceleyerek ahlak problemlerinde insan doğasının rolünü belirlemektir. İnsan doğası ahlakın temeli olarak alındığında ahlaksal güdülenmenin nasıl oluştuğu sorgulanacaktır.

Burada savunulan Hume'un insan doğası merkezli ahlak anlayışıyla, ahlakı temellendirmede metafiziği ve akılcı metotları kullandıkları gerekçesiyle eleştirdiği felsefelerin metotlarını kullanmış olduğudur.

Bu iddiayı temellendirmek, Hume'un ahlakın temelini gizemci öğelerden arındırmak için kurulmasının zorunlu olduğuna inandığı "insan biliminin" "akılcı yönünü" göstermekle mümkündür. Bu nedenle Hume'un insan doğasının temel yapısı olarak ileri sürdüğü tutkuların nasıl sempatiye dönüştüğü ve erdemleri oluşturduğu incelenecektir.

İnsan doğasının en temel özelliği "insan olma" kavramında bulunduğu için, ahlakı temellendirmede metafizik ve ontolojik açıklamaların gerekliliği gösterilerek, Hume'un bundan tamamıyla arınıp arınmadığı araştırılacaktır.

Sonu olarak buradaki arařtırmanın amacı, ahlakı gizemci öęelerden arındırmanın “insan doğası” temel alınarak Newtoncu metot ile yapılamayacağını göstermek ve Hume’un ahlak felsefesinin bütünü içindeki eliřkiyi ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hume, İnsan Doğası, Tutkular, Akıl, Metafizik.

To Ahmet İnam  
for sparking a liking in me for philosophy

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I am very indebted to Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam, supervisor of this thesis, for his guidance, admirable patience, and the kind support he offered when needed, not only for my theses but also for my understanding of life. I cannot fully express my gratitude to him for sparking a liking in me for philosophy. His insights and wise counsel have contributed to the improvement of this dissertation.

My thanks go to Oliver Leamann, who urged me to go on with my study when I was suffering from fears and trepidations.

I owe thanks to the members of the Examining Committee, Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan, Prof.Dr. Sabri Büyükdüvenci, Doç. Dr. David Grünberg, Doç. Dr. Erdal Cengiz, for their guidance and valuable comments to improve this dissertation.

Thanks are also due to James Fieser, the author of the articles on David Hume in the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, and Rachel Cohon, the author of the section on David Hume in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, they both sent me all their articles and papers on Hume and offered many useful insights into their interpretations of Hume.

Thanks also go to Stephen Schneider and James Lambert for their patient efforts in proofreading and their kind suggestions.

I am indebted to, my husband, my daughters, and my beloved parents. Verily they deserve more than just to be mentioned on this page.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

THU	:	A Treatise of Human Nature
EHU	:	An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
EPM	:	An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals
EPML		Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary
DCNR	:	Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion
SEP	:	Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
REP	:	Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE DUAL FACE OF ETHICS

Ethics encompasses a multitude of questions regarding part of our lived experience. Each question about value is within the scope of moral problems. Of the many questions raised, I dealt only with two of them. These questions, both raised by Plato, provide a clear perspective of Humean ethics.

In Plato's famous dialog "Euthyphro" Socrates asks Euthyphro "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?" Euthyphro was a man who took his father to court for killing a murderous slave, an act he thought vicious. The problem which is established by Socrates' famous question caused a debate which is known as "the autonomy of ethics". The advocates of the "autonomy of ethics" hold that morality is distinct from transcendental explanations. I argue this position establishes the first phase of ethical problems in Humean ethics.

It is generally held that the way people approach belief, in terms of how they understand reality, indicates how they prefer to live. From this perspective, according to the principles of founding ethical knowledge we can classify ethical theories into two: natural and metaphysical.

Philosophers, like Socrates, wanted to define a distinct realm from the metaphysical. The demystification of ethics is of worth since it is a historical fact that there are a great many people who need moral motivation that is not grounded

in the metaphysical. This endeavor results in a lot of different ethical bases: rational, empirical, intuitional, emotional, and natural. However, reality always stands present in so far as moral theories are essential in explaining the happiness of the human being; a moral theorist should know about (what brings happiness to) humans and human nature in some manner. In this sense the other face of the problem to be discussed is also a gift from Plato.

In *Republic*, Glaucon states that most of people do not choose to be good willingly. For him, people do what is right in order to get something from it. He believes if people have power to do what they really want and be able to get away with it, most of them will not do what is just. To prove his assumption he tells a story of a shepherd named Gyges.

Briefly the story takes place after an earthquake which causes the ground to be opened. Entering through the window-like openings, Gyges finds a large corpse wearing a golden ring. The shepherd takes the ring, which has the power to make people invisible when its hoop is twisted to the inside of the hand. Using this wonderful ring, Gyges first becomes the messenger of the king and then by committing adultery and murder, he takes over the kingdom.

From this fictional story Glaucon provides a thought experiment. He asks what a just and an unjust man would do if they wore Gyges' ring. He wants to show that both just and unjust people will act similarly when they have a chance to get away with what they do unjustly. Should one ever actually have the ring of Gyges, there would be no reason to act ethically. One of the assumptions declared by this thought experiment is that human beings do not naturally behave justly. Therefore an important question about morality is whether we discover or invent values.

In the light of these two crucial problems about ethics, which are both examined in Hume's work, I firstly focus on the foundations of ethics, both in order to

understand the assessments of human nature in different theories and to attempt to demonstrate the origin of those foundations in the Humean understanding of an ethics based in human nature. In fact, there are many ethical theories to be mentioned when the history of ethics is examined; however, in order to place my dissertation more easily in the context of human nature and Hume I will give a popular contemporary classification that divides the strands of ethical thoughts into three main titles. In the following chapter I will explain features which I think each tradition took from Hume, and I will provide information about the main current debates. My intention is both to show the effects of Hume's budding philosophy on other ethical views and to draw attention to the deficiencies in the grounding of an ethics which stems from the structure of human nature. Later, I will question whether Hume's system is innovative or not by mentioning some of the debates in this field. At the end of this chapter, I will focus on Hume's new understanding of moral science, which I will examine in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

In chapter three, I concentrate on the problems of human nature which arise from the system of impressions and ideas, considering the effects of his Theory of Ideas on moral sentiments. Despite Hume's warning that Book 3 in his *Treatise* can be read independently from the first two books, I hold that, the two books were written in order to form the necessary groundwork for the third book, which compels me to handle *Treatise* as a whole. I will emphasize how Hume actually shifted to naturalism while, at the same time, being able to be accepted as a skeptic by the traditional interpreters. While doing this, I will look into Hume's methods of forming a new science, which constitutes his main problem about human nature, and I will focus on the problems that occur while Hume tries to carry his empiricist methods into the moral field. After showing the problems that are created by the three main maxims of the new science of man, I deal with the unobservable metaphysical part of human beings, which occurs as a result of

Hume's categorizing human beings into observable and unobservable parts. I aim to show that human beings do not remain as human beings but improve to become a human — which I name being-human — by questioning the meaning of life. In this chapter, I will show how the issues that Hume sees as problems of metaphysics and meaning are necessary for his new science. I will also discuss a few problems that occur with Hume's examination of both the unobservable and also the observable parts of human nature.

Hume's naturalist approach, which denies reason, is explicit in his explanations and analogies regarding moral considerations of animals so a part is devoted to animal nature in order to show the difference of "naturalness" in both species due to his method. One of his main arguments is about reason and he wants to show that reason has no role in morality. However, while doing this, he methodologically gets into some difficulties. I will undertake a demonstration of these difficulties by pointing out the deficiencies in his experimental method. The deficiencies and difficulties of his insistence on experimentation of only observables make him come closer to his rivals in method.

In chapter four, I give a detailed summary of the passions which are examined in Book 2 of *Treatise* and left out in *Enquiries*. Even though he did not cover passions in *Enquiries*, I aim to show that Hume insists on passions as the basis of sympathy, for I am of the opinion that he never changed his stance on passions.

Chapter five displays how the system of sympathy comes into being. The sympathy process begins with natural passions and ends with the sharing of the sentiments of others. This communication of the force and vivacity of the sentiments is called sympathy. The defects of this system will be shown using some examples from real life, which are, in a Humean sense, daily observations. In this chapter, Hume is criticized for failing to fulfil the experimental method of his "science of man" by establishing the "common point of view" which shows how

he makes use of causal inferences from experience. After examining the interpretations of the “common point of view”, I will give my own interpretation of Hume on the “common point view”. The system of sympathy is discussed throughout the chapter. This chapter also shows that the basic character of human nature is that of “being human” and which develops over time.

In chapter six the appeal to artificial virtues in achieving a “science of man” in society is examined. I will firstly give a historical background of Hume’s thought. I think it will help the reader to evaluate Hume in his historical context. The natural virtues can initiate the process of sympathy in a small society but artificial virtues are needed in larger societies so as to keep society in a moral order. This distinction of virtues is an indicator of that shortfall in the Humean naturalist approach to ethics: justice — one of the most important virtues which is mentioned among the cardinal virtues — is an artificial virtue.

Chapter six will also demonstrate the deficiencies in Hume’s explanations for the formation of justice, which he makes while trying to free his argument from the question of whether human nature is good or bad. I will show that Hume’s impartial attitude, in fact, goes between both negative and positive poles according to the subject he handles.

In addition, the occurrence of just acts and the relationship between justice and the need for a government is examined in this chapter. I explain that although Hume resorts to natural passions, taking human nature as a basis in order to escape from reason, he cannot manage to do the same manoeuvre when it is necessary to establish a moral system in larger societies. Hume’s notions that the formation of artificial virtues depends on the size of society, and that the “general view” is created by the society, reveal that Hume, unfortunately, was not able to rescue himself from employing causal inferences based on reason.

The attempt to explain human actions merely by reason is rejected by Hume since he holds it is not observable, but it is equally not observable to explain human nature by a process of sympathy among sentiments as Hume does. Hume attempts to establish an understanding of human nature by observing actions, by merely looking at the structure of perceptions until all the unobservable parts are discovered. This raises the question of how accurate any conclusions about the unobservable parts can be. Consequently it is demonstrated that human nature naturally has metaphysical aspects which result from “being human” living in a particular historical time. It means, according to the changing active part, there is always the possibility that some meaning which is left out. Science gives the knowledge of “here and at present” — like a picture frozen in time. Therefore, if the aim is discovering the secret of the human being in continuity — or say the being human — we need to deal with at least a few metaphysical questions. On the other hand, science is necessary for moral motivation as it gives some knowledge — even if probabilistic — of the human being. Moreover, it is not sufficient to show how human beings behave. That is why we need to take into account more components of human nature to discover how to “being a human” is not be adequately described by the Humean “science of man”.

There have been several attempts to demystify ethics since Socrates posed his question in his dialogue with Euythphro. It is commonly held that human nature is a good source of an autonomous structure for ethics; nevertheless, I will explain that this cannot be achieved by making reason a slave of passions as Hume does. I will argue that this leads to inconsistencies in Hume’s system, for he tries to adopt a Newtonian approach to ethics. Hume maintains that sympathy is a natural process. For the mechanism of sympathy to work properly, the spectator needs to be fully informed and impartial, which implies that it cannot be achieved with the perspective of an ordinary person. I hold the view that impartiality cannot be attained merely by natural sentiments. Hume is also aware of this fact but what he

suggests as a method to avoid partiality involves causal inferences which are rational. In addition, that being “fully informed” is no easy task will be discussed in chapters three, five and six, where it is shown that in using the Newtonian method observations may leave out or miss some meanings of actions.

In conclusion, the main aim of this dissertation is to explain that Hume comes closer to the rationalists, whom he rejects methodologically, while trying to establish a new science that would help him attain the demystification of ethics. I will first present Hume’s position as a budding philosopher and second, I will discuss how the scholars of Hume interpret his work and will go on to present my understanding of whether or not he has succeeded methodologically in his Newtonian “science of man”

## **1.2 THE PROBLEMS**

### **1.2.1 Hume –The Scientist**

It is meaningless to ask what the difference between philosophy and science was in ancient times. There were the myths of Homer and the natural explanations of the philosophers. The poets told stories about the universe through their poems. The philosophers made observations and did experiments so as to provide information about the “what” and “how” of nature. In this sense, the history of philosophy is also the history of natural and physical sciences.

Today it is meaningful to ask the difference between sciences and philosophy. A general answer will be that not the scope but the types of questions have changed. Both disciplines ask about the universe, the human, nature, and animals. However, the physical sciences ask the questions “how” and “what”, whereas philosophy asks the question “why”. If we focus on this discrimination, it is appropriate to call

Descartes a philosopher even though he had a deep interest in biology. He mainly asked “why” questions about the reality of the world. As for Hume, he was first a scientist since he refused to ask “why” questions. Hume searched for “what can be known” and “how it can be known.” He wanted to clarify the knowable limits of the mind and its principles. He started with the understanding. To him, the content of the mind consists of the perceptions of the experiences. He claims the limit of the knowable is also the limit of our knowledge. This is why he prefers the adaptation of Newtonian methods. His new science depends on our experiences of observables. Therefore, one important thing to keep in mind for Hume scholars is the scientific side of Hume. To evaluate his thoughts, the scientific criteria of Newton need to be taken into consideration. Indeed labelling Hume as a scientist might be a narrow understanding precisely for the above mentioned reason, but my intention is to draw attention to Hume’s endeavor to become the Newton of the moral realm.

### **1.2.2 The Abundance of Hume Commentaries**

When writing a dissertation paucity of sources can often be a big problem. However, in studying such a famous philosopher as Hume it is rather the abundance of commentaries that can be problematical. There are so many commentaries on Hume that limiting the sources becomes an issue. For this examination, I selected my sources from a corpus of at least three times the size.

Hume was criticized so severely in his time that even he himself thought his *Treatise* fell “still-born from the press”. On the other hand, in recent times naturalist viewpoints have been welcomed by Hume interpreters. As a result, his philosophy is regarded as a ‘budding’ philosophy — John Laird’s term for a philosophy which is developed by later scholars and commentators and continues to be developed — which makes it possible to read diametrically opposing

interpretations such as those which are skeptic, empiricist, naturalist, contractarian, and conventionalist in nature. There are even some thinkers who interpret Hume as the philosopher who expands the boundary of reason, despite his anti-rationalist aims.

### **1.2.3 The Difficulties in his System**

Hume's budding philosophy finds its meaning in time. The *New Hume Debate* is an example of this. For the well-being of philosophy — which is still the master science — it is better to read philosophers in such a way that the valuable parts are emphasized. There are dozens of ways to read a philosophical theory, such as, critical reading, parallel reading, comparing and deconstructing. What I intend to do is to show a harmony between polar positional ideas. Reading in an attempt to find “the noteworthy” is my key concept. To find the most appropriate alternative from these approaches, the deficiencies of each should be identified. The methodological influence of Newtonian science on Hume has to a certain extent been stated by interpreters. The major problem which stems from the influence of Newtonian method is reflected mainly in *Treatise Book 1* and *Book 2*. What seems to be a problem in *Book 3* is the ongoing problem of his thought on the nature of understanding. His method depends on a metaphysical assumption about “the sameness of the observables and unobservables” not only in their nature but also in their system of process. Some controversial statements arise as a result of this method. However, although these controversies still stand, there are also good seeds for future readers to nurture. This dual aspect of Hume's system encouraged me to read him with an equally dualistic approach which I call double-pole reading.

#### **1.2.4 The Procedure for the Method**

Hume is not famous for establishing a new system. Essentially he repeats the popular understandings of his predecessors. He is under the influence of the theories of his time. What he has done is to facilitate the attempts to build a new science for subjects concerning the human condition. He is not an innovator but his system is open to innovations. This is why he is still popular today. Thus, his controversial but also valuable thoughts inspired me to read him from a different perspective. I call this perspective, which will help me mine the precious veins in his theories, double-pole reading.

The problems with reading a philosopher like Hume have been noted. Mining for gold consists of two opposing processes: 1. to get rid of the worthless parts or dross, and 2. to find the valuable material hidden in the earth. The aim is to extract the valuable piece even if the quantity is small and the cost is high. Therefore to find the precious theories double-pole reading requires two perspectives, one seeking to discard the unimportant and the other to discern and distil what is valuable. It is indeed a multi-dimensional reading, though I name it double-pole reading because I aim to stress its uniting function, especially the method's ability to unite extreme contrary perspectives. Critical readings and diametrical readings can display shortcomings and controversies from opposing perspectives. However, sometimes, for the sake of criticism or opposition, interpreters skip some nugget of information which, while seemingly diminutive, is greatly important in quality. On the other hand, to read from the wholly supporting perspectives can hide deficiencies. Double-pole reading proposes keeping two perspectives in mind simultaneously in order to extract the precious material and leave behind the dross.

The double-pole method is also adaptable to the historical perspective of reader. It is commonplace to view philosophers as timeless. Philosophers in their time are

the end of the past and the beginning of the future. It is possible to read a philosopher as we are contemporaries. Double-pole reading helps us to evaluate a philosopher from the perspectives of his or her time, our time, and the timeless.

Succinctly put, in order to reach an interpretation each part of Hume's theories pertaining to morality has been read twice from polar positional attitudes. This method goes beyond assigning labels as the endpoint of interpretation. The overabundance of both commentaries on Hume and labels which have been assigned to Hume can be resolved by double-pole reading. It yields the valuable parts of Hume's theory. Moreover, this method helps to understand why Hume is a source of inspiration to our contemporaries although his theory as a whole has any well-noted problems.

## CHAPTER 2

### FOUNDATION OF ETHICS

All philosophy, all human thinking and teaching, all of your studies, and in particular, everything which I will ever be able to present to you can have no purpose other than answering the question just raised, and especially the last and highest question: What is the vocation of man as such, and what are his surest means to fulfilling it? <sup>1</sup>

In the first lecture of his book *Some Lectures Concerning the Scholar's Vocation*, Fichte asks this question. The search for “the meaning of life” and “the meaning of being human” may be the easiest way to discover human nature. However, to find a satisfying answer which is universally acknowledged is not so easy. Furthermore, the requirements for the quest to find the nature of man are varied.

In relation to one of the basic questions of humanity “Why do I exist?” it is unavoidable to ask “How should I exist?” This is why I argue that it is our way of life — whether we choose it or are compelled to choose — that makes us label things as good or bad or that makes us happy or unhappy.

Hume, whose work is devoted to this quest, believes that it is only possible to go further in other sciences after discovering human nature. It is for this particular reason that he mentioned human nature in the introduction of his book, writing that: “’Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another.”<sup>2</sup> So he held this conviction so strongly that

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<sup>1</sup> Rudiger Bübner, *The German Idealist Philosophy*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, 123.

<sup>2</sup> THN, I, xv.

he called his great work *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subject*.

According to Hume:

Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties. 'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and cou'd explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasonings.<sup>3</sup>

A brief look at history will show that Hume has emphasized the most significant aspect of all sciences, which is the “discovery of the promoter of the sciences”. Man always gives importance to “knowing himself.” Sciences are the product of the curiosity of humans and the first endeavour of this curiosity is “to know himself.” Hence to start with human nature is a way to declare an ethical view. As Kurtz and Means state: “Both naturalistic and idealistic philosophers in the classic and contemporary tradition have been concerned with defining ethical or value concepts by relating them to human nature.”<sup>4</sup>

In my opinion there is, at least, a close relation between the search for meaning of life and human nature. People shape their lives and attempt to form a basis for their views of what is “right” and what is “wrong” by first knowing their selves and the meaning of their lives. From this point of view, the most appropriate thing in ethics attained by Hume was the outcome of his endeavour to define human nature. He demonstrated that it is inevitable to begin with defining the nature of

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Paul W. Kurtz and Blanchard W. Means, “A Reassessment: Does Ethics have any Metaphysical Presuppositions?” *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 9:19-28, 1959, 25.

the human in all sciences. Hume emphasizes that we need to establish “the science of man” on human nature. To him, a human is not only endowed with the capacity to reason, but also, at the same time, is the object of his very own reasoning.<sup>5</sup>

Being an empiricist philosopher, Hume stresses the empirical aspect of our moral sentiments and he accepts that we can observe moral senses like we observe other sensations. I share Hume’s orientation for the sciences, which is the human being, though from a different perspective.

Kuntz and Means point out the importance of ontological and metaphysical aspects of ethics arguing that ethics is not independent of a theory of man or a theory of nature.<sup>6</sup> Supporting their view, I aim to show that being human starts not from a positivist understanding of science (in a Humean manner, a Newtonian understanding) but arises from an ontological perspective. My ontological perspective is embedded in the survey of existence in respect to the meaning of life, which is usually taken into consideration by classical understanding.

Although Hume did not formulate an exact definition of the science of man — except for some limited paragraphs in which he mentioned the necessity of discovering the nature of ideas and the operations of our reasoning scientifically — he maintains that he tries to build his science on a new foundation as a complete system:

In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a

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<sup>5</sup> THN, I, xvi.

<sup>6</sup> Kurtz and Means, “A Reassessment”, 25.

foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.<sup>7</sup>

Before examining this “almost entirely new foundation,” I want to discuss the foundations of ethics firstly within the general perspective of moral philosophy, secondly in light of the Humean notion of science of man, and lastly, I will state my own point of view about the foundation of ethics considering not merely the scientific nature of human nature but in respect to “being human”. Transforming Hume’s human nature oriented ethics into an apprehension of ethics focusing on “being human” or “human life”, I tried to take an overall perspective of the science of man including both the scientific and also the non-scientific aspects which are in the main discarded in Hume’s philosophy.

In this respect, firstly, I want to point out the most famous traditions in the landscape of ethics. Ethics, the principles of life, has always been in the social and personal life of humans. It has a long history indeed and I will only mention discussions which are centred on the three main traditions most discussed in modern moral philosophy. My assumption is that in these theories we may to some extent trace some inspirations from Hume and I believe they are adequate for explicating the general grounds of ethics.

The first tradition is deontological ethics, which has its roots in the work of Immanuel Kant. The second is consequentialism, which is the general name given mainly to the works of the utilitarian ethics of Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill and Henry Sidgwick. The third is virtue ethics, which was known as Aristotelian ethics. Aristotle, the great predecessor of philosophy, argues that the best life for human beings lies under the exercise of virtues (eudemonia). This ordering may seem historically wrong as Aristotle is the founder of virtue ethics; however, it was

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

revisited again in the late 1950`s by G. E. M. Anscombe and some followers. Therefore, I have chosen to discuss virtue ethics last.

## 2.1 DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

Kant is among the famous philosophers who acknowledge Humean influence, in the preface of *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, he writes that: “I openly confess that my remembering David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction.”<sup>8</sup> He does not approve all of Hume’s ideas; however, he tries to solve the problems of metaphysics, especially the question why humans insist on applying categories that are beyond experience. His solution is embedded in human nature and he believes there is a part of human reason which searches for a way to unify all reality into a systematic whole. Thus, his transcendental metaphysics is essential to the human makeup.

He claims that the noumena, that which lies beyond experience, cannot be known. For him we can know only phenomena which are the objects of experience. On the other hand, it is generally held that he asks ethical questions which require setting up an apriority in method. Kant calls the unknowable the “things-in-themselves” and it is commonly held that he believes we cannot confirm or deny their existence.<sup>9</sup> Kant wants to find out the origin in the practical reason of the fundamental principles according to which we all judge when we judge morally. To him, ethics should be centred on the categorical imperative and absolute moral

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<sup>8</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Ellington, J.W. (trans) Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Lawrence Pasternack (ed), London, New York: Routledge, 2002, 31.

rules. Therefore, his duty-centred ethics generates deontological understanding out of a priori pure practical reason.

It is clear why “deontological ethics” was derived from the Greek word “deon”, the meaning of which is “that which is binding” or “duty”. The clue word of the general tendency of the theory explicitly stresses duty. In Kantian tradition these duties are derived from a universal and impartial law of rationality. Kant establishes a famous notion for this situation, which he calls categorical imperative.

To find in reason itself the basis of the a priori element in moral judgment is very significant in that it makes synthetic a priori moral judgments possible. Kant named this, the metaphysics of morals.

To establish such a science, he assumed, we must first look for the good in the absolute sense when making moral choices. Secondly we must look for the unqualified good, which he termed “good in the absolute sense.”<sup>10</sup> The criterion for this is that one must act out for the sake of duty only, not for any other reason. So, to put it simply, only the actions performed for the sake of the duty have moral value. Kant made a clear distinction between desire and action only for the sake of duty. Therefore the notion of “duty” must needs be clearly understood. He defined duty as “the necessity of acting out of reverence for the law”.<sup>11</sup>

It is obvious that the laws mentioned here are the laws in the absolute sense, those which have a strict universality. Hence, to have any moral worth, the subjective principle, the maxim, must coincide with the objective principle, which is the moral law in the absolute sense. These objective principles always present

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 31.

themselves to us as commands. This is called an imperative: the moral law necessarily becomes an imperative for us. He defines imperatives in these words: “The conception of an objective principle, in so far as it is necessitating for a will, is called a command (of reason); and the formula of the command is called an imperative.”<sup>12</sup>

There are three kinds of imperatives: hypothetical, assertoric and categorical. The first one is an effective means to our desired ends; the second one is convinced by inclinations, desires and natural ends; and the third type of imperative commands actions which are good in themselves, not for any other certain end. Only the categorical imperative can be classified as moral, where morality is formulated as universal. Therefore, from the perspective of Kantian understanding goodness is only available by following the universal laws of reason which requires having the universal knowledge of categorical imperatives.

In short we can formulate the categorical imperative from the Kantian principle as follows: “Adam should act in such a way that he always holds humanity not merely as a means, but also as an end”.

Deontological ethics has been attacked as having no factual basis. The most significant attacks have been made by G. E. M. Anscombe, Alasdair MacIntyre and Bernard Williams. They invite philosophers to move away from modern moral theories and go back to Aristotle.

MacIntyre states that justifying morality has failed because the conceptual moral understanding of Aristotle has been discarded. He deemed that the moral notions

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 43.

like “‘virtue’, and ‘justice’, and ‘piety’ and ‘duty’ and even ‘ought’ have become other than they once were.”<sup>13</sup>

Like MacIntyre, Bernard Williams asserts that because of its foundations in Kantianism, modern moral philosophy is removed “from social and historical reality and from any concrete sense of a particular ethical life.”<sup>14</sup> He accused modern morality of being impersonal and it is depending on the notion of blame. For him, in this kind of moral understanding “moral obligation applies to people even if they do not want it to.”<sup>15</sup> He discusses there are moral actions which are not obligatory noting that there “may be heroic or very fine actions, which go beyond what is obligatory or demanded.”<sup>16</sup> Instead of this kind of deontological ethics, he offers an ethics which is centred on the agent’s character and deals with the agent’s social spheres including family, friends, and society.

Furthermore, Kantianism has been accused of giving such a great importance to impartiality and universality that they are criticised for ignoring the historical and communal aspects of human values. In Kantian ethics, the self is assumed to be abstracted from its social and historical bases. Susan Wolf ironically uses the term “Rational Saint” for those who “pays little or no attention to his own happiness in light of the overriding importance he gives to the wider concerns of

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<sup>13</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1985, 197.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Williams, “Morality, the Peculiar Institution” in Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (eds) *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 49.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

morality...[and] sacrifices his own interests to the interests of others”<sup>17</sup> She claims this kind of morality is disturbing since “it seems to require either the lack or denial of the existence of an identifiable, personal self.”<sup>18</sup> Kant, even is characterized as a monster by Ayn Rand. She says:

Those who are not willing to give up the world to mindless brutality must learn that the battle is philosophical--and that there is no time for anything else. Suppose you met a twisted, tormented young man and, trying to understand his behavior, discovered that he was brought up by a man-hating monster who worked systematically to paralyze his mind, destroy his self-confidence, obliterate his capacity for enjoyment and undercut his every attempt to escape. You would realize that nothing could be done with or for that young man and nothing could be expected of him until he was removed from the monster's influence. Western civilization is in that young man's position. The monster is Immanuel Kant.<sup>19</sup>

One notable exemplum of this philosophical battle about “duty” has become very popular and is frequently used. The incident, envisaged by Michael Stocker and utilised by Marcia Baron, is about an ill person and her visitor. In its original form:

You are very bored and restless and loose ends when Smith comes in once again. You are now convinced more than ever that he is a fine fellow and a real friend –taking so much time to cheer you up, travelling all the way across town, and so on. You are so effusive with your praise and thanks that he protests that he always tries to do what he thinks is his duty, what he thinks will be best. You at first think he is

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<sup>17</sup> Susan Wolf, “Moral Saints” in Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (eds) *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 80.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>19</sup> Diana Mertz Hsieh, “David Kelley versus Ayn Rand on Kant” <http://www.dianahsieh.com/blog/2006/02/david-kelley-versus-ayn-rand-on-kant.html>. Accessed February 2006.

engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth: that it is not essentially because of you that he came to see you, not because of you are friends, but because he thought it his duty, perhaps as a fellow Christian or Communist or whatever, or simply because he knows of no one more in need of cheering up and no one easier to cheer up.<sup>20</sup>

Baron, I think rightly, points out that the problem that makes us feel discomfort about this incident does not arise from “acting from duty” but from the concept we ascribe to friendship. She redefines the necessity for acting from duty and rejects the objections of Williams, Stoker, and Wolf about the repugnance of acting from duty interpreting Stoker’s example as alienation. She puts forward three different interpretations:

The allegation that acting from duty is morally repugnant can be broken down into three charges: first, that to act from duty is to act just minimally morally; second, that acting from duty is alienating; and, third, that thinking in terms of what one ought to do or what morality directs one to do is at least as likely to yield the wrong answer as the right one.<sup>21</sup>

It is obvious that the above objections are subject to counterattacks. For example Anscombe’s offer to give importance to psychological obligation is accused of depending on a false assumption since she mixes moral obligations with legal ones. There has also been criticism of the suggestion of turning back to Aristotle and the suggestion of Anscombe’s, which started the new understanding of modern moral philosophy, that moral philosophy “should be laid aside...until we

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Stocker. “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 73: 453-466, 1976, 462.

<sup>21</sup> Marcia Baron, “The Alleged Moral Repugnance of Acting from Duty” *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1984, 199.

have an adequate philosophy of psychology.”<sup>22</sup> The opponents argue that the virtue ethicists are also offering a life with no real relevance or connection with the present day. On the objectivist side, as well, it is argued that MacIntyre’s suggestion about virtue is subject to relativism. Presently, this debate still goes on. Some thinkers give challenges to their detractors and reconstruct their moral understanding giving importance to the virtues in their deontic theory.

As mentioned before, the influence of Hume on Kant is obvious. Both philosophers aim to free moral philosophy from superstitious claims. However, Kant is exceedingly careful with metaphysical assumptions about human nature dividing reason into three, pure, practical and transcendental, which form an underlying structure for metaphysics in ethics. Nevertheless, Kant’s understanding of morality came under harsh criticism for ignoring the self. In my view it is a fact that rules would definitely make life easier and better if they were always obeyed because they were universally reasonable. However, there is always a group of people who still break the most commonly accepted rational and clear rules. So there is still a motivation problem as to why we should obey. For a deontologist there is no need to ask this question because these kinds of questions involve hypothetical imperatives. Accepting that the universal rules have the power to make you happy if and only if you are able to think rationally, you should obey the rules without asking the question “Why?” as the answer is clear that it is a rational universal law. Thus, the logic here is circular.

## **2.2 CONSEQUENTIALIST ETHICS**

One of the most influential ethical theories is consequentialist ethics, which has mainly been shaped by utilitarianism. As consequentialism is the general name of

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<sup>22</sup> G. E. M. Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy”, *Philosophy*, 33: 1-19, 1958, 1.

the utility-based theories it will be more appropriate to use this name though I principally focus on forms of utilitarianism.

Unlike deontological ethics, utilitarianism represents a different perspective which sees value only in the well-being of human beings. The only good for them is human well-being so rational action must focus on this aim.

Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill developed utilitarianism to establish ethics on a scientifically and philosophically secure foundation. From this point of view, they are very close to Hume's science of man, and it will not be wrong to say that utilitarianism was deeply inspired by Hume at its inception. Jeremy Bentham asserts that if we find a way to calculate happiness in a scientific manner, we can attain the best motivation to act. Therefore, he invents his "felicific calculation," which presupposes that we can divide human nature into pain and pleasure. If the only knowable character of human nature lies in pain and pleasure, the firm way to establish a scientific moral system is by considering the "Principle of Utility".

They accept one basic moral principle, "the Principle of Utility," which at the core aims to maximize the "good". In the broadest sense, the good is the "happiness" which is interpreted as gaining pleasure and the absence of pain. Therefore, we can say that utilitarianism is an ethical theory which is commonly accepted as focusing on the greatest happiness and the least unhappiness. Therefore right and wrong are determined through the lens of this standard understanding of the evaluation of actions via the pain/pleasure balance. Consequently the rules of morality in terms of laws and other social institutions are all adapted according to this "Principle of Utility." Unlike the deontological view, according to utilitarianism, an action's being right or wrong is not the result of telling the truth or not. Lying is a wrong action not in itself but because it has bad consequences. The moral rule against wrong actions should be empirically studied in order to justify cases where, for

example, lies are told for the sake of saving someone's life or avoiding bad consequences.

Mill offers this formulation:

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.<sup>23</sup>

For the critics of consequentialism, a problem arises in that no type of action is ruled out as immoral in this perspective. Every action can be acceptable so long as it satisfies the principle.

To see what the purpose of a moral agent is, we can formulize utilitarianism as follows: Adam is morally required to do X if and only if the pleasure/pain balance that results when Adam does X, is greater than that which would result if Adam did any other act available to him. Thus Utilitarianism assumes that what matters is, not the agent's pleasure or pain but the pleasure and pain of anyone at any place in any time. In other words, the agent's own pleasure is not accounted greater than anyone else's. Briefly, there are two complementary theses: pleasure is the only good thing and pain is the only bad thing. Therefore, Adam is morally compelled to do X, if and only if the net good that will result in the world when Adam does A, is greater than the net good that will occur in the world when Adam does any of the other acts possible for him to do. To put it plainly, morality directs Adam to maximize the net good.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001, 10.

<sup>24</sup> The formulization can be differently put forward by different types of utilitarianism. Here a general perspective is stressed.

Utilitarian's defend the seemingly innocent idea that in the name of morality, good is always preferable for Adam to maximize the desirable principle; thus, what motivates Adam to maximize the desirable principle is moral, and the others are evil. As a result, we come to the conclusion that it is not plausible to resist this basic principle. However, this principle of utility has some implications which conflict with some of our most common moral convictions and rationality. For example, telling a lie has generally been acknowledged as a wrong action; however, under certain conditions, for a utilitarian, lying can become an obligatory act.

Utilitarianism, which is the most common version of consequentialism, has been subject to three influential objections. I will give a brief summary of the problems of utilitarianism which Samuel Scheffler mentions in his introduction. The first objection, noted by Scheffler, is put forward by John Rawls. He accused utilitarianism of giving no direct weight to considerations of justice or fairness, especially in the distribution of goods. Utilitarianism is indifferent to how satisfactions or dissatisfactions are distributed among distinct individuals. Therefore, utilitarians recommend maximizing total happiness by denying freedom to a few. In this respect Rawls states an objection:

Yet, as with all other precepts, those of justice are derivative from the one end of attaining the greatest balance of satisfaction. Thus there is no reason in principle why the greater gains of some should not compensate for the lesser losses of others; or, more importantly why the violation of the liberty of a few might not be made right by the greater good shared by many. It simply happens that under most conditions, at least in a reasonably advanced stage of civilization, the greatest sum of advantages is not attained in this way.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> John Rawls, "Classical Utilitarianism", from *A Theory of Justice*, in Samuel Scheffler (ed) *Consequentialism and its Critics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 17-8.

Scheffler also notes that utilitarians have answered this criticism by claiming that attaining a radically inegalitarian distribution of resources or liberties' would never produce the greatest attainable sum of satisfaction. Rawls finds, these kinds of replies insufficient, and insists that "Utilitarianism does not take seriously the distinction between persons."<sup>26</sup>

The second influential objection which Scheffler remarks is that utilitarianism is concerned with people's doing any act (good, bad, right, wrong) that will produce the best available outcome or the maximizing benefit for the maximum number. Thomas Nagel rejects this utilitarian principle on the ground that it requires actions that are "quite horrible". Nagel explains the situation as such:

A person who acknowledges the force of such restriction can find himself in acute moral dilemmas. He may believe, for example, that by torturing a prisoner he can obtain information necessary to prevent a disaster or that by obliterating one village with bombs he can halt a campaign of terrorism.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, some extreme forms of utilitarianism imply that not only may you torture the prisoner but "you *must* torture" the prisoner.<sup>28</sup>

From another angle, Peter Railton assumes that there would be some cases where even the best motivations can lead people to do the wrong thing in a consequentialist sense, while they aimed at the most net good in the long run. Still,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre", from *Mortal Questions*, in Samuel Scheffler (ed) *Consequentialism and its Critics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 52.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Scheffler, "Introduction" in Samuel Scheffler (ed) *Consequentialism and its Critics*, New York: Oxford University Press 1988, 3.

he claims, the best motivations should be encouraged and the well-motivated people should not be blamed when “they cannot do the right thing”.<sup>29</sup>

The third objection to Utilitarianism, discussed by Samuel Scheffler, is that it is such an excessively demanding moral theory that it neglects “one’s own pursuits whenever one could produce even slightly more good in some other way.”<sup>30</sup>

Bernard Williams also discusses that utilitarianism undermines integrity. For him the demand of utilitarianism is so extreme that “it undermines the integrity of the individual agent.”<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, T. M. Scanlon argues that:

The problem with such an objection is that taken alone it may be made to sound like pure self-indulgence. Simply to demand freedom from moral requirements in the name of freedom to pursue one’s individual project is unconvincing. It neglects the fact that these requirements may protect interests of others that are at least as important as one’s own.<sup>32</sup>

Robert Nozick emphasizes the importance of individuality which is absent in utilitarian perspective: To sacrifice a person for greater happiness for others “does not sufficiently respect and take account of the fact that he is a separate person, that his is the only life he has”.<sup>33</sup> Nozick reminds adherents of the Kantian

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>32</sup> T. M. Scanlon, “Rights, Goals, and Fairness” from *Public and Private Morality*, in Samuel Scheffler (ed) *Consequentialism and Its Critics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 78.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Nozick, “Side and Constraints” from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* in Samuel Scheffler (ed) *Consequentialism and its Critics*, New York: Oxford University Press 1988, 141.

principle that: “Individuals are ends and not merely means; they may not be sacrificed or used for the achieving of other ends without their consent.”<sup>34</sup>

Nozick took the Kantian formula which says: “Act in such a way that you always handle humanity, whether in your own case or in the case of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end,”<sup>35</sup> and adapted it into this statement: “So act as to minimize the use of humanity simply as a means”.<sup>36</sup>

Although there are significant problems that consequentialists should solve, Railton says that: “Objective consequentialism (unlike certain deontological theories) has valuable flexibility in permitting us to take consequences into account in assessing the appropriateness of certain modes of decision making, thereby avoiding any sort of self-defeating decision procedure worship”.<sup>37</sup>

As Scheffler concludes:

The dispute between consequentialism and agent-relative morality has been fierce and persistent because each side can claim, with apparent justice that the other clashes with an aspect of our thought that seems very difficult to give up.<sup>38</sup>

It can be claimed that the problems concerning the observable and experimental aspects of human nature that arise in utilitarianism are also involved in Hume’s

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Railton, “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality” in Samuel Scheffler (ed) *Consequentialism and Its Critics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, 117.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Scheffler, *Consequentialism*, 13.

ethics. Therefore the morality which the “science of man” should provide cannot be achieved. As in deontological theory, there is a problem in consequentialism in so far as the theory diminishes the importance of the self in human nature. Humans are reduced to being wholly governed by pain and pleasure. As a result the answer to the question of moral motivation can be stated as interest in utilitarian understanding. Our interest is the first thing that motivates us. Therefore there is a problem which utilitarians face because there can be conflict between our own varying or opposing interests. In some communities smoking can help an adolescent to join a peer group. One can share a cigarette more easily than one's feelings; so in order to gain friends — a type of interest — smoking can be seen as beneficial. On the other hand, in terms of health smoking is clearly not beneficial. So there is a decision to be made about whether to lead a healthy but lonely life or an unhealthy life with a group of friends. For a consequentialist, having friends or becoming friends requires more people than one; so, by taking friendship into account more net pleasure will be generated, which leads to the conclusion that not only can the adolescent take up smoking, but further he or she actually should start smoking.

In my view consequentialist theory has problems arising from the inability to foretell consequences before acting. Take this famous moral dilemma: a pregnant woman has eight children, some of which have severe physical disabilities. Three of them are deaf, two of them are blind, and most importantly, one of them is mentally handicapped. Moreover, the woman has syphilis. What would a consequentialist recommend her to do? Have an abortion? From a consequentialist perspective, considering the sum of the pleasures of the existing eight children plus the one woman in a desperate situation, it is easy to assess that an abortion would reduce the suffering, or at least prevent potential sufferings which the new baby might bring; but what if the unborn baby is Beethoven? The net pleasure to greater humanity brought about by Beethoven's music far outweighs the pain

brought about by the burden of bring up another child in a family in such dire straits. Thus, the baby should be born. Do we also have the right to change our choice if the baby is Hitler? How is it possible to foretell such long-term outcomes of actions?

Hence for consequentialism to work there must be some strict process of determinism operating and humans must have some means to accurately foretell the future. In my opinion an account that isolates humans from the future and the past is not natural. In other words, separating human beings from its permanency (or being historical) is in this sense unnatural. Hume's theory of morality is similarly temporally restricted as his basic unit of human nature depends on mere observation and experience.

### **2.3 VIRTUE ETHICS**

Virtue ethics which goes back to Aristotle and revived in G. E. M. Anscombe has offered harsh criticisms for both deontological ethics and utilitarian ethics. Anscombe's main argument concerns the foundation of ethics. According to Anscombe both the theories looked for a foundation of morality grounded in a legalistic notion such as obligation, which is the product of moral laws derived either from reason or from empirical studies.

The main point of Anscombe's rejection of both kinds of ethics is that obligation-oriented ethics have no meaning without an assumed law-giver. In place of this she offers a moral life independent from obligation and based on human flourishing. Moreover she has called philosophers to replace moral philosophy with moral psychology. "Human flourishing" is a translation of the Aristotelian concept of eudemonia, the exercise of the virtues for the best life for a human being, which is also translated as "well-being" or "happiness". For him there is no life worth living

except with the exercise of the virtues. His views were developed by the Stoics and re-evaluated by modern moral theorists.

Indeed there is a fundamental question concerning what virtue ethics is. In the introduction of her book *On Virtue Ethics* Hursthouse asserts that “virtue ethics” is a term of art which was introduced in normative ethics for emphasizing moral character “in contrast to an approach which emphasizes duties or rules (deontology) or one which emphasizes the consequences of actions (utilitarianism)”.<sup>39</sup> Virtue ethics was formerly rejected as a third approach but is now appreciated by such influential philosophers as G. E. M. Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Bernard Williams, Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum, and Michael Slote, and, thus given equal status with the other two approaches.

In light of Aristotle, virtue ethics can be defined as the moral theory which invites people to live a virtuous life or act virtuously. Since living a virtuous life is the way of obeying moral law or giving the best alternative of maximizing overall well-being, living a virtuous life is a valid concept for both a utilitarian and a deontologist. Foot states that it is important to understand that “morality is not treated as essentially a social phenomenon.”<sup>40</sup> If so, then, what is the value of Adam’s acting virtuously? In response to this question a virtue ethicist will state that Adam should not steal, not because it is against moral law, or counter to maximizing well-being but because it is dishonest. More than this, according to the advocates of virtue ethics the conspicuous feature of virtue ethics is its being agent and agent’s life centred, unlike the other rival theories which focus on examining discrete acts (stealing, lying, having an abortion, and helping poor) isolated from

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<sup>39</sup> Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002, 189.

its historical context (including the isolation from the notions of character, emotions, dispositions) and the rules directing these acts.<sup>41</sup>

Being agent-centred rather than act-centred, virtue ethics is criticised for its inability to provide action-guidance. Moreover, it is criticised for its recommendation that people need a moral exemplar to follow. For some of ethicists opposed to virtue ethics it would be hard to imagine Socrates' decision on abortion if he were a young raped girl.

According to Hursthouse, these objections arise from a misconception. She holds that virtue ethics does indeed specify the right way to act, namely by doing "what a virtuous agent would, characteristically, do in the circumstances."<sup>42</sup> This specification "can be regarded as generating a number of moral rules or principles."<sup>43</sup> She notes that each virtue involves an instruction and each vice a prohibition, for example, "do what is charitable", "do not do what is dishonest". Thus the advocates of virtue ethics answer the objection that there is no action-guidance by claiming that a person does what is honest or charitable and not what is dishonest or uncharitable.

Moreover, Hursthouse believes that there is no adequate moral theory about "rules". She notes that while many deontologists insist that virtue ethics have a major problem with the concept of 'dishonesty', the same can be said of 'harm', a concept which deontologists seem to have no problems dealing with. One of her suppositions is that moral knowledge cannot be acquired solely by attending

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<sup>41</sup> Roger Crisp and Michael Slote, "Introduction" in Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (eds) *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 17.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

lectures in the same way that, say, mathematical knowledge can be acquired. This provides a clue about the nature of moral knowledge. She supposes that “Virtue ethics builds this in straight off precisely by couching its rules in terms whose application may indeed call for the most delicate and sensitive observation and judgement.”<sup>44</sup>

It is worth mentioning the foundational similarities of virtue ethics and Humean ethics here. Hume’s famous theory of sympathy overlaps in some part with virtue ethics in that ethical rules are those that are shared with other people, therefore the manner in which they are transmitted is important. His theory of concepts has some similarities in virtue ethics in the sense that ethical rules are the ones which are shared amongst people via the rules and expressions of the moral language. In the Humean manner, this can be done by finding the exact impressions of ideas couched naturally in our moral language.

The replies to the “action-guidance problem” give rise to some other objections such as “the change of cultural relativity”. This objection notes that some cultural disagreements may arise from narrow understandings of virtues. However, this does not mean that the virtues themselves are necessarily relative. In an article Julia Annas summarizes the consequentialists’ attacks to virtue ethics:

The first claims that virtue ethics makes crucial use of an assumption which is false — namely, that we have character traits. The second claims that virtue ethics is, at some level, egoistic, and thus unfitted to be a proper ethical theory. The third claims that virtue ethics is bound to be ethically and socially conservative, and thus, again, not really fitted to be a proper ethical theory.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Rosalind Hursthouse, Gavin Lawrence, Warren Quinn (eds) *Virtues and Reasons: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory Essays in Honour of Philippa Foot*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, 69.

<sup>45</sup> Julia Annas, “Virtue Ethics and Social Psychology”, *A PRIORI*, 2: 20-34. 2003, 20.

Annas believes these attacks have a common point in that they all rest on a misunderstanding of virtue ethics. She states that “showing the mistakes on which these three attacks depend is useful in that cumulatively it enables us to build up a unified picture of virtue ethics.”<sup>46</sup> She tries to delineate the understandings of virtues in other moral theories by defining virtue ethics with respect to the virtues.

Virtue ethics is, minimally, the position that the virtues form the basis of an ethical theory; not only is it true that people have virtues and vices; this is the central point from which an ethical theory should begin. (Theories which recognize the existence of virtues, but give them a trivial role in, for example, a consequentialist framework, do not count as virtue ethics.<sup>47</sup>

Of course it is indeed plausible that human beings have innate character traits, and it may be plausible to learn morality over the course of time from virtuous exemplars; nevertheless, there is a problem regarding the moral motivation for following such exemplars.

Still another problem arises in conservative societies, that is, societies that expend energy on maintaining the status quo, even when that status quo has some problems regarding moral concepts. For example, slavery is a moral concept. It is widely known that both the Platonic and the Aristotelian systems of virtue permit slavery as a result of their understanding of the human being. For Plato, slaves are naturally uneducatable people from birth, for Aristotle, slavery is natural, but slaves should be able to gain freedom as a reward for hard work. Can it be possible for a virtuous person living in a society whose exemplars are Plato and Aristotle to think that slavery is unjust or that all people have a right to freedom from birth? Although this does not seem a realistic example applicable to today’s society, it is

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 21.

nonetheless useful in explicitly revealing one of the drawbacks of virtues ethics. What can motivate an individual to follow an exemplar? A virtue ethicist can easily reply that the answer lies within the question, that is, that an exemplar is a good person. This response may be adequate for some people.

Other problems in virtue ethics are such questions as, what will motivate people who are guided by an exemplar to overcome their loyalty and see the faults of their leader? Why would an unjust person want to follow a just one? And, how possible is it for an unjust person to find a just model to follow? Breaking the chains of “virtuous exemplars” in the name of an objective understanding, virtue ethicists need to determine the nature of the human being clearly in order to comment on how moral motivation will lead to choosing virtuous acts over acts of vice. It is clear that this is no easy task, nor can we rely solely on moral psychology as suggested by Anscombe, rather the answer lies in knowledge of human nature as a whole.

To put it more bluntly, all the three approaches have problems; but specifically for Hurtshouse they share the justification of motivation problem. It is still a crucial problem to solve if we are to give good reasons for our ethical beliefs. Deontological ethics should solve the problem about justifying its assumption that only some certain rational rules are the right ones to be accepted as moral which are in accordance with human nature, so that deserves motivation. Utilitarians should find a way to justify their assumption that the most significant thing about morality is consequences which provide happiness. That consequences are predictable needs to be demonstrated. Also there is a need to justify that well-being is the only aspect of human nature that always motivates people to do the right action. For virtue ethics the problem is to find a compatible human nature

that answers the question of which character traits are the basic virtues that motivate people to live a good life.<sup>48</sup>

In this chapter I wanted to demonstrate that Hume's ethical understanding plays a significant role as a budding philosophy from the time it was introduced on the philosophical scene. I mentioned Kant's own avowal of Hume. Hume's work is a touchstone which pays attention to the ordinary moral practices of humans and he awakes Kant from his "dogmatic slumber", opening the way to practical reason. I showed that the Humean understanding of pain and pleasure gives birth to utilitarianism. I pointed out that Hume gives importance to the character traits as the indispensable part of morality. As a result we can see how all the three approaches take some inspiration from Hume's budding philosophy. Secondly, I tried to show the deficiencies of the theories which consider human nature to be the basic element. These four moral theories, deontological ethics, consequentialist ethics, virtue ethics and Humean ethics, establish their views not on human nature as a whole but only a part of it. Being reasonable is a characteristic of human nature, but it is not human nature itself or its main feature. Rationalists take it to be the main feature of human nature. For sentimentalists it is our sentiments which shape human nature. Utilitarians think that avoiding pain and desiring pleasure is human nature, whereas virtue ethicists glorify some psychological systems which consider character traits as basic human nature. Despite these flaws or problems, I hold that human nature can be understood by taking all these approaches into account.

Throughout the chapter I dealt mainly with the foundations of ethics from the perspective of normative ethics. I tried to demonstrate that Hume's moral

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<sup>48</sup> Hursthouse, Rosalind, "Virtue Ethics", SEP (Spring 2006 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2006/entries/ethics-virtue/>>.

perspective is a genuine source of inspiration for all the three approaches. As a result, they have similar problems regarding morals concerning human nature.

On the flip side of normative ethical theories lies meta-ethics. As Hume's arguments have their roles there too, before examining Humean ethics deeply, I want to touch briefly the meta-ethical perspective with regard to Humean influence.

Hume's first aim is to liberate morality from metaphysics; and convention, which is guided by naturalism, is a good way to actuate this release from the metaphysical sources of moral motivation. His conventionalism in social establishment categorizes many moral properties as natural features of the world. His basic aim is to define the nature of the human mind which, he believes, will enlighten the nature of human beings and even the world. As a result of this, a form of Humean naturalism emerged. That it has recently become very popular to adapt Humean perspectives to the field of game theory shows Hume's continuing influence in naturalistic studies.<sup>49</sup>

G. E. Moore sees a sharp distinction between what is natural and concepts such as "good", "right", or "virtuous". This problem indicates that, without recourse to moral assumptions, it is hard to set up a moral question even with a great amount of empirical investigation. G.E. Moore, on the non-naturalist side, tries to show that we cannot define moral words in terms of natural ones. He says of pleasure that

We can, I say, describe its relations to other things, but define it we can *not*. And if anybody tried to define pleasure for us as being any other natural object; if anybody were to say, for instance, that pleasure *means* the sensation of red, and were to proceed to deduce from that that

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<sup>49</sup> The doctorate dissertation of Oliver Curry from London School of Economics is a good example.

pleasure is a colour, we should be entitled to laugh at him and to distrust his future statements about pleasure. Well, that would be the same fallacy which I have called the naturalistic fallacy.<sup>50</sup>

He clarifies that this fallacy is a problem in ethics:

And similarly no difficulty need be found in my saying that “pleasure is good” and yet not meaning that “pleasure” is the same thing as “good,” that pleasure means good, and that good means pleasure. If I were to imagine that when I said “I am pleased,” I meant that I was exactly the same thing as “pleased,” I should not indeed call that a naturalistic fallacy, although it would be the same fallacy as I have called naturalistic with reference to Ethics.

The naturalistic fallacy is an important challenge to naturalist ethics, however on the other side of the debate there are counterchallenges to the naturalist fallacy.

Hume is generally viewed as being on the naturalist side in so far as his theory frees moral judgements from metaphysical assumptions. Therefore he is still a valuable source to the defender of naturalist ethics. He is appreciated because of his naturalism and discredited for his empiricism by Mounce who interprets Hume as a great philosopher in his book *Hume's Naturalism*.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, one significant point that should be mentioned is that twentieth century ethics originated from a famous Humean question about the relations between facts and values. In this sense not only twentieth century philosophers but also some earlier ones pay attention to this problem; for example Kant and Bentham. They point out the fact-value distinction while formulating their theories.

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<sup>50</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, 13.

<sup>51</sup> H.O. Mounce, *Hume's Naturalism*, London, New York: Routledge, 1999.

## 2.4 HUME: INNOVATOR OR NOT?

In this section I want to state what Hume has done for philosophical thought. Is he an innovator as frequently claimed, or is he a follower of the tradition he rejects? To clarify these arguments it is important to know the *subject matter* and *method* and *to understand his aim and intention*. Millican points out: “To interpret any philosopher’s work appropriately, it is important to understand the concerns that motivate him.”<sup>52</sup>

Hume is explicit about what he wants to do and from the very beginning of his *Treatise* he prepares the reader for his plans. He forewarns the reader that he has some intentions and plans which he cannot fully realize in his two books. It seems explicit from his introduction that Hume’s plan is to establish ethics on a new scientific foundation which, indeed, means a secular one, and his first two books are introductions to his main book about morals. His epistemological endeavour is to create a new authority in the field of knowledge which remains in the material world and does not need any metaphysical explanations that entail following the principles of unobservables. In order to avoid the effects on ethics of spiritual authority, which he called “chimera” and “superstition”, he begins with the source of knowledge. His “science of man” is the science of human nature; a science which does not go any further than human understanding. Ethics is to be the science that would help strip human affairs of religious dominance. What, then, is human nature? In an effort to create an entirely new “science of man”, he erects a Newtonian theory of human nature and analyzes human nature from the perspective of human perceptions which, in the end, yields a limited understanding of humanity. It is limited because he only treats the observable aspects of human

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<sup>52</sup> Peter Millican, *Reading Hume on Human Understanding: Essays on the First Enquiry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 2003, 27

nature: impressions. This endeavour has been undertaken by the other philosophers of his time, though with different perspectives.

A typical definition of human from an encyclopaedia frequently begins with describing humans from a biological point of view: “Humans...are bipedal primates belonging to the mammalian species *Homo sapiens*.”<sup>53</sup> In Latin *Homo sapiens* literally means ‘wise man’, or ‘knowing man’. “[H]umans have a highly developed brain capable of abstract reasoning, language, and introspection”<sup>54</sup>, and is highly skilled in the use of tools. Science, on the other hand, has various definitions. For Robert K. Merton

Science is a deceptively inclusive word which refers to a variety of distinct though interrelated items. It is commonly used to denote (1) a set of characteristic methods by means of which knowledge is certified; (2) a stock of accumulated knowledge stemming from the application of these methods; (3) a set of cultural values and mores governing the activities termed scientific; or (4) any combination of the foregoing.<sup>55</sup>

David C. Lindberg claims that the nature of science has been a source of debate for a long time. He notes “One view holds science to be the pattern of behaviour by which humans have gained control over their environment” whereas “an alternative opinion *distinguishes* between science and technology, viewing science as a body of theoretical knowledge, technology as the application of theoretical knowledge to the solution of practical problems.”<sup>56</sup> Science is typically defined as

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<sup>53</sup> Wikipedia “Human” en.wikipedia.org/wiki/human. Accessed 21 April 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, (ed) Norman W. Storer, Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1973, 268.

<sup>56</sup> David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science*, Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992, 1.

an organized body of knowledge. It is “an organized body of knowledge that is named through scientific consciousness as a result of investigating well-defined subject matter with a certain methodology leading to accumulation of theories and scientific knowledge.”<sup>57</sup> We can conclude that as humans are capable of thinking, organizing, and communicating by stored data in a certain way, being scientific is a characteristic of human being. The first aspect of the “science of man” — which is Hume’s first goal — should thus include observations on the scientific side of humanity. Hume, as an empiricist philosopher, exhibits this attribute in the light of scientific method. Therefore his scientific method must be an adaptation of the method of natural sciences. In reference to this Peter Millican states:

the sequence of topics that Hume discusses has been chosen not only with a view to his overall purpose (namely, vindicating empirical science against ‘superstition’ and rationalist metaphysics), but also to provide a framework for the introduction of particular principles of scientific inference covering such things as hidden causes, reasoning from analogy, and probability.<sup>58</sup>

He goes on as to show that there is a clear difference between Hume and his rationalist rivals such as Descartes:

the Enquiry presents a unified manifesto for inductive science, and its scepticism, so far from being in conflict with that aim (as so often supposed), importantly paves the way for legitimate ‘science and enquiry’ by demonstrating the impotence and even incoherence of any supposed alternative (such as theistic metaphysics, or rationalistic insight into the nature of the material world).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Alparslan Açıkgenç, *Scientific Thoughts and its Burdens*, İstanbul: Fatih University Press, 2000, 16. (The original quotation has an obscurity so I used the new definition changed by the original author of the book for his second unpublished edition.)

<sup>58</sup> Millican, *Reading Hume*, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

James Noxon believes that Hume does not intend to advance these theoretical sciences by working on them; on the contrary, he intends to determine the logical character and limits of knowledge available from these sciences. Noxon writes:

He [Hume] undertakes to do this by a genetic inquiry, supposing, as a good Lockian would, that if he can discover how men do in fact acquire knowledge and belief, he will be able to show which objects and methods conform to the natural principles of the human understanding and which do not.<sup>60</sup>

Hume supposes that this is achievable through his “science of man.” Hume is confident of the importance of his “science of man”, writing that: “There is no question of importance, whose decision is not compriz'd in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science.”<sup>61</sup> This means that no science can be properly done without the science of man.

Hume, in the sentences that follow, introduces the need for “an entirely new foundation” of a complete system of the sciences. Indeed this was not a new assumption. It was assumed by Descartes a century before. However, what is unique to Hume is the difference in foundation. Terence Penelhum points out this relationship saying:

“Both [Hume and Descartes] believe that there is a sharp distinction to be drawn between the world of public physical events and the world of private mental events. But a great gulf separates them in spite of these

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<sup>60</sup> James Noxon, *Hume's Philosophical Development: A Study of his Methods*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, 6.

<sup>61</sup> THN, 1, xvi.

likenesses. The foundations on which Descartes tries to build are metaphysical.”<sup>62</sup>

Descartes and Hume of course have distinct intentions when building a new foundation of philosophy. Descartes wants to emphasize the need for the belief in God; Hume however, intends to stand aloof from the spiritual authority of “chimera” and “superstition”. It is therefore plain that Hume is against a metaphysical foundation. Both Penelhum and Noxon think that Hume aims to exclude metaphysical assertions from moral sciences, as is done in natural sciences. Penelhum notes that:

To Hume, the simplicity and the freedom that Descartes ascribes to the mind are myths, and the self-consciousness of which Descartes speaks amounts to no more than our familiar ability to observe and report the course of our mental process. Hence there is no reason to suppose there cannot be a science of mind. There can. Indeed, it would be thoroughly Newtonian science<sup>63</sup>

Noxon concludes that Hume’s reason for extending the experimental method of natural philosophy to moral subjects lies with the metaphysical similarities of the subject matter of the two fields. He writes that “the essence of mind is as unknowable as the essence of matter, and therefore the a priori deductive method must be superseded in the human sciences as it had been over a century before in the physical sciences.”<sup>64</sup>

As Hume explains in his introduction:

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<sup>62</sup> Terence Penelhum, *Themes in Hume: The Self, The Will, Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, 5.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

And tho' we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical.<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Hume tries to erect a moral theory without recourse to supernatural notions like God or the afterlife. However, there is no consensus about whether or not he achieved his goal. Capaldi and Penelhum believe that Hume's science of man is a kind of Newtonian science. Noxon contends that Hume's endeavour was not successful. Noxon states that: "Although Hume's philosophy develops in opposition to Descartes' at almost every point, the *animus* of its ruthless questioning of assumptions, beliefs, and principles is indelibly Cartesian."<sup>66</sup> To the contrary, John Laird argues that Hume in the *Letter to a Physician* clearly shows his discovery of the resources of the inductive, experimental or Newtonian method in the domain of human nature. Laird contends "His rejection of 'hypotheses' (i.e. of scholastic occult qualities) and of 'invention' (... called the 'philosophical romance' of Descartes) had no other meaning, and was the constant theme of contemporary Newtonian writers."<sup>67</sup> Laird concludes that "Hume meant, in short, to become the Newton of the Human Mind."<sup>68</sup>

A different perspective is put forward by Jerry Fodor, who attributes certain a Cartesian way of thinking to Hume. He claims:

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<sup>65</sup> THN, I, xvii.

<sup>66</sup> Noxon, *Hume's Philosophical Development*, 9.

<sup>67</sup> John Laird, *Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature*, U.S.A: Archon Books, 1967, 20.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

It may strike you as paradoxical—not to say comical—to suppose a *Cartesian* account of concepts to be part of Hume’s *naturalistic* psychology. But, as we’ll presently see, Cartesianism about what concepts are, and what it is to have them, is neutral about dualism, about nativism, and about whether the content of thought can transcend the content of experience. So Adopting the Theory of Ideas doesn’t align Hume with any aspect of the Cartesian program that he is otherwise committed to reject.<sup>69</sup>

Fodor states that the reason he is interested in Hume’s theory is that Hume is useful in showing that the Cartesian account of concepts might be developed into a naturalistic and empirically plausible psychology of cognition.

All these philosophers attempted to position Hume in the right place in the history of thought. I think it will be useful to deal with this issue by stressing different aspects of the matter, by considering the subject matter, aim or intention, and method.

Hume is generally accepted as belonging to a tradition which rivals Descartes, who is the great supporter of metaphysics and reason. The subject matter of their philosophy may seem very different in the broader sense that Descartes is firstly known to be a metaphysician among all other sciences where he is also very well-known. On the other hand, Hume is a philosopher of the “science of man” — the application of scientific methods to moral issues — which strives to be released from metaphysics. Although their starting points are different methodologically, their subject matter intersects in metaphysics. The distinction is that one has a positive perspective and the other a negative perspective toward metaphysics. Both of them deal with metaphysics in their philosophy. Their goal is to discover a scientific method upon which all other sciences can be built. In his well-known tree analogy Descartes positions metaphysics as the root of the sciences. Whereas,

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<sup>69</sup> J. A. Fodor, *Hume Variations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, 16.

according to Hume, this idea is the first thing to be corrected in philosophy. In his *Treatise*, Hume summarises this tendency as follows:

Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates. Every rational creature, 'tis said, is oblig'd to regulate his actions by reason; and if any other motive or principle challenge the direction of his conduct, he ought to oppose it, till it be entirely subdu'd, or at least brought to a conformity with that superior principle.<sup>70</sup>

He thinks that problems arise from the preference of reason over passion by the association by former philosophers of reason with “eternity, invariableness, and divine origin”<sup>71</sup> and passion with “blindness, unconstancy and deceitfulness.”<sup>72</sup> In order to reveal the “fallacy of all this philosophy,”<sup>73</sup> Hume endeavours to “prove *first*, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and *secondly*, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.”<sup>74</sup>

The aim to create a new science is common in both Descartes and Hume. As mentioned above, while they are establishing their new science, the most important distinction is that Descartes wants to prove that metaphysics is the root of all forms of knowledge and Hume tries to show that in order to be scientific in the Newtonian sense metaphysics should be disregarded. On the other hand some interpreters think that the methodological assumptions of these two philosophers

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<sup>70</sup> THN, 1, 205.

<sup>71</sup> THN, 2, 413.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

have some similar characteristics, causing Fodor to categorize Hume as “a Cartesian Representationalist.”<sup>75</sup>

One of the major differences between Descartes and Hume lies in their solutions resulting from their levels and types of scepticism. Descartes, after a long period of doubts regarding being and existence, reaches a point where the certainty of his own existence requires the existence of a divine being. As a result of his solution, he uses the existence and nature of this divine being as a basis for positioning knowledge of the other things which form the material world. Moreover, he founds his transcendental beliefs on rational intuition which is a kind of mental vision identifying the truth with clear and distinct perception. On the contrary, Hume’s sceptical methodology ends up labelling such rational entities as delusion.

Another significant difference is in their views about substance. Descartes claims that he is a thinking being — a substance — and the physical objects are extended substances. On the other hand Hume focuses on the acting part of being for him even the self is a bundle of perceptions.

Rejecting the traditional view, Hume assumes that when we examine an individual thing, all that we can find is an avalanche of complex ideas composed of simple ideas. With this claim he gives credit to relations instead of substances and properties. That is, his new philosophy, the science of man — unlike Descartes’ philosophy — is concerned with the relations of ideas to one another. Hume believes that we cannot know the substances of ideas but we can observe their relations. Therefore, like Newton did in natural science, Hume wants to disregard substance.

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<sup>75</sup> Fodor, *Hume Variations*, 27.

There is a strong possibility for two opposite views to come closer in some sense when they focus on the same topic, since there are inevitably at least a few interactions and intersections between the rival theories. Therefore, the debate about Hume and his rivals continues still. In my opinion, Hume makes a great metaphysical assumption that all types of scientific knowledge should be observable. Hume holds that unobservables can be known through the same method employed for observables. With this supposition, Hume reconstructs what he at one point disregarded as a chimera. This is an inconsistency. Moreover, Hume's approach falls short of shedding light on the state of the unobservable parts of our minds. What if there are some naturally unobservable parts in our minds? Given that human nature is ever-changing, and that the natural condition of life is that it exists in the flow of time, the possibility of making static observations is highly questionable.

Can an entirely new science solve these questions by disregarding metaphysics or can Hume be justified in labelling rational entities delusion?

## **2.5 THE NEW SCIENCE: “SCIENCE OF HUMAN NATURE”**

I think the arguments about whether Hume achieved his goal of a new science or was unable to step from under the umbrella of Cartesian philosophy can be solved by focusing on the characteristics of the new science: the science of human nature. In fact, it is not imprecise to say that Hume's philosophy centres on human nature which ends up being a naturalist approach that is totally different from rationalist intentions.

Hume's new perspective, on the foundation of ethics — which is held to be inspired by Hobbes — starts from human nature. As Paul Russell declared, the common plans of Hobbes and Hume are the same; the only difference lies in their

methodological attitudes. According to Russell, the main presuppositions of both philosophers are the same though their methodologies varied. Concerning one of the three common presuppositions of these philosophers he says: “Moral and political philosophy must proceed upon the same methodology as that which is appropriate to the natural sciences.”<sup>76</sup> Hume wanted to ground all sciences in the light of the discoveries of human nature. He stressed this aim from the very beginning of his book. In his introduction he states, “And as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation.”<sup>77</sup>

He asserts that human nature is the “centre” of all sciences because all sciences have relations — in one way or another — to human nature.

Take Logic, for instance, it is concerned with the principles and operations of man’s faculty of reasoning. Ethics and aesthetic is concerned with our tastes and sentiments. Politics considers the union of man in society. Mathematics, natural philosophy (i.e. Physics) and natural religion appear to investigate subjects quite other than man. But they are known by man; moreover it is also man that judges what is true and what is false in these sciences.<sup>78</sup>

All sciences depend on some definition of the human being, such as “the human is a thinking being”, “the human is a political being”, “and the human is an introspective being.” The human is the “capital” of all sciences. It is for this reason that we should develop a “SCIENCE OF MAN” by applying the experimental method. Hume holds that since the experimental method has been successful in

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<sup>76</sup> Paul Russell, “Hume’s Treatise and Hobbes’s the Elements of Law” *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 46: 51–63, 1985, 62.

<sup>77</sup> THN, I, xvi.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

natural science, it will also be successful when applied to the science of man, which attempts to discover the principles of human nature. The science of “human nature” seeks to discover the nature of human understanding and demonstrate its breadth of application through a close examination of its influence and capacities.

There are Hume interpreters who hold that Hume’s philosophy is a naturalist one. According to Kemp Smith, while answering a general scepticism, Hume takes naturalism into account; so human nature is a hint for understanding his philosophy as a whole. Marcus Hester points out Hume’s naturalism, commenting that it is evident since “there are some passions and pleasures which are natural and some objects which are naturally suited to certain pleasures or pains.”<sup>79</sup> D. Fate Norton contends that

Hume is a naturalist in that he sought to produce coherent philosophical explanations without the slightest recourse to supernatural entities or transcendental principles...an obvious example of this kind of naturalism...is his attempt to explain moral values as derived from human nature or from, that is, human beings as constituted and active in the world.<sup>80</sup>

Nicolas Capaldi also notes that Hume new science of human nature is constructed upon an adaptation of the Newtonian method. I argue that the deficiency of Hume’s system arises from his employment of the Newtonian method.

Hume stresses that every kind of science can be developed from the science of human nature. Historically Hume is just one step in the “big project”, Paul Russell’s term for the grand and ongoing project of attempting to discover the

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<sup>79</sup> Marcus Hester, “Hume on Principles and Perceptual Ability”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 37: 295-302, 1979, 295.

<sup>80</sup> D. F. Norton, “Hume’s Moral Ontology” *Hume Studies*, 10th Anniversary Issue, 189–214, 1984, 190.

nature of human morality. Norton claims “Hume attempted to provide us with a theory of morals suited to the post-Galilean and post-Hobbesian world in which he lived: with an objectivist account of moral distinctions.”<sup>81</sup> I contend, however, that the science of human nature could never be accomplished. In my view, effectively dealing with an inconstant human nature is not possible by examining human nature as frozen in time, which is an inevitable result of applying the Newtonian method. Hume himself admits the fact: “Human nature is too inconstant to admit of any such regularity. Changeableness is essential to it.”<sup>82</sup>

In my opinion, Hume’s “science of man” covers two different aspects of the human being. The first aspect is the “active” part in which “dynamism” occurs as an essential quality. The second aspect is the “veiled” part, which is the unchanging, inerrable and constant feature of the human. This aspect I call “veiled” because we cannot observe human nature in this sense. Obviously making statements about this aspect of human nature is inherently problematical. An understanding of the observable, “active”, part also raises problems since observations are limited by the fact that they take place at a particular moment in time. Unlike chemistry or physics experiments and observations which take place in the controlled environment of the laboratory, Hume’s science of man requires observations of human psychological processes and moral behaviour in its natural place and time. This method of observation has been criticised as being prone to subjectivism and relativism.

Hume attempts to treat both the active and veiled parts of the human being. However, he believes the way to discover our nature is through observing only the active part. This process includes observing all forms of human actions. Capaldi

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>82</sup> THN, 2, p. 283.

names Hume's observations of the active part the "we do" perspective, in contradistinction to the Cartesian "I think" perspective.<sup>83</sup>

Here the question arises as to whether Hume succeeds in the application of the experimental method to morality. To answer this question it is essential to summarize his moral thought. First, I will explain his application using the formulation of Capaldi which I believe is a good source for shedding light on Hume's Newtonian science. Capaldi is not the first to write on this topic, but he gives a step-by-step formulation of the Humean science of man in the Newtonian manner. From this we may see that Hume's adaptation of the Newtonian method is deficient.

Nicholas Capaldi formulates the adaptation of the method of natural science first by the content of Newtonian program and then the adaptation of this program to Hume's ethics. According to him, the content of Newtonian program can be described as:

1. isolating the objects of analysis,
2. conducting experiments for the sake of arriving at
3. some general principles which explain the relationships among the isolated units, and then
4. extending the general principles to other phenomena.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Nicholas Capaldi, *Hume's Place in Moral Philosophy*, New York, San Francisco, Bern, Baltimore, Frankfurt, Berlin, Wien, Paris: Peter Lang, 1992, 22-24.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

He asserts that for the first step the units that are isolated in Hume's approach are ideas and impressions. My aim is to show that the criterion of this isolation is their being observable. Hume derives his general maxim — which is named the Copy Principle — from this isolation. The second step is conducting experiments. It is generally held that Hume has done no experimentation, and that what he calls experiments are indeed thought experiments and introspection. In this sense Hume is not entirely Newtonian. Capaldi argues that the third step is realised by Hume's "principle of association" or "association of ideas", which includes the different relations of objects and thoughts. Capaldi considers "the principle of association" a general fundamental law that corresponds to Newton's theory of gravitation. I contend that this principle is closely related to Hume's second general maxim. In this maxim Hume shows that wherever there is a close relation between two ideas, the mind easily gets confused. I aim to show that Hume's explanation of the way ideas are formed is nebulous and his principle of association arises from this uncertain path.

According to Hume, the communication of vivacity of an impression is derived from the third general maxim of the science of human nature so that: "*when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity.*"<sup>85</sup> Capaldi thinks that the principle of "communication of vivacity explains belief in *Book 1*," and "explains the passions and sympathy in *Book 2*."<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the sympathy mechanism, with its attendant the communication of the vivacity, is used to explain moral judgment in *Book 3*. I will argue that the inconsistencies of the Humean system arise from this Newtonian perspective.

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<sup>85</sup> THN, 1, 98.

<sup>86</sup> Capaldi, *Hume's Place*, 21.

Firstly, the term “vivacity” is problematic. Secondly, the observation of the process in the sympathy mechanism is unclear. Finally, the communication of vivacity is inadequate to explain moral judgement. To judge morally one needs “the general point of view”, “impartiality”, and “being fully informed.”

In this brief summary Capaldi seems to be testing the formulation of Hume’s theory. Studying the general maxims of Hume’s philosophy I will examine to what extent Capaldi’s claim that Hume is a Newtonian scientist is acceptable. For some philosophers, it is usual to name Hume as a Newtonian scientist of human nature. However, it is also arguable that Hume achieved no scientific (in Newtonian manner) conclusion. To justify one of these perspectives I will again concentrate on human nature. Hume regards ethics as a science of human nature which he divides into two parts:

1. Study of man as a reasonable being.
2. Study of man as born for action.

This dual point of human nature is stressed by Capaldi as the great change in perspective of ethics from Cartesian “I think” to Humean “We do”<sup>87</sup>.

Reason and the senses are two points which rival each other as the source of knowledge and the motivation of morality. In this rivalry Hume takes a position on the side of the senses in order to eliminate the “chimera” which he believes is the result of reason. Therefore his first attack is on the sources of supernatural beliefs: metaphysics and reason. He debases reason by making it a “slave of passions”. According to Baier, in the list of topics given by Hume’s new reformed, self-

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<sup>87</sup> Capaldi, *Hume's Place*, 22-24.

avowedly sentiment-based philosophy, “metaphysics is a significant absentee.”<sup>88</sup> She says Hume’s program includes epistemology not to ask what “*ultimately exists*”<sup>89</sup> but to become aware of how we decide truth and falsehood. Considering Hume’s insistence on the observable part, his assumptions can be summarised as follows: all kinds of human perceptions can be dissolved into impressions and ideas. In this classification impressions have priority over ideas since they are observable. Ideas are the faint images of impressions. There should be no perception which does not stem from experience. If there is some unobservable part we should discard it from consideration.

It is clear that according to Hume morality is derived ultimately not from reasoning but from feeling and moral sentiment. Now I want to mention the difficulties and shortcomings of this Newtonian method of human nature in the following chapters, handling first Hume’s general maxims and then Capaldi’s adaptation of Newtonian method.

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<sup>88</sup> Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume Treatise*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, 22.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE PROBLEMS OF HUMEAN PRINCIPLES**

#### **3.1 PROBLEMS CONCERNING HUME'S SCIENCE OF MAN**

##### **3.1.1 Hume's General Maxim of New Science**

It is generally held that the area of philosophy which is concerned with social problems deals with human nature. The complex and dynamic nature of human behaviour ensures that every view regarding human nature may include controversies. To eliminate such controversies, Hume tries to solve the problem within the boundaries of experience. The first step of his "Newtonian Science of Man", to isolate the unit, does not start from the impressions as Nicholas Capaldi asserts. Since the isolation begins from the observable and non-observable aspects of human nature, he isolates the observable part and disregards the non-observable (in the Humean scientific sense) part of human nature. Therefore, the problems arise from isolation, the first step of his new science. He needs to justify the isolation. Although he sets some principles to justify the isolation, problems still persist.

The reason behind Hume's searching for the nature of humanity by employing scientific methods is important to understanding his whole philosophy. Hume's intention is to become the Newton of moral science. He wants to release human affairs from the dominance of metaphysical assumptions since he sees them as a source of misery. Therefore, morality, which will bring happiness to humans will

released from metaphysical prison. According to him, metaphysical explanations are the cause of factions and wars. He maintains:

How happens it then...if vulgar superstition be so salutary to society, that all history abounds so much with accounts of its pernicious consequences on public affairs? Factions, civil wars, persecutions, subversions of government, oppression, slavery; these are the dismal consequences which always attend its prevalency over the minds of men. If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it. And no period of time can be happier or more prosperous, than those in which it is never regarded or heard of.<sup>90</sup>

Human nature or rather, nature was regarded as a proper source both for metaphysical and scientific moral systems by the contemporaries of Hume. Hume was not the first philosopher to attempt to establish a science of man. His intention was to apply to Newtonian methods to moral theory. Newton's method draws a line between science and metaphysics and ends up with a secular understanding of natural sciences. It is after Newton that the idea of a science of human nature arises. Newton states that, when the analytical method of natural philosophy, or physics in the modern sense, is perfected, the bounds of moral philosophy will be broadened by the adaptation of these methods. This endeavour of adaptation continues today with attempts at philosophizing in the light of scientific verification and scientific methods.<sup>91</sup>

Newton sets up mathematics as the key to natural philosophy. In the same manner, it is not surprising that Francis Hutcheson developed a calculus derived from simple axioms. In his *Inquiry, Treatise Two* contains a section relating to

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<sup>90</sup> DCNR, 220.

<sup>91</sup> Sir Isaac Newton, *Newton's Philosophy of Nature Selections from His Writings*, (ed) H. S. Thayer, Introduction by John Herman Randall, JR. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2005, 5.

axioms and propositions under the heading: *How to compute the morality of Actions in our sense of them*. He gives mathematical equalities such as “good=benevolence x ability”.<sup>92</sup>

Jeremy Bentham in his moral philosophy formulates a calculation between two notions, pleasure and pain, where all the endeavours of all legislation should aim to protect the balance of the principle, which requires that “pleasure should always be greater than pain.” His “felicific calculus” presupposes no difference between any individual and any type of pleasure. Hutcheson, Bentham, and others take for granted that scientific knowledge can objectively elicit the interests of the community.

Hume devotes his introduction of *Treatise* to showing the necessity and superiority of building a new “science of man.” The basic characteristic of his science depends on a natural vision of man released from the authority of rational, metaphysical perspective. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first principle of human nature in the “science of man” is to prove that ideas are derived from impressions. He claims: “all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking, fall under this denomination”<sup>93</sup> By this he means that the contents of the mind consist of perceptions which are the result of every kind of human activities. There are only impressions and ideas coming from these perceptions. He holds: “All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct

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<sup>92</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises*, Wolfgang Leibold (ed) Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004, 128-129.

<sup>93</sup> THN, 3, 456.

kinds”<sup>94</sup>, which he calls “IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS.”<sup>95</sup> And he divides perception into two by stating the following:

The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions: and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion. I believe it will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. This assumption also concerns the non-existence of innate ideas.<sup>96</sup>

Here, it is understandable why Capaldi assumes that Hume’s isolated units are impressions. Hume states that his searches for the basic and observable unit which has the power to give insight into human nature starts from human understanding which is the complex of human perceptions which resolve themselves into ideas and impressions. However, I argue that his first step in the science of man implicitly arises from his Copy Principle, which states that unobservable can be obtained only from observables; thus it is better to call “impressions” the units that can be isolated. He tries to make a clear distinction between these two phenomena in accordance with their force and vivacity. H. O. Mounce states that Hume provides an explanation of perception in an “entirely mechanical”<sup>97</sup> way. He proclaims that “Perception is a process in which the world impresses itself on the

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<sup>94</sup> THN, 1, 1.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Mounce, *Hume’s Naturalism*, 24.

mind rather than one in which the mind is active in discriminating what is in the world. We may also note that the perceiver is a spectator rather than an agent.”<sup>98</sup> According to Mounce, Hume has a propensity to discuss perception in the abstract, distinct from the perceiver’s concrete “wider activities”, which threatens the “we do” perspective. Capaldi asserts that Hume is the Newton of social sciences since Hume caused a shift in perspective.<sup>99</sup> He contends that Hume’s attitude towards morality is from a “we do” perspective not the Cartesian “I think” perspective. Mounce points out that Hume discusses “perception in what is abstract.” Therefore, it is obvious that Hume has done some kind of Newtonian abstraction as formulized by, Capaldi, starting with abstraction (or rather isolation) but it is questionable whether this is justified or not. It is also arguable whether Hume’s perspective causes a shift from “I think” to “we do”.

It is important to note that the distinction is not merely between impressions and ideas. Hume makes a further division between simple and complex where the complex ideas or impressions are obtained from simple ones. For example, an impression of a colour is simple but the impression of a rose is complex because it includes a number of impressions like colour, odour, and shape. According to Hume’s explanation of copy principle, a simple idea is the copy of a simple impression which means there could be nothing in the idea which is not in the impression. However, it is held by Hume’s interpreters that, since our ideas are complex, they have corresponding complex impressions. Hume argues that complex ideas can be compounded in the imagination in any way that does not correspond to any idea but the compounded ones. In this sense, imagination never creates new thing completely distinct from the impressions. It just rearranges the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Capaldi, *Hume’s Place*, 27.

inputs gathered by the impressions. Huxley summarizes Hume's thought in the following example:

Once in possession of the ideas of a red rose and of the colour blue, we may, in imagination, substitute blue for red; and thus obtain a complex idea of a blue rose, which is not an actual copy of any complex impression, though all its elements are such copies.<sup>100</sup>

Hume establishes his general maxim from the very beginning of the *Book 1*, determining the limits of human understanding with the observable units as impressions and ideas and he comes to a rejection of innate ideas. Thus, he states his general maxim:

This then is the first principle I establish in the science of human nature; nor ought we to despise it because of the simplicity of its appearance. For 'tis remarkable, that the present question concerning the precedency of our impressions or ideas, is the same with what has made so much noise in other terms, when it has been disputed whether there be any *innate ideas*, or whether all ideas be derived from sensation and reflexion. We may observe that in order to prove the ideas of extension and colour not to be innate, philosophers do nothing but shew that they are conveyed by our senses. To prove the ideas of passion and desire not to be innate, they observe that we have preceding experience of these emotions in ourselves. Now if we carefully examine these arguments, we shall find that they prove nothing but that ideas are preceded by other more lively perceptions, from which they are derived, and which they present. I hope this clear stating of the question will remove all disputes concerning it, and will render this principle of more use in our reasonings, than it seems hitherto to have been.<sup>101</sup>

However, as already mentioned, in this first principle, problems emerge. The reductionist method of sciences in making explanations can be explicitly seen in this process. Everything which is the content of mind should turn into ideas which

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<sup>100</sup> T. H. Huxley, *Hume*, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific Honolulu, 2003, 62-63.

<sup>101</sup> THN, 1, 7.

are made up of impressions. Take the “blue rose”: it is a variation of the impression of colours and rose by imagination. The assumption is that, anything which does not result from impression is a product of imagination by the modifications of existing impressions. However, Hume’s famous paragraph regarding the missing shade of blue highlights one problem with the first principle:

Suppose therefore a person to have enjoyed his sight for thirty years, and to have become perfectly well acquainted with colours of all kinds, excepting one particular shade of blue, for instance, which it never has been his fortune to meet with. Let all the different shades of that colour, except that single one, be plac’d before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest; ’tis plain, that he will perceive a blank, where that shade is wanting, said will be sensible, that there is a greater distance in that place betwixt the contiguous colours, than in any other. Now I ask, whether ’tis possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, tho’ it had never been conveyed to him by his senses? I believe there are few but will be of opinion that he can; and this may serve as a proof, that the simple ideas are not always derived from the correspondent impressions...<sup>102</sup>

There are some thinkers who aim to show that this paragraph is not problematic by stressing the greatness of the philosopher. In this vein, Nelson states: “Thus we have Hume explicitly asserting, it seems, both that all simple ideas have precedent correspondent impressions and that they do not. But this, on the face of it, is an arrant contradiction! Can Hume have Homerically nodded?”<sup>103</sup> He goes on:

A thinker of Hume’s acumen might nod for a page or two’s quarter hour but not for all of nine years! Moreover, in both places Hume refers to the phenomenon of the impression-less idea of blue as a contradictory phenomenon, indicating clearly enough that he was

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>103</sup> J. O. Nelson, “Hume’s Missing Shade of Blue Re-viewed”, *Hume Studies*, 15: 353–364, 1989, 354.

himself aware of there seeming to be an inconsistency here in his contentions.<sup>104</sup>

J. O. Nelson assumes that Hume intentionally puts this statement forward as a “counter example.” He argues that Hume is so certain about his maxim that he sets forth the counter example of his theory to show that even the counter example does not change the result of his principle. Accordingly, Hume concludes that “the instance is so particular and singular, that ’tis scarce worth our observing, and does not merit that for it alone we should alter our general maxim.”<sup>105</sup>

However, the problems related to innate knowledge and reason in Hume’s empiricism, D.M. Johnson assumes that Hume’s “empiricism rests on a mistake.”<sup>106</sup> According to Johnson, in his example Hume uses no “extra-mental objects or events to play a direct role in creating the imagined colour”<sup>107</sup> because this colour never appears in the subject’s mind and “he never sees it.”<sup>108</sup> For him this is where the contradiction occurs, since Hume’s general maxim claims that all of our ideas are copied correspondingly from sense impressions. The main problem is hidden by Hume’s employing his Copy Principle for testing the legitimacy of metaphysical notions. Hume claims that this is an isolated case; however as Johnson mentions, all simple ideas are capable of being constructed from similar instances. Therefore, for Johnson, it is possible for a person to reach a similar conclusion by extrapolating from other members of examples in the same

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> THN, 1, 6.

<sup>106</sup> D.M. Johnson, “Hume’s Missing Shade of Blue, Interpreted as Involving Habitual Spectra” *Hume Studies*, 10: 109-124, 1984, 109.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

way. Johnson is correct when he assumes the possibility of obtaining “ideas that correspond to (but do not copy) impressions” which one never could have had in the past.<sup>109</sup> As a result, he holds that it is an inevitable conclusion that Hume’s way of testing “the legitimacy of philosophical notions” by appealing to the impressions as the original source is unfounded.<sup>110</sup> So, what is the reason for Hume’s insistence on impressions as the only justifying method of philosophical notions?

Assessing him in his historical background, Hume holds the traditional empiricist view of his predecessors. According to the empiricist philosophers the object of knowledge is only sense impressions which can be perceived. On the other hand, the basic view that we have knowledge obtained by sense impressions opens three different paths to philosophers. Hume scholars hold that by rejecting the validity of the principle of causality Hume stands in a different position from the other two eminent British empiricists: John Locke and George Berkeley. He disagrees with Locke on the existence of substance. He does not acknowledge any dogmatic or spiritual principles like Berkeley’s notion of the reality of spiritual substance. Hume conveys some noteworthy explanations to empiricism such as setting individual impressions as the direct objects of our knowledge. For him there is no means of access to knowledge other than our sense impressions. He attempts to discredit metaphysics; and instead bring natural explanations to bear on various controversial debates such as self, the problem of other’s mind, and soul. For Alasdair MacIntyre this attitude is his weakness. He argues “Hume is for the most

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

part avowedly engaged in explaining why we have the rules that we do and not in any work of criticism.”<sup>111</sup>

It is clear why Hume accepts his first principle even though he is aware of counter example. Hume has to set up a Newtonian moral system which would exclude the authority of reason and metaphysics. Therefore Hume is left with humans themselves as the best alternative for study. He sees the right to eliminate every kind of opposition which can not be excluded by empirical data. He leaves out them. From where I see, his disregarding such a great problem by labelling it as simple proves his weakness.<sup>112</sup> The problems regarding “the missing shade of blue”, shows us the weakness of the “copy principle” which is Hume’s first general maxim. I contend that Hume does not solve the justification problem of metaphysical entities; he just leaves them out of his philosophical scope.

### **3.1.2 The Nebulous Way toward Ideas**

Another principle that bears closer scrutiny is the assumption that “wherever there are close relations betwixt two ideas, the mind is very apt to mistake them”<sup>113</sup>

In the Humean system we have perceptions from our sense experiences which are impressions and ideas. These impressions and ideas are not separated. The “principle of attraction” binds impressions and ideas. In other words, they are not atomic. Through the “principle of attraction” impressions and ideas all gather together and form chains which enable them to recall each other. There is always a

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<sup>111</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*, London: Routledge, 1998, 175.

<sup>112</sup> Hume classifies colour as simple perception, which per se is another issue to scrutinize on.

<sup>113</sup> THN, 1, 60.

path between thoughts. The present impressions and the ones which are collected in the past are tied by “the principle of attraction.” Thus it is possible to reach one idea from another. This principle has been called his most valuable invention and it is now named as the “association of ideas.”

According to Capaldi this principle is Hume’s adaptation of the third step in the Newtonian approach. The general principle that explains the relationships among the isolated units, in the Humean sense, is the “association of ideas.” Upon this fundamental point, Hume bases the complex ideas. Thus, the processes in mind are naturally associated with one another. Ideas come together in the form of an avalanche which is produced by groups of avalanches. The groups of ideas tied to each other by “the principle of association” composes larger groups. This way of obtaining knowledge demonstrates that the groups of representations come from a reality corresponding to them (as the copy principle requires). This is what brings us to the origin of belief in an external world which is directed by the same laws that exist in the world of thought.

This way of gathering knowledge, an avalanche of ideas, originates from an impression. The composition of larger and larger groups is possible by the addition of ideas with the power of imagination. Therefore, imagination in Hume’s Newtonian science of man has the power of composing a huge ocean of ideas from a drop of impression.

While composing such avalanches of ideas there is a distinction between our experiences and the description of them. For Hume, most of our mistakes are the results of the close relations. He explains how these mistakes arise:

they are the causes why we falsely imagine we can form such an idea. For there is a close relation’ betwixt that motion and darkness, and a real extension, or composition of visible and tangible objects...Here then are three relations betwixt that distance, which conveys the idea of

extension, and that other, which is not fill'd with any colour'd or solid object.<sup>114</sup>

Close relations are not the only possible cause of mistakes. Sometimes mistakes may occur from the ascription of additional relations to objects.

For 'tis a quality, which I have already observ'd in human nature, that when two objects appear in a close relation to each other, the mind is apt to ascribe to them any additional relation, in order to compleat the union; and this inclination is so strong, as often to make us run into errors (such as that of the conjunction of thought and matter).<sup>115</sup>

Hume explains the source of error as coming from the process of imagination and fancy which are ready to unite impressions by relations such as causation and resemblance. He contends that this process is a part of the very character of human nature:

And this is easily accounted for from the known properties of human nature. When the mind is determin'd to join certain objects, but undetermin'd in its choice of the particular objects, It naturally turns its eye to such as are related together. They are already united in the mind: They present themselves at the same time to the conception; and instead of requiring any new reason for their conjunction, it wou'd require a very powerful reason to make us over-look this natural affinity.<sup>116</sup>

From these close relations, Hume generalizes a type of relation he refers to as natural affinity. Furthermore, he holds that this natural affinity — which is the love of order and uniformity — is a contribution to the formation of society:

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

<sup>115</sup> THN, 1, 237.

<sup>116</sup> This part is mentioned in the notes of Appendix.

In the mean time, we may content ourselves with observing, that the same love of order and uniformity, which arranges the books in a library, and the chairs in a parlour, contribute to the formation of society, and to the well-being of mankind, by modifying the general rule concerning the stability of possession. And as property forms a relation betwixt a person and an object, 'tis natural to found it on some preceding relation; and as property is nothing but a constant possession, secur'd by the laws of society, 'tis natural to add it to the present possession, which is a relation that resembles it. For this also has its influence. If it be natural to conjoin all sorts of relations, 'tis more so, to conjoin such relations as are resembling, and are related together.<sup>117</sup>

Here, Hume claims the relations between ideas both as a natural affinity and a natural source of errors. He makes generalizations about the love of order but these are contradicted by his treatment of his second maxim. If we, as human beings, all gather our ideas from impressions then we are under the threat of being deceived by the unifying characteristic of imagination because our natural affinity, the love of order, may cause mistakes among closely related ideas. Therefore, on the one side there is the possibility of scepticism regarding the tricks of our imagination and on the other side there is the possibility of the missing mistakes in his system of belief justification. The second maxim, the possibility of mistakes by close relations of ideas, entails mistakes in our belief formation system. Take the “red rose” and “blue rose” they are closely related and resembles each other. However, where the first one is provided from an impression the second one is composed by imagination. Therefore the relation between the thoughts and the external world is not necessary. Hume’s attempt to show the existence of the external world is made impossible by his second maxim. Moreover, since the way to the ideas seems uncertain and nebulous in character he cannot escape from scepticism.

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<sup>117</sup> THN, 3, 611.

In an article which reviews the sceptical differences between *Treatise* and *Enquiry* and which outlines the drawbacks of Hume's scepticism, Michaud points out that Hume presupposes "a new ontology"<sup>118</sup>. According to Michaud, Hume deals with the nature of things from a perspective which takes our beliefs concerning it into account. Thus, the external world and the nature of the self are contained within this Humean version of the nature of human understanding. Because of the imperfect investigations of our natural beliefs Michaud maintains that this ontology is mere invention. For, Michaud "the sceptical outcome pushes through the positive project itself as the failure."<sup>119</sup> In another article Michaud points out that "From a methodological point of view, empiricism requires that we limit ourselves to sensory data."<sup>120</sup> He argues Hume admits the limitations of empiricism "but it leads [Hume] to acknowledge that in fact we continuously go beyond sensory experience."<sup>121</sup> For Michaud it is a common mistake of empiricist philosophers: "Empiricism demonstrates its own limitations. One would find a similar drift in Bertrand Russell's philosophy in which anti-empiricist elements and empiricist program intertwine."<sup>122</sup> Also for Michaud, not surprisingly, Hume's criticisms of the other systems fall within the compass of his own system:

This hypercritical enterprise is, in a way, justified by the project of a science of human nature: a thorough methodological skepticism is a preliminary step for the empirical investigation to follow. But it may go

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<sup>118</sup> Yves Michaud, "How to Become a Moderate Skeptic: Hume's Way out of Pyrrhonism", *Hume Studies*, 11: 33–46, 1985, 35.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Yves Michaud, "Hume's Naturalized Philosophy", *Hume Studies*, 13: 360–380, 1987, 365.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

too far and endanger the whole enterprise, all the more since the natural beliefs which prop up the skeptical system lack rational foundation. That's why, finally, the skeptical system is in jeopardy of being itself as incredible as the metaphysical systems under examination.<sup>123</sup>

He stresses further that:

Above all, we should not forget the vicious circle in which Hume is caught. For the science of human nature is part and parcel of that human nature it purports to investigate, which means that philosophical analysis itself is a product of human nature. Philosophical statements have a conceptual content, but they are uttered by people who are acted on by beliefs, sentiments, passions.<sup>124</sup>

To put it simply, he has suggested that because of the faults in the examination of natural beliefs, the strict rejection of metaphysical systems and not knowing how to evaluate the philosophical beliefs causes Hume's sceptical viewpoint.

In this section I aim to show that there is a problem in the process of how we provide ideas which are derived from impressions. Ideas, the unobservable part of our perceptions, go beyond the impressions, the observable part. Hume's Newtonian method regarding these principles is far from sufficient to enable a clear path to the ideas. As a result, we can conclude that the sceptical accounts of Hume's science of man offer an uncertain and nebulous way to the ideas. Therefore, the science of man does not seem to have efficient principles with which to set up an entirely new science which can overcome the problems of other criticized systems.

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<sup>123</sup> Michaud, "How to Become a Moderate Skeptic", 35.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 36.

### 3.1.3 The Force of Impressions and Ideas

Hume's third general maxim is the "communication of ideas" on which his theory of morality is built. He claims: "it as a general maxim in the science of human nature, that when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity."<sup>125</sup> This is the more general principle which Capaldi equates to gravitation in the Newtonian system. The process of sympathy also depends on this principle.

In the light of this principle it is supposed that, the past experience of feeling the sourness of a lemon does not only have the relation between being sour and lemon but also has a share of its force and vivacity. This communication of force and vivacity turns into a habit of expecting the repetition of the same event in future. Likewise he assumes when we experience a certain effect, we think about its cause. So, when we hear the word lemon, we feel the sourness. Every time an associating quality connects two ideas in such a way that considering the one idea "naturally introduces the other"<sup>126</sup> It is assumed that these relations construct the unity among our ideas. Ideas that are related by resemblance, contiguity, or causation are naturally associated by a force such as the process of gravity or magnetism<sup>127</sup>. In this sense, the communication of force and vivacity of our perceptions is described as the cement which binds the Humean universe. Of course, via our imagination we can link any two ideas we wish, but even here in the principle of association, the force of naturality plays an important role. That is,

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<sup>125</sup> THN, 1, 98.

<sup>126</sup> THN, 1, 13.

<sup>127</sup> Capaldi emphasizes this as the marker of Hume's Newtonian approach.

the more natural is the association between ideas, the easier is to bring them together, and vice versa. I argue that the degree of naturality of association occurs as a problem in sympathy system. Reconsider the “roses” again. The idea of a “red rose” is natural whereas the blue one is not. Therefore to associate “blue” and rose” is not easy. However, through imagination we can definitely associate any two ideas by all means.

When imagination obtains a new idea from other ideas, it is important to show how they are related to each other. In this sense, Hume produces the ideas of philosophical relations. There are seven philosophical relations: “*resemblance, identity, relations of time and place, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in quality, contrariety and causation.*”<sup>128</sup> Three of these carry more significance as they embody the philosophical relations: resemblance, contrariety, causation.<sup>129</sup> Hume holds that from the first appearance to the last situation of the avalanche of ideas we need such imaginative comparisons and communication, and they are also essential to philosophical inquiry as he generalizes the maxims of understanding as the maxims of nature. These relations are important to show the process of forming ideas. However, most interpreters mention problems and contradictions regarding both the relations and the principle of communication.

There is the contradiction of the assumption that simplicity and resemblance can be present at the same time. Also, the force of vivacity has ambiguity which Hume is aware of but wants to disregard. I will explain them in turn. First, I will give the interpretations of Hume’s theory of ideas and then discuss the problems appertaining to these.

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<sup>128</sup> THN, 1, 69.

<sup>129</sup> THN, 1, 70.

According to Jonathan Bennet, Hume inherits his theory about what gives a word its meaning from Locke, who concludes that the meaning of a given general term depends on what kind of idea it is regularly associated with.<sup>130</sup> In the first chapter of *Treatise* Hume uses three words referring to ideas: *perception*, *impression*, and *idea*. He describes all kinds of mental events as perceptions.<sup>131</sup> Ideas and impressions are distinguished by two distinct factors; firstly “force and vivacity,” which is to say that, the impressions are strong, lively, vivacious, and intense; whereas the ideas are weak, faded, washed out, faint, languid, and secondly “sense-experience;” impressions are sense-experience, whereas ideas are the raw materials of thinking, understanding and meaning. However, according to Bennet, there are difficulties about Hume’s theory of ideas and impressions. He summarizes them in three puzzling points. First, for Bennett, Hume treats meaning-empiricism as knowable a priori. Second, Hume’s theory would be refuted if a congenitally blind man showed that he understood purple, because this would remove him of his main argument that certain expressions are meaningless. Third, Hume’s theory implies that the questions about whether certain expressions make sense or not is answered by looking towards the past. However, Bennet thinks if it is a question of present, it should be answered by looking towards the present or future.<sup>132</sup> Consequently, Bennet argues that Hume offers an empirical theory as if he knew it to be true a priori and furthermore his theory “turns out to be largely irrelevant to the matters that he wants to illuminate.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Jonathan Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, 222.

<sup>131</sup> THN, 1, 1.

<sup>132</sup> Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume*, 229.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

Similarly, Barry Stroud draws the same picture of “Theory of Ideas.” In considering Hume’s thoughts about the contents of our minds and his notion that “all the perceptions of the mind are double,” that is, that when we examine what our minds’ constituents are, it is usual to find that all the contents are in pairs.<sup>134</sup> For Hume “the only difference between the members of each pair is the difference in the degrees of force and vivacity.”<sup>135</sup> Therefore, it is not only the case that every perception of the mind resembles the impressions exactly but also there is an exactly corresponding idea for every impression. According to Stroud, this assumption turns out to be mistaken:

There is an exact resemblance between some of our ideas and some of our impressions, but obviously there are also many perceptions of which that are not true. For example, I can now imagine the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is gold and walls are rubies, but I have never had an impression which exactly resembles the idea I have just formed. Also, I have had a breathtaking impression of Paris from the steps of Sacré Coeur, but I cannot now form an idea which exactly resembles that impression. So there are ideas without exactly resembling impressions and impressions without exactly resembling ideas.<sup>136</sup>

Hume is aware of some counter arguments against the primacy of the force and vivacity of impressions; he assumes that they are states of illness; that they are examples of an unbalanced vivacity of impressions and ideas.<sup>137</sup> He holds that, besides the exceptions, the general rule is that the vividness of impression is

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<sup>134</sup> Barry Stroud, *Hume*, London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, 19.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> THN, 1, 2.

always greater than idea.<sup>138</sup> Nonetheless, there can be situations in which this is not the case. D. G. C. MacNabb holds that “such cases are not so rare and not necessarily abnormal” as Hume assumes; he exemplifies the contrary situations in this manner:

Suppose you are in a boat at sea, visibility is bad, and you are straining your eyes to pick up a certain buoy in a certain direction. A faint speck appears for a moment in your field of vision; did you see something raised on the top of a distant wave or did you only imagine it? Or suppose you are anxious to know if you are in the process of falling in love with Miss X. A perception occurs of which you ask whether it be a rather vivid representation of the feeling of jealousy of Mr. Y, or that very passion itself in a low degree. How are you to tell which it is?<sup>139</sup>

Along the same lines Stroud imagines a detective who inspects cautiously the scene of a murder and finds nothing unusual at the room. Later on, while the detective is reflecting about what he has seen there, he is struck by the fact that what was unusual at the scene was the poker standing on the left hand side of the fireplace because the victim was right-handed. Stroud attacks Hume with this example:

Given the theory of ideas, it would seem that the detective had a perception before the mind when he was just thinking about the fireplace and the poker in their absence that struck his mind or consciousness with a greater degree of force and liveliness than did the

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<sup>138</sup> In the very first pages of *Treatise* he writes: “Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions, As on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. But notwithstanding this near resemblance in a few instances, they are in general so very different, that no-one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference.” THN,1,2.

<sup>139</sup> D.G. C. MacNabb, *David Hume, His Theory of Knowledge and Morality*, London: Hutchinson’s University Library, 1951, 24.

perception he had before the mind when he originally perceived them.  
And such things seem to happen often.<sup>140</sup>

Hume's separation of feeling and thinking does not show the distinction clearly according to both Bennett and Stroud. However Stephen Everson discusses that "the terms 'force' and 'vivacity' do not mean what the traditional interpretation requires that they mean."<sup>141</sup> For him these are "causal concepts."<sup>142</sup> It is held that Everson believes that force and vivacity in Hume's terminology should be understood as "exclusively functional" rather than "phenomenological." For Everson, Hume does not intend to explain the difference between feeling and thinking; he just wants to show the distinction between impressions and ideas. According to him, the difference between feeling and thinking does not need any explanation since it is abundantly clear, as Hume puts it:

A man in a fit of anger, is actuated in a very different manner from one who only thinks of that emotion. If you tell me, that any person is in love, I easily understand your meaning, and form a just conception of his situation; but never can mistake that conception for the real disorders and agitations of the passion.<sup>143</sup>

At first sight, Everson's contention seems plausible, but what Hume says in his words reveals a clear distinction between feeling and thinking. The distinction between ideas and impressions also implies the distinction between feeling and thinking. Furthermore, Everson's objection lacks textual support, since in the very beginning of his book Hume explicitly mentions this distinction:

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<sup>140</sup> Stroud, *Hume*, 29.

<sup>141</sup> Stephen Everson, "The Difference between Feeling and Thinking", *Mind, New Series*, 97: 401-413, 1988, 406.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> THU, 1, 16.

Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking. The common degrees of these are easily distinguished; tho' it is not impossible but in particular instances they may very nearly approach to each other. Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions, As on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. But notwithstanding this near resemblance in a few instances, they are in general so very different, that no-one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference.<sup>144</sup>

Stroud's example relates to sensation and MacNabb's to emotions. Yet, the stress is not on their being sensation or emotion but rather having different force and vivacity just as Hume supposes in the above quotation. Everson does not mention any difference in force and vivacity as Stroud and MacNabb emphasize. Everson includes feeling and thinking in the same mental category with the mere difference of motivation. However, Hume does not — as Stroud and MacNabb interpret — intend (only) to show that they are the same mental type but also that they differ in emphasizes the difference of force and vivacity. Everson goes on to defend Hume against Stroud by asserting that Stroud is mistaken when he assumes that a lively idea should be an impression. However, Stroud does not make any new assumption regarding impression, rather he is merely using Hume's definition in respect to force and vivacity: while the detective struck the idea of the leaning poker more vividly than the first impression of it. It is Hume who assumes the difference of impression and idea considering the degree of intensity of feeling. Stroud derives this conclusion from Humean principles not from his own thoughts.

Hume's strict empiricist tendencies and insistence on Newtonian method lead to inconsistencies. Robert Solomon argues that "Hume's analysis of emotion is wholly derivative of his more general epistemological theories, with considerable

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<sup>144</sup> THN, 1, 2.

damage to his view of emotions.”<sup>145</sup> For this reason beginning from Norman Kemp Smith’s interpretations, most interpreters of Hume emphasize his naturalistic side more than his empiricism. The new Hume debate is shaped around his naturalism. However this endeavour is not sufficient to eliminate the defects of Hume’s theory, because he draws the lines of his new science in the light of his empiricist thoughts. It is obvious from the structure of his *Treatise — Book 1* through 3 treating understanding passion and morality, respectively — that Hume’s epistemology provides the ground for his moral theory. Therefore we cannot disregard the defects of empiricism in his theory.

### **3.2 THE PROBLEMS CONCERNING HUMAN NATURE IN A METAPHYSICAL ACCOUNT**

The above mentioned applications are not the only applications of the Newtonian method to moral philosophy; there are some further studies, for example the virtue ethicist advice to stop doing philosophy and try to do moral psychology which would be more scientific. The main aim of those philosophers is to maintain an objective standard in understanding human nature. They hold if a standard is reached, problems can be solved easily.

However, the difficulty is in defining and narrowing the subject matter, which, in this sense is, humans with all their embedded issues. Hume is aware of this fact and he says:

I answer this objection, by pleading guilty, and by confessing that my intention never was to penetrate into the nature of bodies, or explain the secret causes of their operations. For besides that this belongs not to my present purpose, I am afraid, that such an enterprise is beyond the reach

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<sup>145</sup> R. C. Solomon, “The Logic of Emotion” *Nous*, 11: 41–49, 1977, 41.

of human understanding, and that we can never pretend to know body otherwise than by those external properties, which discover themselves to the senses.<sup>146</sup>

Nonetheless, he thinks that there is a possibility to derive principles regarding our perceptions and impressions and this is the aim of his philosophy.

But at present I content myself with knowing perfectly the manner in which objects affect my senses, and their connections with each other, as far as experience informs me of them. This suffices for the conduct of life; and this also suffices for my philosophy, which pretends only to explain the nature and causes of our perceptions, or impressions and ideas.<sup>147</sup>

Capaldi, Laird and others who focus on the Newtonian aspect of Hume's philosophy rightly argue that Hume attempts to construct a system depending on isolations and generalizations. I contend that there is no real problem in setting up — as Hume does — such a philosophy. However, the problem is the degradation of reason to the position of slave. Moreover an account of human nature, which regards the observation of the body without ascribing meaning, does not suffice for conduct of life. To explicate the insufficiency of Hume's idea of human nature, I aim to show how one metaphysical aspect, namely the meaning problem, of human being which is left out by Hume.

### **3.2.1 The Look of “the Conduct of Life”**

This section, discusses problems regarding Humean maxims from a different point of view. Hume holds that by staying within the limits of sense perceptions one can conduct his/her life. This raises the question: Do we really conduct our lives depending merely on sense perceptions?

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<sup>146</sup> THN, 1, 64.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

An initial response might reasonably be: Yes of course; we need food, cloth, reproduction, shelter and so on... To conduct a life by providing these needs the information gathered from experience suffices, as Hume holds.

Therefore, it is easy to live a life which will provide what you and your kinship class need. This is similar to a very easy Hutchesonian type of mathematical formulation: There is the input; apply the process; and here is the output. What a happy life! So, why are there wars, poverty, and sorrow? Is it because of supernatural thoughts, as Hume assumes; or are there some other demons other than mysticism? So let us change the question; is it sufficient to live a life according merely to the natural affinities? The response to this question may be an affirmative one as well; if it is, then what is the thing my nature dictates to one to do? The problem arises at this stage. The inevitable range of questions concerning the meaning of being human appears beyond the observable nature of humankind.

Derek Freeman summarises the basic questions of the conduct of life in history as such:

‘The question of questions’ for we humans, ‘the problem which underlies all others, and is more deeply interesting than any other’ is, T. H. Huxley declared in 1863, ‘the ascertainment of the place which Man occupies in nature’ and of his relation to the universe of things.’ Whence have we come’ and ‘to what goal are we tending’: these are the questions, declared Huxley, ‘which present themselves anew and with undiminished interest’ to every human being born into the world.<sup>148</sup>

Advocating Darwin and evolution to the degree of being nicknamed as “Darwin’s bulldog,” Huxley states the most important questions to be answered regarding the place of humans in nature are those the goals of humanity. These are the great and

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<sup>148</sup> Derek Freeman, *Dilthey's Dream: Essays on Human Nature and Culture*. Australia: Pandanus Books, 2001, 61.

enduring anthropological questions according to Freeman. However, in my point of view, they are indeed a question of meaning. Freeman notes that:

They were echoed in 1897 by Paul Gauguin in his moving painting of Polynesians (now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston) on which he wrote (in French): ‘Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?’ And, they were reiterated in Gustav Mahler’s haunting words at the outset of this present century, ‘Whence do we come? Whither does our road take us?’<sup>149</sup>

Examples other than Freeman’s abound: Ernst Bloch in his introduction to his book on hope asks: “Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going to? What are we waiting for? What awaits us?”<sup>150</sup> Ayn Rand the well-known objectivist at one of her speeches to a graduation class of Military Academy students begins her speech by telling a brief story about an astronaut who lost his way to the world and who crashed his spaceship on an unknown planet. The three questions — she supposes — to come to the astronaut’s mind after regaining consciousness would be: “Where am I? How can I discover it? What should I do?”<sup>151</sup> She claims that most people live a life struggling to evade these three questions which shape human thought, feeling, and action whether consciously or unconsciously. For her, by the time most people believe they know the answers; the only trouble is that they usually experience a causeless fear and an undefined guilt from which they cannot escape. She believes that the trouble arises from the unanswered three questions, which are included in the scope of philosophy. She

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>150</sup> Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope. Vol.1.* (trans) Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, Paul Knight, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991, 3.

<sup>151</sup> Ayn Rand, “Philosophy: Who Needs It?” Address to the Graduating Class of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. March 6, 1974. <http://gos.sbc.edu/r/rand.html>. Accessed in 15 October 2006.

assumes that before ethics, one should solve the problems of metaphysics and knowledge. She contends that:

Before you come to ethics, you must answer the questions posed by metaphysics and epistemology: Is man a rational being, able to deal with reality—or is he a helplessly blind misfit, a chip buffeted by the universal flux? Are achievement and enjoyment possible to man on earth—or is he doomed to failure and distaste? Depending on the answers, you can proceed to consider the questions posed by ethics: What is good or evil for man—and why? Should man’s primary concern be a quest for joy—or an escape from suffering? Should man hold self-fulfilment—or self-destruction—as the goal of his life? Should man pursue his values—or should he place the interests of others above his own? Should man seek happiness—or self-sacrifice?<sup>152</sup>

Similarly, there is a famous eastern fable about a traveller who is fleeing an enraged beast and who seeks refuge in a dry well without first checking to see if the well itself is a safe haven. At the bottom of the well is a horrifying dragon with hungry mouth agape. To escape the beast below the man takes hold on a twig growing out of a crack in the well wall. Surveying his surroundings he notices that two mice are gnawing at the twig and realises that falling into the dragon's mouth is inevitable. At the same time he sees some drops of honey on the leaves of the branch and reaches out with his tongue to lick them. However, he finds no solace in the honey that formerly gave him pleasure, as his unavoidable doom at the hands of the mice and dragon is all he can think about.<sup>153</sup>

When looming fate is taken into consideration, does this not result in the unanswerable truth of all humans? This question is asked by prominent names like

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Paul Edwards, “Meaning and Value of Life” in Paul Edwards (ed) *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* New York, London: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, Collier–Macmillan Ltd., 1967, 467-477, 468.

Tolstoy (in his Confessions). Do we not find ourselves one day in a place similar to the one in the fable without understanding anything?<sup>154</sup> Is it not true that there is at least some pleasure to help us survive? The natural world provides all the creature comforts that humans require. Nature is beautiful, flowers are joyful, there is magnificence on sea, trees give fruits... all of them may sound pleasant to the ear, but a question arises; why are we here? Where are we going? And, what will happen at the end? Who knows?

These are the metaphysical questions which I hold — like the philosophers mentioned above — should be answered before the other questions concerning human being are asked.

Possibly the reason which causes people to ask “Why do I exist?” is a habit of living in a causal environment which is Hume’s supposition. When the sea is wavy, people ask “Why is the sea wavy?” and they get the explanation: “Because there is a difference of pressure between two regions, so there arises a draught which forms a wind and the wind causes the water to get wavy.” Whether it is natural or not, in every event human beings are used to asking for an explanation to the phenomena surrounding them. To elaborate, we can refer to “The formula of the concrete”<sup>155</sup> invented by Claude Levi-Strauss. He mentions this formula in his book *The Savage Mind*. For him, the mind requires order which can be achieved through giving a place and role to everything which forms its environment.<sup>156</sup> For example, in a primitive African tribe, a green leaf is a symbol of evil while the opposite is true in another tribe. This is not because the green leaf actually

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss. *Yaban Düşünce*, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, (trans) Tahsin Yücel, 2000.

<sup>156</sup> Hume also emphasizes the need for order as love of order in human nature.

includes that meaning but because people give that role to it as they need a network of relations and order. It is clear that while people tend to give a role, a meaning even to leaves; they cannot do without asking “What is the role of life?” or without giving a role to it, also.

According to Hume, it is a habitual thing which arises from the natural affinity of humans for order and uniformity. Hence, Hume does not pay attention to these kinds of metaphysical questions about the meaning of life or regarding the reason why we should live and for what.

Perhaps it is true that there is no causal relation other than our habits regarding constant conjunctions and the only way through morality is the science of man, which I have demonstrated in preceding sections. Is it possible to live a life, rather moral life, merely with creature comfort without searching the questions of meaning? Like Annette Baier, I argue, in terms of meaning, for Hume’s ethics based on human nature, “metaphysics is an important absentee”<sup>157</sup>. According to Hume we can never reach the knowledge of how bread nourishes the body even if we know what to eat and when to eat and even we are certain about the fact that bread nourishes us.<sup>158</sup> He claims we know how to move our hands but we do not know how it moves, we do not have the detailed knowledge of the muscles and their mechanism.<sup>159</sup> Moreover we do not know why our body moves only after we think or intend to move it and we do not know why our body follows the commands of our thoughts. These explanations are given to justify his distant position to metaphysics. To use an analogy in order to analyse this assumption,

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<sup>157</sup> Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, 22.

<sup>158</sup> Hume’s supposition about nourishment and muscles is short-sighted, as today’s science has come to a point to explain the nourishment process in detail.

<sup>159</sup> EHU, 33.

take the well-known example of driving a car. Most drivers are ignorant of the mechanical workings of a car, but this does not prevent them from driving. Here we have not strayed from Hume's idea. Humean process of morality is similar to this; but the problem arises when the car is out of order. In the case of the car the driver takes it to the mechanic, who knows the inner processes of that car to be repaired. But what will a human being do when he/she has problems with the inner or deeper processes which Hume disregards as they are unobservable? By whom and how can the problems of our veiled nature be solved?

### **3.2.2 Animal Nature**

Hume's anti-rationalist tendencies towards moral issues can be seen in the parts of his books allotted to animals. However, this issue has not been examined in detail by Hume's interpreters; I think the deficiencies in both his observations and his poor analogies cause this lack of interest. In this section I want to argue with Hume's view of morality in respect to animals for doing so provides great insight into Hume's examination of the dominance of reason.

Animal nature has been an important criterion for defining the place of human in nature. Locating humanity in his the prominent place is usually done by comparison and contrast with other things in nature especially between human and animal. There is a tradition about stating moral theories regarding animal reason and its moral and legal standing dating back to ancient times.

Pythagoras is mainly accepted as the first philosopher to defend animal rights. It is reported in much of the writings about Pythagoras that once when he was present at the beating of a puppy; he pitied it and said "Stop! Cease your beating, because this is really the soul of a man who was my friend: I recognized, it as I heard it cry

aloud.”<sup>160</sup> He advises respect for animals, not in the sense of today’s understanding of moral status but because he believes in the transmigration of souls between human and animals. He asserts that since the souls can transmigrate from human to animals in order not to kill an ancestor people should not kill animals. He is known to have rejected eating animal foods. It is not easy to know whether Pythagoras’ theory of transmigration of souls causes his defence of animal rights or vice versa. In any case, it is clear that he is the one who advocates animal rights in ancient time.

Aristotle is mentioned as defining human as rational animal, and arguing that animals rank far below humans. For him only humans have intellect and reason. On the other hand, one of Aristotle’s students Theophrastus defends that animal can reason, sense and feel like humans do and therefore abstains from eating meat. In the *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare* it is underlined that “Unlike his teacher Aristotle, who held that animals could not form part of the moral community because they were incapable of rational friendship, Theophrastus maintained that animals enjoy kinship with humans and therefore deserve moral solicitude.”<sup>161</sup> He is interpreted as modern because of his view that “we owe animals justice, and also that it is wrong to sacrifice animals and, explicitly, to eat meat.”<sup>162</sup>

Aristotle’s position — that humans are rational and animals not; thus their moral status is different — is more commonly accepted. Under the impact of Aristotle

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<sup>160</sup> Joseph Owens, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts., 1959, 31.

<sup>161</sup> Marc Bekoff and Carron A. Meaney, *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998, 333.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

and Christianity St. Thomas Aquinas, “held that in the created hierarchy that God had made animals were the intellectual inferiors of humans and were made essentially for human use.”<sup>163</sup> Thomas Aquinas thinks that we should be charitable to animals in order not to carry cruel habits over into our behaviour towards human beings. This tendency is also accepted by some other philosophers like Locke and Kant. Kant argues that animals have minds, but they lack reason. According to him animals have no moral status. Marc Bekoff and Carron A. Meaney write “Immanuel Kant viewed animals as without self-consciousness and thereby declared them to be inherently unworthy of moral concern.”<sup>164</sup> According to their view

The rights view takes Kant’s position a step further than Kant himself. The rights view maintains that those animals raised to be eaten and used in laboratories, for example, should be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means. Indeed, like humans, these animals have a basic moral right to be treated with respect, something we fail to do whenever we use our superior physical strength and general know-how to inflict harms on them in pursuit of benefits for humans.<sup>165</sup>

Descartes believes that animals are mere automata and lack all mental capacity. According to him, animals’ acts are instinctual, natural and mechanical. His views on animals depend on the lack of capacity in forming language.<sup>166</sup> He contends that:

Doubtless when the swallow come in spring, they operate like clocks. The actions of honeybees are of the same nature, and the discipline of

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 20.

cranes in flight, and of apes in fighting... All (animal motions) originate from the corporeal and mechanical principle<sup>167</sup>

Therefore generally “the denial of consciousness is associated with René Descartes, who argued that animals were strictly material bodies, obeying the laws of mechanical physics.”<sup>168</sup> In time, however, the subject of the placement of humans with respect to animals in terms of reason and the soul has entered a different phase; today to think or write about animals is for the sake of animals. There has been a movement towards animal rights.

Jeremy Bentham brings a new perspective to the issue from a utilitarian point. Bentham’s new perspective depends on the capacity to feel pain rather than to reason. He argues that the ability to suffer should be taken as the central point of the problem. He assumes that if we accept the ability to reason as the sole criterion of our behaviour, this would result in applying the same attitude applied to animals towards many people who have mental problems. Hume also points out this problem. For him, because of the reason-criterion most people treat babies and idiots like animals and this is a fault. Bentham offers a change of perspective from “reason” to “suffering”

What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month old. But

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<sup>167</sup> Rene Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss, Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989, 17.

<sup>168</sup> Bekoff and Meaney, *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights*, 24.

suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason?, nor Can they talk? but, *Can they suffer?*<sup>169</sup>

He asks humanity to broaden its limits to protect any sensitive being which breathes. Humanity's concern with the rights of animals especially came to a prominence in 1970s. The problem regarding animals has reappeared as whether the moral status of animals is necessarily inferior to that of human beings. Richard Ryder used the phrase "speciesism".<sup>170</sup> He uses this term in discussing definitions of value which aim to benefit the members of only a single special species. Steven Wise claims that in order to avoid speciesism "we must identify some objective, rational, legitimate, and nonarbitrary quality possessed by every *Homo sapiens* that is possessed by no nonhuman that should entitle all of us."<sup>171</sup> When Peter Singer holds that all animals are equal he is "urging that we extend to other species the basic principle of equality that most of us recognise should be extended to all members of our own species."<sup>172</sup> Singer's fame resulted from his analogy between women's liberation and animal liberation in his book *Animal Liberation*. He still works with this issue, giving seminars and panels about animal rights and advises veganism. His books are a source of controversy. His appointment to DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton in 1999 caused protests from conservative

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<sup>169</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1996, 283.

<sup>170</sup> Richard D. Ryder, "All beings that feel pain deserve human rights", *The Guardian*, August 6, 2005.

<sup>171</sup> S. M. Wise, "One Step at a Time" in C.R. Sunstein and M.C. Nussbaum (eds), *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 27.

<sup>172</sup> Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal" in James Rachels and Stuart Rachels (eds) *The Right Thing to Do*, New York: McGrawHill, 166-177, 2007, 167.

groups.<sup>173</sup> Despite much protest animal rights, under the new appellation the Animal Liberation Movement, has attained much wider acceptance.

In this section, I will examine how Hume places the rationality of human and animal in his new science of man. He has two aims: first to state his theory about reason, and second, to emphasize his moral theory with respect to animal reason. Hume uses animals both for stating his theory about reason and for his moral theory in the spectator's eyes.

It is a commonplace of Hume's period that an account of human nature has to distinguish the nature of humans from animals. Hume discusses the issue by similarities and differences between animals and humans. He aims to state the position of reason and sentiment in morality. However in doing this he does not eliminate the ambiguity regarding the meaning of reason and sentiment in his philosophy. Firstly, I will mention the definition of reason by focusing on its functions stated in Hume's theory. In *Treatise Book I* Hume divides human reason into three as:

*from knowledge, from proofs, and from probabilities.* By knowledge, I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas. By proofs, those arguments, which are deriv'd from the relation of cause and effect, and which are entirely free from doubt and uncertainty. By probability, that evidence, which is still attended with uncertainty.<sup>174</sup>

However in *Book 3* he claims reason "is the discovery of truth or falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of

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<sup>173</sup> Singer, "All Animals are Equal" in James Rachels and Stuart Rachels (eds) *The Right Thing to Do*, 166.

<sup>174</sup> THN, 1, 124.

ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact.”<sup>175</sup> After this definition he underlines two ways how reason has influence on human conduct

It has been observ’d, that reason, in a strict and philosophical sense, can have influence on our conduct only after two ways: Either when it excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it; or when it discovers the connexion of causes and effects, so as to afford us means of exerting any passion.<sup>176</sup>

Hume means causal inferences when he uses the term “reason” or “understanding,” hence reason is the faculty of reasoning. It is commonly accepted to name these two functions of reason as demonstrative and non-demonstrative. The former is for discovering the relations of ideas and the latter one is for discovering the matters of facts and causal reasoning.<sup>177</sup> He assigns no demonstrative function to reason in animals.<sup>178</sup> According to Hume the reason of animals is of the second type which depends on experience.<sup>179</sup> He thinks most animals can understand (here understanding refers to recognizing the experiences) and can make simple causal inferences. However there is a difference in capacities

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<sup>175</sup> THN, 3, 458.

<sup>176</sup> THN, 3, 459.

<sup>177</sup> Hume uses the terms as “demonstrative or probable reasonings” for the dual function of reason in THN, 1, 163. In the following pages he defines reason as “nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations.” THN, 1, 179. Also in THU he writes “ALL the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, Relations of Ideas, and Matters of Fact.” THU, 25.

<sup>178</sup> In THN, 1, 178 Hume notes that “Beasts certainly never perceive any real connexion among objects”.

<sup>179</sup> First, it seems evident, that animals as well as men learn many things from experience, and infer that the same events will always follow from the same causes. By this principle they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and gradually, from their birth, treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, &c., and of the effects which result from their operation. THU, 105.

of the two groups. Human capacity of intelligence stems mostly from experience, memory and causal inference which, therefore, is greater than the animals.

In all these cases, we may observe, that the animal infers some fact beyond what immediately strikes his senses; and that this inference is altogether founded on past experience, while the creature expects from the present object the same consequences, which it has always found in its observation to result from similar objects.<sup>180</sup>

According to Hume it is an evident truth that animals have thoughts and reason just like human being and he says in *Of Animals and Reasons*:

Next to the ridicule of denying an evident truth, is that of taking much pains to defend it; and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endow'd with thought and reason as well as men. The arguments are in this case so obvious, that they never escape the most stupid and ignorant.<sup>181</sup>

He holds that animals can understand and reason but at an inferior level. His main point in defence of this idea concerns self preservation which is mainly shaped by keeping away from pain and attaining pleasure. He declares that our actions for reaching ends are conducted by reason and we are conscious of this. Therefore he assumes that other creatures that are performing similar actions, and directed by similar ends, make us believe the existence of a similar cause. He thinks:

The resemblance betwixt the actions of animals and those of men is so entire in this respect, that the very first action of the first animal we shall please to pitch on, will afford us an incontestable argument for the present doctrine.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> THN, 1, 176, THU, 105-106.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

He is sure about the resemblance between the actions of animals and human beings and tries to prove this with simple observations. Moreover he makes some derivations from his observations. He holds that if our external actions are similar to those of animals, then their internal actions are similar, too. Therefore he assumes if our internal actions resemble each other, then the causes will resemble each other also because the causes provide the actions. So the causes which are derived from the same reasons should also resemble each other. Thus, when explaining common mental operations of human beings and animals the same hypothesis would be applied to both.

When any hypothesis, therefore, is advanced to explain a mental operation, which is common to men and beasts, we must apply the same hypothesis to both; and as every true hypothesis will abide this trial, so I may venture to affirm, that no false one will ever be able to endure it.<sup>183</sup>

He constructs analogies between humans and animals in order to state the similarities both in their nature and in the method of explaining their nature. It is obvious that the resemblance of our external actions may be a clue about our internal actions, however the claim of applying the same hypothesis to the both, implies some implicit assumptions. I argue that there is no observation which can provide us with the undeniable assumption that where there is a similarity in the external process of a mechanism there should be a similarity in their inner action also. Besides, Hume's explanations about moral judgement depends on an "internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal"<sup>184</sup> in humankind. It is only by this internal sense that approval or disapproval of actions can be made.

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<sup>183</sup> THN, 1, 177.

<sup>184</sup> EPM, 173.

However, animals lack this internal sense, which is the “principle of humanity”<sup>185</sup> and “the foundation of morality.”<sup>186</sup> Therefore, I argue, through the similarities of external actions, Hume himself shows the distinction in internal sense; so his assertion that we can apply same hypothesis fails.

Among Hume’s interpreters there is debate as to whether Hume positions animals and humans in the same scale with only a difference of degree or he considers they have a difference of kind. For Hume, many philosophical explanations suffer from the fault of being so overly sophisticated that they “exceed the capacity”<sup>187</sup> of not only animals, but also “children and the common people in our own species”<sup>188</sup>. He asserts that philosophers are making “the same fault” regarding the actions of the mind when considering animals. In order to avoid this fault he makes a distinction between “vulgar nature” and “nature which includes extra-ordinary instances of sagacity.”<sup>189</sup> For the vulgar nature, he gives the example of a dog’s avoiding fire, escaping from strangers and yards, and caring for his master. He exemplifies the second kind of nature with a bird’s choosing a suitable place and materials for her nest, and sitting upon her eggs for a due time, in a suitable

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<sup>185</sup> EPM, 272.

<sup>186</sup> EPM, 273.

<sup>187</sup> But though animals learn many parts of their knowledge from observation, there are also many parts of it, which they derive from the original hand of nature; which much exceed the share of capacity they possess on ordinary occasions; and in which they improve, little or nothing, by the longest practice and experience. THU, 108.

<sup>188</sup> Animals, therefore are not guided in these inferences by reasoning: neither are children; neither are the generality of mankind, in their ordinary actions and conclusions: neither are philosophers themselves, who, in all the active parts of life, are, in the main, the same with the vulgar, and are governed by the same maxims. THU, 106.

<sup>189</sup> THN, 1, 177.

season, comparing this with a chemist taking all the necessary precautions of their trade.<sup>190</sup>

He claims that the reasoning of the vulgar nature of animals is not different from that of human nature. They are both founded on the same principles which require the presence of the immediate impressions on their memory or senses. The foundation of both judgements is those impressions. Hume holds that the difference concerning causal inference, which is a function of reason, between human and animals, is one of “degrees of the same faculty,”<sup>191</sup> which, according to him, “sets such an infinite difference betwixt one man and another.”<sup>192</sup> On the other hand the difference concerning demonstrative reason is not a matter of degree. Hume does not attribute animals with any degree of demonstrative knowledge or any ability to extend their thoughts and imagination through past and future. T. L. Beauchamp holds that from Humean perspective humans are unique in culture, politics, law, and religion. From these dissimilarities Beauchamp assumes that Hume draws a line separating humans from animals and for him this indicates that “there exist specific differences in kind, not merely differences in degree”<sup>193</sup> in his system. He contends that: “Hume must hold a weaker position than he would if he could carry his degree-of-difference analysis into the moral domain.”<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> THN, 3, 610.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> T. L. Beauchamp, “Hume on the Nonhuman Animal”, *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 24: 322-335, 1999, 327.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

Making analogies is a common method especially if one cannot conduct experiments regarding the subject-matter directly. Besides this, analogy is sometimes used to strengthen an assumed supposition. In fact, arguments about analogy still continue to this day: some thinkers assume that argument by analogy is especially useful in inductive logic (e.g. P.R. Wilson);<sup>195</sup> whereas some ignore or dismiss it out of hand (e.g. Mario Bunge).<sup>196</sup> Wilson mentions in his article that “those who do discuss the problem generally create the impression that the argument by analogy is not only logically unsound but almost intellectually dishonest, since it appeals to the emotions rather than the mind”<sup>197</sup> This paper does not intend to discuss the overall question of the usefulness or legitimacy of analogies, except to say that analogies are sometimes helpful to clarify issues even though some argue against the worth of analogy as a methodological tool. Wilson asserts that analogy can be a useful method “under carefully defined conditions”<sup>198</sup> Furthermore it is held that “the argument from analogy” cannot be assumed to be usable with every type of subject-matter.”<sup>199</sup> Meiland argues that:

one must take some conclusions concerning that subject-matter which do seem to be rendered probable by the existence of some analogy in each case and directly verify those conclusions. Once this is done, the

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<sup>195</sup> See P.R. Wilson, “On the Argument by Analogy” *Philosophy of Science*, 31: 34-39, 1964.

<sup>196</sup> See Mario Bunge, “The place of induction in science” *Philosophy of Science*, 27: 262-270, 1960 and “Analogy in Quantum Theory: From Insight to Nonsense”, *Philosophy of Science*, 1968, 18: 265-286.

<sup>197</sup> Wilson, “On the Argument by Analogy”, 34.

<sup>198</sup> J. W. Meiland, “Analogy, Verification and Other Minds” *Mind, New Series*, 75: 564-568, 1966, 564.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

argument form can be justifiably regarded as usable with respect to that subject-matter.<sup>200</sup>

Therefore for Meiland, if analogy is acceptable as a method one should at least follow two criteria to set a reliable argument from analogy which means it should not be arbitrary.

Following the lead of Norman Kemp Smith, most interpreters have emphasized Hume's naturalism more than his empiricism. From a naturalist perspective, I hold, deriving strong analogies from the animal world can be very important and persuading. So Hume's appeal to analogies from the animal world is at least plausible in his system. However, the analogies which Hume points out from animal world regarding the relation between reason and morality are really not very persuasive and sometimes verge on the bizarre. Take, for instance, Hume's analogy between parricides in humans and "parricide" in trees, which he chooses in order to show that morality is not derived from relations.

To put the affair, therefore, to this trial, let us chuse any inanimate object, such as an oak or elm; and let us suppose, that by the dropping of its seed, it produces a sapling below it, which springing up by degrees, at last overtops and destroys the parent tree: I ask, if in this instance there be wanting any relation, which is discoverable in parricide or ingratitude? Is not the one tree the cause of the other's existence; and the latter the cause of the destruction of the former, in the same manner as when a child murders his parent? Tis not sufficient to reply, that a choice or will is wanting. For in the case of parricide, a will does not give rise to any different relations, but is only the cause from which the action is deriv'd; and consequently produces the same relations, that in the oak or elm arise from some other principles. `Tis a will or choice that determines a man to kill his parent; and they are the laws of matter and motion that determine a sapling to destroy the oak, from which it sprung. Here then the same relations have different causes; but still the relations are the same: And as their discovery is not

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

in both cases attended with a notion of immorality, it follows, that that notion does not arise from such a discovery.<sup>201</sup>

Here, the problem of poor analogy is revealed explicitly. What matters in an analogy is how well the analogy mirrors the facts. Here, Hume constructs an analogy between the relation of fathers and siblings, on the one hand, and trees and seeds, on the other. Hume takes the seed falling from a tree as the sibling of that tree, and equates the deterioration of the parent tree as the seedling grows up to a murderous act perpetrated by the seed. He constructs an analogy between the tree-seed and the father-sibling relationship calling them the “very same act.” The two relations that are compared are the natural death of the tree as its seed grows up and the sibling’s intentionally killing his father. It is obviously seen that, if an analogy is made between tree-seed and father-sibling relationship, it should be between the father gradually growing old and dying while the child grows up, rather than any deliberate killing of the father by the child.<sup>202</sup> Therefore, I contend that his conclusion to show that morality does not come from relations fails to be persuasive due to the poor design and choice of his analogy.

Hume is aware of the vicious circle of reason; still he wants to show that morality is neither the discovery nor the production of reason, via an analogy between inbreeding in dogs and incest among humans. He uses this analogy in order to show that if we assume that we can discover morality from actions by our reason we should conclude a similar definition of morality in animals for the same actions in them. He argues in *Treatise*:

But to chuse an instance, still more resembling; I would fain ask any one, why incest in the human species is criminal, and why the very

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<sup>201</sup> THN, 3, 467.

<sup>202</sup> Moreover, there is no causal relation at the third level of causal power in the case of the sapling and tree.

same action and the same relations in animals have not the smallest moral turpitude and deformity? If it be answer'd, that this action is innocent in animals, because they have not reason sufficient to discover its turpitude; but that man, being endow'd with that faculty which *ought* to restrain him to his duty, the same action instantly becomes criminal to him; should this be said, I would reply, that this is evidently arguing in a circle.<sup>203</sup>

I claimed before that the analogies which Hume uses in this subject are really weak. With regard to this issue Stephen R. L. Clark argues that Hume's incest argument is "open to rebuttal."<sup>204</sup> According to him it is so poor that most commentators skip it in silence. First of all Hume makes an error by asserting that the inbreeding of dogs is "the very same act" as incest in humans.<sup>205</sup> Clark states:

If "animal incest" and "human incest" are acts of same kind, then they are equally evil, or equally indifferent. To disapprove of the act when done by dogs would be as silly as approving of assault when performed by whites but not when performed by blacks.<sup>206</sup>

What is more; if we accept these acts as the very same kind, there is still a mistake regarding analogies of the relations from the perspective of humans. He has two classes to compare; animals and humans, the relation is the incest, and the result of incest is evaluated by humans. Hume is standing in the human class and judging in another class. However he should look at the animal class to evaluate what kind of responses are given by animals to incest, in order to state whether animals approve or disapprove it. At this point, it is worth mentioning the study of Jane Goodall

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> R. L. S. Clark, "Hume Animals and Objectivity of Morals", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 35: 117-133, 1985, 117.

<sup>205</sup> This assumption also disproves Beauchamp's assertion of the difference in kind. What is implied by "the very same act" shows no difference in kind.

<sup>206</sup> Clark, "Hume Animals", 118.

and her well-known research on the behaviours of chimpanzees. After thirty years with the chimpanzees of Gombe, she wrote her experiences regarding them. In her book she mentions incest and shows that even chimpanzees abstain from it. She reports:

This led to the most extraordinary series of incidents; Goblin, who was now nineteen years old, suddenly evinced an incestuous sexual interest in his mother.... One day... Goblin approached Melissa and summoned her with vigorous shaking of vegetation. She ignored him at first and then, when he persisted, she threatened him.... Melissa was beside herself with fury and, as Goblin displayed away, she stamped after him, screaming until I thought she would choke. He left then...Goblin's unnatural behaviour utterly changed the relationship between Melissa and her son....After Goblin's attempts to mate his mother, however, relations between them very strained and tense. Not only did they stop spending time together, but Melissa actually seemed to be frightened of her son.<sup>207</sup>

Without making any generalizations about animals on this issue, it is nevertheless clear that while incest is not seen as evil by some animals such as dogs, still other animals, even in the wild; do not seem to approve of it. Goodall mentions some more examples one of which concerns cannibalism in chimpanzees. She writes:

Passion approached to within ten yards, then stood staring at the tiny infant. Gilka instantly began to scream loudly, looking back and forth from Passion to the big males. As though they understood what was going on, the males charged over and, one after the other, attacked Passion.<sup>208</sup>

Obviously she does not mention any obligation yet the help from males to the attacked mother against the cannibalistic assault of the other female shows that (at least some) chimpanzees do not tolerate cannibalism.

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<sup>207</sup> Jane Goodall, *Through a Window*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, 144.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

I will state one more example from *The Herring Gull's World*. Niko Tinbergen reports that: "Herring Gulls are monogamous. This monogamy is very strict indeed. We have observed several times how stray birds... tried to "seduce" already mated birds. In no case was such a bird accepted."<sup>209</sup> This behaviour clearly states that the animal world has its rights and wrongs in their way of understanding, of course, not in the way human do.

Also pertinent to this, Clark mentions some kinds of deformity which results from inbreeding. He quotes from Leonard Williams the deformities of inbreeding in dogs: "The small terrier is suffering from dislocation of the eye...A number of dachshunds are becoming paralysed as a result of spinal trouble, and toy poodles are prone to a slipping kneecap. All this is due to unscrupulous inbreeding"<sup>210</sup>

Clark concludes from the awful results that: "inbreeding is indeed an evil"<sup>211</sup>. Hume's fault is taking the actions into consideration from a human perspective which mean inbreeding in dogs is not taken into consideration. I argue that Hume could have had the right to evaluate the action from a human standpoint if he had assessed the results of action in terms of environmental concern. Hume misses these points and goes on with his assertion linking it to the degradation of reason again. He insists that

before reason can perceive this turpitude, the turpitude must exist; and consequently is independent of the decisions of our reason, and is their object more properly than their effect. According to this system, then, every animal, that has sense, and appetite, and will; that is, every

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<sup>209</sup> Niko Tinbergen, *The Herring Gull's World*, New York: Harper&Row, Publishers, 1971, 102.

<sup>210</sup> Clark, "Hume Animals", 121.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

animal must be susceptible of all the same virtues and vices, for which we ascribe praise and blame to human creatures.<sup>212</sup>

Hume holds that men and animals are similar in the incestuous relation in spite of the fact that they are different in moral character. He thinks that reason is essential neither to set moral rules nor to live in accordance with morality. His main endeavour is to show how reason has an inferior status in moral understanding. From this passage Knut Erik Tranøy contends that Hume has assumed that: “whatever is discovered by reason must be independent of reason for its existence.”<sup>213</sup> However, Tranøy holds that there is no necessity to reject the notion that reason could be able to discover its own effects. Hume’s assumption is that humans have sufficient reason to discover the evil character of incest but this implies that immoral character must antecedently exist. According to Tranøy this argument does not eliminate the possibility that the moral turpitude of animal incest can still exist although no animal could discover it. Tranøy explicitly points out that Hume’s assumption regarding reason in respect to morality is contradictory. Firstly, Hume draws the line between human reason and animal reason with respect to the degrees. He then attributes no moral understanding to animals and no issue for reason and finally claims that we neither discover nor produce morality from reason. Therefore, argues Tranøy, the significant difference in morality between human and animal must depend on something other than reason otherwise it is hard to account for human morality. Obviously morality is through sympathy and sentiments in humans. Hume holds that animals have sympathy systems like humans. Sympathy is the necessary condition for moral sentiments but it is not sufficient alone. As animals also have sympathy and moral

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<sup>212</sup> THN, 3, 467-8.

<sup>213</sup> K. E. Tranøy, “Hume on Morals Animals and Men”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 56: 94-103 Scandinavian Number, 1959, 96.

sentiments, they must have moral understanding. However, for Tranöy, Hume never attributes morality to animals, so the difference must lie somewhere other than sentiments. According to Tranöy “The capital point is that we could not possibly have this feeling and distinguish it from other feelings of a different nature without some antecedent cognitive operation.”<sup>214</sup> Tranöy argues that Hume’s theory about the analogy between human and animal in morality requires some cognitive operations which contradict the Humean position towards reason. He states that Hume has to appeal to “human reason in order to establish his moral sentiment as a specifically *moral* sentiment distinct from other feelings of pain, pleasure, and, sympathy.”<sup>215</sup> I hold that Hume’s ethical theories are crucially dependent on rational functions in spite of his very contrary assumptions as shown by other interpreters from different perspectives.

Another point is that in Hume’s view, causal relations both for humans and animals are derived from experience of constant conjunction. Both species learn from experience and he gives examples from dogs and horses being able to learn from their owners the actions that call for punishment and reward. Nevertheless, in his article Juan-Carlos Gomez aims to show how the Humean understanding of experience which is based causality is contradicted by scientific observations. He claims:

More surprising is that the monkeys had no direct experience of using knives, dyes or other tools. And... their vicarious experience of seeing human visitors cut food with knives, drink with glasses or dye with paint was very limited, if any at all. It seems that the monkeys have either fabulous capacity for vicarious learning of causal relations in one-off events or... a natural tendency to draw novel causal inferences

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

from their general knowledge of objects including objects they have never handled.<sup>216</sup>

Therefore, for Gomez, it is possible to show that causality is not a kind of relation which is derived from experiences, but may be an implanted ability even in the animal world. Gomez criticises Hume for lacking a naturalist view. As mentioned before, Hume is deemed to be naturalist in moral issues besides his empiricism. Finally, I want to touch on the lack of the attribution of a role or a meaning with regards to Hume's assumption that inbreeding and incest are "the very same acts". Although the relations seem to be same, they are indeed not even similar. Actions become meaningful only with the motivation and intention within them. Their results provide another clue to evaluating them. When a dog copulates with its daughter, as Clark claims, it has no intention to abuse a defenceless infant. There is no negative result such as being shunned by society or self-reprimand. Ascribing a meaning to the acts does not arise from the eyes of the beholder as Hume assumes; what's more, even if incest does not produce such bad results as it does in human society, it is still not accepted in chimpanzee society. Hume in his attempt to exclude metaphysical arguments leaves out the meanings of actions in their particular environments or societies.

Consequently, I contend that, although making analogies from the animal world is a common method in naturalistic ethics since it can be very persuasive, Hume's empiricism is beyond his naturalism in this subject. Actually missed a good opportunity in this regard, he may have been able to construct a more persuasive argument if only he had used a better analogy. In fact, if he had never given these analogies it would be better for him; because these analogies have been seriously attacked and have made his assumptions controversial and defective. Ironically

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<sup>216</sup> Juan-Carlos Gomez, "Animal Cognition: Monkey Looks Contradict Hume", *Current Biology*, 16: R538-R539, 2006, 539.

Hume is very confident: “This argument deserves to be weigh’d, as being, in my opinion, entirely decisive”<sup>217</sup> However, it will not be wrong to assume that Hume’s naturalism is not successful, as Norman Kemp Smith and Howard Mounce hold. In this section, we have seen that Hume has failed to establish a naturalist foundation for his new science of man with respect to animal reason in morality. Further, Hume has also failed as well as in his attempt to release his doctrine from metaphysics by omitting to deal with the problem of meaning.

### **3.3 CONDUCTING EXPERIMENTS FOR THE SAKE OF GENERAL RULES**

In this section I want to challenge Capaldi’s formulation of Hume’s Newtonian method. In the above section I stressed that despite the presence of rival theories, it is generally accepted that Hume’s intention and endeavour was to become the Newton of the social sciences. It is clear that there are some significant distinctions between social and natural sciences in applying the experimental method. First, this paper will give some brief information about the experimental method, then how Hume adapts and applies it to his new science, and finally draw attention to the problems of Hume’s experimental methods considering general rules.

According to Hume the science of man, which is the only solid foundation for other sciences, should be founded on experience and observation (Hume’s experimental method). He bases his moral philosophy upon the assumption that the essence of the mind is equally unknown to us as that of external bodies.

For to me it seems evident that the essence of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise

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<sup>217</sup> THN, 3, 468.

than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations.<sup>218</sup>

However if we formulate the argument of this paragraph, we notice that Hume makes a metaphysical assumption in the way he criticizes his rivals. The above passage contains the following statements:

1. The nature of the mind is unknown
2. The nature of the external bodies is unknown
3. The extent of our ignorance concerning these issues is the same.
4. It is possible to acquire knowledge about the nature of external bodies only through careful and exact experiments, and the observation of effects that result from the application of different conditions and causes upon them.
5. It is possible to acquire knowledge about the nature of the minds only through careful and exact experiments, and through the observation of effects that result from the application of different conditions and causes upon them.

Combined, these statements outline the following argument:

1. The nature of the minds and the nature of external bodies are unknown to an equal extent.
2. It is possible to acquire knowledge about the nature of external bodies only through careful and exact experiments, and through the observation of effects that result from the application of different conditions and causes upon them.

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<sup>218</sup> THN, 1, xvii.

It is possible to acquire knowledge about the nature of minds only through careful and exact experiments, and through the observation of effects that result from the application of different conditions and causes upon them.

This argument as such is not deductively valid. Though, it is possible to make it valid by some slight changes. It can be changed by replacing (1) with

(1a) Similar subjects of inquiry can be known only by the same methods of inquiry, and,

(1b) Minds and external bodies are similar subjects of inquiry.

Even if the argument is made valid, this does not free the entire argument from metaphysical assumption. Since “unknown” becomes a category of knowledge in the third assumption, according to Hume’s reasoning, in order to assert that the extent of this ignorance is the same (“equally unknown”) experience is required. However if there is an experience then it can not be unknown. In order to assume “the essence of mind is unknown” first it must be stated that “the essence of mind does exist” Once the essence of the mind is stated then it is a significant problem to show how one can know the essence of mind does exist. Here the problem becomes a vicious circle. To break down this vicious circle the making of an unobserved assumption as “the essence of mind does exist” is crucial. Hume holds that to have the knowledge of other mind’s existence is not a problem since every idea comes from an impression and every impression arises something that exists.

From this implicit unobserved assumption implanted in his argument he holds that, since they are equally unknowable in character they should both require the use of the careful, exact experiments and observation of those particular effects in order to form any notion of powers and qualities. This assumption is not only unobservable but also unjustifiable. The application of a thought experiment will

help in explicating this. Take that there are two rooms in your office which are never opened to you and you do not know what is in them and you do not know what is happening in them. Therefore it is not possible for you to assert whether they are precisely the same or different from each other the only common thing between them is their being unknowable. Is it justifiable to hold that you can open both of the doors by using the same key as both of them are equally unknown to you? Of course this is a ridiculous assumption which does not deserve in-depth contemplation. Yet it reveals that Hume has made extensive unobserved assumptions in his premises.

On the other hand Hume knows that experimentation is problematic in morality. He underlines that moral philosophers cannot purposefully conduct with premeditation. He offers that because reflection and premeditation can disturb the operation of natural principles we must:

therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.<sup>219</sup>

As an empiricist philosopher he argues that only experience can tell us about the world. The appropriate method is announced by him as a very simple one. He claims his method rejects every system considering arguments that are not derived from experience. The systems he rejects are indeed based on rational philosophical views which he believes paves the way to metaphysics. So, first of all he needs to show why these theories should be consigned to the flames before developing his science of man.

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<sup>219</sup> THN, I, xix.

Hume believes that his system must be based on experimentation rather than a general abstract principle even though he used experimentation he underlines that the other scientific method is more perfect:

we can only expect success, by following the experimental method, and deducing general maxims from a comparison of particular instances. The other scientific method, where a general abstract principle is first established, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and conclusions, may be more perfect in itself, but suits less the imperfection of human nature, and is a common source of illusion and mistake in this as well as in other subjects.<sup>220</sup>

In addition to this problem, Hume holds that “the chief obstacle, therefore, to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences is the obscurity of the ideas and ambiguity of the terms.”<sup>221</sup> Hume uses an empiricist testing method to define the meaning of obscure terms. According to Hume, the problem of definition arises because of a dependence on other known terms. This method of definition results in conventional definitions. For him, this kind of definition is a repetition of philosophical confusions by using the substitutions of the original. Hume’s important assumption is, that: determining cognitive content is possible without using other similar obscure terms.

For this new explanation of definition he proposes some simple tests. He claims to find out what cognitive content is. His test criterion is simple. As Hume’s isolated units are ideas and impressions the first step is to convert the terms into these isolable units. From this Newtonian perspective the associated idea of the term under examination should be found. If it is not possible to find an associated idea this proves that the term contains no content, no matter how pervasively it may appear in philosophy or theology. If you come up with a complex idea, then, he

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<sup>220</sup> EPM, 174.

<sup>221</sup> EHU, 61.

assumes, you should break it down into its components, which are simple ideas. Then you should look at the origin of the idea, which are impressions: the isolated units of the system. For Hume, impressions are “all strong and sensible”<sup>222</sup> by leaving no space for ambiguity. Therefore, they illuminate the ideas which they stem from, and so release them from obscurity. If this process is successfully realized, we reach a definition of the obscure term; and likewise, if this process fails at any point, it shows that the term has no cognitive content, since it can not be traced back an impression. Hume assigns a big role to impressions. Since for him only impressions are observable; they are the border-lines of our minds. According to him, “we need but enquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?*”<sup>223</sup> If we cannot find any, this confirms our suspicion. Otherwise we remove the “dispute, which may arise, concerning their nature and reality.”<sup>224</sup>

It is usually accepted that what makes Hume’s empiricism distinctive is his explanations about definition. Hume sees it in a Newtonian manner as

a new microscope or species of optics, by which, in the moral sciences, the most minute and most simple ideas may be so enlarged as to fall readily under our apprehension, and be equally known with the grossest and most sensible ideas, that can be the object of our enquiry.<sup>225</sup>

By this account Hume wants to set up the rules of morality in an empirical way. However the simplicity of impressions opens some new debates. These will be focused on in the sections which are allotted to moral sentiments and indirect passions.

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<sup>222</sup> EHU, 62.

<sup>223</sup> EHU, 22.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> EHU, 62.

## 3.4 SOME FURTHER PROBLEMS

### 3.4.1 Leaving Out Some Meaning

In this section I want to examine some further problems concerning Hume's experiments. Hume reminds us that we cannot conduct experiments in the science of humans and instead must rely on observation of the every day life. His main aim is to draw the attention to the acting agent. If we can decode the actions of the agent we can infer human nature in respect to our observations. I want to show that observation of action always leaves out some significant part of the meaning of that action. In his analysis of a cultural event, David Parkin notes that: "Since even the most heightened awareness can never at any moment encompass the full significance of an action, there is always some meaning that is left out."<sup>226</sup> This is significant. Therefore any observation from a "we do" perspective will always leave out some meaning of human nature; as a result there is always a veiled part of human nature, which Hume disregards.

In every day life we gather observations. We see people giving donations to the poor, we see people helping the old, and we see people saving animals and things like these. Do these all acts have the same meaning about human nature for us even when we experience the very same events again and again? Take that we see a beggar on the corner of our building and we observe him for hours. We see many different people helping her. Their help makes us feel a kind of approval of their behaviour. Does it really show that the action of the all the people donating have the very same meaning? Imagine three different people who have three different motivations and intentions but only produce one observable action with three

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<sup>226</sup> D. P. Parkin, "Blank Banners and Islamic Consciousness in Zanzibar" in A. P. Cohen and Nigel Rapport (eds) *Questions of Consciousness*, Florence: Routledge 1995, 200.

different meanings. The first donator is a lover who wants to impress his darling by giving her the sense that he is very generous and compassionate; to make an impression on her he gave some money to the beggar. Next comes a mother who is reminded of her daughter far away and so due to an emotive feeling through her daughter's image she gave money to the beggar to whom she has no special feeling towards. The last donator is a young man who found some money while walking and does not want to keep it and gives the money to the beggar. Suppose you are the genius observer who was chosen by Hume: what will you think about giving money to the poor? As a spectator you appreciate the act and can imagine the happiness of the beggar. However, it may be that the beggar did not gain any happiness from the donated money since the man who is facing her to beg will expect her to work harder in future to bring in a similar largesse. The woman is very upset both because she is being abused and forced to be a beggar and because she is abusing helpful people. As complicated as this example might be, it is a far cry from the usual complexity of everyday life for most humans. Making it more complicated still, imagine an unsympathetic observer who feels that begging is shameful and should not be countenanced by society nor supported by the goodwill of passerby. Such an observer will sympathise with a fourth person who goes by and ignores the begging woman. We can observe millions of people doing "the very same act" but can never be sure about the meaning of them even though they are the "very same act". It is not impossible also that sometimes an act has no meaning at all for the person who performs it. As Parkin metaphorically states "even when the banners have captions and slogans written on them, they remain blank, and perhaps inchoate."<sup>227</sup>

Consequently Newton can observe millions of iron molecules by conducting experiments in order to reach some general rules and he can infer that iron expands

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

when heated after his observations and experiments because the isolation of the unit works in his system. However Hume's supposed isolable unit, which is impressions, does not work, since the subject matter of morality is the human, a being that has the ability of imagination: A group of ideas can provide different probable avalanches of ideas in each individual person according to their different capacities of imagination. Thus the observations will always leave out some meaning in respect to the veiled part of human nature. Considering the nebulous way that we produce ideas, the potential for making an error in backward-engineering an entire avalanche of ideas becomes enormous. Performing such a task with any degree of certainty is highly improbable.

### **3.4.2 Drift into failure**

Hume's prior endeavour is to formulate a proper science which will elucidate human nature and thus to discover the most appropriate understanding of morality in the light of Newtonian methods. Newton's method is explained in four steps in the preceding chapter. Briefly these are: isolating the object of analysis, conducting experiments, reaching some general rules, and applying the general rules to other phenomena. I have shown that in Capaldi's term the isolable unit cannot be impressions and ideas in Humean system but the observable and unobservable. Hume mentioned some difficulties about conducting experiments; however he left out some others. In this section I want to touch on some difficulties that were left out by Hume.

One of the primary difficulties of Hume's system lies in the very attempt at applying Newton's method to the analysis of human nature, and this in the end may be of little help in discovering any general perspectives of human nature. For Plato and Aristotle slavery was natural. Cynics hold the idea that the best form of

life is “dog’s life.”<sup>228</sup> Hobbes maintains the egoist tendencies of humans asserting “every man’s end being some good to himself.”<sup>229</sup> Hume thinks barbarians and Africans cannot attain to a culture. For him “there is some reason to think, that all the nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind.”<sup>230</sup> Darwin asserts that humans are a higher form of animal life. In all cases human nature is an important notion and different attitudes of human nature lead to different understanding in moral obligations. However I think even with today’s increased technology and scientific understanding to reach a plausible model of human nature is not easy. Moreover, it needs to be updated. It was once assumed that the heart is vital for a living organism and when it stops beating the existence of that organism comes to an end. Today battery-powered heart devices mean that one can survive when formerly life would have been at an end. An inorganic device helps the organic system. Philosophically there seems to be little problem with this example. However, if science, one day, is able to store the memory of humans in a chip, or extract memory from a disabled brain, our understanding of human and human nature will change. Every bit of knowledge can cause a change. I argue that human nature shades to grasp its full meaning and we still need metaphysics from Aristotle to Hume and Hume to the present.

The problem arises from both our way of forming ideas and the unobservable part of human nature. Hume mentions how our knowledge is gradually enhanced in his

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<sup>228</sup> B.A.G. Fuller, *History of Philosophy*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1945, 116.

<sup>229</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore Politico*, in J. C. A. Gaskin (ed) Oxford World Classics Thomas Hobbes Human Nature and *De Corpore Politico*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 139.

<sup>230</sup> EPML, 20. Also he writes: All the sciences and liberal arts have been imported to us from the south; and it is easy to imagine, that, in the first ardor of application, when excited by emulation and by glory, the few, who were addicted to them, would carry them to the greatest height, and stretch every nerve, and every faculty, to reach the pinnacle of perfection. EPML, 24

section about scepticism of reason in *Book I* regarding the formation of ideas. He shows that common approbation results in confidence to our knowledge which he usually calls as “habits and customs”.

Hume credits assurance of the opinions to life experience. He thinks the differences of people come from the degrees of reason and experience. He states:

’Tis certain a man of solid sense and long experience ought to have, and usually has, a greater assurance in his opinions, than one that is foolish and ignorant, and that our sentiments have different degrees of authority, even with ourselves, in proportion to the degrees of our reason and experience.<sup>231</sup>

However the possibility of error is always there. He believes even in “the man of solid sense and long experience”<sup>232</sup> there is no absolute authority. There is a dread and also a threat of making future errors which is generated by the awareness of the past mistakes such as, for Dekker, it happens in socio-technical systems. Therefore there is also a risk to drift into failure with this subject in our other opinions and knowledge; and the risk comes from the uncertain ways of ideas, and our incomplete knowledge about the limits of the natural capacities of humans.

Drift into failure is a term which is used by Sidney Dekker which he defines as “a slow, incremental movement of systems operations toward the edge of their safety envelope”<sup>233</sup> for socio-technical system and I find the term adaptable to human nature as I think human nature is also concerned with a system.

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<sup>231</sup> THN, 1, 182.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> S. W. A. Dekker, *Ten Questions About Human Error: A New View of Human Factors and System Safety*, Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Incorporated, 2004, 18.

Dekker's somewhat counterintuitive assertion is that: "Drift into failure could not happen without learning. Following this logic, systems that are bad at learning and bad at adapting may well be less likely to drift into failure."<sup>234</sup> It follows that as humans are superbly capable of learning and adapting they are likely to drift into failure. On the possibility of failure, Hume comments that since

all knowledge resolves itself into probability, and becomes at last of the same nature with that evidence, which we employ in common life, we must now examine this latter species of reasoning, and see on what foundation it stands.<sup>235</sup>

Thus he holds:

In every judgment, which we can form concerning probability, as well as concerning knowledge, we ought always to correct the first judgment, deriv'd from the nature of the object, by another judgment, deriv'd from the nature of the understanding.<sup>236</sup>

This implies applying the general maxims of understanding which have been shown to be problematic in the preceding sections. Further, Hume is also begging the question because our knowledge of human nature comes from our observations and we derive judgments from them. And we must control these judgements by the judgements which are derived from the nature of understanding, which are also derived from our observations by taking understanding as an object. Hume needs an a priori judgement to stop this begging of the question otherwise the correction of judgement by another type of judgement goes on ad infinitum.

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>235</sup> THN, 1, 181.

<sup>236</sup> THN, 1, 182.

According to Hume, there is less confidence in the opinions when there is a reflection on the natural fallibility of judgment. He assumes when he considers the objects concerning reason; and when he proceeds to turn the scrutiny against successive estimations of his faculties “all the rules of logic require a continual diminution, and at last a total extinction of belief and evidence”.<sup>237</sup> In order to be released from this total doubt Hume, again, gives importance to natural sentiments over reason. He thinks that “reasoning and belief is some sensation or peculiar manner of conception, which ’tis impossible for mere ideas and reflections to destroy”<sup>238</sup>. In order to break the circular sceptic chain he claims, nature necessarily

has determin’d us to judge as well as to breathe and feel; nor can we any more forbear viewing certain objects in a stronger and fuller light, upon account of their customary connexion with a present impression, than we can hinder ourselves from thinking as long, as we are awake, or seeing the surrounding bodies, when we turn our eyes towards them in broad sunshine.<sup>239</sup>

However the problem of drift into failure is something different from falling into scepticism of reason or the elimination of this doubt with nature or custom and experience. If it is natural to judge, it is possible to fall into mistakes regarding our judgements; this is because the criteria of our judgements is also our judgements derived from nature of human understanding, which, as noted before, is also fallible. Viewing Hume as a naturalist is common especially following N. K. Smith; however, I hold that, Hume’s science of man lacks a strong foundation of naturalism. I agree with MacIntyre’s assumption that: “Hume treats moral rules as

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<sup>237</sup> THN, 1, 183.

<sup>238</sup> THN, 1, 184.

<sup>239</sup> THN, 1, 183.

given, partly because he treats human nature as given”<sup>240</sup> so his naturalism arises from a “given nature.” In this manner his attitude is not Newtonian either.

Moreover judgements about morality are complex. The possibility of making a mistake “accumulates over time”<sup>241</sup>. These accumulations can sometimes turn into massive faults. Human rights, women liberation and animal rights bear witness to the kinds of faults depending on judgements derived from the nature of objects. These could not have been corrected with the judgements derived from the sympathy mechanism fixed by “common point of view.” The liberation movements took place not from the “common point of view” but from “a little group’s view.”

### **3.4.3 Gradual adaptation**

Human nature is not an exact notion; it is also shaped like an avalanche in a way similar to the ideas. For every bit of new experience and knowledge, understanding changes gradually. Usually the changing part is small. However, for every little drop of new knowledge the system requires an adaptation. Change or adaptation in one sense happens gradually and slowly. Therefore the most obvious characteristic of human beings is its ability to adapt themselves constantly to environmental changes. When you start establishing a system by judgments thinking that you have found the indispensable characteristics of human nature, you will find that the system will inevitably, undergoes tiny but important changes over time. However, since the observation of these changes will expand throughout a very long time, gradual adaptation will always remain as a threat to the stability of the system.

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<sup>240</sup> MacIntyre, *A Short History*, 175.

<sup>241</sup> Dekker, *Ten Questions*, 18.

Determining what is natural and what is artificial while making judgments about the nature of beings that have the ability of adaptation, is only possible by loading some meaning onto these acts. This is exactly what Hume is doing. Being influenced by the fact that Newton's method led to some explanations and developments in physics, Hume started his theory by handling human beings as an ordinary physical object also. He holds that this new approach will create a revolution in the field of ethics. In my view, however, Hume was unable to develop a method successful enough to reveal human nature, exactly because he discarded metaphysics and meaning. He was only able to obtain clues to human nature at certain points. Although the claim that the Humean approach has led to logical positivism can be accepted in respect of inspiration, in fact Hume has never displayed such an approach in his own system. Though we see the application of Humean principles in Wittgenstein's claim that even if lions talked we could not understand them,<sup>242</sup> Hume himself sees nothing wrong in reaching conclusions from the acts of animals as though he was a member of that world. To the acts of the peacock that may just be qualified as instinctive, he attaches meanings from the human world on behalf of their nature, and interprets their act as self-esteem.<sup>243</sup>

I believe that adaptation is one of the greatest sources of the secrets in human nature. It is not easy to know to what conditions and to what features the human being will perform some adaptation. Therefore making any comments about the adaptation ability requires a long process. Hume had to make the distinction between natural and artificial due this reason.

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<sup>242</sup> Brian McGuinness, *Approaches to Wittgenstein Collected Papers*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, 4.

<sup>243</sup> THN, 2, 326.

Let's consider one of the indispensable issues of ethical systems for centuries: telling a lie. How should we label it: natural or artificial? Or both? It appears impossible to reach a solid conclusion through Hume's method of observing the daily life experiences, nor does the copy principle can tell us anything about this issue. Experiments arranged by meditation alone cannot be efficient, either. To be able to effectively solve this problem would require a system or method with a wide enough scope to cover the historical and social aspects. While conducting an observation, following approbation and disapprobation in connection with pain and pleasure, Hume claims, will only lead us to relative information. Take people who always lie but design their lies in a way to make other people happy: what kind of a judgment about the nature of minds can we reach at the end of observing the acts of these people? Shall we say that telling a lie is a natural structure of the mind; it gains the observers' approval as it makes people happy, so is it thus moral? Not only lies, but also all virtue and vices can only be handled by developing a method which considers both personal and social consequences within a historical process by taking past and future into account. Whether we establish a natural or artificial theory, these characteristics will always be renewed as long as the adaptation structure exists. MacIntyre contends that even though Hume is known as a historian he does not apply a historical perspective to his philosophy of human nature.<sup>244</sup>

Is what is natural, good or bad? This question has also been a highly debated but unsolved issue throughout the history of mankind. According to Hobbes, human nature is selfish. Unlike the teachings of selfish schools like Hobbes, Hume needs to envisage human nature as good in order to base the fundamental concepts of his system, such as benevolence, humanity and sympathy on a solid ground. He wrote in *Enquiry* that "there is some benevolence, however small, infused into our

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<sup>244</sup> MacIntyre, *A Short History*, 175.

bosom; some spark of friendship for human kind; some particle of the dove, kneaded into our frame, along with the elements of the wolf and serpent.”<sup>245</sup> He claims that natural benevolence, however small it is, forms the basis of morality and he says:

Let these generous sentiments be supposed ever so weak; let them be insufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body; they must still direct the determinations of our mind, and where every thing else is equal, produce a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind, above what is pernicious and dangerous.<sup>246</sup>

This contention is only possible through the a priori statement that human nature is good even though it has some elements of the wolf and serpent.<sup>247</sup> But such an approach is not the kind of information that can be reached by the methods established by Hume. By making daily life observations in the natural environment of the human being, we cannot reach the conclusion that human is naturally good. Hume’s method does not allow us reach the conclusion that human nature is naturally good enough to develop a system of morality that is based on benevolence. Whether natural or artificial, calling any virtue good or bad is only possible through ascribing a meaning to it. Understanding the whole of human nature is different from understanding the accumulation of separate components. Humankind possesses a dynamic, adapting system; this is why a part of human nature must always remain veiled. Human beings have vices and virtues whether natural or artificial. Each virtue and vice has degrees. Human nature is a web of these virtues and vices each from a different level with a characteristic of adaptation. This being the case, identifying what is virtue and what is vice

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<sup>245</sup> EPM, 271.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> This threat makes Hume be neutral about human nature with some other issues.

becomes difficult. Aristotle was the first philosopher to draw our attention to the degrees of vices and virtues. According to him character traits depend on the degree of our performance. Take bravery for example: it usually implies being fearless, however not to the point that putting one's head into a lion's mouth. That is not bravery but foolishness. Here it is not the character trait which causes the foolishness, but it is the inappropriate limit of it. Human nature is an organic, flexible system with a high capacity for adaptation. Moreover inter-human relations are also dynamic, not mechanical responses to self-interest and social changes. Therefore there are great possibilities to become virtuous or vicious in performing any act. Thus it is difficult to identify human nature but not necessarily impossible so long as a suitable dynamic adapting method of analysis is established for this flexible system. If we observe the isolated units — as Newton did and Hume aimed to do — we cannot comprehend the adapting power of the whole. Usually the source of false judgements and immoral acts is the result of whole system incorporating the dynamism of relations and the applied degrees of traits, not its component parts isolated from the whole.

#### **3.4.4 Unpredictable character**

One more difficulty with the Humean method is about the unpredictability of human nature. Even within a Humean determined system there should be some unpredictable parts of human nature because of not knowing where to look. Hume insists on examining the observable part which is the acting agent. This can lead into important failures which he wants to be released from. He aims to provide a criterion for judging philosophical arguments from his “science of man”.

According to Humean understanding human nature is an accumulation of processing systems in harmony. Hume focuses especially on two of them in order to determine his ethical point of view: the system of sympathy and the system of

comparison.<sup>248</sup> These are mainly psychological systems. However considering human being is a living organism obviously we can find lots of systems in it. The nourishment is a system, vision works through a system, dreaming is commonly accepted as a metaphysical system; the *degraded* system of reasoning is a wonderful system our tastes are performing in the light of their system rules. Briefly we are the accumulation of dozens of systems. It is possible that most of our systems work mechanistically especially the systems which control our body such as the sleeping system, and the nourishment system. However Hume supposes that we cannot know the process of most of our systems.<sup>249</sup>

Take as an example any of the various bodily systems, such as the alimentary system, the memory system, the dream system, and others, we have very little knowledge of how these work and less about why they work. We know that they do work, but we can only observe them in part. If we imagine these systems to be analogous to a giant clock of interconnected gears and cogs, so that every millimetric change in one part of the clock entails changes in all of the other parts, yet at the same time we have very imperfect knowledge of how these parts work or work together, then, in such a complicated and patchily known system, how is it ever possible to determine or predict anything about the whole system from only observing the observable or knowable parts?

Sidney Dekker supposes that: “The potential for an accident accumulates over time, but this accumulation, this steady slide into disaster, generally goes recognized by those at the inside and even those at the outside.”<sup>250</sup> For him even

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<sup>248</sup> THN, 2, 372-384.

<sup>249</sup> EHU, 33.

<sup>250</sup> Dekker, *Ten Questions*, 18.

the people who recognize the accumulation cannot predict a coming disaster. In complicated big systems the possibility of predictability is law. To predict a disaster which is caused by a little defect is very difficult.

From this point of view the Humean system of experimenting on only observable part is an insufficient method to find out the workings of human nature considering that the systems which are unobservable in character are nevertheless an inalienably effective part of the process.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PROCESS OF PASSIONS

Focusing on the nature of human understanding Hume is regarded as a scientist of human nature. He shows the origins and the development of his own culture by beginning with an examination of the nature of human understanding. As I have claimed before, his studies aim to set up a moral philosophy on the grounds of scientific method and to free philosophy from metaphysics. In this chapter, the focus is going to be on the problems that stem from his use of the theory of associations in passions. It is held in this chapter that Hume's varied classifications of passions are vague therefore it is arguable whether the process of passions is stated clearly.

#### 4.1 GRADUAL PASSIONS IN HUME

Hume tries to adopt the same observation method that natural philosophers did in ancient times. Using Newton's method, he describes particular moral acts and he derives general laws from them which can explain the nature of virtuous behaviours. He intends to show the existence of an inner system, processing with sentiments, which is common in human beings. With the purpose of understanding what a moral sentiment is, we must analyze feelings, which are, for Hume, emotions and passions.

As already mentioned, there is a logical connection between the three books of the *Treatise*. Hume's definition of passion starts in *Book 1*, where he first divides

perception into two: impressions and ideas. He argues that passions are the impressions of reflection. Following this, in *Book 2*, impressions are first divided into original and secondary and then into impression of sensation and reflection. Original impressions are formed in the soul “without any antecedent perceptions,”<sup>251</sup> while secondary impressions are reflective impressions that “proceed from these originals.”<sup>252</sup> In this context, impression of sensation refers to pains and pleasures, whereas reflection refers to passions and emotions.

In *Book 2*, Hume further divides them into direct and indirect passions according to how they form. For him, the sources of both types of passion are the same. However, “direct passions... arise immediately from good or evil, from pleasure and pain.”<sup>253</sup> On the other hand, indirect passions do not form immediately. Hume lists grief and joy among direct passions. There are some other direct passions which are paired up by Hume such as “desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security.”<sup>254</sup>

Indirect passions are also paired up such as pride and humility, love and hatred, moral approbation and disapprobation, the sense of beauty and deformity, which all arise after pleasure or pain but this time not immediately after them.

There are also direct and indirect passions which are not derived from pain and pleasure but caused by some original passions. Hume refers to them as the

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<sup>251</sup> THN, 2, 275.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> THN, 2, 276.

<sup>254</sup> THN, 2, 277.

implanted instincts. The bodily appetites such as hunger or thirst are examples to these original passions. Hume contends,

Beside good and evil, or in other words, pain and pleasure, the direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies, and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections.<sup>255</sup>

*Book 2* is devoted to the discussion of passions in order to explain how these natural passions operate in the sympathy mechanism in *Book 3* as Capaldi asserts. Hume aims to establish his own science of man. In his moral system, passions are the isolable units. After he carries out daily observations, he reaches a general principle called sympathy, where passions function in a psychological process. He establishes such a system to underline the naturalness of moral values.

When Hume defines original passions as bodily appetites, he makes a claim about benevolence, kindness towards children<sup>256</sup>, the desire to punish enemies, and aid friends,<sup>257</sup> which he considers similar to or the same as hunger and thirst in terms of naturalness. However, if these virtues are natural a problem regarding the naturalness of immorality arises. It becomes an excuse like illnesses or differences in natural abilities. It is nobody's fault to not have enough natural abilities. In this context, immorality becomes an excusable character trait in the sense that it would be nobody's fault to not have a natural inclination or ability or to have an inadequate level. Although hunger is regarded as a natural instinct, there is an illness called Anorexia nervosa, an eating disorder that prevents the regular intake

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<sup>255</sup> THN, 2, 439.

<sup>256</sup> THN, 2, 417.

<sup>257</sup> THN, 2, 439.

of food. Similarly, kindness towards children is accepted as “the natural impulse or instinct”; however, there is the phenomenon of paedophilia, which, in this context, becomes excusable as it stems from the malfunctioning of natural instincts.

Apart from distinguishing passions according to how they form, Hume also categorizes “reflective impressions” according to their force. Here force is used in relation to the degree the passions are felt. In this sense, although he is aware of the fact that his distinction is not precise enough, he divides the passions into two: “the *calm* and the *violent*.”<sup>258</sup>

The distinction of passions into calm and violent depends upon nearness and remoteness: “The same good, when near, will cause a violent passion, which, when remote, produces only a calm one.”<sup>259</sup> That is, calm passions are recognized in the mind by their effects, whereas, violent passions can be recognized by immediate feeling or sensation. To illustrate, calm passions include benevolence and the sense of beauty and deformity, while violent passions involve “love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility.”<sup>260</sup>

Another way which Hume classifies passions is according to the degree of their power. “We must, therefore, distinguish betwixt a calm and a weak passion; betwixt a violent and a strong one.”<sup>261</sup> This classification is not distinct as it is based on degree: the power of strong passions over reasoning and behaviour is steady and controlling, whereas with weak passions this power is unsteady and

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 419.

exerts less control. As Hume writes “when we wou’d govern a man, and push him to any action, ’twill commonly be better policy to work upon the violent than the calm passions, and rather take him by his inclination, than what is vulgarly call’d his reason.”<sup>262</sup>

It can be concluded that Hume underlines power as a matter of degree and that this distinction is not precise either. “For we may observe, that all depends upon the situation of the object, and that a variation in this particular will be able to change the calm and the violent passions into each other.”<sup>263</sup> Weak and strong passions are convertible into one another, thus this distinction does not relate to the nature of the passions but it relates to the degree of their strength.

Passions play different roles according to the strength that they are felt. The real distinction is not in the passions themselves but the subjects who are the agents of these deeds. This careful but ineffective approach makes the system complicated. Moreover, an agent-dependent passion system ends up in subjectivity. Hume further suggests that this passionate subjectivity can be corrected by experience and education. I argue that had Hume considered reason as active as passions, he could have formed a more consistent and effective system, for reason would not have been enslaved by passions.

Another problem with passions concerns the object and subject of the natural passions. Dietl argues that Hume’s usage of “subject” and “object” is confusing. What the passion is directed to is of great significance in Hume’s ethics. According to him, “The object of love and hatred is always some other person.”<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

Therefore, for Dietl, Hume's distinction of these pairs of passions is based on their object. The object of pride and humility is always the "self"<sup>265</sup>, whereas the object of love and hatred is the "other"<sup>266</sup>. For him this is why Hume rejects self-love. The self, "I" is never the object of my love. Pride involves some kind of a "double relation" between the object who is proud and of which he/she is proud. He claims

Thus a suit of fine cloaths produces pleasure from their beauty; and this pleasure produces the direct passions, or the impressions of volition and desire. Again, when these cloaths are consider'd as belonging to ourself, the double relation conveys to us the sentiment of pride, which is an indirect passion; and the pleasure, which attends that passion, returns back to the direct affections, and gives new force to our desire or volition, joy or hope.<sup>267</sup>

In order to confirm his theory of passions, he claims to have been carried out experiments. Dietl draws our attention to the fact that these are not laboratory experiments established in a controlled situation, using random samples and with statistical measurement.<sup>268</sup> Hume obtained his findings in the laboratory of his mind, and may be called thought experiments or introspection. "Thought experiments are performed in the laboratory of the mind"<sup>269</sup> where carrying out laboratory experiments is impossible or very difficult. Hume argues that exploring the limits of human nature is possible through the evaluation of our observations in

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<sup>265</sup> Paul Dietl, "Hume on the Passions", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 28: 554–566, 557.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 558.

<sup>267</sup> THN, 2, 439.

<sup>268</sup> Paul Dietl, "Hume on the Passions", 558.

<sup>269</sup> J. R. Brown, *The Laboratory of the Mind*. London, New York: Routledge, 1991, 1.

our minds. Hume mentions these experiments to show how the “square of passions”<sup>270</sup> occurs.

Having found, that neither an object without any relation to a subject, nor an object that has only one relation can ever cause pride or humility, love or hatred; reason alone may convince us, without any further experiment, that whatever has a double relation must necessarily excite these passions.<sup>271</sup>

Dietl claims that if one of the members of the square changes in the square of the passions, the result changes. For example, if the subject “I” changes into “you,” the passion of “love” changes into “proud.” He thinks that Hume is putting forward logical or conceptual claims rather than contingent claims in psychology.<sup>272</sup> Hume states that we are at all time conscious of ourselves; our own qualities are more vivid whereas others’ qualities are less vivid and ready to incorporate. Therefore we feel other’s qualities as we feel our own. Dietl asserts that Hume failed to explicate the nature of emotions. He contends that association of ideas never helped Hume with the nature of emotions. According to Dietl, Hume uses “association” to describe “de facto conjunctions” but therefore he misses the explanatory character of those conjunctions.<sup>273</sup> Dietl maintains that in Humean terms, association is caused by resemblance, causality or nearness in space and time. However, none of these relations are necessary to for the occurrence of the relevant passions. Therefore, according to Dietl, Hume cannot explain the occurrence of passions in terms of the association of ideas. Nor can he

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<sup>270</sup> Paul Dietl, “Hume on the Passions”, 557.

<sup>271</sup> THN, 2, 336.

<sup>272</sup> Paul Dietl, “Hume on the Passions”, 560-561.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., in footnote.

explain why a master always feels more proud of a feast than the guest who finds more pleasure in the feast.<sup>274</sup>

Hume conducts experiments to reach a general principle of passions, being loyal to his Newtonian approach; however, he attempts to convince us by suggesting that depending on reason alone will be sufficient without any further experiment. I hold that Hume cannot escape reason while trying to establish an anti-rationalist system. Hume considers reason to have a passive role in motivating people to act. However, here he contradicts himself by attributing a convincing power to reason, thus empowering it.

Furthermore Dietl assumes Hume conducts thought experiments only by asking the reader whether they can imagine the arousal of certain passions in certain contexts. For him there is no limitation to what can be said in response. In fact there are no limits to what a person may feel; however, in a Humean sense, in order to be considered as pride, a feeling has to fulfil a criterion. If that criterion is not met, a feeling cannot be counted as pride. Another problem Dietl points to is that if setting forth the criteria for pride involves a priori knowledge, Hume cannot avoid contradicting his general maxim about innateness.<sup>275</sup>

Another inconsistency of Humean ethics is his identification of good and evil with pleasure and pain. As I mentioned in the section on consequentialism, such identification implies that anything giving pleasure is good and giving pain, evil. Adultery, theft or even murder can give pleasure to some people but this does not mean they are good.

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 562, in footnote.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 564.

To me, pain and pleasure are at the core of Humean ethics, for these two are the most easily observed part of our nature. Hume assumes that even the distinction between a good and boring conversation depends on the pleasure it gives. “In the mean time it may be affirm’d in general, that all the merit a man may derive from his conversation (which, no doubt, may be very considerable) arises from nothing but the pleasure it conveys to those who are present.”<sup>276</sup> This supposition also lacks persuasion, since there are conversations which are of utmost importance for our relations but boring in nature. To illustrate, gossiping is a form of conversation which pleases the listeners and gossipers but gives pain to the people who are gossiped about. In fact, the meaning of “pleasure” in Humean ethics is unclear. Dietl points out the fact that Hume uses the term pleasure to refer to “interchangeable, or perhaps as generic, for a multitudinous cluster of expressions.”<sup>277</sup>

Hume maintains that one of the significant problems of ethics is finding the nature of morality. In other words, he attempts to determine whether morality arises from certain desires. He believes that the most appropriate way to solve this problem is by using the Newtonian method; thus, he accepts that these moral issues are subject to experience: empirical and isolable. He contends it is possible to generalize rules from the isolable unit. Passions are the isolable units. He conducts experiments<sup>278</sup> to reach a generalization. The general rule is the “association” of the passions. The process of passions is held from the perspective of a spectator.

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<sup>276</sup> THN, 3, 611.

<sup>277</sup> Dietl, “Hume on the Passions”, 558.

<sup>278</sup> They are rather thought experiments or introspections.

Hume begins to establish the process of passions with impressions in order to apply the same rules of associations to passions but similar to Dietl, I am of the opinion that he cannot give a sufficient explanation about the application of association of passions merely as a result of the changes in object or subject.

The next unclear point is about the formation of a sympathy mechanism through the spectator's eyes. It can be claimed that Hume builds his morality on the rules of observation that identifies moral judgment as an emotional response. As it is mentioned above, acting morally promotes the common good, and moral values are the product of natural human passions. Hume's interpreters hold that he envisions morality from the perspective of the spectator, and that for him character traits play an important part in the felt force of the passions. I argue that identifying the spectator's perspective with the suffering party instead of the pleased one is not justifiable solely on the grounds that benevolence is a natural virtue. This indicates that Hume's understanding of human nature for consistency's sake should have been based on the goodness of human nature although his approach is categorized as neutral. If Hume had posited the goodness of human nature as the basis, the problem of how the sympathy system between the spectator and the suffering party operates would still persist. If he accepts the goodness of human nature as the norm, he needs to give another explanation as to the reason why passions' felt force does vary between people. In the following section, I will explain the association of passions through indirect ones.

## **4.2 INDIRECT PASSIONS**

It is meaningful that Hume finds the roots of observable human nature in passions like pride and humility, which are major terms employed in religions. First, he isolates passions in order to carry out his experiments. Then he establishes a principle of passions *in Book 2* among "pride and humility", "love and hatred",

and “will and direct passions.” Indeed this system is criticised to be dependent on a priori assumptions rather than on observable behavior. It is obvious that Jeremy Bentham, who is inspired by Hume, sets up pain and pleasure as the experimental basis of morality. However Hume’s system goes beyond observable pain and pleasure and is based on the passions of pride and humility, which are so subjective.

His endeavour proves that the shift in perspective, as termed by Nicholas Capaldi, from “I think” to “we do” is not the only shift Hume intends. There is another significant shift in perspective: The shift from supernatural to nature and the shift from superstition to science. His sympathy system operates with the natural passions pride, humility, love and hatred which explicitly indicate his intention to be freed from superstitions.

Before going deeper into this issue, it might be useful to remember the frame of passions. There are two kinds of impressions and two kinds of passions. All our passions and other emotions resembling them are of the second kind of impressions. E.g. a bodily pain such as headache can produce grief - which is a feeling or passion.

Passions are either:

1. Calm - e.g. sense of beauty
2. Violent - e.g. love, hatred, joy, grief

Hume holds this division in general but this division is not exact because the sense of beauty may become so intense that it might be a violent passion; and also the violent passions love or grief may change into calm by losing their intensity.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> THN, 2, 418-422.

The causes of passions are natural, which means there is no freedom.<sup>280</sup> But there are a great many causes which depend on human artifice and invention (e.g. houses, furniture, money, clothes, etc).<sup>281</sup> Hence, although there are a variety of causes and natural principles of the motivation of pride and humility, “the principles, from which they arise, are commonly but few and simple.”<sup>282</sup> The problem is, therefore, to “enquire how we may reduce these principles to a lesser number, and find among the causes something common, on which their influence depends.”<sup>283</sup>

The common principle, according to Hume, is the association of ideas and the association of impressions through resemblance, contiguity and causality. These three principles assist each other to produce passions in us; and the causes of passions produce sensations in us. Our passions also have effects and it is through observing these effects that we come to know the passions of others.<sup>284</sup>

Love and hatred which have subcategories like esteem and contempt are in many ways parallel to pride and humility. First of all they are simple impressions and so atomic like pride and humility. Also they are agreeable and disagreeable in the same way of love and hatred. Both of the pairs are indirect passions that take place in the course of the “double relation of ideas and impressions”.<sup>285</sup> Nonetheless

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<sup>280</sup> His famous part “Of Suicide” is a good example of this determinist understanding. According to Hume committing suicide is not evil because it is the programme of God.

<sup>281</sup> THN, 2, 281.

<sup>282</sup> THN, 2, 282.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> THN, 2, 283.

<sup>285</sup> THN, 2, 286.

there is a crucial difference between them in terms of object relation. He assumes that pride and humility always take the self as their object and on the other hand love and hatred always need another person as their object.<sup>286</sup>

At this point it is appropriate to mention Donald Davidson and Pall Ardal's ideas about Hume on pride. According to Ardal Hume misrepresents pride and its object. Ardal assumes that, the self being the object of pride, is a kind of "self-evaluation"<sup>287</sup> for Hume. Ardal thinks this misrepresentation stems from assuming that pride has a causal relation with "thought about oneself":

Whenever one is proud one's thought is drawn to oneself, but according to Hume it could be otherwise. It just happens that the feeling of pride makes one think of oneself, that when you are already proud your thought turns to yourself.<sup>288</sup>

One of the most crucial points is that some problems occur when Hume describes pride as an impression which is simple; however James Bailie assumes this is not a problem if we take his explanations as the causal conditions of its production. He says that Hume

intends neither to give an analytic definition of the term, nor to say what pride itself is. Rather, his aim is to give an account of the causal conditions of its production. The crucial point is that he sees these two factors as non-identical: to say how something is caused is not to say what it is. So Hume is saying that no reductive analysis of an impression's subjective qualities, of 'what it is like', is possible. We

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<sup>286</sup> THN, 2, 329.

<sup>287</sup> Pall Ardal, "Hume and Davidson on Pride", *Hume Studies*, 15: 387-394, 1989, 388.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

can, however, give a descriptive account of its causal relations, since these are objective properties.<sup>289</sup>

Here Bailie wants to show that passions are not like colours, as Hume does not give a definition but rather states how it is produced, by which he aims to show that Hume's maxim is still unproblematic. However, while he is trying to rescue the first maxim he is disproving the principle of communication. For example, a childless person can never communicate — sympathize — with a parent who has pride in his or her child. Hume's supporters may accept the principles of resemblance, continuity and causality, but the doors are closed in order to make a resemblance otherwise the analogy will result in mistakes by token of the second principle that close relation readily causes errors. Bailie reminds us that Hume is being accused of inconsistency in saying that each passion is a unique and simple impression, while simultaneously using the notion of similarity between passions. This is because it is possible to reject this idea, as it is done by the significant critics of Hume, for when two things are compared and are found to have a similar property this shows that they are not simple. If two different kinds of passions had a shared property, they could not both be simple; because the difference between them can be possible only if there is a second property that only one of them has. Bailie goes on to defend Hume

However, Hume rejects the claim that similarity requires a shared property. As he says in the Appendix: 'Tis evident, that even simple ideas may have a similarity or resemblance to each other; nor is it necessary, that the point or circumstance of resemblance shou'd be distinct or separable from that in which they differ. Blue and green are different simple ideas, but are more resembling than blue and scarlet, tho' their perfect similarity excludes all possibility of separation or distinction.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> James Baillie, *Hume on Morality*, London: Routledge, 2000, 43.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

Unlike Bailie, Donald Davidson and Pall Ardal think that “Hume’s claim that pride is a simple impression is an embarrassment to him”<sup>291</sup> albeit from different perspectives. In my point of view both Hume and Bailie are making a false analogy between the resemblance of colours and passions, since to decide whether blue resembles green or scarlet we need to know all the three primary colours or we need to also know red and yellow. This is because even though the impression and the idea of the colours are simple, we know that there are primary colours and compounded ones. As scarlet and green are compounded colours of blue, a person who knows the primary colours at least can imagine the compounded ones as being admixtures. Similarities, at least between colours, require a shared property; and in Hume’s example, blue is shared both by green and scarlet. It would be helpful to Hume if he could show any resemblance between red and blue, which are really primary colours; even though they are the members of same family of colours. Bailie uses the “family resemblance” as a proof.<sup>292</sup> From my point of view pride and humility are not simple passions as Hume or his followers assume. Indeed they are compounded passions which cannot be assigned simplistically to pleasure and pain either as most interpreters hold. Take a competitor who wins the second medal of a race; he should be proud of his silver medal but everybody knows that he may regret not winning the gold. Pride and humility are complex passions that cannot be claimed to be simply communicated. The war minister could have the pride of the war in Iraq; however, there are a lot of people who feel the humility of their army and nation from the same event and under the same flag.

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<sup>291</sup> Ardal, *Hume*, 388.

<sup>292</sup> Baillie, *Hume on Morality*, 45.

Another interpretation of Hume's pride from the same perspective of Davidson is from Vermeule Blakey. He also thinks that in Hume's theory pride is not an ordinary emotion. For him Hume's pride is "a highly stylized neoclassical literary and theatrical intervention."<sup>293</sup> He holds that one of pride's key features is its irreducibility to an ordinary emotion. Blakey in a positive tender assumes that pride is the major constructive answer to scepticism. According to him pride answers Hume's previous scepticism in the last part of *Book I* "by rendering objective judgements that up until this point in the *Treatise* remain vague"<sup>294</sup> Moreover he claims pride allows Hume to "reconstruct a "self", whose grounds he had vigorously destroyed in the "personal identity" section of his melancholy bout."<sup>295</sup> He shows how Hume divides the parts of pride into three as: a cause, a passion, and an object, and maintains that Hume's technical terminology is misleading. The "cause" is a person, event or thing to which we respond emotionally. The "object" is only the "self" whereas the "cause" is external. Both of these are ideas where as the "passion" is a simple and uniform impression. Blakey explains how these features obtain a system of pride. For Hume the proud person who has a beautiful house must experience the house as beautiful and he must have the idea that the house is connected in some way to him. According to Blakey, Hume shows us that pride is a general operation which is activated by an "original property" or a "primary impulse" in the mind. Thus Blakey concludes that Hume's entire system is secured in our psychologies by his supposition that we need reference to fixed principles of psychology to explain pride's taking the self as object. Blakey also mentions some interpreters like Pall Ardal and Jerome

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<sup>293</sup> Vermeule Blakey, *The Party of Humanity: Writing moral Psychology in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000, 159.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 160.

Neu, who attack Hume's association of passions for being unrealistic and defective. What they find unrealistic is the transformation of an experienced impression into an inexperienced associated impression. For him, Neu assumes that the system is indeed complex including some other factors like thought by accepting Spinoza's "thought-dependent emotions" as more plausible.

Hume mentions causal relations when talking about pride. He states: "Upon the whole, we may rest satisfy'd with the foregoing conclusion, that pride must have a cause, as well as an object, and that the one has no influence without the other."<sup>296</sup> According to him the difficulty is discovering the "cause" and finding "what it is that gives the first motion to pride, and sets those organs in action, which are naturally fitted to produce that emotion."<sup>297</sup> Consequently he claims that he finds a hundred different causes which produce pride. Alfred Glathe touches on Hume's distinction of object, cause, and quality by pointing to their naturalness and originality. He thinks "Hume finds the object of the passions to be both natural and original, the causes merely natural."<sup>298</sup> Glathe claims: "The argument for the originality of this property, however, is purely verbal."<sup>299</sup> He gives the parallel thoughts of Green and Grose in his footnote. Although they also consider Hume's argument — our mind could never have some secondary qualities if nature had not given some original qualities — to be generally a true tautology; they state "it does not prove that the particular quality in question is "original."<sup>300</sup> Hume insists on

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<sup>296</sup> THN, 2, 333.

<sup>297</sup> THN, 2, 288.

<sup>298</sup> A. B. Glathe, *Hume's Theory of the Passions and of Morals: A Study of Books II and III of the "Treatise"*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950, 33.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-4.

the naturalness but not the originality of the causes; thus he believes originality adapts to the natural qualities, because natural principles are common, few and, simple; whereas the effects may be many. For Hume: “’tis the sign of an unskilful naturalist to have recourse to a different quality, in order to explain every different operation.”<sup>301</sup> As a “skilful naturalist” he constructs the indirect passions unclearly with regard to moral sentiments which generate a general principle that do not explain every different operation from the perspective of an ordinary observer but rather an impartial one. Therefore in the following section, I will explain moral sentiments through spectator’s eyes.

### **4.3 MORAL SENTIMENTS VIA SPECTATOR’S EYES**

In this section, for the sake of clarity, I want to state the basic implications of Humean Moral Theory concerning sentiments. As I mentioned before, in *Book 3* Hume’s first revolutionary attack is directed at reason. Thus, his first assumption is that reason cannot be the motivating power of the will alone. Moreover, it is enslaved by the passions. Therefore, morals cannot be derived from reason.<sup>302</sup> So, how could it be possible to have morals, or, where can we derive them from? Hume’s main claim is that morals should be derived from sentiments rather than reason. He assumes that moral sentiments which are the feelings of approval and disapproval towards incidents characterize our moral understanding.<sup>303</sup> The

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<sup>301</sup> THN, 2, 282.

<sup>302</sup> THN, 3, Section 1.

<sup>303</sup> An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very feeling constitutes our praise or admiration. THN, 3, 471.

various types of moral evaluations come out from our moral sentiments which have a unique quality and important causes.<sup>304</sup> Moral sentiments are calm passions. As soon as people become aware of the moral attitudes of other people the type of passions are changed. This change in the quantity of sentiments can be seen either as an increase or a decrease. Therefore, the difference between vice and virtue is a matter of feeling, that is, feeling of approval and disapproval towards actions done by agents.

Hume's moral theory is the relation of three sides: acting agent, being acted upon receiver, and observing spectator. The theory begins with the action of the agent, which has an impact on the receiver and observed by a spectator. For example, when one gives seat to an old lady, the lady feels good; and a third one who observes the event, the spectator shares the lady's feeling and approves the act. This shows that the motivating power of the agent is a virtuous character trait.

When you — as an agent — give your seat to an old lady, the lady — as a receiver — will experience two different feelings from the act of the agent's virtuous character trait. The first one appears immediately in approval of the virtuous act. The second, which may appear at a later time, is the utility of this action. Giving a seat to an old lady is a useful act. The usefulness of the act will cause agreeable feelings in the receiver. As a consequence of these actions and feelings, a third one — the spectator — who observes the result of the agent's virtuous act will feel the same agreeable feelings as the receiver felt through the system of sympathy. This means that the approval of the acts by the receiver and shared by the spectator is the cause of our moral judgements about the actions.

In contrast, in an incident where Adam did something to give pain to the receiver, such as defamation, the receiver who is acted upon would feel grief and then

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<sup>304</sup> THN, 3, Section 2.

Mary, the spectator, would share the feeling of the receiver and the disapprobation of that feeling will cause her to think that the motivating power of Adam is a negative character trait.

Hume argues that there are different types of virtuous character traits: natural, instinctive and artificial. Benevolence, for example, is a natural character trait, whereas justice is an artificial one. But the system of sympathy usually takes place in a similar phase. One of the debates about Humean theory is this distinction between artificial and natural, so I will focus on this issue in the next chapter.

According to Hume moral sentiments are emotions. They are produced by the disinterested thought about whether the acts of an agent or the one who is acted upon, should evoke approval or disapproval. The approved traits form virtues while the disapproved traits form vices. The observer's sympathies have a common and general perspective that can compensate for misinterpretation resulting from resemblance in language, appearance, likes or dislikes of the person who is judged.<sup>305</sup>

Another point is that passions as it is mentioned before can be either intensified or rarefied this causes a change in them from calm to violent and vice versa. Moreover as Hume wants to base his theory on passions he assigns as a criterion for his moral sentiments that which can be observed, like pleasure and pain. He thinks that there is an association between the pairs of passions and pain/pleasure. Moral approval of an agent towards a receiver means to love one and an approval towards the self means to be proud of one own self.

Now virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances. They must necessarily be plac'd either in ourselves or others, and excite either

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<sup>305</sup> THN, 2, 332.

pleasure or uneasiness; and must therefore give rise to one of these four passions.<sup>306</sup>

There are two common understanding about Hume's moral sentiments. According to some interpreters, two pairs of passions — pride and humility, love and hatred — form the moral sentiments. On the other hand, from the following paragraph some other interpreters think that pain and pleasure is the source of the two pairs of passions and thence all the other passions

For if all morality be founded on the pain or pleasure, which arises from the prospect of any loss or advantage, that may result from our own characters, or from those of others, all the effects of morality must-be deriv'd from the same pain or pleasure, and among the rest, the passions of pride and humility. The very essence of virtue, according to this hypothesis, is to produce pleasure and that of vice to give pain. The virtue and vice must be part of our character in order to excite pride or humility.<sup>307</sup>

In either way the common point about Hume's moral understanding is that it depends on feelings rather than reason. Reason is a tool which differentiates truth and falsehood. For Hume this function of reason shows that it is inert and “can never either prevent or produce any action or affection.”<sup>308</sup> The traits, whether virtuous or vicious, are determined through our approvals and disapprovals. Hume's system is commonly held that the observation of our approvals towards traits shows some indispensable characteristics of virtues such as:

1. being approved by the agent who owns the virtuous character trait recently,
2. being approved by the receivers recently,

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<sup>306</sup> THN, 3, 473.

<sup>307</sup> THN, 2, 295-296.

<sup>308</sup> THN, 3, 458.

3. giving benefits to the agent in future,
4. giving benefits to the receiver in future.

In a like manner we can enumerate the characteristics of vice as:

1. being disapproved by the agent who owns vicious character trait recently,
2. being disapproved by the receivers recently,
3. giving harm to the agent in future,
4. giving harm to the receiver in future.

From the perspective of the Humean science of man we can give generalizations about “virtue” and “vice” after our empirical observations which are gathered from the inferences about the traits as chiefly identified by their effects on the moral sentiments. It is confirmed by daily observations that usefulness is agreeable and we approve of it.

It is necessary to clarify how Hume specifies the causes of moral sentiments. It is held that he explains the moral sentiments as a kind of psychological system which causes the communication of sentiments. For him the first rule of this system is the “association of ideas” that is

to pass from one object to what is resembling, contiguous to, or produc'd by it. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other, united by these relations, naturally follows it, and enters with more facility by means of that introduction.<sup>309</sup>

The second rule is “association of impressions”

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<sup>309</sup> THN, 2, 283.

All resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the `rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, till the whole circle be compleated. In like manner our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other resembling affections.<sup>310</sup>

This system of sympathy takes place among all people as he claims all human beings have same feelings. Therefore it is possible to receive approval and disapproval from others. Ronald J. Glossop notes that although Hume underlines these four categories repeatedly he does not illustrate how these categories come under the same principle of the tendency to support the happiness of society. Glossop says “he frequently mentions this principle as being the standard according to which things are or are not approved.”<sup>311</sup>

Moreover Hume does not give any natural or artificial explanation regarding the conditions of lack of sympathy; nor does he talk about complicated feelings. He only mentions:

Men’s tempers are different, and some have a propensity to the tender, and others to the rougher, affections: But in the main, we may affirm, that man in general, or human nature, is nothing but the object both of love and hatred, and requires some other cause, which by a double relation of impressions and ideas, may excite these passions.

However these passions do fail and our sympathy can work in an unwanted manner.<sup>312</sup> Since the psychological mechanism of passions which is the source of morality is not clarified in the Humean system the source of immorality remains

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> R. J. Glossop, “The Nature of Hume’s Ethics”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 27: 527-536, 1967, 535.

<sup>312</sup> These kinds of statements can also be observed in daily life.

also undefined. Apropos to this I want to show different types of complicated emotions. Take as an example that you have a friend of whom you are very jealous of because of your natural tendency towards beauty. You feel humility rather than pride since she is more beautiful than you are. She is not your enemy in the sense that you have the right to the natural passion of taking revenge on her. Nevertheless you have excessive feelings of jealousy and one evening you hear that she had an awful traffic accident and her face was badly injured and she lost her beauty. Suddenly you feel an enormous happiness thinking that from then on she is not more beautiful than you are. You go to visit her in the hospital to see and be sure that she is not beautiful any more. Your friend assumes that you visited her just because you are friends and she is pleased. And your mother as a spectator feels proud of your behaviour because you made your friend pleased — so your mother experiences a double happiness, but an almost contradictory happiness in Humean terms. Such a situation is not only vastly more complex than Hume gives humans credit for, but also is more true to life — and shares you and your friend's happiness, which seems natural. However, at the same time, your mother knows your ulterior motivation and is also pleased for you on this account. Is there any morality in either you or your mother's action where nothing seems wrong with natural passions? From this perspective can it be possible to assert the source of morality is merely natural sentiments and that reason has no role?

The most plausible answer can be given from Hume's qualification of his spectator. Glossop says the Humean virtue "is whatever mental action or quality gives to a *fully informed* spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation."<sup>313</sup> He holds Hume means that the spectator must know all the relevant facts regarding the mental action or quality under consideration. But is it sufficient to be fully informed in order to show true approbation as the "mother"? At this point Glossop

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 529.

assumes that Hume has two different kinds of approbation. One is sentiment, the other is judgement. He quotes from *Treatise* the paragraph where, he believes, Hume tries to draw the limits of approbation: “In general, all sentiments of blame or praise are variable, according to our situation of nearness or remoteness, with regard to the person blam’d or prais’d, and according to the present disposition of our mind.”<sup>314</sup> Praise and blame are the sentiments of approbation or disapprobation according to Glossop. According to Hume, the variable sentiments of blame or praise

we regard not in our general decisions, but still apply the terms expressive of our liking or dislike, in the same manner, as if we remained in one point of view. Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments, or at least, of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and inalterable.<sup>315</sup>

Glossop interprets “general decisions” as “judgements of approbation or disapprobation” for him the “sentiments of approbation and disapprobation depend on actual sympathy”<sup>316</sup> and can vary according to the person and the situation; whereas “*judgements* of approbation and disapprobation are depend on an *ideal equal sympathy*”<sup>317</sup> which is “a complete disinterestedness toward all persons regardless of time and place”<sup>318</sup>. However, I do not think that Glossop’s distinction of sentiments and judgement eliminates the defect of Hume’s theory of natural sentiments. Sympathy is the actual feeling of approbation and

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<sup>314</sup> THN, 3, 582.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Glossop, “The Nature”, 530.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

disapprobation because it is the reflection of the natural benevolence in every human being. But for making moral judgements, as Glossop also notes, Hume asserts one “must... choose a point of view, common to him with others; he must move some universal principle of the human frame, and touch a string to which all mankind have an accord and symphony.”<sup>319</sup> It will be disinterested neglecting “all these differences, and render our sentiments more public and social.”<sup>320</sup> Therefore as Glossop claims “this point of view depends on the fact that moral judgements, like other judgements, are used in a social context.”<sup>321</sup> Hume returns to his theory of natural approbation afterwards by stating the importance of the disinterested situation.

He holds it could be possible to have sentiments of approbation which do not need correcting. I argue that Hume’s distinction is a proper way to identify a natural system of morality; however, I hold that this distinction shows where reason should be active in understanding morality. The type of approbation which does not need correcting is the product of our natural sentiments whereas the corrected ones are the product of reason since they are judgements (as Glossop emphasizes).

Furthermore I hold that this distinction also shows both the external and the veiled character of human nature. Hume disregards the veiled unobservable part which is usually revealed by reason and he disregards rational judgements for the sake of his chosen experimental method. However he necessarily mentions this actual sympathy, which is derived from the observable actions of humans, needs correction; whereas the ideal universal sympathy does not need any correction because it is the reflection of an idealized human character. Furthermore, there is

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<sup>319</sup> EPM, 272.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>321</sup> Glossop, “The Nature”, 530.

no proof of its naturalness – on the contrary he holds it is a result of being social. I also hold that Glossop is right in pointing out that Hume’s argument of a qualified spectator is in danger of being a class with no members in any given case. Here I contend that Hume’s naturalism is not a strict type based merely on natural sentiments. He pays attention to social aspect of moral judgements, which is a product of reason, more than natural sentiments. Thus his claim to a naturalist approach is only a result of filling the gap which occurs from rejecting the metaphysical aspects of reason and the associated transcendental explanations as a consequence of employing the Newtonian method.

Lastly, I will mention a problem regarding the approbation of the degree of advantageous qualities. Hume argues:

When we find, that almost all the virtues have such particular tendencies; and also find, that these tendencies are sufficient alone to give a strong sentiment of approbation: We cannot doubt, after this, that qualities are approv’d of, in proportion to the advantage, which results from them.<sup>322</sup>

Therefore it seems that there is a gradual ordering of passions which results from their appropriation due to the advantages provided by them. However, Hume does not mention what kind of advantages these are and who will take advantage of the qualities. Approbation of advantage differs in accordance to the self or the society. Terry Hoy states that Hume never considers morality to be reducible to self-interest. According to Hoy, the concept of morality requires a sentiment common to all mankind. Hoy emphasizes that the Humean understanding of morality does not stem from self-love but from a desire to further the interests of humanity. He claims that Humean benevolence promotes human interest, which results in the

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<sup>322</sup> THN, 3, 612.

happiness of the whole society.<sup>323</sup> However In *Book 3* Hume states “there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind”<sup>324</sup> as Hoy also contends. Hume emphasizes social interests in *Enquiry* where he omitted the passions as a whole. Considering the lack of consistency and insufficiency of natural virtues he constructs artificial virtues. For Alasdair MacIntyre, Hume mentions the arousal of certain feelings of approbation in a certain way without showing “in what way?”<sup>325</sup> Hume does not answer this question.

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<sup>323</sup> Terry Hoy, *Toward a Naturalistic Political Theory: Aristotle, Hume, Dewey, Evolutionary Biology, and Deep Ecology*, West Port CT: Praeger, 2000, 30.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 481.

<sup>325</sup> MacIntyre, “A Short History”, 174.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SYSTEM OF SYMPATHY

The system of sympathy is a defining feature of the moral philosophy of Hume. The sympathy system takes place for Hume because all human beings have the same emotions and while observing the effects of an action these emotions are transferred to others minds. The external signs which are “countenance, gesture, and voice” of any person immediately give clues about the passions of the agent to others.<sup>326</sup> Thus the passion which is felt by the agent is communicated into the spectator’s mind by observable expressions. In this chapter this system will be examined.

The use of the term “sympathy” for that which Hume believes is causal in his sympathy system needs explaining. Many interpreters have noted that Hume’s use of word “sympathy” does not match with “vulgar usage”, that is to say, the most common signification in modern English. The term “sympathy” generally denotes a particular feeling corresponding to “pity” or “compassion”. However, Hume uses the term “sympathy” as the label for his principle that coordinates the impressions of different people. Nicholas Capaldi accordingly designated “sympathy” as a mechanism, rather than a feeling.

The system of sympathy is a psychological system for the most interpreters of Hume. Hume contends that the most vivid and forceful impression of all human beings is the “self” which causes him to construct up his theory of associationism.

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<sup>326</sup> THN, 2, 317.

This system of human nature has three aspects. In *Book 1* he discusses the association of ideas. In *Book 2* he states his natural understanding of morality based on the association of impressions which are usually aroused by ideas of an observed agent. In *Book 3* Hume emphasizes the association of passions which can be transferred among human beings through sympathy (with the power of the force and vivacity). The relations have great importance both in his epistemology and in his moral theory. Especially three of the relations namely: “resemblance, contiguity and causation.” These three help the transference of the related perceptions to a passion. He claims “’Tis evident, then, there is an attraction or association among impressions, as well as among ideas; tho’ with this remarkable difference, that ideas are associated by resemblance, contiguity, and causation; and impressions only by resemblance.”<sup>327</sup> For Hume, the communication of passions is possible when there is an adequate amount of force and vivacity.

Hume claims human beings are similar in their possession of parallel passions just as they have similar bodies. He explains:

Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery, ’tis certain, that even before it begun, the preparation of the instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patient and assistants, wou’d have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror. No passion of another discovers itself immediately to the mind. We are only sensible of its causes or effects. From these we infer the passion: And consequently these give rise to our sympathy.<sup>328</sup>

Agents who are acted upon and spectators who share much common ground, for example if they are from the same culture, will have even stronger sympathetic tendencies in viewing similar events. The relations of resemblance and contiguity

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<sup>327</sup> THN, 2, 283.

<sup>328</sup> THN, 3, 576.

between the agent and spectator cause the communication of the idea of the agent's passion via the spectator's mind. The communication occurs as the association of passions. The degree of force between the idea and impression of the agent and spectator is different. The strength of the actual passion which the agent feels is transferred to the spectator's mind as an idea. The force and vivacity turns the idea of the agent into the impression of the spectator. Thus the spectator shares the passion. This means a spectator can share any feeling of any agent no matter how much a stranger the agent is. For Hume it is the system of sympathy which causes shared feelings between strangers. Here I claim that he makes an unobservable assumption as he did before about the contents of the mind and substance. He assumes that since our biological bodies have similarities our passions should also have similarities. While this may seem plausible assumption, for a strict empiricist this should not be the case. Hume strongly emphasizes gathering knowledge from observations and experiences rather than from this type of rational analogy.

He contends that the pleasure felt by a spectator upon seeing the beautiful house of a stranger can only be the result of the sympathy system.<sup>329</sup> Useful and approvable character traits cause people to feel pleasure, whereas destructive or disapproval traits cause people to feel pain. For him similar affections between people who do not know each other arising from similar events are proof of his sympathy system. However Hume does not give any explanation of how those feelings are shared even if one never owns a beautiful house and does not know the pleasure it gives to a person. His appeal to naturalism in asserting that all human beings have same feelings which is required for his theory of the attraction of the passions goes

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<sup>329</sup> This makes possible the transference of the agents' feelings to the spectator and thence the transformation of those feelings

against his general maxims of empiricism and the exclusion of any kind of innate knowledge.

Hume explains the sympathy system by the “equally wound up strings” analogy:

As in strings equally wound up, the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all the affections readily pass from one person to another, and beget correspondent movements in every human creature. When I see the effects of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes, and forms such a lively idea of the passion, as is presently converted into the passion itself. In like manner, when I perceive the causes of any emotion, my mind is convey'd to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion<sup>330</sup>.

Hume holds that as human beings are strings “equally wound up” they have common responses for similar actions which make possible the communication of the ideas of passion. Hume exemplifies this by describing the passion which occurs after observing the preparation for a surgery. When Mary, as a spectator, considers the instruments arranged for a medical operation, she imagines a similar passion of an agent who would be acted upon since she transfers “the effects of passion in the voice and gesture of that person.”<sup>331</sup> For Hume the usual passions would be “pity and terror”<sup>332</sup> because these are common for any human being. However even when the countenance, voice and gesture are the same in human beings the causes can vary from human to human. Furthermore, it is not clear how it is possible for an inexperienced spectator, Mary, to transfer the pity and terror without applying any derivation (by reason) from similar passions experienced in the past.

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

Hume's usage of the words is mentioned by Baillie as:

Hume's collective term for all secondary impressions is 'the passions'. This should be regarded as a term of art, so it is no criticism of Hume that it, or other theoretical terms, do not accord with ordinary usage (either of his time or ours). For example, it is of no import that many of these 'passions' do not seem particularly 'passionate'. Calling the passions secondary impressions indicates that they derive from original impressions. They are 'founded on pain and pleasure', either immediately, such as when a sensation of pain leads to a desire for it to stop, or via an idea, such as when the mere thought of pain can cause distress.<sup>333</sup>

Hume assumes that we know the causes of physical expressions of emotions which are introduced by sympathy, since it is possible to observe the effects from the external signs in facial expressions and conversation that communicate the idea which will be soon transformed into an impression. Then the impression will gain force and vivacity to a degree that it turns into the passion itself, and at last it produces an emotion equal to the original affection. This is the process in which, he assumes how his system of sympathy works. It is not difficult to show that the similarities of human beings arising from their natural passions are communicated to a greater or lesser extent depending on the power of those passions. The problem here is made manifest if we adapt Hume's missing shade of blue into missing feelings. Take a person who has never had a surgery: is it possible for him or her to sympathise with the person who is going to have surgery? Perhaps yes, as Hume supposes, through observing the patient's countenance. It could be possible from the patient's countenance. However, what if the person who is going to have surgery is a mother and is pretending to be happy by hiding her pains so as not to make her children upset? Will there still be a way to share her sorrows then? At this point an anecdote by Nasreddin Hodja, who holds a similar but more realistic understanding than Hume on this issue, sheds light.

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<sup>333</sup> Baillie, *Hume on Morality*, 39.

One day Hodja climbs onto the roof in order to do retiling and somehow falls off when his foot slips. People gather around him immediately and give him advice but the Hodja does not pay attention to any of the help offered says: “Bring me somebody who fell from a roof.” He does not believe that those who never fallen from a roof can sympathize with him. As comic as this tale is, it nevertheless highlights an important gap in Hume’s logic. Now, I want to give a break to Hume’s assumption and bring in an afflictive event about an odd sympathetic feeling from United States.

## **5.1 THE POSSIBILITY OR THE PROBABILITY OF SYMPATHY**

Hume’s ambition to set up a new science in morality similar to natural sciences results in his using parallel terminology to that of science. Words such as “attraction” and “association” are crucial in his system. He constructs a theory of perception involving principles of various associations – ideas, impressions and passions and in his moral theory the system of sympathy is a fundamental principle of human nature. The operation of sympathy depends, in part, on human perceptions. However the relations are also important because the process works through the relations of “resemblance, contiguity, and causation” between perceptions. Hume explains it as follows:

Our affections depend more upon ourselves, and the internal operations of the mind, than any other impressions; for which reason they arise more naturally from the imagination, and from every lively idea we form of them.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> THN, 2, 319.

To illuminate how the system of sympathy operates with the aid of the relations, he starts from observing (as he usually does) the lively impression of the self which each human has. The significant question is how a passion transforms into the passion itself; and how the principles of resemblance, contiguity, and causation aid this process. He finds that

'Tis evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us, and that our consciousness gives us so lively conception of our own person that 'tis not possible to imagine, that any thing can in this particular go beyond it. Whatever object, therefore, is related to ourselves must be conceived with a little vivacity of conception, according to the foregoing principles; and tho' this relation shou'd not be so strong as that of causation, it must still have a considerable influence.<sup>335</sup>

It is explicitly stated that this lively impression of our selves can communicate its force or vivacity to impressions and ideas related to it. We can formulate Hume's sympathy with a simple example. Imagine that my husband has received bad news and this has made him unhappy. This passion, unhappiness, affects his appearance and behaviour: He has a lamentable countenance, a weepy face, and he is clearly mortified. When I perceive his appearance and behaviour, I, as a spectator, receive these as a sign of his unhappiness since it is known from my past experience that such appearance and behaviour is in general caused by that passion. Furthermore, my husband has a closer relation with me by resemblance and contiguity than any other person. The resemblance is not just in the general manner in which all humans resemble one another; in fact it is more than this: we share common interests and likes and dislikes with each other. In addition, because he is so close to me he explicitly tells me his bad news. I have formed an idea of my husband's unhappiness. As he is my husband, related to me by resemblance and contiguity,

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<sup>335</sup> THN, 2, 317.

the lively formation of my “self” which “is always intimately present with us”<sup>336</sup> provides its force and vivacity to my idea of my husband’s unhappiness and translates this idea into the equivalent impression. I come to feel unhappy and so share my husband’s sorrow. For Hume, this is the process of the double effect of the impressions. There is both transference of an impression and transformation of an idea into an impression.

Hume claims:

’Tis certain, that sympathy is not always limited to the present moment, but that we often feel by communication the pains and pleasures of others, which are not in being, and which we only anticipate by the force of imagination.<sup>337</sup>

According to Hume, sympathy is a lively idea that is transformed into an impression. We can also feel sympathy towards any person, whether we know them or not, when we consider his or her future possible or probable condition. If we can envision the probable outcomes of an act so vividly in our thoughts in such a way that we become concerned and feel the pleasure or the pain of another agent even before any act has happened we have converted the vivid idea into an impression. To illustrate this moral notion of sympathy, Hume gives an example. He claims that when we see a person who is unknown to us sleeping in a field in danger of being trod upon by horses, we should immediately run to help him. The reason for such a reaction is that our idea of feeling the probable pain of being trod on by a horse causes an impression, which results in sympathy to a stranger threatened by that pain.<sup>338</sup> This feeling of sympathy, from which our moral

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> THN, 2, 385.

<sup>338</sup> THN, 2, 386.

judgments arise, is the basic character of human nature. He underlines it: “in this I shou’d be actuated by the same principle of sympathy, which makes me concern’d for the present sorrows of a stranger. The bare mention of this is sufficient.”<sup>339</sup> He determines that since sympathy is

nothing but a lively idea converted into an impression, ’tis evident, that, in considering the future possible or probable condition of any person, we may enter into it with so vivid a conception as to make it our own concern; and by that means be sensible of pains and pleasures, which neither belong to ourselves, nor at the present instant have any real existence<sup>340</sup>.

This is a brief explication of how the system of sympathy occurs or should occur from a Humean viewpoint. Hume is clear that he is attempting to found a moral system which is not founded on reason. He states that his position is obviously far from reason. Bailie says about Hume that:

In drawing conclusions concerning the prospect of pain or pleasure, reason functions purely in the service of the passions, working out the probability of some goal that is already preordained by passion, or the best means to achieve it. While motivation of the will requires both beliefs and desires, and therefore input from both reason and passion, Hume’s theory clearly gives desires a ‘structural priority’ over beliefs, in setting ends rather than means.<sup>341</sup>

Robert Solomon thinks that the word “sympathy” is a vehicle which is used by most of the sentimentalist philosophers in order to reject the “selfishness” of human nature put forward by Hobbes and Mandeville. Solomon assumes philosophers like David Hume and Adam Smith state that “sympathy” is the spark

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>341</sup> Baillie, *Hume on Morality*, 88.

of altruism without any thought of self-interest. He argues: “But altruism like benevolence doesn’t involve any sharing of feelings, as sympathy does”<sup>342</sup> He thinks altruism may be understood as the behavioural analogue of benevolence and sympathy is often used as a synonym for benevolence like wishing well to others. Solomon assumes both philosophers argued for a much more humane and admirable picture of human nature against the “monstrous”<sup>343</sup> theories of Hobbes and Mandeville, and their followers. He believes both that human and animal nature are neither a “war of all against all” nor a “mindless beehive”. He claims both animal and human nature give rise to sympathetic communities characterized by “fellow-feeling” and hatred of seeing the fellow creatures suffer. However even if we can reject the selfish school’s understanding of human nature, that does not automatically mean that therefore the entirety of our actions are motivated by benevolence. Before commenting on the principles of the sympathetic system, I want to mention a frighteningly poignant incident. The event, which occurred in America, is now very well-known by ethicists. It is also mentioned in Louis Pojman’s introduction of the book titled *Ethics Discovering Right and Wrong*. He writes about an infamous event in 1964 which is now known as “Genovese syndrome”<sup>344</sup>. The incident concerns a young New York woman named Catherine Susan Genovese, familiarly known as Kitty. She was the eldest daughter of her family. She was an Italian American girl who grew up in Brooklyn. In 1954 her

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<sup>342</sup> R. C. Solomon, “Sympathy As A “Natural” Sentiment”, *Business Science and Ethics. Ruffin Series in Business Ethics*, 53–58, 2004, 56.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>344</sup> This summary is taken from Martin Gansberg, “38 Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call Police”, *The New York Times*, March 27, 1964.

mother witnessed a murder and the family moved from the city. She chose to live with a partner in an apartment block after her family left the city.

It is reported that Kitty arrived home in the early morning as was her wont, and parked about thirty metres from the door to her apartments. As she approached the door she was attacked by a man named Winston Moseley who stabbed her with a knife. Kitty screamed out in pain, and although nearly a dozen of her neighbours heard her cry out none of them responded to the distressed cries of a woman in the night. Only one of the neighbours was brave enough to shout from his window, which caused Moseley to flee immediately. Kitty attempted to reach her front door but was hampered by the severity of her injuries. Ten minutes later Moseley returned to the building and found the wounded Kitty, whereupon he stabbed her several more times and then raped her while she was incapacitated. The attack lasted for the best part of half an hour, during which time none of the neighbours who heard Kitty's cries for help called the police. Eventually, when Kitty was near to death, one neighbour did call the police who arrived on the scene in a matter of minutes. Kitty dies on the way to the hospital.

Two weeks after Kitty's death news of this gruesome event circulated in an article in a newspaper written by Martin Gansberg for *The New York Times*. He encapsulated the event in the terrifying headline as "Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police"<sup>345</sup>. What was more terrifying than the event was the explanation of a neighbour who witnessed some parts of the protracted murder but did not call the police because of not wanting to "get involved." For Gansberg the inspector of the incident was "baffled not because it is a murder, but because

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<sup>345</sup> Martin Gansberg, "38 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call Police", *The New York Times*, March 27, 1964.

the “good people” failed to call the police.”<sup>346</sup> After reminding this incident Pojman asked: “Who are our neighbours?”<sup>347</sup> According to Hume our neighbours are the ones who through propinquity should have so much resemblance and contiguity with us that it should not be difficult for them to sympathize. Moreover Hume, notes that

this phenomenon of the double sympathy, and its tendency to cause love, may contribute to the production of the kindness, which we naturally bear our relations and acquaintance. Custom and relation make us enter deeply into the sentiments of others; and whatever fortune we suppose to attend them, is render’d present to us by the imagination, and operates as if originally our own. We rejoice in their pleasures, and grieve for their sorrows, merely from the force of sympathy. Nothing that concerns them is indifferent to us; and as this correspondence of sentiments is the natural attendant of love, it readily produces that affection.<sup>348</sup>

Which natural virtue can cause a silence for the sake of not getting involved? Did all the neighbours who saw Kitty lack the “natural attendant of love” or natural benevolence? Did all the neighbours who heard Kitty’s cries lack impressions of pain? Why did the system of sympathy not work for Kitty? Or did all her neighbours just happen to unfortunately sympathize with Moseley? Or it is perhaps because morality, unlike Hume supposes, is founded on reason? For as he famously states reason cannot be the foundation of morals because: “’Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. ‘Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> L. J. Pojman, *Ethics Discovering Right and Wrong*, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994, 2.

<sup>348</sup> THN, 2, 389.

least uneasiness of... some person unknown to me.”<sup>349</sup> The simple explanation is that the neighbours chose “not to get involved,” contrary to benevolence, because they did not want to risk bringing any trouble on themselves. As we can see, this moral choice is a product of reasoning. Does this mean that benevolence is not a natural sentiment but an artificial one which is displayed only on certain occasions? That it is only something that can be utilized when it carries no possibility of risk to one’s self-interest? If it is contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world it is rational to choose not to “get involved” in an incident of murder. Thus, how can it be contrary to our sentiments, whether natural or artificial, “to get involved” in an event if human beings have a constant nature considering benevolence or humanity as the basic feature of this nature?

## **5.2 THE COMMUNICATIVE POWER OF SYMPATHY**

There is no doubt that Hume is correct in his assumption that sympathy is an important factor in moral behaviour, however, the application of the Newtonian method coupled with his attempted rejection of reason, gives rise to many inconsistencies in the structure of his sympathy system. He thinks of sympathy as a principle of communication in terms of a Newtonian science of man. In his examples above, and in many of others, the passion of one person gives rise to the very same passion in another. The passions are claimed to be “communicated” from one person to another.

This idea is presently converted into an impression, and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity, as to become the very passion itself, and produce an equal emotion, as any original affection. However instantaneous this change of the idea into an impression may be, it proceeds from certain views and reflections, which will not escape the

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<sup>349</sup> THN, 2, 416.

strict scrutiny of a philosopher, tho' they may the person himself, who makes them.<sup>350</sup>

Like the gravitational force in physics (which is assumed by Capaldi) or infectious vectors in biology, Hume's conception of sympathy is a kind of emotional force which has infectious nature. Like infectious diseases, which are easily transmissible from one person to another, the human passions can also be transmissible from one person to another. However, sympathy can do more than transmission. Sympathy not only transfers passion but also transforms them into different but complementary passions. Therefore, poverty in one person, via the operation of sympathy, can give rise to the feeling of helping the poor in another and pain in one person can eventually cause pity in another. Hume states

Our affections depend more upon ourselves, and the internal operations of the mind, than any other impressions; for which reason they arise more naturally from the imagination, and from every lively idea we form of them. This is the nature and cause of sympathy; and 'tis after this manner we enter so deep into the opinions and affections of others, whenever we discover them.<sup>351</sup>

To illustrate how this works let us assume that one has given rise to feelings of respect in another person with regard to oneself. In this case one should feel that this respect is due to some positive quality one possesses. Thus, the variety of things for which one may be respected associate to the variety of qualities that one can be proud of. But how can one to know this? From the perspective of Hume's new science, one's prior experiences and observations of appearances are a signpost to passions. Passions affect a person's appearance and behaviour. Therefore, as one already has a concept of the characteristic behaviours and

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 317.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 319.

appearances that accompany respect, it is possible for one to take any such signals as signs of that passion. From this one forms an idea of the other person's pleasure, and via the sympathy system, one forms an idea which is converted into an impression. Seeing that one is the object of another's respect due to certain positive qualities one possesses, one feels pleasure and hence one becomes the object of this feeling, which is the indirect passion: pride. This is how the sympathy system directs the passions of respect and pride.

According to Hume sympathy is a fundamental principle of morality which depends on natural impressions. The difference between the association of ideas and the sympathy system is obvious. The association of impressions is the organization of impressions within the mind; however, the sympathy system is the organization of the impressions within the minds of two or more people. The sympathy system can both communicate passions from one person to another and also organize passions. Therefore, sympathy, which is a fundamental principle of human nature, plays the important role in Humean understanding of morality.

The definition of virtue, which is given in eight steps in chapter four, can be summarized as: "every quality of the mind, which is *useful* or *agreeable* to the *person himself* or to *others*, communicates a pleasure to the spectator, engages his esteem, and is admitted under the honourable denomination of virtue or merit"<sup>352</sup>

To put it more clearly, step by step, as a result of Adam's observation himself and Mary

1. Adam considers reactions as manifestation of traits
2. Adam considers the natural affinities as coming from the reflections of traits

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<sup>352</sup> EPM, 277.

3. Adam finds the acts either positive or negative to himself or to Mary
4. Adam consequently approves or disapproves of them.

It is held that Hume has a strict sense of experience-based theory and experimentalism which can be seen in the following passage from *Enquiries*:

Adam, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of water that it would suffocate him, or from the light and warmth of fire that it would consume him. No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.<sup>353</sup>

Adam can sense his inner feelings, and through introspection and drawing upon the accumulated knowledge of “daily life” experiences, he can infer that these feelings are common to all human beings. Furthermore, by applying some natural principles considering pain and pleasure he determines which character traits are approvable or unapprovable. Baillie claims that:

Hume takes the traditional sceptical worry of the existence of an external world to be an ‘idle question’, in that any argument about it is pointless: if the conclusion is negative, it will be literally unbelievable, and carry no force with us; if the conclusion is positive, it will be equally impotent, being utterly unnecessary. As with the case of causation, he chooses rather to trace the origin of our idea of and our belief in an external world, showing how they can come neither from the senses alone, nor reason as traditionally conceived of, but emerges from the associative principles governing the imagination.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> THU, 1, 27.

<sup>354</sup> Baillie, *Hume on Morality*, 31.

He says that, according to Hume, belief in the social world is a fact of human nature which does not need any further justification. It is the sympathy mechanism which provides humans with the ability to detect or simulate others' thoughts and passions in the self. Baille says: "While one might theorize that spectators can only observe others' behaviour directly, and not their thoughts, our natural experience is of a world of people who have thoughts, sensations, feelings, and so on."<sup>355</sup>

These thoughts, sensations, and feelings occur in the veiled part of human nature which is difficult to observe. As Hume supposes, we sympathize more easily with someone who resembles us more, or someone who is more contiguous or more related to us by causation. Therefore our ability to respond sympathetically to others differs due to these variations in our relations. Hume claims that to sympathize with someone who is known and beloved is easier than to sympathize with foreigners. It is obvious that this kind of "communicating sympathy" can provide subjective moral judgments.

Most interpreters hold that the subjective nature of passions is overridden by recourse to the "general point of view." Hume establishes the system of indirect passions to provide an answer to the question that how our moral judgements occur. For him nature provides humans with moral approbation and disapprobation by indirect passion and nature also provides moral sentiments which result in moral judgements. The only difference between moral sentiments and indirect passions is their object. Indirect passions always take a person — either the "self" or "another person" — as an object; whereas moral sentiments take character traits as an object. If, for example, I am ill and after a hard day's work need rest, peace and quiet, but this very night my neighbours, with whom I share an adjoining wall, have friends over and decide to watch a loud action movie on their entertainment

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 60.

system and simultaneously test out the abilities of their new surround-sound speaker system. Naturally, I can feel every powerful punch of every fist on my own face and feel every bullet fired pass through my own head. In this situation, Hume posits that the first mental operation is an indirect passion, such as a feeling of hatred towards my immediate neighbours. This disapprobation is transferred into a moral sentiment relating to the character trait — that is, making loud noise at night without considering the comfort of neighbours — which I then extend to all people who demonstrate this kind of trait, and so this becomes a moral judgement. In moral sentiments there is the possibility of being mistaken; however, as mentioned before, Hume supposes that moral judgements undergo correction via the “general point of view.” Since moral sentiments are subject to the general point of view they have the power of correcting the subjective errors of indirect passions. In his words: “we fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation.”<sup>356</sup>

However, this chain of reasoning has not prevented Hume from begging the question, for how is it that human beings have arrived at this general point of view? Hume’s answer is, from natural passions, which when inserted back into the equation forms a cyclical pattern that goes on ad infinitum.

### **5.3 THE PROBLEM OF SYMPATHY THROUGH INDUCTION**

As I mentioned before the famous problem of induction in philosophy is a heritage to us from Hume. It is sometimes called as Hume problem. The traditional interpretation of Hume’s causal inferences — which is generally held by scholars — is the Reid-Beattie-Green view. According to this view Hume is an extreme

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<sup>356</sup> THN, 3, 581-2.

sceptic who is advising his followers to stop making causal inferences. For J. W. Lenz this understanding has changed after Norman Kemp Smith's analysis. He notes Kemp Smith believes that Hume defended causal beliefs by showing their natural character. However, for Lenz, it is not clear whether Hume really defends causal inference or not.<sup>357</sup>

The distinction between "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact" is fundamental to Hume's philosophy. An important interpreter of Hume, Antony Flew, named this distinction "Hume's Fork." Hume's Fork is commonly related to Kant's analytic-synthetic distinction. In a similar way, Ayer thinks: "a proposition is analytic when its validity depends solely on the definitions of the symbols it contains and synthetic when its validity is determined by the facts of experience."<sup>358</sup> Although there are difficulties, Hume's distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact is commonly acknowledged as a reflection of the distinction between "analytic" and "synthetic".

It is held that for years, David Stove has been taken as the authority regarding Hume's theory on induction. However, it is also held that Kenneth Winkler's "non-sceptical" interpretation changed the old view. Winkler assumes "Hume's skepticism may consist in a refusal to affirm the existence of real powers."<sup>359</sup> Although lots of ideas have been promulgated on the problem of induction, there is still no any proven or generally accepted idea, a fact which reveals that the problem has not been solved yet.

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<sup>357</sup> J. W. Lenz, "Hume's Defense of Causal Inference", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19: 559-567, 1958.

<sup>358</sup> A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971, 105.

<sup>359</sup> Kenneth P. Winkler "The New Hume", *The Philosophical Review*, 100: 541-579, 1991, 566.

### 5.3.1 The Problem of Induction in General

While we do not come across with the term “induction” in Hume’s own writings, we find instead the term “Causal inference” in the accounts of Hume. Although Hume’s causal inferences are separate entities, when they are added to one another in a chain this is tantamount to what is ordinarily now known as induction. In addition to this, cause can be defined as an object which comes after another object; and all these objects resemble the first one which is being followed. This means that the occurrence of the second one is tied to the occurrence of the first one. Hume discusses this in *Enquiries of Human Understanding* in a famous paragraph:

Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise to-morrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, *that it will rise*. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.<sup>360</sup>

Hume’s focus is on about the justification of inductive arguments where there is no logical necessity that the future will resemble the past. Most interpreters of Hume deal with the causal inference problem. The traditional understanding is to place Hume as an extreme sceptic who advises his followers to cease making causal inferences. However, according to Kemp-Smith’s new understanding, Hume does not intend to eliminate making causal inferences; on the contrary, he

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<sup>360</sup> THU, 1, 25-6.

wants to defend how natural it is to make causal inferences.<sup>361</sup> Still the debate goes on. John W. Lenz believes Kemp Smith does not so satisfactorily show in which sense Hume defends causal inferences and cannot clearly figure out the natural character which provides the grounds for the defence of causal inferences.<sup>362</sup> Lenz tries to show that Hume does not defend or “justify” the causal inferences, arguing that Hume’s raising of the problem of justifying causal inferences is within a context of a deterministic theory of belief. According to Hume in the actions of matter there is no liberty, so they are necessary. He says:

’Tis universally acknowledg’d, that the operations of external bodies are necessary, and that in the communication of their motion, in their attraction, and mutual cohesion, there are not the least traces of indifference or liberty. Every object is determined by an absolute fate to a certain degree and direction of its motion, and can no more depart from that precise line, in which it moves, than it can convert itself into an angel, spirit, or any superior substance. The actions, therefore, of matter are to be regarded as instances of necessary actions; and whatever is in this respect on the same footing with matter, must be acknowledg’d to be necessary.<sup>363</sup>

Therefore, for Lenz, Hume concludes that since causal inferences are necessary and natural, they are unavoidable. Hume’s aim is to show the possibility of explaining mental phenomena by applying the laws of causality in the same way that Newton used these laws to describe physical phenomena. The necessary connection between physical events is their constant conjunction; since physical events are also represented in the mental sphere, they should have necessary connection as well. According to Lenz the best examples of Hume’s deterministic

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<sup>361</sup> Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, 88–98, 1964.

<sup>362</sup> J. W. Lenz, “Hume’s Defense of Causal Inference”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19: 559-567, 1958, 559.

<sup>363</sup> THN, 2, 399–400.

account of mental phenomena is his assumptions about the passions. For Hume, passions are determined by the natures and circumstances of humans.

Sometimes the definition of a cause is made by the followers of Hume as such: An object which is followed by the other and whose appearance carries the thought to the following one.

Through our experience and observation, if any event  $E_1$  is followed by an event  $E_2$  then a new event  $E_1^1$  will lead us to expect that  $E_2^1$  will also come. This is also true when the contrary situation arises. This is called causal inference. Hume states that the necessary connection is between the premises and conclusion, and it is not confined to premises only.

Hume argues that the sum of the observations which happens in turn is called the “constant conjunction”.<sup>364</sup> This incident gives birth to causal relations as habits. It is this habit which makes us wait for the new second premise as conclusion. Causal inference is the result of neither reason nor experience, but the imagination following definite laws.<sup>365</sup> Hume argues that experience gives us the constant conjunctions of objects and imagination, following definite laws, leads us to infer a necessary connection between such objects. However it is not clear from which objects imagination infers a necessary connection. To recall Reid’s famous example about day and night: although the arrival of night is unexceptionally followed by the termination of day, we never say that day causes night. Reid claims:

All our volitions and efforts to act, all our deliberations, our purposes and promises, imply a belief of active power in ourselves; our counsels,

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<sup>364</sup> THN, 1, Section 1, and Section 4, Section 6.

<sup>365</sup> THN, 1, 88.

exhortations, and commands, imply a belief of active power in those to whom they are addressed.<sup>366</sup>

Another salient example has been noted by A. C. Ewing.

For instance, the sounding of a hooter at 8 a.m. in London is regularly followed not only by men going to work at that factory in London but by men going to work at a factory in Manchester which also opens at 8 a.m. Yet everybody would say that, while the arrivals at the factory in London were caused by the hooter in that factory, the arrivals at Manchester were not.<sup>367</sup>

Ewing argues that if constant conjunction were true we would be forced to say that the sounding of the hooter in London is the cause of the workers entering the Manchester factory. He maintains that

for memory to be possible ...[one's] present state of consciousness must be genuinely determined by, not merely follow on, the past event remembered. There can be no trusting my memory of yesterday's events if it was not really determined by the events said to have been remembered.<sup>368</sup>

Additionally, causal inferences do not always result from experiences from a large amount of events. Ewing adds to Reid's day/night example: "the fact, for instance, that in infants the growth of hair is regularly followed by the growth of teeth; or that in human beings birth regularly follows the tenth return of the moon since

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<sup>366</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Reprinted in *The Works of Thomas Reid*, D.D. Now fully collected with selections from his unpublished letters. Preface by Sir William Hamilton Bart. Vol: 2 London: Longman, 1863, 517.

<sup>367</sup> A. C. Ewing, *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy*, London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1951, 161.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

conception.”<sup>369</sup> These examples are clearly sequential constant conjunctions but are equally clearly not causal inferences. Sometimes a causal inference can be made after only a single event. C. J. Ducasse exemplifies this with an experiment he conducted with his students. He brings

into the room and place on the desk a paper-covered parcel tied with string in the ordinary way, and asks the students to observe closely what occurs. Then, proceeding slowly so that observation may be easy, I put my hand on the parcel. The end of the parcel the students face then at once glows. I then ask them what caused it to glow at that moment, and they naturally answer that the glowing was caused by what I did to the parcel immediately before.<sup>370</sup>

Here it is asserted that what he had done caused the reaction of glowing even though the students had seen the event for the first (and probably the last) time. Thus he concludes that Hume misrepresents causality as constant conjunction since this is “not repetition of a certain act of mine followed each time by the glow, but one single case of sequence of the latter upon the former.”<sup>371</sup>

According to some interpreters, Kant provides one of the most influential objections to Hume’s understanding of the lack of empirical origin in causal inferences. Kant answers Hume by disputing that no event can be an object of experience for a human if it does not depend on a causal relation to other events. Thus Kant accepts Hume’s argument that causal relations do not have an empirical origin, but unlike him, he reaches the conclusion that the concept of causation should be innate. He assumes:

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<sup>369</sup> C. J. Ducasse, *Nature, Mind and Death*, La Selle: Open Court Publishing, 1951, 94.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

time contains the sensible a priori condition of the possibility of a continuous advance of the existing to what follows, the understanding, by virtue of the unity of apperception, is the a priori condition of the possibility of a continuous determination of all positions for the appearances in this time through the series of causes and effects, the former of which inevitably lead to the existence of the latter, and so render the empirical knowledge of the time-relations valid universally for all time, and therefore objectively valid.<sup>372</sup>

The only way to justify induction is by using inductive reasoning and this makes the problem a circular argument. These are composed of the chains of causal necessity.

In dealing with the problem of induction, Hume also attempts to distinguish good inductive habits from the bad ones.<sup>373</sup> This raises two difficulties, one epistemological and the other metaphysical. The epistemological problem is in finding a method to identify good habits from bad habits. Metaphysics, on the other hand, brings forth a difficulty, commonly known as “the despair of philosophy”, which holds that there can be no method to identify the good from the bad.

It seems that there is no solution for the problem induction in relation to the metaphysical problem because we can find no criterion for identifying the reliability of inductions.

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<sup>372</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, N.Kemp-Smith (trans) New York: Martin's Press. 1965. 232–233.

<sup>373</sup> From the mere repetition of any past impression, even to infinity, there never will arise any new original idea, such as that of a necessary connexion; and the number of impressions has in this case no more effect than if we confin'd ourselves to one only. But tho' this reasoning seems just and obvious; yet as it wou'd be folly to despair too soon, we shall continue the thread of our discourse; and having found, that after the discovery of the constant conjunction of any objects, we always draw an inference from one object to another, we shall now examine the nature of that inference, and of the transition from the impression to the idea. Perhaps 'twill appear in the end, that the necessary connexion depends on the inference, instead of the inference's depending on the necessary connexion. THN, 1, 88.

### 5.3.2 The Problem of Induction in Moral theory

One of the most famous characteristics of Humean human nature-centred ethics is his assumption that making moral evaluation is not an activity of reason but of our natural sentiment. In his well-known claim he says: “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.”<sup>374</sup> Given this, he must offer a basis to our judgements other than reason. Taking what Hume assumes about induction into consideration, we have no way to justify the moral character of approval and disapproval other than making inferences from our observations or setting a natural sentiment for our inferences.

According to Hume moral sentiments are necessary for making moral judgements. Remember that Mary and Adam can feel approbation and disapprobation in a subjective way because their emotions are dependent on relations such as resemblance and contiguity. Before examining moral judgement I want to look at “love of fame” — a passion which causes people to make judgements.

An important characteristic of human nature is, in Hume’s words, love of fame. Hume assumes that from our early years we make judgements about other people and others also judge us. There is a natural tendency to gain the approval of others and so people conduct themselves in response to other’s judgements. Hume calls this desire the “love of fame.” Love of fame is a natural passion that causes reciprocal evaluating of actions and character traits. Introspective self-opinion is augmented by the belief that someone else holds the same opinions about you. Love of fame provides the impetus for this judgement. Hume believes “This constant habit of surveying ourselves, as it were, in reflection, keeps alive all the

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<sup>374</sup> THN, 2, 415.

sentiments of right and wrong”<sup>375</sup> and that it produces, especially “in noble natures, a certain reverence for themselves as well as others; which is the surest guardian of every virtue.”<sup>376</sup> He is referring a general character of moral language which is a product of our social sympathies. It is the general moral language which allows Adam to judge both himself and Mary from our “steady point of view” or in other words the appropriate perspective of morality. According to Hume, the “general point of view” is “the most perfect morality with which we are acquainted.”<sup>377</sup>

For him morality is what we approve or disapprove of, or we love or hate in other people. He develops a theory of moral evaluation in order to eliminate the problems arising from the subjectivity of point of view in the process of sympathy. As mentioned before, Hume’s sympathy system works more easily and strongly through friends and fellow citizens than with the strangers and foreigners because of the associative principles of resemblance, contiguity, and causation. Therefore our sympathetic responses vary with the variations in our relations. To account for this contradiction he claims that our moral judgements alone do not indicate our approval or disapproval of character traits, as they represent the incident not merely from our perspective but rather we use the “steady and general points of view — the most perfect morality — in order to correct our subjective sentiments. According to Rachel Cohon this causes two grave difficulties for Hume’s theory. The first one is that Humean “moral evaluations become inductive, empirical beliefs about what would feel if we really occupied the imagined common point of

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<sup>375</sup> EPM, 276.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

view, and hence are the deliverances of causal reason.”<sup>378</sup> She thinks this view contradicts “Hume’s claim that the making of a moral evaluation is not an activity of reason but of sentiment.”<sup>379</sup> Cohon stresses that Hume’s Newtonian project is the “hunting for the causal origins or “principles” of all things mental.”<sup>380</sup> For her, “Hume is explaining the causal origin of the moral sentiments using the mechanism of sympathy”<sup>381</sup> which involves communication of sentiments via the force and vivacity of the passions. For her, moral judgements “come into being when the pleasure or uneasiness that people receive from a certain quality of mind is transferred”<sup>382</sup> to the spectator through sympathy. Briefly, for her, “Hume says that if we judge from our particular points of view”<sup>383</sup> we can reach ambiguity and contradictions and thus we become unable to realize the communication of the passions. The problem, in this system, results in the requirement of the general point of view which raises the question whether Hume is an anti-rationalist sentimentalist or not. As Cohon shows, it is possible to claim that “moral judgements *are* counterfactual beliefs based on experience and his antirationalism

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<sup>378</sup> Rachel Cohon, “The Common Point of View in Hume’s Ethics”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57: 827–850, 1997, 827.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., 830.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid., 831.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 834.

is only skin deep.”<sup>384</sup> Cohon thinks Hume is “an antirationalist sentimentalist about moral evaluations themselves, which is what he says he is.”<sup>385</sup>

Hume rejects moral rationalism because he thinks it cannot provide the motivation for morality. However, the necessity of recourse to the general point of view undermines his rejection of reason. Do not forget poor Kitty, and the improbability of her neighbours’ sympathizing with Moseley as if they had a point of view close to him. This converts moral evaluations into inductive empirical beliefs, based on past experience of the effects of people’s character traits on their closest associates. For Hume these kinds of beliefs are the inferences of causal reason and contradict his own general maxim that to make moral evaluation is not to infer or conclude but rather to feel in a certain way.

To resolve this contradiction Cohon interprets Hume as claiming that when we regard the general point of view “we always have *actual* feelings, and do not merely infer what feelings we would have if we were differently situated.”<sup>386</sup> She believes that moral evaluations “express, or describe these actual (although often calm and faint) feelings rather than conclusions of causal reasoning.”<sup>387</sup> Cohon supposes that there are two sentiments. The first type which needs correction is the “situated” and the second “moral sentiment” which is generated by the imagination. Cohon concludes that “moral sentiments are the variable ones, not the steady ones.”<sup>388</sup> She says that Hume categorizes passions as “conspecific” in *Book*

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 835.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 836.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 838.

2, where he identifies passions as occurring in pairs, which are further categorised by their strength as either calm or violent. She further shows that for Hume calm passions are confused by the operation of reason. Calm passions occur when there is a remote object and violent ones when there is a close object. In a similar way Charlotte Brown thinks, following Ardal, that “Hume takes moral sentiments to be calm forms of love and hatred.”<sup>389</sup> She maintains that “Hume starts with our more personal, irregular, and violent loves and hatred — feeling that aren’t themselves moral — and describes the process by which we transform these non-moral feelings into moral loves and hates.”<sup>390</sup> On the other hand, she notes, Don Garret, who interprets Hume as a cognitive scientist, thinks that moral approval and disapproval are not the calm types of love and hatred. For him moral approval and disapproval are the products of a non-inferential element in human nature. Considering the Copy Principle, he believes, Hume thinks that “such a non-inferential element would require the existence of distinctively moral impressions.”<sup>391</sup> For Garret our experiences start at the first stage of our cognitive history. He says: “Proponents of what I call the “skeptical interpretation” hold that this conclusion is an epistemic valuation to the effect that inductive inferences are entirely lacking in epistemic warrant or evidential value.”<sup>392</sup> Garret insists on the necessity of a non-inferential element from the first stage. On the contrary, for Brown, this interpretation causes a close relation between the Humean type of benevolence and the Hutchesonian model which Hume rejects. Hutcheson

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<sup>389</sup> Charlotte Brown, “Is the General Point of View the Moral Point of View?” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 62: 197-203, 2001, 197.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>391</sup> Garrett, “Précis of Cognition and Commitment in Hume’s Philosophy” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 62: 185-189, 2001, also quoted in Brown 193.

<sup>392</sup> Garrett, “Précis of Cognition and Commitment”, 186.

constructs benevolence from the first stage since he believes God implanted the moral sense in human beings. Garrett uses this interpretation to save Hume from rational inferences.

What is common to all these interpreters is that they consider that Hume holds an anti-rationalist position. They try to help Hume to obviate the threat posed by the inductive character of moral evaluation resulting from the “general point of view.” They all look for a sentimentalist interpretation. Both Brown and Garrett declare that Hume provides a naturalistic account of moral evaluation. Pall Ardal is also on the side of sentimentalist interpretation. For him it is “only qualities of mind”<sup>393</sup> that stimulate the indirect passions which enable us to call “the person evaluated as vicious or virtuous.”<sup>394</sup> He maintains that

This presupposes that beliefs about what these qualities are, and not special qualities of or relations to the evaluator, are the sole determining factors in arousing those passions that constitute evaluations. The disinterested, objective point of view is presupposed.<sup>395</sup>

To characterize people legitimately as “Adam is a good man” or “Mary is a bad woman” is an outcome of the processing of the indirect passions which arises from “contemplation of qualities of mind or character”<sup>396</sup> and in order to evaluate what these are we need “an objective, unbiased point of view.”<sup>397</sup> According to Ardal

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<sup>393</sup> Pall Ardal, “Review: Depression and Reason”, *Ethics*, 103: 540-550, 1993, 544.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 544–545.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 545.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 546.

the contemplation of the character of the person arouses a special kind of sentiment, which in turn gives rise to that special kind of love and hatred, which arouses the special kind of benevolence and anger that leads one to say that the person deserves good or ill, as the case may be.<sup>398</sup>

Thus he concludes that the evaluations of persons are for Hume special kinds of indirect passions. On the other hand, Annette Baier holds a very different view. She believes that “absence of contradiction is reason’s minimal demand.”<sup>399</sup> According to Baier, Hume defends his version of moral judgement by claiming that “reflexive self-understanding is the perfection of theoretical reason”<sup>400</sup> where “reflexive self-approval”<sup>401</sup> is the perfection of practical reason. Baier asserts that for Hume moral sentiment is self-approving, but during the exposition of how this process actually works Hume’s “antirationalist mask slips revealingly, and we are reminded that the love of truth is as inventive and lively a passion as any other, and one that freely cooperates with our moral passions. It is no slave.”<sup>402</sup> Unlike the others mentioned above, Baier states that “Hume’s project all along has been not so much to dethrone reason as to enlarge our conception of it, to make it social and passionate.”<sup>403</sup> Even though Ardal confesses that “there are passages that seem at first sight embarrassing for the interpretation”<sup>404</sup> he has advocated — defending

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, 277.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>404</sup> Ardal, “Review: Depression and Reason”, 547.

Hume's claim about correcting our sentiments — he still thinks that this correction is not founded on reason. He assumes that “the evaluation, when corrected, would still be a sentiment.”<sup>405</sup> According to him it is “reasonable to see the distinction between the biased valuations of our ordinary passions and the objective evaluations”<sup>406</sup> which are appropriate for approval or disapproval. He argues that the objective point of view is about the greater human interest, not personal interest. Hume supposes to correct the moral language at least and Ardal finds this supposition instructive since people talk in terms of what the case would be “in standard conditions.”<sup>407</sup> He says “We know how we would feel if we could overcome our bias, and that leads us, for example, to call our enemy good, though we still find we hate him.”<sup>408</sup> He stresses that “known human motives in known human conditions could have led us to take up disinterested points of view, that enables us to love or hate people”<sup>409</sup> on actions alone, devoid of subjective feelings. This will remove mystery from evaluations. Briefly, thinking a person to be virtuous is a way of loving him, which “removes the mystery”<sup>410</sup> from moral judgements.

However, I think these are all interpretations that arise from an a priori acceptance of Hume's science of man. They are not sufficient in themselves to prove that Hume does not contradict himself in regard to causal inferences in moral

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 549.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

judgement. There are a lot of passages which show that Hume does not succeed in setting his theories about causal inferences and reason in conformity as Cohon demonstrates in selected passages from *Treatise*. Hume says “Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments, or at least, of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and inalterable.”<sup>411</sup> Moreover he states that “however the general principle of our blame or praise may be corrected by those other principles, ’tis certain, they are not altogether efficacious, nor do our passions often correspond entirely to the present theory.”<sup>412</sup> And finally that “The passions do not always follow our corrections; but these corrections serve sufficiently to regulate our abstract notions, and are alone regarded, when we pronounce in general concerning the degrees of vice and virtue.”<sup>413</sup> Cohon asks

If there are occasions on which we make use of the common and steady point of view to regulate our abstract notions and our utterances, but our passions are inalterable, then what do we acquire by imagining ourselves to occupy that point of view?<sup>414</sup>

Her answer is that we acquire some sort of belief, not a passion, about what we would feel if we really had the common point of view. As a result she is aware that we are able to know what to feel through induction based on past experience; however she still contends that these are not causal inferences as is the common interpretation of Hume’s advocates. I think the interpretations just discussed are not sufficient to show that Hume has never fallen into some rationalist assumptions.

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<sup>411</sup> THN, 3, 582.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 583.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., 585.

<sup>414</sup> Cohon, “The Common Point of View”, 836.

Hume himself is aware of the shortcomings of his method: he subtitles his work an “attempt” and recognises that he is a philosopher who is engaged in a “big project” which will last as long as humanity. This is why he so easily accepted the heavy criticism of his masterpiece *Treatise*. Nevertheless I do not believe that he really thought that his theory was born dead from the beginning. He attempts to do something; he does not say that he achieved his goal. Therefore, in my opinion interpreters should respect his work as it is. I do not think that Hume needs correction; the best way to read Hume is to read him as himself even with his contradictions. There is no need to correct him by reading him in a way other than he writes. Hume is honest to confess the defects in his work. A far better and more useful way of dealing with Hume is to distil those parts of his work which are valuable, rather than get bogged down in attempts to correct his various inconsistencies.

Here I want to consider some of his confessions in light of the methodological assumption of the system of passions. Remember that Hume wants to erect an entirely new science, the science of man utilising the Newtonian method. He claims

Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.<sup>415</sup>

While this sounds impressive, it would be better if Hume demonstrated more fidelity to his maxims. He should show his fidelity to his maxims. However throughout *Book 2* he only provides a number of thought experiments none of which are “collected or compared.” Indeed he is aware of the insufficiency of his maxims, especially when the subject matter is a dynamic one like morality. In his

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<sup>415</sup> THN, I, xix.

honesty he forewarns about the difficulty of applying experiment. He declares: “All the rules of this nature are very easy in their invention, but extremely difficult in their application; and even experimental philosophy, which seems the most natural and simple of any, requires the utmost stretch of human judgment.”<sup>416</sup> After showing how difficult it is to apply the experimental method even in natural philosophy, he gives an apology for the insufficiency of his method with these words:

If this be the case even in natural philosophy, how much more in moral, where there is a much greater complication of circumstances, and where those views and sentiments, which are essential to any action of the mind, are so implicit and obscure, that they often escape our strictest attention, and are not only unaccountable in their causes, but even unknown in their existence? I am much afraid lest the small success I meet with in my enquiries will make this observation bear the air of an apology rather than of boasting.<sup>417</sup>

Therefore it is for the sake of being released from the dominance of reason that Hume prefers a natural understanding which encompasses all the natural characters of human beings including veiled thoughts, sensations, and feelings from observable behaviour. Charles William Hendel, who finds Hume’s association of ideas contradictory, claims that although Hume “reminds us...that every argument anticipating the existence of events is an ‘association of ideas’; he lapses into the error of representing this association as produced in the imagination by a habit which is merely a result of the frequent conjunction of objects.”<sup>418</sup> According to Hendel, Hume’s claim which “follows that we might have

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<sup>416</sup> THN, 1, 175.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> C. W. Hendel, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1925, 196–7.

experience of conjunctions which are so infrequent that we have no fully-formed habit and, consequently, no impelling thought or belief concerning them” contradicts his supposition which he “has himself so greatly emphasized” that “we have this impulse to infer upon the slightest provocation and even upon witnessing merely a single instance.”<sup>419</sup> As Hendel manifests, Hume “seems now to be accounting for that impulse of thought itself from experience. Thus if the impulse is yet feeble our belief is correspondingly weak.”<sup>420</sup>

Hume assumes that the relation of cause-effect is not necessary but habitual. It is the result of constant conjunctions. On the other hand sympathy works mechanically with cause-effect system through our inalterable passions. However, problems occur if the cause-effect relation is not necessary. The problem about belief is so important that it becomes one of the most crucial issues in appropriately positioning Hume as a philosopher; note that he is claimed both to be a sceptic and a naturalist. According to my interpretation, the most appropriate position for Hume is that he is an explicit and strict Humean who is really loyal to his “attempt” even while being aware of the shortcomings of the method.

The problem of induction has not been solved in either science or in morality. The sentiments are natural but while the process of sympathy is at work they usually need correcting. Since the operation works well when the resemblance and contiguity are stronger, correction from the common point of view is necessary. The common point of view cannot be a natural moral sentiment since Hume explicitly says: “experience teaches us.”<sup>421</sup> Remember Hume’s contention that

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> THN, 3, 582.

humans gather empirical data from the observation of daily life. These experiences provide the general point of view that is used to correct our moral sentiments or the judgements gathered there from. We learn from experience what is approvable and what is disapprovable over time and our sentiments' role is to make it possible to feel pleasure or uneasiness. Humean morality is a kind of morality which cannot be justified because Humean sympathy concerns causal inference just like the natural sciences. Let me make a Humean analogy. As Hume shows us that his aim is to construct a science of man parallel to Newtonian science — because they are the same in character for being unknowable — by the same token they are same being under the threat from the problem of induction.

It is obvious that Hume is a skilful philosopher who can see the desperate character of the problem. This is why he is so comfortable with his counter arguments Copy Principle and the problems of communicating sympathy through the common point view. I do not feel any triumph, like Baier, in showing that Hume has rationalist assumptions even though with Hume, I acknowledge that his work is, after all, an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning.

## CHAPTER 6

### SOME SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES IN

#### HUMEAN ETHICS

In this chapter I will focus on the historical background of sentimentalist thought and hence Hume as a sentimentalist. Hume belongs to the sentimentalist tradition of his age. As his predecessors, he rejects any notion of dominance over passion by reason or any metaphysical interpretations, which he labels “chimera.” In the first section I will discuss his rejection of reason from a historical perspective. Then I will focus on how the distinction of virtues as either artificial or natural causes inconsistency in Humean general maxims. Special emphasis will be devoted to justice — the basic artificial virtue concerning property — along with the problems of motivation and obligation. After examining obligation to the government, I will cover the famous debate about Hume: is he contractarian or conventionalist?

#### 6.1 REJECTING RATIONAL MORALITY

“The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.”<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, New York: Free Press 1979, 39.

What Whitehead is emphasizing is the enormous debt of Western philosophy to the rationalist tradition inherited from the ancient Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle. With this in mind it is pertinent here to make some observations on the rationalist tendencies with respect to moral philosophy. Plato and Aristotle glorify the human as a rational being, and accordingly their moral theories are rooted in the soil of reason. This perspective influenced the European thought for a long time. It is held that, justice shows the existence of the rational basis for morality. Reason is held up as the prime motivation for the operation of justice. The desire of early moral philosophers is to channel people towards acting justly and to prevent contrary impulses or desires. The concept of morality for the Greeks was inspired by a concern for the well-being of the individual and the society, and how to make these flourish. This rational influence affected moral understanding. Today the understanding of well-being is taken as authoritative especially by virtue ethicists. However, on the other side, sentiment is an important motivation in transcendental morality. In the course of time moralists diversified due to their assumption about the foundation of morality. Some moralists have given a major role to sentiments within their theory of morality. Sentiments and reason occur as rival sources for moral understanding.

The foundation of morality has caused much debate throughout history. For example moral sceptics argue that laws are merely the reflection of self-interest. According to moral sceptics self-interest is the only motivation for human action. They believe there are no real moral distinctions rather only differences between moral motivations. Therefore justice and natural right are foolish concepts. David Norton notes that Hugo Grotius offers at least four foundations of morality in reply to the moral sceptics, namely: the sociability of humanity, the understanding of humanity, agreeable covenants, and lastly, the free will of God.<sup>423</sup> Of these, the

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<sup>423</sup> D. F. Norton, "Hume, Human Nature, and the Foundations of Morality" in *The Cambridge Companion*, D. F. Norton (ed), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 150.

ability to form societies is the most important foundation. For Grotius right and justice occur as a result of a natural character in human nature. Human nature produces the rules and distinctions. However, Hobbes, under the influence of the new sciences, rejects the notion that nature itself includes intrinsic values. For him both physical and moral occurrences should be explained by the same principles. Norton's interpretation of the Hobbesian understanding is that "there are no values in nature, and there is no foundation of morality in nature."<sup>424</sup> Norton states that the basic claim of Hobbes is that humans are essentially amoral and have no social faculty as Grotius suggests. Human motivations usually depend on self-interested desires. The distinction between good and evil stems from pain and pleasure. According to Hobbes

There being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common Rule of Good and Evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the Person of the man (where there is no Common-wealth;) or, (in a Common-wealth,) from the Person that representeth it; or from an Arbitrator or Judge, whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up, and make his sentence the Rule thereof.<sup>425</sup>

Samuel Pufendorf proposes a moral philosophy which also rejects the idea of morality based on nature. He discusses this in terms of "moral entities":

Our present task is to examine how things and their natural motions have had superimposed on them, chiefly for the direction of voluntary acts, a certain kind of attribute that gives a peculiar consistency to human actions and adorns man's life with a remarkable grace and order. These attributes are called moral entities because the human mores and actions directed and moderated by them assume thereby a

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<sup>424</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>425</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or, the Matter, Forme & Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civill Book*, (ed), A. R. Waller, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904, 30.

character and aspect different from the unrefined simplicity of brutes.<sup>426</sup>

For him moral entities should be referred to the “Great and Good God” “who did not wish mortals to pass through this life without culture and mores, in the fashion of brutes, but wanted men’s life and actions to be tempered by certain principles — something that could not happen without moral entities.”<sup>427</sup> He underlines the difference between physical and moral entities as such

Now, as the original manner of producing physical entities is creation, there is hardly a better way to describe the production of moral entities than by the word ‘imposition.’ For moral entities do not arise from intrinsic substantial principles of things but are superadded to things already existent and physically complete, and to their natural effects, by the will of intelligent beings who alone determine their existence.<sup>428</sup>

According to him human nature is the product of a free act of the Divine Creator. Since God has created the world he has the right to demand that creatures obey his obligations; and thus he has the right to punish the disobedient. Therefore the foundation of morality is not in nature but in the omnipotence of a “Great and Good God” that draws the limits to right and wrong. He says:

The efficacy of the moral entities instituted by God flows from the fact that He has, by right of creation, circumscribed the free will it pleased Him to grant men within certain limits, and that by threatening some evil He turns the recalcitrant in whatever direction He wishes.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Samuel Pufendorf, *On the laws of Nature and of Nations* in *The Political Writings of Samuel Pufendorf*, Craig L. Carr (ed) Michael J. Seidler (trans), New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 100.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 101.

Ralph Cudworth accused both Hobbes and Pufendorf of making basic errors in morality. Hobbes thinks that justice and injustice are artificial things. Pufendorf also believes that there is nothing really good or just. In the light of his Platonic understanding of knowledge, Cudworth proposes a “true atomical philosophy”. He maintains that knowledge has a real and permanent nature which can be known via innate ideas which enable us to understand this nature. According to Cudworth, who became a leading name of the Cambridge Platonists, we have moral conceptions and the ability to match them to the physical world. He opposes the idea of divine omnipotence in morality and argues against both the reduction of morality to civil obedience to the ruler and to the deity. Cudworth says: “Moral good and evil... cannot possibly be arbitrary things, made by will without nature; because it is universally true, that things are what they are, not by will but by nature.”<sup>430</sup> He stresses the nature of all things in reality is distinct from the will of deity

Neither can Omnipotence itself (to speak with reverence) by mere will make a thing white or black without whiteness or blackness.... Or ... to instance in things relative only; omnipotent will cannot make things like or equal one to another, without the natures of likeness or equality.<sup>431</sup>

Arthur Prior characterizes Cudworth’s objection to Hobbes in his book *Logic and Basis of Ethics* in this way:

Cudworth’s classification of promises and contracts along with commands as acts of will which cannot give rise to obligations apart from a more fundamental obligation to act in accordance with them is directed against an attempt by Hobbes to derive all our obligations, not directly from the command of the ruler, but from a supposed agreement with

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<sup>430</sup> Ralph Cudworth, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality with a Treatise of Freewill*, Sarah Hutton (ed), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 16.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid.

others to obey him.<sup>432</sup>

According to Michael B. Gill, Cudworth was interested in distinguishing between what is essential to religion and what is non-essential. For him Cudworth claims that ““rites and ceremonies”, doctrinal “beliefs”, and scholastic “speculations” are religiously inessential.”<sup>433</sup> Gill thinks that Cudworth is an important name both for rationalists and sentimentalists. Since he raises “heart” over “head” he obviously claims that in religious matters knowledge and thought have a nonessential role.<sup>434</sup>

Following the general views of the Cambridge Platonists that non-Christians could be fully moral, Lord Shaftesbury argues against the Hobbesian egoistic conception of human nature and tries to show that human nature is good. Shaftesbury believes that atheists could have a proper “sense of right and wrong” and be “capable of Virtue.” This is why he usually interpreted as the leading name of the secular ethics. He thinks that

The nature of virtue consisting, as has been explained, in a certain just disposition or proportionable affection of a rational creature towards the moral objects of right and wrong, nothing can possibly in such a creature exclude a principle of virtue or render it ineffectual, except what:

either takes away the natural and just sense of right and wrong

or creates a wrong sense of it;

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<sup>432</sup> A. N. Prior, *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1949, 21.

<sup>433</sup> M. B. Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 41.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

or causes the right sense to be opposed by contrary affections<sup>435</sup>

The controversy continued with Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*.<sup>436</sup> Mandeville disputes the idea that humanity is basically unselfish. He puts forward a theory that human actions are essentially the same because they are all motivated by self-interest. He magnified the idea of moral scepticism. Hutcheson in support of Shaftesbury and the optimistic view defends the idea that neither self-interest nor reason is sufficient cause for moral motivation. He supposes humanity has a moral sense which not only motivates us to useful and sympathetically actions but also supports of these kinds of actions. He maintains that moral distinctions have their foundation in human nature. Thus he is one of the important names of the sentimentalists who believe that the natural character of humanity is altruistic not selfish.<sup>437</sup>

In this historical lineage Hume is an important name. He rejects rationality in the name of sentiment without any transcendental explanation, and rejects the possibility of making moral rational theories comprehensible. For him nature aids human beings otherwise the words we use to talk about morality "wou'd be

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<sup>435</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners Opinions, Times* Lawrence E. Klein (ed), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 177.

<sup>436</sup> In the preface of his book he writes: the Nature of Man, abstract from Art and Education, may observe, that what renders him a Sociable Animal, consists not in his desire of Company, Good nature, Pity, Affability, and other Graces of a fair Outside ; but that his vilest and most hateful Qualities are the most necessary Accomplishments to fit him for the largest, and, according to the World, the happiest and most flourishing Societies. Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, Liberty Fund, 1988, 4.

<sup>437</sup> Hutcheson claims: "a State of *Good-will, Humanity, Compassion, mutual Aid, propagating and supporting Offspring, Love of a Community or Country, Devotion, or Love and Gratitude to some governing Mind*, is our natural State," to which we are naturally inclined, and do actually arrive, as universally, and with as much uniformity, as we do to a certain *Stature and Shape*. Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, (ed) Aaron Garrett, *The Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002, 130.

perfectly unintelligible, and wou'd no more have any idea annex'd to them, than if they were of a tongue perfectly unknown to us."<sup>438</sup> He sets his moral theory against the moral rationalists who hold that moral judgments are based on reason. Hume explains that reason judges either matters of fact or relations of ideas, which means that reason helps us to determine what truth and falsehood. According to him we can discover truth and falsehood from a harmony or a discrepancy mainly through three sources: the real relations of ideas, real existence, and, matter of fact. Rationalists believe that reason cannot perceive morality in matter of fact. Thus they take relations into consideration. Hume gives the example of wilful murder, and holds that after examining the incident we can only find certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts and no matters of fact. Instead there is "a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action."<sup>439</sup> At this point Hume states that any type of relation which occurs between humans can also occur between inanimate objects and animals. However, by his analogies he concludes that humans do not derive the same conclusions from similar events happening among humans and those among animals or inanimate objects. For him this shows that morality is not an issue of relations which can be understood by reason. The examples of dog inbreeding and parricide are offered as proof of this.<sup>440</sup> For him, identifying these comparable cases as either moral or immoral needs more than reason alone. Even if it is possible to conclude an appropriate subject-matter for the moral rationalist, after determining that a matter of fact or a relation is obtained, according to Hume, our understanding has no more opportunity to function. Therefore, for Hume the approval (praise) or disapproval

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<sup>438</sup> THN, 3, 500.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 469.

<sup>440</sup> I have shown the shortcomings about the Humean analogy between animal and human worlds before.

(blame) which is the characteristic of morality cannot be the work of reason.<sup>441</sup> He concludes that “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.”<sup>442</sup> According to this view morality becomes a subjective matter of taste considering the sentiments which should be fixed by the general point of view. Neither vices nor virtues are matters of reason.

Hume supposes that reason has the role of informing us of the tendencies of actions. Reason can suggest means for attaining a given end, but it cannot control or direct ultimate ends. Rather it is our passions which to provide the ends. As a result reason has no power to motivate for action, nor does it produce any moral understanding.<sup>443</sup> This is why he sees reason as the slave of passions and thus moral sentiments are necessary. We can judge only by our sentiments about actions and give our preferences with our feelings of approval and disapproval. Because of this, what we usually find after an action is our passions, emotions and feelings.

Hume’s sentimentalism is similar to Francis Hutcheson. However Hutcheson does not have as many problems with motivation since he uses supernatural explanations to justify his claims. Therefore even if Hume is a student and a follower of Hutcheson, they differ from each other in their methods and indeed in their aims. Hume believes that the moral rationalists make a mistake about the role of reason in moral theory and he draws attention to this assumption by using

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<sup>441</sup> This assumption has been shown to be contradictory in those cases where sympathy is corrected via the common point of view.

<sup>442</sup> THN, 3, 469.

<sup>443</sup> THN, 3, 458-459.

extremely direct language, calling reason the “slave” of the passions. He aims at demystifying morality from both rational and transcendental foundations. Hutcheson’s problem is only with reason. He, like his rationalist rivals, justifies his theory with the help of transcendental explanations. So, although they are both sentimentalists we can not interpret them in the same account. Moreover Hutcheson does not accept Humean virtues and distinction. Hutcheson believes all kinds of virtues are based on universal benevolence; whereas Hume sets extremely wide boundaries for what he discusses under the name of virtue, including such qualities as curiosity, greatness of mind, and wit, which are not usually regarded as virtues.

## **6.2 THE DISTINCTION OF VIRTUES INTO “ARTIFICIAL” AND “NATURAL”**

Humean naturalist understanding includes his notion of “artificial” virtues which come into play in the analysis of the social aspects of the morality. Artificial virtues and education play important roles besides the natural virtues. Most Humean interpreters think that the distinction of artificial and natural virtues has a minor function in his whole system because of the nebulous character of the division.

According to James Fieser, Hume argues that the distinction is unfounded “since both groups of mental qualities elicit the same sympathetic moral feelings in the spectator.”<sup>444</sup> Fieser maintains that, “Hume suggests numerous possible points of

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<sup>444</sup> I quote this from James Fieser, “Hume's Wide Construal of the Virtues” which he kindly sent me. This article can be found also on Internet. <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Mode/ModeFies.htm> Accessed June 2006.

distinction between natural abilities and moral virtues, but then rejects them all.<sup>445</sup>

Hume rejects the idea that our moral judgments can be derived from any kind of reason or metaphysical explanation. For him moral judgements are the products of the sympathy system. The sympathy system works through approval or disapproval of the feelings. Although, he admits the possibility that individual justice can conflict with an act motivated by benevolence, he insists that it is the sympathy system which defines the virtuous motivations. However it is a fact that, for the sentimentalists, it is necessary to understand just what motivates us in cases where there is a conflict between our sense of justice and our natural sentiment of benevolence. In the following sections I will first discuss the role of virtues in the Humean moral system then focus on “justice” as a significant artificial virtue.

### **6.2.1 Setting the Scene for Artificial Virtues**

In *Treatise, Book 2* Hume delineates the passions which supply the sympathy system. Hume mainly deals with natural virtues in order to explain the reasons for our approval and disapproval. This has utmost importance in the system of sympathy and thus in morality. He posits benevolence as a basic natural sentiment which starts the process of sympathy. Among other natural sentiments is curiosity. Hume claims “beside the love of knowledge, which displays itself in the sciences, there is a certain curiosity implanted in human nature, which is a passion deriv’d from a quite different principle.”<sup>446</sup> These natural virtues are the sources or foundations of ethical thinking.

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> THN, 2, 453.

Hume circumscribes his understanding of nature by a series of oppositions. Firstly, nature is not miraculous. “If *nature* be oppos’d to miracles, not only the distinction betwixt vice and virtue is natural, but also every event, which has ever happen’d in the world.”<sup>447</sup> Taking this into consideration he contends that there is no significance to labelling virtues as either natural or artificial. Second, he claims:

nature may also be opposed to rare and unusual; and in this sense of the word, which is the common one, there may often arise disputes concerning what is natural or unnatural; and one may in general affirm, that we are not possess’d of any very precise standard, by which these disputes can be decided.<sup>448</sup>

The third part of his definition opposes natural to artificial:

nature may also be opposed to artifice, as well as to what is rare and unusual; and in this sense it may be disputed, whether the notions of virtue be natural or not. We readily forget, that the designs, and projects, and views of men are principles as necessary in their operation as heat and cold, moist and dry: But taking them to be free and entirely our own, `tis usual for us to set them in opposition to the other principles of nature.<sup>449</sup>

The second explanation does not even deal with moral understanding or conscience. It is the system of sympathy which works with these natural sentiments via the rules of attraction. Hume places natural virtues in opposition to conventional virtues.

Hume believes sympathy is a sign of our approval or disapproval of both natural and artificial virtues. Sympathy is the principle factor of his moral system. People sympathize with natural virtues in the same way they approve or disapprove of

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 474.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

natural virtues and vices. This is same in the case of artificial virtues. He also explains that people naturally approve of actions because they put themselves in the people's places that are affected by such behaviours. He argues that approval is a result of sympathy that gives the idea of pleasure to the minds of spectators of virtuous behaviours.<sup>450</sup>

According to Hume artificial virtues are approvable and they also require sympathy because they are invented for the interest of the society. We take the idea of pleasure in account. He categorizes justice as a moral virtue "merely because it has [a] tendency to the good of mankind; and, indeed, is nothing but an artificial invention to that purpose."<sup>451</sup> Hume sees justice as originating from the concept of property and it is the main artificial virtue which paves the way to the other artificial virtues such as allegiance to government, laws of nations. These virtues come into being due to their beneficence. He supposes that they are approvable in all times and places because they benefit society. Hume defends the idea that people approve of these artificial virtues for the sake of the well-being of the society even though their personal benefit is not directly at stake.

He states that "reflecting on the tendency of characters and mental qualities is sufficient to give us the sentiments of approbation and blame."<sup>452</sup> This is so because "the means to an end can only be agreeable, where the end is agreeable; and as the good of society, where our own interest is not concern'd, or that of our friends, pleases only by sympathy."<sup>453</sup> Accordingly, the cause of our appreciation

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<sup>450</sup> THN, 3, 590-591.

<sup>451</sup> THN, 3, 577.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

is sympathy concerning about ends and means, as in all artificial virtues. The system is the same: the pleasurable feeling of moral approval towards certain character traits occurs after the process of sympathy. Each character trait is a means to an end and we can observe how the sympathy system makes the traits agreeable in most of the natural virtues as they are approvable in the same manner. The natural traits beneficence, clemency, and moderation, are good both for the self and the society as long as the system works.<sup>454</sup> The pleasure gathered from the benefit to the receiver of either natural or artificial traits results in approval through the system of sympathy. Consequently it is obvious that Hume leaves no room for reason both in natural and artificial virtues. The system of sympathy, with its mechanical approval/disapproval process, is paramount in the case of well-being of both self and society.

In its historical context I have mentioned that moral sentimentalists believe that reason is insufficient to motivate people to act morally and therefore they aim to ground morality upon something other than reason. Hutcheson and Hume are the two names from the movement I mentioned. For Hutcheson the ultimate motive of humanity is universal benevolence, a moral sense like sense of colour or beauty. Both thinkers reject reason as a moral basis.

In contradistinction to non-natural or socially-constructed theory of rationalists, Hume proposes a moral system which is composed of both artifice and nature. Moreover, he claims that if we had no natural moral sentiments, no politician, however skilful, could motivate moral acts in humans by artifice. Nay it could not

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<sup>454</sup> Meekness, beneficence, charity, generosity, clemency, moderation, equity bear the greatest figure among the moral qualities, and are commonly denominated the social virtues, to mark their tendency to the good of society. THN, 3, 578.

be possible to teach the language of the moral sphere. Hume mentions language as a criterion of this naturality.<sup>455</sup>

According to Hume whether or not certain behaviour is a vice or a virtue can depend on the degree to which the behaviour is present or evident. For example, different levels of behaviours such as generosity and pride can be seen as either vice or virtue. People who have too much pride are disapproved of by other the people. Hume explains that a negative reaction to a certain character feature is identified by an observer through the process of comparison which he believes is a natural ability. If, for example, somebody has a “genuine and hearty pride”, which is “well conceal’d and well founded”<sup>456</sup> then this is agreeable, but “nothing is more disagreeable than a man’s over-weaning conceit of himself.”<sup>457</sup> Thus it is the amount of passion which is crucial. According to Hume most virtues are the result of the right amount of self-esteem. He believes “Courage, intrepidity, ambition, love of glory, magnanimity, and all the other shining virtues of that kind, have plainly a strong mixture of self-esteem in them, and derive a great part of their merit from that origin.”<sup>458</sup> Hume believes that all virtues arise from benevolence and humanity. These provide humans with the ability to have virtue through the process of sympathy.

Since moral sentimentalists find the rationalists’ argument of justice in their moral system insufficient, they bring the sentiments into play. From this point of view,

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<sup>455</sup> THN, 3, 579.

<sup>456</sup> THN, 3, 598.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 597.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., 599-600.

most important virtues are prudence and justice. Hutcheson adapts his principle of universal benevolence to the individual virtue of justice. He believes there can be no conflict between universal benevolence and true justice. Sentimentalists think justice is not a notion that can be determined by examining a single case. Thus they assume the advantages of the rule of justice should be considered generally considering the circumstances of the society, it is initiated from. However, surely, if it is a result of a natural sentiment then it ought to be able to determine it from a single case. The Humean method of analogy depends on extrapolating generalizations based on similarities derived from a sole example. If the

causes are entirely similar, the analogy is perfect, and the inference, drawn from it, is regarded as certain and conclusive: nor does any man ever entertain a doubt, where he sees a piece of iron, that it will have weight and cohesion of parts; as in all other instances, which have ever fallen under his observation<sup>459</sup>

The similarity he emphasizes is anatomical which is indeed natural. Hume analyzes the natural characteristics of a frog or an animal and from just one example he derives general conclusions. He says:

The anatomical observations, formed upon one animal, are, by this species of reasoning, extended to all animals; and it is certain, that when the circulation of the blood, for instance, is clearly proved to have place in one creature, as a frog, or fish, it forms a strong presumption, that the same principle has place in all.<sup>460</sup>

Therefore, since each natural sentiment can have similarities in different people it is possible to derive general conclusions from one particular natural sentiment. On the other hand, if it is set artificially after evaluating the circumstances of the society it should be a result of some rational inferences of observations.

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<sup>459</sup> EHU, 104.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

It is ultimately in order to shape justice and solve the problem of motivation that Hume designs the artificial virtues. He paves the way to artificial virtues after a long and complicated setting up of passions. He reaches a moral understanding which has the widest sense of virtues. Fieser says “A conservative estimate of the various virtues Hume refers to in his moral writings would put the number at around seventy, with the more untraditional ones including wit, good manners, and dialog”.<sup>461</sup>

Hume claims human beings gain approbation when they see other people showing intelligence, good judgement, or good behaviour to others, and if they do not have these qualities, humans show disapproval. These beneficial natural habits have approvable character to the observers because they supply benefits to the people who possess them thus Hume accepts them as a part of his sympathy system.

Hume holds that he proves the sympathy system, which works through approbation comes into play also when the acts are beneficial to society. Thus he writes “We have happily attain’d experiments in the artificial virtues, where the tendency of qualities to the good of society, is the *sole* cause of our approbation, without any suspicion of the concurrence of another principle.”<sup>462</sup> He claims thus that the force of this principle has been demonstrated. He supposes “where that principle may take place, and the quality approv’d of is really beneficial to society, a true philosopher will never require any other principle to account for the strongest approbation and esteem.”<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Fieser, “Hume's Wide Construal of the Virtues”

<sup>462</sup> THN, 3, 578.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

In exploring the artificial virtues Hume aligns them to the natural virtues of his system of sympathy methodologically. As a result most of Hume scholars think that there is no precise distinction between artificial and natural virtues because they both are subject to same rules of sympathy. Hume's own words seem to attest this:

The only difference betwixt the natural virtues and justice, lies in this, that the good, which results from the former, arises from every single act and is the object of some natural passion: Whereas a single act of justice, consider'd in itself, may often be contrary to the public good; and 'tis only the concurrence of mankind, in a general scheme or system of action, which is advantageous.<sup>464</sup>

However I think composing artificial virtues is a good indicator of his inconsistency in the founding of his moral system. As Annette Baier notes, Hume devotes to artificial virtues “twice as much space as to the natural virtues, and almost four times as much as to the antirationalist preliminaries of part 1.”<sup>465</sup> Since artificial virtues are vital in giving reason a role in moral systems. Hume, with great care, establishes the artificial virtues in detail. According to Baier, Hume's project of degrading reason to the “slave of the passions” has resulted in “enlarge[ing] our conception of it, to make it social and passionate.”<sup>466</sup>

Society and government is a reflection of our moral understanding of human nature. They are also the ground where Humean human nature centred ethics is situated. Social life is the ground both for the application and verification of our theories.

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<sup>464</sup> Ibid., 579.

<sup>465</sup> Annette Baier, “Hume's Account of Social Artifice-Its Origins and Originality”, *Ethics*, 4: 757-778, 1988, 757.

<sup>466</sup> Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, 278.

Therefore Hume has with good reason dealt with artificial virtues as they are social ones as opposed to the natural — mainly individual — ones.

### **6.2.2 Composing Artificial Virtues**

In the traditional understanding of virtue ethics the list of, at least cardinal, virtues are usually limited and they are identified. However, this is not the case with Hume, who deals with such a vast and, at times, ill-defined, set of virtues that it becomes nigh on impossible to count them. Moreover, he is not contented with natural virtues alone, but also artificial virtues. Most Humean interpreters think that for Hume moral judgement falls within the boundaries of natural virtues and so do not deal overly much with the characteristics of artificial virtues. However, as justice is one of the artificial virtues I think it has a crucial role in the system.

Hume is usually viewed as being a sentimentalist in terms of the foundation of morals, but digging deeper in his virtue system, Capaldi thinks that Hume falls in between the tradition of Hobbes and Shaftesbury. Hobbes maintains a totally artificial basis for morality in interest and education and Shaftesbury leads the sentimentalists who argue for natural and original principles. Hume shares some similarities with both traditions although he believes that natural and original principles should be fundamental. Capaldi says the advocates of the natural principles ignore the need for correction with the common point of view which represents the social perspective<sup>467</sup> and thus the need for artifice. The artifice theorists disregard the natural ability to make social covenants. According to Capaldi, Hume solves the major controversy of his time in moral theory. He

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<sup>467</sup> Thus this shows the fairness of my rejection of the interpretations about common point of view. They are not natural feelings or calm passions; they are the products of experiences and this proves that Hume does indeed use causal inference.

claims Hume divides “the virtues into the artificial, which clearly require reference to interest and education, and the natural, which do not.”<sup>468</sup>

The difference between habits via natural abilities and habits with regard to moral virtues can be exemplified with the reward-punishment system. The reward-punishment system can cause a change in habits with regard to moral virtues however it cannot transform habits via natural abilities. According to Hume, habits arising from natural abilities are not subject to change due to any reward or punishment since they are constant.<sup>469</sup> Thus for Hume it is necessary to obtain some artificial virtues even though he cannot draw the exact distinction.

The general view is that there is no concrete distinction between the artificial and natural in Hume. On the other hand, Charles Cottle finds at least five differences between the two kinds of virtues. He thinks the first difference is their being guides to conduct. Artificial virtues are invented as guides to conduct, whereas natural virtues are observable regularities of behaviour. Secondly, unlike natural moral judgements, an artificial moral judgement “proceeds deductively on the basis of established rules in an attempt to achieve certainty.”<sup>470</sup> Thirdly, artificial moral judgements have no degrees of gradation. Fourthly, they advance by inflexible general rules. Lastly, the impartiality of both type of virtue is different. Cottle’s first and second arguments add weight to Baier’s assumption that artificial virtues enlarge reason, or at least give a greater role to reason than that of slave.

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<sup>468</sup> Capaldi, *Hume’s Place*, 210.

<sup>469</sup> Men have observ’d, that tho’ natural abilities and moral qualities be in the main on the same footing, there is, however, this difference betwixt them, that the former are almost invariable by any art or industry; while the latter, or at least, the actions, that proceed from them, may be chang’d by the motives of rewards and punishments, praise and blame. THN, 3, 609.

<sup>470</sup> Charles Cottle, “Justice as Artificial Virtue in Hume’s Treatise” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40: 450- 468, 1979, 458.

Hume means causal inferences when he uses the term “reason” or “understanding”, hence reason is the faculty of reasoning. According to him, there are two functions of reason: demonstrative and non-demonstrative. The first one is for discovering the relations of ideas and the second one is for discovering the matters of fact and causal reasoning. Since being a guide to conduct includes both discovering the relations of ideas and the matters of fact, when we act in respect to the artificial virtues we are transforming the job of sentiments to reason.<sup>471</sup>

### **6.2.3 The Relation between Justice and Benevolence**

Hume’s social virtues of benevolence and justice are closely related. The moral sentiment of benevolence draws our attention to the advantages of belonging to a society. Living in a society is a good motivation for people for acting justly. People usually approve of just acts in a society. Justice and benevolence are both approvable virtues sustaining the happiness and affluence of society. Hume likens the profits of benevolence to “a wall, built by many hands, which still rises by every stone that is heaped upon it, and receives increase proportional to the diligence and care of each workman.”<sup>472</sup> Therefore the functions of each virtue differ from each other.

According to Hume we can confirm the approval of the utility of acts of benevolence and justice by some simple daily observations which are in conformity with his experimental method. He claims it is observable that the

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<sup>471</sup> See footnote 178.

<sup>472</sup> EPM, 305.

utility of these kinds of acts benefit our self-interest without restricting of the approval of the acts serving our particular interests.

However, it is not the case that our personal interest and public interest will always be in harmony. While keeping priority of approval to our own interest we can also keep approval to public interest. Where public and self-interests overlap, we observe a sensible increase of the sentiments of justice and benevolence. At the same time, according to Hume, this increase in sentiments actually begets the very same overlap of self and public interest. Here Hume's logic is manifestly circular.

Challenging the understanding of the selfish schools Hume attempts to establish his science of man based on the foundation of a system of approbation and disapprobation. This system is transformed into the psychological system of sympathy. In this psychological system Hume supposes that, separation in space and time is not an important factor. Rather the force or vivacity of approval and disapproval changes in relation to the distance in space and time. However, imagination repairs our judgement. Hume uses the influence of a foreign statesman us as an example. Hume says he "affects us with a less lively sympathy,"<sup>473</sup> despite the fact that we evaluate his "merit to be equally great" with the acts of less remote one. This line of thought is testimony to the great role that Hume gives to imagination throughout his ethical system. If distance in space and time are unimportant because they are repaired by imagination what is the importance of imagination and how is it that imagination is more forceful to what is nearer than remote as Hume earlier maintained?

Since the manifestation of justice can harm some individuals in some cases while benefiting society as a whole, it is always possible that the individual chooses self-interest over public good. To eliminate these possibilities Hume takes the aid of

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<sup>473</sup> EPM, 227.

judgement for correcting — or sometimes he mentions “fixing” — “the inequalities of our internal emotions and perceptions.” Similarly this judgement “preserves us from error, in the several variations of images, presented to our external senses.”<sup>474</sup> In Humean system of morality, modification and correction — with the help of the common point of view — is necessary for establishing moral sentiments consistently since we have a greater tendency to give more lively expressions of natural virtues, which provides us benefits for us directly. And also to adapt the system of sympathy to artificial virtues has the same problems as seen with the natural virtues because of some controversial statements, which I have mentioned in section 3.1.3. The “Genovese Syndrome” highlights the shortcomings of sympathy in moral judgements. The sympathy system is sometimes incapable of motivating human in critical cases.

#### **6.2.4 “General view” Hume’s all-purpose Life Preserver**

One problematic area with Hume’s moral system is his constant recourse to the “general point of view” in order to resolve such inconsistencies that his line of reasoning creates.

Hume is mostly attacked for attempting to establish justice as an artificial virtue rather than natural one. He supposes that the primary motivation of justice is a sense of duty that arises from conventions. The sense of duty usually occurs as a result of our rational inferences. Hume constructs the rules of motivation in *Of Justice and Injustice* in *Book 3* where he states that “In short, it may be establish’d as an undoubted maxim, *that no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless*

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

*there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality.*<sup>475</sup>

According to Hume “If morality had naturally no influence on human passions and actions, ‘twere in vain to take such pains to inculcate it; and nothing wou’d be more fruitless than that multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound.”<sup>476</sup> As a scientist of the “science of man” Hume thinks that actions are signs of motives. He says it is usual to “fix our attention on the signs, and neglect, in some measure, the thing signify’d.”<sup>477</sup> He assumes “a person may perform an action merely out of regard to its moral obligation.” However he thinks there are also distinct principles in human nature “which are capable of producing the action, and whose moral beauty renders the action meritorious.”<sup>478</sup> For him common experiences inform us that “men are often govern’d by their duties, and are deter’d from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impell’d to others by that of obligation.”<sup>479</sup>

Therefore it is obvious that he cannot escape from the very same criticisms which he uses against his rivals. He argues neither reason nor Hutcheson’s benevolence is sufficient to motivate people. However his natural virtues alone cannot suffice to motivate or produce a moral sentiment and his system of sympathy has difficulties. Despite the deficiencies of his system of sympathy he insists on his natural system of attraction and adds some artificial virtues to the system.

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<sup>475</sup> THN, 3, 479.

<sup>476</sup> THN, 3, 477.

<sup>477</sup> THN, 3, 479.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> THN, 3, 457.

The communication of sentiments, which acts in the same way a “contagious”<sup>480</sup> illness, is the vehicle for social modification and it helps us to set aside our own peculiar positions. Justice is quality of mind yet how social approbation occurs voluntarily is a persistent problem unresolved. Remember Hume use the generality of language to prove the generality of some sentiments. He notes that human beings use common language, and considers that general use “must be moulded on some general views.” It is this mechanism which creates a “general” or “common point of view.” It results in the reaching of some general and permanent standard which is the cause of approval or disapproval of characters and manners. However, remember that the system works only after some causal inferences are made, which is a function of reason. The common point of view is gathered from the experiences by the help of reason as it identifies truth or falsehood without the aid of feelings. Some people in a society may have tendencies towards cannibalism but this general tendency does not make it a common point of view. Moreover, the problem of motivation towards this general view is more problematic when the judgements are not natural.

Hume constructs his moral system based upon sentiments which are common for every human being in both action and speech. He often uses language to strengthen his suppositions of a general view. According to Hume the language of morals is a subset of language which

implies some sentiment common to all mankind, which recommends the same object to general approbation, and makes every man, or most men, agree in the same opinion or decision concerning it. It also implies some sentiment, so universal and comprehensive as to extend to all mankind, and render the actions and conduct, even of the persons the most remote, an object of applause or censure, according as they agree or disagree with that rule of right which is established. These two

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<sup>480</sup> THN, 3, 605.

requisite circumstances belong alone to the sentiment of humanity here insisted on.<sup>481</sup>

Therefore it can be stated explicitly that, according to Hume, the foundation of morals is the sentiment of benevolence or sympathy system. He repairs the deficiencies of the system with the help of language and he insists on the power of sentiment of humanity. The significance of motivation lies under the “general views” which is an implication of some sentiments “so universal and comprehensive as to the extend to all mankind.”<sup>482</sup>

One important distinction about social and individual virtues to be mentioned is that with social virtues we can observe a shift from a self-interested perspective to a more universal one, however with individual virtues we cannot. The virtues are approved of because of their usefulness and “these advantages are enjoyed by the person possessed of the character, it can never be self-love which renders the prospect of them agreeable to us, the spectators, and prompts our esteem and approbation.”<sup>483</sup> However usefulness cannot be sufficient when there is a complicated position where an individual faces a choice between acts which are useful for the community yet harmful to the self, or, vice versa. Therefore the significance of the artificial virtues is clear. Hume needs the help of the rationalist system of social covenants; however he is employing some philosophical sleight-of-hand does away with reason and replaces it with the general point of view. He sets the social convention theory against the rational and selfish school’s contractarian theory through his assumption of “general view” or “common point of view” — the all-purpose savior.

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<sup>481</sup> EPM, 272.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> EPM, 234.

### 6.3 CONVENTIONAL JUSTICE FOR THE SAKE OF SOCIETY

Conventional justice is an adaptation of the individual virtue of justice. This section principally examines how Hume develops the artificial virtues of justice. It also treats some other artificial virtues that Hume assumes are useful for the well-being of society.

Hume explicates justice in terms of property. According to his view the thought of making secure one's own property causes one to respect other's property and this gives birth to the individual virtue of justice. However it is not clear why this individual virtue commands the respect for other people's property in a society. Let us consider two different situations which raise some problems when considering the general maxims of Hume's whole system. According to Hume, a just person pays money back to the man he borrowed money from, even when that man is a seditious bigot who is, in fact, neither useful to the self nor society. Here Hume is aware of the insufficiency of his notion of natural sentiments and he tries to rectify this. The natural virtues of benevolence and prudence while effective in a small society are not enough by themselves to start the process of sympathy in a large society. Justice is a very significant virtue in most moral systems, yet with Hume, it should work within the bounds of the system of sympathy. Thus he utilizes artificial virtues.

Before introducing artificial virtues Hume describes how natural virtues work in a small society without any obstacle.<sup>484</sup> He claims natural virtues as benevolence and prudence, are adequate to engender just acts regarding each other's property in primitive societies since people know and love each other. Hume believes that in small societies people are more sensitive towards an unjust act. These kinds of acts

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<sup>484</sup> THN, 3, 501.

can be easily seen and would be punished. According to him, our passions are not enough to control us about our interests.<sup>485</sup> There is no way to control this love of interest except by changing the direction of the love itself. We can give up some of our interests for the sake of other greater interests of ours. Therefore he shows how humans willingly choose self-control for greater interests. He says:

Now this alteration must necessarily take place upon the least reflection; since 'tis evident, that the passion is much better satisfy'd by its restraint, than by its liberty, and that in preserving society, we make much greater advances in the acquiring possessions, than in the solitary and forlorn condition, which must follow upon violence and an universal licence.<sup>486</sup>

However there is always the alternative path of reaching power by not respecting the property of others. This is an attractive and sufficient probability for the seduction of a person by his liberty. Moreover, the stress here about virtues is from external societal effects not from human nature. Hume has an implicit supposition that the violation of the property of others will always be attacked by other members of society. However if people have neither good or bad character as Hume supposes they would prefer to be silent in a situation where there is neither utility or harm for them. Defining justice as a natural virtue or admitting the goodness of human beings would solve this problem. If we accept justice as a natural virtue or the innate goodness of human nature, it becomes easy to explain assisting people in need, whether it boots one or not. This explanation is more consistent than Hume's reliance on prudence. Furthermore, if an unjust person has a position of power then even in a small community it is possible for them to perform unjust acts with impunity. Hume counters such possibilities via his notion of the force of "interested affection."

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<sup>485</sup> THN, 3, 495-496.

<sup>486</sup> THN, 3, 492.

## 6.4 SHAPING JUSTICE WITH THE SIZE OF SOCIETY

Hume claims that in a small society where people know and love each other, people rarely tend to do unjust acts. His assumption about the size of society is, I think, a different version of the problem which was demonstrated in one of the famous thought experiments of Plato: Gyges' Ring.

This thought experiment was put forth by Glaucon in Plato's famous work *Republic*. Glaucon claims that people act through the fear of punishment. He imagines two magic rings which cause invisibility. According to his claim, when one of these rings is worn by a just person and the other is worn by an unjust person, the behaviour of both will be the same: they will both steal, and they will both kill, as it is fear of social compulsion (a kind of social artifice) that makes people just.

With Hume's Adam there is no magic ring of Gyges *per se*. However, in Hume, a society of a certain size is equivalent to a magic ring. In a small society — one without a magic ring — Adam is aware that any attempt at a criminal or unjust act is not prudent since he knows this will not go unnoticed, and so he chooses honesty and justice as his policy. In the case of a large society the chance of an injustice being noticed is significantly reduced — in other words, there is a magic ring — and according to Hume, Adam will take the opportunity afforded by this and act unjustly. From this we can see that Hume believes that humans act honestly through artificial virtues and not natural or innate ones. However, what is Hume's justification for believing that whatever causes justice in a small society is not the same as that which causes justice in a large society? His answer is that the former is natural and the latter artificial. This runs contrary to the usual Humean practice of using a single natural example as the basis for a generalisation or maxim.

It is telling that Hume does not delineate just what size a society needs to be for this invisibility factor to come into play. In fact, the size is only determined as that in which such invisibility does occur — this is an instance of circular logic. If it is our natural sentiments which prevents injustice in one society it should be same in another.

On the contrary, Hume thinks in a small group people know and love each other. People have strong ties and good feelings. The friendship and benevolent feelings which they have towards each other will prevent them from violating the rules of justice with respect to property and provide the artificial virtues. Also he supposes that

The question, therefore, concerning the wickedness or goodness of human nature, enters not in the least into that other question concerning the origin of society; nor is there any thing to be consider'd but the degrees of men's sagacity or folly. For whether the passion of self-interest be esteemed vicious or virtuous, 'tis all a case; since itself alone restrains it: So that if it be virtuous, men become social by their virtue; if vicious, their vice has the same effect.<sup>487</sup>

Here Hume is stating that the very basis of social behaviour is self-interest. However, there are at least two easy ways to eliminate Hume's inconsistency concerning self-interest in the above quotation. First, to accept human nature as naturally good, and second, to accept that humans respond with greater sympathy towards one another in accordance to closeness, such as in Hume's sympathy system minus the correcting influence of the general point of view. Hume assigns neither a virtuous nor vicious character to human nature, disregarding the principles of sympathy. He repeatedly underlines the importance of the communication of ideas via sympathy, however in the paragraph above his stress is only self-interest which is neither virtuous nor vicious. Hume for the sake of

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

proving the anti-rationalist basis of society is required to resort to the concept of self-interest. Not only in this self-interest closely akin to Hobbesian egoism, it furthermore undermines Hume's insistence upon the action of sympathy with regard to benevolent behaviour.

Hume eliminates the role of natural passion in the sympathy system in creating social behaviour since he cannot find a natural passion which can start the process without self-interest. Therefore it cannot be the sympathy system through natural passions. The system of sympathy which works better between people known to one another is made objective by the common point of view and to preserve this objectivity consistently Hume disavows the idea that sympathy works better between loved ones. So, the first alternative — the acceptance of innate goodness — appears more plausible as the basis for forming a society. Only goodness can play a vital role in transforming self-interest into a starting point of attaining a society. It will be useful to mention the policies of “game theory” here to strengthen my argument. The most fruitful policy for an altruistic system is to suppose the coordination of our partner which proves a positive understanding of human nature.<sup>488</sup> However, Hume concludes the subject in these words: “that a regard to public interest, or a strong extensive benevolence, is not our first and original motive for the observation of the rules of justice; since 'tis allow'd, that if men were endow'd with such a benevolence, these rules would never have been dreamt of.”<sup>489</sup> These words clearly move Hume closer to his rivals of selfish-school. The assumption becomes more plausible when we remember his words that no ruler however skilful can ever establish any rule if it were not a reflection of human nature. Therefore by not accepting the goodness of human nature Hume

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<sup>488</sup> For more details see Oliver Curry's doctorate Dissertation.

<sup>489</sup> THN, 3, 495-6.

assumes that the artificial rules of justice are required! This is very similar to Hobbes' contention that justice is needed to prevent a "war all against all." As Hume puts it, we need to make conventions to regulate property.

If the basic beginning point of society is the perceived self-interest considering self-control by prudence, it is not easily understandable why it changes according to the size of society. If humanity and benevolence are in our nature innately and we follow our self-interest why then do they change so easily due to external incidents or the size of the society we face? If virtues and self-control are only at work with prudence in small groups, and if familial society is founded on these, as Hume suggests, what is the difference between his familial group and the state of nature? The only difference is people are selfish in a state of nature and *compulsory* benevolent in a familial group. In both societies moral understanding arises artificially. What is the importance of founding morality — which is a feature of every kind of society — on different terms? Moreover I think the analogy of Gyges Ring clearly proves that Hume sees society as innately wicked, rather than naturally good. If sentiments are at the same time obligations this is inevitable.

In addition, Hume's assumption that benevolence is not sufficient stands in contradiction to his system of sympathy. He believes that normal humanity or humane benevolence will be insufficient to motivate us against doing an unjust act even if it is highly beneficial both for us and for our loved ones when the risk to be caught is low. However it is obvious that by our much-vaunted prudence we can also reach these following possibilities:

It is possible to see that justice is potentially more harmful to an unjust person in a larger society than in a small society since a criminal can anticipate tolerance in a small society where the people know him. People can more easily forgive a beloved one in a small society

In a larger society the chance of escape is greater but the chance of being excused when apprehended is smaller.

In a large society harmony can be better maintained even though there are some unjust acts since the effect of these acts will be limited to that small section of the community whereas an unjust act can cause a massive chaos in a small society because the number of people effected by the unjust act is a larger proportion of the society.

Thus the size of society is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage considering all the possibility which can be attained through. The establishment of convention for just acts is not due to the size of society. Hume thinks it is not any natural virtue or motive that makes us refrain from committing an injustice in a larger society. Since it is not possible to give an explanation for the abstention from unjust acts via any natural motive, Hume thus believes the explanation lies in an artificial virtue. Therefore his appeal to artificial virtue is essentially instigated by the size of a society. The sympathy system with natural sentiments is degraded from its universal position to a small society. Artifice is needed. Since societies are no longer small Hume's main ethical supposition is a product of social contrivance not natural sentiments. Human nature has a tendency towards justice in order to comprehend what constitutes a just act. Without this tendency to talk about a natural ethics is pointless. However from another perspective to call natural what we have opens a door to the metaphysics of nature.

On the contrary Hume advances his artificial virtues to eliminate these kinds of problems. He assumes there are some occasions where people abstain from doing an unjust act even if the natural motives are insufficient, the unjust act seems very beneficial, and the risk to be arrested is very low. Hume supposes if it is not natural motives than it should be artificial ones. Adam can abstain from an unjust act which can provide him a great benefit only when he believes in the wrongness

of the act. In other words he acts from a sense of duty. However we do not feel our duty as Hume supposes. Duty is not a matter of taste, interest or feeling. We justify our duties after we gather experiences about what to do in the case of many and varied incidents, which needs a causal inference.

To not apply his basic principles in a larger society by asserting the insufficiency of natural sentiments, especially benevolence and prudence, will be violating both his theory against the selfish school of human nature and the sympathy system. If human nature is good enough to avoid some kinds of injustice and if it is possible for a human to conduct his/her self-interest with self-control in a small society then it should suffice in a larger society also. Here the implicit supposition, which is rejected by Hume, about human nature, should be the identifying character. Similarly if the size of society is the identifying factor then we should have no reason to be good in a smaller society either. As it is supposed in the Gyges' Ring thought experiment the only reason to be good is the compulsion of covenant in a society not any natural sentiment. Therefore the process of sympathy system naturally is in danger of inconsistency.

## **6.5 ONGOING PROBLEMS WITH “IMPARTIALITY”**

For Hume a sense of duty or conscience is inevitable in order to set up the rules for justice. The term “sense of duty,” for rationalists, is a result of reasonable thinking. However, Hume rejects that reason can have any role in motivating action. Furthermore Hume holds that such impartial benevolence — which the sentimentalist Hutcheson mentioned as the keystone of moral virtue — will not in all cases be adequate to motivate just acts. Unlike Hutcheson he thinks sometimes universal benevolence can conflict with justice. Therefore the question of motivation becomes desperately problematic.

Here we will consider a famous Humean problem — which is treated by most Hume scholars — respecting the returning of money to a seditious bigot as the indicator of the conflict of impartiality. According to Hume, we think it binding to pay back money we have borrowed from to a seditious bigot; it is not because of self-interest or public interest but rather an artificial sense of duty.

On the other hand, Hume is aware of the possibility of a conflict between natural and artificial sentiments or between benevolence and justice. Yet he believes

single acts of justice may be contrary, either to public or private interest, `tis certain, that the whole plan or scheme is highly conducive, or indeed absolutely requisite, both to the support of society, and the well-being of every individual. 'Tis impossible to separate the good from the ill. Property must be stable, and must be fix'd by general rules. Tho' in one instance the public be a sufferer, this momentary ill is amply compensated by the steady prosecution of the rule, and by the peace and order, which it establishes in society.<sup>490</sup>

Hume explains sense of duty in the same manner as the system of sympathy which has a process in and through the natural virtues. There are some problems which Hume faces. The first one is about impartiality of the spectator which I mentioned in the previous chapter as well. It is obvious that we naturally have a tendency to be more sympathetic with those who have more resemblance and contiguity with us. However Humean moral judgment presupposes some sort of impartiality concerning those who take part in actions.

To make this more evident, consider, that tho' the rules of justice are establish'd merely by interest, their connexion with interest is somewhat singular, and is different from what may be observ'd on other occasions. A single act of justice is frequently contrary to public interest; and were it to stand alone, without being follow'd by other acts, may, in itself, be very prejudicial to society. When a man of merit, of a beneficent disposition, restores a great fortune to a miser, or a

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<sup>490</sup> THN, 3, 497.

sedition bigot, he has acted justly and laudably, but the public is a real sufferer.<sup>491</sup>

At this point Hume argues that the deficiency of human nature having a personal bias about a seditious bigot — should be corrected while making moral judgments. The spectator should take a sympathetic but impartial position. When he achieves this impartiality he will return the money acting justly and courageously.

I think it will be clarifying to evaluate this problem of motivation from both a utilitarian and consequentialist perspective. There is a problem in explaining why we should pay the money back to a seditious bigot if we recall Hume's influences on utilitarian thought. Seeing that the consequentialist, in general, consider the formula of true justice as the greatest happiness for the greatest number and a utilitarian will account the usefulness of paying back the money we cannot return what we owe and even under some certain conditions we should not return what we owe.

Furthermore it is obvious for the scholars examining the motivating power behind returning money to a seditious bigot in a Humean manner what is found as the motive is the wish to do the right thing — which sounds more Kantian. However, according to Humean moral theory, the rightness or obligatoriness should be essentially explained by the morally good motive to return the money. Therefore the explanation is circular. The good motive is the cause of the right and obligatory act, and the right and obligatory act causes the good motive. This shows us that Hume's justification of justice as an artificial virtue is in conflict with his associationist system of sympathy.

Conversely to understand the character of justice as an individual virtue it is inevitable to question if there is a way to explain justice through natural motives.

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<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

We know that justice is constructed as an artificial virtue in the sympathy system. Now, if the cases such as returning what we owe to a bigot are approvable, then the significance of artificial motives appears to be huge. At this point most interpreters think that Hume is obviously faced with a problem. He is an empiricist and naturalist scientist who sees reason as the slave of passions and bases his morality on the feelings and sentiments. But if his assumed natural motives are not adequate to explain the virtue of justice without a sense of duty, he then needs to display the appropriate conditions for the occurrence of the sense of duty beyond the scope of reason. He also needs to explain how obligation begins and justice develops. It is known that in rationalist systems the occurrence of the sense of duty depends on reason. As Hume bases his moral theory on sentiments, he needs an explanation of how a sense of duty can exist as a feeling which is compatible with his empiricist premises of the science of man. Further, if sense of duty is natural what is the need for artificial virtues? And, at last but not least, how does motivation take place? Of course it is clear that it is not an easy task to solve these problems without falling into inconsistency.

Let us now turn to another problem which is also not new for Hume scholars. This problem arises when Hume discusses the influence of parents and educators since he thinks “the sense of justice and injustice is not deriv’d from nature, but arises artificially, tho’ necessarily from education, and human conventions.”<sup>492</sup>

Upon the whole, then, we are to consider this distinction betwixt justice and injustice, as having two different foundations, viz, that of interest, when men observe, that ’tis impossible to live in society without restraining themselves by certain rules; and that of morality, when this interest is once observ’d and men receive a pleasure from the view of such actions as tend to the peace of society, and an uneasiness from such as are contrary to it. ’Tis the voluntary convention and artifice of men, which makes the first interest take place; and therefore those laws

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<sup>492</sup> THN, 3, 483.

of justice are so far to be consider'd as artificial. After that interest is once establish'd and acknowledg'd, the sense of morality in the observance of these rules follows naturally, and of itself; tho' 'tis certain, that it is also augmented by a new artifice, and that the public instructions of politicians, and the private education of parents, contribute to the giving us a sense of honour and duty in the strict regulation of our actions with regard to the properties of others.<sup>493</sup>

Hume assumes that parents and educators instil in children a sense of duty with regard to the properties of others and this causes them to disapprove of injustice. Education is a good system on which to found artificial virtues such as justice as human nature does not have education naturally. However, Hume scholars claim that there is a presumption that in order to educate children the educators and parents should already have a sense of honour and duty themselves merely from their observations. They think it is not clear how the educators and parents reach this conclusion from mere observation in Humean terms, for this would mean that morality is supposed to be founded on rational inferences made from those observations. Hume should state the initiating motive of this disapproval to show how it can be communicated through the sympathy system which he maintains is necessary for moral approval and judgment. In the Humean system we can define an action as good or bad according to the character traits which motivate humans, or the approval or disapproval attaining to that action. This therefore, shows how right and wrong arise from our approval and disapproval of natural sentiments. Most interpreters believe it is hard to apply the sympathy system to artificial virtues, and it is hard to define what is right or obligatory when artificial virtues are at stake in a naturalist understanding of morality depending on our sentiments.

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<sup>493</sup> THN, 3, 462.

## **6.6 SOCIAL CONVENTION THEORY VERSUS CONTRACT THEORY**

The legitimacy of a state authority is an important subject in the history of thought. Especially in the seventeenth century the issue was discussed in terms of natural state. Natural state or “state of nature” theories suppose that in the early phases of a society individuals behave only in accordance to their conscience. Taking the “state of nature” as the starting point of society, some famous thinkers have explained, various ways, depending on social contract, to show how people voluntarily abjure their rational self-interest and natural rights. The common answer is to gain some other great benefits which can be achieved only after a society is established. Therefore these social contractarian theorists believe that people can abjure voluntarily from some of their rights and interests through a contract. However, Hume thinks that the contract theory of government was not supported by the available historical data. Moreover, he sees “natural state” as a myth of history. Kemp Smith thinks that Humean ethics is “The least original, and largely for that reason the most stable, part of Hume’s philosophy.”<sup>494</sup> He maintains that in this non-original system “What is most of his own is his treatment of the political virtues.”<sup>495</sup>

### **6.6.1 “Keeping Promises” Convention or Contract**

This section summarizes Hume’s thoughts about promises and analyses his theory of convention with respect to human nature. Hume aims at defining every kind of

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<sup>494</sup> Kemp-Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, 562.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

human act in the light of daily observations which will give us immutable nature of humanity.

In my interpretation Hume has a binary theory of society. He makes a distinction between small and large societies. His assumption for a small society is in conformity with his theory of morality, which is the system of sympathy. According to him a small society is enough to provide an economic level without the domination of some people over other people depending on intentional conformity with ownership, exchange of goods, and fulfilling agreements. According to him this is because convention is easily attained in a small group or a small society.<sup>496</sup> The marker of convention is our fidelity to promises.

Fidelity, being loyal to promises and contracts is commonly accorded high merit. Hume considers that promises are made to serve people's own interest. They are not made credit to the friendly exchanges of favours between friends. Cohon claims although Hume perceives a circularity problem about the motive of fidelity when he focuses on a "different conundrum that arises with the misguided attempt to analyze fidelity as a non-conventional (natural) virtue."<sup>497</sup> Cohon says, unlike Hobbes and Locke, Hume claims that "the performative utterance "I promise" would be unintelligible in the absence of background social conventions, and that the moral obligation of a promise is dependent upon such conventions as well."<sup>498</sup> Consequently, for her, Hume argues that the obligatory motivating power of a promise depends on social conventions rather than on natural causes.

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<sup>496</sup> The problems about a small society are discussed before.

<sup>497</sup> Rachel Cohon, "Moral Philosophy of David Hume" in SEP.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

Hume claims that it is illogical for one to create an obligation by wanting to be forced to fulfil a promise. The thing that makes an action compulsory or mandatory is observation by people who are impartial. However, an act of will, can affect a later act, but cannot affect a former act in any way. Therefore it cannot be a motive. Sentiments are not exposed to intentional control. Cohon claims that according to Hume creating a new compulsion means “to alter the abstract relations in which such objects as actions and persons stand to one another, and while one can do this by acting, surely one cannot do it by performing in one’s own mind an act of willing such a relation to exist.”<sup>499</sup> Although people in normal conditions can understand other people’s thoughts by instinct, when they are unable to understand one another they need the binding force of promises. However, neither person is compelled by the supposed rules of a promise. Therefore they cannot be mandated. Hume thinks that for promises we cannot establish or in any way discover the necessary conditions. The impossibility of stating an obligation naturally proves that this obligation of promises is produced by social invention to provide social interests. Hume says: “The will never creates new sentiments. There could not naturally, therefore, arise any obligation from a promise, even supposing the mind could fall into the absurdity of willing that obligation.”<sup>500</sup> Due to the fact that the necessary elements can not be provided in order to create a natural obligation for promises, we can draw the conclusion that this obligation is the invention of the desire to conform to the interests of society.

According to Cohon, Hume claims many important benefits can be achieved on the condition that people can be depended upon to provide goods or services in the future for the advantages of the present. The type of exchange Hume is referring to

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<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> THN, 3, 518.

is when one person promises to give something to a second person after first receiving something to begin the exchange. This involves two steps. The initial step is the first person giving an item to the second with the expectation of getting something in return as per the stipulation of the promise. The second step is when the receiver of the first item then fulfils the promise and gives something in return. The first step is performed with the hope of some gratification in the near future. The second step, however, is performed without any hope of gratification as the receiver has already got what they wanted, that is, the first item of exchange. Therefore, the motivation to reciprocate the exchange and fulfil the promise is low as there is no immediate self-interest in fulfilling this part of the deal. For Hume, the sole motivation to perform second part of the exchange is the desire to maintain the reputation of being an honest person who fulfils promises. This is, of course, a social artefact, not a natural virtue. So he claims “’twou’d be in vain, either for moralists or politicians, to tamper with us, or attempt to change the usual course of our actions, with a view to public interest.”<sup>501</sup> He asserts that what can be done by the moralists and politicians is “to give a new direction to those natural passions, and teach us that we can better satisfy our appetites in an oblique and artificial manner, than by their headlong and impetuous motion.”<sup>502</sup>

People are aware that reciprocated exchanges would be helpful to their interests. They feel the necessity to express this idea to each other with the aim of motivating everyone to find and keep similar agreements.<sup>503</sup> People use a specific phraseology to conduct these exchanges. When someone expresses himself with

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<sup>501</sup> THN, 3, 521.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Hume adapts his attraction theory to the artificial virtues here the natural attraction occurs in an artificial way by human communication

these kinds of words, he is understood that he expresses a decision to act “and along with that, by making use of this *form of words*, subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again in case of failure.”<sup>504</sup> The possible penalty in practice for those whose words cannot be trusted is that they will be ostracised from making any future agreements. This social practise informs changes human motives for acting. Therefore, it is evident that, experience teaches us and educators, parents, and other teachers motivate the promise-keeping process. In order to continue conformity to society, one gives a promise. One feels the necessity to fulfil his/her promise in order to ensure that people will trust his/her promises in the future. Hume says that promise-keeping is not only provided by but also motivated by the sentiment of morals.

In fact, Hume analyses promise-keeping under the umbrella of his analysis of property and property rights. Also, he shows a similarity between promises and the words of priests. Hume thinks each new promise produces a new moral obligation. This is

one of the most mysterious and incomprehensible operations that can possibly be imagin'd, and may even be compar'd to *transubstantiation*, or *holy orders*, where a certain form of words, along with a certain intention, changes entirely the nature of an external object, and even of a human nature.<sup>505</sup>

He likens promises to holy orders. Yet while he glorifies and approves promises as they render benefits for society and he disapproves of priestly “inventions” as they do not serve the public interest. He says “those other monstrous doctrines are mere

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<sup>504</sup> THN, 3, 522.

<sup>505</sup> THN, 3, 524.

priestly inventions, and have no public interest in view, they are less disturb'd in their progress by new obstacles”<sup>506</sup>

Since the obligation of promises and contracts are artificial Hume denies that we need to give any promise when convention is accepted. He claims: “If by *convention* be here meant a *promise* (which is the most usual sense of the word) nothing can be more absurd than this position.”<sup>507</sup> He thinks it is unnecessary to be “bound to keep our word because we have given our word to keep it.”<sup>508</sup> He gives the example of the agreement between rowers who want to pass across a river and thus work in coordination — there is a tacit agreement that they will work in concert by common convention for their common interest. Nothing more, nothing less.<sup>509</sup>

There are interpreters who think that Hume is a contractarian since he accepts that justice can take a role in agreements which are done for the interest of all people. According to R.S. Downie, Hume’s analysis of promises is an outcome of his general views on justice. For him, Humean promises are “artificial and contractual.”<sup>510</sup> He counts nine assumptions all of which are, he believes, mentioned by Hume explicitly. Succinctly these features are 1. There is no natural motive in human nature for keeping promises or for setting up a legal or quasi-legal institution to make contracts possible; 2. To say “I promise” indicates that we

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

<sup>507</sup> EPM, 306.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> THN, 3, 490.

<sup>510</sup> R. S. Downie, “Three Accounts of Promising” *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 35: 259-271, 1985, 259.

are using the institution; 3. A promise — which is made under coercion — is not valid; 4. Uttering promises is different from making resolutions, expressions of intentions, or the like; 5. There must be mutual advantage or mutual recognition by the parties; 6. If a promise waives his right the promiser is absolved; 7. A promisee's right to performance may be given up in certain cases; 8. The promisee must want what is promised; 9. There must always be a promisee. For him these nine features are “all either necessary or sufficient to constitute the legal idea of a contract.”<sup>511</sup> However Baier believes that Hume would not have accepted “the label ‘contractarian’, and he certainly would not agree with those who try to make all of morality, not only justice, rest on a hypothetical self-interested agreement.”<sup>512</sup> For Hume, we as human beings have inalterable characters and we have no moral motive for our honest actions like keeping promises or respecting other's possessions. We are only taught morals by educators, parents or politicians so what is the basis of morality other than self-interested agreement? Furthermore, Hume rejects contractarian theories on the ground that it is impossible to give a proof about the state of nature. He calls “state of nature” a myth of philosophers since we have no way to go back to the origin of society and show it how happened. Taking into consideration his own criterion we have no way to prove his assumptions either.

### **6.6.2 Two Humean Societies According To the Size**

It is clear that Hume divides the concept of society: there are small societies (usually the familial ones) and large societies (where a state is needed). He claims

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<sup>511</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>512</sup> Annette Baier, “David Hume” in *REP*.

that just acts can be easily attained in a small society but artifice is needed when society becomes larger.

He thinks increase in population size provokes a break-down in the rules of the society. Increasing interest provokes the idea of behaving unjustly. Although people know that injustice is very harmful and destructive to social conformity and cooperation, they are still unable to overcome this danger because people have weakness from birth against the temptation to choose the contagious interest.<sup>513</sup> At this point it is difficult to understand why a weakness from birth can grow in a larger society but not in a small one if it is always with us. Hobbes and other contractarian theorists assume that it is wickedness which makes people entirely concerned with their own, and that this necessitates a contract. I think Hume differs from Hobbes only with his assumption of the condition of the necessitation: the size of society. Therefore to prescribe the limits of convention and contract is a difficult task.

Hume completely rejects the state of nature. For him it is a fiction of philosophers like the “golden age” of the poets. His entire rejection of contract theory depends on the belief that it was not supported by available historical data. He claims the stability of possession is so clear that

nothing can be more simple and obvious than that rule; that every parent, in order to preserve peace among his children, must establish it; and that these first rudiments of justice must every day be improv'd, as the society enlarges: If all this appear evident, as it certainly must, we may conclude, that 'tis utterly impossible for men to remain any considerable time in that savage condition, which precedes society; but that his very first state and situation may justly be esteem'd social.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> THN, 3, Part 2, Section 7.

<sup>514</sup> THN, 3, 492.

Therefore for him the supposed state of nature is merely a myth of the philosophers, “which never had, and never cou’d have any reality.”<sup>515</sup> Hume’s claim that the “esteem’d” first situation of people is social reveals to us the first type of society which is the precursor to a governed society.

When the society becomes larger, to maintain the right to possessions becomes difficult or is threatened both from within the society and by other external societies. At this stage the need for government arises and thus evolves the second type of society. It is an important responsibility for government to prevent the destruction of society. It needs to enforce the rules of property and promise. For Hume this is the central cause behind the invention of the government. The rulers in power solve problems by using their authority where the rules of justice are required in special cases. They also can use their authority to accomplish shared social benefits about the use of goods, services and places for all members of society. According to Hume governments are explicitly social creations so he does not try to prove that we obey the rules of government as a result of convention.

Since Hume tries to explain the existence of governments in respect to defining human nature, he does not give details about the formation of the governments and their approaches to societal problems. For Hume, all men are subject to the same weakness that is the possibility of compromising one’s integrity by giving in to self-interest in cases of conscience which are “contagious” rather than “remote.” Thus Hume tries to find a solution to alleviate the effects of this weakness. He maintains that the best thing to do is to alter our situation, and “render the observance of the laws of justice our nearest interest, and their violation our most remote. But this being impracticable with respect to all mankind, it can only take place with respect to a few, whom we thus immediately interest in the execution of

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid., 493.

justice.”<sup>516</sup> Since humans have unalterable characters it is better to change their situation. In order to have long-term security the people have to organize societies. Therefore to secure justice for the sake of society, as well as for individual interest, turns out to be the best policy. Since the entire society cannot invent the rules of justice for the society as a whole a few select groups of people are given the job of providing the security of justice. So people choose “magistrates, kings and their ministers ... governors and rulers”<sup>517</sup> and accord them a high position. This ruling class obeys the rules of justice and also enforces people to obey those rules. The motivation for their probity relies on the wealth and respect that are given to magistrates. Hume thinks there would be rebellions when an accountable amount of immediate benefits are at stake “by making us over-look the remote interest, which we have in the preserving of peace and order in society”<sup>518</sup> According to Hume the motivating power of the ruling class is not clear but obviously the wealth given to them is so great that they do not need to compare themselves with others and they are not subject to attraction from other people’s wealth. Moreover, they are “indifferent... to the greatest part of the state,”<sup>519</sup> and as a result, protect the order of the society in order to protect their own wealth and status.

People usually make decisions considering the biggest and nearest good when they are planning for their future. They may empower the rulers because the rulers will use this authority to secure justice and will ensure the rules are obeyed for the sake of the good of all. People obey rulers who in turn are in charge of protecting the rules from any violation of the rules.

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<sup>516</sup> THN, 3, 537.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

<sup>518</sup> THN, 3, 545.

<sup>519</sup> THN, 3, 537.

For Hume, to obey our governors does not depend on the giving of promises. It is in people's interest to obey the rules set by the governors, and this then leads to conforming to promises and contracts. Governors keep the society in order and make people obey the rules of justice; otherwise the voluntary convention would break down. When we consider the situation of being loyal to promises we find that obeying governors causes sympathy and makes us accept that it arises as an artificial virtue. Neither present governors nor their ancestors have a divine right to become a leader. According to Hume the task of adherence to the ruling class is not a divine issue. He claims we do not give any promise to obey them, either. For him it is entirely erroneous to conclude that if people "*had not given their word, either expressly or tacitly, to preserve allegiance, it would never have become a part of their moral duty.*"<sup>520</sup> He maintains that "the duty of allegiance be at first grafted on the obligation of promises, and be for some time supported by that obligation, yet it quickly takes root of itself, and has an original obligation and authority, independent of all contracts."<sup>521</sup>

According to Hume it is because of a common communal assessment that societies establish governments. If a government is successful enough to make people prefer the existence of it then it has no problem with legitimacy and there is no reason to overthrow it. On the other hand if the government turns out to be a cruel tyranny it is not contrary to the obligations of Humean understanding of duty in his moral system to rebel against rulers. He says "Government is a mere human invention for the interest of society. Where the tyranny of the governor removes this interest, it also removes the natural obligation to obedience."<sup>522</sup> Although, he does not draw

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<sup>520</sup> THN, 3, 542.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> THN, 3, 552.

the exact boundaries of this cruel tyranny he claims “if interest first produces obedience to government, the obligation to obedience must cease, whenever the interest ceases, in any great degree, and in a considerable number of instances.”<sup>523</sup>

Since interest is the natural basis of allegiance to magistrates Hume does not approve of the change in system or governors for the limited benefits of a group if the existing system or the governors are able to keep the interests of its subjects. The main aim of bringing order and providing people’s interest would be removed by this kind of a change. Therefore it is our sense of allegiance to the magistrates which prevents these disturbances. For Hume election is not a necessary condition for a leader to be legal. He maintains that “’Tis interest which gives the general instinct; but ’tis custom which gives the particular direction.”<sup>524</sup> He sets some principles for being a magistrate which mainly depend on power and conquest. He maintains that

’Twas by the sword, therefore, that every emperor acquir’d, as well as defended his right; and we must either say, that all the known world, for so many ages, had no government, and ow’d no allegiance to any one, or must allow, that the right of the stronger, in public affairs, is to be receiv’d as legitimate, and authoriz’d by morality, when not oppos’d by any other title.<sup>525</sup>

Consequently we can state that Hume does not prefer any system as better than others since he supposes “Time and custom give authority to all forms of government, and all successions of princes; and that power, which at first was founded only on injustice and violence, becomes in time legal and obligatory.”<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> THN, 3, 553.

<sup>524</sup> THN, 3, 556.

<sup>525</sup> THN, 3, 558.

<sup>526</sup> THN, 3, 566.

Thus he maintains no ground for a revolution due to the random selection of a ruler legally.

Hume especially critiques the social contract theory of political responsibility since he does not believe in the need of a contract due to the impossibility of its proof in history. According to him the rationalists' assumption that there should be a contract either explicit or implicit, is erroneous. Moreover, Hume rejects the possibility that anyone actually makes even an implied promise to follow the government, given that civilians do not consciously decide on doing such a thing at any time, but rather are born to obey it.<sup>527</sup> People obey the rulers not because of a promise but from being born into and raised in a society where such obedience is the norm. Having never made this kind of promise, yet at the same time being aware of the punishments meted out for infraction of government rules, proves that we have no contracts for allegiance. The duty to keep promises and to obey a government is of the same kind thus the former cannot be the reason of the latter.

The causal chain is initiated from individuals, the natural sentiment of self-love causes us to follow our interests, and we form societies to keep our properties and interests. Then in Humean understanding two types of society form, based on size. For Hume this is a more plausible theory than the myth of the state of nature. Hume's attack to contract theorists on the basis of the impossibility of a state of nature is credible. The problem is why the inalterable character of human nature is in need of education in a large society but not in a small one. The answer to this is not dealt with by Hume.

In my view our natural sentiments are, as Hume supposes, inalterable in every time and every place; so what changes in us due to the size of the society is our judgements which we derive from our experiences — such as experiences of past

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<sup>527</sup> THN, 3, 548.

wars, social turmoil arising from injustices which are mentioned by Hume. On the other hand, taking into consideration what he says in section *Of the source of allegiance* that “I have all along endeavour’d to establish my system on pure reason”<sup>528</sup> unlike Ardal’s refusal, I think, Baier seems to be right when assuming that Hume expands the limits of reason while he intends to make it a slave. Hume is a skilful and inspiring philosopher. His main rejection of reason is due to the unobserved, non-experienced productions of the mind which he sees as chimeras. Therefore his war against reason is indeed not against it directly but to some of its products which are beyond his empiricism. However many of his arguments accept without any doubt whatsoever the existence of such metaphysical entities as “self,” “other minds,” “outer world,” “causal relation.” Making these entities depend on naturalism, as Hume does, is as metaphysical as any dependence on reason or rational inferences.

Christopher J. Berry maintains that Hume is at the same position with his opponents about the separation of constant man from his variable environment or culture. He states “Hume shares with his contractarian opponents the defect of operating with an abstract notion of human nature and thence of society.”<sup>529</sup> For him Hume’s interpretation of human nature is same as his rivals. On the other hand, Baier thinks there is not a separation but a connection. She states that Hume relates our biological inheritance to cultural inheritance by using a special term like “natural artifices.” I do not interpret Hume like Baier. First of all I think the term “natural artifices” is like a “married bachelor” or a “square circle” which are illogical. We must remember that Hume aims at constructing an entirely new science which will have the same effect as the Newtonian inventions in natural

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<sup>528</sup> THN, 3, 546.

<sup>529</sup> C. J. Berry, “From Hume to Hegel: The Case of the Social Contract” *Journal of History of Ideas*, 38: 691-703, 1977, 696.

sciences. What Hume understands is the impossibility of drawing a natural line to morality since it cannot be separated from human life. He thinks human nature is constant under every condition. The system is such a mechanical one that it frequently fails to provide consistent explanations, and is thus debased by Hume's constant resort to the "general point of view" to patch the holes in the logic. If common point of view is a calm passion or a kind of sentiment which will provide the objectivity of morality, it is unintelligible that it cannot work in larger societies. If it is causal inferences from our past experiences and daily observations by the function of reason it is obscure why we need an anti-rationalist sentimentalist theory. From this perspective Hutchesonian sentimentalist theory seems more consistent than Hume's since Hutcheson claims justice is a product of our benevolence so they can never be at odds. Moreover, according to Hume the need for a governmental life has nothing to do with neither goodness nor wickedness of human nature. However, his artifice theory arises from the assumption that the natural characteristics of human mind are being selfish and not generous enough especially when our own interest is at stake. Because of the scarcity of the goods humans need, Hume supposes, people behave through these qualities of mind and then behave according to convention which seems a more Hobbesian supposition with the mere difference being the size of society. Hobbes assumes that this is initially a matter of human nature whereas Hume states the defect of human nature can be veiled in small societies. What is clearly stated in Hobbes is assumed implicitly in Hume: the selfishness of human nature. Therefore if we disregard the illogical nature of the term "natural artifice" the great job to relate human nature naturality to cultural artifice is not entirely new for Hume but derived from Hobbes.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION: A RUDIMENTARY ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS**

Forming an autonomous structure of ethics has been among the goals of moralists since the famous question Socrates posed to Euthypro. The researches were started by questions like “Are we discovering or inventing ethics?” has today resulted in numerous different concepts about the foundations of ethics: does it stem from transcendental beings? reason? sentiments? nature? or any combination of these?

I have first focused on the foundations of morals. The three main streams — Deontological Ethics, Consequentialism and Virtue Ethics — were examined in respect to Hume’s understanding of human nature. In this paper I have argued that the unattainable or unknowable part of human nature causes problems with each of these three streams of philosophical thought. The enduring Humean influence on ethics shows the greatness of Hume’s budding philosophy. This has been a source of inspirations for those that came after him, despite the difficulties caused by the limited understanding of human nature in a system centred on that very foundation. Those who thought that the views which defined human beings according to reason or senses had turned ethics into a mere system of rules formed a new psychology of ethics. The Humean system has especially influenced two basic views in ethics, utilitarianism and virtue ethics.

Human nature has two parts namely; the observable and the unobservable which I have called active and veiled although Hume consistently only ever discusses the observable. Hume's aim is to discover the veiled part in relation to the active part. Hume believes the veiled part is same as the active part which proves to involve an a priori proposition.

For him the most appropriate method on which to base such investigations is on observation and experience. This study has displayed the deficiencies of his Newtonian method from different perspectives. The problems begin with the general maxims and go through to his method of moral understanding.

With his attempt to found a new science in accordance with human nature, an attempt that he embarked upon sincerely, Hume aims to save ethics from rationalist and metaphysical explanations and thus demystify it. However, the empiricist view which he was influenced by caused him to limit his understanding of humanity within narrow confines while establishing his ethical system.

It is held that the innovation that Hume brought about in the field of ethics was to shift ethics from the platform of thought to that of action. Hume's human beings display their existence by living, not by thinking. This explanation is not within an ontological frame; it is totally in accordance with the perception of actions, so that Hume's human beings appear as a bundle of perceptions. Hume's claim about human nature depends on his belief that he can make clear deductions about the unobservable part of human beings from the observable part. However, Hume fails to recognize that he is also reasoning here like the rationalists he criticizes. Hume accepts that the unobservable parts of human beings cannot be perceived by our senses by separating human nature into observable and unobservable parts at the very beginning. However, so as not to be imprisoned by this acceptance, he made an assumption that the unobservable can be understood through the observable, which in fact contradicts his rejection of innate knowledge.

Claiming that moral reasoning cannot be derived from the two functions of reason, he degrades reason to the slave of passions. It is crucially important to keep in mind Hume's primary aim to demystify ethics from the dominance of reason and transcendental beings. The Humean maxims concerning the science of man are examined. Hume's desire for establishing a new science starts with his objection of prior rationalists systems. Experience and observation are indispensable elements for him. When the limits of experience and observation are reached, he applies analogies. He frequently attempts to explain human nature by analogy to the animal world; however his poor analogies do not strengthen his assumptions that reason is passive. For this reason many Hume interpreters have preferred not to deal with this issue.

Throughout *Book I*, his explication of understanding by experience and observation shows that he is a successful follower of the empiricist tradition. However, it is this very effort at keeping loyal to the empiricist and Newtonian structures which leads him into inconsistencies.

The traditionalist view of Hume was that Hume's theory of knowledge was that of a sceptic, however, after the 1950s, this view has been replaced by the interpretation that he is a naturalist. Though he was sometimes influenced by sceptic ideas, he states that he never resorted to reason or the transcendental and admonishes other scholars to follow him in this. According to him, most thinkers have resorted to reason as a result of metaphysical questions.

In Hume's new understanding, there is no place for either scepticism or rational explanations and he sets his naturalism against them. He removes some of the most crucial problems of metaphysics by accepting them as natural, which indeed makes them a priori. For example the famous problem of other's mind is not a problem in Hume's system.

Hume believes that every kind of explanation concerning human sciences should begin from observations about how human beings live and function in the world. For Capaldi, this is Hume's "We do" perspective, as opposed to the "I think" perspective. Thus his attempt is to discover the causes of human belief by avoiding the search for an infallible rational justification as metaphysicians do. As well as rejecting reason, Hume does not deal with the questions of metaphysics and meaning either. Though he describes and treats lots of human characteristics, he never discusses such issues as the meaning of life.

Accepting both the veiled constant and the observable active aspects of the human being, he claims that the constant aspect can be reached by observing actions. However, in this study it is shown that the aspect of human that is reflected in actions is just like the seen or observable part of an iceberg. Although Hume argues we need only observe and describe without assigning meaning to human nature, perhaps, as I argue giving meaning to the observable part will have implications for the unobservable part. However, meaning has no place in Hume's system. Instead of considering the biological, physiological and psychological aspects of human beings as parts of a whole that cannot be separated, he limits himself to the mere observable part of humans and separates human nature into observable and unobservable. Hume's behaviourist and even biological approach relies on many rational and metaphysical assumptions — the very things he was trying to do away with.

Hume's aim is to base certain characteristics in humans that are seen as metaphysical on a scientific foundation. *Treatise Book 2* explains the binary passions such as pride/humility and love/hatred, which occupy a large place especially in Christianity, by sympathy and comparison, which is inherited in humans as a natural system. In this view the generally disparaged pride is raised to the status of virtuous feeling that makes the moral system work. He says that these

passions give pain and pleasure to human beings through binary feelings. The result is a mechanical sympathy system that works by approbation/disapprobation. Upon receiving harsh criticism for this aspect of his work passions found no place in his *Enquiries*. Nevertheless, he established his morality on the same sentimentalist view in his other writings.

Hume defines the ultimate goal of true philosophy as explaining why we believe what we do. As mentioned before, Hume is against theories or systems which offer accounts of human nature that are proved to be false by experience and observation. Our assumptions about human nature should depend on experience and observation. Therefore according to Hume the most influential arguments against these systems can be made descriptively.

At many points Hume loses his commitment to his empiricist approach that does not accept the a priori in theory of knowledge. He resorts to the social concept of “common point of view” in order to camouflage the deficits in the mechanical system that he founded on the basis of human nature in his system of ethics. He keeps on defending the idea that human nature is/should be constantly fixed by the common point of view and education, which are in fact the job of reason which he belittles to passions’ slave.

Reason, according to Hume, is passive and just has two functions. According to Hume reason can only discover truth and falsehood, of either matters of fact or the relations of ideas, either of which can influence our conduct by providing understanding of things that we can then exert our passion upon.<sup>530</sup> His aim is to prove that ethics is not the product of the two functions that reason has. Since neither of these functions has the power to motivate humans, reason should only remain as the slave of passions. However, at this point it is also possible to claim

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<sup>530</sup> THN, 3, 458.

that Hume's experimental method has some rationalist tendencies, because he benefits from many inferences in inner observations and thought experiments, which he calls experiments. The reduction of reason into just two functions has also been criticized. While reducing reason into just two functions, he separated imagination, which is generally a function of reason, from reason and loaded the whole burden of the system on it. Although some interpreters think that he is one of the rare thinkers who demystified ethics, he was faced with numerous problems from his very first general maxim.

Being accepted as a unique characteristic of human beings, "reason" and reasoning has been considered the basis of ethics by such giants of philosophy as Plato and Aristotle, and the effects of this tradition have lasted a long time. The basis of ethics has kept changing with the difference in the understanding of human nature. Defining human beings as selfish and emphasizing this selfishness, Hobbes and his followers sought the basis of ethics in compulsory agreements — but again dependent upon reason. After Empiricism became a force in the British School, ethics focused on the sentiment of human beings. Pain and pleasure gained significant meaning with empiricists. Claiming that pain and pleasure are above all our feelings and thoughts, it was held that the system of ethics was directed by these two senses.

The debate whether the human being is good or evil in nature is a fundamental question in ethics and so it is in Hume's moral understanding. The famous names of selfish schools contend that a natural moral understanding is illusionary and think that self-interest is the only guide to morality. In Hume's estimation, examples where we respond with benevolence when our self-interest is in danger are enough to refute the selfish hypothesis. Moreover, he assumes that the approval of benevolence also refutes the selfish schools' argument. According to Hume the amount of benevolence — even it is a slight amount — set in human

nature is enough to refute the selfish hypothesis. However for an advocate of selfish school the same assumption can be made about Humean understanding. If a single example of benevolence giving against self-interest is enough to reject the selfish schools assumption, then surely only a single example of selfishness is required to Hume's own theory. Since Hume's system requires the artificial virtue of justice, which is based on two qualities of mind: selfishness and limited generosity, Hume is hoist by his own petard.

Among the relations of individuals the main feature we observe of human nature is its being benevolent so the sympathy system depends on this natural sentiment. Hume has two different understandings of society, one for small societies and the other for larger ones. It is not under every condition that we need the rules of justice. Justice is established through the conventions of society for the protection of the rules of property in large societies. Since people know and respect the owners of the property in familial groups it is not essential to set up rules of justice. In very small societies, members of an extended family do not need our notions of either property or the rules of justice. In large societies rules of justice serve for regulating property rights of individuals as it is not possible for all individuals to know one another, or who owns a certain piece of property. Rules of justice are not natural; they arise from a necessity artificially.

Sometimes public utility outweighs personal utility, but where it is not clear which is preferable, or there is a conflict between our natural benevolence and the artificial virtue of justice, we use the common point of view to help us decide which the virtuous path is. Hume continually resorts to this rationale to explain away inconsistencies. In this rationale reason is active, not passive.

Hume believes that human beings have more desires and needs than they can ever satisfy alone, yet, he also holds that we have natural skills which we use to satisfy these desires. In fact, Hume creates a complex and somewhat nebulous system of

categorization of these skills and desires. What is important is that Hume deliberately discards the natural ability to make judgements from this categorization in moral issues. Hume's constant resort to general point of view reveals just how reliant his system is on rational judgements.

The debate about whether Hume is a contractarian or a social convention theorist is revealing with respect to Hume's use of reason. The individuals in a small group initially form a simple rule about avoiding using the material goods that others possess. People desire that the others abide by the same rules of property. This simple rule becomes complicated in the course of time. In this first stage there is no given promise, only an intention arising from prudence. The usefulness of such an understanding will be augmented easily among other members of society. Thus, like the attraction of our communication of sympathy, the attraction occurs artificially as the communication of people through the use of moral language. Hume's claim that we could not understand the language of morality without a natural moral understanding must surely be able to be applied to other social rules. The punishment for violating a social rule is to be excluded from society. Thus the definition of justice stems from a common communal approval and the destruction of this social convention produce injustice. According to Hume it is meaningless to talk about moral rights and wrongs before we invent artificial virtues. Since we can imagine what will happen when we do those acts by our prudence we first introduce some artificial virtues in respect to our interests. People take into consideration of their interests not only for present but also for future time and then censure or praise the actions through conventional rules. Consequently people can satisfy their natural greed without breaking the rules of justice. While making these assumptions Hume suppose that goodness and wickedness have no role in forming social virtues, however, he has no explanation why people with limited generosity are able to prefer convention in small societies but cannot reach this convention in larger societies.

According to Hume we invented the concept of property because of our self-interest. However, since justice is artificial, as opposed to natural, Hume offers no explanation for why we should perceive justice as virtuous and injustice as vicious. Hume's answer is self-interest. He believes we extend our own natural behaviour to society as a whole and so produce general rules. However, in Hume's notion of society, dependent as it is on size, there is an implication of rational judgement arising from the application of the general point of view, which is the product of causal inferences from our past experiences.

Furthermore, Hume's natural basis of societal morality fails when it is accepted that human nature is neither good nor wicked. Hume's benevolent human being cannot escape the call of selfishness when his or her own interests are in danger. For Hume, large societies act as a type of Gage's ring in that they allow for the possibility of getting away with unjust acts unnoticed or unpunished, but if this is the case, what then prevents society from descending into a war all against all? Hume has no answer other than that very same interest, self-interest, which he rejected as the position of the selfish school of thought. The natural aspects of Hume's human are not sufficient alone to form the foundation of society, and so social conventions are necessary, and these are nothing but invented, artificial virtues, which are inevitably the products of "pure reason".<sup>531</sup>

There are a good deal of interpreters who believe Hume's anti-rationalist endeavour falls short of explaining the formation of societies and obeisance to rulers — for me this is especially true of large societies. What we gather from our experiences is called as the "common point of view" however, contra Hume this is indeed the product of our moral judgements — the product of our reason.

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<sup>531</sup> See footnote 529.

The Newtonian method of isolating units for study purposes is problematical for the investigation of human nature or moral issues. Since human nature is a unified whole how can we justify the accuracy of any generalisations about the unobservable part from the observable part? The Newtonian method fails in Hume's application due to some limitations, the two principle ones being, firstly, that Hume's observations are fixed in time, and secondly, the non-attribution of any meaning to the observations, as the method is wholly descriptive.

In respect of these evaluations, whichever ethical theory we handle, it is a fact that most ethical theories include a definition of human nature from the perspective of a particular world view — which we consciously or unconsciously have. In this context, what Hume attempted to do is to found ethics on the observable part of human nature — actually; it is more accurate to say that Hume founded his ethics on human nature frozen in a particular moment in time. The necessity of observing behavior in moral philosophy is vitally important and this is one of the greatest contributions of Hume. Yet observation alone is not sufficient to illuminate the veiled part of human nature. His application of Newtonian method is limited as there is no possibility of experimentation on isolated units as humans are always and ever part of society and their time. Employing Humean observation of our biology we can easily see that we have brains, hearts, and stomachs. To call one of these organs as the slave and the other the master is scarcely plausible for moral theories.

Human beings are not a bundle of sentiments restricted to the present. We have a history which has an invisible impact on our nature. Although Hume claims human nature is constant he repeatedly invokes the “general point of view”, which is a product of our historical judgements and open to change in the future. In doing so he reveals that reason works together with sentiments rather than being a “slave” to passion.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **TURKISH SUMMARY**

#### **HUME’UN AHLAK ANLAYIŞINDA İNSAN DOĞASININ ROLÜ**

David Hume bilgi felsefesine getirdiği yaklaşımların yanı sıra ahlak felsefesinde de modern dönem ahlak anlayışlarına ilham kaynağı olmuştur. Bu çalışmada öncelikle modern ahlak anlayışlarında insan doğasının nasıl ele alındığı ve Hume’dan nasıl etkilendikleri ortaya konmuştur. İnsan doğası kavramının bütüncül olarak ele alınmayışından kaynaklanan sorunlara değinilmiştir. Bilgi kuramının ahlak anlayışına etkisi göz önünde bulundurularak Hume’un sistemi bir bütün olarak çalışılmıştır. İnsan doğasına dayalı ahlak anlayışının aklın tutkuların kölesi olduğu deneyci bir sistemle kurularak kurulamayacağı incelenmiştir.

Hume Newtoncu anlayışın etkisinde problemlere bir filozoftan daha çok bilim adamı gibi yaklaşmıştır. Hume insan bilimini kurarken neden soruları yerine nasıl sorularına odaklanmıştır. İyi, kötü, doğru, yanlış, güzel, çirkin gibi değerlerin neden değil nasıl meydana çıktığını doğal ahlak duyguları doğrultusunda açıklamıştır. Hume neyi nasıl bilebiliriz soruları üzerinde durarak bilebileceklerimizin sınırını çizmek istemiştir. Bilebileceklerimiz bilginin de

sınırını gösterecektir. Bu yüzden zihin ve zihnin içeriklerini incelemekle işe başlamıştır. Yalnız bu yaklaşım daha önceki filozoflardan farklı olarak akılcı değil deneyci metotlarla ortaya konmuştur. Bu yaklaşımından dolayı Hume'un ahlak anlayışının tanımlayıcı olduğu da söylenmektedir.

Tez çalışmalarındaki zorluklardan biri kaynak yokluğu ya da azlığıdır. Ancak Hume gibi meşhur bir filozofu çalışmanın da bir takım sıkıntıları vardır. Hume felsefesi üzerine yazılmış birçok eser bulunmaktadır. Hume hakkında bazen birbiriyle çelişen, birbirinden farklı o kadar çok yorumlar yapılmıştır ki bu çalışmada kaynakları sınırlamak için titiz bir araştırmaya gidilmiştir. Hume eserlerini yazdığı dönemde çok ağır eleştirilere maruz kalmıştır. Ancak sonraki dönemlerde deneycilik yönünden çok doğalcı yönünün ön plana çıkarılmasıyla görüşleri birçok düşünür tarafından rağbet edilmiştir. John Laird Hume'un gelişen bir felsefesi olduğunu söyler. Modern dönemde Hume'un etkisiyle yazılan eserler bunun göstergesidir.

Hume felsefede yeni bir sistem kurmakla meşhur değildir. Genellikle kendisinden önceki deneyci filozofların bir takipçisidir. Deneyci felsefeyi Newtoncu bir metotla birleştirip yeni bir insan bilimi kurmaya çalışmıştır. Görüşleri yeni olmasa da yeniliklere ilham kaynağı olacak yapıdadır. Birçok tutarsızlıklarına rağmen onun yeni düşüncelere ilham kaynağı olması bu çalışmanın farklı bir bakış açısıyla ele alınmasını sağladı. Altın gibi değerli madenleri bulmak için yürütülen çalışmaların iki yönü vardır. Taş toprak gibi kısımlardan kurtulup kıymetli olanı aramak böylece kendisi az ama kıymeti çok olan altına ulaşmaktır. Bu çalışmada Hume gibi bir yandan tutarsızlıklarıyla gündeme gelmiş bir yandan hala birçok düşünüre ilham kaynağı olan filozofların tıpkı bir altın madencisi gibi çalışması gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Hume'un felsefesindeki ilham verici yorumlara ulaşmak için tutarsızlıklarını tespit etmek gerekmektedir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda çalışmak için iki yönlü okuma metodu denenmiştir. Aslında uygulanan çok yönlü

okumadır ancak özellikle tutarsızlıklardan kurtulup değerli parçalara ulaşmak istendiğinden buna iki yönlü okuma adı verilmiştir. Eleştirel okuma metinlerdeki değerli yönlerin görülmesini perdeleyebiliyor. Diğer yandan filozofun geçerli görüşlerine odaklanmak tutarsızlıkların göz ardı edilmesine yol açabiliyor. Bu çalışmada takip edilen iki yönlü okuma iki karşıt görüşü birden değerlendirerek hem tutarsızlıkların ortaya konulmasını hem de geleceğe ilham kaynağı olacak görüşlerin değerlendirilmesini mümkün kılmaktadır. İki yönlü okuma metodu okuyucunun tarihsel bakış açısına da uyarlanabilir. Filozoflar kendi zamanlarında geçmişin bitişi geleceğinde başlangıcı konumundadır. Filozofları hem kendi tarihsel süreçleri içinde hem de tarihten bağımsız değerlendirmek mümkündür. İki yönlü okuma bize bu iki farklı görüşü aynı anda kullanmamızı da sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada Hume hakkında yapılan yorumlar onun görüşlerini iki farklı yaklaşımdan okunarak ortaya konmuştur.

Hayatın anlamı nedir, neden varım gibi sorular insanlık tarihinin en temel sorularındandır. Neden varım sorusundan sonra nasıl var olmalıyım sorusu da kaçınılmaz olarak sorulmaktadır. İnsanın kendini bilme çabası bizi seçtiğimiz ya da seçmeye zorlandığımız bir takım değerlere sahip olmamızı sağlamıştır. Hume'un çalışması da bir açıdan bu kendini bilme çabasıdır. O insan doğasının anlaşılmasıyla tüm bilimlere kaynaklık edecek bir bilimin kurulacağına inanmaktadır. Hume'a göre bütün bilimler az ya da çok bir şekilde insan doğası ile ilgilidir. Tarih bize bilimlerin mucidi insanın en büyük çabasının kendini bilme olduğunu insanın kendini bilmeye her dönemde önem verdiğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada insanın kendini bilme çabasının önemi göz önünde bulundurularak Hume'un ahlak sistemi değerlendirilirken insan doğası esas alınmıştır.

Çalışmanın ilk bölümü Hume'un ahlak problemlerinin iki yönünü ortaya koymakla başlar. Birincisi ahlakın seküler bir şekilde temellendirilmesidir. İkincisi insan doğasının iyi mi kötü mü olduğunun sorgulanmasıdır. Her iki ahlak problemi

de aslında Platon'un diyaloglarından günümüze kadar gelmiştir. Platon *Euthyphro* diyalogunda ahlakı özerk bir alana taşıyacak meşhur soruyu Socretes'in ağzından "dindarlık iyi olduğu için mi tanrılar tarafından sevilir yoksa tanrılar sevdiği için mi iyidir" diye sormuştur. Bu soru ahlakın zamanla dinden bağımsız özerk bir alanda temellendirilmesi problemini beraberinde getirmiştir. Ahlak felsefe tarihi boyunca filozoflar özerklik problemine yeni yaklaşımlar getirmeye çalışmışlardır. Hume'un ahlak alanındaki çalışmalarının temelini de bu sorun oluşturmaktadır. Hume Newton'un doğa bilimlerindeki deneye ve gözleme dayalı metodunu kullanarak insan bilimlerinde özellikle ahlak alanında batıl ve boş inanışlardan arınmış akılcı olmayan seküler bir sistem kurmaya çalışmıştır.

Platon'un ahlak alanına getirdiği bir diğer sorun insan doğasının yapısal olarak iyi mi kötü mü olduğudur. Platon'un *Cumhuriyet (Republic)* adlı eserinde Glaucon insan doğasının özünde kötü olduğunu ancak çevrenin baskısı ve kurallar sayesinde adaletli davrandığını bir düşünce deneyi ile göstermeye çalışır. Gyges yüzüğü adı verilen ve parmağına takan kişiyi görünmez kılabilme gücüne sahip sihirli bir yüzükten bahseder. Efsaneye göre Gyges isimli bir çoban kırlarda dolaşırken bir yer sarsıntısı olur ve yer yarılr. Pencere gibi açılan girişlerden yeraltına ilerleyen çoban orada büyük bir ceset görür. Cesedin parmağındaki yüzük dikkatini çeker ve onu alır. Yüzüğü takıp avucunun içine doğru çevirdiğinde görünmez olduğunu fark eder. Yüzük sayesinde önce kralın habercisi olur daha sonra kralın karısını baştan çıkarıp kralı öldürür ve kral olur. Bu efsaneden yola çıkarak Glaucon Gyges yüzüğü takan biri adaletli diğeri adaletsiz iki insanın davranışlarının aynı olacağını savunur. Gyges yüzüğü takıp görünmez olan adaletli birini adaletli olması için bir sebep kalmaz. Glaucon insanların görünmezlik sayesinde işledikleri suçların bedelini ödemek zorunda kalmayacağını bu yüzden de her türlü suça teşebbüs edebileceğini düşünür. İnsanın özünde iyi mi kötü mü olduğu ya da insan doğasının nasıl olduğu sorunu ahlakta sıkça irdelenen konular arasına girmiştir. Hume insan doğasını temel alan insan biliminde bu konuya da

yer vermiş ancak ne olumlu ne olumsuz bir görüş belirtmemiştir. Hume'a göre insanda hem iyi hem kötü bir arada bulunmaktadır. Ancak bu tavrı ahlak sistemini sempati, insanlık, hayırseverlik gibi kavramlarla şekillendiren Hume'u bazı konularda tutarsızlıklara götürmüştür. Özellikle yapay erdemlerini büyük toplum küçük toplum ayırımına dayanarak açıklamış olması Hume'un doğal duygularının kurgusunda tutarsızlığa yol açmıştır.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde Hume'un modern ahlak anlayışlarına nasıl ilham kaynağı olduğunu göstermektedir. Modern dönem ahlak anlayışlarını üç ana başlıkta toplayacak olursak bunlar: 1. Deontolojik ahlak anlayışı 2. Sonuçsallık 3. Erdem ahlakıdır. David Hume'un, her üç ahlak anlayışına da etkisinden bahsetmek mümkündür.

Deontolojik ahlakın genel ilkeleri Kant'ın ahlak anlayışıyla çizilmiştir. Kant, Hume sayesinde dogmatik uykusundan uyandığını söyler. Kant da ahlak sistemini Hume gibi seküler bir temele oturtmak istemiştir ancak metafizik öğeler hakkında Hume'dan daha dikkatli davranmıştır. Bu tarz bir bilim kurabilmek için mutlak iyi kavramına bakılması gerektiğini düşünür. Kişinin eylemlerinde mutlak iyiyi herhangi bir sebepten değil sadece görev anlayışı olduğunu düşünerek yapmasının bir değer taşıdığını savunur. Ödev kanunlara hürmetten kaynaklanır. Burada sözü geçen kanunlar mutlak kanunlardır. Mutlak kanunlar evrensel ve akıl ile ulaşılabilir. Ahlaksal açıdan değerli olan öznel ilkelerin evrensel ilkelerle örtüştüğü mutlak kanunlardır. Bu nesnel ilkeler kendilerini buyruklar olarak gösterirler. Bu buyruklar arasında ahlaksal olarak en değerli olanı herhangi bir nedenle değil sadece kendi özlerinde iyi olduklarından dolayı yapılan eylemlerdir. İyi insan olmak için aklın evrensel kanunlarını bilmek ve onları takip etmek gerekmektedir. Kısacası Kant'ın ahlakı evrensel akıl kurallarına dayalı bir ödev ahlakıdır. Kant'ın merhamet, adalet, erdem gibi kavramları eski kullanımlarından farklı bir anlama taşıdığı ve bu yüzden de ahlakı temellendirmesinin başarısız

olduğu düşünölmektedir. Modern dönemde özellikle Erdem ahlakçıları tarafından “kişi”yi ihmal ettiđi için büyük eleştiriler almışlardır. Bazı düşünürler Kantçılığın gerçek temellere dayanmadığını savunmuştur. Kahramanlık eylemlerinin Kant’ın iddia ettiđi gibi bütün erdemlerin kaynağının ödev duygusu olamayacağıının bir göstergesi olduđu savunulmuştur. Kant ahlakının tarafsızlığa verdiđi önemden dolayı insanların erdem anlayışının tarihsel ve sosyal yönlerinden soyutlandığı iddia edilmiştir. Hatta Kant ahlakının canavarca olduđu söylenecek kadar ileri gidilmiştir. Yine de Kant taraftarları deontolojik ahlak anlayışını geliştirerek sürekliliğini sağlamışlardır.

Sonuçsal ahlak anlayışı daha çok faydacı ahlak anlayışı doğrultusunda şekillenmiştir. Hume’un Newtoncu bir metot geliştirmek için ölçülebilir insan doğasının özelliđi olan fayda ve zarar üzerinde durması Jeremy Bentham’a ilham kaynağı olmuş ve faydacılık anlayışı faydanın her zaman zarardan büyük olması gerekliliđi prensibi üzerine kurulmuştur. Faydacılık akımı maruz kaldığı eleştirilerle kendi bünyesinde en az altı deđişik şekle bürünmüştür. Hangi tarz faydacılık olursa olsun genel olarak toplamda faydanın zarardan büyük olması prensibi temel alınmıştır. Ancak sonuçların önemli olduđu bir sistemde ahlaksal olarak yanlış kabul ettiğimiz herhangi bir fiil yapmak zorunda olduğumuz bir iş haline gelebilir. Sonuçsallığa karşı getirilen en etkili eleştirilerden birisi budur. Sonuçsallığın en doğru bildiğimiz genelin kabul ettiđi ahlak ve ahlaksız kavramları ile çatışacağı öne sürölür. Hasta olan birine yalan söylemek, bilgi almak için bir insana eziyet etmek, daha fazla insanın yaşaması için bir insanı öldürmek gibi durumlar örnek olarak verilir. Bu tepkilere karşı faydacılığı savunanlar iyi güdülenmiş birinin doğruları yapamadığı için suçlanmaması gerektiğini iddia etmişlerdir. Ayrıca sonuçları fayda ilkesine göre deđerlendirmenin hak ve adalet gibi kavramları göz ardı ettiđi söylenmektedir. Sonuçların fayda doğrultusunda ahlaki hareketleri kontrol etmesi gerekliliđi insanların davranışlarından önce sonuçları bilme zorunluluđu sorununu ortaya çıkartmıştır. Her zaman fayda zarar

ilişkisi ve sonuçlar göz önünde bulundurulseydi belki insanlık tarihi Beethoven gibi bir müzisyene sahip olamazdı. Sonuçların öngörüsü sorunu yanı sıra bu ahlak akımı da tıpkı deontolojik ahlak anlayışı gibi kişinin daha büyük faydalar için göz ardı edildiği eleştirisini almıştır. Faydacılığın toplamda daha fazla fayda için kişinin kendi öz faydalarından vazgeçmesini istemesinin insanın bütünlüğüne önem vermediğini gösterdiği düşünülmektedir.

Erdem ahlakçıları diğer iki ahlak anlayışını kurallara dayandığı için reddedip kişinin duyguları, eğilimleri, arkadaşları, ailesi göz önüne alınarak, kısacası ahlak psikolojisi yapılarak en doğru davranış biçimine ulaşılacağını savunmuştur. Hume'un kabul edilen ya da edilmeyen davranışların sebebi olarak kişinin karakter yapısından bahsetmiş olması erdem ahlakı ile Hume'un ahlakı arasındaki benzerliklerdendir. Erdem ahlakçıları doğru davranışın örnek insanları taklit edilerek ulaşılacağını savunmuşlardır. Ancak değişen şartlar ve anlayışlar bize örnek bir ahlak abidesi bulmanın hiç de kolay olmadığını göstermektedir. Platon yaşadığı dönemde örnek bir ahlak timsali idi ancak Platon'un kölelik anlayışını bugüne taşırsak ahlaklı davrandığımız söylenemez. Ancak erdem ahlakçıları tarafından bu tarz eleştirilerin yanlış kavramsallaştırmaktan kaynaklandığı öne sürülüp her erdem için bir bilgi erdemsizliğinin de bir yasaklama içerdiği gösterilerek karşı çıkmıştır. Erdem ahlakçıları kurallar hakkında hiçbir ahlak kuramının yeterli olmadığını öne sürmektedir. Onlara göre ahlak matematik gibi derslere katılıp öğrenilemez. İyi bir örnek gözlemlenilip öğrenilir. Bu anlayışın ahlaka kültürlere göre değişken bir yapı getirdiği iddia edilmiştir. Erdem ahlakçıları bu karşı çıkışlara kendi tezleri ile savunmaktadır. Görüldüğü gibi ahlak alanındaki tartışmalar devam etmektedir.

Her üç ahlak anlayışı da kendi içinde bir takım sorunlar barındırmaktadır. Ancak bunların kesiştiği ortak alan insan doğasını tanımlama da bütüncül kapsayıcı bir model ele almayışırlardır. Kant insanın aklını ön plana çıkarırken faydacılar insanı

fayda ve zarar dengesinde gidip gelen bir varlık olarak görmüşlerdir. Erdem ahlakçıları kişinin psikolojisini ve karakterini göz önünde bulundururken güdülenme problemi hala devam etmektedir. Hume ise akılcı ahlak anlayışlarına karşı çıkarken duyguları aklın efendisi yapmıştır. Ahlak sistemi eğer insan doğası temel alınarak yapılacaksa bunun en etkin yolu insanı bir bütün olarak ele almakta saklıdır.

Hume'un Newtoncu tutumu ile bir Kopernik devrimi yapıp yapmadığı da tartışılmaktadır. Bazı düşünürler Hume'un kişiyi "düşünen" düzleminden "eyleyen" düzlemine taşınması ile ahlakta bağlam değişikliğini sağladığını bunun da büyük bir devrim olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Ancak onun tüm çabalarına rağmen Descartes'i takip ettiğini düşünenler de vardır. Hume ile Descartes benzer konularda çalışmış oldukları için birçok noktalarda buluşmuştur. Ancak bu buluşmalardan onların aynı fikirlere sahip olduğunu iddia etmek güçtür. Amaçları bir insan bilimi kurmak olsa da Hume bunu tamamen seküler bir alanda yapmak istemiş Descartes ise sistemini tanrının varlığına dayandırmıştır. Descartes metafiziği bütün bilimlerin temelini koyarken Hume metafizikten bağımsız bir sistem kurulması gerekliliğini savunmuştur. Bu yüzden Hume nelerin var olduğunu değil nasıl var olduğunu araştırır.

Çalışmanın üçüncü bölümünde Hume'un Newtoncu yeni insan biliminin ilkeleri ve sistemin bu ilkelerle uyumu araştırılmıştır. Newton model alınarak insan bilimi yapmak isteyen tek filozof Hume değildir. Francis Hutcheson Newton'un doğa bilimlerinde matematiği esas almasından yola çıkarak ahlak felsefesini matematiksel formüller vererek oluşturmuştur. Jeremy Bentham'ın fayda zarar hesaplaması da bu tarz bir matematiksel ve tarafsız anlayışın ürünüdür. Hume Newton'u model alarak insan bilimi yapmak istemiştir. Hume da Newton gibi bilimini deney ve gözleme dayandırıp deneyimlerimizde karşılığını bulamadığımız kavramlardan kurtulmamız gerekliliğini savunmuştur. Bu bağlamda birçok

düşünüre göre Hume'un bilgi felsefesi ahlak felsefesini de belirleyici kılmıştır. Hume'un *İnsan Doğası Üzerine Bir İnceleme (A Treatise of Human Nature)* adlı eseri her ne kadar değişik zamanlarda yazılmış üç kitaptan oluşsa da kitapların bir bütün olarak değerlendirilmesi daha doğru olacaktır. Hume henüz birinci kitabının başında bize bunu haber vermektedir. Üçüncü kitabın başında ahlak kitabının bağımsız da okunabileceğinin duyurusunu yapmıştır. Ancak biliminin temeline koyduğu algılar birinci kitapta anlatılmaya başlanır. İkinci kitap ahlakın temelinin oluşturacak tutkular üzerinedir. Tutkuların insan doğasında nasıl bir sempati sistemi kurduğu anlatılır. Ahlakın temeli de bu sempati sisteminin çalışması ile ortaya çıkar. Aldığı ağır eleştirilerden sonra yazdığı diğer eserinde tutkulara yer vermemiştir. Ancak *İnsan Anlığı ve Ahlak İlkeleri Üzerine Araştırmalar (Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals)* eserinde de temel ahlak görüşü değişmemiştir. İlk eserinde sempati sistemi olarak sunduğu ahlak anlayışı ikinci eserinde insanlık ve hayırseverlik kavramları ile işlenir.

Hume'un genel ahlak ilkeleri duygucu ahlak sistemlerine uyar. Ancak Newtoncu yaklaşımından dolayı anlam ve akli göz ardı ettiği için hocası Francis Hutcheson'dan daha farklı bir çizgidedir. Hume'un ahlak sisteminden önce insan bilimi adını verdiği bilimin ilkeleri incelenmiştir. Bu ilkelerin insanı gözlemlenen ve gözlemlenemeyen diye ikiye ayırması ve insanın gözlemleyemediği yönünün gözlemlenen yönlerinden çıkarılabileceği iddiası Hume'un katı deneyci tutumuyla uyumsuz. Gözlemlenemeyenle ispatlayamayacağı kavramlardan kurtulmayı teklif ederken Hume kendisinde gözlem kullanmadan sonuçlara ulaşmıştır.

Metafiziğe kapı açacağı endişesiyle Hume anlam sorununu göz ardı etmiştir. İnsan doğasını gözlemlenebilirle kısıtlamış olması Hume'un ahlak sistemindeki tutarsızlıklara yol açmıştır. Özellikle hayatın idamesi için nesnelere duyulan etkileşim yolunu bilmenin yeterli olacağını savunması ahlak sisteminde anlam

sorununu ön plana çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışma anlam sorunu ile ilgilenmeden ortaya konacak ahlak sistemlerinde insan doğasının ihmal edilen ya da yanlış anlaşılacak yönlerinin olacağını göstermektedir. İnsan doğası anlayışları zaman içinde değişmektedir. Bir zamanlar kalbi duran insanın yaşamının da biteceği düşünülmekteydi. Şimdilerde kalp işlevini yerine getiremezse yerine pil takıp insan hayatı devam ettirilmektedir. Bilimin gelişmesi insanların kalp ve insan ilişkisini değerlendirmesini de farklılaştırmıştır. Bunun gibi sayamayacağımız birçok değişiklikler olmaktadır. Bilimsel gelişmeler yeni bir takım bilgilere ulaşmamıza bu bilgiler de bakış açımızın değişmesine yol açmaktadır. Bu insan doğasının değişebilen yapısı onu tahmin edilebilir olmaktan uzaklaştırmaktadır.

Hume aklın ahlak sisteminde herhangi bir rolü olmadığını göstermek için hayvan aklı ile ilgili kıyaslardan yararlanmıştı. Ancak hayvanlar konusundaki kıyaslamaları iknadan o denli uzaktır ki birçok Hume akademisyeni bu konuya değinmemiştir. Hume hayvanlardaki nesezsizliği insanlardaki enest ilişkileri ile aynı ilişki olarak değerlendirmiştir. Hayvanlar üzerine uzun yıllar çalışmış olması ile bilinen Jane Goodall Gombe maymunlarının enest ilişkiye karşı saldırgan tavır aldıklarını ve hayvanların bir kısmının bunu desteklemediklerini anlatmıştır. Hayvanlar arasında yaygın olduğu bilinen yamyamlığın da bir kısım maymunlar tarafından engellenmeye çalışıldığı da anlatılmaktadır. Goodall saldırgan iki dişi maymundan çocuğunu korumaya çalışan anne maymunun çevredeki erkek maymunlardan yardım istediği ve erkek maymunların da yamyamlık yapmak isteyen saldırgan dişi maymunları kovalayarak bu eyleme engel olduklarını gözlemlemiştir. Martıların tek eşliliği de hayvanlar âleminde değişik birçok örneklerin bulunduğu gösterir. Bu örnek olaylardan yola çıkarak hayvanlar ya da maymunlar âleminde genellemeler yapmak doğru olmaz. Ancak bu çalışmada hayvanlar arasındaki ilişkilerin de kendi aralarında bir “değeri” ve “anlamı” olduğu gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır. Hume’un hayvanlarla ilgili bu savı ile amacı ahlakın ilişkilerden çıkarılamayacağını göstermektir ancak “aynı eylem” diye

nitelendirdiği eylemlerin birbirine benzememesi bir yana deneyim ve gözlem sonucu vardığı yargı akılsal bir çıkarımdır. Aklın aktif olmadığını gösterirken kendisi aktif bir şekilde akılsal çıkarımlar kullanmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölümde Hume'un doğal ahlak anlayışını kurmak için oluşturduğu tutkular ele alınmıştır. Hume algıları izlenimler ve düşünceler diye ikiye ayırırken aralarındaki tek farkın canlılık ve dirilik olduğunu savunur. Bu tezinin dışında kalan durumları ise hastalık delilik gibi anormal durumlar diye adlandırır. Ancak birçok örnek Hume'un hissetme ve düşünce arasındaki ayrımın sağlam temellere dayanmadığını göstermektedir.

Hume ikinci kitabını tutkulara ayırmıştır. Birinci kitabındaki izlenim ve düşünce ayrımına paralel olarak İzlenimleri kökensel ve ikincil diye ikiye ayırmıştır. İkincil izlenimler tutkuları oluşturur. Bu tutkular dolaylı ya da dolaysız olarak tasarlanmıştır. Dolaysız tutkular iyi ve kötünden, haz ve acıdan anında oluşturulurken dolaylı tutkular hemen oluşmazlar. Dolaysız tutkular üzüntü sevinç, korku ümit, gibi acı ve haz duygularının arkasından hemen görünen tutku çiftleridir. Dolaylı tutkular ise gurur alçakgönüllülük, aşk nefret gibi hemen oluşmayan duygu çiftleridir. Acı ve hazla oluşmayan tutkular içgüdüler olarak adlandırılmıştır. Açlık ve susuzluk bu tutkulara örnektir. Hume'un kökensel tutkuları arasında hayırseverlik, çocuklara karşı merhamet, düşmanları cezalandırma, arkadaşlara yardım etmek de açlık ve susuzluk gibi bedensel istekler arasında sayılmıştır. Bu durum iştahsızlık gibi bedensel zaaflarımızın hastalık olarak algılandığı gibi hayırseverlik ya da çocuklara karşı merhamet gibi isteklerimizdeki zaaflarımızın da hastalık olarak algılanılması ve ahlaksal sorumluluk alanının dışına taşınmasına sebep olmuştur. Ayrıca Hume'un tutkuları etkilerine göre güçlü ve zayıf olarak nitelendirmesi tutkular sistemini karmaşık bir yapıda ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu karmaşık yapının özelliklerinden birisi de nesne ve özne ayrımına bağlı olarak tutkuların değişmesidir. Gurur ve

alçakgönüllülüğün öznesi her zaman kişinin kendisi olurken aşk ve nefretin öznesi hep başkalarıdır. Dahası Hume bu karmaşık duygu yapısını açıklamak için deney metoduna başvurmuştur. Ancak Hume'un arka arkaya sıraladığı deneyler düşünce deneylerinden ve iç sorgulamadan başka bir şey değildir. Deneylerinin sonunda Hume kendisi de aklın bu deneyleri anlamaya yeterli olacağını savunurken aslında başvurduğu ne deneyimdir ne de gözlem ancak akıl ve aklın düşünme gücüdür.

Acı ve haz gözlemlenebilir öğeler olarak Hume'un ahlak sisteminin merkezindedir. Faydacı ahlak anlayışlarının karşılaştığı sorunlar bu bağlamda Hume'un da sistemini tehdit etmektedir. İnsana haz veren her sohbetin iyi olarak nitelendirilemeyeceği gibi sıkıcı ama çok önemli sohbetler olabilir. Hume bu tarz detaylara girmeden düşüncelerini ortaya koyup okuyucunun da kendisi ile aynı düşünceleri paylaşıp paylaşmadığını sorar. Bu tutum deneyci olmaktan ve ikna edicilikten yoksundur.

Hume'un insan doğası merkezli ahlak sistemi eyleyen eylemci, eylemin yapıldığı alıcı ve bu eylemleri gözlemleyen gözlemci olmak üzere üç şahıs arasındadır. Yaşlı bir bayana yer veren kişi eyleyen eylemci, yaşlı kadın eylemin yapıldığı alıcıdır. Yaşlı kadının kendisine yer verilmesi sonucu hissedeceği mutluluğu gözleyen gözlemci duyguların paylaşımı ile kadının mutluluğunu hisseder ve bu mutluluğa sebep veren "yaşlılara yer verme" davranışını onaylar bu tarz onaylanan davranışlar erdemli onaylanmayan davranışlar ise erdemsiz davranışları oluşturur. Böylelikle ahlak bir onaylanma onaylanmama durumuna dönüşür. Hume gözlemcinin perspektifinden ahlakı ortaya koyarken hayırseverliği doğal insan erdemi ön-kabulünden hareket eder. İnsanın doğasını ne iyi ne de kötü olarak değerlendirmede göz önünde bulundurulursa Hume'un gözlemcisinin gözleminde neden acı veren tarafla değil de acı duyan tarafla bir sempati kurduğu açıklanmış değildir. Ayrıca Hume'un gözlemcisinin kendisine yakın, tanıdık ve sevilen birisi ile tanımadığı kimse arasında adil karar verecek kadar tarafsız ve her

şeyden haberdar olması gerekmektedir. Birçok Hume eleştirmeni böyle tarafsız ve her şeyden haberdar bir gözlemcinin olamayacağını savunmuştur.

Beşinci bölüm sempati sisteminin yapısını incelemektedir. Sempati kavramına Hume'un sisteminde günlük anlamının ötesinde bir anlam yüklenmiştir. Sempati bir duygu olmanın çok ötesinde psikolojik bir sistemdir. Bu yüzden birçok yorumcu sempati mekanizması kavramını kullanmıştır. Hume sempati hakkındaki yargısına da yine bir takım ön-kabullerle ulaşmıştır. Aklın işlevlerinden olan kıyas burada da görülmektedir. Hume hayvanlarla insanların gözlemlenebilir dolaşım, sindirim gibi benzer tarz sistemlere sahip olduğundan gözlemlenemeyen sistemlerinin de ortak olduğunu savunmuştur. İnsanların gözlemlenebilir aynı sistemlere sahip olduğundan duygularının da aynı sistemle çalıştığını dahası aynı sebeplerin aynı sonuçları doğuracağını iddia etmektedir. Hume tüm insanların birbirlerine eşit iplerle bağlandığını düşünür. Bu bağ tüm insanların tutkularını birbirleri arasında iletebildiklerini gösterir. Hume Newton'un yerçekimi gibi insanlar arasında da bir çekim gücünün olduğunu savunur. Ona göre bu tespit büyük bir buluştur. Hume insanın yüz ifadesi jest ve mimikleri o anda nasıl hisler yaşadığının göstergesi olduğunu düşünür. Dolayısıyla herhangi yabancı biri dahi olsa o anda yüz ifadelerine bakarak bir insanın duygularının paylaşılacağına inanır. Hume'a göre bir başkasının izlenimleri sempati sayesinde gözlemci tarafından transfer edilen canlı düşüncelerdir. Bu düşünceler sadece transfer edilmez aynı zamanda gözlemcinin zihninde onun izlenime dönüştürülür. Bu transfer ve dönüşüm işlemi sadece o anda oluşan bir olaydan ya da duygudan meydana gelmez. Bazen olma ihtimali olan bir olayın sonuçlarının düşüncesi dahi canlı izlenimlere yol açabilir. Böylelikle gözlemci bu transfer ve dönüşüm işlemi sayesinde izlediği kişinin olan ya da olması ihtimali olan duygularını paylaşmış olur. Hume duyguların bulaşıcı hastalıklar gibi olduğunu düşünür. Ancak Hume verdiği ameliyat örneğinde hiç ameliyat olmamış birinin nasıl olup da ameliyat olacak birinin duygularını sadece yüzündeki ifadeden paylaşabildiğini açıklamaz.

Ayrıca yüz ifadelerini saklayan ama acı çeken ameliyat olacak bir annenin yüz ifadeleri olmaksızın duygularının nasıl paylaşılacağını da sorgulamaz. Hume bize yakınlığı olan kimselerle daha kolay sempati kurabildiğimizi düşünür. Ancak bu durum sempati sisteminin öznel olması tehlikesini ortaya çıkarır. Birçok Hume eleştirmeni Hume'un bu öznel yargı tehlikesinden “genelin görüşü” ile kurtulmaya çalıştığını savunur.

Sempati genel olarak iyiliklerin kaynağı gibi algılansa da bu sistemin günlük gözlemlerle olan uyumsuzluğu Hume'un gözleme aykırı her sonuca karşı çıkışının tehdidine kendi sisteminin de maruz kaldığını göstermektedir. Sokak ortasında herkesin gözü önünde işlenen cinayetler, soygunlar hatta metro tecavüzleri insan davranışlarının sempatinin ve duyguların ötesinde karmaşık bir şekilde oluştuğunun göstergesidir. Sempatiye dayalı bu sistemde ahlaksızlığın temelini ne olduğu açık olarak belirlenmiş değildir.

Hume'un felsefe tarihine en büyük katkılarından biri tümevarım sorunudur. Hume insan aklının içeriğini ikiye ayırır. Bunlar olgu durumları ve düşüncelerin ilişkileridir. Birçok filozof gibi Hume da olgu durumlarının kesinlik taşıdığına hemfikirdir. Ancak olgu durumları böyle değildir. Hume'un bu ayrımı felsefe tarihinde Hume çatalı olarak bilinmektedir. Hume sebep-sonuç ilişkisinin zorunluluğunu reddeder. Geleneksel anlayışa göre Hume bu tarz çıkarımlar yapmaktan vazgeçmeyi tavsiye eden bir şüphecidir. Ancak yeni yorumlar onun bu zorunluluk ilişkisini doğallıkla açıkladığına dairdir. Hume tümevarım kavramını hiç kullanmaz. O nedensel çıkarım tanımını kullanır. Hume güneşin daha önceki günler doğmuş olması yarın doğacağını göstermez. Hume bu tarz düşüncelere inanmanın insan doğasının vazgeçilmez bir yapısı olduğunu öne sürer. Hume yorumcuları Hume'un bu konudaki yorumunun da onun Newtoncu yapısını gösterdiğini savunurlar. Fiziksel olaylardaki nedensellik aslında birbirini takip eden olaylardan ibarettir. Hume takipçileri deneyim ve gözlem sonucu birbirini

takip eden ve önce olanın sonrakinin düşüncesini çağrıştırdığı durumlarda nedensellik gözlemediğimizi bunun zihnin bir alışkanlığı olduğunu savunurlar. Ancak başta Thomas Reid olmak üzere bu anlayış gece-gündüz örneği, çocukların saçlarının uzamasının arkasına dişlerinin çıkması gibi sürekli birbirini takip ettiği halde aralarında nedensellik ilişkisi olmayan birçok karşı örnekle çürütülmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu problemle Hume iyi ve kötü tümevarımın nasıl belirleneceği konusunu gündeme getirmiştir. Günümüze kadar birçok filozof bu sorunu çözmeye çalışmış hala da çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı tümevarım sorununu irdelemek değildir. Tümevarım sorununun metot olarak ahlaka nasıl yansıdığını tartışmaktır. Hume nedensel çıkarımların aklın bir işlevi olduğunu düşünür. Hume ahlaksal yargılarda öznellikten korunmak için “genel görüşe” sığınır Genel görüş ise Hume’un duygular ya da tutkularla açıkladığı bir kavram değildir. Genel görüş daha önceki tecrübelerimizin eğitimle tarafsız olarak değerlendirilmesidir. Bu genel görüş anlayışı bazı yorumculara göre Hume doğal ahlak sınırından çıkartmıştır. Hatta bu tutumu Hume’un duygularının aklın efendisi olmadığını da gösterir. Bazı yorumcular Hume’un “genel görüş” kavramının ahlak duygusunun bir parçası olduğunu savunmuş olsalar da Hume’un ahlak sisteminin çalışması için sürekli başvurduğu bu kavram aklın Hume’un belirlediği sınırların çok ötesinde bir işlevi olduğunu göstermektedir. Nedensellik ilkesinin zorunlu olmaması halinde Hume’un ahlak sistemini oluşturan tutkularını açıklamak ve nesnel bir sempatinin varlığından söz etmek pek mümkün olmayacaktır. Ancak Hume çalışmasını bir deneme olarak nitelendirmiştir. Bu onun sistemdeki eksiklerden haberdar olduğunu gösterir. Hume Newton’u model alan bir insan biliminin kurulmasının önemine inandığından bu çabasıdan vazgeçmemiştir. Bu çalışma Hume’un sistemini insan doğası yönünden ele aldığı için sistemdeki eksikliğin insan anlayışındaki kısıtlamalardan kaynaklandığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışma Hume’un tutarsızlıklara rağmen geleceğe ilham kaynağı olmasından dolayı iki-yönlü okuma metodu ile ele almıştır.

Altıncı bölüm Hume un ahlakının topluma nasıl uyarlandığı tartışmaları üzerine kurulmuştur. Bu bölümde ahlak felsefe tarihinde çok tartışmalara yol açan erdemlerin doğal yapay ayrımı ve özellikle yapay erdem olan adalet üzerinde duruldu. Hume'un iki yönlü ahlak felsefesinin ikinci yönünü oluşturan insan doğasının iyilik kötülük kavramları toplumsal erdemlere paralel olarak ele alındı.

Hume akılcı ahlak yaklaşımlarına karşıt olan ahlak duygucularındandır. Hume ahlakı hem metafizik öğelerden hem de aklın egemenliğinden kurtarmak istemiştir. Hume'un seküler ahlak kurma çabası kendinden önceki filozoflarda da gözlenmektedir. Hume bunu akla dayandırmadan yapmaya çalışmıştır.

Batı felsefesi ilkçağ Yunan filozoflarının etkisiyle akılcı bir yapıya sahiptir. Aklın ön planda tutulması insanın ayırıcı özelliği olarak akli ve düşüncesinin temel alınmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ortaçağda Hıristiyanlığın etkisi ile duygular gündeme gelmiş ve akıl ile duygular birbirine karşıt görüşleri oluşturmuştur. Adalet ahlakın akılcı temelinin bir göstergesi olarak kabul edilmiştir. Yunanlılar için ahlak insanları iyi bir yaşama yönlendirmektir. Zamanla ahlak filozofları ahlakı temellendirmede farklı görüşler ortaya koydular.

Ahlaki şüphecilere göre kurallar kişisel çıkarlar doğrultusunda oluşmuştur. Onlara göre adalet ve doğal haklar aptalca kavramlardır. Hugo Grotius ahlaki şüphecilere karşı en az dört ahlaki temel saymıştır. Bunların en önemlisi insanın toplum oluşturmasıdır. Grotius adalet ve hak kavramlarının insanın doğasında olduğunu savunur. Thomas Hobbes insan doğasının bencil olduğunu bu kavramları doğal olarak sahiplenmediğini ancak bencil çıkarlar doğrultusunda antlaşmayla elde edileceğini iddia eder. Samuel Pufendorf da doğal bir ahlak kavramını kabul etmez. Pufendorf kâinatı yaratan tanrının insana nasıl olması gerektiğinin kurallarını koymuştur ve uymayanları cezalandırmak da hakkıdır. Böylece ahlakın temeli doğada değil Mükemmel ve iyi bir tanrının buyurmasındadır. Ralph

Cudworth her iki filozofu da temel hatalar yaptığı için suçlamıştır. Cudworth ahlakın keyfi olmadığını doğal olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Lord Shaftesbury insan doğasının temelinde iyi olduğunu bu yüzden ateistlerinde iyi olabileceklerini savunmuştur. Bu tezi ile de seküler ahlakın kurucularından sayılmıştır. Bernard Mandeville tüm insan davranışlarının aynı olduğunu ve genelde kişisel çıkarla güdülendiğini iddia etmiş ve tartışmayı canlı tutmuştur. Hume'un hocası ve arkadaşı olan Francis Hutcheson bu anlayışa karşı çıkmış ve insanlık kavramı ile ahlak duygusuna vurgu yapmıştır. Hutcheson sisteminde akla ve metafiziğe de yer vermiştir.

Hume'un ahlak konusundaki birçok tutarsızlıklarının Newtoncu metodu ve aklın köleleştirilmesinden kaynaklandığı anlatılmıştır. Bu tarihsel süreç içinde Hume Akılcı ve bencil tezleri reddetmiş ve akıldan ve metafizikten uzak bir sistem kurmaya çalışmıştır. Bu yönüyle de döneminin iki farklı kutbunun ortasında yer almaktadır.

Hume üçüncü kitabına aklın ahlakın temeli olamayacağını göstermekle başlamıştır. Ona göre ahlak akılcıların iddia ettikleri gibi düşüncelerin ilişkisinde bulunmamaktadır. Kasten işlenen bir cinayeti örnek gösterir ve ahlak anlayışımızın cinayet fiilini onaylamayan duygularımızdan edindiğimizi savunur. Dolayısıyla ahlakın tanımlaması bize acı verdiği için onaylamadığımız haz verdiği için onayladığımız davranışlarda aranmalıdır. Bu onaylama yahut onaylamama tavrı ise aklın çıkarımı olamaz. Tabii burada daha öncede değinilen öznellik sorunu ortaya çıkıyor insanların onaylama onaylamama anlayışları farklılık arz edebilir. Ancak Hume hayat kurtarıcı kavramını devreye sokar ve öznellikten kurtulmak için “genel görüşü kullanır.

Hume'un toplum kavramı gözlemlenebilir mülkiyet kavramı üzerine kurulmuştur. Hume aile tarzı toplumlarda mülkiyet hakkının çok açık bir şekilde kişiye en yakın

olana geçtiğini bunun toplum tarafından da kolaylıkla benimsendiğini iddia eder. Sorunun toplumun büyüdükçe karmaşıklaşan mülkiyet hakkını belirleme zorluğundan çıktığını savunur. Küçük toplumlarda sevgi bağlarının hayırseverliğin ön planda olduğunu öngörü sayesinde kişilerin yakalanma korkusuyla suçta teşebbüs etmeyeceklerini bu yüzden de doğal erdemlere dayalı toplumun kurulacağını düşünür. Ancak büyük toplumlarda suç işleyen kaçma ihtimali yüksek, insani bağlar zayıf olduğu için insanlar öngörü ile toplumda adaletin teminine ihtiyaç duyarlar. Hume'un bu iddiası da tutarlı görünmemektedir. Herkesin birbirini tanıdığı ve sevdiği bir toplumda suç işleyen bir insanın sempati ve insanlık duyguları sevgi bağları suç işleyeni bağışlanmaya sebep olabilir. Büyük bir toplumda suç işleyen kaçma ihtimali olsa da yakalandığında affedilme ihtimali küçük toplumlara göre çok daha az olacaktır. Ayrıca büyük toplumda suç işlendiği zaman toplumun küçük bir parçası etkilenirken küçük bir toplumda işlenen suçtan toplumun daha büyük bir oranı etkilenir. Sonuç olarak suç işleyip kaçma toplumun büyüklüğüne bağlı olmamalıdır. Hume kıyas yaparken bir kurbağanın dolaşım sisteminin doğallığından yola çıkıp genel hükümler verir ama küçük bir toplumda görünen doğal duygular neden büyük toplumda işlemez bunu açıklamaz.

İnsanın doğal ahlak duyguları büyük toplumlarda işlemediği için adalet kişisel çıkarların korunması için tesis edilen yapay bir erdemdir. Bu çalışmada Hume'un yapay adalet iddiasının tıpkı Platon'un Glaucon diyalogunda geçen Gyges yüzüğü durumunu ortaya koyduğunu göstermektedir. Görünmezlik yüzüğü olan Gyges yüzüğünü takan insanın iyi davranması için hiçbir sebep yoktur. Ahlak kötü olan insan doğasını toplumsal yaptırımlarla düzeltmek için ortaya çıkmıştır Hume'un eylemcisi için belki bir yüzük söz konusu değildir ancak büyük toplumun özelliği olarak kurgulanan suç işleyip kaçabilme imkânı tıpkı bir Gyges yüzüğü işlevi görmektedir. Burada Hume'un insan doğasını iyi ya da kötü olarak kabul etmemesinin sistem içindeki tutarsızlığa sebep verdiği ortaya konulmuştur.

Hume yapay erdemlerinde doğal erdemlerle aynı sistem doğrultusunda çalıştığını iddia etmektedir. Ancak küçük toplumda işlevini görebilen yapay duyguların neden büyük toplumda işlemediği bir sorundur. Bu sorun Hume'un insan doğasını iyi ya da kötü kabul etmesi ile aşılabilir.

Tarafsızlık da Hume'un tutarsızlıktan kurtulamadığı bir problemdir. Hume bir kişinin bir vatan hainine olan borcunu ödemesi gerektiğini bunu da genel görüş ile düzeltilen bir anlayışla yapılabileceğini düşünür. Ancak fayda ve zararın onaylama onaylamama gibi duyguların hâkim olduğu sempatiye dayalı bir sistemde neden hiçbir haz vermeyen ve faydası olmayan böyle bir borcu ödememizin gerektiği anlaşılmamaktadır. Hume bunu bir görev duygusu ile yapacağımızı söyler ancak burada da vatana karşı ve kişiye karşı görev çatışması söz konusudur. Ayrıca genel görüşün ebeveyn ve eğitimciler tarafından çocuklara öğretildiğini iddia etmesi sistemin doğal bir sistemden uzaklaşmasına sebep olmuştur. Bize genel görüşü kazandıran geçmiş tecrübelerimizden yaptığımız akılcı çıkarımlarımızdır.

Hume antlaşma ve gelenek çatışmasında gelenekçi tarafta olmasına rağmen tutarlı bir gelenek sistemi kuramamıştır. Hume hiçbir dönemde insanların yöneticilere söz vermediğini ancak doğuştan onlara uymak zorunda olduklarını savunmuştur. Hume'a göre söz vermek zaten tutulmak üzere yapılan bir eylemdir bunun antlaşmayla sağlanmasına gerek yoktur. Tıpkı kürekçilerin anlamadıkları halde nehrin karşısına geçmek için beraber kürek çekmeleri gibidir. İnsanlar mülkiyet haklarının ve toplumun düzeninin korunması için yöneticilere itaat ederler. Hume yöneticilerin kıskanacakları kimse olmadığı için suça da karışmadıklarını düşünür. Hume düzeni sağlayamayan yöneticilere isyan edilebileceğine de inanmaktadır. Zaten yöneticilerin meşruiyetinin zaman içinde kazanıldığını birçok meşru yönetimin önce kılıçla gelip zamanla meşrulaştığını savunur. Hume'un sistemi gelenekçi olarak adlandırılrsa da onu antlaşmacı karşıt görüşte sınıflandıranlar da

vardır. Bunlar söz vermenin tüm çeşitlerinin bir şekilde antlaşma olduğunu savunmaktadırlar.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma Hume'un modern ahlak anlayışlarına etkisi ile başlamış Hume'un Newtoncu prensipleri doğrultusunda kurduğu insan bilimini insan doğası bağlamında irdelemiştir. Hume doğal ahlakı kurmak için karmaşık bir tutkular sistemi oluşturmuş ve bu tutkularla çalışan bir sempati mekanizması geliştirmiştir. Birçok açıdan Hume'un bu çabası geleceğe de kaynak olacak yapıdadır. Ancak Hume'un gelişen ahlak anlayışından en iyi şekilde faydalanabilmek için onun tutarsızlıklarının kaynağını bilmek önemlidir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan iki-yönlü okuma metodu bir yandan Hume'un tutarsızlıklarını ortaya koyarken bir yandan da doğal ahlak sistemini açıklamaya çalışarak bu sistemin gelecekte tutarsızlıklardan arındırılmış bir şekilde ahlak felsefelerine ilham kaynağı olabileceğini göstermektedir. Hume'un tutarsızlıklarının temel kaynağının indirgemeci Newton metodu ve köleleştirdiği akıl anlayışı olduğu gösterilmektedir. Bu çalışma Hume'un sisteminde aklın köle olmadığını Hume'un kendisinin de gözlemleyebildiklerinin ötesine geçtiğini ortaya koymaktadır. İnsan doğasının bir resim gibi dondurulup incelenmesi beraberinde yanılgıları da getirmektedir. İnsan Hume'un da açıklamaya çalıştığı birçok sistemlerden oluşmuştur. Bunların bir kısmını günlük hayat içinde gözlemlememiz mümkündür. Ancak gözlemleyemediğimiz sistemler hakkında yorum yapmak o konuda akıl yürütmek ve gözlemlere mana yüklemektir. Dolayısıyla insan Hume'un iddia ettiği gibi sadece bir tutam algı demeti değil, geçmişi, geleceği, duyguları, akli, hisleri, içgüdüleri olan bir bütündür. Bu çalışma insan doğası temel alınan ahlak sistemlerinde insanın bütün özelliklerini kuşatıcı bir anlayışa ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir.

## APPENDIX B

### CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Sur name, Name: Çelik, Şengül  
Nationality: Turkish (TC)  
Date and Place of Birth: 7 January 1972, Adana  
Marital Status: Married  
Phone: +90 212 876 53 20  
Email: scelik@fatih.edu.tr

#### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Philosophy	1999
BS	METU Philosophy	1996
High School	Adana Anadolu High School, Adana	1990

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrolment
2005-Present	Fatih University	Instructor

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Basic German, Basic Arabic

#### PUBLICATIONS

1. Çelik, Şengül 2006 "The Need for a Pluralistic Attitude towards Ethical Problems in a Globalized World", In Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Asian Philosophical Association: *The Rise of Asian Community and the New Dialogue between Past and Future of the World*. pp. 519–527.

#### HOBBIES

Swimming, Jogging, Gourmet, Movies, Reading