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MORAL EVALUATION AND THE MORAL SENTIMENTS IN HUME'S
"TREATISE"

The Ohio State University

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To Daniel M. Farrell
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My intellectual and emotional debt to others is too great to fully document here. I would, however, like to express my appreciation to those whose help and concern have been crucial to the completion of this project. I am most grateful to the members of my reading committee: Daniel M. Farrell, D. Clayton Hubin, and Robert G. Turnbull. They have provided invaluable philosophical and emotional support. I am also grateful to William Lycan, Richard Garner, and John Champlin for their help and encouragement with this project and an earlier project which led me to undertake the present one. Now, I would also like to thank Mary Lee Raines for her beautiful typing job and for deleting my unnecessary 'now's. I am also grateful to Linda Sotos and Jim Rubino for their love and encouragement. Finally, I am deeply grateful to my parents. Their constant love and support have sustained me in all my endeavors.
VITA

February 14, 1955. . .  Born - Atlanta, Georgia

1977 . . . . . . . . A.B., Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia

1977-1983 . . . . . Teaching Associate, Department of Philosophy, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1979 . . . . . . . . M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Philosophy

Areas of Specialization: Ethics, Moral Psychology, The Moral Philosophy of David Hume

Areas of Competence: Social and Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind
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INTRODUCTION

Most contemporary discussions of Hume's moral theory have emphasized Hume's negative views concerning the relationship between reason and moral evaluation. Until very recently, Hume's positive account of moral evaluation has been given only cursory treatment. This usually involves attributing to Hume some simple version of subjectivism or emotivism which obscures the true subtlety of Hume's thought. In this thesis, I shall attempt to remedy this problem with respect to one small part of Hume's moral theory, namely, his account of the moral sentiments and their relation to moral evaluation. In particular, I hope to make clear the relationships between moral evaluations, the moral sentiments, the passions, and the imagination.

In order to prepare the way for this discussion, I shall also briefly discuss Hume's epistemology and his account of the relationship between reason and moral evaluation.

Let me emphasize that what follows is not an essay in moral philosophy. My primary goal is to understand Hume's account of evaluation, not to assess it. Though I consider a number of criticisms of the views I discuss, I do so only in the hope that they will help clarify what Hume has to say. I do think, however, that Hume is mistaken on many points.
Most of these mistakes will be obvious to the contemporary student of philosophy who has the advantage of an additional two hundred years of philosophical investigation at his or her disposal. I hope, however, that what I have to say will show that Hume's moral theory is worthy of study—if not for its truth, then for its beauty.
I. REASON AND MORAL EVALUATION

Though my primary goal is to explicate Hume's positive account of the moral sentiment and the role it plays in moral evaluation, it is necessary that we first have some understanding of Hume's views concerning the relationship between reason and moral evaluation. As we shall see in the next chapter, it is difficult to reconcile what appears to be Hume's positive account of moral evaluation with his thesis that moral evaluations are not the result of reason alone. In this chapter, then, I shall briefly consider Hume's general psychology and epistemology and then examine in some detail his thesis concerning the relationship between moral evaluation and reason.

(i)

According to Hume, all the contents of the human mind, which he calls perceptions, are either impressions or ideas. All impressions are either impressions of sensation or impressions of reflection. It will suffice here to note that under impressions of reflection, Hume includes "the passions, and other emotions resembling them."¹ The impressions of sensation are those which "without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the
external organs." These include "the impressions of the senses, and all bodily pains and pleasures." For Hume, then, impressions are the immediate objects of consciousness.

Perhaps it should be noted here that there is some ambiguity in Hume's use of the term 'impression'. Hume sometimes speaks as if impressions are things external to the perceiver. For instance, he says:

An impression first strikes upon the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or another.

Throughout the Treatise, moreover, Hume uses the word 'object' to refer both to perceptions which are dependent on the mind of the perceiver and to bodies which exist independently of the perceiver.

Hume's considered view, however, is quite clear:

For philosophy informs us, that every thing, which appears to the mind, is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted, and dependent on the mind; whereas the vulgar confound perceptions and objects, and attribute a distinct continu'd existence to the very things they feel or see.

The fact that Hume himself appears quite often to slip into the vulgar opinion might perhaps be excused since he tells us that despite its shortcomings, the vulgar opinion is the result of "a kind of instinct or natural impulse" of the mind. Even in moments of philosophical reflection, this instinct has a profound influence.
Nay she has sometimes such an influence, that she can stop our progress, even in the midst of our most profound reflections, and keep us from running on with all the consequences of any philosophical position. Thus tho' we clearly perceive the dependence and interruption of our perceptions, we stop short in our career, and never upon that account reject the notion of an independent and continu'd existence. That opinion has taken such deep root in the imagination, that 'tis impossible ever to eradicate it, nor will any strain'd metaphysical conviction of the dependence of our perceptions be sufficient for that purpose.  

Ideas, according to Hume, are "the faint images of [impressions] in thinking and reasoning." The distinction between impressions and ideas, he believes, will be apparent to everyone as the distinction between "feeling and thinking." But according to Hume the difference between these is just a difference in force or liveliness. Introspection shows that these two kinds of perceptions are resembling in all other respects; our ideas appear to be exact representations of our impressions:

The first circumstance that strikes my eye, is the great resemblance betwixt our impressions and ideas in every other particular, except their degree of force and vivacity. The one seem to be in a manner the reflexion of the other; so that all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas. When I shut my eyes and think of my chamber, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt; nor is there any circumstance of the one, which is not to be found in the other. In running over my other perceptions, I find still the same resemblance and representation. Ideas and perceptions appear always to correspond to each other.
Further reflection, however, shows that this is not the case. I may, for instance, formulate ideas of all sorts of fictitious entities for which I have never had any corresponding impressions. I can formulate a clear idea of a unicorn despite the fact that I have never seen one and consequently have never had an impression of one. But, according to Hume, if we consider the matter, we will note that even though I can find no impression which corresponds to my idea of a unicorn, for each part of my idea, I have had some corresponding impression. My idea of a unicorn is a complex idea which is constructed out of simple ideas by the operations of the imagination, and for each of these simple ideas, there is a corresponding simple impression.

I perceive, therefore, that tho' there is in general a great resemblance betwixt our complex impressions and ideas, yet the rule is not universally true, that they are exact copies of each other. We may next consider how the case stands with our simple perceptions. After the most accurate examination, of which I am capable, I venture to affirm, that the rule here holds without any exception, and that every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it; and every simple impression a correspondent idea.11

Hume notes, moreover, that not only do our simple impressions and ideas correspond, but the appearance of the impression always precedes the appearance of the idea. Our ideas upon their appearance produce not their correspondent impressions, nor do we perceive any colour or feel any sensation merely upon thinking of them. On the other
hand we find, that any impression either of the mind or body is constantly followed by an idea, which resembles it, and is only different in the degrees of force and liveliness.

This constant conjunction, according to Hume, provides us with convincing evidence that impressions cause their corresponding ideas. Furthermore, he notes that whenever one's sensory faculties fail to function properly, not only are some impressions lost, but also their corresponding ideas. More generally, we discover that where impressions are lacking so are their corresponding ideas. "We cannot form to ourselves a just idea of the taste of a pine-apple, without having actually tasted it." Thus, Hume asserts the following thesis which is the central tenet of his epistemology:

That all our simple ideas in their first appearance are deriv'd from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent.

Now, let us turn our attention to Hume's account of reason. Hume tells us that:

All men have allow'd reasoning to be merely an operation of our thoughts or ideas; and however those ideas may be varied to the feeling, there is nothing that ever enters into our conclusions but ideas, or our fainter conceptions.

So, for Hume, reason is an operation of the mind which results in or produces ideas. But reason does not produce
just any idea. It results only in those ideas which it discerns to be true.

Our reason must be consider'd as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect. It
Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood.

Truth and falsehood, for Hume, "consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact." It is quite clear that Hume believes that the bearers of truth and falsehood are ideas. Hume tells us that "nothing can be contrary to truth or reason, except what has reference to it" and that "the judgments of our understanding only have this reference." Now, Hume is not altogether consistent in his use of the word 'judgment'. Sometimes he contrasts judgment with belief or opinion; at other times, he calls beliefs or opinions judgments. But in both senses, it is clear that judgment involves the having of ideas and that the representative quality of the judgment is dependent on the fact that ideas are copies or representations of impressions.

Now, since there are two kinds of truth and falsehood, there are two kinds of operations of reason, viz., the comparing of ideas and the inferring of matters of fact. Hume holds that there are seven kinds of "philosophical" relations holding between ideas. These, he tells us, can be divided into two classes. One class consists of those relations which depend entirely on the ideas related. As such,
these relations cannot be changed without changing the idea. These include resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and proportions in quantity and number. The discovery of these relations by means of the comparison of ideas is **demonstrative reason**. Such reasoning is employed in algebra and arithmetic (Hume adds geometry to the list in the *Inquiry*) and is the only source of knowledge and certainty.

The other class of philosophical relations include those which may be changed without any change in the corresponding ideas. These include the relations of time and place, identity, and causation. Hume tells us, for instance, that the spatial relationship between two objects may be changed without any change in the objects or their ideas; one only need move one of the objects. Now, the discovery of the relations of time, place and identity is not made by reason:

> When both the objects are present to the senses along with the relation, we call this perception rather than reasoning; nor is there in this case any exercise of the thought, or any action, properly speaking, but a mere passive admission of the impressions thro' the organs of the sensation.²¹

The relation of causation, however, allows us to pass in thought, from what is immediately present to the senses to what is not. That is, causal or probabilistic reasoning is the inferring of effects from causes or causes from effects.

Causal inference, for Hume, is based upon the disposition of the mind to pass from the impression or idea of one
object to the idea of another. This disposition is created by the observation of a constant conjunction of these two objects. For instance, I observe in a number of cases that one event is always followed by another. These observations condition my mind to pass from the idea of impression of the first event to the idea of the second. Then when I observe or formulate the idea of the first event, my mind passes to the idea of the second event. This passage is causal inference.

All causal reasoning, according to Hume, must be based ultimately on experience. He says:

When we infer effects from causes, we must establish the existence of these causes; which we have only two ways of doing, either by an immediate perception of our memory or senses, or by an inference from other causes; which causes again we must ascertain in the same manner, either by a present impression, or by inferences from other causes, and so on, till we arrive at some object which we see or remember. 'Tis impossible for us to carry on our inference in infinitum; and the only thing, that can stop them, is an impression of the memory or senses, beyond which there is no room for doubt or enquiry.22

(iii)

Now let us turn to the main thesis of Book III, Part I, Section I of the Treatise. Hume gives each of the following characterizations of his main thesis:

The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reasoning.23
Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason.²⁴

'Tis in vain to pretend, that morality is discovered only by a deduction of reason.²⁵

Vice and Virtue are not discoverable merely by reason.²⁶

There is much ambiguity in these formulations. First, Hume speaks loosely of the rules of morality, moral distinctions, morality, and the discovery of vice and virtue. Though these notions may be related, they are obviously not the same. Despite this, it is clear that the phenomenon in which Hume is primarily interested is a mental phenomenon. In order to "cut off all loose discourses and declamations," Hume states that the problem with which he is concerned is the following:

Whether 'tis by means of our ideas or impressions we distinguish betwixt vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blameable or praiseworthy?²⁷

We might be inclined to identify these mental entities by which we distinguish virtue and vice with what are commonly called moral judgments, moral beliefs, or the thought that some action or character trait is right or wrong. But Hume reserves the terms 'judgment', 'belief', and 'thought' for a much more restricted class of phenomena than common discourse would allow, and as we shall see, on Hume's view, there is no such thing as a moral judgment, belief, or thought.²⁸ With this in mind, I shall restrict myself to
the more neutral terminology and refer to these phenomena simply as 'moral evaluations'.

There is also much ambiguity concerning what Hume takes to be the relationship between moral evaluations and reason. Hume often uses the word 'reason' to refer only to demonstrative reason. This might lead someone to think that Hume is only denying that moral evaluations are the results of demonstrations. As we shall see, however, Hume explicitly denies that moral evaluations are the results of causal or probabilistic reasoning. Furthermore, it should not be thought that Hume is denying that reason plays any role in moral thought. Hume allows that reason has a very important role in the production of a moral evaluation. It will become clear that he only wants to deny that reason alone is sufficient for the production of a moral evaluation.

Finally, it should be noted that in Book III, Part I, Section I of the Treatise, Hume is concerned with two theses. First, he attempts to argue that moral evaluations are not the result of reason alone. Second, he argues that immoral action is not the same as irrational or unreasonable action. Here I shall be concerned primarily with the arguments for the first thesis and shall consider his arguments for the second thesis only insofar as they are relevant to the first.

Hume offers several arguments for his claim that moral evaluations are not arrived at by reason. His most important argument is what I shall call the internalist argument. We
shall consider this argument in some detail in the next section. Here, we shall consider briefly some less convincing arguments which Hume took to be supplementary to his main argument.

Hume argues that since reason is the discovery of either relations of ideas or matters of fact, if moral evaluations are arrived at by reason, then virtue and vice must consist either in one of the four philosophical relations which depend on the ideas alone or some matter of fact discoverable by causal inference. He then considers each of these alternatives.

If moral evaluations are arrived at by demonstrative reason, then virtue and vice must consist in either resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, or proportion in quantity and number.

Demonstrative reason discovers only relations. But that reason, according to this hypothesis, discovers also vice and virtue. These moral qualities, therefore, must be relations. When we blame any action, in any situation, the whole complicated object, of action and situation, must form certain relations, wherein the essence of vice consists. This hypothesis is not otherwise intelligible.

And as we have seen, these relations can only be the relations of resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and proportion in quantity and number.
But this consequence, Hume tells us, is absurd. These relations may hold between inanimate objects as well as human actions, passions, or volitions. If vice and virtue may be reduced to these relations alone, then a stone, for instance, might have the quality of vice or virtue. But such is obviously not the case.

Now, Hume realizes that this argument rests on the claim that his list of demonstrative philosophical relations is exhaustive. Virtue and vice might consist in some demonstrative philosophical relation that Hume has not discovered. Hume's response to this objection is two-fold. First, he says:

To this I know not what to reply, till some one be so good as to point out to me this new relation. 'Tis impossible to refute a system, which has never yet been explained. In such a manner of fighting in the dark, a man loses his blows in the air, and often places them where the enemy is not present. 30

Despite this, Hume does have something to say. He lays down two conditions that any such relation must satisfy. First, he says that such a relation "must lie only betwixt internal actions (e.g., passions and volitions), and external objects, and must not be applicable either to internal actions, compared among themselves, or to external objects, when placed in opposition to other external objects." 31 If the former kind of relation is allowed, he says, then it would be possible that we are guilty of "crimes in ourselves"
regardless of our relationship to the external world. That is, if vice could consist merely in some relation between internal objects, then we could be vicious regardless of how we act or are disposed to act with regard to other things in the universe. The latter kind of relation cannot be allowed, according to Hume, for vice and virtue could then be properties of inanimate objects. That is, if the relation in which vice and virtue consists can hold between external objects alone, then inanimate objects may be vicious or virtuous.

Even though Hume asserts that this condition is impossible to satisfy, his remarks are not altogether convincing. They amount to mere assertion:

Now it seems difficult to imagine, that any relation can be discover'd betwixt our passions, volitions and actions, compared to external objects, which relation might not belong either to these passions and volitions or to those external objects, compar'd among themselves.  

The second condition which such a relation must satisfy is stated by Hume as follows:

We must also point out the connexion betwixt the relation and the will; and must prove that this connexion is so necessary, that in every well-disposed mind, it must take place and have its influence.

Note that strictly speaking this condition need not be satisfied for it to be true that moral evaluations are susceptible to demonstration. It could be the case that virtue and vice
consist in some relation which is discoverable by the comparison of ideas but that this relation has no influence on the will. It is clear, however, that Hume takes his opponents to hold both theses.

According to the principles of those who maintain an abstract rational difference betwixt moral good and evil, and a natural fitness and unfitness of things, 'tis not only suppos'd, that these relations, being eternal and immutable, are the same, when consider'd by every rational creature, but their effects are also suppos'd to be necessarily the same.34

Hume apparently has Samuel Clarke in mind here. Clarke held not only that moral judgments are susceptible to demonstration, but also that "by this understanding or knowledge of the natural and necessary relations, fitnesses, and proportions of things, the wills likewise of all intelligent beings are constantly directed, and must needs be determined to act accordingly."35

At any rate, Hume gives two arguments that this condition cannot be satisfied. First, he refers to his thesis that no relation alone can ever influence action. We shall consider this thesis at length in the next section. Second, he refers to his discussion of causation.

It has been shewn, in treating of the understanding, that there is no connexion of cause and effect, such as this is suppos'd to be, which is discoverable otherwise than by experience, and of which we can pretend to have any security by simple consideration of the objects. All beings in the universe,
Since the alleged relationship between virtue and vice and the will is a causal relationship, it is not susceptible to demonstration by the comparison of ideas. It can only be established by causal reasoning and an appeal to experience.

Finally, Hume considers two cases which he takes to support further his claim that virtue and vice do not consist in relations discoverable by the comparison of ideas. First, he points out that ingratitude especially when committed against one's parents and "appears in the more flagrant instances of wounds and death" is one of the most vicious acts a human being can perform. He then asks us to consider the following case:

Let us choose 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 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?37

According to Hume, then, all the relevant relations found in an act of ingratitude and parricide can also be found in the case where the sapling overtops and kills its parent tree. But, of course, the young tree is not guilty of ingratitude.
or parricide. Similarly, Hume claims that incest in humans is vicious, but the same action with all the same relations is innocent in animals.

J. L. Mackie rejects Hume's cases with the following claim:

This argument is more picturesque than cogent. It is easy to reply that there are further elements in the human situations which make them relevantly different from the non-human ones with which Hume compares them.38

Hume need not hold, however, that there are no relevant differences between the human cases and the non-human cases. He only needs to hold that these differences are not susceptible to demonstration. For instance, the obvious thing lacking in the case of the trees is intent. But as Hume points out, "a will does not give rise to any different relations, but is only the cause from which the action is deriv'd."39 And as we have seen, causal claims are not susceptible to demonstration by the comparison of ideas.

Finally, Hume argues that vice and virtue do not consist in any matter of fact. The argument he gives us involves a direct appeal to experience.

Take any action allow'd to be vicious: Willful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, of real existence, which you call vice. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object.40
Note that this argument supports a thesis somewhat stronger than Hume needs. He wants to show that moral distinctions are not discovered by reasoning concerning matters of fact. Recall that reasoning involves a passage in thought from some impression or idea to another. Reasoning concerning matters of fact involves passing from what is immediately present to the senses to what is not. Thus, what is immediately present to the senses is not the result of reasoning. "We call this perception rather than reasoning." The argument Hume gives us seems to support the claim that virtue and vice do not consist in any matter of fact discovered by reason or perception.

There appears to be a problem with this interpretation. Hume continues:

You never find it, till you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object.

Now it appears that Hume is willing to allow that vice does consist in some matter of fact. He appears to be denying only that it consists in some matter of fact which "lies in the object." He tells us 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."
If taken literally, Hume's claim here is absurd. It entails, for instance, that when I contemplate Hitler's character and assess it as vicious, the vice is in me. However, Hume need not hold this view to make his point. His primary point is that my assessment of Hitler as a vicious person does not depend merely on the discovery of some objective property of Hitler. It depends, at least in part, on a feeling I have from the contemplation of Hitler. This feeling is not something found in Hitler; it is contributed by me. This thesis does not require that the vice be in me. It only requires that the assessment of vice or virtue be dependent on something in me. We shall discuss the nature of this dependence in detail in the next chapter.

(iii)

Now let us consider Hume's internalist argument. The following is a very brief and clear statement of the argument:

Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be deriv'd from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason.⁴⁴

Thus Hume's main argument is that (1) moral evaluations can by themselves influence passions and actions. That is, my assessment of a certain action as right or wrong, virtuous or vicious will excite passions in me and cause me to act in
a certain way: (2) The products of reason cannot, by themselves, affect my actions or passions. Therefore, moral evaluations are not the products of reason.

In defense of (1), Hume says:

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 the multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound. Philosophy is commonly divided into speculative and practical; and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division, 'tis supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgments of the understanding. And this is confirm'd by common experience, which informs us, that men are often governed by their duties, and are deter'd from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impelled to others by that of obligation.45

Beyond this, Hume has little to say in defense of (1). He simply takes it as an indisputable fact that moral decisions can, by themselves, influence passions and actions. This thesis has been hotly debated in the twentieth century. I shall not attempt to review the debate here. But perhaps it should be noted that (1) does not follow immediately from anything we find in common experience. Common experience teaches us that people often do what they judge to be virtuous and refrain from doing what they judge to be vicious. There are, however, at least two explanations of this fact. One is Hume's thesis that the moral judgment or evaluation itself moves the person to act. An alternative hypothesis,
however, is that the moral evaluation in conjunction with something else (e.g., a universal desire to do what is right) moves the person to act.

There are two important aspects of Hume's internalism which should be noted. First, according to Hume, the relationship between moral evaluation and action is purely contingent. It is quite clear that he takes the relationship between moral evaluations and passions and actions to be causal. Other things being equal, our moral evaluations cause us to act in certain ways. As we have seen, moreover, causal relationships, for Hume, are purely contingent. Indeed, it is on these grounds that Hume rejects the stronger kind of internalism held by Samuel Clarke.46

Second, Hume does not hold that every instance of moral evaluation effectively produces passions and actions. He tells us, for instance, that I may disapprove of a person or object which causes pain in another, "tho' I may not be willing to sacrifice any thing of my own interest, or cross any of my passions, for his satisfaction."47 The view Hume seems to hold, then, is that moral evaluations constitute tendencies or inclinations to have certain passions and perform certain actions. In the absence of any contrary tendencies, moral evaluations will in fact produce passions and actions, but there are contrary inclinations which can effectively counteract their influence.
Hume discusses the second premise at length in Book II. First, Hume considers the role played by each kind of reasoning in making practical decisions. He notes first that we often employ demonstrative reasoning such as mathematical reasoning in deciding what to do. But, he tells us, such reasoning is useful only in helping us formulate precise judgments concerning cause and effect.

The reason why we employ arithmetic in fixing the proportions of numbers, is only that we may discover the proportions of their influence and operation. A merchant is desirous of knowing the sum total of his accounts with any person: Why? but that he may know what sum will have the same effects in paying his debts and going to market, as all the particular articles taken together. Abstract or demonstrative reasoning, therefore, never influences any of our actions, but only as it directs our judgment concerning causes and effects.48

What, then, of our reasoning concerning cause and effect? Our judgments concerning cause and effect, according to Hume, will influence our actions only if we are affected by either the cause or the affect.

It can never in the least concern us to know, that such objects are causes, and such others effects, if both the causes and effects be indifferent to us. Where the objects themselves do not affect us, their connexion can never give them any influence; and 'tis plain, that as reason is nothing but the discovery of this connexion, it cannot be by its means that the objects are able to affect us.49
The argument here seems to be completely conclusive. Suppose, for instance, that I discover that overwatering my houseplants will cause them to die. What influence will this belief have on my actions? If I am completely indifferent to the death of my houseplants or any consequence of their death, it will have no effect at all. It will have an effect only if I have some desire the satisfaction of which is affected by the death of my houseplants.

Thus, according to Hume, the results of reason can influence action only by directing the influence of our desires. That is, reason may show us the most efficient means to their satisfaction, but reason alone can neither prompt nor prevent action.

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.50

Note that the argument, as it stands, is not entirely conclusive. It shows, to be sure, that beliefs and judgments arrived at by probabilistic or demonstrative reasoning will not influence action unless they are accompanied by some propensity or aversion. But the argument leaves open the possibility that propensities or aversions are themselves assessable by or are the products of reason. Hume adduces some "other considerations" which bear directly on this point. In Book II, he says:
A passion is an original existence, or, if you will modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possesst with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this passion can be oppos'd by, or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagree­ment of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent.51

Hume repeats this argument in Book III:

Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore, is not susceptible of this agreement or disagreement is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason. Now 'tis evident that our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagree­ment; being original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying no refer­ence to other passions, volitions, and actions. 'Tis impossible, therefore, they can be pronounced either true or false, and be either contrary or conformable to reason.52

Hume takes this argument to support two theses. First, it shows that "actions do not derive their merit from a con­formity to reason, nor their blame from a contrariety to it."53 This follows immediately from the fact that actions can neither conform nor be contrary to reason. Second, since the argument shows that passions and actions can neither
conform nor fail to conform to reason, reason can never prevent or produce a passion or action. Consequently, reason "cannot be the source of the distinction betwixt moral good and evil, which are found to have that influence."54

Now, at first glance, the argument seems perfectly straightforward. The sole function of reason is the discovery of truth and falsehood. Consequently, only those entities which are capable of being true or false may be assessed by reason. That is, only entities which are capable of being true or false may conform or fail to conform to reason. But truth and falsehood consists in the agreement or disagreement of entities which represent relations of ideas or matters of fact with real relations of ideas or matters of fact. Only representative entities may be true or false and consequently assessable by reason. Passions, volitions, and actions are "original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions."55 That is, passions, volitions, and actions are not representative entities. Consequently, they cannot be true or false and thereby assessable by reason.

Now let us look more closely at the argument. First, we need to determine what Hume takes representative entities to be. Several commentators have claimed that Hume is contrasting passions with propositions. Rachael Kydd, for instance, says:
He does not specifically say what it is which, when true, agrees with real facts or relations, and false, disagrees with them, but it is clear that he is referring to propositions. His argument then is that truth and falsehood, self-evidence and self-contradiction are predicable only of propositions, and this in so far as the latter agree or disagree with the facts or relations of ideas which they assert; and, since actions, passions, and volitions are not propositions, but 'original facts and realities', it is meaningless to speak of them as either true or false.56

Stroud gives a similar interpretation:

In order to try to understand what Hume is getting at, let us say that the sorts of things that are true or false are 'propositions'. They are 'representative' entities in that they represent things to be a certain way, and they are true if and only if things are as the proposition represents them to be. Only propositions, so understood, are the proper 'objects of reason'. Hume appears to be saying that the only way something could be opposed to, or in conflict with, reason is by being opposed to, or in conflict with, one of the 'objects of reason'. But something can be in conflict or contradiction with a particular proposition only if it differs in truth-value from that proposition, and so whatever can be in conflict or contradiction with a proposition must be something that itself has a truth-value. And the only things that have truth-values, the only things that are either true or false, are 'representative' entities such as propositions.

On this interpretation, Hume's argument is certainly valid. If only propositions may be assessed by reason, then certainly passions cannot be. Propositions are abstract entities, and passions are mental entities. The problem,
however, is that the premise is false. Not only propositions but also our beliefs and judgments, are assessable by reason. The argument on this interpretation would rule out the possibility that our beliefs and judgments conform or fail to conform to reason. Beliefs and judgments, like passions, are mental entities, not abstract entities like propositions.

This is a conclusion that Hume would certainly want to avoid. I think, however, a close examination of the text shows that the Kydd-Stroud interpretation is mistaken. First, Hume nowhere mentions propositions. As a matter of fact, Hume tells us explicitly that those representative entities he has in mind are mental entities; namely, ideas. "This contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent." And in the first sentence following the famous passage in Book II, Hume says:

What may at first occur on this head, is, that as nothing can be contrary to truth or reason, except what has a reference to it, and as judgments of our understanding only have this reference, it must follow, that passions can be contrary to reason only so far as they are accompany'd with some judgment or opinion.

Thus, it is beliefs and judgments which, according to Hume, agree or disagree with reality, and it is in virtue of their component ideas that they are capable of such agreement and disagreement. Hume's main point is that ideas but not passions are representative entities.
Now, at first glance, Hume's conclusion that passions are not assessable by reason is implausible. We are inclined, for instance, to regard a fear of daisies as irrational or unreasonable. Some philosophers have tried to account for this intuition by claiming that the passions have what Philippa Foot calls internal relations to their objects.\textsuperscript{60} Not only is any particular kind of passion, for instance, fear, essentially directed toward some thing or person, it is essentially directed toward that thing under certain kinds of descriptions. Necessarily, fear is fear of something as threatening. In short, being afraid necessarily involves the cognition that something is dangerous or threatening. Thus, a person's fear of daisies will be unreasonable in virtue of the fact that his cognition that daisies are dangerous or threatening is unreasonable.

Hume is not insensitive to this intuition. Though he does not believe that cognitive states are essential components of passions, he does believe that there is a very strong contingent relationship between certain cognitive states and certain passions. He tells us, for instance, that fear always arises from the expectation of pain or harm. It is in virtue of such contingent relationships between passions and judgments that Hume allows that we can speak, albeit loosely, of the passions as being reasonable or unreasonable:
'Tis only in two senses, that any affection can be called unreasonable. First, when a passion, such as hope or fear, grief or joy, despair or security, is founded on the supposition of the existence of objects which really do not exist. Secondly, when in exerting any passion in action, we choose means insufficient for the design'd end, and deceive ourselves in our judgment of causes and effects.\textsuperscript{61}

The second sense seems more properly applicable to actions and choices, but the first sense seems to cover just those cases in which we are concerned to say that the passions are unreasonable. Hume warns us, however, that "'tis not the passion properly speaking, which is unreasonable, but the judgment which accompanies it."\textsuperscript{62}

Thus, according to Hume, desires and aversions are not, properly speaking, the results of reason. The results of reason, moreover, influence passions and actions only insofar as they are accompanied by an appropriate desire or aversion. Since moral evaluations by themselves can influence passions and actions, it follows that they are not the results of reason.
II. MORAL EVALUATION AND THE MORAL SENTIMENTS

After rejecting the thesis that moral distinctions are discoverable by reason, Hume tells us that "it must be by means of some impression or sentiment they occasion, that we are able to mark the difference betwixt them."¹ Let us call this sentiment the moral sentiment. Hume tells us that the moral sentiments "are nothing but particular pains or pleasures."² There has been much controversy concerning exactly what Hume takes to be the relationship between these particular pains and pleasures and moral evaluation. Here I shall attempt to make some preliminary remarks concerning this relationship.

Recall that Hume is primarily concerned with moral evaluations as mental phenomena. To be sure, Hume often mentions moral "pronouncements," but it is clear that his analysis of moral utterances is derived from his analysis of moral evaluations. Here, then, I shall focus my attention on Hume's account of the nature of the mental phenomena we ordinarily call moral evaluations.

Hume is not at all clear about the relationship between moral evaluations and the moral sentiments. A number of different views may plausibly be attributed to him. These views may be divided into two distinct kinds. First, Hume
appears to hold that every moral evaluation is dependent, in some sense, on an actual, occurrent moral sentiment. The exact sense in which the evaluation is dependent on the moral sentiment might plausibly be construed in any of the following ways:

(1) Moral evaluations are judgments, beliefs, opinions, etc., about the causes of one's occurrent moral sentiments.

(2) Moral evaluations are judgments, beliefs, opinions, etc., about one's occurrent moral sentiments.

(3) Moral evaluations are identical to one's occurrent moral sentiments.

I shall discuss these three interpretations in section (i).

There is evidence, however, that Hume held a quite different view about the relationship between moral evaluations and the moral sentiments. In Book III, Part III of the Treatise, Hume seems to suggest that the relationship between moral evaluations and the moral sentiments is indirect. There Hume's view might plausibly be construed in the following ways:

(4) Moral evaluations are judgments, beliefs, opinions, etc., about the moral sentiments of most people.

(5) Moral evaluations are judgments, beliefs, opinions, etc., about the moral sentiments one would have if one were in a certain situation.

I shall discuss these interpretations in (ii).
Let us consider (1). Geoffrey Hunter attributes such a view to Hume. He characterizes the view as follows:

A moral judgment states that there is a causal relation between the contemplation by the speaker of some actual or imagined state of affairs and a certain sort of feeling or sentiment that he has when he does the contemplating. 3

His primary support comes from the following passage:

When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. 4

It appears that here Hume is straightforwardly asserting the view attributed to him by Hunter. Hume appears to be saying that moral evaluations are particular kinds of causal judgments.

The most serious problem with this view is that it appears to be incompatible with Hume's account of the relationship between reason and moral evaluation. As we have seen, Hume explicitly denies that moral evaluations are the results of causal reasoning. The results of causal reasoning cannot by themselves move us to action. Since the ability to move us to action is one of the distinguishing characteristics of moral evaluations, it follows that moral evaluations cannot be the results of causal reasoning. But according to
(1), moral evaluations just are causal beliefs of a certain kind and consequently the results of causal reasoning.

Hunter argues, however, that this view is consistent with Hume's doctrine about the relationship between reason and morality. He says:

The distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, because it is founded on the sentiments felt by people contemplating relations of objects. It is not perceived by reason alone, because these sentiments themselves are the objects not of reason but of feeling.5

Hunter is making two points here. First, he seems to be claiming that when Hume denies that virtue and vice consist in any matter of fact, he is denying only that they consist in any external matter of fact. So, Hume's doctrine concerning reason and morality does not rule out the possibility of virtue and vice consisting in some internal matter of fact. In particular, according to Hunter, it does not rule out the possibility that virtue and vice consist in a causal relationship between the contemplation of a character trait and the moral sentiment. Second, Hunter is claiming that such a relation is not discovered by reason alone because the discovery of internal matters of fact depends on an appeal to feeling. Hume seems to suggest this interpretation in the following passage:
The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You can never find it, till you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object.

I think that Hunter is correct concerning the first point. As we saw in the last chapter, Hume does seem to exclude some internal matters of fact from his thesis that vice and virtue do not consist in any matter of fact. Apparently, Hume thought that he was justified in doing so since the internal matters of fact in question, namely the moral sentiment, is "the object of feeling, not of reason." And, of course, Hume's main concern in this passage is to show that moral evaluations are not arrived at by reason alone.

The distinction Hume is drawing between reasoning and feeling is roughly the same as that which he draws in Book I between reasoning and perception. There he claims that the discovery of the relations of time, place and identity is not made by reason because "both objects are present to the senses along with the relation" and consequently the discovery of such a relation does not require "any exercise of the thought." That is, the discovery of these relations does not require the production or transformation of any perceptions. No conclusions need be drawn; there is a "mere passive admission of the impressions thro' the organs of the
sensation." Now, the same principle should hold for any entity or relation which is immediately present to the mind. The discovery of such an entity or relation does not require any creative activity of the mind. It does not require reasoning; it only need be felt. The moral sentiment, Hume is telling us, is just such an entity.

None of this entails that reasoning is not required to discover causal connections between such entities. Hume is quite clear that causal relations, even between mental entities, are never immediately present to the mind. Consequently, a causal belief always requires an inference to something that is immediately present to the mind. That is, an act of reason is always required. Thus, even though the moral sentiment is an object of feeling, the causal relation between the sentiment and some act of contemplation is an object of reason. On Hunter's interpretation, then, Hume must allow that moral decisions are arrived at by reason.

Hunter's second point is that since the discovery of a moral sentiment is made by feeling rather than reason, and since this discovery is necessary for arriving at the causal belief in question, reason is not by itself sufficient for the production of the moral decision. Certainly, Hume wants to allow that reason has some role in the production of a moral decision; he only wants to deny that reason alone can result in a moral decision. Note, however, that Hume cannot mean by this merely that some appeal to feeling is also
required to arrive at a moral decision. Hume holds that all empirical reasoning is ultimately based on impressions, and impressions are the objects of feeling, not of reason. Hume obviously takes his thesis that moral decisions are not arrived at by reason alone to exclude some instances of causal reasoning, but even in these cases an appeal to feeling is required. Thus, the mere fact that reasoning about the causes of one's occurrent moral sentiments requires an appeal to feeling does not distinguish such reasoning from those instances of causal reasoning which Hume clearly takes his thesis to exclude.

It is fairly clear, moreover, that the role that Hume allows reason to play in the production of a moral evaluation does not involve reasoning about the moral sentiment. Reasoning is involved in the formulation of adequate beliefs or ideas about the action or character trait which is being evaluated. These beliefs or ideas are not about the moral sentiment; they give rise to the moral sentiment. In the Inquiry, Hume says:

In order to pave the way for such a sentiment and give a proper discernment of its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained.
Now, let us consider (2). (2) is the view that moral evaluations are thoughts about occurrent moral sentiments. That is, to make a moral evaluation is to entertain an idea which is a copy of and consequently represents an occurrent moral sentiment.

An apparent problem with attributing this view to Hume is that it seems to be incompatible with Hume's internalism. Suppose, for instance, that I falsely judge that I now have a moral sentiment. Then I will not in fact have the moral sentiment in question (and, we may suppose, any other sentiment appropriate to moral action in this case). In this case, my moral judgment will lack the appropriate connection with my will. I have made a moral judgment even though the moral sentiments are absent. As we have seen, according to Hume, a thought cannot by itself move one to action.

There is a response to this argument. In Book I of the Treatise, Hume says:

Every impression, external and internal, passions, affections, sensations, pains and pleasures, are originally on the same footing; and that whatever other differences we observe among them, they appear, all of them, in their true colours, as impressions or perceptions. And indeed, if we consider the matter aright, 'tis scarce possible it shou'd be otherwise, nor is it conceivable that our senses should be more capable of deceiving us in the situation and relations, than in the nature of our impressions. For since all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness they must necessarily appear in every particular what
they are, and be what they appear. Every thing that enters the mind, being in reality a perception, 'tis impossible anything should to feeling appear different. This were to suppose, that even where we are most intimately conscious, we might be mistaken.11

Here Hume seems to assert that we cannot be mistaken about the contents of our minds. It would apparently follow that if I judge that I now have a moral sentiment, then I must have a moral sentiment. That is, the judgment that one has a moral sentiment is necessarily attended by a moral sentiment. Note that this effectively blocks the supposition I made above that one might mistakenly judge that one now has a moral sentiment.

Note, however, that even if this is true, it will be the sentiment and not the judgment that I have the sentiment which, strictly speaking, influences my passions and actions. This may account for the same phenomena that Hume takes to support his internalism, but it is clear that this is not the view Hume holds. According to Hume, the moral evaluation itself influences our passions and actions. This is quite different from the claim that our moral evaluations are always attended by something which influences passions and actions.

Throughout Books II and III, moreover, Hume repeatedly asserts that we can be mistaken about our passions and sentiments. Concerning the moral sentiment, he says that it is often mistaken for an idea.
This feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle, that we are apt to confound it with an idea, according to our common custom of taking all things for the same, which have any near resemblance to each other.\textsuperscript{12}

Similarly, we may mistake a sentiment of self-love for the moral sentiment:

'Tis true, those sentiments, from interest and morals are apt to be confounded, and naturally run into one another.\textsuperscript{13}

And concerning the calm passions in general, Hume says:

Now 'tis certain, there are certain calm desires and tendencies, which tho' they be real passions, produce little emotion in the mind, and are more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation.\textsuperscript{14}

To know a passion by its effects requires causal reasoning and consequently the possibility of error. Thus, it appears that it is possible, on Hume's view, to falsely judge that I now have a moral sentiment.

What are we to make of the inconsistency between these passages and Hume's apparent claim that we cannot be mistaken about the contents of our mind? Note that Hume only says that the contents of the mind cannot appear to feeling different from what they are. That is, our immediate awareness of a perception cannot be mistaken. Indeed, in the context in which Hume mentions that our awareness of the
contents of the mind cannot be mistaken, he is discussing the mistaken belief that our impressions are external to us. To be sure, Hume stresses that perception or feeling cannot give rise to such a belief, but he clearly allows that it is possible to have false beliefs about the contents of one’s mind.

There is another apparent problem with my argument that (2) is incompatible with Hume’s internalism. It seems that Hume does allow that thoughts can move us to action. According to Hume, pleasures and pains are primarily what excite passions and influence actions.

The chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind is pleasure or pain; and when these sensations are removed, both from our thought and feeling, we are in a great measure, incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition.15

Note that Hume mentions both thought and feeling here. Sometimes, moreover, Hume tells us that "'tis from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises towards any object."16 Presumably, entertaining the prospect of pain is entertaining in some manner the idea of pain. Thus, if we are moved to act by the prospect of pain or pleasure, we are moved to act by an idea.

In Book I, Hume makes it very clear that the idea of pain or pleasure can influence action. First, he tells us that:
Pain and pleasure have two ways of making their appearance in the mind; of which the one has effects very different from the other. They may either appear in impression to the actual feeling, or only in idea, as at present when I mention them.\textsuperscript{17}

The impression of pain or pleasures always influences passions and action, but some ideas do not have this effect. Hume tells us, however, that some ideas do influence passions and actions. Otherwise, "we should every moment of our lives be subject to the greatest calamities; because, tho' we foresaw their approach, we should not be provided by nature with any principle of action, which might impel us to avoid them."\textsuperscript{18} If we must wait to feel a pain before we are moved to avoid it, we will be constantly subject to all kinds of painful experiences.

Hume explains the influence of these ideas on passions and actions by appealing to the enlivening influence of belief. That is, by means of the enlivening influences of a related present impression, the idea of pain or pleasure is raised up "to an equality with our impressions, and bestow on it a like influence on the passions."\textsuperscript{19}

This fits in quite nicely with (2). Since the moral sentiments are pains and pleasures, ideas of them will be the kind of ideas Hume is talking about here. These ideas, then, may be enlivened by belief and consequently be able to move one to act. Thus it appears that (2) is not incompatible with Hume's internalism.
We should note that Hume does not appear to be altogether happy with his distinction between a lively idea of a pleasure and the feeling of pleasure itself. When Hume is attempting to explain our esteem for the rich and powerful, he says:

Riches give satisfaction to their possessor; and this satisfaction is convey'd to the beholder by the imagination, which produces an idea resembling the original impression in force and vivacity. This agreeable idea or impression is connected with love, which is an agreeable passion.  

The noteworthy thing about this passage for our present purposes is that Hume refers to the lively idea of the rich person's pleasure as "this agreeable idea or impression." Hume is here hesitant to distinguish the lively idea from the impression. Similarly, when he is explaining why we find an unbalanced composition in painting to be disagreeable, he says:

A figure, which is not justly ballanc'd, is disagreeable and that because it conveys the ideas of its fall, of harm, and of pain: which ideas are painful, when by sympathy they acquire any degree of force and vivacity.  

Here again we find a tendency to de-emphasize the distinction between the lively idea of a pain and the pain itself. The lively idea of pain, we are told, is itself painful. Now, this might be interpreted as the claim that the lively idea of pain gives rise to a pain which is distinct from it. But
there is a passage where Hume clearly identifies the two. In his discussion of the production of the moral sentiment, he says:

When any quality, or character, has a tendency to the good of mankind, we are pleas'd with it, and approve of it; because it presents the lively idea of pleasure; which idea affects us by sympathy, and is itself a kind of pleasure.\textsuperscript{22}

Here Hume tells us that our lively idea of pleasure is itself a pleasure.

We should not be surprised, however, to find Hume conflating impressions and ideas in this case. At this point, Hume is up against the constraints of his own inadequate epistemology. Belief, he tells us, raises the idea of a pain or pleasure "to an equality with our impressions." It is because of this that such a belief can influence passions and actions. But he explicitly claims that the only manner in which impressions and ideas differ is in their vivacity. It follows, then, that to raise the liveliness of an idea to that of an impression is to convert it into an impression.\textsuperscript{23} The expectation of a pain, however, is evidently not an impression; when one expects a pain, one does not feel a pain. One has a thought of a pain. It is plausible, I think, that it is Hume's sensitivity to this problem and his inability to adequately resolve it that leads him to de-emphasize the distinction between lively ideas of pains and pleasures and painful or pleasant impressions.
Where does that leave us concerning (2)? Insofar as Hume tends to conflate the lively ideas of pleasures and pains with pleasures and pains, it is likely that he would conflate (2) and (3). Hume may not have clearly distinguished the two views, or he may have been undecided concerning which view he wanted to hold. However, there is clear textual evidence that, at least on some occasions, Hume takes (3) to be the correct view. He says:

Our decisions concerning moral rectitude and depravity are evidently perceptions; and as all perceptions are either impressions or ideas, the exclusion of the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judg'd of.24

There can be no doubt that Hume is here explicitly claiming that moral evaluations are impressions rather than ideas. He says, moreover, that:

To have a 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. . . . We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous.25

Thus, to make a moral evaluation, according to Hume, is just to have a feeling of a particular kind. Moral evaluations are not thoughts about our moral sentiments; they are identical to moral sentiments.
These passages, together with the difficulties with (1) and (2), suggest that (3) is the correct interpretation. There are passages, however, where Hume appears to hold a view which is incompatible with all three of the views we have discussed here. Let us now turn our attention to these passages.

(ii)

In Book III, Part III of the Treatise, Hume is much concerned with what appear to be two serious problems with the view of moral evaluation which he develops earlier in Book III. First, he tells us that the liveliness of our sentiments varies according to the distance in space or time that the object of the sentiment is from us. Second, the sentiments aroused in us by the virtues of a friend or relative are usually more lively than those aroused in us by the virtues of a stranger. But neither of these circumstances affect our moral evaluations of the relevant persons:

Now 'tis evident, that those sentiments, whence-ever they are derived, must vary according to the distances or contiguity of the objects; nor can I feel the same lively pleasure from the virtues of a person, who liv'd in Greece two thousand years ago, that I feel from the virtues of a familiar friend and acquaintance. Yet I do not say that I esteem the one more than the other.26

But, according to Hume, this problem is only apparent. Just as is the case with all of the senses, experience teaches us
to correct our moral sentiments for variations resulting from our peculiar positions. Otherwise, moral thought and moral language would be impossible.

We correct our moral sentiments by fixing on "some steady and general points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation." First, experience teaches us to disregard our peculiar spatial or temporal location and to consider the action or character trait "as if we remained in one point of view." Similarly:

We overlook our own interest in those general judgments; and blame not a man for opposing us in any of our pretentions, when his own interest is particularly concerned. We make allowance for a certain degree of selfishness in men; because we know it to be inseparable from human nature, and inherent in our frame and constitution.

By doing these things, we are able to correct our sentiments to avoid the variability mentioned above.

But there is a problem here. Hume tells us 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. 'Tis seldom men heartily love what lies at a distance from them, and what no way rebounds to their particular benefit; as 'tis no less rare to meet with persons, who can pardon another any opposition he makes to their interest, however justifiable that opposition may be by the general rules of morality.
Hume is telling us that adopting the disinterested point of view does not always have the desired effect on the passions. That is, changes in the feelings of approbation and disapprobation do not always follow readily from the reflections required to correct our moral sentiments. But, Hume tells us, "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."  

Similarly, in the Inquiry, Hume says:

And though the heart takes not part entirely with those general notions, nor regulates all its love and hatred by the universal, abstract differences of vice and virtue without regard to self or the persons with whom we are more intimately connected, yet have these moral differences a considerable influence; and being sufficient, at least, for discourse, serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, in the theater, and in the schools.

Thus, it appears that Hume is giving up the proposed connection between moral evaluations and occurrent affective states altogether.

It is, perhaps, on these grounds that C. D. Broad gives the following interpretation of Hume's ethics:

Hume's theory is that "x is good" means that the contemplation of x will call forth an emotion of approval in all or most men on all or most occasions.
Broad quite correctly points out that on this theory "a man might quite well make the judgment that x is good, though the contemplation of x evoked in him at the time no emotion at all or an emotion of disapproval."^34

There is no direct textual evidence for Broad's interpretation in the Treatise, though it fits the passages quoted above quite well. There is, however, some evidence for a different interpretation which explains these same passages equally well. Hume says:

We blame equally a bad action, which we read of in history, with one performed in our neighbourhood t'other day: The meaning of which is, that we know from reflexion, that the former action wou'd excite as strong sentiments of disapprobation as the latter, were it placed in the same position.35

(emphasis mine)

One might take this passage to indicate that, for Hume, an assessment of an action as vicious or virtuous is just the judgment that if one were to view the action or be placed near it, one would feel a disagreeable moral sentiment. In the Inquiry, Hume says:

The hypothesis which we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary.36

This passage seems to confirm the interpretation in question. Note, moreover, that like Broad's interpretation, this
interpretation allows that one can make a moral judgment without having the moral sentiment. One need only judge that a spectator would have the moral sentiment upon contemplating the action.

Things become even more complicated. Hume appears to tell us that viewing the action or character trait is not in itself sufficient for the production of the moral sentiment. How the action or character trait affects one's own peculiar interests will influence or "distort" the sentiments which are produced by the contemplation of it. Thus, the sentiments felt by different spectators on different occasions will differ. But, as we have seen, moral judgments do not vary in this way. Thus:

It is only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment as denominates it morally good or evil. 37

As Jonathan Harrison points out, Hume seems to be moving toward some kind of ideal observer theory. 38 It appears that Hume must say that a moral evaluation does not require an actual feeling, nor does it require that we would have some feeling were we to view the action or character trait. The moral evaluation is a judgment that a perfectly disinterested spectator would feel a certain moral sentiment upon contemplation of the action or character trait.
Now the problem with all of these interpretations should be obvious. They place moral evaluation clearly in the camp of those things which may be arrived at by empirical reason alone. There appears to be no fundamental difference between moral evaluation and any kind of opinion arrived at by empirical reasoning. As Broad correctly points out concerning the view he attributes to Hume, "such statements as this can be argued about and supported or refuted by observation and collection of statistics." Concerning the other interpretations, Barry Stroud says:

It is not by feeling alone that we discover that we would feel such-and-such if certain conditions were to obtain. Only by experience and reasoning can we come to such a conclusion. . . . So Hume's attempt to bring his theory of moral judgment into accord with the facts of moral thinking commits him to the view that moral judgments are the results of certain operations of the understanding. And this is just the conclusion he wants to avoid.

Even if Stroud is right, we should not think that Hume has made any great concession to the rationalists. Those whom Hume considered to be his primary opponents held that moral judgments were susceptible to demonstration. Of course, the most Hume needs to concede here is that moral judgments may be arrived at by empirical reason. The important problem, however, is that this view seems to be incompatible with Hume's internalism. Judgments about possible sentiments or the sentiments of an impartial spectator will
not move us to action. In divorcing moral decisions from actual occurrent sentiments, Hume is forced to give up the view that moral decisions alone are capable of exciting passions and influencing action.

Note that the passage in Book I where Hume seems to allow that lively ideas of pleasures and pains can move us to act will not help him out of the difficulty here. There he is clearly concerned with predictions or expectations that some object will cause in me a pleasure or pain. It is quite clear that he does not believe that entertaining the hypothetical possibility of a pain or pleasure will have the same influence. He says:

Tho' an idle fiction has no efficacy, yet we
find by experience that the ideas of those objects, which we believe either are or will be existent, produce in a lesser degree the same effect with those impressions, which are immediately present to the senses and perception.41

I shall argue in what follows that these interpretations of Hume are mistaken. The correct reading of those passages which appear to support these interpretations do not indicate that Hume gives up the simple kind of account of moral evaluations which we discussed in section (i). A close reading of the text reveals, I think, that even in Book III, Part III of the _Treatise_, Hume holds that moral evaluations are identical to occurrent moral sentiments. In order to see this, however, we must first determine the relationship between the passions
and the moral sentiments. I shall closely examine this relationship in the following two chapters. In the final chapter, I shall try to make good my claim.
III. THE MORAL SENTIMENTS AND THE PASSIONS

It is generally assumed that, according to Hume, the moral sentiments are passions. There has been some controversy, however, concerning the moral sentiments' place in Hume's classification of the passions. In this chapter, I shall examine the relationship between the moral sentiments and the passions in some detail. In section (i), I shall examine Hume's general account of the passions; and in section (ii), I shall examine the debate concerning whether the moral sentiments are direct or indirect passions.

(i)

The passions, according to Hume, are divided into the direct and the indirect passions:

By direct passions I understand such as arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. By indirect such as proceed from the same principles, but by the conjunction of other qualities.¹

The direct passions are primarily those which arise from pains and pleasures "most naturally, and with least preparation."² That is, the direct passions are primarily those which arise immediately—without any intermediate steps—from pains and pleasures. Later Hume modifies his characterization
of the direct passions to include those which arise from the mere prospect of pain or pleasure:

The mind by an original instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid evil, tho' they be conceiv'd merely in idea, and to be consider'd as to exist in any future time.³

Moreover, the nature of the direct passion is determined by whether the idea is of pain or pleasure and the probability that the pain or pleasure will occur. Pleasure "consider'd simply" produces desire, and pain considered in the same manner produces aversion. When pleasure is certain, joy is produced; and when pain is certain, grief is produced. When either pain or pleasure is uncertain, fear or hope is produced "according to the degree of uncertainty on the one side or another."⁴

Fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy. When we are uncertain about the occurrence of some event, Hume tells us, the mind "fluctuates betwixt the opposite views."⁵ That is, the mind alternately considers the idea of the occurrence of the event and the idea of the alternative events. So when we are uncertain about whether pain or pleasure will occur, the mind alternately considers the idea of pain and the idea of pleasure. While the mind is entertaining the idea of pleasure, joy is produced, and while it is entertaining the idea of pain, grief is produced. Since the passions tend to linger after the idea is gone, grief and joy become mixed in
the mind. Now, depending on what we take to be the chances of the occurrence of pain or pleasure, one of these passions will predominate. If we believe that the probability of the occurrence of pain is higher than the probability of the occurrence of pleasure, the idea of pain will occur in the mind more often than the idea of pleasure. Consequently, more grief will be produced in the mind than joy. When this happens the resulting mixture is fear. When more joy is produced than grief, the resulting mixture is hope.

Besides desire, aversion, grief, joy, fear, and hope, there is another kind of passion which Hume includes under the direct passions:

Besides 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.6

It is a bit surprising that Hume includes these passions in the class of direct passions since his usual method is to categorize the passions according to their manner of production. Apparently, however, he groups these passions under the direct passions because they appear to be kinds of desires.7
Beyond this, Hume has little to say about the direct passions. Concerning the indirect passions, however, he has much to say. The greater part of Book II is devoted to a discussion of the indirect passions and their principle of production. In order to get a clear understanding of these passions, let us first consider Hume's account of pride which he takes to be a paradigm case of an indirect passion.

Pride, according to Hume, is a simple impression. Thus, we must not interpret Hume as giving an account of the character trait of pride. A person may be described as a proud person on the basis of his having a disposition to behave in certain ways even though he may have no occurrent feelings which we might identify as feelings of pride. Indeed, a person may be a proud person without knowing that he is proud. Insofar, then, as Hume is offering us an account of the character trait of pride, his account is extremely implausible. If Hume's account is plausible at all, it must be as an account of the occurrent feeling of pride. Thus, I shall interpret Hume as giving an account of the occurrent feeling which a parent, for instance, has while observing his child perform well at some task.

Since pride is a simple impression, Hume tells us, it cannot be defined. The best one can do in an attempt to understand simple impressions is to give a "description of them, by an enumeration of such circumstances, as attend them." This Hume proceeds to do.
Hume begins with a discussion of the objects and causes of pride and humility. The object of both, he tells us, is self:

'Tis evident, that pride and humility, tho' directly contrary, have yet the same OBJECT. This object is self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness. Here the view always fixes when we are actuated by either of these passions. . . . Whatever other objects may be comprehended by the mind, they are always consider'd with a view to ourselves; otherwise they wou'd never be able either to excite these passions, or produce the smallest encrease or diminu-ation of them. When self enters not into the consideration, there is no room either for pride or humility.  

The object of a passion, for Hume, is the idea to which the passion directs one's attention.

Hume clearly distinguishes the object of a passion from its cause. The object of pride cannot be the cause of pride, he argues, for pride and humility have the same object. If the object is sufficient for producing the passion, the same cause would result in both. Thus, he argues, the idea of self would cause equal portions of both pride and humility; these would neutralize each other, and the result would always be indifference. But clearly people sometimes feel pride or humility. So, self cannot be their cause:

We must, therefore, make a distinction betwixt the cause and the object of these passions; betwixt that idea which excites them, and that to which they direct their view, when excited.
Here then is a passion plac'd betwixt two ideas, of which the one produces it, and the other is produc'd by it. The first idea, therefore, represents the cause, the second the object of the passion.10

Before looking at Hume's account of the productive principle of pride, let us first consider some objections to Hume's account of the object of pride. First, it has been objected that it is simply not true that self is always the object of pride. For instance, it is initially plausible to say that when a father feels pride because of the accomplishments of his daughter, the object of the pride is his daughter. It is quite natural to say, for instance, that the father is proud of his daughter. Moreover, it appears that the father's attention would naturally be directed to his daughter, not to himself.

Note, however, that even in such a case, the idea of the self plays an important role. The man feels pride in virtue of the fact that the young woman is his daughter. One is not naturally proud of the accomplishments of a person with whom one has no connection. I think that when we get Hume's full account before us, we will see that it handles such a case quite easily. What the case does show, however, is that for Hume, the notion of object is a technical notion and need not correspond with what is naturally the grammatical object of "proud."
Second, it has been objected that even in those cases
where the object of pride is the self, it is not always the
case that one's attention is directed to the self. Páll Árdal
gives the following case:

A man glows with pride when he is presented to
the Queen: the passion is supposed to have an
object, in the sense that the attention of the
proud person is always turned to himself. But
is this so? Is it not more likely that his
attention at that time is focused on all the
magnificent things he is in the presence of
on this occasion in his life?

Two things need to be noted here. First, Hume nowhere denies
that one may be thinking of things other than self when one
feels pride. As we shall see, it is always the case that
other ideas will be before the mind. Secondly, it seems
implausible that if the man's attention is directed solely
to "the magnificent things he is in the presence of" that he
will feel pride. It is much more plausible, I think, to
describe such a state as one of awe or some similar emotion.

Finally, it has been objected that the relationship
between a passion and its object is for Hume a purely con­
tingent relation, whereas in fact the relation is a conceptual
one. It is clear that for Hume the relationship is contin­
gent. He says, concerning the object of pride and humility:

I find, that the peculiar object of pride and
humility is determin'd by an original and
natural instinct, and that 'tis absolutely
impossible, from the primary constitution of
Thus, insofar as the relationship between pride and its object is dependent on a natural instinct of the mind, it is contingent.

It has been objected that this view leaves open the logical possibility that one be proud of anything whatsoever. Anthony Kenny, for instance, characterizes Hume's view as follows:

It always happens that we feel proud of our own achievements and not, say, of the industry of ants in stone-age Papua; but the suggestion that we might feel proud of such things is as perfectly intelligible as the suggestion that the trees might flourish in December and decay in June.13

Kenny's point cannot be that it is unintelligible that one feel proud of the industry of ants in stone-age Papua. Suppose, for instance, that I believe that I am descended from these ants. In such a case, the claim that I am proud of their industry is just as intelligible as the claim that I am proud of the virtues of my great grandparents. Kenny's point, I think, is that in the absence of such peculiar beliefs, such a claim is unintelligible. That is, the claim that I am proud of the industry of the ants even though I do not believe that I am connected with them in any way is unintelligible.
There is some indication that Hume would be sympathetic to Kenny's point. In one place, Hume says that the distinguishing characteristic of pride and humility is that they have self as their object:

That this proceeds from an original quality or primary impulse, will likewise appear evident, if we consider that 'tis the distinguishing characteristic of these passions.\textsuperscript{4} (emphasis mine)

It is not clear, however, what Hume means by "distinguishing characteristic." He takes the fact that the relation between pride and self is a distinguishing characteristic of pride to show that the relation is due to an original quality of the mind, i.e., a fundamental mental law.

Now these qualities, which we must consider as original, are such as are most inseparable from the soul, and can be resolv'd into no other: And such is the quality, which determines the object of pride and humility.\textsuperscript{15}

Certainly, mental laws are contingent. Thus whatever Hume means by 'distinguishing characteristic,' it is clear that he takes the relationship between pride and its object to be contingent.

I shall not attempt here to resolve the difference between Kenny and Hume. Perhaps, Hume is mistaking a conceptual connection for a causal connection. On the other hand, the claim that one feels proud of the industry of the ants in Papua does not strike me as altogether unintelligible. It is,
to be sure, exceedingly queer, but that is not to say that it is nonsense.

Now let us look at Hume's account of the nature of the causes of pride and humility. First, Hume makes a distinction between the **quality** and the **subject** of the cause.

A man, for instance, is vain of a beautiful house, which belongs to him, or which he has himself built and contriv'd. Here the object of the passion is himself, and the cause is the beautiful house: which cause again is sub-divided into two parts, viz. the quality, which operates upon the passion, and the subject, in which the quality inheres. The quality is the beauty, and the subject is the house, consider'd as his property or contrivance.\(^{16}\)

Hume notes that a great number of different things can cause pride and humility. This, he believes, shows that the causes cannot be original since "'tis utterly impossible they shou'd each of them be adapted to these passions by a particular provision, and primary constitution of nature."\(^{17}\)

To invent without scruple a new principle to every new phaenomenon, instead of adapting it to the old; to overload our hypothesis with a variety of this kind; are certain proofs that none of these principles is the just one, and that we only desire, by a number of falsehoods, to cover our ignorance of the truth.\(^{18}\)

Thus, Hume attempts to reduce all of the causes of pride and humility to a single principle of production. He considered his discovery of this principle to be one of his most important contributions to philosophy.
Hume argues in Book I of the Treatise that the direction of our thoughts is determined by the association of ideas; "the rule, by which they proceed, is to pass from one object to what is resembling, contiguous to, or produced by it." He argues, moreover, that there is a similar principle of association of impressions. The only difference is that the impressions are associated only by resemblance. "All resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the rest immediately follow."

Hume looks at the causes of pride and humility and makes two observations. First, he notes that the qualities all result in a pleasure or pain which is distinct from the pride and humility. Second, he notes that the subjects in which these qualities inhere are "either parts of ourselves, or something nearly related to us."

The same qualities, when transfer'd to subjects, which bear no relation, influence not in the smallest degree either of these affections.

Next Hume notes that pride is a pleasurable sensation and humility a painful one.

Thus pride is a pleasant sensation and humility a painful; and upon removal of the pleasure and pain, there is in reality no pride nor humility. Of this our very feeling convinces us; and beyond our feeling, 'tis here in vain to reason or dispute.
Finally, Hume reminds us that the object of pride and humility is self. These four facts lead Hume to a "remarkable discovery."

I immediately find, that taking these suppositions to be just, the true system breaks in upon me with an irresistible evidence. That cause, which excites the passion, is related to the object, which nature has attributed to the passion; the sensation, which the cause separately produces, is related to the sensation of the passion; from this double relation of ideas and impressions, the passion is deriv'd. The one idea is easily converted into its correlative; and the one impression into that, which resembles and corresponds to it: With how much greater facility must this transition be made, where these movements mutually assist each other, and the mind receives a double impulse from the relations both of its impressions and ideas.24

Pride, then, is produced when a quality produces a pleasant impression and the subject of the quality is related to the idea of self. The pleasant impression is related to the impression of pride by resemblance and the idea of the subject is related to the object of pride by resemblance, causation, or contiguity. It is in virtue of this double association of impressions and ideas that pride is produced.

Any thing that gives a pleasant sensation, and is related to self, excites the passion of pride, which is also agreeable, and has self for its object.25

This same schema, according to Hume, can be used to account for the production of the other indirect passions—humility, love, and hatred. Humility differs from pride in
that its sensation is disagreeable rather than agreeable. Consequently, humility is produced when some quality causes a painful impression and the subject in which the quality inheres is related to self by resemblance, causation, or contiguity. The difference between love and hatred and pride and humility is that the object of love and hatred is always some other person.

As the immediate object of pride and humility is self or that identical person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious; so the object of love and hatred is some other person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious.26

Love, then, is produced when some quality causes a pleasurable sensation and the subject of the quality is related to some other person by resemblance, causation, or contiguity; and hate is produced when some quality causes a painful sensation and the subject of the quality is related to some other person.

(ii)

There has been much discussion recently concerning whether the moral sentiments are direct or indirect passions. In his classic study of Hume, Norman Kemp Smith claims that "as thus immediately arising upon an act of contemplation, they have to be classed with the direct, not the indirect passions."27 More recently, however, Páll Árdal has argued that "there is in the Treatise a close relation between the
indirect passions and the moral sentiments.\textsuperscript{28} In particular, Árdal claims, the moral sentiments are a species of the indirect passions. Here I shall attempt to resolve this disagreement. Let us begin by examining Árdal's position in some detail.

Árdal first notes that when Hume distinguishes the moral sentiments from those arising from the contemplation of inanimate objects, he explicitly links the moral sentiments with the indirect passions. Hume says:

\begin{quote}
Pride and humility, love and hatred are excited, when there is any thing presented to us, that both bears a relation to the object of the passion, and produces a separate sensation related to the sensation of the passion. Now virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances. They must necessarily be placed either in ourselves or others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore must give rise to one of these four passions.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

The obvious interpretation of this passage is that Hume believes there to be a causal relationship between the moral sentiments and the indirect passions. The moral sentiments provide the independent sensation of pleasure or pain which is required to produce an indirect passion by the double association of impression and ideas.

Árdal, however, wants to argue for a stronger connection between the indirect passions and the moral sentiments. He claims that the moral sentiments just \underline{are} indirect passions. In particular, Árdal claims, the moral sentiments are a calm species of love and hatred. His primary evidence for this
The pain or pleasure which arises from the general survey or view of any action or quality of the mind, constitutes its vice and virtue, and gives rise to our approbation or blame, which is nothing but a fainter and more imperceptible love or hatred.30

I believe, moreover, that there is further evidence in the Treatise for Árdal's interpretation. In accounting for the differences between the feelings of approbation that arise from different virtues, Hume appeals to different kinds of love. It is clear from the context that he is identifying these:

And indeed we may observe, that the natural abilities, no more than the other virtues, produces not, all of them, the same kind of approbation. Good sense and genius beget esteem: Wit and humour excite love.31

In a footnote, Hume tells us that "Love and esteem are at bottom the same passions, and arise from like causes."32 In Book II, he tells us that "esteem and contempt are to be considered as species of love and hatred."33 So it is clear that Hume takes the different kinds of approbation just to be different kinds of love.

Árdal's interpretation, however, runs into a number of problems. One such problem is pointed out by Thomas Hearn, who notes that whatever we identify with the moral sentiments,
Hume is quite explicit that the moral sentiments cause love, pride, hate, or humility. This is clear from the first passage quoted above. Hearn goes on to say:

What renders [Smith's] version more plausible is that to show that these sentiments of approval are themselves indirect would require an independent account of how they arise by this same process, involving pleasure or pain in the exciting cause independent of the pleasure or pain of the given moral sentiment. No such account is found in Hume or Árdal.

This in itself does not entail that Árdal's interpretation is mistaken. It is remarkable, however, that given Hume's fondness for the associationist schema, he does not draw such a fact to our attention or explain it in any detail.

Moreover, Hume mentions the causal relationship between the moral sentiments and the indirect passions in order to distinguish the moral sentiments from pleasures and pains which arise from the contemplation of inanimate objects. The moral sentiments, he says, always give rise to the indirect passions. But he notes that the pleasures and pains arising from inanimate objects need not give rise to the indirect passions. Note, however, that if the moral sentiments just are indirect passions of some kind, he need not resort to the indirect passions which arise from them to make his distinction. Some person is always the object of an indirect passion. Certainly, not every pain or pleasure which arises from the contemplation of an inanimate object has some person
as its object. This observation would suffice to distinguish the moral sentiments from these sentiments which arise from the contemplation of inanimate objects. The fact that Hume does not draw the distinction in this way but instead appeals to the very same properties of those passions which are caused by the moral sentiments is very strong evidence that he did not take the moral sentiments to be indirect passions.

What, then, are we to make of those passages where Hume appears to identify explicitly moral approbation with a calm species of love? The answer to this question lies in recognizing that for Hume moral approbation and disapprobation are not the same phenomena as the moral sentiments. Given this, it is perfectly consistent to hold that moral approbation is a species of love and that the moral sentiments are not indirect passions. Indeed, there is confirmation of this thesis in the passage on which Árdal bases his case. There Hume says that "the pain or pleasure which constitutes the virtue or vice of the action or character trait "gives rise to our approbation or blame."\textsuperscript{35} Certainly, it is plausible that the pains and pleasures referred to here just are the moral sentiments, and Hume is telling us that these cause our approbation or blame.

I argued in the last chapter that according to Hume, moral judgments or moral evaluations are identical to occurrences of moral sentiments. Thus, the distinction between moral sentiments and moral approbation and
disapprobation will be the distinction between judging or deciding that an action or character trait is virtuous or vicious and approving or disapproving of the action or character trait. When cast in this way, the distinction has much initial plausibility. Normally, when we think that an action is wrong, we disapprove of it. But we are not inclined to identify our disapproval with the judgment that the action is wrong. It seems much more natural to say that one disapproves of the action because one thinks that it is wrong. On the proposed interpretation, this will be Hume's view. The moral sentiments give rise to moral approbation or disapprobation, and this is just to say that we approve or disapprove of an action or character trait because we judge it to be vicious or virtuous.

Moreover, there are independent reasons to think that this is Hume's view. Recall that Hume tells us that the "impressions, by which moral good or evil is known, are nothing but particular pains or pleasures." Now the question that needs to be answered is whether these particular pains and pleasures are the same as the feelings of moral approbation and disapprobation. There is, I think, conclusive evidence that Hume, at least on some occasions, considered these to be distinct. In the Inquiry, when he distinguishes the moral sentiments from those pleasures and pains which arise from the contemplation of inanimate objects, Hume says:
We ought not imagine, because an inanimate object may be useful as well as a man, that therefore it ought also, according to this system, to merit the appellation of virtuous. The sentiments excited by utility are, in the two cases, very different; and the one is mixed with affection, esteem, approbation, etc., and not the other. 37

Hume is making two points here. First, he is claiming that the sentiments which arise from the contemplation of inanimate objects are different from the moral sentiments. If we recall the place in the Treatise where Hume considers the same problem, we can suppose that he is claiming that the two kinds of sentiments are different in the qualities of their sensation. Hume's second point is the one of importance for our purpose. He notes that the moral sentiment is mixed with affection, esteem, approbation, etc. Now, if Hume believes that the moral sentiment can be mixed with approbation, it is unlikely that he believes that the two kinds of sentiment are identical. Of course, it could be the case that the moral sentiment can be mixed with itself, but such a thesis is hardly worth noting.

Note that the point seems to occupy the same place in the argument as Hume's claim about the relationship of the moral sentiments to the indirect passions in the Treatise. In the Treatise, after noting that the moral sentiments are different in quality from those arising from the contemplation of inanimate objects, Hume goes on to point out that the one kind of pain and pleasure gives rise to love, hatred,
pride, and humility while the other does not. If we note that according to Hume affection and esteem are kinds of love and suppose for a moment that approbation is also a kind of love, it appears that Hume is making much the same point in the two cases. The moral sentiments give rise to the indirect passions among which are included approbation and disapprobation.

The most serious problem with the interpretation I am proposing is that Hume seems to use 'moral sentiments,' 'sentiments by which we distinguish virtue and vice,' 'moral approbation and disapprobation,' 'sentiments of blame or praise,' and so on, interchangeably throughout both the Inquiry and the Treatise. Certainly, this is what has led commentators to assume that all of these expressions refer to the same phenomenon. If we look closely, however, we find Hume mentioning both the moral sentiments and the feelings of approbation and blame in a great number of cases. Hume tells us, for instance, that certain tendencies of characters "affect our sentiments, and command our approbation." Similarly, concerning a tendency to the good of mankind, he says "we are pleas'd with it, and approve of it." Similar passages can be found throughout the Treatise.

Of course, these may simply be redundancies. It cannot be denied, moreover, that Hume speaks only of approbation and disapprobation in many places where speaking of the moral sentiments would be appropriate. For instance, in the famous
passage where we get the first indication of Hume's positive view, he says:

The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflection into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action.\textsuperscript{40}

We find the vice when we find the sentiment of disapprobation. No moral sentiment distinct from this feeling of disapprobation is mentioned.

I think, however, that such passages can be explained.

At the very beginning of Book III, Part III of the \textit{Treatise}, Hume gives the following argument:

We have already observ'd that moral distinctions depend entirely on certain peculiar sentiments of pain and pleasure, and that whatever mental quality in ourselves or others gives us a satisfaction, by the survey or reflection, is of course virtuous; as every thing of this nature, that gives uneasiness, is vicious. Now, since every quality in ourselves or others, which gives pleasure always causes pride or love; as every one, that produces uneasiness, excites humility or hatred: It follows, that these two particulars are to be consider'd as equivalent, with regard to our mental qualities, virtue and the power of producing love or pride, Vice and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge of the one by the other; and may pronounce any quality of the mind virtuous, which causes love or pride; and any one vicious, which causes hatred or humility.\textsuperscript{41}

First, we should note that Hume's argument is apparently unsound. When he tells us that whatever mental quality in
some person which gives us a satisfaction is virtuous, he must mean a particular kind of satisfaction. He has already told us that those mental qualities in others which have a tendency to our own advantage give us an agreeable sentiment but that this sentiment is distinct from the agreeable moral sentiment:

Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain, which arises from characters and actions, of that peculiar kind, which makes us praise or condemn.42

Hume is here distinguishing the moral sentiments from the sentiments of self-love. He goes on to explain that "the good qualities of an enemy are hurtful to us"43 even though they are in fact virtuous. Consequently,

It seldom happens that we do not think an enemy vicious, and can distinguish betwixt his opposition to our interest and real villainy or baseness.44

But now the premise that Hume needs to get his conclusion (namely, that all and only those mental qualities of persons which give rise to the moral sentiments cause one of the indirect passions) is not open to him. Certainly, the sentiments of self-love will give rise to the indirect passions through the double relation of impressions and ideas. Hume's inference can be saved, however, if we take him to be talking about the peculiar kind of indirect passion which arises from the moral sentiments. That is, we must take him in his
conclusion to be identifying virtue with the power of producing a particular kind of love or pride and vice with the power of producing a particular kind of hate or humility.

Once the argument is seen in this way, it becomes clear that the peculiar kind of love and hatred Hume is talking about here just is moral approbation and disapprobation. Hume apparently thinks that he makes some epistemological gain by identifying virtue with the power of producing this peculiar kind of love. That is, the identification provides him with a criterion of vice and virtue which helps him "discover the true origin of morals." He only need discover the origin of the peculiar love and hatred in order to determine what kinds of character traits are vicious and virtuous. But he proceeds immediately to discuss those character traits which give rise to approbation or disapprobation. This together with the fact that all those passages in which Hume identifies approbation and disapprobation with indirect passions occur in this section of the Treatise shows that in the passage above, Hume is identifying virtue with the power of producing approbation and vice with the power of producing disapprobation.

This conclusion is important for two reasons. First, it further confirms my thesis that the moral sentiments and the feelings of approbation and disapprobation are distinct. Those sentiments on which moral distinctions depend are evidently distinct from that peculiar kind of love and hatred which Hume identifies with approbation and disapprobation.
The former gives rise to the latter, and it is only in virtue of this fact that we are allowed to consider virtue as the power of producing approbation. Second, it explains those cases in which Hume appears to be using the notions interchangeably. When Hume is trying to find out what kinds of character traits give rise to the moral sentiment, he only needs to discover what kinds of character traits give rise to approbation or disapprobation. He apparently believes that some epistemological gain is made by reformulating the problem in this way.

Why does Hume think that discussing approbation and disapprobation instead of the moral sentiments provides some epistemological gain? In Book II, when he discusses love and hatred, he says:

'Tis not so evident at first sight, that a relation of impressions is requisite to these passions, and that because in the transition the one impression is so much confounded with the other, that they become in a manner indistinguishable.45

Hume is concerned here that introspection does not confirm his claim that love and hate arise by means of a double relation of impressions and ideas. Suppose, for instance, that I am now feeling the passion of love, but introspection does not reveal any separate agreeable sensation which is related by resemblance to my love. The reason I cannot find the separate sensation, Hume is telling us, is that it is
confounded, i.e., mixed, with the love. Elsewhere, he says that "impressions and passions are susceptible of an entire union; and like colours, may be blended perfectly together." Thus, when the separate sensation of pleasure gives rise to love, the two are blended together. Introspection, then, will not reveal two separate impressions. But, according to Hume, the impressions are nonetheless distinct.

But as in pride and humility, we have easily been able to make the separation, and to prove, that every cause of these passions produces a separate pain or pleasure, I might here observe the same method with the same success, in examining particularly the several causes of love and hatred.

Let us conclude, then, that the moral sentiments are distinct from the feelings of approbation and disapprobation and that even though approbation and disapprobation may be indirect passions, the moral sentiments are not. It would appear, then, that Smith is correct in classifying the moral sentiments as direct passions. Such a conclusion, however, would be much too hasty.

Recall that Hume believes that there are two kinds of direct passions. First, those passions which arise immediately "and with the least preparation" from pains and pleasures or the expectation of pains and pleasures are direct passions. Second, those passions which "arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable" are direct passions. As we shall see later, the
process by which the moral sentiments are produced is radically different from either of these. The moral sentiments are produced by a complicated process involving the operations of sympathy and the activities of the imagination. A detailed examination of this process will have to wait until later. However, I think that it is safe to tentatively conclude that the moral sentiments are neither direct nor indirect passions.
IV. THE CALM PASSIONS

Most commentators agree that the so-called doctrine of the calm passions plays an important role in Hume's moral theory and theory of motivation. Hume appeals to the notion to explain apparent cases of rational motivation. Moreover, many commentators have claimed that Hume classifies the moral sentiments as calm passions, and as we shall see, Hume alludes to the notion in a passage in Book III, Part III of the Treatise which is crucial to understanding the relationship between the passions and moral evaluations. Despite the apparent importance of the notion for Hume, however, his remarks about the calm passions are brief, scattered, and lacking in the systematic coherence which we expect from him. For this reason, the calm passions have become the object of considerable controversy among Hume scholars. In this chapter, I shall examine some of the major interpretations of Hume on this point and put forward a new interpretation which avoids the problems of previous ones.

(i)

Hume's reason for introducing the notion of a calm passion is to explain the alleged conflict between reason and the passions. As we have seen, Hume argues that reason alone can
have no influence on passions or actions. Consequently, there can be no real conflict between reason and passion. Apparent cases of such conflict, according to Hume, are really conflicts between violent passions and calm passions. In such cases, he tells us, we are mistaking calm passions for the judgments of reason:

When any of these passions are calm, and cause no disorder in the soul, they are very readily taken for the determinations of reason, and are suppos'd to proceed from the same faculty, with that, which judges of truth and falsehood. Their nature and principles have been suppos'd the same, because their sensations are not evidently different.¹

Recall that Hume claims that the primary difference between ideas and impressions is their force or vivacity. An idea is a fainter or calmer copy of an impression. Consequently, when an impression becomes calm, it very closely resembles an idea. Now, passions are impressions, and consequently they are almost indistinguishable from ideas when they are very calm. Thus, "according to our common custom of taking all things for the same, which have any near resemblance to each other,"² we are apt to mistake a calm passion for that which "proceeds from" reason, namely, ideas.

It appears, then, that the distinguishing characteristic of a calm passion is its calmness or lack of vivacity. Indeed, it is just this characteristic of the calm passions which leads us to confuse them with ideas. However, several
commentators, the most important of whom is Rachael Kydd, have denied that calmness is the fundamental distinguishing characteristic of these passions. Though Kydd believes that the calm and violent passions differ in emotional intensity, she believes that this difference can be explained by appealing to a more fundamental difference:

But it is plain that this distinction in terms of feeling quality is not supposed to be the fundamental one. Evidently it is only symptomatic of some more fundamental difference which is constitutive of the difference between calmness and violence.

Kydd offers no direct textual evidence for this claim. Instead, she refers us to passages which suggest that the calm/violent distinction can be drawn in terms of other properties of the passions and attempts to explain the difference in emotional intensity of the calm and violent passions by appealing to these other properties.

Kydd notes that Hume sometimes describes a calm passion as one which is "founded on a distant view or reflection." She claims, moreover, that according to Hume, there are two kinds of reflection which correspond to two senses of 'calm passion.' In one sense, she claims, a calm passion is one founded on an adequate conception of its object. In the other sense, a calm passion is one founded on an adequate conception of what is conducive to our great possible good. We shall examine her evidence for both of these claims momentarily.
There are some passages which do not seem to fit with either of these characterizations of the calm passions. In places, Hume seems to allow that calm passions may arise as the result of a "predominate inclination of the soul" or "certain instincts originally implanted in our nature." As such they do not seem to require the formulation of an adequate idea of their object nor any idea about one's own greatest possible good. In response to this, Kydd claims that both kinds of calm passions can arise in two ways. Concerning the first kind of calm passion, she says:

[Calm desires] can arise on the one hand, in the way which we have described in the last chapter, that is as the result of our actually forming adequate ideas of their objects by making a series of theoretical judgments. On the other hand, they can arise quite fortuitously without any adequate idea ever being entertained. For we may, by nature or by upbringing, be so disposed that, without any express attempt to do so, we in fact have those desires which we should have if we had formed and entertained adequate ideas of their objects.

Kydd claims that such passions are **materially** calm without being **formally** so. That is, a passion which is the result of having formed an adequate conception of its object is formally calm, and one which does not come about in this way but which would have if one had formed an adequate conception is only materially calm.

Kydd applies the formal/material distinction to both senses of calm passions and generates four different ways
in which, according to Hume, a passion can be calm.

Indeed for our present purpose it is best to consider the calm passions as being of four kinds: (i) Desires which accord with the real qualities of their objects independently of a special consideration of these objects. (ii) Desires which accord with these qualities as the result of the agent forming an adequate conception of them. (iii) Desires which accord with the real qualities of their objects as constitutive of or a means to happiness without the agent considering them as such. (iv) Desires which accord with these qualities as constitutive of or a means to happiness as the result of the agent forming an adequate idea of them in this relation.9

(ii) and (iv) are kinds of passions which are formally calm, and (i) and (iii) are kinds of passions which are only materially calm. Now let us look at Kydd's evidence for attributing this account to Hume.

In defense of her claim that in one sense a calm passion is a passion which is founded on an adequate conception of its object, Kydd says:

Men act from a violent passion when they 'proportion their affections more to the light under which any object appears to them, than to its real and intrinsic value', when they do not give preference 'to what is in itself preferable', or when they expect from any object more pleasure or pain 'than what, strictly speaking, naturally belongs to it'.10

Here she cites three passages from the Treatise. Let us examine these passages in some detail.
The first two passages to which Kydd refers come from Hume's discussion of government in the *Treatise*. Hume has argued that self-interest is the motive to the establishment of justice. If this is the case, Hume asks, how is it that self-interested individuals act unjustly? Since "men are so sincerely attach'd to their interest, and their interest is so much concern'd in the observance of justice," how is it that men ever act unjustly? In answer to this, Hume says the following:

> It has been observ'd in treating of the passions, that men are mightily govern'd by the imagination, and proportion their affections more to the light, under which any object appears to them, than to its real and intrinsic value.  

This is the first passage which Kydd cites. Now, what does Hume have in mind here? He goes on to explain. First, he notes that the affections are influenced more by strong and lively ideas than by weak and obscure ideas. Moreover, those things which are near in space or time "strike upon us" with a more lively idea than those things which are distant. Consequently, those things which are near in space or time have more effect on our affections than those which lie at a distance.

> This is the reason why men so often act in contradiction to their known interest; and in particular why they prefer any trivial
Thus, it appears that, at least in the context of the problem with which Hume is concerned, the real and intrinsic value of an action will be the total net advantage of performing it and the apparent value is the immediate advantage of performing it. The affections are more influenced by the immediate advantage because it is nearer in time.

The second passage to which Kydd refers occurs in Hume's discussion of how we are led to seek government as a solution to this problem. Hume says:

> When we consider any objects at a distance, all their minute distinctions vanish, and we always give the preference to whatever is in itself preferable, without considering its situation and circumstances.\(^{14}\)

From a distance, the immediate advantages of performing some action are themselves at a distance and consequently fail to have any special status. The immediate advantages, like those more remote, are important only insofar as they contribute to the overall net advantage of performing the action.

> In reflecting on any action, which I am to perform a twelve-month hence, I always resolve to prefer the greater good, whether at that time it will be that more contiguous or remote;
nor does any difference in that particular make a difference in my present intentions and resolutions. My distance from the final determination makes all those minute differences vanish, nor am I affected by any thing, but the general and more discernible qualities of good and evil.  

So, from a distance, we do prefer that action which results in the greatest net advantage. But as the moment at which the action is to be performed grows nearer, the influence of the immediate advantage is greater. According to Hume, this is unavoidable. "Men are not able radically to cure, either in themselves or others, that narrowness of soul, which makes them prefer the present to the remote."  

Even though they are not able to change their nature, people are able to change their situation. That is, the problem can be remedied by making those actions which result in the greatest net advantage also result in the greatest immediate advantage. In the case of justice, this is accomplished by setting up a government which punishes injustice.

I have discussed these passages in some detail because we must view them in their context in order to determine whether they support Kydd's interpretation. It is abundantly clear, I think, that, when viewed in context these passages offer no support to the claim that a calm passion is one founded on an adequate conception of its object.

First, we should note that there is no reason to take anything Hume says in these passages as an attempt to
characterize the fundamental distinction between the violent and calm passions. He never mentions the distinction explicitly. But even if we could interpret these passages as indicating a characterization of the calm passions, it is doubtful that the characterization would be the one offered by Kydd. The point that Hume is trying to make is not that people are sometimes motivated by passions which are based on faulty or inadequate conceptions (certainly, however, he would allow that this is the case), but that the motivating influence of a passion varies with the nearness of the object being conceived. Suppose that one must choose between an action that has great immediate benefit but relatively less net benefit and an action that has relatively more net benefit but little immediate benefit. This is the kind of case in which, according to Hume, we are motivated to do what is contrary to the "real and intrinsic value" of performing the action. But Hume nowhere says (and he need not say) that in such a case one has an inadequate conception of the consequences of the action. One may be fully aware of the net benefit of each action and yet perform the action with less net benefit because the immediate benefits strike us with a more lively idea than those that are more distant in time. It is not that our idea of the short term benefit is faulty; it is only more lively.

Even though throughout these passages Hume is considering only those cases where our conceptions of an object
are indeed actually representative of the object (i.e., true),
he need not do this to make his point. Suppose, for instance, that one falsely believe that the long term benefits of doing A are very great but the short term benefits are small, and that the long term benefits of doing B are small but the short term benefits are great. None of these conceptions are adequate, but there is no doubt that Hume would say that the person is more likely to do B. And insofar as the passion caused by the believed long term benefits is calm, it is no less calm because one's conception of the long term benefits is faulty.

Moreover, note that Hume tells us that a distant view makes "all . . . minute distinctions vanish."17 Certainly, there is a sense in which a more detailed conception is more adequate than a less detailed one. At any rate, we would not want to say that a conception is inadequate just because it is detailed.

The third passage which Kydd cites in support of her claim that the calm passions are those based on an adequate conception of its object occurs in Hume's discussion of the effects of custom on the passions. In particular, Hume is discussing what happens when we come across an object or event which we have not experienced before. Since "there is a certain unliableness in the faculties, and a difficulty of the spirits moving in this new direction,"18 the spirits are excited and the mind enlivened.
Hence every thing, that is new, is most affecting, and gives us either more pleasure or pain, than what, strictly speaking, naturally belongs to it. When it often returns upon us, the novelty wears off; the passions subside; the hurry of the spirits is over; and we survey the objects with greater tranquility.\textsuperscript{19}

Kydd cites this passage as one in which Hume claims that people's passions are violent "when they expect from any object more pleasure or pain 'than what, strictly speaking, naturally belongs to it'."\textsuperscript{20} But Hume says absolutely nothing in this passage about people's expectations of pain or pleasure or their conceptions of the pain or pleasure which is caused by some object. Hume is claiming that novel objects or events give us or cause in us more pleasure or pain than familiar ones. It is not the false or unrealistic expectation of pleasure and pain that makes the passions lively; it is the novelty of the object considered that makes the pleasures or pains and those passions which arise from them lively.

Finally, it should be noted that Kydd's attempt to explain the differences in intensity between the calm and violent passions by appealing to the adequacy of the conception which gives rise to them is unconvincing. She says:

It is plain that passions which are firmly rooted in the nature of their objects will have persistence. They will not be at the mercy of every new discovery about their object. Hence, they are likely to feel calm and undisturbing, while those which
are not so rooted and are liable to new variations every time some new fact about their object is noted will, by their constant fluctuations, cause what Hume calls 'a disturbance in the soul'.

We have already seen that in those passages cited by Kydd, Hume is claiming that the distance of the object determines the intensity of the passion independently of the adequacy of the conception of the object. Consequences which are near in time have more effect on the passions whether or not one's conception of the consequences is adequate. Moreover, Kydd's explanation in this passage depends on the assumption that inadequate ideas are always discovered to be inadequate. The discovery of new facts will cause "fluctuations" in the passions only if new facts are discovered. Certainly, it is possible that one have an inadequate conception of some object or event and yet never discover any new facts about it.

Let us turn our attention to the other sense in which Hume, according to Kydd, uses the notion of the calm passions. It should be clear what motivates Kydd to interpret Hume in this way. In the passages we have discussed above, what is at issue is the agent's conception of what is in his interest. Moreover, Kydd cites the following passage from the Treatise:
The common error of metaphysicians has lain in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles, [the calm and the violent], and supposing the other to have no influence. Men often act knowingly against their interest; for which reason, the view of the greatest possible good does not always influence them. Men often counteract a violent passion in prosecution of their own interests and designs; it is not, therefore, the present uneasiness alone which determines them. In general, we may observe that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the general character or present disposition of the person.22

Concerning this passage, Kydd says that "it is, I think, clear from this passage that Hume does regard a 'calm passion' as a desire to do an act which we think will be conducive to our 'greatest possible good'."23

In the passage in question, Hume's main concern is to refute those metaphysicians who claim either that reason (calm passions) always motivates us, or that passion always motivates us. Note that the refutation will be successful if Hume can produce an instance where the calm passions have more influence and an instance where the violent passions have more influence. This is what Hume does. He notes that sometimes a violent passion leads men to act knowingly against their interests (i.e., a violent passion counteracts a calm one), and sometimes the calm desire for what is in one's interest will win out over a violent passion. This argument requires only that some desires for what is in one's
interest be calm passions. We might, for the sake of argument, allow even that all desires for what is in one's interest are calm passions. But nothing Hume says commits him to the thesis nor indicates that he holds the thesis that all calm passions are desires for what is in one's interest.

Again we should note that Kydd's attempt to explain the differences in intensity between the calm and violent passions by appealing to the hypothesis that the calm passions are founded on one's conception of one's interest is very implausible. She says:

It is evident that when passions are calm in this sense that they are either conducive to or directed towards our greatest possible good, they are co-ordinated with one another and cannot come into conflict. Such passions, since they do not conflict, cause no disorder in the soul, for it is only when our passions are not co-ordinated by a single principle that they can cause a 'sensible emotion'.

The most serious problem with this explanation is that it does not allow Hume to use the notion of the calm passions to do the work he wants it to do. Hume wants to explain apparent cases of conflict between reason and the passions as conflict between calm passions and violent passions. If conflict makes a passion violent, it would be impossible for there to be a conflict of calm and violent passions.

Finally, we should briefly examine Kydd's distinction between passions which are formally calm and those which are
materially calm but not formally calm. First, it should be noted that there is absolutely no textual evidence to suggest that Hume would endorse such a distinction. It is extremely implausible, moreover, to suggest that Hume would be willing to draw the calm/violent distinction according to facts entirely extrinsic to and only accidentally related to either the passion or the manner in which the passion is produced. Finally, those passages which, according to Kydd, show that the material/formal distinction is required by Hume are all passages where Hume is explicitly discussing the distinction between the calm and violent passions. As we have seen, those passages which Kydd takes to support her interpretation of the primary senses in which passions are calm are, at best, marginally related to Hume's discussion of the distinction. Given this, it is best to interpret those passages in which Kydd bases the material/formal distinction as showing that her interpretation is mistaken rather than as evidence that we need to attribute to Hume an apparently *ad hoc* distinction which he nowhere draws explicitly.

(ii)

Let us examine those interpretations according to which the distinction between the calm and the violent passions is to be drawn primarily in terms of their emotional intensity.
Norman Kemp Smith, for instance, characterizes the calm passions as follows:

In the first place, they are calm, with none of the violence of the other passions. This, Hume holds, has been one chief reason why hitherto they have been traced, like judgments and inferences regarding matters of fact, to understanding or reason instead of to feeling. Secondly, they can be identified as being the passions which we experience on the mere contemplation of beauty and deformity in action and external forms, and may accordingly be further described as being modes of approval and disapproval.  

Smith makes two claims here. First, he says that the calm passions are those which are calm. Second, he identifies them with the moral and aesthetic sentiments. Let us, for the moment, consider only the first claim. Árdal agrees with Smith concerning his first point and argues that the calmness of a calm passion is its distinguishing characteristic.

The fundamentum divisionis seems to be emotional intensity, the 'disturbance in the soul' as Hume sometimes puts it. The term is used to describe the conscious state involved. It is analogous to the concept of 'force and vivacity' in impressions and certain ideas.  

Árdal claims, however, that this account needs to be qualified in an important way. Hume seems to allow that calm passions may be violent on some occasions and that violent passions may be calm on some occasions. At the beginning of Book II, Hume classifies the moral and aesthetic sentiments
as calm impressions of reflection and contrasts them with those other impressions which he calls violent. But he warns us that:

The raptures of poetry and music frequently rise to the greatest height; while those other impressions . . . may decay into so soft an emotion as to become, in a manner, imperceptible.27

Hume tells us, however, that since "in general" those impressions which arise from the contemplation of beauty and deformity are calmer than those other impressions, "these impressions have been commonly distinguished from each other."28 He tells us, moreover, that he intends to utilize this distinction.

On the basis of this, Árdal claims that Hume uses the word 'calm' in two different senses. First, it is used to describe the emotional intensity of a particular passion. Second, it is used as part of a name for the class of those passions which are calm in the first sense on most occasions or in general.

Now let us consider Smith's second claim. Overlooking the confusion between the moral sentiments and the feelings of approbation and disapprobation, Smith is suggesting that we can identify the calm passions with the moral and aesthetic sentiments.29 Perhaps the most important piece of evidence for this claim comes at the beginning of Book II where Hume says:
The reflective impressions may be divided into two kinds, viz. the calm and the violent. Of the first kind is the sense of beauty and deformity in action, composition, and external objects. Of the second are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility.  

Here Hume appears to be explicitly identifying the calm impressions of reflection with the moral and aesthetic sentiments.

It appears, however, that the calm passions are not restricted to the moral and aesthetic sentiments. Later in Book II, Hume gives us a list of calm passions none of which appear to be identical to these sentiments.

Now 'tis certain, there are certain calm desires and tendencies, which, tho' they be real passions, produce little emotion in the mind, and are more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation. These desires are of two kinds; either certain instincts originally planted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; or the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil, consider'd merely as such.

Benevolence, resentment, the love of life, kindness to children, and the general appetite to good and aversion to evil are evidently distinct from the moral and aesthetic sentiments. In our discussion of Kydd, moreover, we saw that there is some evidence to suggest that the desire for what is in one's overall net interest is a calm passion. Also, in
the last chapter, we saw that approbation and disapprobation may be calm species of the indirect passions. It seems, then, that there are many kinds of calm passions.

What, then, are we to make of the passage where Hume appears to be identifying the moral and aesthetic sentiments with the calm passions? The obvious interpretation is that Hume is offering us an illustration of the distinction and not an exhaustive list of the calm passions. This is the position taken by Árdal. First, Árdal notes that this passage occurs in the introduction to Book II, and as such may be taken as a summary of the key points of Book II. He says, moreover, that:

In a summary, a list of the members of a class may be taken as a means of illustrating a distinction. If there is in the rest of the book a longer list, we may therefore assume that the longer list is to be taken as a fuller, more complete account of the author's meaning.32

I think, however, that a close and literal reading of the text will show that Hume is not simply illustrating the distinction between the calm and violent passions. In particular, I shall argue that according to Hume, the moral and aesthetic sentiments are not calm passions at all.

At the very beginning of Book II, Hume divides impressions into impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. Concerning these he says:
Of the first kind are all the impressions of the senses, and all bodily pains and pleasures; Of the second are the passions, and other emotions resembling them. (emphasis mine)

It is apparent in this passage that Hume believes that there are some impressions of reflection which are not passions. It is clear, I think, that two paragraphs later, he explicitly identifies these "other emotions" with the moral and aesthetic sentiments.

When Hume comes to distinguish the moral and aesthetic sentiments from the more violent impressions of reflection, the distinction is a distinction between kinds of reflective impressions, not between kinds of passions. The moral and aesthetic sentiments are calm reflective impressions. The violent reflective impressions "are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility" (emphasis mine). It appears, then, that the distinction Hume is drawing here is between the calm reflective impressions and the passions.

Hume has some reservations about this distinction since "the raptures of poetry and music frequently rise to the greatest height; while those other impressions, properly call'd passions, may decay into so soft an emotion, as to become in a manner, imperceptible." But even with these reservations, Hume suggests that only those other impressions are "properly call'd passions."
Because of these reservations, Hume calls his distinction "vulgar and specious." He says, however, that:

The subject of the human mind being so copious and various, I shall here take advantage of this vulgar and specious division, that I may proceed with the greater order; and having said all I thought necessary concerning our ideas, shall now explain those violent emotions or passions, their nature, origin, causes and effects.\textsuperscript{36} (emphasis mine)

However vulgar and specious Hume thinks the division to be, it is absolutely clear here that he intends to use it. He tells us, moreover, that his task in Book II is to explain the "violent emotions or passions."

What are we to make of those passages later in Book II where Hume speaks explicitly of the calm passions? For our purpose, perhaps the most notable feature of all of these passages is the conspicuous absence of any mention of the moral and aesthetic sentiments. Indeed, Hume never uses the word 'passion' to refer to a moral or aesthetic sentiment anywhere in the Treatise.

Whether or not the moral and aesthetic sentiments are among them, it is clear that Hume classifies a certain group of affections as calm passions. First, it is absolutely clear that Hume considers these to be passions. When he mentions those calm desires and tendencies which are often confused with ideas, he says that they are calm "tho' they
be real passions." After listing these desires, moreover, he says:

> When any of these passions are calm, and cause no disorder in the soul, they are very readily taken for the determinations of reason, and are supposed to proceed from the same faculty, with that, which judges of truth and falsehood.38

(emphasis mine)

Second, it is quite clear that these passions are classified as calm passions solely in virtue of their lack of intensity. Also, there is considerable evidence to suggest that they are not classified as such because they are generally or usually calm; a particular occurrence of a passion is a calm passion only if it is in fact calm. Hume says:

> Besides these calm passions, which often determine the will, there are certain violent emotions of the same kind, which have likewise a great influence on that faculty.39

If a calm passion is one which is usually calm, there could not be a violent passion of the same kind since even though the passion may be violent on a particular occasion, it would still qualify as a calm passion. But it is clear here that Hume thinks that the same species of passion may be a calm passion on one occasion and a violent passion on another. He lists resentment as one of those calm desires which are often confused with the results of reason. Then to
illustrate how a passion of the same kind may be a violent passion, he says:

When I receive any injury from another, I often feel a violent passion of resentment, which makes me desire his evil and punishment, independent of all considerations of pleasure or advantage to myself.  

(emphasis mine)

Hume tells us, moreover, that a calm passion may be converted into a violent one.

What makes this whole affair more uncertain, is, that a calm passion may easily be chang'd into a violent one, either by a change of temper, or of circumstances and situation of the object, as by borrowing force from any attendant passion, by custom, or by exciting the imagination.

Note that one of the ways a calm passion can be converted into a violent passion is "by borrowing force from an attendant passion." Presumably, in such a case, the only thing that changes about the passion is its emotional intensity. But if a calm passion is one that is usually calm, changing the emotional intensity or force of the passion would not convert it into a violent passion.

Thus, for Hume, a calm passion is neither more nor less than a passion which is calm, that is, a passion which lacks emotional intensity. When Hume is drawing the distinction between the calm and violent impressions of reflection, he is drawing a quite different distinction. Both calm and violent passions are violent impressions of reflection, and
it is just because of this that Hume thinks that drawing the
distinction between the moral and aesthetic sentiments and
the passions according to their emotional intensity is vulgar
and specious. Some of the passions are just as calm as the
moral and aesthetic sentiments, and sometimes the moral and
aesthetic sentiments are just as violent as the passions.
Despite this, Hume does distinguish the moral and aesthetic
sentiments from the passions and reserves the word 'passion'
for those impressions of reflection which are in general
violent.

Finally it should be noted that this conclusion confirms
and is confirmed by the conclusion of the last chapter. There
I argued that the moral sentiments are neither direct nor
indirect passions. Hume tells us, moreover, that "when we
take a survey of the passions, there occurs a division of
them into direct and indirect." Presumably, this division
is exhaustive. Consequently the moral sentiments are not
passions.
V. SYMPATHY AND THE MORAL SENTIMENTS

The notion of sympathy plays a crucial role in Hume's account of the production of the moral sentiments. It is by means of sympathy that we are affected by the pains and pleasures of the person we are evaluating and those connected with him. Indeed, the notion of sympathy plays a crucial role throughout Books II and III of the Treatise. When he first introduces the notion, Hume says:

No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequence, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own.

In this chapter, I shall examine this remarkable quality of human nature. In particular, I shall examine Hume's general account of sympathy, the role the notion plays in the production of the moral sentiment, and Hume's account of how we are able to sympathize with non-existent passions and sentiments.

(i)

Sympathy, according to Hume, is a mechanism whereby people come to have the affections or opinions of other people. He compares its operations to the reflective
properties of mirrors and the sympathetic resonation of strings tuned to the same pitch:

In general we may remark, that the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each other's emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may decay away by insensible degrees.\(^2\)

The minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations, nor can any one be actuated by any affection, of which all others are not, in some degree, susceptible. 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.\(^3\)

Sympathy should not be confused with the passions of pity, compassion, or benevolence. Though Hume sometimes speaks as if sympathy is a passion,\(^4\) it is clear that he primarily considers sympathy to be a mechanism whereby passions and opinions are "communicated" from one person to another.

Hume tells us that when any affection or opinion is acquired through sympathy, "it is at first known only by its effects, and by those external signs in the countenance and conversation, which convey an idea of it."\(^5\) That is, one first becomes aware of certain signs of the affection in the verbal and non-verbal behavior of some person. By means of causal reasoning, one then infers the presence of the affection. I may, for instance, observe that Susan is displaying all of the symptoms of grief. Upon inquiry, moreover, she
may tell me that she is very sad. From these facts, I infer that Susan is feeling grief; that is, I formulate, by means of causal reasoning, the lively idea of Susan's grief.

According to Hume, this lively idea of Susan's grief is converted into an impression, namely, the passion of grief:

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.6

The idea acquires this new force and vivacity from a related perception, the perception of self:

The idea of ourselves is always intimately present to us, and conveys a sensible degree of vivacity to the idea of any other subject to which we are related. This lively idea changes by degrees into a real impression, these two kinds of perception being in a great measure the same, and differing only in their degree of force and vivacity.7

The perception of ourself conveys vivacity to our idea of some other person's affection in virtue of the fact that we are related to this other person. In particular, our perception of self enlivens our ideas of the affections of those to whom we are related by causation, resemblance, or contiguity. That is, we tend to sympathize with those to whom we are related causally (i.e., "the relations of blood"), those to whom we are near in space and time, and those we resemble. The relation of resemblance is very important since all humans stand in this relation to each other.
Now 'tis obvious, that nature has preserv'd a great resemblance among all human creatures, and that we never remark any passion or principle in others, of which, in some degree or other, we may not find a parallel in ourselves. The case is the same with the fabric of the mind, as with that of the body. However the parts may differ in shape or size, their structure and composition are in general the same. There is a very remarkable resemblance, which preserves itself amidst all their variety; and this resemblance must very much contribute to make us enter into the sentiments of others, and embrace them with facility and pleasure.  

Consequently, we have a tendency to sympathize with all humans. Our sympathy, however, varies with variation in these relations. That is, the strength or liveliness of the affections we receive through sympathy varies with the number and degree of these relations which hold between us and the person with whom we sympathize. The closer the blood relation, the nearer in space and time, the greater the resemblance, the more lively the affection we acquire through sympathy.

The stronger the relation is betwixt ourselves and any object, the more easily does the imagination make the transition, and convey to the related idea the vivacity of conception, with which we always form the idea of our own person.

Consequently, any peculiar relationship which we have to some person will affect our sympathy with the person. This point will be very important in the next chapter.

Hume compares his account of sympathy with his account of belief in Book I and takes the two accounts to confirm each
other. Sympathy, he tells us, is "exactly correspondent to the operation of our understanding." Belief, according to Hume, is "A Lively Idea Related to or Associated With A Present Impression." That is, a belief is an idea which has been enlivened by means of its relation to some present impression:

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.

Despite their similarities, however, there are two important differences between Hume's account of sympathy and his account of belief. First, the end result of belief is a lively idea whereas the end result of sympathy is an impression. That is, in belief an idea is enlivened, but in sympathy an idea is transformed into an impression.

Stanley Tweyman has denied this difference. He has argued that sympathy does not convert an idea into an impression:

It is important to notice that throughout his discussion of belief Hume maintains that the vivacity given to the inferred idea by the present impression simply provides a more forcible conception of an idea. He nowhere states that the vivacity acquired by the idea turns the idea into an impression. Now, if sympathy is exactly correspondent to the operation of belief then there should be an inference to an idea through the natural relation of causality and an enlivening of this idea.
Tweyman wants to conclude from this that Hume is speaking loosely when he refers to the result of sympathy as an impression. We should note, however, that Hume discusses sympathy extensively in the Treatise, and almost without exception, he refers to the result of sympathy as an impression. Given this, it is far more likely that Hume is speaking loosely when he says that sympathy is exactly correspondent to the operation of belief than when he tells us that the result of sympathy is an impression.

We should recall, moreover, that Hume shows some tendency, at least in some cases, to conflate lively ideas with impressions. This is a natural consequence of the vivacity criterion for distinguishing impressions and ideas. Any hesitation to distinguish lively ideas from impressions in the case of sympathy is probably the result of this problem.

The second difference between the operations of sympathy and belief is perhaps more important. Note that in the passage above, Hume says that it is "the idea of ourselves" that conveys vivacity to our idea of another person's affections and converts it into the affection itself. In his account of belief, it is some present impression which lends vivacity to the related idea. Now, one would naturally think that an idea can be converted into an impression only by borrowing vivacity from a related impression. Ideas do not possess enough vivacity to insure such a transformation.
Indeed, one would naturally expect the result of belief to be an impression since the vivacity is acquired from an impression and the result of sympathy to be an idea since the vivacity is acquired from an idea.

There are some passages where Hume does appeal to the impression of self. He says, for instance, that:

All these relations, when united together, convey the impression or consciousness of our own person to the idea of the sentiments or passions of others.¹⁷ (emphasis mine)

Elsewhere, he appeals to the idea of the self but then corrects himself.

'Tis evident that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us. . . . Whatever object, therefore, is related to ourselves must be conceived with a like vivacity of conception.¹⁸

Whatever Hume says, however, he is not allowed to appeal to the impression of the self, for he has argued in Book I that there is no such impression.¹⁹ Furthermore, it is fairly obvious that Hume is aware of the problem, and this is why he is indeed indecisive about which way to go. If he appeals to the idea of self, he has trouble explaining how an idea can convey enough vivacity to convert another idea into an impression. If he appeals to the impression of the self, he has contradicted his claim in Book I that there is no such impression.
Árdal tries to help Hume out of this dilemma by arguing that Hume's account of sympathy does not require an impression of a self which is unchanging over time. All that Hume needs for his account of sympathy, according to Árdal, is "that at any particular time, when we are conscious, there should be some complex impression we can identify as the impression of our own person." It is clear that what Hume denied in Book I of the *Treatise* was the existence of an impression of a being which exists over time and can be identified as one's self. Árdal's suggestion, then, is that Hume may allow the existence of an impression which at some particular moment in time may be identified as one's self even though the impression may be different in the very next moment. Hume may be willing to appeal to such a complex impression in his account of sympathy, but clearly there is no sense in which he would be willing to call it an impression of self. Our idea of self is the idea of something which continues over time unchanged.

There are hints in the *Treatise* that Hume is inclined to try a different strategy for solving the problem we have posed for him. In places, Hume suggests that the idea of self may be able to convey enough vivacity to a related idea to raise it to an impression. He appears to offer two suggestions as to how this might work. First, note that in the passage above where Hume claims unequivocally that it is the idea of self which supplies the vivacity needed to convert the idea of another's affection into an impression, he tells
us that "this lively idea [i.e., the idea of the other's affection], changes by degrees into an impression" (emphasis mine). This suggests that the idea is not transformed into an impression all at once, but that it is enlivened little by little until it becomes an impression. If we suppose that vivacity is cumulative, Hume may be suggesting that the idea is converted into an impression by repeatedly borrowing vivacity from the lively idea of the self.

Later, in the same passage, Hume suggests a different solution.

In that case resemblance converts the idea into an impression, not only by means of the relation, and by transfusing the original vivacity into the related idea; but also by presenting such materials as take fire from the least spark.

Here, Hume seems to be saying that the lively idea of self provides only enough vivacity to initiate the transformation of the idea into an impression. The idea of another's affection is, presumably, the kind of idea which when infused with some vivacity completes the transformation on its own. We get no word concerning how this works.

It is, perhaps, because of these problems that Hume drops the mechanism of sympathy in the Inquiry. There, Hume claims that we feel uneasiness upon the contemplation of the uneasiness of others and we feel pleasure upon contemplating their pleasure.
Have we any difficulty . . . to conceive that the very aspect of happiness, joy, prosperity gives pleasure; that of pain, suffering, sorrow communicates uneasiness? The human countenance, says Horace, borrows smiles or tears from the human countenance.23

But this phenomenon is not explained by appealing to the enlivening influence of the perception of self on the ideas of the affections of others. Instead, Hume appeals to the principle of humanity which is an original predisposition of the mind. In a footnote, he says:

It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others? It is sufficient that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. . . . It is not probable that these principles can be resolved into principles more simple and universal, whatever attempts may have been made to that purpose.24

It may well be the case that Hume has in mind here his own attempt which was abandoned because of the difficulties involving the impression of the self.

(ii)

Let us see exactly how sympathy enters into the production of the moral sentiment. Hume first appeals to the notion of sympathy in order to explain how justice becomes a moral virtue. Self-interest, according to Hume, "is the original motive to the establishment of justice."25
After men have found by experience, that their selfishness and confin'd generosity, acting at their liberty, totally incapacitates them for society; and at the same time have observ'd, that society is necessary to the satisfaction of those very passions, they are naturally induc'd to lay themselves under the restraint of such rules, as may render their commerce more safe and commodious.26

The details of Hume's account of justice need not concern us here. What is important for our purposes is that humans are moved to lay down the prescriptions of justice out of a concern for their own interest. The original displeasure that persons have from contemplating injustice, moreover, is a sentiment of self-love, i.e., a disagreeable sentiment that arises from the contemplation of objects which have a tendency to one's own disadvantage.

Hume observes, however, that when society becomes large, it is possible that injustice be so remote as to have no effect on our interest at all. But such injustice still displeases us. This displeasure, we are told, is a moral sentiment and results from the operation of sympathy:

Nay when the injustice is so distant from us, as no way to affect our interest, it still displeases us; because we consider it as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one that approaches the person guilty of it. We partake of their uneasiness by sympathy; and as every thing, which gives uneasiness in human actions, upon the general survey, is call'd Vice, and whatever produces satisfaction, in the same manner, is denominated Virtue; this is the reason why the sense of moral good and evil follows upon justice and injustice.27
It should be noted that Hume often speaks of sympathy with public interest. He says, for instance, that "a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation" which attends injustice. This appears to be a rather curious statement. Persons are the kinds of things we sympathize with, and the public interest is not a person. One might think that what Hume has in mind here is simply sympathy with all those persons affected by the just or unjust character. Hume seems to suggest in the passage above that we sympathize with particular persons when evaluating a character; in particular, we sympathize with those persons "who approach" or have commerce with the person whose character is being evaluated. We shall see in the next chapter that Hume's account is not quite so straightforward, but this interpretation will serve our purposes here.

When Hume turns his attention to the natural virtues, he gives us much the same account. First, he considers those character traits such as beneficence, charity, generosity, and equity which, like justice, are useful to others. The only difference between these character traits and justice, he tells us, is that the good which arises from these "arises from every single act, and is the object of some natural passion: whereas a single act of justice, consider'd itself may often be contrary to the public good." Both derive their merit, however, from their general tendency to the good of others. And just as the contemplation of a just
character produces an agreeable sentiment by means of sympathy with those who have commerce with him, the contemplation of a benevolent or charitable character produces an agreeable sentiment by means of sympathy.

Hume claims, moreover, that those character traits such as prudence, temperance, industry, and dexterity, which are useful only to the person who possesses them, are moral virtues. Similarly, those qualities which are disadvantageous to the person who possesses them are vices:

Suppose a quality, that without being an indication of any other good qualities, incapacitates a man always for business, and is destructive to his interest; such as a blundering understanding, and a wrong judgment of every thing in life; inconstancy and irresolution; or a want of address in the management of men and business; These are all allowed to be imperfections in a character; and many men would rather acknowledge the greatest crimes, than have it suspected, that they are, in any degree, subject to them.

Though such a quality is only disadvantageous to the person who possesses it, contemplation of it produces the moral sentiment by means of sympathy with the person who possesses it. The pains such a person receives from the tendency of his own character traits to his own disadvantage are communicated to others by sympathy.

Finally, Hume tells us that even though "reflexions on the tendencies of actions have by far the greatest influence, and determine all the great lines of our duty," some
character traits are virtues because they are immediately agreeable to others or the person who possesses them. "Wit, and a certain easy and disengag'd behaviour," for instance, produce a satisfaction in others even though they have no tendency to promote the public interest. Similarly, some qualities such as cheerfulness are immediately agreeable to the person who possesses them. In the former case, the moral sentiment is produced by means of a sympathy with those who have commerce with the person; and in the latter case, the moral sentiment is produced by means of a sympathy with the person himself.

Now, what precisely is the relationship between sympathy and the moral sentiment? There are two common views. Some commentators have claimed that the moral sentiments are passions which arise from those passions and sentiments we acquire by means of sympathy.32 We have seen, however, that the moral sentiments are not passions. Other commentators have claimed that the moral sentiments just are the affections we acquire by means of sympathy. Ingemar Hedenius, for instance, says that "consciousness of something as a virtue or a vice is a sympathetic consciousness of the pleasure or pain of others."33

There are two problems with Hedenius' interpretation. Some of the pleasures and pains we acquire by means of sympathy are passions. Consequently, this view will entail
that the moral sentiments are passions at least on some occasions. Thus, Hedenius' view has the same problem as the first view. There is, moreover, another serious problem.

Consider the vice of malice. A malicious person is vicious because of his tendency to cause pain in others. These pains may be physical pains such as those inflicted in torture, or mental pains such as the humility which attends degradation, the grief of having something one cares about taken away, or the fear that arises from the expectation of harm. When we sympathize with these pains, Hume tells us, "the ideas of the affections of others are converted into the very impressions they represent." (emphasis mine). Thus when I sympathize with your grief, for instance, I feel grief. Now, Hume certainly does not want to say that my moral sentiment is a pain in my leg in one case and a feeling of grief in another case. It is, he says, a peculiar sentiment of pain or pleasure which can be distinguished from others by the felt quality of its sensation.

Barry Stroud has suggested that a more plausible account of sympathy in general would be the view that only the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the affection is communicated through sympathy:

[Hume] need not say that it produces in me the very same kind of suffering as the other is undergoing. It would be enough for his purposes to say that by means of the operation of sympathy we get feelings of the very same
affective quality as those we observe or contemplate. Unpleasant feelings in others cause unpleasant feelings in us, and pleasant feelings in others cause pleasant feelings in us.\textsuperscript{35}

This view would indeed be more plausible since, as Stroud points out, when I sympathize with your toothache, I may have a disagreeable feeling, but I do not have a toothache. It should be noted, moreover, that what Stroud is proposing is roughly the view that Hume takes in the \textit{Inquiry} concerning the operation of the principle of humanity.

As an interpretation of Hume's account of sympathy in the \textit{Treatise}, however, Stroud's suggestion will not work. The primary reason is that it is inconsistent with the details of the way sympathy works. I formulate an idea of your grief which is presumably a faint copy of grief. This faint copy is enlivened. The result must be grief since the only difference between an idea of grief and an impression of grief is liveliness or vivacity.

This problem shows, I think, that we should reject Hedenius' identification of the moral sentiments with the affections we acquire by means of sympathy. There is evidence, moreover, that Hume thinks that these are distinct in some cases. Concerning these qualities which are useful to the person who possesses them, Hume says:
In this case, the qualities that please me are all consider'd as useful to the person, and as having a tendency to promote his interest and satisfaction. They are regarded as means to an end, and please me in proportion to their fitness for that end.36

So, character traits please a person because they are a means to some person's advantage or good. The moral sentiment in such a case is the agreeable feeling one gets from consideration of the means. But the consideration of the means is agreeable only insofar as the end is agreeable.

The end, therefore, must be agreeable to me. But what makes the end agreeable? The person is a stranger: I am no way interested in him, nor lie under any obligation to him: His happiness concerns not me, farther than the happiness of every human, and indeed of every sensible creature: That is, it affects me only by sympathy.37

The end is the advantage or good of the person who has the character trait. This end affects me by sympathy. "Whenever I discover his happiness and good, whether in its causes or effects, I enter so deeply into it, that it gives me a sensible emotion."38 Thus, I am pained when he is pained; I am grieved when he is grieved. But these are not the moral sentiments. The moral sentiments arise from the contemplation of the means to these ends. "The appearance of qualities, that have a tendency to promote it, have an agreeable effect upon my imagination."39 This agreeable effect is the moral sentiment.
I am assuming here that the same sentiments of pleasure or pain arise from the contemplation of the means to passions which are similar in that they are both agreeable or both disagreeable even though they may be different in other respects. That is, only the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the passion is transmitted from the end to the means. Even though Hume never explicitly addresses this assumption, it seems plausible and it avoids the problems discussed above.

We have considered only those qualities which are useful to the person who possesses them. Even though Hume is not quite so explicit concerning those qualities that are useful to others, it is plausible that he would give a similar account of them. These qualities acquire their merit or demerit from being means to the advantage or disadvantage of others, and we find the means pleasing in virtue of the fact that the end is pleasing. We cannot, however, apply this account to the other two kinds of virtue and vice. As we have seen, there are character traits which are virtuous or vicious not because they are means to agreeable or disagreeable ends, but because they are immediately agreeable or disagreeable to the person who possesses them or those who have commerce with the person.

There may be a problem here. The moral sentiments which arise from the contemplation of qualities that are useful may all produce the same kind of pleasure or pain because they are
all sentiments associated with means to agreeable or disagreeable ends. But there may be a great diversity in those kinds of pleasures and pains which are communicated by sympathy when we consider character traits which are immediately agreeable or disagreeable. The pleasure that one feels from one's own cheerfulness, for instance, would appear to be different from the pleasure one feels from the wit of some other person.

Concerning this, Hume says the following:

Whenever we survey the actions and characters of men, without any particular interest in them, the pleasure or pain which arises from the survey (with some minute difference) is, in the main, of the same kind, tho' perhaps there be a great diversity in the causes, from which it is deriv'd. 40

Note that Hume here mentions the manner in which the qualities being evaluated are contemplated. When we consider them "without any particular interest in them," the same kinds of pain or pleasure arise. We shall discuss this notion in detail in the next chapter. The important point for our present purposes is that the disinterested consideration of character traits always gives rise to the same kinds of pleasures and pains. Moreover, this kind of pleasure and pain is distinct from the kinds that arise from an interested consideration of character traits or from inanimate objects.
There is something very inexplicable in this variation of our feelings; but 'tis what we have experience of with regard to all our passions and sentiments.41

(iii)

The account of sympathy I have presented so far suggests that it is only from the consideration of the effects of a real, occurrent passion or sentiment that one comes to have the passion or sentiment by means of sympathy. As it turns out, however, this is not the case. Hume allows that the mechanism of sympathy can produce an affection in us even though the person with whom we sympathize does not have any affection of that kind.

Hume tells us that an affection may be produced by sympathy not only from the consideration of its effects, but also from the consideration of its causes:

When I perceive the causes of any emotion, my mind is convey'd to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion. Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery, 'tis certain, that even before it begun, the preparation of instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patients and assistants, wou'd have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror.42

It appears, then, that the consideration of the causes of an affection contributes to the production of the affection in
us by means of sympathy. Note that in this passage, Hume seems to be assuming that pity and terror are actually occurring in the patient and assistants. Moreover, the contemplation of their effects (i.e., "the signs of anxiety and concern") produce in the observer pity and terror.

In Book II, however, Hume explicitly says that the consideration of the causes of a passion can lead us to sympathize with a non-existent affection:

'Tis certain that sympathy is not always limited to the present moment, but that we often feel by communication the pains and pleasure of others, which are not in being, and which we only anticipate by the force of imagination. For supposing I saw a person perfectly unknown to me, who, while asleep in the fields, was in danger of being trod under foot by horses, I shou'd immediately run to his assistance; and in this I shou'd be actuated by the same principle of sympathy, which makes me concerned for the present sorrows of a stranger. The bare mention of this is sufficient. Sympathy being 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.43

It appears, then, that we can sympathize with expected affections. I see a person about to be trod under foot by horses, and I formulate, presumably by means of causal reasoning, the expectation of this person's pain. This person is not yet in pain, but my expectation or lively idea of his future pain is
converted into an impression by borrowing vivacity from the perception of myself. The important point here is that the production of an affection by means of sympathy does not require that the person sympathized with actually have the affection. All that the operation of sympathy actually requires is an idea of some affection which has the appropriate relationship to the perception of self.

It seems, moreover, that this idea of the affection need not take the form of an expectation or belief. A certain kind of sympathy may be in operation even though we do not expect the affection to occur at all:

The communicated passion of sympathy sometimes acquires strength from the weakness of its original, and even arises by a transition from affections, which have no existence. Thus when a person obtains any honourable office, or inherits a great fortune, we are always the more rejoic'd for his prosperity, the less sense he seems to have of it, and the greater equanimity and indifference he shews in it's enjoyment. . . . From the same principles we blush for the conduct of those, who behave themselves foolishly before us; and that tho' they shew no sense of shame, nor seem in the least conscious of their folly.

In Book III, Hume makes a similar claim when he tries to account for a "remarkable circumstance" which appears to be an objection to his account of the production of the moral sentiment:
Where a person is possessed of a character, that in its natural tendency is beneficial to society, we esteem him virtuous, and are delighted with the view of his character, even tho' particular accidents prevent its operation, and incapacitates him from being serviceable to his friends and country. Virtue in rags is still virtue; and the love, which it procures, attends a man into a dungeon or desert, where the virtue can no longer be exerted in action, and is lost to the world. 45

Suppose, for instance, that a person with the character trait of benevolence is stranded alone on a desert island. Even though such a character trait would be useful to others if there were others around, it is useful to no one on the desert island. Consequently, there is no one whose pleasures we could acquire by sympathy. But we still say that the person is virtuous.

Hume's reply is that despite the fact that no one will ever receive any good from the operations of such a character trait, the contemplation of it still gives us pleasure. He tells us, for instance, that a well-built house gives us pleasure even though no one will ever live in it and that fertile land gives pleasure even though it is uninhabited. He accounts for this phenomenon by appeal to general rules:

Where a character is, in every respect, fitted to be beneficial to society, the imagination passes easily from the cause to the effect, without considering that there are still some circumstances wanting to render the cause a compleat one. General rules create a species
of probability, which sometimes influences the judgment, and always the imagination.\textsuperscript{46}

According to Hume, general rules are habits or customs of the mind to pass from one idea or impression to another. After experiencing many instances of the conjunction of two events, the mind forms a habit or propensity to pass from the perception of one to the idea of the other. Recall that it is in virtue of such a propensity that we are able to make causal inferences. But the influence of general rules may extend beyond what we are properly allowed to conclude by causal reasoning:

\begin{quote}
Now 'tis the nature of custom not only to operate with its full force, when objects are presented, that are exactly the same with those to which we have been accustom'd; but also to operate in an inferior degree, when we discover such as are similar; and tho' the habit loses somewhat of its force by every difference, yet 'tis seldom entirely destroy'd where any considerable circumstances remain the same.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

Consider again the benevolent person who is alone on the desert island. Experience has taught us that a benevolent character in certain kinds of circumstances causes joy and happiness. That is, the mind develops a habit or disposition to pass from the perception of the benevolent character in these circumstances to the ideas of joy and happiness. But here the case is not quite the same. There is a relevant difference in the circumstances; there are no people to be
affected by the benevolent character. But since the circumstances closely resemble those which actually result in joy and happiness, the general rule still carries the mind to the ideas of joy and happiness though with less intensity.

This tendency of the mind to extend its habits beyond what strictly speaking it acquires from experience to those objects and events resembling those experienced results is what Hume calls unphilosophical probability. This is presumably the species of probability that he is telling us is created by general rules. He tells us, moreover, that unphilosophical probabilities influence the judgments of the vulgar, yet even in the wise these general rules affect the imagination.

Hume tells us that "the imagination has a set of passions belonging to it." These passions do not require belief to be excited. They may result from ideas with "degrees of liveliness and strength, which are inferior to belief, and independent of the real existence of their objects." Hume mentions the passions which belong to the imagination in several places. He tells us, for instance, that:

The seeming tendencies of objects affect the mind: And the emotions they excite are of a like species with those which proceed from the real consequences of objects, but their feeling is different.
Similarly, concerning those passions which arise from poetry, he says:

There is no passion of the human mind but what may arise from poetry; tho' at the same time the feelings of the passions are very different when excited by poetical fictions, from what they are when they arise from belief and reality.\footnote{51}

Presumably, then, the idea of a non-existent passion is converted into one of these special passions belonging to the imagination. The general rule produces in the imagination the idea of a passion. This idea is converted into a passion by borrowing vivacity from the perception of self. Though this passion may be different in feeling from one which arises from the consideration of a real or expected passion, it may still affect the mind and give rise to the moral sentiments.

Let us apply this account to the benevolent person who is alone on the desert island. When we consider the benevolent character, general rules affect the imagination with the ideas of joy and happiness. Even though we do not believe any real joy and happiness will result from the character, we imagine the joy and happiness which usually results from character traits of this type. These ideas of joy and happiness borrow force and liveliness from the perception of self and are consequently transformed into a kind of joy and happiness. Though this special kind of joy and happiness is
different in feeling from the kind that arises from belief, it is sufficient to affect the mind with an agreeable sentiment. Insofar, then, as the character trait is usually a means to these agreeable passions, the consideration of it gives rise to the agreeable moral sentiment.

Strictly speaking, then, sympathy is not a principle of the communication of affections. Sympathy may give rise to a passion even though there is no real passion to be communicated. Indeed, sympathy may produce an affection in a person even though there is no particular person with whom he sympathizes. Sympathy is simply a mechanism whereby an idea of an affection is converted into the affection itself by means of the enlivening influence of the perception of self.
VI. THE GENERAL POINT OF VIEW

At the end of chapter II, we saw that there are passages in Book III, Part III of the Treatise which suggest that Hume allows that one can make a moral evaluation without having an occurrent moral sentiment. The standard interpretation of these passages is that Hume found it necessary to give up the view that moral evaluations are a function of occurrent moral sentiments in order to account for the fact that moral evaluations are disinterested. There I promised that I would show that this interpretation is based on an incorrect reading of the passages in question. Here I shall attempt to keep that promise. In sections (i) and (ii), I shall examine the problem with which Hume is concerned in these sections of the Treatise and his proposed solution to it. In section (iii), I shall examine specifically those passages which appear to support the view that occurrent moral sentiments are not necessary for moral evaluation.

(i)

In Book III, Part III of the Treatise Hume attempts to account for the general, disinterested nature of moral evaluation. The nature of moral evaluation, he tells us, requires that every person, regardless of his or her peculiar situation,
evaluate the same action or character trait in the same way.

He states this position very clearly in the Inquiry:

The notion of morals 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, the object of applause or censure, according as they agree or disagree with that rule of right which is established.¹

Hume takes this fact very seriously. One of the most important problems for any "subjectivist" theory of the type I attributed to Hume in chapter II is accounting for this fact. It appears that our affections depend greatly on our peculiar situation. It is more likely, for instance, that I will feel an agreeable affection from the contemplation of a person who intends to give me a million dollars than from the contemplation of a person who has no special interest in me. How is it, then, that moral evaluation can depend on such sentiments and at the same time be disinterested.

According to Hume, our peculiar position can influence our affections in two ways. First, self-love has a great influence on our affections and depends on what is in our peculiar interest. Second, our affections depend on the relationships in which we stand to their causes, and these relationships vary from individual to individual. Hume does
not always clearly distinguish these problems. It is clear, however, that they are distinct problems. For the sake of clarity, then, let us consider them separately.

Let us consider the first problem. Early in Book III, Hume distinguishes the sentiments of morals from those of self-love. He says:

Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain, which arises from characters and actions, of that peculiar kind, which makes us praise or condemn. The good qualities of an enemy are hurtful to us; but may still command our esteem and respect. 'Tis only when a character is consider'd in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil.

There are two important points being made in this passage. First, Hume is telling us that the moral sentiments are distinct in kind from the sentiments of self-love. Thus, the agreeable sentiment that arises from contemplation of a character trait's tendency to our own advantage does not constitute a moral evaluation of that character trait. In the Inquiry, Hume is much more explicit that the reason he draws this distinction is to account for the disinterested nature of moral evaluation. He says that self-love produces "in every breast, many strong sentiments of desire and aversion, affection and hatred, but these neither are felt so much in common nor are so comprehensive as to be the foundation of
any general system and established theory of blame or appro-

bation." He continues as follows:

When a man denominates another his enemy, his rival, his antagonist, his adversary, he is understood to speak the language of self-love and to express sentiments peculiar to himself and arising from his particular circumstances and situation. But when he bestows on any men the epithets of vicious or odious or depraved, he then speaks another language and expresses sentiments in which he expects all his audience are to concur with him.

Thus, the sentiments of morality must be distinct from the sentiments of self-love.

The second point made in the passage above concerns the production of this peculiar sentiment. Hume is apparently telling us that it is a causal precondition of the occurrence of the moral sentiment that we consider the character trait in question without regard to our particular interest. In Book III, Part III of the Treatise, Hume spells out in more detail what this comes to. When we consider a character trait without regard to our particular interest, he tells us, we consider only its tendencies to cause pleasure or pain in the person who possesses it or those who are connected with him:

In judging of characters, the only interest or pleasure, which appears the same to every spectator, is that of the person himself, whose character is examin'd; or that of persons, who have a connexion with him. And
tho' such interests and pleasures touch us more faintly than our own, yet being more constant and universal, they counter-ballance the latter even in practice, and are alone admitted in speculation as the standard of virtue and morality. They alone produce that particular feeling or sentiment, on which moral distinctions depend.\(^3\)

Hume claims, moreover, that these interests and pleasures affect us by means of sympathy.

The second problem which Hume encounters in trying to account for the disinterested, general nature of moral evaluation is the variability of sympathy itself. As we saw in the last chapter, the intensity of the affections we receive through sympathy varies depending on how closely we are related to the person with whom we sympathize. Hume tells us, however, that our moral evaluations do not vary with these variations in our sympathy:

But as this sympathy is very variable, it may be thought, that our sentiments of morals must admit of all the same variations. We sympathize more with persons contiguous to us, than with persons remote from us: With our acquaintance, than with strangers: With countrymen, than with foreigners. But notwithstanding this variation of our sympathy we give the same approbation to the same moral qualities in China as in England. They appear equally virtuous and recommend themselves equally to the esteem of a judicious spectator. The sympathy varies without a variation in our esteem. Our esteem, therefore, proceeds not from sympathy.\(^6\)
In response to this problem, Hume claims that when we morally evaluate a character, "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." In this way, we correct our evaluations. Hume compares such corrections with the corrections we make in our assessments of beauty:

In like manner, external beauty is determin'd merely by pleasure; and 'tis evident, a beautiful countenance cannot give so much pleasure, when seen at a distance of twenty paces, as when it is brought near us. We say not, however, that it appears to us less beautiful: Because we know what effect it will have in such a position, and by that reflexion we correct its momentary appearance. (emphasis mine)

Hume is suggesting here that in judging that a person is beautiful we imagine that we are near the person. This reflection corrects the original pleasure we have from viewing it from a distance. Similarly, concerning our moral sentiments of praise and blame, Hume says:

These variations 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 remain'd in one point of view. Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments. (emphasis mine)

Hume believes that we are motivated to adopt this general point of view in order to avoid "contradictions" which arise from evaluating persons from our own peculiar points of view:
Our situation, with regard to both persons and things, is in continual fluctuation; and a man, that lies at a distance from us, may, in a little time, become a familiar acquaintance. Besides, every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and 'tis impossible we could ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view. In order, therefore, to prevent these continual contradictions, and arrive at a more stable judgment of things, we fix on some steady and general points of view; and always, in our thoughts place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation.10

Elsewhere, he says:

When we form our judgments of persons merely from the tendency of their characters to our own benefit, or to that of friends, we find so many contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation, and such an uncertainty from the incessant changes of our situation, that we seek some standard of merit and demerit, which may not admit of so great variation.11

In these passages, Hume appears to have two kinds of "contradictions" in mind. First, when a person changes his position in relation to the person he is evaluating, his present evaluations may "contradict" his earlier ones. Second, when different people stand in different relations to the person being evaluated, their evaluations may "contradict" each other.

Note that the "contradictions" Hume is talking about here cannot be logical contradictions. Sentiments do not
have truth values and consequently cannot logically contradict each other. However, sentiments can be opposites in the sense that one is agreeable and the other is disagreeable. Note, moreover, that these same sentiments will have opposite influences on passions and actions. One will give rise to aversion, and the other will give rise to desire. I think that these are the kinds of considerations Hume has in mind when he speaks of "contradictions." Sentiments "contradict" when one is agreeable and the other is disagreeable and when they give rise to contrary passions and actions.

Why do people want to avoid such contradictions? Earlier in the Treatise, Hume says:

Nothing is more certain from experience, than that any contradiction either to the sentiments or passions gives a sensible uneasiness, whether it proceeds from without or from within; from the opposition of external objects, or the combat of internal principles. On the contrary, whatever, strikes in with the natural propensities, and either externally forwards their satisfaction, or internally concurs with their movements, is sure to give a sensible pleasure.12

I think that both kinds of "contradictions" can be reduced to "the combat of internal principles." Our present sentiments are in conflict with our remembered sentiments in the case where we have contradictions with our own earlier judgments. When our evaluations contradict those of others, we feel their sentiments by means of sympathy, and these are in
conflict with our own original sentiments. These conflicts cause uneasiness from which the mind "will naturally seek relief." According to Hume, this relief is found by adopting the general point of view.

Note that Hume mentions conversation several times in the above passages. Indeed, he tells that "'tis impossible we cou'd ever converse together on any reasonable terms," if we did not evaluate characters from the general point of view. This suggests that Hume holds that one motivation for taking the general point of view is to avoid contradictions in moral discourse. Note, however, that Hume cannot hold that this is an original motivation. Hume tells us that taking the general point of view is a necessary condition for the occurrence of the moral sentiments. In the Inquiry, moreover, Hume suggests that we develop moral language only after the distinction between the moral sentiments and the sentiments of self-love is recognized:

The distinction, therefore, between these species of sentiment being so great and evident, language must soon be molded upon it and must invent a peculiar set of terms in order to express those universal sentiments of censure or approbation which arise from humanity, or from views of general usefulness and its contrary.15

Certainly, however, once moral language begins to be developed, it may provide further motivation for people to take the general point of view. That is, those who attempt to use
moral language to express sentiments which arise from their peculiar position will find that they are often "contradicted" in moral conversation.

(ii)

Let us examine the notion of the general point of view in more detail. Hume's examples suggest that by means of the imagination, we fix the distance from ourselves to the person being evaluated. That is, when we evaluate a person, we always imagine ourselves a certain fixed distance from him. He tells us, for instance, that we correct our assessments of beauty by reflecting on what effect it would have on us if we were near. Similarly, he says:

We blame equally a bad action, which we read of in history, with one perform'd in our neighborhood t'other day: The meaning of which is, that we know from reflexion, that the former action wou'd excite as strong sentiments of disapprobation as the latter, were it plac'd in the same position.16

Moreover, this account seems to fit quite well with Hume's analogy with the corrections of the senses:

The case is here the same as in our judgments concerning external bodies. All objects seem to diminish by their distance: But tho' the appearance of objects to our senses be the original standard, by which we judge of them, yet we do not say, that they actually diminish by the distance; but correcting the appearance by reflexion, arrive at a more constant and establish'd judgment concerning them.17
Carole Stewart completes the analogy as follows:

The correct moral point of view, Hume appears to argue, is like the correct point of view for perception: the point at which the object is most clearly or most readily seen, a point neither so close, that the object is obscured by the details, nor so far, that the details cannot be seen at all. This would place the observer, in moral questions, at a sort of 'middle distance', neither so close, that his perception of the situation is obscured by his own interests, nor so far, that he is entirely uninterested.18

There are two problems with this suggestion. First, it does not solve the problems that Hume is attempting to solve. To be sure, distant objects influence our self-love less than those that are near. But this is just an instance of Hume's more general principle that the influence of any object on the passions and sentiments depends on the distance from the object to the person contemplating it:

Contiguous objects must have an influence much superior to the distant and remote. Accordingly we find in common life, that men are principally concern'd about those objects, which are not much remov'd either in space or time, enjoying the present, and leaving what is afar off to the care of chance and fortune.19

Insofar as distance weakens the influence of self-love on our affections, it will weaken all of the passions and sentiments which arise from the contemplation of the object. If self-love perverts our evaluation of characters when they are near, it is likely that it will pervert our evaluation at a
distance. Distancing ourselves from a situation would weaken all relevant passions but would not change their proportionate influence.

Second, the conclusion that Hume actually draws from his discussion is quite different from the one suggested by Stewart. He says:

'Tis therefore from the influence of characters and qualities, upon those who have an intercourse with any person, that we blame or praise him.20

Recall that this is the same account that we get from Hume when he is distinguishing the moral sentiments from the sentiments of self-love. He characterizes the general point of view in this way in several places. He tells us, for instance, that when the contradictions we encounter when evaluating characters lead us to abandon our own particular point of view,

We cannot afterwards fix ourselves so commodiously by any means as by a sympathy with those, who have any commerce with the person we consider.21

A little later, he stresses that this point of view is the only one which will give rise to sentiments which do not contradict those of others:

The only point of view, in which our sentiments concur with those of others, is, when we consider the tendency of any character to
the advantage or harm of those, who have any immediate connexion or intercourse with the person possess'd of it.32

It is quite clear, then, that this is Hume's primary characterization of the general point of view.

However, this characterization of the general point of view is puzzling since it does not appear to address the problems which motivate Hume to introduce the motion. For instance, it does not seem that one can correct for the variability of sympathy by requiring that we only consider those people who are connected with the person we are evaluating. Suppose, for instance, that one of the people connected with the person being evaluated is a family member or friend of the person making the evaluation. Certainly, this would influence his sympathy and consequently his evaluation.

Moreover, considering only the interests of the person possessing the character trait and those who are connected with him does not effectively prevent the arousal of the sentiments of self-love. Suppose that I am evaluating my own character or that of a friend. In the former case, I possess the character trait being evaluated, and in the latter case, I am connected with the person who possesses the character trait. It seems that the account presented so far allows in these cases that I consider the effects of the character trait being evaluated on myself. It appears, then,
that considering only the pleasures or pains of the person being evaluated or those connected with him does not guarantee that I consider the person without regard to my particular interest. Insofar as I consider my particular interests, my reflection will give rise to the sentiments of self-love.

Hume apparently believes that this characterization of the general point of view takes care of these problems. In a number of places, he says that when we take the general point of view, we disregard our own interests and the interests of those with whom we are closely related. We saw earlier that Hume says that the moral sentiments arise only when we consider the character "without reference to our particular interest." He says, moreover, that:

We consider not whether the persons, affected by the qualities, be our acquaintance or strangers, countrymen or foreigners. Nay, we overlook our own interest in those general judgments.

In the Inquiry, moreover, Hume speaks of regulating our love and hatred "by the universal abstract differences of vice and virtue without regard to self or the persons with whom we are more intimately connected."

These passages might suggest that the moral sentiments are produced when we consider the influences of a character trait on those persons connected with the person who possesses the trait except for ourselves and any person with
whom we are intimately connected. Note that this avoids both of the problems with the simpler account. The variability of the sympathy is avoided by ruling out of consideration all persons with whom we have special relations. Moreover, since our own interest is not considered, the sentiments of self-love will not be produced.

Note, however, that this account makes meaningful self-evaluation impossible. I stand in a peculiar relation to myself and everyone connected with me. Consequently, there are no pleasures and interests which I am allowed to consider when I evaluate myself. It is not clear what self-evaluation amounts to in such a case. Unless I at least formulate some idea of pleasure or pain, no feelings or sentiments of the appropriate kind will be aroused.

Moreover, even though this version avoids the variability of sympathy, it does not avoid the variability of moral evaluations. Suppose that a child is regularly beaten by his father. Suppose, further, that the father has no inclination to harm anyone other than the child. Now if, when evaluating his father, the child considers only the effects of the father's character trait on other people, the child will not have the disagreeable moral sentiment and consequently cannot assess his father as vicious. Others, however, are allowed to take into account the effects of the character on the child and consequently will assess the
father as vicious. This is just the kind of variability that Hume wants to avoid.

There is another interpretation which is consistent with most of what Hume says and which avoids these problems. Hume tells us that the moral sentiments arise "upon the general survey" of a character or "when the character is consider'd in general." These passages suggest that the moral sentiments are produced by reflecting on the effects of a character trait on people in general. Not only do we not consider the effects of the character trait on ourselves or our friends and acquaintances, we do not consider its effects on the particular interests of any particular individual. When evaluating a character trait, we reflect on the effects a character trait of that kind generally has on the person who possesses it or those connected with him.

Note that this fits nicely with Hume's claim that we can assess a character as vicious or virtuous even though circumstances prevent the character from affecting anyone. What we do in such a case is reflect on the effects that such a character trait generally has on people. Moreover, even in those cases where the effects of the character trait are not prevented by some circumstance, we may not be in a position to determine the actual effects it has on particular people; yet we are still able to assess it as virtuous or vicious. A vicious person, for instance, may have never even performed
any vicious acts, but we can evaluate such a person's character by considering the tendencies of characters of that kind to cause harm in others. When we reflect on these tendencies, we do not consider them as tendencies to cause harm to particular individuals; we consider only the effects traits of that kind generally have on people.

Moreover, this account explains the role that experience plays in correcting our evaluations. Hume tells us that "experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments." It is from experience that we learn what effects a character trait usually has on the person who possesses it or those connected with him. That is, we formulate a general rule from the observation of the effects of particular character traits on particular individuals. When evaluating a character trait, however, we do not consider the particular circumstances; rather, the general rule leads us to imagine the effects that such character traits have in general. Our evaluation is based on this reflection.

Finally, recall that in his discussion of justice, Hume speaks of sympathy with the public interest. We noted in the last chapter that this is an odd way of speaking if we take Hume to hold that we can only sympathize with particular individuals. Now we are in a position to understand what Hume means by this. To sympathize with the public interest is just to sympathize with the pleasures and pains people generally have in certain circumstances. That is, reflecting on a just
or unjust character leads us to imagine the pains or pleasures which generally result from these character traits. These ideas of pleasure or pain are then converted into impressions in virtue of the enlivening influence of the perception of the self.

It should be noted that Hume sometimes appears to be claiming that when we correct for the variability which results from evaluating a person from our particular point of view, we correct our judgment though our affections remain unchanged. Concerning our assessments of beauty, he tells us that it is evident that "a beautiful countenance cannot give so much pleasure, when seen at the distance of twenty paces, as when it is brought nearer," but by reflecting on the pleasure it would give us if we were near, we correct our assessment of its beauty. This suggests that our evaluation of the beautiful countenance is influenced by the reflection even though our affections remain unchanged. Similarly, Hume may be claiming that we correct our evaluations of a character trait by reflecting on its general tendencies even though our affections are not influenced by such a reflection.

Note, however, that Hume repeatedly says that such reflections correct our sentiments. Moreover, we saw in the last chapter how these reflections can influence our affections. The idea of the pain or pleasure which generally arises from the kind of character trait being evaluated is
converted into one of the special passions belonging to the imagination. This special passion gives rise to the moral sentiment. Hume is much more explicit that this is what is happening when we correct our aesthetic evaluations. He tells us that "our sentiments of beauty much depend" upon the special passions belonging to the imagination. It appears, then, that when we correct our assessment of a beautiful countenance by reflecting on the effects it would have if we were close to it, our reflection actually arouses one of these special passions. Since the beautiful countenance is the means to this passion, the consideration of it produces an agreeable aesthetic sentiment.

This interpretation is confirmed by the following passage:

'Tis... observ'd by critics, that all words or sentences, which are difficult to the pronunciation, are disagreeable to the ear. There is no difference, whether a man hear them pronounc'd, or read them silently to himself. When I run over a book with my eye, I imagine I hear it all; and also, by the force of imagination, enter into the uneasiness, which the delivery of it wou'd give the speaker. The uneasiness is not real; but as such a composition of words has a natural tendency to produce it, this is sufficient to affect the mind with a painful sentiment, and render the style harsh and disagreeable.

A word or sentence which is difficult to pronounce gives rise to a disagreeable sentiment whether we hear it spoken or read it silently. When it is spoken, we acquire by sympathy the pain it gives to the speaker. When we read it to ourselves,
we imagine that we hear someone speaking it and reflect on the pain it would give such a speaker. This reflection gives rise to one of the disagreeable passions which belongs to the imagination and consequently renders "the style harsh and disagreeable." It is clear, then, that reflecting on pleasures and pains which would arise in certain circumstances can produce in the mind agreeable and disagreeable sentiments.

(iii)

We are now in a position to solve the problem raised in chapter II. Let us review the problem. In places, Hume appears to hold that even though in some cases we are not able to correct our sentiments, we can still correct our evaluations. He says, for instance, that:

However the general principles 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.33

Elsewhere, he says:

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.34

In the Inquiry, we get much the same news:
Though the heart takes not part entirely with those general notions, nor regulates all its love and hatred by the universal abstract differences of vice and virtue without regard to self or the persons with whom we are more intimately connected, yet have these moral differences a considerable influence; and being sufficient, at least, for discourse, serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, in the theater, and in the schools.  

He tells us, moreover, that when our passions and sentiments are not corrected by the general point of view, we can still correct our language:

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.

As we have seen in chapter II, these passages suggest that it is possible, according to Hume, to morally evaluate an action in the absence of the moral sentiments. Stroud expresses the standard interpretation of these passages as follows:

If our actual feelings cannot be 'corrected' or altered, what we say or believe on the basis of those feelings can. . . . If there can be alterations in our actual sentiments without corresponding alterations in our judgments of esteem, and vice versa, then the judgments or 'pronouncements' we make are not solely a function of the feelings we have at the time.

The view that Stroud is attributing to Hume is problematic for two reasons. It is inconsistent with those passages where Hume appears to assert that our moral evaluations are
a function of our occurrent moral sentiments, and, as we have seen, it is incompatible with Hume's view that moral evaluations are not the result of empirical or probabilistic reasoning. 38

Upon examination, however, none of these passages support the view suggested by Stroud. Note that Hume's point in the first three passages is that the passions do not follow our corrections. I have argued at length that the moral sentiments are not passions. Consequently, nothing in these passages indicates that moral evaluations do not require the presence of an occurrent moral sentiment. It is clear, moreover, that Hume is concerned with the passions in the fourth passage. He immediately illustrates his point as follows:

Our servant, if diligent and faithful, may excite stronger sentiments of love and kindness than Marcus Brutus, as represented in history; but we say not upon that account, that the former character is more laudable than the latter. 39

Thus, the sentiments which are stubborn and inalterable are passions: namely, the passions of love and kindness.

Hume's point in these passages is not that the presence of an occurrent moral sentiment is not necessary for a moral evaluation. Instead, he is claiming that our passions do not always conform to our moral sentiments. This is obvious in the following passage:
'Tis seldom men heartily love what lies at a distance from them, and what no way redounds to their particular benefit; as 'tis no less rare to meet with persons, who can pardon another any opposition he makes to their interest, however justifiable that opposition may be by the general rules of morality. Here we are contented with saying, that reason requires such an impartial conduct, but that 'tis seldom we can bring ourselves to it, and that our passions do not readily follow the determination of our judgment. This language will be easily understood, if we consider what we formerly said concerning that reason, which is able to oppose our passion; and which we have found to be nothing but a general calm determination of the passions, founded on some distant view or reflection.

Though the passions may not follow the corrections of the sentiments, "reason" requires an impartial conduct. Hume is alluding to that passage in Book II where he discusses those calm passions which are often taken for the determinations of reason. Here, however, he does not mention the calm passions; instead, he refers to "a general calm determination of the passions." It is clear, I think, that Hume is talking about the moral sentiments. Insofar as the moral sentiments are particular pains and pleasures, they "determine" the passions. As we saw in chapter III, they may generally give rise to a calm species of love and hate, namely, moral approbation and disapprobation. But the sentiments of self-love, being more lively, may counteract or even prevent the production of these calm passions.
Hume uses this fact to explain away the apparent contradiction between limited generosity and extensive sympathy. In his account of justice, Hume claims that people generally care only about themselves and their relatives, friends, and acquaintances. This appears to be incompatible with his claim that a sympathy with people in general gives rise to the moral sentiment even when the person being evaluated has no special relationship with the person making the evaluation. In order to resolve this apparent difficulty, Hume appeals to the fact that our moral sentiments do not always influence our passions and actions:

My sympathy with another may give me the sentiment of pain and disapprobation, when any object is presented, that has a tendency to give him uneasiness; tho' I may not be willing to sacrifice any thing of my own interest, or cross any of my passions, for his satisfaction. A house may displease me by being ill-contrived for the convenience of the owner; and yet I may refuse to give a shilling towards the rebuilding of it. Sentiments must touch the heart, to make them controul our passions: But they need not extend beyond the imagination, to make them influence our tastes.41

Those sentiments which do not extend beyond the imagination are presumably those special affections which "belong to the imagination." In the same paragraph, Hume distinguishes those emotions which arise from the "seeming tendencies of objects" and those which arise from the "real consequences of objects."42 These affections, he tells us, may not
influence the passions, but they do affect our taste. By taste, Hume means our moral and aesthetic sense, that is, the source of the moral and aesthetic sentiments.

Hume tells us, moreover, that those sentiments which depend on the imagination may co-exist with those which arise from the real consequences of objects.

Nay, these emotions are so different in their feeling, that they may often be contrary, without destroying each other; as when the fortifications of a city belonging to an enemy are esteem'd beautiful upon account of their strength, tho' we cou'd wish that they were entirely destroyed.43

It is clear, then, that even in those cases where the contemplation of a character trait from the general point of view does not influence the passions, it still produces the moral sentiments. Hume could allow that in some cases, taking the general point of view does not work at all. He would only need allow that in such cases, there is no moral evaluation. But these are not the cases he has in mind when he claims that even though our passions do not conform to the general point of view, our evaluations do. In these cases, the moral sentiment is always present.
NOTES

Introduction

1 A notable exception is Norman Kemp Smith's discussion in *The Philosophy of David Hume* (London: Macmillan, 1949).

I. Reason and Moral Evaluation


2 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 278.

3 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 278.


10 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 3.

11 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 3.


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Perhaps it should be mentioned that Hume is sometimes criticized for failing to view reason in just this way. For instance, Barry Stroud says:

What is questionable is (Hume's) further assumption that reason is somehow to be understood simply as the totality of the 'objects of reason', i.e., as a set of propositions. That seems to leave out altogether the notion of reason as a faculty of the mind, or reasoning as a mental process. (Hume, (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 160.).

But it is clear from the passage cited above that Hume does take reasoning to be a mental process.

After a warning, however, Hume continues to use the vulgar terminology.
33 Hume, Treatise, p. 465.

34 Hume, Treatise, p. 465.


36 Hume, Treatise, p. 466.

37 Hume, Treatise, p. 467.


39 Hume, Treatise, p. 467.

40 Hume, Treatise, p. 468.

41 Hume, Treatise, p. 73.

42 Hume, Treatise, p. 469.

43 Hume, Treatise, p. 469.

44 Hume, Treatise, p. 457.

45 Hume, Treatise, p. 457.

46 See above pp. 16-17.

47 Hume, Treatise, p. 586.

48 Hume, Treatise, p. 414.

49 Hume, Treatise, p. 414.

50 Hume, Treatise, p. 415.

51 Hume, Treatise, p. 415.

52 Hume, Treatise, p. 458.

53 Hume, Treatise, p. 458.
II. Moral Evaluation and the Moral Sentiments

1 Hume, Treatise, p. 470.
2 Hume, Treatise, p. 471.
4 Hume, Treatise, p. 469.
5 Hunter, p. 62.
6 Hume, Treatise, pp. 468-469.
7 Hume, Treatise, p. 73.
8 Hume, Treatise, p. 73.
11 Hume, Treatise, p. 190.
As we shall see, this is exactly how sympathy works.

III. The Moral Sentiments and the Passions

7. Norman Kemp Smith calls these passions primary passions. See p. 168.
15. Hume, Treatise, p. 28.

IV. The Calm Passions

4. Kydd, pp. 142-143.
9 Kydd, p. 149.
10 Kydd, p. 133.
19 Kydd, p. 423.
20 Kydd, p. 133.
21 Kydd, p. 144.
23 Kydd, p. 145.
24 Kydd, p. 147.
25 Smith, p. 167.
26 Årdal, p. 94.

29 See also Mary Warnock, "The Justification of Emotions, Part I," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 31 (1957); 44.
V. Sympathy and the Moral Sentiments

1 Hume, Treatise, p. 316.
2 Hume, Treatise, p. 365.
3 Hume, Treatise, p. 576.
4 For instance, see Hume, Treatise, p. 370.
5 Hume, Treatise, p. 317.
6 Hume, Treatise, p. 317.
7 Hume, Treatise, p. 354.
8 Hume, Treatise, p. 318.
9 Hume, Treatise, p. 318.
10 Hume, Treatise, p. 320.
11 Hume, Treatise, p. 96.
Elsewhere Hume says that belief is "a particular manner of forming an idea" (Treatise, p. 97).

Hume, Treatise, p. 98.

Tweyman, p. 157.

See Hume, Treatise, pp. 317-318.

See above pp. 43-44.

Hume, Treatise, p. 318.

Hume, Treatise, p. 317.

See Hume, Treatise, pp. 251ff.

Årdal, p. 45.

Hume, Treatise, p. 354.

Hume, Treatise, p. 354.

Hume, Treatise, p. 47.

Hume, Treatise, p. 47.

Hume, Treatise, p. 499.

Hume, Treatise, p. 499.

Hume, Treatise, p. 499.

Hume, Treatise, pp. 499-500.

Hume, Treatise, p. 579.

Hume, Treatise, p. 588.

Hume, Treatise, p. 590.

See Årdal, pp. 129ff.; Mackie, pp. 120-121.

VI. The General Point of View

1 Hume, Inquiry, p. 93.
2 Hume, Treatise, p. 472.
3 Hume, Inquiry, p. 93.
4 Hume, Inquiry, p. 93.
7 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.
8 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.
9 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.
20 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.
24 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.
28 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.
29 See above, p. 115.

30 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.


36 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.

37 Stroud, p. 190.

38 See above, pp. 51-52

39 Hume, *Treatise*, p. 582.


Sutherland, Stewart R. "Hume on Morality and the Emotions." *Philosophical Quarterly* 260 (1976), 14-23.
