

# Treatise of Human Nature

## Book II: The Passions

David Hume

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis . . . . indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omitted passages are reported on, between [brackets], in normal-size type.

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## Part i: Pride and humility

### 1: Division of the subject

Having divided all the perceptions of the mind into •impressions and •ideas, we can now divide impressions into **(1)** original and **(2)** secondary. The distinction between these is the one I drew in I.i.2, using the language of **(1)** ‘impressions of sensation’ and **(2)** ‘impressions of reflection’.

**(1)** Original impressions, i.e. impressions of sensation, arise in the soul not from any preceding perception but from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the effect of objects on the external organs. These include all the impressions of the senses, and all bodily pains and pleasures.

**(2)** Secondary impressions, i.e. impressions of reflection, arise out of the original ones, either immediately or through the mediation of ideas of the original ones. These include the passions, and other emotions resembling passions. [Example of ‘the mediation of ideas’: Joe’s **(2)** present anger against Max is caused by Joe’s present memory of being hurt by Max, which is caused by his **(1)** being hurt by Max.]

The mind in its perceptions *has to* begin somewhere. It can’t begin with ideas, because every idea comes *after* a corresponding impression; so it must start with impressions—there must be some **(1)** impressions that turn up in the soul without having been heralded by any preceding perception. [Remember that for Hume ‘perception’ covers every mental state.] The causes of these impressions of sensation are natural objects and events out there in the world; I couldn’t examine those without straying from my present subject into anatomy and natural science. So I’m going to confine myself to the other **(2)** impressions, the ones I call ‘secondary’ and ‘of reflection’, which arise either from original impressions or from ideas

of them. Bodily pains and pleasures are the source of many passions, both •immediately• when they are felt by the mind and •through the mediation of ideas• when they are considered by it; but they themselves arise originally in the soul (or in the body, call it what you will) without any preceding thought or perception. An attack of gout, •which is extremely painful•, leads **to** a long series of passions—grief, hope, fear and so on—but it doesn’t come immediately **from** any mental state or idea. [Regarding that last use of ‘immediately’, perhaps Hume is thinking of things like this: my present agony is caused by gout, which is caused by my drinking too much port and getting too little exercise, which was caused by my having thoughts of how pleasant it would be to sit by the fire swilling port; so my pain is after all caused by a mental event, but not immediately.]

The reflective impressions can be divided into •calm and •violent. Of the first kind is the sense of beauty and ugliness in actions, works of art, and external objects. [In this version, ‘ugliness’—a word Hume doesn’t use—always replaces his ‘deformity’, which did but now doesn’t mean the same thing. He does regularly use the adjective ‘ugly’, and always associates it with ‘deformity’.] Of the second kind are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility—these are ‘passions’ properly so-called. This division is far from exact: poetry and music frequently produce intense raptures that are far from calm; while those other impressions—the passions properly so-called—can subside into an emotion that is so soft as to be almost imperceptible. But the passions are *usually* more violent than the emotions arising from beauty and ugliness, and that’s the basis on which we draw the line. The human

mind is such a big and complicated topic that I need help in *ordering* my treatment of it, and it's in that spirit that I shall take advantage of this common and plausible classification, and . . . . set myself to explain those violent emotions or passions, their nature, origin, causes, and effects.

Looking over the passions, we find that they divide into •direct and •indirect. By 'direct passions' I mean ones that arise *immediately* from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. By 'indirect passions' I mean ones that have the same sources as the others but only when those sources are combined with other qualities. At this stage I can't justify or explain this distinction any further. I can only say that under the 'indirect passions' I include

•pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, generosity,

along with passions that depend on those. Under the 'direct passions' I include

•desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair, and security.

I shall begin with the indirect passions. ['z is an indirect result of x' ought to mean that x leads to y which leads to z. But what Hume says about z's arising from x 'by the conjunction of' other qualities points to a different picture, in which y doesn't reach back to x and forward to z but rather collaborates with x to produce z directly. The contrasting use of 'immediately' is wrong for the same reason. From now on, phrases like 'arise immediately from' will be replaced by 'arise purely from', in contexts where that is obviously the meaning.]

## 2: Pride and humility—their objects and causes

[Hume's words 'humility' and 'humble' will be allowed to stand in this version; but you'll see that 'humility' as he describes it sounds more like *shame*. Every occurrence of 'shame' or 'ashamed' in this version comes from the original text.] The passions of pride and humility are simple and uniform impressions, so we can't—however many words we use—properly *define* them, or any of the passions for that matter. (·This resembles the fact that we can't verbally define 'red' because the idea or impression of redness is simple and uniform·.) The most we can claim to offer is a description of them—a description in which we list the states of affairs that accompany them. But 'pride' and 'humility' are commonly used words, and the impressions they stand for are the most common of all; so no-one needs

my help to form an accurate idea of them with no risk of getting them wrong. I shan't waste time on preliminaries, therefore, and will start right away on my examination of these passions.

[In this paragraph we'll meet Hume's technical notion of 'the object of someone's pride or humility. He also uses 'object' (not 'object of') hundreds of times to mean merely 'thing' or 'item'—as in the phrase 'the effect of objects on the external organs'. When 'object' is used in this thin sense, *in a context where the 'object of' notion is also at work*, the thin-sense 'object' will be replaced by 'thing' or by 'item', a word that Hume himself never uses.] It is obvious that pride and humility, though directly contrary to one another, have the same object. This object is *oneself*, i.e. the sequence of related

ideas and impressions of which one has an intimate memory and consciousness. Whenever we are driven by pride or humility, our view is always focussed on *ourselves*. We feel one or other of those opposite affections—are elated by pride, or dejected with humility—depending on how favourable an idea of *ourselves* we have. [The word ‘affection’ occurs very often in this work. It is Hume’s most general term for emotional states, covering everything from furious rage to mild distaste, from ecstatic pleasure to a barely detectable feeling of satisfaction.] ·When we are in a state of pride or humility·, whatever other items we are thinking about we’re considering them in relation to ourselves; otherwise they couldn’t arouse these passions or increase or lessen them in the slightest. When *oneself* doesn’t enter the picture, there is no room for either pride or humility.

But although the connected sequence of perceptions that we call ‘self’ is always the •object of these two passions, it can’t possibly be their •cause—it can’t *unaided* arouse them. [Hume goes on to explain that if one’s self alone caused either pride or humility, it would always arouse both together, and because they are contrary passions with the same object, namely oneself, they would cancel out, so that in the upshot neither would be caused. He continues:] It is impossible for a man to be both proud and humble at the same time. It often happens that a man has reasons for pride and other reasons for humility; in that case they take turns in him; or, if they do come together and collide, the stronger one annihilates the weaker and loses as much of its strength as has been used up in that process. But in the present case—i.e. the supposed case in which the *whole* cause of someone’s pride and/or humility is himself—neither of the two passions could ever be stronger than the other, because their common cause, himself, isn’t biased in favour of one rather than the other, so it must produce both in the same strength—which means that it can’t produce either of them. . . .

So we have to distinguish the •cause of these passions, i.e. the idea that arouses them, from their •object, i.e. whatever it is that they focus on when aroused. Once pride or humility has kicked in, it immediately turns our attention onto *ourselves*, regarding that as its ultimate and final object; but for either pride or humility to be aroused in the first place, another factor is needed—a factor that figures differently in one of these passions from how it figures in the other. Here’s how the course of events goes:

- (1) A certain idea  $I_1$  comes before the mind,
- (2)  $I_1$  causes or produces an associated passion P,
- (3) P turns the person’s attention to  $I_2$ , the idea of himself.

So here we have a passion P that comes between two ideas  $I_1$  and  $I_2$ ; it is caused by  $I_1$  and it causes  $I_2$ . Thus, the first idea  $I_1$  represents the cause of the passion, the second idea  $I_2$  represents the object of the passion.

Let us start with the causes of pride and humility. The most obvious and remarkable thing about them is the vast variety of things that people can be proud of or humble about. Every valuable quality of the mind—

of the imagination, judgment, memory, or disposition; wit, good sense, learning, courage, justice, integrity—all these are causes of pride, and their opposites are causes of humility. And people can be proud of or humble about physical characteristics as well as mental ones. A man may be proud of his

beauty, strength, agility, handsomeness; elegance in dancing, riding, fencing; skill in any manual business or manufacture,

·and humble about his lack of any of these·. And there’s more yet! Pride and humility look further, and take in whatever items are in *any* way connected with or related to us. Our country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens,

horses, dogs, clothes; any of these can cause either pride or humility.

Thinking about these causes, we see that in any cause of pride or humility we have to distinguish •the operative quality from •the thing that has the quality. Take the case of a man who is proud of a beautiful house that he owns or that he planned and built. The object of his pride is himself, and its cause is the beautiful house; and the cause is subdivided into •the beauty that operates on [Hume's phrase] the pride and •the house that has the beauty. Both these parts are essential, and they really are different—both •in themselves

and •in how they relate to pride and humility. No-one is ever proud of *beauty*, considered in the abstract and not considered as possessed by something that is related to him; and no-one would be proud of *a house*—even one that he had planned and built, and now owned—unless it had beauty or some other pride-inducing quality. So we need to be aware of this distinction between the two parts of any cause of pride or humility, and to handle it with careful exactness: •the two can easily be separated from one another, and •it takes the two of them in conjunction to produce the passion.

### 3: Where these objects and causes come from

Having distinguished the object of a passion from its cause, and within the cause having distinguished the operative quality from the thing that has it, the next task is to examine what makes each of our two—pride and humility—to be what it is, and associates a given case of passion to this •object and that •quality and this other subject [= 'quality- possessor']. For example, to understand fully what is going on when I am *proud of my son's energy*, we must face these questions:

- What makes this state of mine a case of *pride*?
- How does *energy* come into it?
- How does *that man* come into it?
- How do *I* come into it?

and must have answers to them all. When we have done all that we'll fully understand the origin of pride and humility.

Why do pride and humility always have *self* for their object? Well, it happens because of a certain property of the

human mind—a property that is both •natural and also •basic. No-one can doubt that this property is natural, given how constantly and steadily it operates: it is *always* self that is the object of pride and humility, and whenever either of these passions looks further, it is still with a view to oneself—without an appropriate relation to oneself no person or thing can have any influence on us. If the connection between one's pride or humility and oneself were not natural but rather something we learn, there would surely be some people who hadn't learned this properly and were (for example) proud of the number of stars in the sky or ashamed of the existence of volcanoes.

That the mental property in question is basic or primary will likewise appear evident if we consider that it is the distinguishing characteristic of these passions. Unless nature had given the mind some basic qualities, it could

never have any derived ones, because with no basic qualities it would have no basis for action and could never begin to exert itself. The basic qualities of the mind are the ones that are most inseparable from it, and can't be analysed out as upshots or special cases of other more basic qualities. And that's the case with the mental quality that determines the object of pride and humility. [In this context, 'basic' replaces Hume's 'original'. The sense of 'original' in 'original quality' is nothing like its sense in 'original impressions' (see page 147), and it should be helpful to use a different word. A second point: if the paragraph gives any *reason* for thinking not merely that the mind must have some basic qualities but that the quality Hume is writing about is one of them, it is in the first sentence; but it's not clear what reason it is.]

Even if you are satisfied that the •object towards which pride and humility are directed is natural, you may not be satisfied that the •causes of these passions are equally natural. Rather than coming from the constitution of our mind (you may think), perhaps all that vast variety of causes comes from individual preferences. This doubt is soon removed when we look at human nature, and bear in mind that the same •sorts of items have given rise to pride and humility in all nations and at all times, so that even if someone is a stranger to us we can make a pretty good guess at what will either increase or diminish his passions of these two kinds. There are no big differences among people in this respect, and what ones there are come merely from differences in temperament and bodily constitution. Can we imagine it as possible that without any change in human nature men will ever become entirely indifferent to their power, riches, beauty, or personal merit, and that their pride and vanity won't be affected by these advantages? [Despite the phrase 'pride and vanity', Hume ordinarily seems to treat 'vanity' as synonymous with 'pride'. This version will always leave 'vanity' and 'vain' untouched.]

But though the causes of pride and humility are clearly natural, it turns out that •they can't be basic—i.e. that •it's impossible that each of them is connected to pride or humility by a particular basic natural hook-up. They are far too numerous for that; and many of them are man-made things that are products partly of work, partly of personal choices and partly of good luck. Work produces houses, furniture, clothes. Personal choice determines what kinds of houses etc. men make. And good luck often contributes to all this, by revealing the effects of different mixtures and combinations of bodies—e.g. the lucky discovery of a better recipe for cement. It's absurd to think that *each* of these was foreseen and provided for by nature, and that every new man-made cause of pride or humility is connected with that passion by a basic mechanism that lay concealed in the soul until something happened that kicked it into action. The cabinet-maker who invented the plan for a writing desk and then made the first one, sold it to someone who was proud of this possession of his; are we to suppose that this pride arose from a *basic* pride-in-writing-desks mechanism in his mind? one that is different from his pride-in-handsome-chairs mechanism? We must reject that ridiculous suggestion; so we have to conclude that the causes of pride owe their efficacy to some one or more features that they all share, and similarly with all the causes of humility.

[Those two occurrences of 'mechanism' replace Hume's word 'principle', which he uses here in a now-obsolete sense—or narrow range of closely related senses. In the passage represented by the **(1)–(2)–(3)** on page 149 above, Hume speaks of the first idea  $I_1$  as a 'cause or productive principle' of the passion  $P$ ; but 'principle' is often used to stand not for an individual cause but rather for some permanent causal structure. In our present paragraph, 'mechanism' catches the meaning pretty well, as it does also in most of the dozens of other cases. Don't think of these mechanisms in terms of physical machines with wheels and gears etc. In fact, Hume has no opinion about the intrinsic nature of these items, but he's sure that they exist. If it is pretty reliably the case that when an  $F$  occurs

in someone's mind it will be followed by a G, Hume will be sure that it's because that mind has a property or quality or 'principle' connecting F with G—what this version will call a 'mechanism' connecting F with G. That expresses a conviction that the if-F-then-G link will continue to hold, but Hume's use of this mechanism concept does more work than that. Where two things like these seem to be reliably true:

- When an F occurs in someone's mind, it is followed by a G,
- When an H occurs in someone's mind, it is followed by a J,

Hume will want to know 'Does one mechanism underlie both these generalizations, or do they involve two independent mechanisms?' He does real work with this type of question, even while knowing nothing about what any such mechanism consists in.—When he uses 'principle', as we do, to stand for a kind of proposition, the word will of course be left untouched.]

•And there's a more general point that goes the same way. We find •that in the course of nature there are many effects but their causal sources are usually few and simple, and •that when a natural scientist appeals to a different quality in order to explain every different operation, that's a sign that he isn't very competent. This must apply with special force to •explanations of the operations of• the human mind,

because it is such a confined subject. It's reasonable for us to think that it *couldn't* contain such a monstrous heap of mechanisms as would be needed to arouse the passions of pride and humility if each of their causes were connected to its passion by its own separate mental mechanism.

The situation of the scientific study of man is now what the situation of the physical sciences were with regard to astronomy before the time of Copernicus. Although the ancient astronomers were aware of the maxim that nature does nothing in vain, they concocted systems of astronomy that •were so intricate that they seemed inconsistent with true science, and eventually •gave place to something simpler and natural. When someone confronted by a new phenomenon isn't ashamed to invent a new mechanism for it rather than tracing it back to mechanisms already known, when he overloads his scientific system with this sort of variety, we know for sure that none of his mechanisms is the right one and that he's merely trying to hide his ignorance behind a screen of falsehoods.

#### 4: The relations of impressions and ideas

So now we have easily established two truths—that the mechanisms through which this variety of causes arouse pride and humility are natural, and that there isn't a different mechanism for every different cause. Now let us investigate *how* we can reduce these mechanisms to a lesser number, finding among the causes something common on which their influence depends.

To do this, we'll have to think about certain properties

of human nature that have an enormous influence on every operation both of the understanding and of the passions, yet are seldom emphasized by students of human nature.

(1) One is the •association of ideas, which I have so often mentioned and explained •in Book I of this *Treatise*•. It's impossible for the mind to concentrate steadily on one idea for any considerable time, and no amount of strenuous effort will enable it to train itself to that kind of constancy



of attention. But changeable though our thoughts are, they aren't entirely without rule and method in their changes. The rule by which they proceed is to pass from one object to what is •resembling, •contiguous to, or •produced by it. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other idea that is related to it in one of these three ways will naturally follow it, entering the mind more easily through that introduction.

(2) The other property of the human mind that I want to call attention to is a similar •association of **impressions**. Impressions that resemble one another are connected together, so that when one arises the rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, until the whole circle is completed. Similarly, when our mind is elevated with joy it naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other emotional states that resemble joy. When the mind is gripped by a passion, it can't easily confine itself to that passion alone without any change or variation. Human nature is too inconstant to permit such regularity—it is *essentially* changeable. And what it's most natural for it to change *to* at any given time are affections or emotions that are . . . in line with the dominant passions that it actually has at that moment. So clearly there's an attraction or association among impressions as well as among ideas, but with one notable difference: •ideas are associated by resemblance, contiguity, and causation, whereas •impressions are associated only by resemblance.

(3) These two kinds of association very much assist and forward each other, and the transition •from one idea to another or from one impression to another• is more easily made when both items have the same object. For example, a man who is upset and angry because of some harm that someone has done to him will be apt to find a hundred

subjects of discontent, impatience, fear, and other unpleasant passions, especially if he can find these subjects in or near the person who did him the initial harm. In a case like this, the mechanisms that drive the transition from one idea to another go along with the mechanisms that drive the transition from one passion to another; and with both of them operating jointly in a single mental event, they bestow on the mind a double impulse. So the new passion must arise with that much greater violence, and the transition to it must be made that much more easy and natural.

I'd like to cite the authority of an elegant writer, •Joseph Addison•, who writes this:

As the imagination delights in everything that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still more pleased the more it finds of these perfections in the same thing, so it is capable of receiving a new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense. Thus, any continued sound, as the music of birds or a fall of waters, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place that lie before him. Thus, if there arises a fragrance of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasure of the imagination and make even the colours and lushness of the landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than when they enter the mind separately: as the different colours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of the situation.

In this phenomenon we see the association both of impressions and of ideas, as well as the mutual assistance they give each other.

### 5: The influence of these relations on pride and humility

Now we have some principles that are based on unquestionable experience. The next move is to consider how to apply them to our present topic, starting with this: we'll look over all the causes of pride and humility and ask whether the causal work is done by the •qualities of things or by the •things that have the qualities. When I examine these qualities, I immediately find that many of them agree in producing the sensation of pleasure independently of pride, and that many of them agree in producing the sensation of unpleasure independently of humility. [The phrase 'sensation of pain', which is what Hume wrote, is *now* much too narrow for what he means. And 'displeasure' won't do either, because to our ear it carries suggestions of moral disapproval and of the attitude of someone in authority. So, as the opposite of 'pleasure', this version will use 'unpleasure', an excellent English word that is exactly right for the purpose. Hume often expresses this same notion with the term 'uneasiness', probably borrowed from Locke; it will be allowed to stand.] Thus, personal beauty considered just in itself gives pleasure as well as pride; and personal ugliness causes unpleasure as well as humility. A magnificent feast delights us, and a sordid one displeases. When I find something to be true in some instances, I suppose it to be true in all, so I'll now take it for granted at present, without any further proof, that every cause of pride produces, through its special qualities, a separate pleasure, and every cause of humility in the same way produces a separate uneasiness.

Regarding •the things that *have* these qualities, it's often obvious that •they are either parts of ourselves or something nearly related to us; and it seems likely enough that this is always the case—as I shall suppose it to be. The good and bad qualities of *our* actions and manners constitute

virtue and vice, and determine *our* personal character, which has as much effect on pride and humility as anything does. Similarly, it is the beauty or ugliness of *our* person, houses, silverware, or furniture by which we are made either vain or humble. When those same qualities are possessed by things that aren't related to *us* in any way, they haven't the slightest tendency to make us proud or humble.

[In this paragraph the first six words are Hume's.] Having thus in a manner supposed two properties of the causes of pride and humility, namely that

- the qualities produce a separate unpleasure or pleasure,

—separate, that is, from their production of humility or pride—and that

- the things that *have* the qualities are related to self,

I now turn to the examination of the passions themselves, looking for something in them that corresponds to the supposed properties of their causes. From this examination we get two results.

(1) The special object of pride and humility—i.e. their always being related to *oneself*—is fixed by a basic and natural instinct; the fundamental constitution of the mind makes it absolutely impossible to have pride or humility that isn't connected with oneself, i.e. with the individual person of whose actions and sentiments each of us is intimately conscious. When we are actuated by either of these passions, our ultimate focus is on *ourselves*—the object we can't lose sight of while we are experiencing pride or humility. I don't offer to explain why this is so; I regard it as a *basic* feature of the mind.

(2) The second quality that I find in pride and humility and regard as another *basic* quality is how they feel, the special emotions that they arouse in the soul and that constitute their very being and essence. Pride is a pleasant sensation, and humility an unpleasant one; strip off the pleasure or displeasure and there's no pride or humility left. We *feel* that this is so; and there's no point in reasoning or disputing about something that is settled by feeling.

Now let us take these two established properties of the passions, namely

(1) their object (self) and (2) how they feel (pleasant or unpleasant)

and compare them to the two supposed properties of their causes, namely

(3) their relation to self, and (4) their tendency to produce pleasure or pleasure independently of the passion.

If I am right about those four items, everything falls into place—the true theory breaks in on me with irresistible convincingness. The property (3) of the cause of the passion is related to the (1) object that nature has assigned to the passion; the property (4) of the cause is related to the (2) feeling of the passion: from this double relation of ideas and impressions the passion is derived. [The rest of this paragraph expands what Hume wrote, in ways that can't easily be indicated by the 'small dots' convention.] The (3)/(1) relation involves a relation between **ideas**—for example between •the idea of a book that I wrote and the idea of •myself. The (4)/(2) relation is a relation between **impressions**—for example between •the pleasure I get from the book just as a good book and •the pleasure that is a part of my pride in the book. It is easy for idea (3) to lead to idea (1), and for impression (4) to lead to impression (2); so you can see how easy it is for the whole transition to occur from

(4) impersonal pleasure in (3) something that happens to be related to me in a certain way

to

(2) pride in something (1) because I made it.

The movement from idea to idea helps and is helped by the move from impression to impression; there's a double impact on the mind, pushing it into pride.

To understand this better, let's suppose that nature has equipped the human mind with a certain structure that is disposed produce a special impression or emotion, the one we call 'pride'. She has assigned to this emotion a certain idea, namely that of *self*, which it never fails to produce. It's not hard to entertain this; it's a kind of set-up of which we know many examples. The nerves of the nose and palate are so structured that in certain circumstances they convey certain particular sensations to the mind; the sensations of lust and hunger always produce in us the idea of the special items that are suitable to each appetite. These two features occur together in pride. The 'mental' 'organs' are structured so as to produce the passion; and when the passion has been produced it naturally produces a certain idea. None of this needs to be *proved*. It's obvious that we would never have that passion if there weren't a mental structure appropriate for it; and it's equally obvious that the passion always turns our view to ourselves, making us think of our own qualities and circumstances.

The next question is this: Does the passion arise purely from nature, or do other causes come into it as well? Unaided nature may produce •some of our passions and sensations, e.g. hunger; but it's certain that •pride needs the help of some external object, and that the organs that produce pride aren't kicked into action, as the heart and arteries are, by a basic internal movement. 'Here are three reasons for saying this.'  
(a) Daily experience convinces us that pride requires certain

causes to arouse it, and fades away unless it is supported by some excellence in the character, physical accomplishments, clothes, possessions or fortune of the person whose pride is in question. (b) It's obvious that if pride arose purely from nature it would be perpetual, because its object is always the same, and there's no disposition of body that is special to pride, as there is to thirst and hunger. (c) If pride arose purely from nature, the same would be true of humility; and in that case anyone who is ever humble must be perpetually humble, except that being perpetually proud and perpetually humble he would never be either! Safe conclusion: pride must have a cause as well as an object, and neither can have any influence without the other.

Our only remaining question, then, is this: What is the cause of pride? What makes pride kick in by starting up the organs that are naturally fitted to produce it? [This next bit uses the 1–2–3–4 numbering system that was used a page back.] When I look to my own experience for an answer, I immediately find a hundred different causes of pride; and on examining them I get confirmation for my initial suspicion that each cause of pride *x* has these two features. (4) *x* is a sort of item that is generally apt to produce an impression that is allied to pride—specifically, that is *like* pride. (3) *x* has to do with something that is allied to the object of this particular instance of pride. Consider for example my pride in my brother's physical skills. (4) Physical skill generally gives pleasure, which resembles pride in being enjoyable; and (3) this instance of physical skill is possessed by someone 'allied' to me, namely my brother. Stated generally:

**P:** Anything that (4) gives a pleasant sensation and (3) is related to oneself arouses the passion of pride, which (2) is also agreeable and (1) has oneself for its object.

[Hume remarks that this account of the causes of pride relies on his extremely general thesis—one that he applies far beyond the territory of pride—that impressions and ideas are apt to be caused by other impressions and ideas that are suitably *related* to them, especially by the relation of resemblance. He says also that it doesn't take much to start up a causal chain that ends in pride, because the relevant 'organs' are] naturally disposed to produce that affection, and so require only a first impulse or beginning for their action.

This account of the causes of pride holds equally for the causes of humility. The sensation of humility is uneasy, as that of pride is agreeable; so the causal story reverses the (4)/(2) quality-of-sensation part of the pride story while keeping the (3)/(1) relation-to-oneseff part the same. In short:

**H:** Anything that (4) gives an unpleasant sensation and (3) is related to oneself arouses the passion of humility, which (2) is also unpleasant and (1) has oneself for its object.

[Hume says that in going from P to H what we are doing is to 'change the relation of impressions without making any change in the relation of ideas'. This is right about the ideas, wrong about the impressions, i.e. the sensations. In shifting from P to H we don't 'change the relation of impressions; it's the relation of *similarity* in both; what we change are the impressions that are thus related.] Accordingly, we find that a beautiful house owned by me makes me proud; and if through some accident it becomes ugly while still being mine, that same house makes me humble. When beautiful, the house gave pleasure, which corresponds to pride; and when it became ugly it caused displeasure, which is related to humility. It is easy to move from pride to humility or from humility to pride, because the double relation between the ideas and impressions is there in both cases.

[In this next paragraph Hume remarks that ‘nature has bestowed a kind of attraction on certain impressions and ideas’, thus likening the phenomenon of the association of ideas and impressions with something like *magnetism*. Apart from that, the paragraph repeats the material of the preceding one, emphasizing how natural and inevitable pride and humility are. Take the case of my pride in my beautiful house. The cause of this involves

(4) a pleasure-giving quality (beauty) possessed by (3) something related to me;

and the resultant pride is

(2) a pleasant-feeling sensation associated with (1) my idea of myself.

Hume concludes:] no wonder the whole cause, consisting of a quality and of a subject, so unavoidably gives rise to the passion.

[The last paragraph of this compares Hume’s theory of pride with his theory of causal judgments. He says that there’s ‘a great analogy’ between the two.]

## 6: Qualifications to this system

Before I move on to examine the causes of pride and humility in detail, I should state some qualifications—five of them—to the general thesis that all agreeable (disagreeable) items that are related to ourselves by an association of ideas and of impressions produce pride (humility). These qualifications come from the very nature of the subject.

(1) When an agreeable item acquires a relation to oneself, the first passion that appears is joy; and it takes less to produce joy than to produce pride. I feel joy on being present at a feast, where my senses are regaled with delicacies of every kind; but it’s only the master of the feast who has not just •joy but also the additional passion of •self- applause and vanity. It’s true that men sometimes boast of a great entertainment at which they have only been present, using *that* relation as a basis for converting their pleasure into pride: but there’s no denying that *in general* joy arises from a more inconsiderable relation than vanity [Hume’s word], and

that many things that are not related to us closely enough to produce pride can still give us pleasure. . . .

So my general thesis that *everything that is related to us and produces pleasure or unpleasure also produces pride or humility* has to be qualified: for pride or humility to occur, the relation has to be a close one, closer than is required for joy.

(2) The second qualification says that for an item to make a person proud or humble it must be •closely related to that person and •*not closely related to many other people*. It’s a quality observable in human nature that anything that comes before us often, so that we get used to it, loses its value in our eyes and before long is treated as negligible. Also, we judge things more by comparison than by their real intrinsic merit; and we’re apt to overlook what is essentially good in a thing if we can’t use some contrast to enhance its value. These •qualities of the mind—which I’ll try to explain

later—have an effect on joy as well as pride. It is noteworthy that goods that are common to all mankind, and have become familiar to us by custom, give us little satisfaction—sometimes much less than we get from inferior things that we value highly because they are rare and unusual. But •the qualities in question have a greater effect on vanity than on joy. We rejoice in many goods that don't give us pride because they are so widespread. When health returns after a long illness, we are very conscious of our •satisfaction, but we don't regard our health as a subject of •vanity because it is shared with so many others.

Why is pride in this way so much harder to trigger than joy? I think it's for the following reason. For me to be proud, my mind has to fix on *two* items,

- (i) the cause, i.e. the item that produces pleasure; and
- (ii) myself, the real object of the passion.

But for me to have joy ·or pleasure·, all my mind needs to take in is (i). Admittedly, this cause of my joy must have *some* relation to myself, but that's needed only to make it agreeable to me; it doesn't make *myself* the object of this joy. So pride involves focussing on two items, and if neither of them is sufficiently special this must weaken pride more than joy is weakened by the insufficiency of the one item that it involves. ·He was proud of his house's wonderful copper roof; then he learned that (i) it wasn't copper but treated zinc, and that in any case (ii) all the neighbouring houses also had such roofs. This was a fatal *double* blow to his pride·.

(3) The third qualification is this: the pleasant or unpleasant item will cause pride or humility only if it is very noticeable and obvious, not only to ourselves but also to others. This detail, like those in (1) and (2), has an effect on joy as well as on pride: our ·joyful· sense of our own happiness is intensified when we appear to others to be happy. The same thing applies even more strongly to our

·proud· sense of being virtuous or beautiful. I'll try to explain later why this is so.

(4) [The fourth qualification has to do with short-lived potential causes of pride. Something x that crops up in my life in a 'casual and inconstant' manner won't give me much joy, and will give me even less pride. Why *less*? Because in pride I'm thinking well of *myself* because of my relation to x; and if x is enormously less durable than I am, this seems ridiculous. With joy the situation is different, because in joy the whole focus is on x and not on myself.]

(5) The fifth point, which is really an enlargement of my account rather than a limiting qualification of it, is this: General rules have a great influence on pride and humility, as well as on all the other passions. For example, our notion of a certain social rank is made to fit the power or riches that go with it, and we don't change this notion because of any peculiarities of health or temperament that may deprive someone in that rank of any enjoyment of his possessions. [Hume uses the word 'notion' twice in that sentence, but his real topic is the emotions or passions that go with the notion; the next two sentences make that clear.] This can be explained in the same way as the influence of general rules on the understanding. Custom easily leads us to go too far in our passions as well as in our reasonings.

I might as well point out here that *all* the mechanisms that I'll be explaining in the course of this Treatise are greatly aided by the influence of general rules and maxims on the passions. Suppose that a full-grown person with a nature the same as yours were suddenly launched into our world: isn't it obvious that he would be at a loss over everything, and would have to *work* at learning what degree of love or hatred, pride or humility, or any other passion he ought to attribute to different things? The passions are often varied by very minor mechanisms that aren't always

perfectly regular in their operation; but when custom and practice have •brought all these mechanisms to light and •settled the correct value of everything, this is bound to contribute to the easy production of the passions, and to guide us—through general established maxims—regarding how strongly we ought to prefer one object to another. . . .

A final thought relating to these five qualifications: The people who are proudest and are generally regarded as having most reason for their pride aren't always the happiest

. . . . though my account might lead you to think otherwise. An evil may be real although **(1)** its cause has no relation to me; it may be real without **(2)** being special to me; it may be real without **(3)** showing itself to others; it may be real without **(4)** being constant; and it may be real without **(5)** falling under general rules. Such evils as these won't fail to make us miserable, but they have little tendency to diminish pride. The most real and solid evils in life may all be found to be of this nature.

## 7: Vice and virtue

Taking these qualifications along with us, let us examine the causes of pride and humility to see whether in every case we can discover the double relations by which they operate on the passions. If we find that

every cause of pride or humility in a given person **(1)** is related to that person and **(2)** produces pleasure or uneasiness independently of the pride or humility,

there'll be no room left for doubt about the present system [= 'the account I have given of the causes of pride and humility']. I shall mainly work at proving **(2)**, because **(1)** is in a way self-evident.

I'll begin with vice and virtue, which are the most obvious causes of pride and humility. In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in whether our notions of vice and virtue are •based on natural and basic mechanisms •of the mind• or •arise from self-interest and upbringing; but this issue is irrelevant to my present topic. I'll deal with it in Book III of this Treatise. In the meantime I'll try to show that

my system holds good on either of these hypotheses—which will be a strong proof of its solidity!

Suppose that morality has no foundation in nature, and that •our judgments about• vice and virtue are based on our own self-interest or are products of indoctrination in our youth; it's still beyond question that vice and virtue produce in us a real unpleasure and pleasure; and we see this being strenuously asserted by those who defend that hypothesis about the basis of morality. They say this:

Every passion, habit, or turn of character that tends to work for our advantage or against it gives us delight or uneasiness; and *that* is where approval and disapproval come from. We easily profit from the generosity of others, but always risk losing because of their avarice; courage defends us, but cowardice leaves us open to every attack; justice is the support of society, but unchecked injustice would quickly lead

to its ruin; humility exalts us, but pride mortifies us. For these reasons the former qualities are regarded as virtues, and the latter regarded as vices.

This line of thought takes it for granted that delight or uneasiness—pleasure or displeasure—accompanies every kind of merit or demerit; and that is all I need for my purposes.

But I go further, and remark that **(1)** this moral hypothesis and **(2)** my present system are not merely compatible but one implies the other—if **(1)** is true, that provides an absolute and undefeatable proof of **(2)**. It goes as follows. If all **morality** is based on the displeasure or pleasure arising from the prospect of any loss or gain that may result from the characters of those whose moral status is in question, all the **effects of morality** must come from that same displeasure or pleasure—including among those effects the passions of pride and humility. The very essence of virtue, according to this hypothesis, is to produce pleasure, and that of vice to give displeasure. For virtue or vice to make someone proud or humble it must be part of that person's character, i.e. must be virtue or vice that he has. What further proof can we want for the double relation of impressions and ideas? [Slowing that down a bit: When I am proud of my own virtue, I move from •the impression that is the pleasure associated with virtue to •the impression that is the agreeable feeling of pride; and from the idea of the virtue as *mine* to the idea of *me*. So: a double relation.]

An equally conclusive argument for my account of pride and humility can be derived from the thesis that morality is something real, essential, and grounded in nature, i.e. the opposite of the thesis I have just been exploring. The most probable theory anyone has offered to explain how vice differs from virtue, and what the origin is of moral rights and obligations, is this:

Some characters and passions produce displeasure in us just from our observing or thinking about them; others produce pleasure in the same way; and all this happens because of a basic fact about how we are naturally constructed. The displeasure and pleasure are not only inseparable from vice and virtue but constitute their very nature and essence. To approve of a character is to feel a basic pleasure when it appears. To disapprove of it is to be aware of an uneasiness.

•According to this view, displeasure and pleasure are the primary causes of vice and virtue, which implies that they must also be the causes of all the effects of vice and virtue, including the pride and humility that inevitably accompany vice and virtue.

Even if that hypothesis in moral philosophy is false, it's still obvious that displeasure and pleasure are •inseparable from vice and virtue even they aren't •causes of them. Just seeing a generous and noble character gives us satisfaction; such a character never fails to charm and delight us when we encounter it, even if it's only in a poem or fable. And on the other side, cruelty and treachery displease us by their very nature; and we can't ever be reconciled to these qualities, either in ourselves or others. Thus one theory of morality is an undeniable proof of my system, and the other is at least compatible with it.

But the qualities of the mind that are commonly taken to be parts of moral duty aren't the only causes of pride and humility, which also arise from any other quality that has a connection with pleasure and displeasure. Nothing flatters our vanity more than a talent for pleasing others by our wit, good-humour, or any other accomplishment; and nothing gives us a more painful sense of humiliation than a failure of any attempt to please in such a way. No-one has ever been



able to tell what *wit* is, i.e. to show what is going on when we affirm 'It shows wit' of one system of thought and deny it of another. Our only basis for making this distinction is our *taste*—there's no other standard for us to go by. Well, then, what *is* this 'taste', which in a way brings true wit and false wit into existence, and without which no thought can be entitled to either label? It's clearly nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of uneasiness or unpleasure from false wit, without our being able to tell the reasons for that pleasure or uneasiness. So the very essence of true and false wit is the power to give •these opposite sensations, and that's why it is that true and false wit are causes of the pride or humility that arises from •them.

[In the next sentence, and a few other places, 'schools' are university philosophy departments that are heavily influenced by Roman Catholicism and the philosophy of Aristotle.] If you have been accustomed to the style of the schools and the pulpit, and have never considered human nature in any light except the one that

*they* shine on it, you may be surprised to hear me talk of virtue as arousing pride, which they look on as a vice; and of vice as producing humility, which they have been taught to consider as a virtue. I don't want to argue with them about words, so I'll just say this: by 'pride' I mean the agreeable impression that arises in someone's mind when the view of his virtue, beauty, riches, or power makes him satisfied with himself, and that by 'humility' I mean the opposite impression. In these senses of the terms, it's obvious that pride isn't always morally wrong and humility isn't always virtuous. The most rigid morality allows us to get pleasure from reflecting on a generous action that we have performed; and no morality judges it to be a virtue to feel any useless remorse when we think about our past villainy and baseness. So let us examine these impressions considered in themselves, investigating their mental and physical causes, without troubling ourselves just now about any merit or blame that may come with them.

## 8: Beauty and ugliness

Whether we regard the body as a part of ourselves, or agree with the philosophers who regard it as something external to us, there's no denying that it is connected with us closely enough to form one of the double relations that I have said are necessary to the causes of pride and humility. [My pride in my own virtue involves a relation between the idea of *mine* and the idea of *me*. My pride in my own beauty—really my body's beauty—involves a relation between the idea of *my body's* and the idea of *me*. Hume is saying that that's a close enough relation to satisfy

the demands of his theory of pride.] To complete the application of my theory to pride in one's own beauty, all we need now is to find a suitable relation of impressions to go with that relation of ideas. Well, beauty gives us a special delight and satisfaction—and ugliness a special unpleasure—no matter what kind of beauty or ugliness it is, and no matter what kind of thing it is that *has* it, e.g. whether the thing is animate or inanimate. So that completes my theory's account of pride (humility) about one's own beauty (ugliness). We have an

appropriate relation between two ideas (my body's, me) and an appropriate relation between two impressions (pleasure, pride; or unpleasure, humility).

This effect of personal and bodily qualities supports my account of pride and humility not only •by showing that the account fits what happens when someone is made proud or humble by his own beauty or ugliness, but also •in a stronger and even more convincing way. Think about all the hypotheses that philosophers and ordinary folk have come up with to explain the difference between beauty and ugliness: they *all* come down to the thesis that

for something to be beautiful is for it to be put together in such a way as to give pleasure and satisfaction to the soul, whether by the basic constitution of our nature or by custom or by caprice.

That's the distinguishing character of beauty, and constitutes the whole difference between it and ugliness, whose natural tendency is to produce uneasiness. Thus, pleasure and unpleasure don't just *come with* beauty and ugliness—they constitute their very *essence*. You'll have no doubt about this if you give thought to the fact that much of the beauty that we admire in animals and in other objects comes from the idea of convenience and utility. The shape that produces strength is beautiful in one animal, and the shape that is a sign of agility is beautiful in another. For a palace to be beautiful it has to be not merely •shaped and coloured in certain ways but also •planned so as to be convenient to live in. Similarly, the rules of architecture require that a pillar be narrower at the top than at the base, because that shape gives us the idea of security, which is pleasant; whereas the contrary form—•narrower at the base than at the top—gives us a sense of danger, which is uneasy. From countless instances of this kind we can conclude that beauty is just a form that

produces pleasure, as ugliness is a structure of parts that conveys unpleasure; and we get further confirmation of this from the fact that beauty, like wit, can't be defined, but is discerned only by a taste or sensation. (That is, we can't define 'beautiful' by listing the intrinsic qualities that are necessary and sufficient for a thing to be beautiful. The question 'Is x beautiful?' doesn't inquire into x's •intrinsic qualities; all it asks is whether x has a certain •relational property, namely making us feel a certain way.) And since the power of producing pleasure and unpleasure constitute the essence of beauty and ugliness, the only effects there can be of beauty and ugliness must be effects of this pleasure and unpleasure; and of all their effects the most common and remarkable are pride and humility.

This argument is conclusive, I think; but let's suppose that its conclusion is false, and see where that leads us. We're supposing now that the power to produce pleasure and unpleasure is not *the essence of* beauty and ugliness; but we can't avoid the fact that pleasure and unpleasure *always accompany* beauty and ugliness. Now, here are arguments for two conclusions that add up to my account of pride and humility. **(1)** Think about •natural beauty and •moral beauty: each is a source of pride, but all they have in common is their power to produce pleasure. Now, a common effect always points to a common cause; so the real and influencing cause of the pride that comes from both kinds of beauty must be the pleasure that each gives. **(2)** Think about •the beauty of your body and •the beauty of other objects that aren't related to you in any special way. One gives you pride while the others don't—you haven't, for example, the slightest tinge of *pride* in the beauty of the Parthenon. The only way in which your body differs from *all* those other items is that it is closely related to you and they aren't. So this difference in relation-to-you must be the cause of all their

other differences, including the fact that one arouses pride while the others don't. Put these two conclusions together and they amount to my account of pride and humility: pride **(1)** comes from pleasure that is **(2)** given by something that is related to oneself; and the same account, except for switching from 'pleasure' to 'unpleasure', holds for humility. . . . This is good confirmation of my account, though I'm not yet at the end of my arguments for it.

[Hume now has two short paragraphs about one's pride in other 'bodily accomplishments', such as strength and agility. This whole range of facts, he rightly says, fit his account.]

[In this next paragraph as originally written, Hume talked about *surprise*—a quality of the surprised person, not of the surprising object. To make the paragraph fit better with his general line of thought, this version talks instead about *surprisingness*—a relational property of the surprising object, not an intrinsic property of it.] You may think or suspect that *beauty* is something real, 'an intrinsic quality of the beautiful thing' and not a mere power to produce pleasure; but you have to allow that *surprisingness* is relational—a thing's being surprising isn't an intrinsic quality of it, but merely its power to create a pleasure arising from novelty. Pride comes into the picture through a natural transition from that pleasure; and it arises *so* naturally that we feel pride in *everything* in us or belonging to us that produces surprise. We are proud of the surprising adventures we have had, the escapes we have made, and dangers we have been exposed to. That's the source of the commonplace kind of lying in which someone, without being prodded by self-interest and purely out of vanity, heaps up a number of extraordinary events that are either fictions of his brain or true stories about someone else. . . .

This phenomenon involves two empirical findings ['experiments'] that we should look at in the light of the known rules by which we judge cause and effect in anatomy, physics,

and other sciences. When we do, we'll find that we have here an undeniable argument for 'my thesis about' the influence of the double relations that I have been discussing. **(1)** We find that an object produces pride merely through the interposition of pleasure, because the quality by which it produces pride is actually just the power of producing pleasure. **(2)** We find that the pleasure causes the pride by a transition along related ideas; because when we cut off that relation the pride is immediately destroyed. We are proud of any surprising adventures in which *we* have been engaged; other people's adventures may give us pleasure, but they won't make us proud because they aren't related in the right way to ourselves. What further proof of my theory could you want?

Possible objection: 'Though nothing is more agreeable than health, and nothing more unpleasant than sickness, people are not usually proud of their health or humiliated by their illness.' It's not hard to account for this 'consistently with my system', if we bear in mind the second and fourth qualifications that I made to the system. I noted that **(2)** no item ever produces pride or humility in someone unless something about it is special to that person; and **(4)** that for something to cause pride or humility in a person *x* it must be fairly constant and must last for a length of time that holds some proportion to [Hume's phrase] the duration of *x* who is its object. Well, **(4)** health and sickness come and go **(2)** with all men, and neither is in any way the special property of one individual . . . . When an illness of any kind is so rooted in someone's constitution that he is beyond hoping for recovery, from that moment the illness does become a cause of humility. [Hume writes 'an object of humility', but this must have been a slip; look back at page 149 for his distinction between 'cause' and 'object' where pride and humility are concerned.] This is evident in old men, who are disgusted by the thought of their age

and infirmities. They try for as long as they can to conceal their blindness and deafness, their rheums and gouts, and admitting that they have such infirmities is something they do reluctantly and unhappily. Young men aren't ashamed of every headache or cold they fall into, but the general thought that we are at every moment of our lives vulnerable to such infirmities is more apt than anything else to make us

take a low view of our nature. This shows well enough that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility, though we tend to filter them out from our thoughts about our merit and character because of our practice of estimating things in comparative terms rather than in terms of their intrinsic worth and value. . . .

### 9: External advantages and disadvantages

Although a person's pride and humility have his own qualities—the qualities of his mind and body—as their natural and more immediate causes, we find by experience that these passions can also have many other causes, and that the primary cause is somewhat obscured and lost among all the other causes that lie outside the person himself. We base our vanity on •houses, gardens, furniture, as well as on personal merit and accomplishments; and •these external advantages, distant though they are from the person himself, considerably influence his pride of which the ultimate object is himself. This happens when external things come to have some special relation to him, and are associated or connected with him. A beautiful fish in the ocean, an animal in a desert, and indeed anything that he doesn't own and isn't in any other way related to, hasn't the slightest influence on his vanity—however extraordinary and wonderful it may be. To touch his pride it must be somehow associated with *him*. His •idea of it must in some way hang on his •idea of himself, and the transition from •one idea to •the other must be easy and natural.

But here's a remarkable fact: although the relation of •resemblance conveys the mind from one idea to another in the same way that •contiguity and •causation do, it is seldom a basis for either pride or humility. [The gist of the rest of the paragraph is this: Sometimes resemblance may seem to enter into the causing of pride, but really it doesn't. I resemble you in respect of some of the fine parts of your character, and my pride may rest on this fact; but it's basically a fact about •my character, not about •how I resemble you.]

Sometimes a man *x* will be vain about resembling a great man *y* in facial features or other tiny details that don't contribute in the least to his reputation; but this isn't a widespread phenomenon, and it's not an important part of the story of pride. Here is my explanation of *why* it isn't. *x* wouldn't be vain about a trivial resemblance to *y* unless he admired him for some very shining qualities; and these qualities are the real causes of *x*'s vanity—causing it by their relation to him. Well then, *how* are they related to him?

- (1) the admired person y's good qualities are parts of him, and this connects them with
- (2) y's trivial qualities, which are also supposed to be parts of him.
- (3) x's trivial qualities, which are connected with the
- (4) the person x as a whole.

This creates a chain of several links between x and the shining qualities of the person y whom he resembles. But the chain doesn't convey much force, for two reasons: •there are so many links in it; and •when x's mind passes from (1) to (2) the contrast between them will make him aware of how trivial (2) are, which may even make him a little ashamed of the comparison and resemblance.

Thus, •contiguity and •causation are the only two relations that are needed for the causation of pride and humility—relations, that is, between the cause of the passion and its object, namely the person whose pride or humility it is. And what these relations are—so far as our present topic is concerned—is nothing but qualities by which the imagination is carried from one idea to another. In the light of that, let us consider what effect these relations can possibly have on the mind, and how they become so essential for the production of the passions. The general association-of-ideas mechanism can't be the whole story, because:

It is obvious that •the association of ideas operates so quietly and imperceptibly that we are hardly aware of it, and know about it more from its effects than from any immediate feeling or perception. •It produces no emotion, gives rise to no new impression of any kind, but only modifies ideas that the mind used to have and could recall when there was a need for them.

So it's obvious that when the mind feels either pride or

humility when it thinks about some related item, there is, along with the thoughts that can be explained in terms of the association of ideas, an emotion or original impression [Hume's phrase] that is produced by some *other* mechanism. The question then arises:

Are we dealing here with just the passion of pride itself, or is there an involvement of some other impression that is related to pride?

It won't take us long to answer this in favour of the second alternative. There are many reasons for this, but I'll focus on just one. [The next part of this paragraph is dense and difficult. Here is the gist of it, not in Hume's words: We must consider two possible mechanisms for producing pride:

- (1) The cause of pride or humility produces that passion immediately, without causing any other emotion along the way.
- (2) The cause of pride or humility produces that passion indirectly, by causing some other emotion E that in its turn causes the pride or humility.

If (1) were right, there would be no work to be done by the relation of ideas. But our experience shows us that the relation of ideas *does* figure in the causation of pride and humility; so of the two possible mechanisms (2) must be the actual one. Hume continues:] It's easy to see how the relation of ideas *could* play a part in this: it could facilitate the transition from E to pride. . . . I go further: I say that this is the only conceivable way for the relation of ideas to help in the production of pride or humility. An easy transition of ideas can't in itself cause any emotion; the only way it can have any role in the production of any passion is by helping the transition from one impression (E) to a related impression (pride or humility). And this is confirmed by another point: How much pride a given item x causes in a person y depends not only on •how glowing x's pride-making qualities are

but also on •how closely x is related to y. That is a clear argument for *the transition of affections along the relation of ideas*, because every change in the relation produces a corresponding change in the passion. [The italicised phrase is verbatim from Hume]. . . .

You'll see this even better if you look at some examples. Men are vain of the beauty of their country, of their county, of their parish. Here the idea of beauty plainly produces a pleasure, which is related to pride—this being a similarity between two impressions. The object or cause of this pleasure is related to self, i.e. to the object of pride—this being a relation between two ideas. It's this double relation of impressions and ideas that enables a transition to be made from the one impression to the other, from pleasure to pride.

Men are also vain about temperateness of the climate in which they were born; the fertility of their native soil, and the goodness of the wines, fruits, and other foods produced by it; the softness or the force of their language; . . . and so on. These items plainly involve the pleasures of the senses, and are basically considered as agreeable to touch, taste or hear. How could they possibly become objects of *pride* except through the relation-of-ideas transition that I have been discussing? . . . .

Since we can be vain about a country, a climate, or any inanimate item that has some relation to us, it's no wonder that we are vain about the qualities of people who are our relatives or friends. If a quality is one that I would be proud of if I had it, then I shall be proud—though less so—if (say) my brother turns out to have it. Proud people take care to display the beauty, skill, merit, trustworthiness, and honours of their relatives, these being some of the most considerable sources of their own vanity.

Just as we are proud of riches in ourselves, so—to satisfy our vanity—we want everyone connected with us to be rich also, and are ashamed of any of our friends and relations who are poor. So we get the poor as far from us as possible on the family tree, and . . . . claim to be of a good family, and to be descended from a long succession of rich and honourable ancestors.

I have often noticed that **(1)** people who boast about how old their families are are glad when they can add to this that their ancestors for many generations have continuously owned the same portion of land, and that their family has never changed its possessions or moved into any other county or province. I have also noticed that **(2)** they are even more vain when they can boast that these possessions have been passed down the male line, with none of the honours and fortune going through any female. I'll try to explain these facts through my account of pride.

Obviously, when someone boasts of the antiquity of his family he isn't boasting merely about how many ancestors he has and how far back they go; his vanity rests on their riches and good name, which are supposed to reflect some glory onto him because of his relation to them. He first considers these items, gets an agreeable feeling from them, and then—returning to himself through the relation of parent and child—is filled with pride through the double relation of impressions and ideas. Because the passion thus depends on these relations, whatever strengthens (weakens) any of them must also increase (diminish) the passion. Now, **(1)** the relation of ideas arising from kinship is certainly strengthened if it is accompanied by the *identity* of the family's possessions down through the years; if they have through all that time owned the *very same* estate, that makes it even easier for today's heirs and descendants to make mental connections between themselves and their ancestors;

and this increases their pride and vanity.

Similarly with the transmission of the honours and fortune through a succession of males without their passing through any female. It is a quality of human nature (I'll discuss it in ii.2) that the imagination naturally turns to whatever is important and considerable, at the expense of attention to lesser things that are also available to be thought about. Now, in the society of marriage the male sex has the advantage above the female [those are Hume's exact words], which is why the husband first engages our attention; and whether we're thinking about him directly or only through his relation with other items that we're thinking about, it is easier for our thought to reach him than to reach his wife, and there's more satisfaction in thinking about him than in thinking

about her. It's easy to see that this must strengthen a child's relation to its father and weaken its relation to its mother. Why? Because:

A relation between x and y is nothing but a propensity to pass from the idea of x to the idea of y, and whatever strengthens the propensity strengthens the relation. From the idea of the children we are more prone to pass to the idea of the father than to the idea of the mother; so we should regard their relation to their father as closer and more considerable than their relation to their mother.

That's why children usually have their father's name, and are rated as high-born or low-born on the basis of *his* family. . . .

## 10: Property and riches

But the relation that is rated as the closest—the one that does more than any other to make people proud—is *ownership*. I can't fully explain this relation until I come to discuss justice and the other moral virtues ·in Book III·. For present purposes it will suffice to define

•person x *owns* object y—or y is a *property* of x

as meaning

•x is related to y in such a way that the laws of justice and moral equity allow x the free use and possession of y, and don't allow this to anyone else.

So if justice is a virtue that has a natural and basic influence on the human mind, ownership can be regarded as a particular sort of causation, the effect being **(1)** the owner's

liberty to do as he likes with y, or **(2)** the advantages he gets from y. [Put a little differently: If x owns y according to Hume's definition of what this means, then *by the laws of justice* x is free to do as he likes with y, and no-one else is; so if the laws of justice are a kind of causal law governing the basic operations of the human mind, then x's ownership of y **(1)** causes] a state of affairs in which no-one interferes with x's use of y, and **(2)** causes all the benefits x gets from using y. And the same holds if justice is, as some philosophers think, an artificial and not a natural virtue. For in that case honour and custom and civil laws take the place of natural conscience, and produce some of the same effects. Anyway, this much is certain: the mention of the •property naturally carries our thought to the •owner, and vice versa;

this shows a perfect relatedness of those two ideas, and that's all I need for my present purpose. [Hume proceeds to argue like this: given that any idea of *something I own* is related to my idea of *myself*, and that the *pleasure* I take in any of my nice possessions is related to the *pleasure* involved in being proud of something, it follows by Hume's account of pride that any person will be proud of any good possessions that he has. Whether this consequence is true, Hume says,] we may soon satisfy ourselves by the most cursory view of human life.

Everything a vain man owns is the best to be found anywhere! His houses, coaches, furniture, clothes, horses, hounds, excel all others—he thinks. And it's easy to see that the slightest advantage in any of these gives him a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you'll believe him, has a finer flavor than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table more orderly; his servants more expert; the air in which he lives more healthful; the soil he cultivates more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier, and to greater perfection; this object is remarkable for its novelty; this other for its antiquity; here's one that is the workmanship of a famous artist; there's another that used to belong to such-and-such a prince or great man. In short, any object that is—or is related to something that is—useful, beautiful, or surprising gives rise to the passion of pride through being owned. The only thing these objects have in common is that they give pleasure. That's their only common quality, so it must be what produces the passion that is their common effect. Every new example ·of this phenomenon· is further confirmation ·of my system·, and countless instances are available; so I venture to assert that there has hardly ever been a system so fully proved by experience as the one I have put forward here.

Given that, ·as my system asserts·,

**owning** something that gives pleasure either by its utility, its beauty, or its novelty produces ·not only pleasure but· also pride, through a double relation of impressions and ideas,

it's not surprising that **the power of coming to own** the thing should have the same effect. That's the right way to look at riches—they are the power to come to own things that please, which is the only reason they have any influence on the passions. In many contexts paper will be considered as riches, because it can confer the power of acquiring money; and what makes money count as riches is not its qualities of solidity, weight, and fusibility, but only its relation to the pleasures and conveniences of life. This is obvious, and we can take it for granted; and then from it we can get one of my strongest arguments to prove the influence of the •double relations on pride and humility.

I have remarked that the distinction we sometimes make between •a power and •the exercise of it is entirely frivolous, and that no-one and nothing should be credited with •having an ability unless he or it •puts the ability into action [I.iii.14, page 81]. This is indeed strictly true as a matter of sound scientific thinking, but it certainly isn't true of how our passions work, because many things work on *them* through the idea and supposition of •power, independently of •its actual exercise. We are pleased when we acquire an ability to procure pleasure, and are displeased when someone else acquires a power of giving unpleasure. Experience shows that this is the case; but understanding why it's the case is another matter, and I now embark on that explanation.

According to the scholastic doctrine of free will, a person who doesn't do x because he has strong motives for not doing it may nevertheless have the power to do x, this being an aspect of his free will. That *could* lead people to distinguish



power from its exercise; but in fact it has very little to do with that distinction as made by ordinary folk, whose everyday ways of thinking are not much influenced by this scholastic doctrine. According to common notions, a man who wants to do *x* and is blocked from doing it by very considerable motives going the other way *doesn't* have the power to do *x*. **(1)** When I see my enemy pass me in the streets with a sword by his side, while I am unarmed, I don't think I have fallen into his power, because I know that his fear of the law is as strong a restraint as any iron one, and that I'm as safe as if he were chained or imprisoned. But **(2)** when someone gets an authority over me that he can exercise as he pleases, with no external obstacle and no fear of punishment for anything he does to me, *then* I attribute a full power to him, and consider myself as his subject or underling.

According to the system presented in Book I, the only *known* difference between these two cases is this:

In **(1)** we conclude, from past experience that the person never will perform the action in question, whereas in **(2)** he possibly or probably [Hume's phrase] will perform it.

Because the will of man is often fluctuating and inconstant (nothing more so!), we can't be absolutely sure about someone's future actions, ·in the manner of **(1)**·, unless he has *strong* motives. When we see someone who is free from strong motives, we take it be possible that he'll do *x* and possible that he won't; we may hold that motives and causes will settle how he acts, but that ·conviction· doesn't remove •the uncertainty of our judgment concerning these causes, or •the influence of that uncertainty on the passions. ·So we do after all have a connection between power and the exercise of it·. We ascribe a power of doing *x* to anyone who has no very powerful motive to refrain from *x*, and we deny that the power is possessed by anyone who does have such a motive;

from which we can infer that power *is* always related to its actual or probable exercise; we regard a person as having an ability ·or power· when we find from past experience that he probably will—or at least possibly may—exercise it. Add to this •the fact that our passions always look to the real existence of objects, and •the fact that our beliefs about what is ·or will be· real always come from past instances, and out comes •the conclusion that the power to do *x* consists in the possibility or probability of doing *x*, as discovered by experience of how the world goes.

If some other person and I are inter-related in such a way that he has no very powerful motive to deter him from harming me, so that it's uncertain whether he will harm me or not, I am bound to be uneasy in this situation and can't consider the possibility or probability of that harm without feeling a concern. The passions are affected not only by •certainty about what is going to happen but also—though not so strongly—by •the ·thought of the· possibility that something is going to happen. Even if the harm never comes, and I eventually learn that strictly speaking the person didn't have the power to harm me because he *didn't* harm me, my earlier uneasiness about this is real. And all this applies equally to agreeable passions in relation to the belief that someone can or probably will bring me some benefit.

Another point: My satisfaction at the thought of a possibly coming good is greater when it's in my own power to take the good or leave it, with no hindrance from any external obstacle and no very strong motive ·going the other way. It's easy to see why·. All men want pleasure, and by far their best chance of getting it comes when there's no external obstacle to its being produced and no perceived danger in going after it. In such a case, a man's imagination easily anticipates the satisfaction, giving him the same joy as if he were convinced that it actually exists right now.

But this doesn't fully explain the satisfaction that comes with riches. A miser gets delight from his money—i.e. from the power it gives him of getting all the pleasures and conveniences of life—though he knows he has possessed his wealth for forty years without ever using it, so that he has no reason to think that the real existence of these pleasures is any closer than it would be if he suddenly lost everything. But though he can't **(1)** *rationaly infer* that he is near to getting pleasure from the use of his riches, he certainly **(2)** *imagines* it to come closer when all external obstacles are removed and he isn't deterred from taking it by any motive of self-interest or fear. For a fuller treatment of this matter, see my account of the will in iii.2, where I shall explain the false sensation of liberty that makes us imagine that we can do anything that isn't very dangerous or destructive. Whenever •someone else has no strong reason of self-interest to forgo a certain pleasure, we judge from experience that the pleasure will exist and that he will probably obtain it. But when •we ourselves are in that situation, our imagination creates an illusion that the pleasure is even closer and more immediate. The will seems to move easily in every direction, and throws a shadow or image of itself even on the side where it doesn't actually settle; and this image makes the enjoyment seem to come closer, giving us the same lively satisfaction that we would have if it were perfectly certain and unavoidable.

It will be easy now to pull all this together into a proof that when riches make their owner proud or vain (as they always do!), this comes about through a double relation of impressions and ideas. •It goes like this•:

- The very essence of riches consists in the power of getting the pleasures and conveniences of life.
- The very essence of this power consists in the prob-

ability of its being exercised and in its causing us to anticipate—by true *or false* reasoning—the real existence of the pleasure.

- This anticipation of pleasure by a person x is in itself a very considerable pleasure; and its cause—namely, x's wealth—is related to x.

So there you have it: all the parts of my account of the cause of pride are laid before us exactly and clearly. •The relation of ideas is the relation between x's idea of •his ownership of the wealth in question and his idea of •himself. And the relation of impressions is the relation between •the pleasure of anticipating pleasure from spending the wealth and •the pleasure involved in pride•.

[The section ends with two paragraphs on slavery and related themes. One makes the point that •having power over others is a source of pride for the same reason that wealth is; and that •being enslaved is a source of humility for the same reason that poverty is. Then:] The vanity of power (and the shame of slavery) are greatly increased by facts about the persons over whom we exercise our authority (or who exercise it over us). Suppose statues could be constructed having such an admirable mechanism that they could move and act in obedience to our will; *owning* such a statue would obviously be a source of pleasure and pride; but not as much pleasure and pride as one gets from having that same authority over creatures that can think and feel. [Hume's reason for this is obscure, but he says that it will recur when he discusses malice and envy. He doesn't explain—or even describe—the effect that facts about a slave-owner have on the humiliation of his slaves. And when he does return to this topic [see page 198] he still writes obscurely.]

## 11: The love of fame

In addition to these basic causes of pride and humility there's another cause which, though secondary, is just as powerful in its effect on the feelings. It is *the opinions of others*. Our reputation, our character, our name, are tremendously important to us; and the other causes of pride—virtue, beauty, and riches—have little influence when they aren't backed up by the opinions and sentiments of others. To explain this phenomenon I'll have to cast my net wider, and first explain the nature of sympathy. [In Hume's day 'sympathy' had a broad sense that comes from the Greek origin of the word, meaning 'feeling with': my 'sympathy' for you could consist in my sorrowing over your sorrow *or rejoicing in your joy*. In Hume's hands, we'll see in a moment, the word is even broader, covering not just fellow-feeling but also fellow-*thinking*.]

We are prone to sympathize with others, to have their inclinations and sentiments passed on to us, even if they are quite different from or even contrary to our own. This quality of human nature is notable both in itself and in its consequences. It is conspicuous not only in •children, who firmly accept every opinion proposed to them, but also in •men of great judgment and understanding, who find it hard to follow their own reason or inclination in opposition to that of their friends and daily companions. This mechanism is the source of the great uniformity we see in how the members of a single nation feel and think; this uniformity is much more likely to have arisen from sympathy than from any influence of the soil and the climate, which, though they are constant, couldn't make the character of a nation constant over a century. A good-natured man immediately joins in the mood of those he is with, and even the proudest and most surly person will pick up *something* of the frame of mind of

his countrymen and his acquaintances. Your cheerful face makes me feel serene and contented; your sad or angry face throws a sudden damp on me. Hatred, resentment, respect, love, courage, cheerfulness, and melancholy—all these passions are ones that I feel more through their being passed on •from others• than from my own natural temperament and disposition. Such a remarkable phenomenon is worth studying; let us trace it back to its basic causes.

When a person *x* has a feeling that is passed on through sympathy to another person *y*, what *y* first knows about it are its effects, the external signs in *x*'s face and speech that convey to *y* an idea of the feeling. This idea is immediately turned into an impression, and becomes so forceful and lively that it becomes the very passion itself, producing in *y* as much emotion as do any of his feelings that start within himself. This switch from idea to impression, though it happens in an instant, is a product of certain opinions and thoughts that the philosopher should look into carefully, even if *y* himself isn't aware of them.

It's obvious that the idea (or rather impression) of a person is always intimately present to him, and that his consciousness gives him such a lively conception of *himself* that nothing could possibly be livelier. So anything that is related to him will be conceived by him in a similarly lively manner (according to my scheme of things); that relatedness, even if it's not as strong as that of causation, must still have a considerable influence. Resemblance and contiguity [= 'togetherness in space or in time'] are relations that we shouldn't neglect, especially when we are informed of the real existence of an object that is resembling or contiguous. (•When the 'object' is someone else's feeling, how are we informed of

its existence? By observing the external signs of it in his face, speech, and other behaviour, and performing a cause-and-effect inference on those signs.)

It's obvious that nature has made all human creatures very much alike: the parts of our bodies may differ in shape or size, but their structure and composition are in general the same. And what holds for our bodies is also true of the structure of our minds, which is why we never observe in other people any passion or drive that doesn't have some kind of parallel in ourselves. Amidst all the variety of minds there's a very remarkable resemblance that must greatly contribute to making us enter into the sentiments of others and easily and happily accept them. And so we find that where the general resemblance of our natures is accompanied by any special similarity in our manners, or character, or country, or language, it makes our sympathy for one another even easier. . . .

•Resemblance isn't the only relation having this effect; it gets new force from other relations that may accompany it. The sentiments of others have more influence on us when the others are nearby than when they are far away. •Blood-relationships, which are a species of causation, sometimes contribute to the same effect; so does •personal acquaintance, which operates in the same way as education and custom, as we'll see more fully in ii.4. When all these relations are combined, they produce in our consciousness the strongest and liveliest conception of the sentiments or passions of others.

[Hume now reminds us of his thesis that the only systematic difference between ideas and impressions is the greater 'force and vivacity' of the latter, so that when an idea becomes lively enough it *becomes* an impression. He continues:] The lively idea of any object always approaches its impression, and we sometimes feel sickness and pain

from the mere force of imagination, making an illness real by often thinking about it. This happens most notably with •opinions and feelings—it's with •them that lively ideas are most often converted into impressions. Our feelings depend more on ourselves—on the internal operations of our minds—than any other impressions, which is why they arise more naturally from the imagination and from every lively idea we form of them. This is the nature and cause of sympathy; this is how we enter so deeply into the opinions and feelings of others . . . .

[In a long paragraph Hume now develops his view that the obvious and well-known *facts* of sympathy are good evidence both for his thesis about how ideas differ from impressions and for his theory of sympathy. Indeed, he says, the facts are so clear that there's hardly any need for any explanatory theory.]

Now let us turn from •the general topic of sympathy to •the influence of sympathy on pride and humility when these passions arise from praise and blame, from reputation and infamy. No-one ever **praises** anyone for a quality that wouldn't produce **pride** in anyone who possessed it. The songs of praise focus on his power, or riches, or family, or virtue—all of which are subjects of pride that I have already explained. According to my system, then, if the praised person saw himself in the same way that his admirer does he would *first* receive pleasure and *then* pride or self-satisfaction. Now, it is utterly natural that we should accept the opinions of others whom we admire, both **(1)** from sympathy, which makes all their sentiments intimately present to us, and **(2)** from reasoning, which makes us regard their judgment as evidence to support what they affirm. These two mechanisms—sympathy and authority—influence almost all our opinions, and are bound to have a special influence on our judgments of our own worth and character.

Such judgments are always accompanied by passion (I.iii.10); and nothing is more apt to disturb our thinking and rush us into unreasonable opinions than their connection with passion, which spreads itself across the imagination and gives extra force to every related idea. . . .

All this seems very probable in theory; but to make this reasoning fully secure we should examine the facts concerning the passions, to see if they agree with it.

A fact that gives good support to my account is this: although fame in general is agreeable, we get much more satisfaction from the approval of people whom we admire and approve of than from the approval of those whom we hate and despise; and, similarly, we are mainly humiliated by the contempt of persons on whose judgment we set some value, and don't care much about the opinions of the rest of mankind. If our mind had a *basic* instinct for wanting fame and wanting to avoid infamy, we would be equally influenced by fame and infamy no matter where they came from—the judgment of a fool is still the judgment of another person.

As well as valuing a wise man's approval more than a fool's, we get an extra satisfaction from the former when it is obtained after a long and intimate acquaintance. This is also accounted for by ·the role of contiguity in· my system.

The praises of others never give us much pleasure unless we agree with them, i.e. unless they praise us for qualities in which we do (·in our opinion·) chiefly excel. A recipient of praise won't value it much if he is

a mere soldier being praised for eloquence,  
a preacher praised for courage,  
a bishop praised for humour,  
a merchant praised for learning.

However much a man may admire a given quality, considered in itself, if he is aware that he doesn't have it he won't get pleasure from the whole world's thinking that he does,

because their praise won't be able to draw his own opinion after them.

It often happens that a man of good family who is very poor leaves his friends and his country and tries to earn a humble living among strangers rather than among those who know about his birth and upbringing. 'I shall be unknown', he says, 'in the place I am going to. Nobody will suspect what my family background is. I'll be removed from all my friends and acquaintances, and that will make it easier for me to bear my poverty and low station in life.' When I examine these sentiments I find that in four different ways they support the position that I am defending. [Regarding the next bit and some other places in this work: •To 'contemn' someone is to have or show contempt for him—a useful verb. •In Hume's day the noun 'contempt' had a broader meaning that it does today. For us, contempt for someone is an attitude of actively despising him; but for Hume it could be merely the attitude of regarding him as negligible, treating him as of no account; though on page 179 we'll find him saying that contempt is a species of hatred.]

**First**, the sentiments in question show that we suffer most from the contempt of people who are both related to us by blood and live in our neighbourhood; from which we can infer that the unpleasantness of being contemned depends on sympathy, which depends on the relation of objects to ourselves. So we try to diminish this sympathy and uneasiness by getting away from those who are •blood-related to us and •contiguous to us, putting ourselves in a contiguity to strangers.

**Secondly**, there's something to be learned here about *how* relations come into the forming of sympathy. After my shame over my poverty has led me to go to another country to live among strangers, I am still •blood-related to my kindred and •contiguity-related to my new neighbours; ·and both groups still despise my poverty·. But those •two relations

don't have much force to create sympathy—i.e. to cause me to have towards myself the dismissive attitude that my distant kindred and my close neighbours have towards me—because they aren't united in the same persons. This shows that what are required for sympathy are not •relations *period*, but •relations that have influence in converting our ideas of the sentiments of others into the sentiments themselves.

**Thirdly**, we should think some more about this matter of sympathy's being reduced by the separation of relations. Suppose I am **(2)** living in poverty among strangers, and consequently am treated with little respect; I prefer that to my situation **(1)** when I was every day exposed to the contempt of my relatives and neighbours. In **(1)** I felt a double contempt—from my relatives and from my neighbours—this double contempt being strengthened by the relations of •kindred and •contiguity. But in **(2)** the people to whom I am •kin are different from those I •live near to, these two inputs of contempt don't coalesce, and that reduces their power to make me feel the contempt for myself that I know those two groups have. . . .

**Fourthly**, a person in **(2)** naturally conceals his birth from those among whom he lives, and is very unhappy if anyone suspects that he comes from a family that is much wealthier and socially more elevated than he is now. We always value things by *comparison*: an immense fortune for a private gentleman is beggary for a prince; a peasant would

count himself fortunate if he had 'wealth' that a gentleman couldn't scrape by on! If someone has been accustomed to a more splendid way of living, or thinks he is entitled to it by his birth and social rank, everything below that level strikes him as disagreeable and even shameful; and he tries very hard to conceal his claim to a better fortune. *He* knows that he has come down in the world; but his new neighbours know nothing of this, so that the odious comparison comes only from his own thoughts, and isn't reinforced by a sympathy with others; and that must contribute very much to his ease and satisfaction.

Any objections to my thesis that the pleasure we get from praise arises from the passing on of sentiments will turn out—when properly understood—to *confirm* the thesis. Here are three of them. •Popular fame may be agreeable even to a man who despises ordinary people; but that's because the very number of them gives them additional weight and authority. •Plagiarists are delighted with praises that they know they don't deserve; but this is building castles in the air, with the imagination entertaining itself with its own fictions and trying to make them firm and stable through a sympathy with the sentiments of others. •Proud men are very shocked by contempt though they don't agree with it; but that's because of the conflict between the passion that is natural to them and the one that comes to them from sympathy. . . .

## 12: The pride and humility of animals

[In this section Hume argues that the phenomena of pride and humility in non-human animals can be explained by his theory and not in any other way. Based as it is on such notions as that of the pride of peacocks and vanity of nightingales, the section has a certain charm but little serious intellectual interest.]

## Part ii: Love and hatred

### 1: The objects and causes of love and hatred

It is quite impossible to *define* the passions of love and hatred, because each produces just one simple impression with no internal complexity, so that trying to define them would be like trying to define 'red' or 'sweet'. And it's altogether unnecessary to give you markers that would help you to identify cases of love and hatred, because your own feeling and experience enable you to pick them out well enough. It would also be a clumsy procedure for me to offer such markers at this stage, because they would have to involve the nature, origin, causes, and objects of love and hatred, and these are precisely what I am going to be discussing throughout Part ii. This is the line I took when I embarked on my discussion of pride and humility in 2<sub>i</sub>; and indeed pride/humility are so *like* love/hatred that my explanation of the latter has to start with an abbreviated account of my reasonings concerning the former.

Whereas the immediate object of pride and humility is ourself, the particular person whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious of, the object of love and hatred is some other person, whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious of. This is obvious enough from experience. Our love and hatred are always directed to some sentient being other than ourselves. We talk of 'self-love', but that's not 'love' in the strict sense, and doesn't produce a feeling that is in the least like the tender emotion that is aroused by a friend or mistress. Similarly with 'self-hatred': we may be disgusted by our own faults and follies, but it's only from harm caused by *others* that we ever feel anger or hatred properly so-called.

Although the object of love and hatred is always some other person, it's clear that this object is not strictly speaking the cause of these passions. It *can't* be, because: Love and hatred are directly contrary in how they feel, yet have the same object as one another; so if that object were also their cause, it would produce these opposite passions in an equal degree—in which case they would cancel out and there would be no such thing as love or hatred. So they must have a cause that is different from the object.

[Don't spend energy trying to see how this argument works, because it doesn't. The analogous argument for pride/humility succeeds, with help from the premise

'Pride and humility have the same object'—namely oneself.

But the present argument needs the premise

'Love and hatred have the same object'—namely someone else,

which is obviously absurd. Hume, for all his brilliance, sometimes goes too fast.]

The causes of love and hatred turn out to be very various and not to have much in common. A person's virtue, knowledge, wit, good sense, or good humour produce love and respect, and the opposite qualities produce hatred and contempt. Love can come from physical accomplishments such as beauty, strength, speed, nimbleness, and hatred from their contraries. And family, possessions, clothes, nation, and climate—any one of these can produce love and respect, or hatred and contempt, depending on what its qualities are.

These causes point us towards a new way of looking at the distinction between the causally operative quality and the thing that has it. A prince who owns a stately palace commands the respect of the people on that account—why?

Because •the palace is beautiful and because •he owns it. Remove either of these and you destroy the passion; which shows that the cause is a complex one.

Many of the points I have made regarding pride and humility are equally applicable to love and hatred; it would be tedious to follow them through in detail. All I need at this stage is the general remark that

•the **object** of love and hatred is obviously some thinking person, that •the sensation of love is always agreeable, and that •the sensation of hatred is always disagreeable.

We can also suppose, with some show of probability, that

•the **cause** of love or hatred is always related to a thinking being, and that •the cause of love produces pleasure and •the cause of hatred produces unpleasure

quite apart from its relation to a thinking being. For example, through being owned by the Prince the palace causes people to love him, but the palace—just in itself, whoever owns it—gives pleasure.

The supposition that nothing can cause of love or hatred without being related to a person or thinking being is more than merely probable—it's too obvious to be questioned. . . . A person looking out of a window sees me in the street, and beyond me a beautiful palace that has nothing to do with me; no-one will claim that this person will pay me the same respect as if I were owner of the palace.

[Hume goes on to say that it's not so immediately obvious that love/hatred fit the pride/humility story about connections between impressions and ideas, and so on. But he will let himself off from going through all that, he says, because

he is willing to defend on empirical grounds the general thesis (not that he puts it quite like this) that if you •take a complete true theory about pride and humility, and •in that story replace every occurrence of 'oneself' by an occurrence of 'someone else', the result will be a complete true theory about love and hatred. The defence of this starts now.]

Anyone who is satisfied with his own character or intellect or fortune will almost certainly want to show himself to the world, and to acquire the love and approval of mankind. Now, it's obvious that the qualities and circumstances that cause pride or self-respect are just exactly the ones that cause vanity or the desire for reputation, and that we always put on display the features of ourselves that we are best satisfied with. Well, if the qualities of others that produce love and respect in us were not the very same qualities that produce pride in ourselves when we have them, this behaviour would be quite absurd; no-one in that case could expect other people's sentiments about him to correspond with his own. It's true that few people can create exact theories about the passions, or reflect on their general nature and resemblances; but we don't need that kind of philosophical progress to move through this territory without making many mistakes. We get enough guidance from common experience, and from a kind of presentation [Hume's word] that tells us, on the basis of what we feel immediately in ourselves, what will operate on others. Therefore: since the same qualities that produce pride or humility also cause love or hatred, all my arguments to show that •the causes of pride and humility arouse pleasure or unpleasure independently of the passion will hold just as clearly for •the causes of love and hatred.

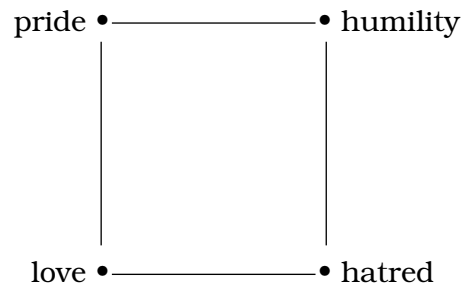


## 2: Experiments to confirm this system

Anyone who weighs these arguments will confidently accept the conclusion I draw from them regarding the transition along related impressions and ideas, especially given what an easy and natural mechanism this is. Still, in order to place this system beyond doubt—both its love/hatred part and its pride/humility part—I shall present some new experiments on all these passions, and will also recall a few of the points I have formerly touched on. The ‘experiments’ are mostly thought-experiments.

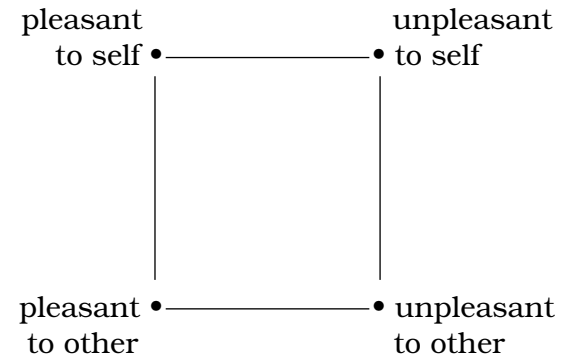
As a framework for these experiments, let’s suppose that I am in the company of a person for whom I have had no sentiments either of friendship or enmity. This presents me with the natural and ultimate object of all these four passions—myself as the proper object of pride or humility, the other person as the proper object of love or hatred.

Now look carefully at the nature of these passions and how they relate to each other. It’s evident that we have here four ‘possible’ emotions, related to one another in ways that can be represented by a square. [He has in mind a square like this:



In this the horizontal lines represent ‘identity of object’ and the verticals represent sameness in respect of pleasant/unpleasant. Hume’s summing up of this could (though

he doesn’t put it this way) be represented by another square in which each corner represents, regarding the passion in question, •how it feels and •to whom it is directed:



Hume continues:] I say then that for anything to produce any of these ·four· passions it must involve a double relation—a relation of ideas to the object of the passion, and a relation of sensation to the passion itself. That’s what I am going to argue for, on the basis of eight experiments. [Through all this, bear in mind how Hume’s terminology works in this context. If you are proud of your wealth and I respect (or ‘love’) you because of it, your *owning* the wealth creates a ‘relation of ideas’, i.e. a relation between my or your idea of that wealth and my or your idea of you; and the wealth’s giving *pleasure* creates a ‘relation of impressions’, i.e. a similarity between that pleasure and your pride and my love. Similarly for my shame (or your contempt) regarding my house.]

**(1)** Take the case I have described, where I am in the company of some other person ·towards whom I have none of the four passions we are considering·, and add to it some object that has no relation (of impressions or of ideas) to any of the four. Let it be an ordinary dull stone that isn’t owned by either of us, and isn’t an independent source of pleasure

or unpleasure—so obviously it won't produce any of the four passions. Now replace the stone by anything you like, *x*, and suppose my mentality to be changed in any way you like; if you do this in such a way that *x* doesn't relate in a certain way to myself or the other person, or relate in a certain other way to pleasure or unpleasure, it won't be credible that *x* should produce in me any of the four passions. Try it out on them, one by one, and you'll see.

**(2)** [In this paragraph and the next, the stuff about 'tilting' towards one 'pole' of an 'axis' goes well beyond Hume's wording, but it does express the meaning of what he says.] Try this again with an object *x* that has just one of the two relations in question, and see what emerges. Specifically, suppose that I *own* the unremarkable stone, so that it has the crucial relation to the object of the passions: it obviously still won't be a source of pride in me or of love or respect in the other person, because there's nothing here to tilt the situation towards one rather than the other pole of the pride/humility axis or the love/hatred axis . . . . No trivial or common object that doesn't independently cause pleasure or unpleasure can ever produce pride or humility, love or hatred, no matter how it relates to any person.

**(3)** So a relation of •ideas is clearly not enough on its own to give rise to any of these passions. Now let us see what can be achieved by a relation of •impressions on its own: instead of the stone let's have an object that is pleasant or unpleasant but has no relation either to me or to the other person. What do we find now? Let's first look at the matter theoretically, as I did in **(2)**. We find that the object does have a small though uncertain connection with these passions, and it does involve a tilt towards one pole of each axis; in terms of how they feel, pleasure is not very different from pride, unpleasure from humility or shame. But nothing in this situation enables the feeling in question to focus on one

person rather than another. For a state to count as one of our four passions, it must not only

*feel* a certain way

but must also

*be targeted at* some particular person

the person who is proud/humble or is loved/hated. And this present situation provides no such target. . . .

Fortunately, this theoretical approach fits perfectly with what we find in experience. Suppose I'm travelling with a friend through a country to which we are both utter strangers; if the views are beautiful, the roads good, and the inns comfortable, this may well put me into a good mood in relation to myself and to my friend. But as this country has no 'special' relation either to myself or to my friend, it can't be the immediate cause of pride or love 'because those are targeted on individual persons'. 'I may say 'I love this country!', but this isn't love strictly so-called'. It is the overflowing of an elevated frame of mind rather than an established passion. And all this can be re-applied to the case of a nasty countryside and the passions of humility and hatred.

**(4)** [Hume says here that we may well be convinced by what he has said so far, but that he will push forward in further arguing for his theory of the four passions. He does this with a serial thought- experiment, that can be expressed in terms of the second square on page 177. I start with the thought of some virtue of mine, of which I am proud (top left). I then suppose that the virtue belongs not to me but to you, and this produces love (bottom left). Next, I go back to the starting-point and instead replace the (pleasant) virtue by some unpleasant vice that I have; this produces humility (top right); and if instead I take some vice of yours the result is hatred (bottom right). In Hume's own presentation of all this (which is about five times as long), he says that a virtue

of yours has •one relation that favours my being proud, this being outpulled by the •two relations that favour my having love for you. Similarly with each of the other competitions between adjacent corners of the square. He continues:]

But to make the matter still more certain, switch the examples from virtue and vice to beauty and ugliness, then to riches and poverty, then to power and servitude. With each of these, suitable changes in the relevant relations take us around the square of the passions in the same way as with virtue and vice—and the result is the same no matter what order we adopt in changing the relations. It's true that in some cases we'll get respect (or contempt) rather than love (or hatred); but these are basically the same except for differences in their causes. I'll explain this later.

**(5)** Now let us go through all that again with just one difference: we are now to suppose that the other person in the scene is closely connected with me either by blood or friendship—he's my son or my brother or an old friend of mine. Let us see what difference that makes to all the switches that we went through in **(4)**.

Before we consider what the differences actually are, let us work out what they must be if my theory is right. Here and in **(6)** I'll state all this in terms of an attractive virtue; you can work out for yourself how to adapt it to the case of a nasty vice. Clearly, my theory says that the passion of love must arise towards the person who possesses the virtue—the person who is linked to it by a connection of ideas. [Hume speaks of the person who is connected to the cause of my pleasure 'by these double relations which I have all along required', but that is a mistake. According to his theory there's a relation-of-ideas between *the person* and the virtue, and a relation-of-impressions between *my pleasure at his virtue* and my love for him. The theory doesn't have any person entering into any 'double relation'. When we come to 'experiment' **(6)** we'll again find Hume being careless about what is supposed to be

related to what, and in that case the carelessness will do damage.] The virtue of my brother must make me love him; but then the theory has something further to say: because he is my brother, there's a relevant relation-of-ideas between his virtue and myself; and so according to the theory my love for him will give rise to pride, taking me from the lower-left to the upper-left corner of the square.

That's what my theory says will happen, and I am pleased to find that that's what actually *does* happen in such cases. The virtue of a son or brother not only arouses love but also, by a new transition from similar causes, gives rise to pride; nothing causes greater vanity than some shining quality in our relatives. This exact fit between experience and my reasoning is convincing evidence of the solidity of the theory on which the reasoning was based.

**(6)** [Hume here presents **(a)** a certain empirical fact, **(b)** a reason for thinking that it clashes with his theory, and **(c)** an explanation of **(a)** that reconciles it with the theory. He starts:] This case is strengthened even further if we make a switch in the story, so that instead of starting with

•my brother's virtue, which causes me first to love him and then to be proud of him,

we start with

•my own virtue, with this having no special connection with my brother.

**(a)** Experience shows us that this switch breaks the chain: my mind is not now carried from one passion to another, as in the preceding instance. We never love a brother for the virtue we see in ourselves, though obviously we feel pride when it is he who has the virtue. The transition from pride to love is not so natural as the transition from love to pride. **(b)** This may seem to clash with my theory, because the relations of impressions and ideas are in both cases precisely the same.

[Hume evidently means that his theory might lead us to expect that in this present case

my love for myself because of my virtue will make me proud of my brother because of my virtue;

but *why* might it lead us to expect that preposterous result? Hume's only answer to this is that in the present case 'the relations of impressions and ideas are precisely the same' as they were in (5); but that doesn't explain anything because it isn't true—see the long small-type note immediately before this one. Hume's (c) attempt to reconcile the fact with the theory hinges on an explanation of why, although Gerald and I are symmetrically brothers of one another, it is easier for my imagination to pass from •the thought of him to •the thought of myself than it is for it to go in the opposite direction. That in itself is graspable, but it doesn't fend off a crash because there was no threat of a crash in the first place.]

(7) We have seen that a passion  $P_1$  whose object is item  $x_1$  easily generates a **similar** passion  $P_2$  whose object  $x_2$  is idea-related to  $x_1$ . For example, the ( $P_1$ ) pleasure I get from ( $x_1$ ) my son's virtue generates ( $P_2$ ) pride in me, and of course ( $x_2$ ) the object of my pride is something idea-related to my son, namely myself. The mechanism producing that result ought to work even more smoothly in bringing it about that a passion  $P$  whose object is item  $x_1$  easily generates **the very same** passion  $P$  with an object  $x_2$  that is idea-related to  $x_1$ . And that is what we find. When we either love or hate someone, the passions seldom stay within their first bounds; they stretch out towards all the nearby objects, taking in the friends and relatives of the person we love or hate. When someone is our friend, it is totally natural for us to have friendly feelings towards his brother, without looking into the brother's character. A quarrel with one person makes us hostile to his whole family, even if they had no part in whatever it was that generated the trouble. There are countless instances of this kind of thing.

There's a wrinkle in this that I'll need to deal with before moving on. It's obvious that although all passions pass easily from one object to another related to it, when this transition

- goes from an object to a related one that is somehow lesser, less considerable, than the first object is, the transition happens more easily than when it
- goes in the opposite direction, from the lesser to the greater.

For example, it is more natural for us to love the son on account of the father than to love the father on account of the son; the servant on account of the master than the master on account of the servant; the subject on account of the prince than the prince on account of the subject. Similarly, we more readily come to hate a whole family when our first quarrel is with the head of it than when we are displeased with a son, or servant, or some low-ranked member of the family. In short, our passions, like other objects, fall more easily than they rise!

This phenomenon poses a challenge, because the factor that makes it easier for the imagination •to pass from remote things to nearby ones than to go from nearby to remote also makes it easier for the imagination •to pass from lesser things to greater ones than to go from greater to lesser. Whatever has the greatest influence is most taken notice of; and whatever is most taken notice of presents itself most readily to the imagination. In any subject we're more apt to overlook what is trivial than to overlook what seems to be important, especially if it's the important item that *first* engages our attention. [Hume gives examples: Jupiter before its planets, imperial Rome before its provinces, master before servant, subject before monarch. He continues:] That same mechanism is at work in the common custom of making wives bear the name of their husbands, rather than husbands that of their wives; as also the ceremonial

custom of allowing those whom we honour and respect to *go first* in any parade. There are many other instances of the mechanism, but it's obvious enough without them.

Now, since the imagination finds it just as easy to pass from the lesser to the greater as to pass from the remote to the nearby, why doesn't this easy •transition of ideas help the •transition of passions in the former case as well as in the latter? . . . . The love or hatred of an inferior doesn't easily cause any passion towards the superior, even though the natural propensity of the imagination is to move in that direction; whereas the love or hatred of a superior does cause a passion towards the inferior, again contrary to the propensity of the imagination. . . .

[Having spent two of his pages setting up this problem, Hume now spends two difficult pages solving it. The gist of the solution is as follows. Take the example of

A: **(a1)** love for **(a2)** the father,

B: **(b1)** love for **(b2)** the son.

So far as transition from one idea to another is concerned, the move from **(b2)** to **(a2)** is easier than the move in the opposite direction. So the puzzling fact that the move from A to B is easier than the reverse must come from its being easier to move from **(a1)** to **(b1)** than to move in the opposite direction; that is, it must be that the tendency of the transition of **ideas** is overpowered by a reverse tendency of the transition of **impressions**. Hume then proceeds to show why it is

that the transition of impressions is easier in that direction. The basic thought is that the father is more considerable than the son, so that any passion towards the father will be stronger than the corresponding passion towards the son; and it's easier to pass from a stronger passion to a weaker one than vice versa. So we have one tendency favouring the move from A to B, and another favouring the move from B to A. Why does the A-to-B tendency trump the B-to-A one? Because, Hume says, 'the affections are a more powerful principle than the imagination', meaning that impressions push harder than ideas do. He goes on to say at some length that his theory's ability to resolve this difficulty is further strong evidence for its truth.]

**(8)** [Hume here presents and explains a seeming exception to his thesis that it's easier to pass from love or hatred to pride or humility than to pass from pride or humility to love or hatred. His handling of this is hard to grasp, and seems not to be needed for anything that comes later; so let's let ourselves off from trying to master it.]

. . . . If we consider all the eight experiments that I have explained, we shall find that the same mechanism appears in all of them—that it's by means of a transition arising from a double relation of impressions and ideas that pride and humility, love and hatred, are produced. And this double-transition mechanism explains not only the straightforward cases but also the seemingly anomalous ones. . . .

### 3: Difficulties solved

After so many and such undeniable proofs drawn from daily experience and observation, there seems to be no need to explore in detail all the causes of love and hatred. What I shall do in the rest of Part ii is ·in this section· to remove some difficulties concerning particular causes of these passions, ·in sections 4 and 5 to discuss some rather special cases·, and ·in sections 6–11· to examine compound affections arising from the mixture of love and hatred with other emotions.

We all know that any person acquires our kindness, or is exposed to our ill-will, in proportion to the pleasure or unpleasure we receive from him, and that the passions stay exactly in step with the sensations in all their changes and variations. We are sure to have affection for anyone who can find ways to be useful or agreeable to us, by his services, his beauty, or his flattery; and, on the other side, anyone who harms or displeases us never fails to arouse our anger or hatred. When we are at war with some other nation, we detest them as ‘cruel’, ‘perfidious’, ‘unjust’, and ‘violent’, but always judge ourselves and our allies to be fair, moderate, and merciful. If our enemies’ general is successful, it’s hard for us to allow that he is *a man* at all. He is a sorcerer (·we tend to think·); he is in touch with demons; . . . he is bloody-minded, and takes pleasure in death and destruction. But if our side succeeds, then our commander has all the opposite good qualities—he’s a pattern of virtue, as well as of courage and steadiness. His treachery we call ‘policy’; his cruelty is an evil inseparable from war. In short, we deal with each of his faults either by trying to minimize it or by dignifying it with the name of the closest virtue. It is evident that this same way of thinking runs through common life.

Some people add another condition to this; they require not only that the unpleasure and pleasure arise from the person, but that it arise knowingly, having been designed and intended by the person. A man who wounds and harms us by accident doesn’t become our enemy on that account; and we don’t feel any ties of gratitude to someone who accidentally does something that is helpful to us. We judge the actions by •the intentions; it’s through •those that the actions become causes of love or hatred.

But here we must make a distinction. If what pleases or displeases us in someone else is constant and inherent in his person and character, it will cause us to love or hate him independently of what he *intends*; but otherwise—i.e. when someone pleases or displeases us by some short-lived action rather than a durable character-trait—we won’t love or hate him unless ·we think that· he intended to produce the displeasing result. Someone who is disagreeable because he is ugly or stupid is the object of our aversion [Hume’s word], though he certainly hasn’t the least intention of displeasing us by these qualities. But if the unpleasure he gives us comes not from •a quality that he has but from •an action that he performs—something produced and annihilated in a moment—unless it comes from a particular forethought and design it won’t be sufficiently connected with *him* ·to cause anything like love or hatred in us·. It’s not enough that the action arises from him, has him as its immediate cause and author. This relation on its own is too feeble and inconstant [Hume’s phrase] to be a basis for love or hatred. ·When considered apart from any intention or purpose, the action is really just a bodily movement·; it doesn’t reach down into the person’s sensing and thinking part; it doesn’t

come from anything durable in him, or leave anything behind it in him—it passes in a moment, and is as though it had never been. In contrast with this, an *intention* shows certain qualities of the person that

- are still qualities of him after the action has been performed,
- connect the action with him, and
- make it easier for us to move between ideas of the action and ideas of him.

We can never think of him without reflecting on these qualities, unless repentance and a change of life have altered him in a relevant way, in which case our the passion is likewise altered.

[The word ‘injury’ in what follows isn’t restricted to bodily damage. It means more generally ‘harm’, though restricted to harm deliberately inflicted. In a moment we’ll see Hume implying that an ‘injury’ minus the nasty frame of mind in which it was done is ‘mere harm’. He *also* sometimes labels as ‘injury’ something that wasn’t deliberate; in the interests of clean line-drawing, those occurrences will be put between quotation-marks.] I have just given one reason why an intention is needed if either love or hatred is to be aroused, but there is also another. The intention with which an action is performed doesn’t just •strengthen the relation of ideas between the action and the person•; it is often needed to •produce a relation of impressions between our perception of the action and our feelings about it•, i.e. needed for the action to give us pleasure or unpleasure. That is because, as we can all see, the principal part of any injury is the contempt and hatred that it shows in the person who injures us; without that, the mere harm gives us a less acute unpleasure. Similarly, a bit of help is agreeable mainly because it flatters our vanity, and shows the kindness and respect of the person who gives it. Remove the intention and the help is much less gratifying. . . .

Admittedly, removing the intention doesn’t entirely remove the (un)pleasantness of what is done. But then it doesn’t entirely remove love and hatred either. We all know that men become violently angry over ‘injuries’ that they have to admit were entirely involuntary and accidental. This emotion doesn’t last long, but it’s enough to show that there’s a natural connection between uneasiness and anger, and that a relation of ideas doesn’t have to be very sturdy for a relation of impressions to operate along it. But when the impression has lost some of its violence, the defect of the relation begins to be better felt—i.e. when the man becomes less angry he becomes more aware of the fact that the real object of his anger doesn’t have much to do with the person he thought he was angry with. And because a person’s ‘long-term’ *character* isn’t involved in ‘injuries’ that he causes in a casual and involuntary way, such ‘injuries’ are seldom the basis for any lasting enmity.

Compare that with a parallel phenomenon. When something unpleasant happens to us because of someone’s conduct, our strength of feeling about this may be reduced not because the person •wasn’t acting deliberately but because he •was only doing what his duty required him to do. If we are in the least reasonable, we won’t be *angry* with someone who deliberately harms us, if the source of this intention is not hatred and ill-will but justice and equity, despite the fact that he is the cause—the *knowing* cause—of our sufferings. Let us look into this a little.

[Hume goes on to remark that this latest phenomenon isn’t total or universal. A criminal will usually be hostile towards the judge who condemns him, although he knows that he deserves the sentence. And all of us are at least somewhat like this. And a second point: When something unpleasant happens to us through somebody’s action, our immediate reaction is angry and hostile, and that leads us to

look for evidence that the other person was malicious,] so as to justify and establish the passion. Here the idea of injury

doesn't produce the passion—it arises from it. . . .

#### 4: Love for people with whom one has some connection

Having given a reason why various actions that cause real pleasure or unpleasure arouse little if any love or hatred towards the people who performed them, I now need to show what is going on in the pleasure or unpleasure of many items that we find by experience *do* produce these passions.

According to my theory, love and hatred can be produced only where there is a double relation of impressions and ideas between the cause and effect. But though this is universally true, it's a conspicuous fact that the passion of love can be aroused by a single relation of a different kind—*from either of these*—, namely a relation between ourselves and the person we love. Clearly that's a relation between persons, not between impressions or between ideas; but it doesn't make the other two kinds of relation irrelevant; what it does, rather, is to bring them along with it.

**(1) The connection phenomenon:** What I'm talking about is the relation that holds between *x* and *y* if *x* is *united by some connection* [Hume's phrase] to *y*. If someone is united to me by some connection, I'll give him a share of my love (greater or lesser depending on what the connection is), without enquiring into his other qualities. Thus

- blood-relatedness of parents to their children

produces parental love, which is the strongest tie the mind is capable of; and lesser degrees of love come with

- more distant blood-relationships.

And it's not only those—*any* kind of relatedness whatsoever tends to produce love. We love

- our countrymen,
- our neighbours,
- others in our trade or profession, even
- those who have the same name as we do.

Every one of these relations is regarded as a *tie* of a sort, and entitles the person to a share of our affection.

**(2) The acquaintance phenomenon:** There's another phenomenon that is parallel to this, namely the fact that love and kindness towards a person can arise from our merely being acquainted with him, without any kind of relation. When we have become used to being in the company of a certain person, without finding that there's anything specially good about him, we can't help preferring him to strangers who we are sure are all-round better than he is. These two phenomena—the effects of •connection and of •acquaintance—will throw light on one another, and can both be explained in terms of the same mechanism.

Those who enjoy speaking out against human nature have said that man is utterly incapable of supporting himself, and that when you loosen his grip on external objects he immediately slumps down into the deepest melancholy and despair. They say that this is the source of the continual search for amusement in gaming, in hunting, in business, by



which we try to forget ourselves and arouse our spirits from the lethargic state that they fall into when not sustained by some brisk and lively emotion. [The ‘(animal) spirits’—mentioned in the very first paragraph of Book II— belong to a physiological theory popularized by Descartes. They were supposed to be a superfine superfluid stuff that could move fast and get in anywhere, doing the work in the body that is actually done by impulses along the nerves. Hume quite often brings them in, apparently with confidence; but the phrase ‘it is natural to imagine’ on page 219 may be a signal that he knows how wildly hypothetical the theory of ‘spirits’ is.] I agree with this line of thought to this extent: I admit that the mind can’t entertain itself unaided, and naturally looks for external items that can produce a lively sensation and stir up the spirits. When such an item appears, the mind awakes, so to speak, from a dream, the blood flows more strongly, the heart is elevated, and the whole man acquires a vigour that he can’t achieve in his solitary and calm moments. That is why *company* is naturally such a pleasure: it presents us with the liveliest thing there is, namely a rational and thinking being like ourselves, who lets us in on all the actions of his mind, shares with us his innermost sentiments, and lets us see his various emotions at the very moment when they are produced. . . .

Given this much, all the rest is easy. Just as the company of strangers is agreeable to us *for a short time* because it enlivens our thought, so the company of people we are **(1)** connected to or **(2)** acquainted with must be especially agreeable because it enlivens us more and for a longer time. If someone is connected with us ·in some way like those listed near the start of this section·, our conception of him is made lively by the easy transition from ourselves to him. And having long been acquainted with a person also makes it easier to think of him and strengthens our conception have of him. The ‘connections’ phenomenon

and the ‘acquaintance’ phenomenon have just one thing in common, namely that they both produce a lively and strong idea of the object. (·I can give a round-about argument for that last statement·. The **(1)** ‘connections’ phenomenon is parallel to our ·reasonings from cause and effect; the **(2)** ‘acquaintance’ phenomenon is parallel to what happens in ·education; and the only thing that ·reasoning has in common with ·education is that they both lead to the formation of strong and lively ideas.) Their role in producing love or kindness must depend on the force and liveliness of conception that goes into the forming of love. Such a conception is especially agreeable, and makes us have an affectionate regard for everything that produces it, when the proper object of kindness and good-will. [By the words after the last comma Hume presumably means to imply that we wouldn’t have affection for a *non-person* that happened to cause us to have a strong agreeable conception.]

**(3) ·The resemblance phenomenon·:** It is obvious that people get together according to their individual temperaments and dispositions—that cheerful men naturally love others who are cheerful, as serious men are fond of others who are serious. This happens not only when they notice this resemblance between themselves and others, but also by the natural course of their disposition and a certain sympathy that always arises between people of similar characters. When they notice the resemblance, it operates by producing a relation of ideas in the way a **(1)** connection does. In cases where they don’t notice it, some other mechanism must be at work; and if this other mechanism is *like* the one that operates in **(1)**, this phenomenon must be accepted as further evidence for my over-all account of these matters. ·I now proceed to show what this other mechanism is·.

The idea of ourselves is always intimately present to us, and noticeably enlivens our idea of any other object

to which we are related in any way. The enlivening of this idea gradually turns it into a real impression (remember that the only difference between ideas and impressions is in their degree of force and vivacity). Now, this change from idea to impression is bound to happen more easily if the object in question is a person who is temperamentally like ourselves, because in that case we are naturally apt to have the same impressions that the other person has, so that any given impression will arise from the slightest of causes. [The impressions that Hume is writing about here are *feelings*. The thought is that it won't take much to make me amused by something that amuses Peter if we are both cheerful people.] When that happens, the resemblance changes 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 [that last clause is verbatim Hume]. So this is a second way in which love or affection arises from resemblance. Out of all this we learn that a sympathy with others is agreeable only because it gives an emotion to the spirits. Why? Because an easy sympathy and correspondent emotions are the only things that are common to (1) connection, (2) acquaintance, and (3)

·temperamental· resemblance.

The range of things that a person may be proud of can be seen as a similar phenomenon. After we have lived for a considerable time in a city, however little we liked it at first, our dislike gradually turns into fondness as we become familiar with—*acquainted with*—the streets and buildings. The mind finds satisfaction and ease in the view of objects to which it is accustomed, and naturally prefers them to others that may be intrinsically better but are less known to it. This same quality of the mind seduces us into having a good opinion of ourselves, and of all objects that belong to us. They appear in a stronger light, are more agreeable, and consequently are fitter subjects of pride and vanity than any others are.

[Hume now devotes two pages to putting some of his theoretical apparatus to work in a fairly unconvincing explanation of why the tie between a child and his widowed mother becomes weaker if the mother remarries, whereas the remarriage of a widower doesn't equally weaken the tie between him and his child. The explanation leans heavily on the view, encountered earlier, that men are greater or more significant than women.]

### 5: Esteem for the rich and powerful

Nothing has a greater tendency to give us a respect for someone than his being rich and powerful; and nothing has a greater tendency to give us contempt for someone than his being poor and living poorly; and because respect and contempt are kinds of love and hatred, this is a good place to explain these phenomena.

In this case we ·as theorists· are fortunate: rather than having to look around for some mechanism that could produce this effect, we have only to choose the best out of three candidates for this role. It may be that we get satisfaction from others' wealth, and respect the possessors of it, because:

(1) the objects a rich person possesses—his house, furniture, pictures, gardens—are agreeable in themselves, and must therefore give pleasure to anyone who sees them or thinks about them. Or because

(2) we expect the rich and powerful to do us some good by giving us a share in their possessions. Or because

(3) sympathy makes us share in the satisfaction of everyone we come into contact with, including rich people.

These three mechanisms could work together in producing the present phenomenon. But which of them has the largest role?

The mechanism (1) involving reflection on agreeable objects has more influence than we might think it does at first glance. We seldom reflect on something that is beautiful and agreeable (or ugly and disagreeable) without an emotion of pleasure (or displeasure); and though these feelings of pleasure or displeasure don't show up much in our ordinary casual way of thinking, it is easy to find them when we are reading or engaging in conversation. Men of wit always direct the conversation towards subjects that are entertaining to the imagination; and the subjects of poets are always like that. Mr. Philips wrote an excellent poem on cider; beer would have been less satisfactory because it doesn't look or taste as good as cider does. (He would have preferred wine to either of them, if only his native country had provided him with that agreeable liquor!) We can learn from this that everything that is agreeable to the senses is also to some extent agreeable to the imagination, creating a mental image of the satisfaction that comes from applying the item to the bodily organs—e.g. an image of the satisfaction of tasting cider.

This delicacy of the imagination may be one of the causes of our respect for the rich and powerful, but there are many reasons for not regarding it as the only one, or even as the

main one. [Hume now embarks on two pages of reasoning to show that mechanism (1) does less work than mechanism (3). He gives three reasons for this. (a) If someone is rich and powerful, we tend to respect *him*, not just *his possessions*. The only way to bring the owner of the wealth and power into the story of our respect and admiration is by our responding not merely to the thought of

•our enjoying his wonderful possessions

but also to the thought of

•*his* enjoying his wonderful possessions.

Our having a good feeling about that is *sympathy*, i.e. mechanism (3). (b) We respect the rich and powerful even if they don't make use of their wealth and power. It's true that a man's money can carry our imaginations to ideas of enjoyment of things that the money could buy; but this connection is pretty remote; there's a stronger connection between our pleasant thoughts and the rich person's own satisfaction in being able to purchase good things; and that again is (3) the sympathy mechanism. (c) Hume says his third reason may to some people 'appear too subtle and refined', but we can follow it. It concerns our respect for the wealth of a miserly man who doesn't spend much. We can see that the man's character is so settled that it isn't probable—it is hardly even *possible*—that he will use his wealth to get things that we would enjoy (and would therefore enjoy thinking about, in the manner of mechanism (1)). But from his own point of view such uses of his money are thoroughly on the cards—'For me to acquire a handsome house and garden', he may think, 'would be as easy as raising my arm.' This is just a fact about how human beings view themselves—each of them regards as on the cards for himself various kinds of behaviour that his character actually puts *off* the cards. So our respect for the wealthy miser can't owe as much to (1) our responding to our sense of possible

pleasures from his wealth as to **(3)** our sympathetic response to *his* sense of the possibility of those pleasures. Hume continues:]

So we have found that the mechanism **(1)** involving the agreeable idea of the objects that riches make it possible to enjoy largely comes down to the mechanism **(3)** involving sympathy with the person we respect or love. Now let us see what force we can allow to mechanism **(2)**, involving the agreeable expectation of advantage.

Riches and authority do indeed give their owner the power to do *us* service, but obviously this power isn't on a par with his power to please *himself* and satisfy *his own* appetites. His power to do himself good will come close to his actually doing himself good—self-love will take care of that. But what can narrow the gap between his power to do *us* good and his actually doing *us* good? It will have to be his having friendship and good-will towards *us* along with his riches. Without that detail it's hard to see what basis we can have for hoping for advantage from the other person's riches; yet the plain fact is that we naturally respect the rich even before we find them to have any such favourable disposition towards *us*.

Indeed we respect the rich and powerful not only where they show no *inclination* to serve *us* but also when we are so much out of the sphere of their activity that they can't even be thought to be *able* to serve *us*. Prisoners of war are always treated with a respect suitable to their condition [here = 'social status'], and a person's condition is determined to a large extent by his wealth. If birth and rank come into it also, that provides another argument for my present thesis. What does it mean to say that a man is of 'good birth' except that he is descended from a long series of rich and powerful ancestors, and acquires our respect by his relation to people we respect? So we respect his ancestors partly on account

of their riches; but those ancestors, being dead, can't bring any advantage to *us*.

Our disinterested [= 'not *self*-interested'] respect for riches also shows up in everyday life and conversation. A man who is himself moderately well off, when he comes into a company of strangers, naturally treats them with different degrees of respect and deference as he learns of their different fortunes and conditions; though he couldn't possibly solicit any advantage from them, and perhaps wouldn't accept it if it were offered. . . .

You might want to oppose these arguments of mine by an appeal to the influence of general rules. Thus:

We're accustomed to expecting help and protection from the rich and powerful, and to respect them on that account; and we extend the same attitude to others who resemble them in their fortune but from whom we can't hope for any advantage. The *general rule* still holds sway, and steers the imagination in such a way as to draw along the passion in the same way as when its proper object is real and existent.

But that can't be what is happening here. For a general rule to become established in our minds and to extend itself beyond its proper bounds, there has to be a certain uniformity in our experience, with very many more cases that fit the rule than ones that don't. But that is not how things stand with regard to advantage from the rich and powerful. Of a hundred men of credit and fortune that I meet with, there may be none from whom I can expect advantage, and there certainly aren't many, so that a *custom* of expecting such help can't possibly be established in my mind.

So, wanting to explain our respect for power and riches, and our contempt for meanness and poverty, all we are left with is **(3)** the mechanism of sympathy, by which we have some of the sentiments of the rich and poor, and share in

their pleasure and unpleasure. •Riches give satisfaction to their possessor x; •this satisfaction is conveyed to the onlooker y by his imagination, which •gives him an idea that resembles the original impression (·i.e. x's satisfaction·) in force and vivacity. This agreeable idea or impression •is connected with love, which is an agreeable passion. . . .

[We will be better 'reconciled' to this view, Hume says, if we look at the prevalence and power of sympathy all through the animal kingdom, and especially] in man, who is the creature •most desirous of society and •best fitted for it by his qualities. There's nothing we can wish for that doesn't involve society. A perfect solitude is perhaps the greatest punishment we can suffer. When there is no-one else around, every pleasure fades and every unpleasure becomes more cruel and intolerable. Whatever other passions we may be driven by—pride, ambition, greed, curiosity, revenge, or lust—the soul or animating force of them all is *sympathy* . . . . Let all the powers and elements of nature work together to serve and obey one man; let the sun rise and set at his command; let the sea and rivers roll as he pleases, and the earth furnish spontaneously whatever may be useful or agreeable to him; he will still be miserable until you give him access to at least one person with whom he can share his happiness and whose respect and friendship he can enjoy.

This conclusion from a •general view of human nature is confirmed by •special cases where the force of sympathy is very remarkable. Most kinds of *beauty* are derived from sympathy. When we judge some senseless inanimate piece of matter to be beautiful, we are usually taking into account its influence on creatures who think and feel. A man who shows us a house takes particular care, among other things, to point out the convenience of the rooms, the advantages of how they are laid out, and how little space is wasted on stairs, antechambers and passages; and indeed it's obvious

that the chief part of the beauty consists in such details as these. The observation of convenience gives pleasure, because convenience is a beauty. But *how* does it give pleasure? The beauty in question isn't a •formal one; it has to do with people's •interests; but *our own* self-interest doesn't come into it. So our pleasure in this beauty must come from our sympathizing with the house's owner: we enter into *his* interests by the force of imagination, and feel the same satisfaction that the house naturally occasions in him. . . .

Nothing makes a field more agreeable than its fertility, and the beauty that this gives it can hardly be matched by any advantages of ornament or situation [=, roughly, 'any advantage of prettiness or of having a fine view']. Similarly with individual trees and plants. For all I know, a plain overgrown with gorse and broom may be intrinsically as beautiful as a hill covered with vines or olive-trees, but it will never seem so to anyone who knows the value of each. Yet this is a beauty merely of imagination, and isn't based on what appears to the senses. 'Fertility' and 'value' plainly refer to *use*; and use points to riches, joy, and plenty; and though we have no hope of sharing in these, we enter into them by the strength of our imagination and to some extent ·sympathetically· share them with the owner.

The most reasonable rule in painting is that figures should be balanced, each placed with great exactness on its own centre of gravity. A figure that isn't justly balanced is disagreeable; but why? Because an unbalanced figure it conveys the ideas of •falling, of •harm, and of •pain; and these ideas are unpleasant when they become forceful through sympathy.

Add to this that main element in personal beauty is an air of health and vigour, and a physique that promises strength and activity. The only way to explain this idea of beauty is in

terms of sympathy.

The minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because •they reflect each others' emotions but also because •those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions can often reverberate and gradually fade away. [Hume is likening •the workings of sympathy with •the effect on a ray of light of a facing pair of mirrors that bounce the light back and forth between them; the 'gradually-fade-away' feature is special to sympathy, and doesn't carry over to the mirrors.] Thus the pleasure that a rich man receives from his possessions is thrown onto the onlooker, in whom it causes pleasure and respect; these feelings are perceived and sympathized with by the rich man, thus increasing his pleasure; and this, being reflected back yet again, becomes a new basis for pleasure and respect in the onlooker. The basic satisfaction in riches comes from their power to enable one to enjoy all the pleasures of life; and this, being the very nature

and essence of riches, must be the **primary** source of all the passions that arise from riches. Of these resultant passions, one of the most considerable is the love or respect that others have, which has to come from their sympathy with the pleasure of the possessor. But he also has a **secondary** satisfaction in riches, arising from the love and respect that come to him because of them; and this satisfaction is simply a second reflection of that basic pleasure that came from himself. This secondary satisfaction or vanity becomes one of the main advantages in being rich, and is the chief reason why we either want to be rich ourselves or respect riches in others. This, then, is a **third** rebound of the original pleasure. After that it's hard to distinguish images from reflections of them, and thus hard to go on counting 'rebounds', because of their faintness and confusion.

## 6: Benevolence and anger

Ideas may be compared to the extension and solidity of matter; impressions—especially reflective ones—may be compared to colours, tastes, smells, and other sensible qualities. Ideas can never be totally coalesced with one another; they have a kind of *impenetrability* by which they exclude each other and can't form a compound by mixing but only by conjunction. [Compare what happens when you add a pint of sand to a pint of dry rice, and stir. The most intimate mixture we can have will still have sand-grains and rice-grains distinct from one another; and this is what Hume is calling 'conjunction'. If the grains were mutually penetrable, we might have a compound in which *every part*, however

small, contained both rice and sand; which is what Hume here calls 'mixing'.] On the other hand, impressions can be entirely united with one another; like colours, they can be blended so totally that each of them loses itself and contributes to •the whole only by making some difference to the uniform impression that arises from •it. This is true not only of ordinary impressions but also of passions. Some of the most challenging and puzzling phenomena of the human mind come from this property of the passions.

What ingredients can be united with love and hatred? In trying to answer that, I have started to become aware of

a misfortune that has befallen every system of philosophy [here = 'of philosophy or science'] that the world has seen. When we are explaining the operations of nature in terms of some particular hypothesis, we often find that along with •many experiments that square perfectly with the principles we want to establish there is •some phenomenon that is more stubborn, and won't so easily bend to our purpose. We needn't be surprised that this happens in natural science: we're so much in the dark about the essence and composition of external bodies that in our reasonings (or rather our conjectures!) concerning them we are bound to get caught up in contradictions and absurdities. But the perceptions of the mind are perfectly known, and I have been enormously cautious in forming conclusions about them; so I have always hoped to keep clear of the contradictions that every other system has fallen into. The difficulty that I am about to present, then, isn't at all contrary to my system; it merely departs a little from the simplicity that until now has been the system's principal force and beauty.

The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather combined with, benevolence and anger. It is this combination that chiefly distinguishes love and hatred from pride and humility. Pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul: they aren't accompanied by any desire, and they don't immediately arouse us to action. But love and hatred are not self-sufficient in that way—there's more to them than just how they feel—they carry the mind to something further. Love is always followed by a desire for the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery; and hatred produces a desire for the misery of the hated person, and an aversion to his happiness. Given the extent to which pride/humility is parallel with love/hatred, this remarkable *difference* between them is worth attending to.

Why are love and hatred thus combined with this desire and this aversion? There are two possible answers. **(1)** The first says that the desire and aversion are not merely •inseparable from love and hatred but are •integral parts of them. On this view, love and hatred have not only •the two elements that we have already met, namely:

**(a)** a cause that arouses them, namely pleasure or un-pleasure, and

**(b)** an object to which they are directed, namely a person or thinking being,

but also •one that I didn't include in my initial account of these two passions:

**(c)** an end that they try to attain, namely the happiness or misery of the person in **(b)**.

The thesis is that love or hatred is a single passion in which these three elements are smoothly blended. So **(c)** doesn't *accompany* love and hatred; it's a *part of* them

But our experience doesn't support this. It's certainly true that whenever we love someone we *do* want him to be happy, and whenever we hate someone we *do* want him to be miserable; but these desires don't arise until the ideas of the happiness of our friend or misery of our enemy are presented by the imagination; the desires are not absolutely essential to love and hatred. They're the most obvious and natural expressions of love and hatred, but not the only ones. Those two passions can express themselves in a hundred ways, and can last in us for a considerable time without our having any thoughts about the happiness or misery of their objects; which clearly shows that these desires are not any essential part of love and hatred.

**(2)** •So we are left with the second hypothesis, namely that •benevolence and anger are passions different from love and hatred, and are only *conjoined* with them by the basic constitution of the mind. Just as •nature has given

certain appetites and inclinations to the body, increasing or lessening or varying them according to the situation of the fluids or solids, •she has done the same for the mind. A desire for the happiness or misery of someone is something that nature arouses in our mind, according to whether we love or hate the person, and the nature and intensity of the desire varies in accordance with the nature and intensity of the love or hatred. This isn't an absolutely necessary state of affairs: love and hatred *could* have occurred without any such accompanying desire, or the connection of those desires

with love and hatred *could* have been entirely reversed. That is, if nature had wanted it this way, love could have had the effect that hatred actually does, and hatred the same effect as love. I can't see anything *self-contradictory* in supposing love to be accompanied by a desire to produce misery, or hatred to be accompanied by a desire to produce happiness. If the sensation of the passion and desire be opposite, nature could have altered the sensation without altering the tendency of the desire, and by that means made them compatible with each other. [The last sentence is exactly as Hume wrote it.]

## 7: Compassion

But although the desire for the happiness or misery of others, according to our love or hatred for them, is an arbitrary and basic instinct implanted in our nature, we often have counterfeits of it, which aren't upshots of our basic nature but arise from secondary sources. *Pity* is a concern for the misery of others, and *malice* is a joy in it, without any friendship or enmity—any love or hate—to bring about this concern or joy. We pity even strangers, and people who mean nothing to us; and we sometimes feel malice towards someone to whom we aren't otherwise connected. If our ill-will toward someone else comes from his having harmed or insulted us, that isn't strictly malice—it's revenge. But if we examine these feelings of pity and malice, we'll find that they are secondary ones, arising from basic ones that are varied by some particular turn of thought and imagination.

My earlier account of sympathy [page 171] makes it easy to explain the passion of pity. We have a lively idea of everything

that is related to us. All human creatures are related to us by resemblance. So their persons, their interests, their passions, and their pains and pleasures must have a strong effect on us, producing in us an emotion similar to the one in them, because a lively idea is easily converted into an impression. If this is true in general, it must be especially true of affliction and sorrow, which always have a stronger and more lasting influence than any pleasure or enjoyment.

A spectator of a dramatic tragedy goes through a long series of feelings—terror, indignation, and so on—which the poet represents through his characters. The spectator must sympathize with all these changes, and take in the fictitious joy as well as all the other passions represented on the stage. Why joy? Because a tragedy can't be a really good one unless it involves some reverses of fortune—indeed many tragedies end happily. [Hume goes on to say that •what has to be explained here is the fact that



each passion represented on the stage is followed by the appearance in the spectators' minds of the very same passion, 'first as an idea and then as an impression';

that •this must be explained by some kind of carry-over from actor to audience; and that •the only remotely plausible account of this carry-over is that it comes through the mechanism of *sympathy*. Then:]

Some philosophers explain pity in terms of who-knows-what subtle reflections on •the instability of fortune and on •our being liable to the same miseries that we see in others; but the facts don't support them. For example, there's the fact that x's pity for y depends to a large extent on y's being near to x and even within x's range of eyesight; which shows that pity comes from the imagination •and not from any high-flown philosophical reflections on fortune or fate•. Notice also that women and children, who are most guided by imagination, are most subject to pity; the same infirmity that makes them faint at the sight of a naked sword, even when it's in the hands of their best friend, fills them with pity for anyone whom they find in any grief or affliction.

A rather remarkable fact about sympathy •in general, and thus about pity in particular• is that the communicated passion of sympathy sometimes gets *strength* from the *weakness* of its original, and even arises by a carry-over from feelings that don't actually exist! For example, when someone obtains an honourable office or inherits a great fortune, our joy in his prosperity is •greater in proportion as the sense *he* seems to have of it is •less, i.e. in proportion as his enjoyment of his good fortune is calm and level-headed. Similarly, a man who is not dejected by his misfortunes is pitied all the more on account of his patience; and if he has that virtue to such an extent that he really isn't

suffering at all, this still further increases our compassion. [The 'virtue' of 'patience' is an attitude to •one's own misfortunes—the attitude of putting up with •them without whining or complaining, even within one's own mind]. When a good man suffers what would ordinarily be regarded as **(1)** a great misfortune, we form

**(2)** a notion of his condition;

our imagination moves from that to

**(3)** a lively idea of the sorrow that would *usually* result from that;

and that turns into

**(4)** an impression of that sorrow,

•meaning that *we* become sad about *his* misfortune•, •overlooking the greatness of mind that raises him above such emotions, or •noticing it and being led by it to an even greater admiration, love, and tenderness for him. In our move from **(2)** to **(3)** our imagination is influenced by the general rule that *most* people who suffer such a misfortune are made very sad by it. The same mechanism is at work when we blush for the conduct of someone who behaves foolishly in our presence, even if *he* shows no sense of shame and seems to have no awareness of his folly. This comes from sympathy, but it's a selective sympathy that views its object only on one side, without considering the other side that •has a contrary effect and •would entirely destroy the emotion that arises from the first appearance. [The 'one side' is the misfortune (or foolish conduct) that would ordinarily produce sorrow (or shame); the 'other side' is the person's actual lack of sorrow (or shame).]

In some cases, our concern for someone who is unfortunate is increased by his lack of concern about his misfortune, although his lack of concern does not come from any great-minded virtue. A murder is made worse by its victim's being murdered when he was peacefully asleep. And when an infant prince is captive in the hands of his enemies, historians find him •more worthy of compassion the •less

aware he is of his miserable condition. In such a case we are acquainted with the person's situation, that gives us a lively idea and then sensation of the sorrow that *generally* comes with such a misfortune; and this idea becomes even more

lively, and the sensation more violent, by contrast with the security and calmness that we observe in the person himself. Our imagination is always affected by contrasts, . . . and pity depends entirely on the imagination.<sup>1</sup>

### 8: Malice and envy

The next task is to explain the passion of malice, which imitates the effects of hatred just as pity does those of love, giving us a joy in the sufferings and miseries of others who haven't in any way harmed or wronged us.

Men are so little governed by reason in their feelings and opinions that their judgments about things are always based more on •comparisons than on the things' •intrinsic worth and value. If something that is in itself pretty good is not *as good* as something that a man is already thinking about or is used to, it will affect his passions as though it were defective and bad. This is a feature of the soul, and is similar to what we experience every day in our bodies. Heat one of your hands and cool the other, then plunge both into ·tepid· water; you'll experience the water as cold to one hand and hot to the other. When a small degree of a quality comes after a greater degree, it produces the same sensation as if it were less than it really is, and even sometimes as if it were the opposite quality. A gentle pain that follows a violent one seems like as nothing, or rather becomes a pleasure; just as

a violent pain following a gentle one is doubly grievous and unpleasant.

No-one can doubt this as a thesis about our passions and sensations

—i.e. the thesis that comparisons enter into how strong a passion is caused in us by a given sensory input.—

but there may be some doubt about it as a thesis concerning our ideas and objects

—i.e. the thesis that comparisons enter into what idea or image is caused in us by a given object·.

When an object *x* *seems* larger or smaller because of a comparison with an object *y* that one was looking at just before, no change is occurring in the image and idea of *x*, or in the retina or in the brain or organ of perception. The size of *y* won't make any difference to •how one's eyes refract the rays of light from *x*, or in •how the optic nerves convey the images of *x* to the brain, or even in •what *x*'s size is according to the imagination. So the question is: how can it happen

<sup>1</sup> To prevent all ambiguity, I should explain that **(1)** when ·in I.i.3· I contrasted •imagination with •memory, I was taking imagination to be merely the faculty that presents our fainter ideas. **(2)** Everywhere else, and especially when I contrast 'imagination' with •understanding, I am construing 'imagination' more broadly, as excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings. [This is in fact the first occurrence of 'understanding' in II.ii; what Hume is referring to is his explanation of pity (on page 192) in terms of 'imagination' rather than in terms of 'subtle reflections' on fate etc.]

that, from the same impression and the same idea, we form such different judgments about *x*, at one time admiring its great size and at another despising its smallness? This variation in our judgments must come from a variation in some perception; but the impression of *x* doesn't vary, nor does the idea of *x*; so the variation must concern some other impression that accompanies the impression of *x*. [The words 'seems larger or smaller' replace Hume's words 'augments or diminishes to the eye or imagination'. But that formulation can't be what he means, because he goes on to say that the larger/smaller variation *doesn't* involve either the eye or the imagination.]

In order to explain this, I'll briefly bring in two mechanisms—one to be more fully explained later on, the other already fully explained. **(1)** I think it is safe to accept as a general truth that every object that is presented to the senses, and every image formed in the imagination, is accompanied by some •emotion or movement of spirits that is proportional to it. Because we are so accustomed to this •sensation we may be unaware of it •as a separate factor in our mental situation• and may confound it with the object or idea. But with some careful and exact experiments we can easily isolate it from those. I'll start with examples involving extension and number—'How big?' and 'How many?'. It is well known that •any very large object (the ocean, an extended plain, a vast chain of mountains, a wide forest) and any very numerous collection of objects (an army, a fleet, a crowd) arouse in the mind an emotion that we do feel; and that •the admiration arising from the appearance of such objects is one of the liveliest pleasures that we are capable of. Now, as this admiration is made to grow or shrink by the growth or shrinkage of the objects, we can conclude, in line with the rules of causation I expounded in I.iii.15 [rule 7 on page 83], that it is a compound effect—a combination of several different •simpler• effects, each arising from some

part of the cause. So every part of extension, and every unit of number, has a separate emotion accompanying it when it is conceived by the mind. That emotion isn't always agreeable, •because sometimes it is too faint/slight/minor to be either pleasant or unpleasant•; but it contributes to the production of admiration, which *is* always agreeable. How does it make that contribution? By combining with other such emotions, and helping to agitate the spirits enough to produce a perceptible emotion. If this is granted with respect to extension and number, there can't be any problem about accepting it also with respect to virtue and vice, wit and folly, riches and poverty, happiness and misery, and other such objects that are always accompanied by an evident emotion.

**(2)** The second of the two mechanisms that I mentioned is the one that makes us adhere to general rules. This has an enormous influence on our actions and our understanding, and can even affect our senses. When we have found by experience that a certain •kind  $K_1$  of• object is always accompanied by an object of some other kind  $K_2$ , •the general-rule mechanism comes into play•:

Every time a  $K_1$  object appears, even if this is in circumstances very different from previous appearances of such an object, we naturally fly to the conception of  $K_2$  and form an idea of a  $K_2$  object—an idea that's as lively and strong as if we had inferred the object's existence by sober and rigorous reasoning.

When this happens, nothing can undeceive us—not even our senses! Instead of correcting this false judgment, the senses are often perverted by it, and seem to authorize its errors.

These two mechanisms, combined with the influence of *comparison* that I have mentioned, produce this result:

Every object is accompanied by some emotion proportioned to it—a great object with a great emotion, a small object with a small emotion.

Because of this, a great object following a small one makes a great emotion follow a small one. Now, when a great emotion follows a small one, that makes it greater than it would otherwise have been; and we naturally infer from that increase in the emotion that the object is also greater than it would ordinarily be. How do we infer that? By applying a general rule to the effect that a certain degree of emotion goes with a certain magnitude of the object; and it doesn't occur to us that comparison—the effect of the move from small to large—might change the emotion without changing anything in the object. Those who are acquainted with the metaphysical part of optics [see I.iii.9, especially page 61], and know how we transfer the judgments and conclusions of the understanding to the senses, will easily conceive this whole operation.

But setting aside this new discovery of an emotional impression that secretly accompanies every idea, we must at least acknowledge the mechanism through which objects appear greater or less by comparison with others. We have so many examples of this that there can't be any argument as to whether it is real; and it's this mechanism that I invoke to explain the passions of malice and envy.

[Hume will here be using 'happiness' to refer *not* to an emotional state but rather to a general state of being in good 'condition and circumstances'. Some of his early uses of 'happiness' and 'happy' may also have been like that; but it's especially important to grasp the point *here*, where happiness is repeatedly said to lead to or be accompanied by pleasure. And all of this applies equally to 'misery'.]

It's obvious that when we reflect on our own condition and circumstances, we have more or less satisfaction or dissatisfaction in proportion as they appear more or less fortunate or unhappy, in proportion to how much riches, power, merit, and reputation we think we have. Now, our judgments about objects are usually based not on their intrinsic value but

on how they compare with other objects; and from that it follows that our estimate of our own happiness or misery (and thus the pleasure or unpleasure we feel because of it) depends on our observation of the happiness or misery of others. Someone else's misery gives us a more lively idea of our happiness, and his happiness gives us a more lively idea of our misery. So the former produces delight in us, and the latter produces unpleasure.

So we have here a kind of *pity in reverse*, with the beholder having sensations that are the opposite of those that are felt by the person whom he considers. [Hume goes on to say that what's at work here is a very general mechanism that makes our estimate of where a thing *x* falls on any scale depend partly on the place on that same scale of something else *y* to which we compare *x*. He continues:] A small object makes a great one appear still greater. A great object makes a little one appear less. Ugliness of itself produces unpleasure, but it increases, by contrast, the pleasure we get from a beautiful object. . . . So the case must be the same with happiness and misery. The direct survey of someone else's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure, and therefore produces unpleasure when compared with our own. His unpleasure considered in itself is unpleasant to us, but it augments the idea we have of our own happiness and so gives us pleasure.

If you think it strange that we may feel a reversed sensation from the happiness and misery of others, bear in mind that such comparisons can also give us a kind of malice against ourselves, making us rejoice for our past unpleasures and grieve for our past pleasures. The prospect of past unpleasure is agreeable to us when we are satisfied with our present condition; and the prospect of our past pleasures give us unpleasure if we don't at present enjoy anything that matches them. . . . This phenomenon could be described as a kind of malice against one's past self, enjoying

the thought of how miserable one *was*.

Indeed, someone may have this malice against his *present* self, carrying it to the point where he deliberately seeks affliction, trying to increase his unpleasures and sorrows. There are two situations in which this can happen: **(1)** when someone who is dear to him is in distress, and **(2)** when he feels remorse for a crime that he has committed. Both of these irregular appetites for evil [Hume's phrase] arise from the comparison mechanism. **(1)** Someone who basks in pleasure while his friend is suffering feels the reflected suffering from his friend more acutely because of how it contrasts with his own initial pleasure. Shouldn't the contrast make his present pleasure even greater? ·In theory it might·; but in the case as I have described it, *grief* is the predominant passion, and every addition falls to that side and is swallowed up in it, without operating in the least on the opposite feeling. **(2)** Similarly with the penances that men inflict on themselves for their past sins and failings. When a criminal reflects on the punishment he deserves, the idea of it is magnified by a comparison with his present ease and satisfaction; this comparison forces him, in a way, to seek unpleasure so as to avoid such a disagreeable contrast.

This accounts for •envy as well as •malice. The only difference between those two is this:

- Envy is aroused by someone else's present enjoyment, which by comparison lessens our idea of our own satisfaction.
- Malice is the unprovoked desire to make things bad for someone else, in order to get pleasure from the comparison.

The enjoyment that is the object of envy is usually greater than our own. A superiority naturally seems to overshadow us, and presents a disagreeable comparison. But even when the other person's enjoyment is less than our own, we still

want a greater distance ·between his enjoyment and ours·, so as to increase our idea of ourself—i.e. our idea of how satisfactory things are with us—even further. When this distance decreases, the contrast is less to our advantage, and consequently it gives us less pleasure, even to the point of being disagreeable. That's the source of the kind of envy that men feel when they see their inferiors approaching or overtaking them in the pursuit of glory or happiness. This envy involves the effects of comparison twice repeated. A man who •compares himself to his inferior gets pleasure from the comparison; and when the inferior person *rises*, thus reducing the gap, what should have been merely a decrease of pleasure becomes a real unpleasure because of a new •comparison with its preceding condition [the last six words are Hume's.]

It's worth noting that when x is envious of y's superiority ·in some respect·, what makes x envious is not the •great size of the relevant difference between himself and y but rather its •smallness. A common soldier doesn't envy his general in the way he envies his sergeant or corporal; an eminent writer doesn't encounter great jealousy in hack writers for tabloids as much as he does in authors who are closer to his own level. You might think that the greater the difference of level the greater must be the unpleasure from the comparison; but then look at it in this way: the sheer size of the level-difference between (for example) the hack writer and the eminent author cuts off the relation between them, and either •keeps the hack from comparing himself with the other or •reduces the effects of the comparison. Resemblance and proximity always produce a relation of ideas, and two ideas can't be related unless there is resemblance and proximity between them. No matter what other features may bring them together, in the absence of a bond or connecting quality to join them in the imagination they can't remain

united for long or have any considerable influence on each other. The next paragraph will concern proximity; after that the topic will be resemblance.

[Hume now gives a one-sentence account of what is going on when an affluent slave-owner gets satisfaction from the difference between his condition and that of his slaves. It is extremely obscure, as is the earlier passage to which Hume relates it (section 10<sub>i</sub>); but we can follow his general point when he continues:] When the imagination in comparing objects doesn't pass easily from one of the objects to the other, the action of the mind is to a large extent interrupted, and the imagination in considering the second object makes a kind of fresh start with it. In cases like that, the impression that accompanies an object isn't made to seem greater by the fact that it follows a lesser one of the same kind. These two impressions are distinct, and produce their distinct effects without interacting with one another. The lack of relation between the ideas breaks the relation of the impressions, and this separation prevents them from operating together.

I have been discussing cases where proximity is lacking, i.e. where the people being compared are far apart on the relevant scale; but I stand by my statement that resemblance is also essential for a comparison to produce envy. A poet is not apt to envy a philosopher, or a poet of a different kind, of a different nation, or of a different age. All these differences prevent or weaken the comparison, and consequently reduce the passion of envy.

That is also the reason why objects appear large or small only when compared with others of the same kind. If we see a horse on a mountain, its apparent size isn't altered by the fact that we are also seeing the mountain; but when we see a Flemish horse beside a Welsh horse, one appears much bigger (and the other much smaller) than when it is seen in contexts that don't involve any other horses.

[Now Hume says that this same phenomenon can be seen at work in history, when one side in a civil war is willing to hire foreign mercenary soldiers rather than come to terms with their fellow-countrymen on the other side. In the many wars between Italian city states, he says, the two sides were not strongly related; they both had the label 'Italian', spoke the same language, and were geographically close, that was all; yet that was enough relatedness to make the 'envy' mechanism kick in, causing the lesser of the warring states to *suffer* at the thought of the other state's superiority; and to seek help from foreign forces that were also superior to them, this superiority not being 'grievous' because it wasn't accompanied by any significant 'relation'. He continues:] The mind quickly perceives its various advantages and disadvantages; it finds its situation to be most unpleasant when superiority—i.e. the superiority of someone else—is combined with other relations; so it tries to calm itself down as much as possible by separating itself as much as possible from the superior person, thus breaking the association of ideas that makes the comparison so much more natural and powerful. When it can't break the association, it feels a stronger desire to remove the superiority; which is why travellers are commonly so lavish in their praise of the Chinese and Persians and so grudging about the merits of nations that are neighbours to their own native country! The point about the neighbours is that they are strongly enough related to the travellers to count as *rivals*, whose superiority would be a source of grief.

[There are similar phenomena in the arts, Hume says, though the similarity that he points out is really rather remote. His main example: **(1)** we would object to a play of which part was tragic and part light and funny, but **(2)** we don't mind tragic play and a comic one being published in a single volume; the point being that in **(1)** the two items are

more closely 'related' than the items in (2).]

In short, no ideas can affect each other by comparison or by the passions they separately produce unless they are united by some *relation* that can make it easy for the mind to move between them, thus making it easy to move from •the emotions or impressions that accompany one of them to •the emotions or impressions that accompany the other, so that a single impression relating to one of them can be carried over, intact, to the other. This mechanism is very remarkable, because it is analogous to what we have seen concerning •the understanding and •the passions. Suppose I am confronted by two objects that aren't connected by any kind of relation, that each of these objects separately produces a passion, and that these two passions are opposites—what will be the emotional upshot of all this? We find from experience that the lack of relation between the objects or ideas blocks the natural contrariety of the passions: the break in the •transition of the thought keeps the emotions at a distance

from each other, and prevents their opposition. ·For example, my •utter delight over the success of my friend's book is not lessened, not eaten into or diluted, by my •total gloom over the latest news about slavery in Jamaica·. It is the same case with comparison. [He means that just as two passions don't interact if they aren't sufficiently related, our thoughts about x aren't affected by thoughts of how x compares with y if x and y aren't sufficiently related.] From these two phenomena we can build a secure argument:

- The absence of relation between two ideas can prevent the associated impressions from interacting as they naturally would.
- When the absence of an object or quality removes any usual or natural effect, we can certainly conclude that its presence contributes to the production of the effect.

Therefore:

- The relation of ideas contributes to the transition ·or interaction· of impressions.

### 9: The mixture of benevolence and anger with compassion and malice

So there you have my attempt to explain pity and malice. Both arise from the imagination; whether it generates pity or malice in any particular case depends on the light in which it places its object.

·Pity: When it considers the sentiments of others *directly*, entering deep *into* them, our imagination makes us feel the passions it surveys ·in the other person·.

This happens with all passions, but most especially with

grief or sorrow. On the other hand,

Malice: When we *compare* the feelings of others to our own, we feel a sensation directly opposite to the original one, i.e. a joy from the grief of others, and a grief from their joy.

But these are only the first foundations of the affections of pity and malice. Other passions are afterwards mingled with them: there is always a mixture of love or tenderness with pity, and of hatred or anger with malice. Now, these mixtures

seem to count against my system. Pity is an unpleasure, and malice is a joy, each arising from the misery of others; so we would expect pity to produce hatred, and malice to produce love. I'll now try to reconcile the 'mixture' facts with my theory.

For a passion to pass from one person to another there has to be a double relation of impressions and ideas—a single relation won't do the work. To understand the full force of this double relation, you have to grasp a crucial fact about the nature of the passions being transferred:

What determines the character of any passion is not merely the present sensation—the momentary unpleasure or pleasure—but rather the whole bent or tendency of it from the beginning to the end.

Up to here I have been discussing cases where two passions are related to one another because they feel the same; but passions can also be related because their impulses or directions—the behaviour or at least the desires associated with them—are alike. This can't happen with pride or humility, because they are only pure sensations, ways of *feeling* with no direction or tendency to action. So if we want examples of this special relation of impressions, we'll have to look to emotions that are accompanied by a certain appetite or desire, e.g. *love* and *hatred*.

[Hume's next paragraph is hard to grasp. (1) One of its aims is to show how **pity** is connected with **love**. The link is provided by **benevolence**. Hume has already shown, he says, that benevolence is connected with love in a natural and basic way; and he expresses this by using the formula—

'a desire for the happiness of a beloved person and an aversion to his misery'

—to characterize the 'desire' component of **benevolence**. He then uses a very similar formula—

'a desire for the happiness of someone else and an

aversion to his misery'

—to characterize the 'desire' component of **pity**. He concludes from this that these two passions are 'similar' and 'related'.

(2) The paragraph's other aim is to show how **malice** is connected with **hatred**. The link is **anger**. Hume claims to have shown that anger is connected with hatred in a natural and basic way, and brings this out by using the formula—

'a desire for the misery of a hated person and an aversion to his happiness'

—to characterize the 'desire' component of **anger**. Then he uses the very similar formula—

'a desire for the misery of someone else and an aversion to his happiness'

—to characterize the 'desire' component of **malice**. He concludes from this that anger is 'correspondent to' and 'related to' malice. The paragraph concludes:] It is by this chain that the passions of pity and malice are connected with love and hatred.

There are adequate empirical grounds for this hypothesis. If a man is starting to resolve to perform a certain action (never mind why), he is naturally drawn to every other view or motive that can strengthen his resolution, giving it authority and influence on his mind. To confirm us in any plan that we have formed, we hunt for motives drawn from self-interest, from honour, from duty. So it's not surprising that pity and benevolence, malice and anger, being **the same desires arising from different mechanisms**, should become so totally mixed together that they can't be told apart. . . .

Here is another empirical fact: benevolence and anger—and thus love and hatred—arise when our happiness or misery depend in any way on the happiness or misery of another person, even if we have no further relation to him. I'm sure you will agree that this is such a striking fact that it's all right for me to stop for a moment to consider it.



Suppose that two people in the same trade seek employment in a town that can't support them both; it's clear that the success of either of them is incompatible with the success of the other, and that anything serving the interests of either of them goes against the interests of his rival. Now suppose that two merchants, though living in different parts of the world, enter into a partnership; in this case, their interests go the same way, and anything that favours either of them favours both. It's obvious that the rivalry in the first case will generate hatred, and that the partnership in the second case will generate love. Let us consider to what mechanism is at work here.

[It can't be the standard mechanism of double-relations-of-impressions-and- ideas, Hume says. If *that* were in play, my frame of mind towards my rival would be like this: I hate him when he causes me unpleasure, and love him when he causes me pleasure. But the fact is that I hate him all the time, even though he often brings me pleasure through his misfortunes in our common trade. Similarly with my partner: he may often cause grief in me through his misfortunes in business, but I love him all the time. After dismissing one other suggested explanation, Hume continues:]

So the only explanation we can give of this phenomena involves the parallel direction mechanism mentioned above. ·I mean the mechanism I was invoking a page back, when I wrote that 'passions can be related because their impulses or directions are alike', meaning the behavioural impulses and the direction of the desires involved in them·. Our concern for our own interests gives us a pleasure in the pleasure of our partner and an unpleasure in his unpleasure, in the same way that by sympathy we feel a sensation matching that of a person who is present with us. And on the other side, our concern for our own interests makes us feel unpleasure in the pleasure of our rival, and pleasure in his unpleasure—i.e. the same contrariety of feelings as arises from comparison and malice. . . .

[The remainder of this section will not be presented here. It consists of five pages of very dense exposition and argument, presenting •various supposed facts about when and towards whom we have this or that passion, •reasons why those facts present challenges to Hume's theories, and •attempts by him to meet the challenges. This material is ingenious, but doesn't offer today's philosophically interested readers enough, at the bottom line, to warrant the truly exhausting labour of following it in detail.]

## 10: Respect and contempt

I now turn to the passions of respect and contempt. In considering the qualities and circumstances of another person, we can either

- (1) regard them as they really are in themselves,
- (2) compare them with our own qualities and circumstances, or
- (3) combine both of those two methods of consideration.

The good qualities of others from the first point of view produce (1) love; from the second (2) humility; from the third (3) respect, which is a mixture of love and humility. And the different ways of regarding the bad qualities of others can lead us to (1) hatred or (2) pride or (3) contempt, which is a mixture of hatred and pride.

There's no need for me to prove that humility is an ingredient in respect, and pride an ingredient in contempt; you'll find it obvious that this is so if you attend to what it feels like to have respect or contempt for someone. It's equally obvious that this mixture arises from tacitly comparing ourselves with the respected or contemned person. While x's condition and talents don't change, he may go from causing respect in y to causing contempt in him because y has moved from being x's inferior to being his superior. It's clear from this that the passions in question come from the subject's *comparing* himself with the object.

I have remarked that the mind has a stronger propensity for pride than for humility, and have tried to explain this in terms of the basic mechanisms of human nature. Whether or not you accept my explanation, you can't deny the phenomenon, of which there are many examples. Among other things it is the reason why there is a much greater mixture of pride in contempt than of humility in respect, and why we

are more elevated with the view of someone below us than cast down by the presence of someone above us. Contempt or scorn is such a large ingredient in pride that one can hardly detect any other passion in it, whereas humility plays a smaller part in esteem or respect—love is a much bigger ingredient than humility is. The passion of vanity is so alert that it springs into action at the slightest prompting, whereas humility requires a stronger impulse to make it exert itself.

But now a question arises: . . . Why does anything ever cause pure •love or •hatred, rather than always producing the mixed passions of •respect and •contempt?

All through my discussion I have been supposing that the passions of love and pride are similar in their sensations, being always agreeable; and that humility and hatred are also alike in their sensations, being always unpleasant. That is indeed true ·as far as it goes·, but we can see that between the two agreeable passions, as well as between the two unpleasant ones, there are differences—even contrarieties. Nothing invigorates and exalts the mind as much as pride and vanity do, whereas love or tenderness are rather found to weaken it and make it slack. The same difference is observable between the unpleasant passions. Anger and hatred give new force to all our thoughts and actions, whereas humility and shame deject and discourage us. We need to have a clear idea of these qualities of the passions, so let's keep it in mind: pride and hatred invigorate the soul, love and humility weaken it.

Now, love and pride are alike in the agreeableness of how they feel, and that's why they are always •aroused by the same objects; but they are also unlike because of the contrariety I have just described, which is why they are

•aroused in very different degrees. [Hume tries to illustrate this with a couple of examples, but they or Hume's analyses of them aren't described fully enough for one to follow his line of thought.

[In the following paragraph he offers to answer his question 'Why does anything ever produce pure love or hatred, rather than the mixed respect and contempt?' The placing of this paragraph seems to imply that his answer will involve the invigorate/weaken point that he has been making, but in the upshot it doesn't. It goes like this: Certain personal qualities—including 'good nature, good-humour, facility, generosity and beauty'—are especially apt to produce love in others, but haven't such a strong tendency to arouse pride in ourselves. And those qualities, though very productive of love in others, won't cause much humility in them. No quality in you will cause humility in me by comparison with you unless it's a quality that I would be (non-comparatively) proud of if I had it myself; and no quality in you will cause pride in me by comparison with you unless it's a quality that I would feel (non-comparatively) humble about if I had it myself. Now, suppose someone *x* has a quality that is •just right for producing love in others but is •not very apt to produce pride in *x* himself; the effect of this on another person *y* will be •a great degree of love in *y* for *x* but •a

much lower degree of humility in *y* from the comparison with *x*; with the result that although *y* does have both love and humility with respect to *x*, the humility ingredient in his compound state isn't enough to turn his state from love into respect—it is barely enough for him even to feel it. And the analogous story can be told about qualities in *x* that are apt to make *y* •hate *x* but not very apt to make him •contemn *x*.]

[The section ends with two paragraphs devoted to explaining the 'curious phenomenon' of our preference to keep people whom we contemn at a distance from ourselves. The core of the explanation can be briefly stated (in terms of 'rich' and 'poor', but of course those are only examples). **(1)** Seeing a rich man gives us at least a 'faint touch of respect'; seeing a poor one gives us a touch of contempt. These are conflicting emotions, but the conflict doesn't disturb us if the rich man and the poor one are not *related* in any relevant way [see the book-success/slavery example near the end of section 8]. But if they are physically close to one another, that's enough of a relation to set up an unpleasant dissonance in our minds. **(2)** The rich man wants to keep the poor one at a distance, because if he doesn't he will seem to the rest of us to be unaware of the dissonance and thus, perhaps, unaware of his own high status.]

### 11: The amorous passion, or love between the sexes

Of all the compound passions that come from mixing love or hatred with other emotions, none is more worth attending to than the love that arises between the sexes—both •because of its force and violence and •because it constitutes overwhelming evidence for certain interesting philosophical theses. It's clear that this emotion in its most natural state comes from the combination of three different impressions or passions—•the pleasing sensation arising from beauty, •the bodily appetite for generation, and •a generous kindness or good-will. [Those three sources are given in Hume's exact words.] Things I have already said explain how kindness arises from the perception of beauty, and the 'pleasing sensation' component is too obvious to need discussing. The question that remains is: how is the bodily appetite for generation aroused by the perception of beauty? [The 'appetite for generation' is of course *sexual desire* or, if you like, *lust*; but it will do no harm to stay with Hume's terminology. When 'lust' appears here, it will be because that's the word Hume used.]

The appetite for generation is obviously pleasant (when it's not too extreme), and it is strongly connected with all the agreeable emotions. Joy, mirth, self-satisfaction, and kindness all encourage this desire, as do as music, dancing, wine, and good cheer. On the other hand, sorrow, melancholy, poverty, and humility are destructive of it. All this makes it easy to grasp why this appetite should be connected with the sense of beauty.

But there's another mechanism that contributes to the same effect. Two desires will be connected if there is a real relation between them; one such real relation is •feeling the same, another is •having parallel directions. The second of these is my present topic (I have mentioned it before). To get

a proper grasp of the extent of this relation, consider this:

Any principal desire may be accompanied by subordinate ones that are connected with it. Any further desires that run parallel to those subordinate desires thereby come to be related to the principal one.

Thus, **(1)** hunger often counts as the primary inclination of the soul, and **(2)** the desire to come to food as the secondary or subordinate one, because it's impossible to satisfy **(1)** without satisfying **(2)**. So if something other than hunger inclines us to come near to food, it naturally increases our appetite; as something that inclines us to set our food at a distance is contradictory to hunger and lessens our inclination to eat.

[An example of what Hume is getting at here might be this: We start with two states of my soul:

**(a)** my hunger,

**(b)** my desire to get my fork into that steak,

where I have **(b)** because I have **(a)**. A friend who is already sitting at the table says 'Come and join us for dinner'. That gives me

**(c)** a desire to sit at the dinner-table,

a desire that doesn't come from hunger. Because **(b)** and **(c)** have parallel directions—meaning that they aim at the same behaviour—my acquisition of **(c)** intensifies **(a)**. To illustrate the other half of Hume's story, suppose that my wife says 'The folk next door haven't had steak for years; it would mean such a lot to them if we gave them that one'; and this creates

**(d)** a desire for the steak to be sent to next-door.

This goes in the opposite direction to **(b)**, and thus lessens **(a)**.]

Now, we all know that when our food *looks* attractive, that sharpens our appetite; and that if it *looks* terrible we aren't willing to eat it, however, wonderful it may *taste*. That is an example of the double phenomenon I have been talking about. All this is easily applicable to the appetite for generation.

These two relations, resemblance and parallel desires, cre-

ate such a strong connection between •the sense of beauty, •the bodily appetite for generation, and •benevolence that they become in a manner inseparable; and we find from experience that it doesn't matter which of them comes up first, because any one of them is almost sure to be accompanied by the other two. Someone who is inflamed with lust feels at least a momentary kindness towards the object of it, and at the same time sees her as unusually beautiful; it often happens that someone begins with kindness and respect for the intelligence and merit of the other person, and moves on from that to the other two passions. But the commonest kind of love is the one that starts with the sense of beauty and then spreads itself into kindness and into the bodily appetite for generation. It isn't easy for •kindness or respect to be united with •the appetite for generation: they are too remote for that, because •one may be the most refined passion of the soul, while •the other is the most gross and vulgar [here calling it 'vulgar' just means that *anybody* might have it]. The love of beauty is nicely half-way between them, sharing something with each; which is why it is uniquely fitted to produce both.

This account of love isn't special to my system; it is unavoidable on any theory. The three feelings that make up this passion are obviously distinct, with each having its own distinct object. So it is certain that their ability to produce one another comes from the relations amongst them. But the relations among •the passions is not sufficient on its own; there have to be also relations among •ideas: the beauty of one person never inspires us with love for someone else! This is further evidence of the truth of my theory about the double relation of impressions and ideas. . . .

This matter of sexual appetite also serves to illustrate my claims about the origin of pride and humility, love and hatred. I have pointed out that although *self* is the object of pride and humility, and *some other person* is the object of love and hatred, these objects can't unaided be the causes of the passions. If they were, pride and humility would always be caused together, cancelling one another out; similarly with love and hatred. So here is the picture I have drawn of the mind:

The mind has certain organs that are naturally fitted to produce a passion; when that passion is produced, it naturally turns the view to a certain object. But this object isn't sufficient to produce the passion, so there has to be some other emotion which, by a double relation of impressions and ideas, can set these mechanisms in action and give them their first impulse.

This situation is still more remarkable with regard to the appetite of generation. Sex is not only the object of that appetite but also its cause: as well as being caused by that appetite to think about sex, we are also caused by thinking about sex to have that appetite. But because this cause loses its force if it comes into action too frequently, it has to be enlivened by some new impulse; and we get that impulse from the beauty of the person—i.e. from a double relation of impressions and ideas. Since this double relation is necessary where an emotion has a distinct cause and a distinct object, how much more necessary it is for an emotion that has only a distinct object without any determinate cause!

## 12: The love and hatred of animals

Let us now move on from the passions of love and hatred (and mixtures containing them) to those same passions as they display themselves in lower animals. When we look into this we find not only that love and hatred are common to every animal that can sense and perceive, but also that on my account of the causes of love and hatred those causes are so simple that it's easy to believe that they are at work in mere animals as well as in mankind. They don't require any force of thoughtfulness or insight; everything is done by springs and mechanisms that aren't exclusive to man or to any one species of animals. This clearly constitutes support for my system.

Love in animals doesn't have other animals of the same species as its only object; it stretches beyond that, taking in almost every sensing and thinking being. A dog naturally loves a man more than another dog, and it very commonly finds that this affection is returned.

Animals can't have much in the way of pleasures or unpleasures of the imagination; so they can judge objects only by the perceptible good or evil that they produce, which has to be the basis for the animals' feelings about them. And so we find that we can get an animal to love or hate us by bringing it benefits or by hurting it.

Love in the lower animals isn't caused by *relations* as much as it is in our species, because they aren't intellectually agile enough to trace relations, except in very obvious instances. Yet it's easy to see that sometime relations have a considerable influence on them. For example, *acquaintance*—

which has the same effect as relation—always produces love in animals either to men or to each other. For the same reason, any likeness among them is a source of affection. An ox that is in an enclosed space with horses will naturally keep company with them; but he will leave them and join up with one of his own species if one is introduced into the enclosure.

The feelings of parents for their young comes from a special instinct in animals, as well as in our species.

It's obvious that sympathy—the passing on of passions—occurs among animals as much as it does among men. Fear, anger, courage, and other states are frequently passed from one animal *x* to another animal *y* without *y*'s knowing anything about the cause of *x*'s state. Grief also is acquired through sympathy among animals, producing almost all the same emotional and other consequences that it produces in our species. . . .

Everyone has noticed that dogs hunting in a pack are ever so much more animated than when they are hunting singly; and it's obvious that it must be sympathy that makes the difference. And huntsmen know that this effect follows in a greater degree—even in *too* great a degree—when two packs that are strangers to each other are joined together. We might wonder why this should be, if we didn't have experience of the same thing in ourselves.

Animals are conspicuously given to envy and malice. Perhaps those are more common than pity because they require less effort of thought and imagination.

## Part iii: The will and the direct passions

### 1: Liberty and necessity

The next task is to explain the *direct* passions, i.e. the impressions that arise immediately from good or evil, from unpleasure or pleasure. These include desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear.

Of all the immediate effects of unpleasure and pleasure, none is more remarkable than *the will*. That isn't strictly speaking a *passion*; but we can't understand the passions unless we fully understand the will—what it is and how it works—and for that reason I'm going to explore it here. Please note: by 'the will' I mean nothing but

the internal impression that we feel and are conscious of when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body or new perception of our mind.

This impression, like the previously discussed ones of pride and humility, love and hatred, can't be defined and needn't be described; so I shan't get into any of those definitions and distinctions with which philosophers customarily •tangle rather than •clarify this topic. Instead I'll get straight into the topic by first examining the long-disputed question concerning *liberty and necessity*, which crops up so naturally in discussions of the will.

[Regarding the next two sentences: An instance of 'indifference' would be a state of affairs that could develop in either of two or more ways. (This does *not* mean merely 'that could, *so far as we can tell*, develop in either of two or more ways'.) Hume holds that in the material world there are no indifferent states of affairs. He says that indifference is ruled out by 'absolute fate', but don't attach any weight to that. What makes it certain that this body at this moment will move precisely *thus*, Hume holds, is not its being spookily 'fated' to move like that but its

being down-to-earth *caused* to do so.] Everyone accepts that the operations of external bodies are necessary—that there's not the least trace of indifference or liberty in how they •push one another around, •attract one another, and •hang together. Every object is *determined* by an absolute fate to move at a certain speed in a certain direction; it *can't* move in any other way, any more than it can turn itself into an angel . . . . So the actions of matter are to be regarded as *necessary* actions; and anything that is in this respect on the same footing as matter must also be acknowledged to be necessary. We want to know whether the actions of the •mind are on this same footing; and I'll work towards that by first examining •matter, asking what basis there is for the idea of a necessity in its operations, and what reason we have for ever concluding that one body or •bodily• action is the necessitating cause of another.

I have said that •the ultimate connection between any two objects can never be discovered through our senses or our reason, and that •we can never penetrate far enough into the essence and structure of bodies to perceive the fundamental source of their mutual influence. All we are acquainted with is their constant union, and *that* is where the necessity comes from. If objects didn't occur in uniform and regular relations with one another, we would never arrive at any idea of cause and effect. 'What about the element of *necessity* that is contained in the idea of cause and effect?' Yes, that too! All there is to that necessity is the mind's determination •to pass from object x to the object y that usually accompanies it, and •to infer the existence y from

the existence of *x*. [See the first paragraph of I.iii.14.] So these are two elements that we are to consider as essential to necessity—

(1) the constant union, and

(2) the inference of the mind;

and wherever we find these we must acknowledge a necessity. (·The two are connected with one another, because· it's our observation of (1) that leads us to perform (2).) Now, it's *only* because of these two that we take the actions of matter to be necessary; this view of ours owes nothing to any insight into the essence of bodies. What, then, would it take to show that the actions of our mind are also necessary? One might think that the answer to that is this:

To show that the actions of the mind are necessary, all that is needed is to show (1) that there is a constant union of these actions; that will secure (2) the inference from one mental action to the next; and from (1) and (2) together we get necessity.

To give my results as much force as I can, I shall take these two elements separately: I'll first prove from experience (1) that our actions have a constant union with our motives, temperaments, and circumstances, before I consider (2) the inferences that we draw from this union.

A very slight and general view of the common course of human affairs will be enough to establish (1). . . . Whether we consider mankind according to the difference of sexes, ages, governments, conditions, or methods of education, the same uniformity and regular operation of natural mechanisms are discernible. Just as in the mutual action of the elements and powers of ·material· nature, so also in the mind, like causes produce like effects.

Different kinds of trees reliably produce different-tasting fruit, and we'll all agree that this regularity is an example of necessity and causes in external bodies. But is there any

more regularity in how

•the products of Bordeaux differ in taste from •the products of Champagne

than there is in how

•the forceful and mature feelings, actions, and passions of the male sex differ from •the soft and delicate feelings, actions, and passions of the female sex?

Are the changes of our body from infancy to old age more regular and certain than those of our mind and conduct? Is it *more* ridiculous to expect a four-year-old child to raise a weight of 300 pounds than to expect that same child to produce philosophical reasoning or a prudent and well-thought-out course of action?

We have to accept that the cohesion of the parts of matter arises from natural and necessary causal sources, however hard we find it to explain what they are; and for a similar reason we have to accept that human society is based on similar sources. [Hume is here likening •the way portions of matter hang together to constitute (say) a *pebble* with •the way human beings hang together to constitute a *society*.] Indeed we have more reason to say this about humans and societies than to say it about rock-grains and pebbles. That's because as well as observing that men always seek society we can explain the mechanisms that underlie this universal coming-together. It's no more certain that two flat pieces of marble will unite together than it is that two young savages of different sexes will copulate. And then there are further uniformities: parents caring for the safety and preservation of children arising from this copulation; parental foresight of possible difficulties when their offspring leave home; plans to avoid these difficulties by keeping close and collaborative relations with the offspring.

The skin, pores, muscles, and nerves of a day-labourer are different from those of a man of quality; so are his



sentiments, actions, and behaviour. A man's position in life influences his whole fabric, external and internal; and these different positions arise •necessarily, because •uniformly, from the necessary and uniform mechanisms of human nature. Men can't live without society, and can't have society without government. Government brings it about that people differ in how much property they have, and in what their social ranks are; and out of this arise industry, manufactures, lawsuits, war, leagues, alliances, voyages, travels, cities, fleets, ports, and all the other actions and objects that produce so much diversity, while also maintaining so much uniformity, in human life.

If a traveller from abroad told us that he had encountered a climate in the fiftieth degree of northern latitude where all the fruits ripen in the winter and rot in the summer, in the way that in England the reverse happens, very few people would be so gullible as to believe him. I suspect it would be the same with a traveller who told us he had encountered people just like the ones in Plato's *Republic*, or the ones in Hobbes's *Leviathan*. There is a *general course of nature* in human actions as well as in the operations of the sun and the climate. There are also national characters and individual personal characters, as well as characteristics that are common to all mankind. Our knowledge of what these national or personal •characteristics *are* is our observation of the actions that uniformly flow from •them in the given nation or the given individual person; and this uniformity is the essence of necessity.

The only conceivable way of evading this argument is to deny the uniformity of human actions that is its basis. Someone who accepts that human actions have a constant union and connection with the situation and temperament of the agent, though he may be unwilling to *say* 'Human actions are necessary', is really accepting that they are. Now,

you may want to deny this regular union and connection for the following reason:

'What is more capricious than human actions? What more inconstant than the desires of man? What creature departs more widely not only •from right reason but •from his own character and disposition? An hour—a *moment!*—is sufficient to make him change from one extreme to another, and overturn some plan that it had cost him the greatest work and effort to establish. Human conduct is irregular and uncertain; so it doesn't come from necessity, which is regular and certain.'

To this I reply that our conclusions about the actions of men should be reached by the same kind of reasoning we use in reaching our views about external objects. When any two phenomena are constantly and invariably conjoined together, they become so strongly connected in •the imagination that •it passes quickly and confidently from one of them to the other. ·In such a case, we are *certain*, and we say that the connection is *necessary*·. But there are many degrees of evidence and probability that are lower ·than this certainty·, and we don't regard our reasoning to a general conclusion as completely destroyed by a single counter-example. The mind balances the items of empirical evidence for and against our conclusion, and deducts the lighter from the heavier; the remainder fixes the degree of assurance or evidentness that the conclusion still has. Even when evidence and counter-evidence are of equal weight, we don't drop the whole idea of *causes* and *necessity* ·from our thinking about the subject-matter of our conclusion·. Rather, we take it that the counter-examples are produced by the operation of hidden contrary causes, and conclude that any *chance* or *indifference* that there is here lies only in our imperfectly informed judgment and not in the things themselves—the

events are in every case equally necessary (we think), even though they don't *appear* to be equally constant or certain. And this intellectual handling of events in the material world should, I repeat, be applied also to events of the mind and human conduct. No union can be more constant and certain than that of some actions with some motives and characters; and if in other cases the union is uncertain, it's no more uncertain than plenty of events in the operations of body; and we can't infer from the mind/conduct irregularity anything that won't follow equally from the irregularities in bodies.

It is commonly accepted that madmen have no liberty. But their actions have less regularity and constancy than the actions of sane men, and consequently—if we judge by the surface—they are further removed from necessity than sane men are. So our way of thinking about liberty in humans is absolutely inconsistent; but that's a natural upshot of the confused ideas and undefined terms that we so often use in our reasonings, especially on this topic.

My next task is to show that just as motives relate to actions in the same constant way that other kinds of natural events relate to one another, the influence of this constancy on our understanding is also the same in one sphere as in the other—meaning that we are caused to infer the occurrence of an action from the existence of a motive. If this turns out to be right, there is no known circumstance that enters into the connection and production of the actions of matter that isn't to be found also in all the operations of the mind; which implies that it would be a manifest absurdity to attribute necessity to matter and deny it of mind.

[This next paragraph will use the phrase 'moral evidence', using 'evidence' in its old sense of 'evidentness'. So 'moral evidence' could mean **(1)** something like what 'moral certainty' means today—referring to something short of absolute certainty but sure enough to be a safe basis

for planning and predicting. That was one of its meanings in Hume's day too, but 'moral' then also had a different sense, meaning **(2)** 'having to do with human thinking and acting'—a sense in which psychology was a 'moral science'. It's natural to think that the opponents Hume envisages here are talking about 'moral evidence' in sense **(1)**. His reply to them isn't evasive, but it does shift the emphasis from **(1)** to **(2)**.] Any philosopher, however firmly his judgment is riveted to this fantastic system of liberty, accepts the force of moral evidence, regarding it as a reasonable basis for thinking both in theory-building and practical planning. Well, what *is* moral evidence? It's nothing but a conclusion about the actions of men, derived from premises about their motives, temperaments, and situations. Here's an example. [Here as nearly always Hume uses the word 'fact' to mean 'proposition', so that for him calling Caesar's death a fact isn't implying that Caesar died.]

We see certain words printed on paper, we infer that the person who wrote them would affirm such facts as Caesar's death, Augustus's success, Nero's cruelty; and, recalling many other testimonies to these same things, we conclude that those facts were once really existent, and that so many men wouldn't conspire to deceive us without having any motive to do so, especially since the attempt to do so would expose them to the derision of all their contemporaries. . . .

The same kind of reasoning runs through politics, war, commerce, economics—indeed it's woven so densely into human life that we couldn't act or survive for a moment without making use of it. A prince who imposes a tax on his subjects, expects them to pay. A general who leads an army relies on a certain degree of courage in his soldiers. A merchant looks for honesty and skill in his agent. A man who gives orders for his dinner doesn't wonder whether his servants will obey. In short, most of our reasonings relate to judgments concerning our own actions and those of other

people, because nothing is more central to our interests than that. I contend that when anyone reasons in this way about his and other people's actions he is expressing his belief that the actions of the will arise from necessity; and if he denies this, he doesn't know what he means!

Any two items of which we call one 'cause' and the other 'effect' are, considered in themselves, as distinct and separate from each other as any two things in nature; and however carefully we look into them we can never infer the existence of the effect from that of the cause. It's only from experience and the observation of their constant union that we can make this inference; and when we *can* conduct the inference there's nothing to it but the effects of custom on the imagination. We mustn't here be content with saying •that the idea of cause and effect arises from

(1) constantly united objects;

we have to say •that it also involves

(2) constantly united ideas of objects;

and •that the necessary connection is not discovered by a conclusion of the understanding on the subject of (1), but is merely a perception of the mind arising from (2). Thus, whenever we see that kind of uniformity, and wherever the uniformity has that effect on our belief and opinion, we have the •idea of *causes* and *necessity*, even if we don't like using those •words. In every case that we have observed, when a moving body has collided with another, the other has moved. That is as far as the mind can go; it can't dig any deeper. From this constant union it forms the idea of cause and effect, and through the influence of the union it feels the necessity. What we call 'moral evidence' involves that same constancy and that same influence—and that completes my argument. What remains can only be a dispute about words.

Think about how neatly natural evidence and moral evidence join together to form a single chain of argument. If

you do, you won't hesitate to agree that the two are of the same nature, and derived from the same principles. [In this sentence 'principle' can't plausibly be replaced by 'mechanism' or 'causal source', as it usually has been up to here. There's a real question as to how much similarity Hume is here claiming between the two kinds of evidence; and 'principle' is left standing, to mark the spot. On most of its future occurrences, it will be replaced by 'drive'.] If a prisoner has no money and no influence, he can't escape, and that is as much because of the obstinacy of his jailer as because of the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and when he tries to escape, he chooses to work on the hardness of the stone and iron rather than on the inflexible nature of the jailer. When he is led to the scaffold, he foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards as from the operation of the axe. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas—

the refusal of the soldiers to consent to his escape,  
the action of the executioner,  
the separation of the head from the body,  
bleeding, convulsive motions, and death.

Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions. As the mind passes from one link to the next, it doesn't feel any difference, and it is as sure of the future event as it would be if it were connected with the present impressions of the memory and senses by a chain of causes cemented together by so-called 'physical necessity'. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united items are •motives, volitions, and actions, or •shape and motion. . . .

I venture to predict, with confidence, that no-one will ever try to refute these reasonings of mine in any way except by altering my definitions and giving different meanings to 'cause', 'effect', 'necessity', 'liberty', and 'chance'. According to my definitions, necessity is an essential part of causa-

tion; and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, also removes causes, and is the same thing as chance. As chance is commonly thought to imply a contradiction, and is at least directly contrary to experience, there are always the same

arguments against liberty or free-will. If anyone alters the definitions, I can't undertake to argue with him till I know what meanings he *does* give to these terms.

## 2: Liberty and necessity (continued)

The doctrine of liberty is absurd taken in one sense, and unintelligible in any other—so why is it so prevalent? I think there are three reasons for this. **(1)** After we have performed an action, though we accept that we were *influenced* by particular views and motives it's hard for us to persuade ourselves that we were governed by *necessity* and that it was utterly impossible for us to have acted differently; because we have no sense of the force, violence, or constraint that seems to be implied by the idea of necessity. Not many people are capable of distinguishing

- the liberty of spontaneity (as the scholastics call it), the liberty that is opposed to violence [= 'opposed to being physically locked up or held down or the like']

, from

- the liberty of indifference, i.e. the liberty that means a negation of necessity and causes.

The former is the most common sense of the word; and that species of liberty is the only one we have reason to want to preserve; so our thoughts have chiefly turned towards it, and have almost universally confused it with the other.

**(2)** There is a false sensation or experience of liberty, which is regarded as evidence for its real existence (I'm talking now just about the liberty of indifference). The

necessity of any action, whether of matter or of the mind, is a quality not in the thing that acts but in the mind of any thinking being who considers the action. It consists in •the determination of the spectator's thought to infer the action's existence from something that happened before it; whereas liberty or chance is nothing but the lack of •that determination, and a certain looseness that we feel in passing or not passing from the idea of one to the idea of the other. When we are viewing or thinking about the actions *of others*, we seldom feel such a looseness or indifference, but we often feel something like it regarding *our own* actions; and . . . this has been offered as a conclusive proof of human liberty. We feel that our actions are usually subject to our will, and we *imagine* we feel that our will isn't subject to anything. Here is why: If someone insists that our will *is* subject to causes, we may be provoked to try ·to show him to be wrong·, we feel that our will moves easily in every direction, and produces an image of itself even on the side on which it didn't settle. We persuade ourselves that this image could have developed into the thing itself, because if that is denied we find, on a second trial, that it can. But these efforts get us nowhere. Whatever capricious and irregular actions we may perform ·in such a situation·, they are •motivated by the desire to

show our liberty, so we can't ·in this way· ever free ourselves from the bonds of •necessity. We may imagine that we feel a liberty within ourselves, but a spectator can commonly infer our actions from our motives and character; and even where he can't, he concludes in general that he could have done so if he had known all the details of our situation and temperament, and the most secret springs of our character. And that, according to my doctrine, is the very essence of necessity.

(3) A third reason why the doctrine of liberty has had a better reception from the world than has its antagonist involves religion, which has needlessly concerned itself with this question. No method of 'reasoning' is more common, or more blameworthy, than in philosophical debates to try to refute a thesis by claiming that it has dangerous consequences for religion and morality. When any opinion leads us into absurdities, it is certainly false; but an opinion's having dangerous consequences does *not* make it certain that it is false. So we ought never to use that line of thought: it isn't in the least helpful towards discovering the truth; all it does is to draw down hatred on one's opponent. I'm offering this as a general remark, without wanting to get any advantage from it, ·such as I might get if I thought my position to be true and also dangerous·. I am entirely willing to have my views tested for dangerousness! I would go so far as to say that the doctrine of necessity, understood in terms of my account of it, is not only innocent but even advantageous to religion and morality.

I define 'necessity' in two ways, conformable to the two definitions of 'cause', of which necessity is an essential part. I place necessity either in (a) the constant union and conjunction of pairs of similar items or in (b) the inference of the mind from one such item to the other. Now, necessity in *each* of these senses has been attributed to the will of

man—tacitly, but by everyone in the schools, in the pulpit, and in common life. No-one has ever claimed to deny that (b) we can draw inferences concerning human actions, and that those inferences are based on (a) the experienced union of similar actions with similar motives and circumstances. If someone is to disagree with me about this, it will have to be either •by refusing to call this 'necessity' or •by maintaining that the operations of matter involve something more ·than the necessity described in my theory. The former of these dissents doesn't matter·: the word can do no harm as long as its meaning is understood. As for the second dissent: the question as to whether my account captures the necessity of material events is of no consequence to religion, however much it may matter to natural science. Perhaps I am wrong in asserting that our only idea of connections between the actions of •bodies is the one I have analysed, and I'll be glad to be further instructed about this; but I am sure that I don't ascribe to the actions of •the mind anything but what must readily be agreed to. So no-one should make my position look bad by misconstruing my words and saying simply

'He asserts the necessity of human actions, putting them on a level with the operations of senseless matter.'

I do not ascribe to the will the unintelligible necessity that is supposed to lie in matter. I do ascribe to matter the intelligible quality—call it 'necessity' or not—which the most rigorous orthodoxy does or should agree belongs to the will. If I am in conflict here with any of the received systems, the conflict concerns material objects, not the will.

Indeed I go further! I contend that this kind of necessity is so essential to religion and morality that without it they would both be undermined, and that any account of the will different from mine would be entirely destructive to all laws, both divine and human. All human laws are based

on rewards and punishments, so it *must* be assumed as a fundamental principle that these motives influence the mind in producing good actions and preventing bad ones. Call this influence anything you like; but . . . . common sense says it should be regarded as a cause, and be looked on as an instance of the necessity that I am arguing for.

This reasoning holds just as well when applied to divine laws, with God being considered as a legislator who inflicts punishments and gives rewards in order to produce obedience. But what about when he is acting not •in that magisterial capacity—i.e. distributing rewards and punishments so as to get obedience—but rather •as the avenger of crimes simply because they are disgusting and ugly? •I stand my ground even then. I contend that without the necessary connection of cause and effect in human actions, punishments would be inconsistent with justice and moral fairness, and no reasonable being could even *think* of punishing anyone. The object of hatred or anger is always *a person*, a creature endowed with thought and consciousness; and when some criminal or injurious •action creates hatred or anger, it does so only because of its connection with the •person whose action it is. But the doctrine of liberty or chance reduces this connection to nothing, implying that men are no more accountable for their designed and premeditated actions than they are for their most casual and accidental ones. Actions are by their very nature temporary and short-lived; if an action doesn't come from some cause in the character and disposition of the person who performed it, then doesn't *attach* itself to him, and can't bring him either honour (if it's a good action) or dishonour (if it's a bad one). *The action* may be blameworthy, and contrary to all the rules of morality and religion; but *the person* isn't responsible for it, because it didn't come from anything durable or constant in him and doesn't leave anything durable or constant behind in him.

So it can't possibly draw down punishment or vengeance on him because of it. According to the hypothesis of liberty, a man is as pure and untainted after committing a horrid crime as he was at the moment of his birth; his character isn't in any way involved in his actions because they don't come from it, so that the wickedness of the actions is no evidence of the depravity of the man. . . .

But men are so inconsistent with themselves that though they often *say* that necessity utterly destroys all merit and demerit . . . . , they still continue to base their judgments about merit and demerit on the thesis that necessity reigns. •Here are three striking bits of evidence for this•.

Men aren't blamed for evil actions that they perform ignorantly and casually, whatever their consequences may be.

Why? It can only be because the causes of these actions are only momentary, and come to an end the moment the action is performed.

Men are blamed less for evil actions that they perform hastily and without premeditation than for ones that they perform thoughtfully and deliberately.

Why? It must be because a tendency to act with rash haste, though it's a constant cause in the mind, operates only intermittently and doesn't infect the whole character.

Any crime can be wiped off by repentance, especially if the repentance is accompanied by an evident reformation of life and manners.

Why? It must be because actions make a person criminal only because the actions are proofs of criminal passions or drives [Hume: 'principles'] in the person's mind; and when these drives alter in such a way that the actions are no longer proofs of that, they are no longer criminal. But according to the doctrine of liberty or chance, the actions never were sound proofs •of anything bad and durable in the person

who performed them, and so they never were criminal!

[Hume ends the section with a triumphant challenge to his adversaries to support their position by 'fair arguments'. He concludes:] I have no doubt of an entire victory. So now,

having proved that all the actions of the will have particular causes, I proceed to explain what these causes are and how they operate.

### 3: The influencing motive of the will

Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the battle between passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and to assert that men are virtuous only to the extent that they conform themselves to reason's dictates. Every rational creature, it is said, ought to regulate his actions by reason; and if any other motive or drive tries to take control, he ought to oppose it until it is either entirely subdued or at least made to conform to the superior drive, reason. Most moral philosophy, ancient and modern, seems to be based on this way of thinking. This supposed pre-eminence of reason over passion provides a rich source of metaphysical arguments as well as of moral harangues, in which

reason's eternity, unchangingness, and divine origin are held up for admiration, while

the passions' blindness, inconstancy, and deceitfulness

are equally strongly emphasized. Wanting to show the fallacy of this entire line of thought, I shall try to show that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will, and that reason can never oppose passion in directing the will.

The understanding [here = 'the faculty of reason'] goes to work in two different ways: **(1)** reaching judgments through

demonstration, attending only to the abstract relations of our ideas, and **(2)** reaching them on the basis of probability, attending to the relations of objects that we can know about only from experience. I hardly think anyone will contend that **(1)** the demonstrative species of reasoning is ever, on its own, the cause of any action. That kind of reasoning belongs in the world of ideas, while the will deals on with the world of realities; so it seems that demonstration and volition are totally removed from each other. It's true that mathematics [here = 'geometry'?] is useful in all mechanical operations, and arithmetic is useful in almost every art and profession; but they don't have any influence by themselves. Mechanics is the art of regulating the movements of bodies for some purpose; and our only reason for using arithmetic in fixing the proportions of numbers is to help us discover the proportions of the influence and operations of bodies. . . . Abstract or demonstrative reasoning never influences any of our actions except by directing our judgment concerning causes and effects. That brings me to the second operation of the understanding.

**(2)** It's obvious that when we have the prospect of un-pleasure or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or liking, and are led to avoid or embrace

the object in question. It's also obvious that this emotion doesn't stop there; rather, it makes us look in every direction so as to take in whatever objects are connected with the first one by the relation of cause and effect. That's where reasoning comes in: it looks for cause-effect connections, and the results it comes up with will affect how we subsequently act. But it's obvious that in this case reason doesn't *provide* the impulse to act but only *steers* it. It's the prospect of pleasure or unpleasure from an object that makes us want it or want to avoid it; and these feelings extend themselves to the causes and effects of the object as they are pointed out to us by reason and experience. We couldn't have the slightest interest in what causes what, if the causes and effects were indifferent to us [i.e. if we didn't have attitudes, pro or con, towards them]. Where •the objects themselves don't affect us, •their way of being connected can't have any influence over us; and because reason is nothing but the discovery of how they are connected, objects can't affect us with the help of reason.

Since unaided reason can't **(a)** produce an action or give rise to a volition, I infer that it is equally incapable of **(b)** preventing a volition or of challenging any passion or emotion •in its role as a producer of our conduct•. This inference is strictly valid. The only way reason could possibly **(b)** prevent a volition would be by pushing our passions in a different direction; but such a push, if it operated alone, would have been able **(a)** to produce a volition. Nothing can block or dampen the impulse of passion except a contrary impulse—a push in the opposite direction•; and if this contrary impulse ever comes from reason, it follows that reason must have a basic influence on the will, and must be able to cause volitions as well as block them. But if reason has no basic influence, it can't possibly resist any drive that does have such efficacy; it can't ever keep the mind in suspense for a moment. So it seems that the drive that opposes our passion

can't be *reason* (using that word in its proper sense). When we talk of the struggle 'between passion and reason', we aren't speaking correctly. **Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions**; the only work it can claim to do is in serving and obeying them. [The famous first half of that sentence is verbatim Hume; he didn't put it in bold type.] This opinion may strike you as rather extraordinary, so perhaps I should back it up by some other considerations.

A passion is just a bit of the world's furniture, or if you like a property or state of a bit of the world's furniture; there's nothing about it that would enable it to represent or be a copy of anything other than itself. When I am angry, that passion is just the state that I am in; it isn't *about* anything else, any more than a reference to something else is involved in my being thirsty or sick or more than five foot tall. So my anger can't *possibly* be opposed by, or contradictory to, truth and reason; because any such contradiction consists in a misfit between objects and the ideas that represent them; •and my anger doesn't represent anything•.

... Passions can be contrary to reason only to the extent that they are *accompanied* by some judgment or opinion. So there are only in two senses in which any passion can be called 'unreasonable'. **(1)** When a passion such as hope or fear, grief or joy, despair or security, is based on a belief in the existence of objects that don't really exist—which includes: a belief in the occurrence of events that don't really occur•. **(2)** When in acting on a passion the person chooses means that won't secure his desired end, because he is making some false judgment about causes and effects. If a passion isn't based on false beliefs, and doesn't lead to the choice of inadequate means for the person's end, there's nothing the understanding can say about it by way of justification or condemnation. It's not contrary to reason for me to prefer •the destruction of the whole world to •the scratching of



my finger. It's not contrary to reason for me to choose •my total ruin so as to prevent •some slight unpleasure for a person who is wholly unknown to me. When I accept that x is better y, it's not contrary to reason for me to have a strong preference for y. A trivial good can in certain circumstances produce a stronger desire than does the greatest and most valuable enjoyment; and there's nothing extraordinary in this, any more than there is in mechanics when we see a one-pound weight so situated that it can raise 100 pounds. In short, a passion must be accompanied by some false judgment if it is to be unreasonable; and even then, strictly speaking, what is unreasonable is not the passion but the judgment. . . .

For anyone who doesn't examine things with a strict philosophic eye [Hume's phrase], it is natural to think that there's no difference between two actions of the mind that don't *feel* different. Now, reason exerts itself without producing any sensible emotions, and hardly ever gives pleasure or unpleasure . . . . So it comes about that every action of the mind that is performed with that same calmness and tranquillity is confused with reason by everyone whose opinions about things are based on superficial appearances. Some calm desires and tendencies, though they are real passions, produce little emotion in the mind and are known more by their effects than by how they feel. These desires are of two kinds: **(1)** basic instincts implanted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; **(2)** the general desire for good and aversion to evil, considered merely as such. When any of these passions are calm, and cause no turbulence in the soul, they're easily mistaken for the determinations of reason, •so that (for example) when someone is calmly drawn to behaving kindly to a child• he thinks he is being told to do this by the faculty that makes judgments concerning truth and

falsehood. Because the calm desires and the workings of reason don't *feel* different, they have been thought to have the same nature and to work in the same way.

Beside these calm passions that often determine •the will, there are certain violent emotions of the same kind that also have a great influence on •that faculty. When someone harms me, I often feel a violent passion of resentment that makes me want him to be punished by coming to harm, independently of any thought of pleasure and advantage for myself. •Another example•: When I am immediately threatened with some grievous ill, my fears, apprehensions, and aversions rise to a great height and produce an emotion that I feel.

Philosophers have commonly gone wrong by •ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these mechanisms and •supposing the other to have no influence. •Evidence that the calm passions don't do all the work•: Men often act knowingly against their interest, which means that •the calm passion involved in• the view of the greatest possible good doesn't always influence them. •Evidence that the violent passions don't do all the work•: Men often counteract a violent passion in furthering their interests and designs; so they aren't determined purely by their present uneasiness. [Hume's choice of words here suggests that while expounding his view about calm and violent passions he means also to be offering a passing comment on Locke—who wrote that he used to think that the will is always determined by the person's view of 'the greater good', and then came to see that this is wrong and that the will is always determined by the person's 'present uneasiness'.] The fact is that both these mechanisms act on the will; and when they are opposed, which one prevails will depend on the person's general character or his present disposition. When we credit someone with having 'strength of mind', we mean that in him the calm passions usually prevail over the violent ones; though we

all know that no-one has this virtue so constantly that he *never* gives in to the urgings of violent passion and desire. Because of these variations of temperament, it is very hard

to decide what is actually going on in men's actions and resolutions in any case where there is any contrariety of motives and passions.

#### 4: The causes of the violent passions

This question of the different causes and effects of the calm and violent passions is as tricky—as demanding of careful precision—as anything in philosophy. It's obvious that passions don't influence the will in proportion to how violent they are, to how much disturbance they create in the person's frame of mind. Sometimes the truth is the opposite of that! It often happens that when a passion has become a settled action-driver and the predominant inclination of the soul, it no longer produces any agitation that the person can feel. Its own force and its repeated activity have made everything yield to it, so that it now directs the person's conduct without the opposition and emotion that naturally accompany every momentary gust of passion. So we need to distinguish calm passions from weak ones, and violent passions from strong ones. But despite this, when we want to control a man and push him to act in a certain way we'll usually have a better chance of succeeding if we work on his violent passions rather than his calm ones, hooking into his inclination rather than his reason (as the vulgar call it). And *how* are we to do this? The answer to that introduces my main topic in this section. What we have to do is to get the object of the passion we are working on into a situation that will increase the violence of the passion. It's just a fact that everything depends on the situation of the object,

and that a variation in that can change a calm passion into a violent one or vice versa. Both these kinds of passions pursue good and avoid evil; and both of them are increased or lessened by the increase or lessening of the good or evil. But here's where they come apart: something that the person judges to be good will cause a violent passion in him when it is near, but a calm passion when it is remote—it's the very same good, affecting the passions differently according to its situation. This is part of the story of the will; so I'm going to examine it thoroughly, investigating the circumstances and situations of objects that make a passion either calm or violent.

It is a remarkable property of human nature that any emotion that accompanies a passion is easily converted into it, even if they are basically different from and even contrary to one another. [Hume reminds us of his theory that 'a double relation of impressions and ideas' is needed for one passion to produce another; but that is irrelevant here, he says, because he is talking about two passions that already exist from their own separate causes, and then merge and mingle; and for this there doesn't have to be a double relation, or even, sometimes, a single one. He continues:] The predominant passion swallows up the lesser one and converts it into itself. Once the spirits [see note on page 171]

have been aroused, it's easy to change their direction, and it's natural to imagine that this change will come from the prevailing passion. In many ways the connection between two passions is closer than the connection between any passion and ·passionless· indifference.

[Hume now offers three examples. **(1)** A lover is so 'heartily in love' that he comes to find charming and lovable the little faults of his mistress that would ordinarily make him angry. **(2)** A public speaker, wanting to get his audience worked up over some 'matter of fact', first makes them curious, delaying his revelation until they are almost desperate to know what it is. Hume doesn't provide details to make this plausible. **(3)** The third example concerns the emotions of a soldier going into battle, feeling brave and confident when he thinks of 'his friends and fellow-soldiers' and terrified when he thinks about the enemy. Hume writes of the steps that are taken to increase the soldier's confidence and reduce his fear; and he *says* that this involves the phenomenon that is his official topic here—a dominant emotion converting a lesser one into itself—but he says nothing to make this believable.]

If two passions are both present at the same time, then, however independent they are, they're naturally transfused into each other. From this it follows that when good or evil is placed in such a situation as to cause not only •the basic direct passion of desire or aversion but also •some more specific emotion, the basic passion acquires new force and violence.

One class of cases where this happens is when an object arouses *contrary* passions. When someone is subject to two opposing passions, this often causes a new emotion in the spirits, creating more disorder than would come from the *working together* of two passions of equal force [equal, that is, to the two opposing passions]. This new emotion is easily converted into the predominant one of the two opposing

passions, which thus becomes more violent than it would have been if it had met with no opposition. That explains why it is natural for us to want what has been forbidden, and to take pleasure in performing actions merely because they are unlawful. When the notion of duty is opposed to the passions, it usually can't overcome them; and when it fails to do so, it tends rather to increase them, by producing an opposition in our motives and drives.

Whether the opposition arises from internal motives or external obstacles, the effect is the same: the passion usually acquires new force and violence in both cases. The mind's efforts to overcome the obstacle arouse the spirits and enliven the passion.

Uncertainty has the same effect as opposition. ·The natural accompaniments of uncertainty·—the agitation of the thought, the thought's quick turns from one view to another, the variety of passions that come with the different views—all these produce an agitation in the mind and transfuse themselves into the predominant passion.

Why does security •diminish passions? The only natural cause for this, I believe, is that security removes the uncertainty that •increases the passions. When the mind is left to itself it immediately goes slack; it has to be continually supported by a new flow of passion if it is to preserve its eagerness and energy. And that's also the reason why despair tends to dampen the passions, despite the fact that despair is contrary to security. ·That contrariety is irrelevant; the crucial point is that despair and security are two forms of certainty·.

Nothing more powerfully enlivens an emotion than concealing some part of its object by throwing it into a kind of shade, so that we are shown enough of the object to be drawn to it while still having some work left for the imagination to do. ·This is doubly enlivening: •obscurity

is always accompanied by a kind of uncertainty, which is enlivening, and •the imagination's effort to complete our idea of the object arouses the spirits and gives even more force to the passion.

With *despair* and *security* we have an example of

- contrary states that produce the same effects; which contrasts with *absence*, which is
- a single state that has contrary effects

in different circumstances. The Duc de la Rochefoucault was right when he said that absence destroys weak passions but increases strong ones; as the wind extinguishes a candle but blows up a fire. Long absence naturally weakens our idea and diminishes the passion; but when the idea is strong and lively enough to support itself, the unpleasure arising from absence increases the passion and gives it new force and violence.

### 5: The effects of custom

Nothing has more power to increase and lessen our passions, to convert pleasure into unpleasure and vice versa, than custom and repetition. Custom has two *basic* effects on the mind: •it makes easier the performance of any kind of action or the conception of any object, and •it then creates a tendency or inclination towards that action or object. All the other effects of custom, however extraordinary, come from those two.

When the soul sets itself to perform an action or conceive of an object to which it isn't accustomed, the faculties are somewhat stiff and awkward and the spirits find it difficult to move in the required new direction. Because •this difficulty arouses the spirits, •it is the source of wonder, surprise, and all the emotions that arise from novelty; and •it is in itself very agreeable, like everything that enlivens the mind to a moderate degree. But although surprise is agreeable in itself, its effect of agitating the spirits leads to a heightening of *all* our affections, pleasant as well as unpleasant. (This follows from my principle that every emotion that precedes

or accompanies a passion is easily converted into it.) So every *new* thing affects us greatly, giving us more pleasure or unpleasure than what naturally belongs to it. If the item in question often returns, the novelty wears off, the passions subside, the spirits stop bustling, and we survey the item in a calmer way.

The repetition gradually makes the action or conception easy; and that's another very powerful driver in the human mind, and an infallible source of pleasure as long as the easiness hasn't gone too far. It's worth noting that the pleasure that comes from a moderate facility [= 'easiness'] doesn't tend to augment unpleasant as well as pleasant emotions in the way that novelty does. The pleasure of facility doesn't consist in any •ferment of the spirits as much as it does their •orderly motion; and this is sometimes so powerful that it even converts unpleasure into pleasure, eventually getting us to *like* something that was at first most harsh and disagreeable.

That was about *moderate* facility. When an action or conception becomes *too* easy, it often converts pleasure into unpleasure, making the actions of the mind so faint and lethargic that they can't any longer interest and support it. The only things, almost, that become disagreeable through custom are ones that are naturally accompanied by some emotion, which is destroyed by the too frequent repetition.

We can look at or think about the clouds, the night sky, trees, and stones as often as we like without ever feeling any aversion. Not so with women and music and good cheer and all the other things that naturally ought to be agreeable: when one of *them* becomes indifferent, that easily produces the opposite emotion. . . .

### 6: The imagination's influence on the passions

The imagination is notably closely united with the emotions; nothing that affects it can be entirely indifferent to them. Whenever our ·imaginative· ideas of good or evil become livelier, the passions become more violent and keep pace with the imagination in all its variations. Never mind •why this happens; . . . it's enough for my present purpose that the imagination •does have this influence on the passions, and that there are plenty of examples of this.

[Hume now devotes most of two pages to the thesis that if we are acquainted with pleasure x and know about pleasure y only in a general way (presumably from description), we'll be more affected by x than by y, even if we accept that y is better than x. (He might be thinking of x as the pleasure of dining with good friends and y as the promised joys of heaven.) The reason, he says, is that a very general notion of a pleasure doesn't give our imagination, or therefore our emotions, enough to latch on to. He then recounts something that happened in ancient Athens. Someone had a plan for a military action that he thought would be good for Athens, but he couldn't say publicly what it was because surprise was of

its essence. The Athenians told him to confide the details to one man whom they trusted, and that man reported that the proposed action would be •*very advantageous to Athens and very unjust*; whereupon the Athenian people voted against putting the plan into action. Hume reports an historian who is extremely impressed by this behaviour, but he says that it's not surprising: his point is that the description 'very advantageous to Athens' is too general to grip their imaginations or, therefore, their emotions. He concludes:] The advantage must have had a weaker influence on their imaginations, and have been a less violent temptation, than if they had been acquainted with all its details; otherwise it's hard to conceive that a whole people—unjust and violent people, as men commonly are—should so unanimously have stuck to justice and rejected a considerable advantage.

Any satisfaction that we have recently enjoyed, and of which the memory is fresh, operates more forcefully on the will than a less recent satisfaction of which the traces are almost obliterated. That has to be because in the first case the memory helps the imagination, giving extra force and

vigour to its conceptions. The image of the past pleasure being strong and violent, bestows these qualities on the idea of the future pleasure that is connected with it by the relation of resemblance.

A pleasure that is suitable to •our present way of life arouses our desires and appetites more than does a pleasure that is foreign to •it. This can also be explained in terms of the same mechanism.

Nothing is more capable of putting passion into the mind than eloquence, by which objects are represented in their strongest and most lively colours. We don't need the help of an orator to see that *x* is valuable and *y* is odious; but •these ideas may have only a feeble influence on the will and the

affections until an orator stirs up the imagination and gives •them force.

But eloquence isn't always needed. Someone else's bare opinion, especially if reinforced by passion, will cause an idea of good or evil to influence us—an idea that would otherwise have been entirely neglected. This comes from the mechanism of sympathy, which, I repeat, is simply the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination.

It's a conspicuous fact that lively passions usually go with a lively imagination. This is just one of the ways in which the force of a passion depends on the temperament of the person as much as on the nature or situation of the object. . . .

## 7: Closeness and distance in space and time

There is an easy reason why everything that is close to us, whether in space or in time, should be conceived with special force and liveliness, and excel every other object in its influence on the imagination. *Ourself* is intimately present to us, and anything that is related to self—e.g. by closeness—is intimately present too. But that doesn't explain the fact that when an object is far enough away from us to have lost the advantage of this relation, it becomes fainter and more obscure the further away it is. To explain *this* we may need to get into details.

It's obvious that our imagination can't ever totally forget the points of space and time in which we exist—i.e. can't ever forget *here* and *now*. It gets so many reminders of them from the passions and the senses that even when it is busy

with things that are far away ·in space and/or time· it is forced at every moment to reflect on the present. Now, when we are thinking about objects that we regard as real and existent, we take them in their proper order and situation; we don't jump from one object to another that is distant from it, without at least sketchily running our thought across all the objects that come between them. [Despite Hume's use of 'distant' and 'space', throughout all this he is talking about near/far in time as well as in space. He'll come to a relevant difference between them in the next paragraph but one.] So when we reflect on any object that is distant from ourselves, we are obliged not only •to reach it at first by passing through all the space between ourselves and the object, but also •to keep redoing this because we are at every moment recalled to the consideration of ourselves

and our present situation, ·i.e. recalled to *here* and *now*·. It's easy to believe that this interruption must weaken the idea, by breaking up the mind's action so that its conception can't be as intense and continuous as it is when we think about something closer to us. . . . The *unliveliness* of our idea of an object is roughly proportional to how distant the object is from us and how difficult it is for us to get our thought across to it.

So those are the effects on our •imagination of close objects and remote ones. If my previous theory is correct, there must be corresponding effects on the •will and the •passions—strong effects for close objects, weaker ones for remote objects. And that's what we find. In everyday life men are principally concerned about items that aren't far away in space or in time, enjoying the present and leaving what is far off to the care of chance and fortune. Talk to a man about his condition thirty years hence and he won't listen. Speak of what is to happen tomorrow and he will attend. The breaking of a mirror at home concerns us more than the burning of a house a hundred miles away.

But although spatial and temporal distance both have a considerable effect on the imagination, and therefore on the will and passions, the effect of spatial distance is much less than that of temporal distance. Twenty years—that's a tiny stretch of time compared with how far back history goes; indeed it isn't very big compared with the extent of some people's memories. Yet I think that a twenty-year distance will weaken our ideas and diminish our passions more than they would be diminished by five thousand miles, or even the greatest distance possible on our planet. A West Indian merchant ·here in Europe· will tell you that he cares somewhat about what is going on in Jamaica, but he is not likely to think far enough ahead to be afraid of possible accidents twenty years into the future.

Why is there this difference? It must come from the different properties of space and time. [Hume's explanation is this. Different parts of space exist together, and can be perceived together; this helps the imagination to imagine them together; and that makes the imagination's journey from *here* to *elsewhere* 'smooth and easy'. In contrast with that, different parts of time don't exist together, and can't be perceived together; so when the imagination traces a route from *now* to *some other time* it must go through the intervening times piecemeal—'Every part must appear single and alone', as Hume puts it—so that the imagination's journey is much bumpier. Hume concludes:] In this way any distance in time causes a greater interruption in the thought than an equal distance in space, and consequently weakens more considerably the idea—and therefore (according to my system) correspondingly weakens the passions.

There's another somewhat similar phenomenon, namely that an object a certain distance into the •future has a greater effect than that same object would have if it were that same distance into the •past. It's easy to explain with respect to effects on the will: what is past can't be altered, so it's to be expected that it won't have any effect on the will. But why does the future have more effect on the •passions than the past does? That question is still standing, and it's worth trying to answer.

When we think about some temporally remote item by going progressively through the points of time between ourselves and it, a further feature of our thinking comes into play—one that I haven't yet mentioned. It is that when we think our way along a period of time, we find it easier to go through the moments in the order in which they exist. Starting from an event in the past, we find it easier to move our thought from that event to what happened afterwards than to move it from that event to what happened

before it. You can see this at work in the order that is always observed in historical narrations: nothing short of an absolute necessity can get an historian to break the order of time by narrating two events in the opposite order to that in which they actually occurred.

It will be easy to apply this to our present question if we reflect on my point that *the present situation of the person* is always what imagination starts from when it sets out to conceive any ·temporally· distant object. When the object is **past**, the movement of thought in passing to it from the present is contrary to nature: it goes from one point of time to an earlier one, then a still earlier one . . . and so on, in opposition to the natural course of the succession ·of time·. Whereas when we turn our thought to a **future** object, our imagination flows along the stream of time, going in

the seemingly most natural order from one point of time to the next . . . and so on. So the move into the future is easier for the imagination, making it conceive its object in a stronger and fuller light than when it makes its (much less natural) journey into the past. A small distance into the past has a greater effect in interrupting and weakening the conception than a much greater distance into the future. And that past/future difference in effect on the imagination produces a past/future difference in effect on the passions.

[The section ends with a one-page paragraph in which Hume presents a further flourish of his present line of thought. It's not clear what the flourish really is, and it seems not to be needed for the understanding of the rest of what he has to say.]

### 8: Closeness and distance in space and time (continued)

Thus I have explained three remarkable phenomena: •distance weakens both conception and passion; •distance in time has a greater effect than distance in space; and •distance in past time has a greater effect than distance in future time. Now we come to three phenomena that seem to be in a way the reverse of these. They all concern the *respect and admiration* that we have for a given item x:

- (1) It is increased by x's being at a very great ·spatial or temporal· distance.
- (2) It is increased more by x's being distant in time than by its being distant in space.
- (3) It is increased more by x's being distant in the past than by its being distant in the future.

This is an odd set of facts; forgive me if I stay with it for some time.

[In the paragraphs headed **(1)** and **(3)**, 'admiration' is used, as it often was in Hume's day, to mean something like 'enjoyable wonder'; one could 'admire' the distances between the stars without in any way approving of them.]

**(1)** Why does a great distance increase our respect and admiration for an object? It is obvious that the mere view and contemplation of any greatness, whether in a succession or all at once, enlarges the soul and gives it delight and pleasure. A wide plain, the ocean, eternity, a succession of centuries—these are all objects of great interest; they surpass everything, however beautiful, whose beauty isn't accompanied by a



comparable greatness. Now, when a very distant object is presented to our imagination we naturally think about •the distance between ourselves and it, and get the satisfaction that usually comes from conceiving •something great and magnificent. And our admiration for *the distance* naturally spreads to *the distant object* (because of the imagination's practice of passing easily from one idea to any other that is related to it); so that any passions we have directed to the distance come also to be directed to the distant object. For an object to attract our distance-related admiration, it doesn't have to be actually distant from us; all that is needed is for it to make us, by the natural association of ideas, carry our thought to a considerable distance. A great traveller counts as a very extraordinary person although he is right here in the room with us; as a Greek medal in our display-case is regarded as a valuable curiosity. In these cases the object by a natural transition makes us think about the distance (-spatial for the traveller, temporal for the medal-), and our admiration for the distance by another natural transition reflects back on the object.

Temporal distance has this effect more strongly than does spatial distance. Ancient busts and inscriptions are more valued than •contemporary• Japanese tables; . . . . we regard the •ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians with more veneration than we do the •modern Chinese and Persians, and take more trouble to clear up the history and chronology of the •former than it would cost us to make a voyage and get solid information about the character, learning, and government of the •latter. To explain this I shall have to take a detour.

It's a conspicuous quality in human nature that any opposition that doesn't entirely discourage and intimidate us has instead a contrary effect, and inspires us with a more than ordinary largeness of thought. In gathering ourself together to overcome the opposition, we invigorate the soul

and raise it to a height that it would never have known otherwise. Giving in to a difficulty makes our strength useless, so that we have no sense of *having* strength; but opposition •to a difficulty• awakens our strength and puts it to use.

This is also true in reverse. It's not just that opposition enlarges the soul; when the soul is full of courage and largeness of thought it in a way *seeks* opposition. . . . •Whatever supports and fills the passions is agreeable to us; •what weakens and enfeebles them is disagreeable. Opposition has the •former effect, and facility [= 'easiness'] has the •latter; so it's no wonder that the mind in certain dispositions wants opposition and is averse to facility.

These mechanisms have an effect on the imagination as well as on the passions. To be convinced of this, we need only consider . . . . [Hume now embarks on a three-page exposition of this point (in the course of which he loses sight of what he set out to argue; the only thing in it that has the form '. . . applies to the imagination as well as to the passions' is simply asserted, not shown). The exposition starts with the effect on the imagination of height and depth, which we associate with good and bad—e.g. a monarch has a 'high' status, a labourer a 'low' one. Now, no place is *intrinsically* high: our notion of height is just the thought of a position from which it is easy for bodies to descend towards the earth, a place towards which it is hard for bodies to rise. And the customary descent of •bodies from heights operates on our •senses, which affect our •imagination; the result of this being that when we think about something that is high up, 'the idea of its weight makes us tend to transport it to the place immediately below it, and so on •downwards• until we reach the ground, which stops the body and our imagination'. And we have some difficulty moving from the thought of something to the thought of something above

it, 'as if our ideas acquired a kind of heaviness from their objects'. In this context, Hume revisits his thesis that a fully robust soul will ('in a manner') look for difficult things to do, applies this to the (difficult and therefore attractive) process of raising one's thoughts higher and higher, and asserts that this applies to the imagination as well as passions. Then:]

All this is easily applied to our question of why a considerable distance in time produces a greater veneration for the distant objects than a comparable distance in space. The imagination finds it harder to move from one portion of time to another than to move through parts of space, because space or extension appears to our senses as •united whereas time or succession is always •broken and divided. If the distance is large enough it creates a challenge for the imagination, which is invigorated by it; the challenge (and therefore the invigoration) is greater with temporal than with spatial distance, . . . and this is the reason why all the relics of antiquity are so precious in our eyes, and appear more valuable than what is brought even from the remotest parts of the world.

**(3)** The third phenomenon that I noted—namely, the fact that our admiration for a thing is increased more by its being distant in the past than by its being distant in the future—fully confirms this. [Hume's explanation of this is based on the thesis that we think of past/future in terms of high/low, e.g. thinking of our ancestors as *above* us. That has the result that it is harder for us to think our way 'up' to earlier times than to think our way 'down' to later ones; if the difficulty is great enough it presents an invigorating challenge to our imagination and our passions, and that makes us have 'veneration and respect' for any object that our thought reaches by this difficult route. Then Hume ends the section:]

Before I leave this subject of the will, I should perhaps give a brief summary of what I have said about it, so as to put the whole •body of doctrine• more clearly before your eyes. A 'passion', in the ordinary sense of the word, is a violent emotion that the mind experiences when confronted by something good or evil, or by something that arouses an appetite in us by hooking into the basic structure of our faculties. By 'reason' we mean emotions of the very same kind as passions, but operating more calmly and causing no disturbance in the person's temperament. (The calmness of these emotions leads us into a mistake about what they are, causing us to regard them as merely conclusions of our intellectual faculties.) The causes and the effects of these violent and calm passions are pretty variable, and largely depend on the particular temperament and disposition of the person concerned. The violent passions generally have a more powerful influence on the will; though we often find that the calm ones, when backed by reflection and supported by resolution, can control the violent passions in their most furious movements. A calm passion can easily turn into a violent one, either by

- a change of mood in the person,
- a change in the circumstances and situation of the object of the passion,
- reinforcement by an accompanying passion,
- reinforcement by custom, or
- input from an excited imagination,

and that fact makes this whole affair more uncertain, •i.e. makes it harder to predict with justified confidence how a given person's emotional state at a given moment will lead him to act•. This so-called 'struggle between passion and reason' adds variety to human life, and makes men different not only from each other but also from themselves at different times. Philosophy can account for only a few of the larger

and more obvious events of this war, leaving aside all the smaller and more delicate revolutions because they depend

on mechanisms that are too tiny for philosophy to grasp.

### 9: The direct passions

It's easy to see that the passions, both direct and indirect, are based on unpleasure and pleasure, and that all you need to produce an affection of any kind is to present some good or evil. Remove the unpleasure and pleasure and you immediately remove love and hatred, pride and humility, desire and aversion, and of most of our reflective or secondary impressions.

The impressions that arise most naturally and simply from good and evil—actual or prospective—are the *direct* passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition. The mind by a *basic* instinct tends to unite itself with the good and to avoid the evil.

[Hume goes on to fit *indirect* passions into his account. Some impression of unpleasure or pleasure gives me a direct passion; and further features of the situation make 'certain dormant mechanisms of the human mind' kick in to create indirect passions in the manner Hume described early in Book II. A secondary passion doesn't compete with the primary passion from which it comes, and may indeed increase it. A suit of fine clothes gives me pleasure because of its beauty; this pleasure produces the direct passions of volition and desire; the thought that I own the suit starts up the mechanism that produces *pride*; and the pleasure that this involves reflects back on my direct passions, adding strength to my desire or volition, joy or hope. Then:]

When a good is certain or probable, it produces joy. When evil is certain or probable, there arises grief or sorrow.

When good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to fear or hope—depending on where the balance of uncertainty lies.

Desire is derived from good considered simply, and aversion is derived from evil. [That sentence is verbatim Hume.] The will exerts itself, when either good can be achieved or evil averted by some action of the mind or body.

Beside good and evil—i.e. pleasure and unpleasure—the direct passions often arise from a natural impulse or instinct that defies explanation. Examples include: •the desire for our enemies to be punished and for our friends to be happy, •hunger, •lust, and a few •other bodily appetites. Strictly speaking, these ·indirect· passions *produce* good and evil rather than *coming from* them as other emotions do. ·For example, when I look hungrily at the food on my plate, the situation is not that I see the food as good and am led by that to hunger for it; rather, it is that I hunger for the food, and that makes it a good for me·.

The only direct passions that are worth studying closely, it seems, are hope and fear; and I'll now try to explain them. The ·fundamental· fact is obvious:

If an event would produce grief or joy if it were certain to happen, it will give rise to fear or hope if there is only an uncertain probability that it will happen.

Thus, the difference in certainty of upshot makes a considerable difference in the associated passion. To understand why, we have to go back to what I said in I.iii.11 about the nature of probability.

Probability arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, by which the mind is not allowed to settle on either side but is incessantly tossed from one side to the other—from thinking of the object as existent to thinking of it as nonexistent. [This to-and-fro of ‘imagination or understanding, call it which you please’ [Hume’s exact phrase] creates a fluctuation between joy and sorrow—the unsettledness of thought produces unsettledness of passions. Hume continues:]

With regard to its passions, the human mind is not like a flute, which stops making a sound the moment the breath ceases, but rather like a violin, which still makes some sound, gradually fading away, after the bow’s •stroke has been completed. The imagination is extremely quick and agile; but the passions are slow and hard to budge, which is why when the mind is presented with an alternation of two views that are productive of two different passions, though the imagination can change its views very nimbly, it does not happen that each •stroke produces a clear and distinct note of •some one• passion, but rather one passion is always mixed and mingled with the other. Depending on whether the probability is greater on the good or the evil side, the passion of joy or sorrow predominates in the composition. Probability provides a larger number of views or chances on one side than on the other; or—to put the same thing in different words—it involves a larger number of returns of one of the passions. Those dispersed passions are collected into one, and form a higher intensity of that passion. Which is to say, in other words, that the •joy and •grief that are intermingled by means of the alternating contrary views of

the imagination produce through their mixture the passions of •hope and •fear.

The contrariety of passions that is our present topic raises a teasing question about how to explain the following empirical fact. When the objects of contrary passions are presented at once, any one of four things can happen. One is that the predominant passion absorbs the other and is increased by it (I have already explained this, and won’t discuss it further here.). The other three are:

- (1) Brief attacks of one of the passions alternate with brief attacks of the other.
- (2) The two passions cancel one another out, so that neither of them is experienced.
- (3) Both passions remain united in the mind.

What theory can we use to explain these different upshots? and what general mechanism underlies them all?

(1) When the contrary passions arise from entirely different objects they take place alternately, because the lack of any relation in the relevant ideas separates the impressions from each other and prevents them from cancelling one another out. For example, when a man is upset over •losing in a lawsuit, and joyful at •the birth of a son, his mind can’t run from the agreeable to the calamitous object and back again quickly enough for one emotion to damp down the other and leave him *between* them in a •state of indifference.

(2) It’s easier for the mind to achieve •that calm state when a single event is of a mixed nature, having both good and bad aspects. In that case, the two passions mingle with each other by means of the relation—i.e. the relation of *coming from different aspects of a single event*—and so they cancel out and leave the mind in perfect tranquillity.

(3) Suppose that what we have is not (1) two different objects or (2) good and bad aspects of a single object, but rather a single entirely good object which is being considered

not as certain but only as more or less probable. In that case, I contend, the contrary passions will both be present in the soul at once, and instead of destroying and damping down each other they will exist together and produce a third impression or emotion by their union. [A little later on, Hume compares **(1)** with two liquids in different bottles, **(2)** with acid and alkali in one bottle, and **(3)** with oil and vinegar in one bottle. On the way to that he explains rather lengthily what is needed for a case to be of type **(3)** rather than type **(2)**. The explanation is ingenious, but not very nutritious, philosophically speaking. After all that he returns to his main topic in this section:]

The passions of fear and hope can arise when the chances on the two sides are equal. In such a situation the passions are at their strongest, because the mind there has the least foundation to rest on and is tossed about by the greatest uncertainty. Add a little probability on the side of grief and you immediately see that passion spread itself over the joy/grief mixture and tincture it into fear; as the probability on the grief side goes on increasing, the grief steadily grows and so does the fear, until—as the joy component continually diminishes—the fear imperceptibly turns into pure grief. And the entire process can be run in reverse: increase probability on the joy side and you'll intensify the joy until it turns into hope, and eventually when the probability becomes high enough the hope will turn back into pure joy. Aren't these ·facts· plain proofs that the passions of fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy—as plain as the comparable proofs in optics that a coloured ray of the sun passing through a prism is a composition of two others? I'm sure that neither natural nor moral philosophy contains any proofs stronger than this.

There are two kinds of probability: •when the object is really in itself uncertain, and to be determined by chance;

and •when the object is already certain but we can't be certain about it because we have evidence on both sides of the question. Both kinds of probability cause fear and hope; which must come from the one property that they have in common, namely the uncertainty and fluctuation they bestow on the imagination by the unresolved contrariety of views.

It's not only probability that can cause hope and fear. They can arise from anything which, like probability, produces a wavering and unconstant method of surveying an object; and that is convincing evidence that my hypothesis about the causes of hope and fear is correct.

An evil that is hardly thought of as even *possible* does sometimes produce fear, especially if it's a very great evil. A man can't think of extreme pain without trembling, if he is in *any* danger of suffering them. The smallness of the probability is made up for by the greatness of the evil, and the sensation ·of fear· is just as lively as it would be if the evil were more probable. . . .

Fear can even be caused sometimes by evils that are agreed to be *impossible*. For example, when we tremble on the brink of a precipice, though we know that we are in no danger because it is up to us whether we advance a step further. What is happening here is this: the immediate •presence of the evil influences the imagination in the same way that •the certainty of it would do; but when this fear collides with our thought about how safe we are, it is immediately retracted, and causes the same kind of passion, as when contrary passions are produced from a contrariety of chances.

Evils that are *certain* sometimes produce fear in the same way that ·merely· possible and impossible evils do. A man in a strong well guarded prison with no chance of escape trembles at the thought of ·being tortured on· the rack, to

which he has been sentenced. This happens only when the certain evil is terrible and confusing: the mind continually pushes the evil away in horror, and the evil continually pushes back into the man's thought. The evil itself is fixed and established, but the man's mind cannot bear being fixed on it; and from this fluctuation and uncertainty there arises a passion that feels much the same as fear.

[Fear can arise when some evil is uncertain (not as to whether it did or will occur, but) as to *what* evil it is. Hume gives the example of a man who learns that one of his sons has been suddenly killed, but doesn't yet know which. This produces in his mind a fluctuation between one evil and another—the passion cannot settle—with nothing good about it; and this produces something like the fear that comes from evil/good uncertainties.]

These results enable us to explain a phenomenon that at first sight seems very extraordinary, namely that surprise is apt to change into fear, and everything that is unexpected frightens us. The most obvious explanation of this is that human nature is in general cowardly, so that on the sudden appearance of any object we immediately conclude it to be an evil and are struck by fear without waiting to learn anything about it. But although this seems obvious it turns out to be wrong. The suddenness and strangeness of an appearance naturally creates a commotion in the mind, like everything that is unfamiliar to us and that we weren't prepared for. This commotion naturally produces a curiosity or inquisitiveness that is very violent (because of the strong and sudden impulse of the object); because of its violence it becomes unpleasant, and resembles in its fluctuation and uncertainty the sensation of fear or the mixed passions of grief and joy. This likeness of fear naturally turns into fear itself, giving us a real sense that something evil is present or on the way. That's an example of the mind's general

practice of forming its judgments more from its own present disposition than from the nature of its objects. [The concept of *fluctuation* seems to intrude into this paragraph without being explained or justified. Perhaps Hume's thought is that a 'commotion' is bound to be a shaky fluctuating affair.]

Thus all kinds of uncertainty are strongly connected with fear, even when they don't cause any opposition of passions coming from opposite features of the situation or ways of looking at it. A person who has left his friend on his sick-bed will feel more anxiety about his friend than if he were still with him, even if he can't give him any help and can't judge what the outcome of the sickness will be. Here is the explanation of this. What he chiefly cares about here is the life or death of his friend; he will be just as uncertain about that when he is with his friend as when he is away from him; but while he is there in the hospital room he will take in a thousand little details of his friend's situation and condition, these will steady his thought and prevent the fluctuation and uncertainty that is so like fear. It's true that uncertainty is in one way as closely allied to hope as to fear, because it is essential part of both; but it doesn't lean to that side, because uncertainty as such is unpleasant, which gives it a relation of impressions to the unpleasant passions.

That's why it is that uncertainty concerning any little detail relating to a person increases our fear of his death or misfortune. [Hume decorates this with four lines by the Latin poet Horace.]

But this mechanism connecting fear with uncertainty goes even further: *Any* doubt produces fear, even if it's a doubt about whether A or B or C will happen, when each of them is good and desirable. A virgin on her bridal night goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, although she expects nothing but pleasure of the highest kind, and what she has long wished for. The newness and greatness of the

event, the confusion of wishes and joys, throw the mind into such a turmoil that it doesn't know what passion to settle on; that gives rise to a fluttering or unsettledness of the spirits, and because this is somewhat unpleasant it very naturally degenerates into fear.

So we go on finding that whatever causes any fluctuation or mixture of passions that has any degree of unpleasure in the mix always produces fear, or at least a passion so like fear that they can hardly be told apart.

I have here confined myself to discussing hope and fear in their simplest and most natural form, not going into all the variations they can have by being mixed with different views and reflections. Terror, consternation, astonishment, anxiety and the like are nothing but different species and degrees of fear. It's easy to imagine how •a different situation of the object or •a different turn of thought can change a

passion, even changing how it *feels*; and the more specific sub-kinds of all the other passions come about in the same sort of way. Love may show itself in the shape of tenderness, friendship, intimacy, respect, good-will, and in many other forms; basically they are all one passion, arising from the same causes though with slight variations. I needn't go into the details of this, which is why I have all along confined myself to the principal passion, ·love·.

The same wish to avoid long-windedness has led me to by-pass a discussion of the will and direct passions as they appear in animals. It's perfectly obvious that they have the same nature and the same causes in the lower animals as they have in human creatures. Look at the facts about this for yourself—and in doing so please consider how much support they give to the theory of the direct passions that I have been defending here.

### 10: Curiosity, or the love of truth

All these enquiries of mine started from *the love of truth*, and yet I have carelessly ignored *that* love while inspecting many different parts of the human mind and examining many passions. Before leaving the passions, I should look a little into the love of truth and show its origin in human nature. It's such a *special* emotion that it couldn't have been satisfactorily dealt with under any of the headings of my discussion up to here.

Truth is of two kinds: **(1)** the discovery of the proportions of ideas, considered as such, and **(2)** the conformity of our ideas of objects to their real existence. [The rather mysterious

**(1)** seems to refer primarily to truths in geometry, though we'll see Hume extending it to mathematical truths generally.] It is certain that **(1)** is not desired merely as truth, and that our pleasure in truths of this kind doesn't come just from their being true; something else has to be at work here. . . .

The chief contributor to a truth's being agreeable is the level of intellect that was employed in discovering it. What is easy and obvious is never valued; and even what is in itself difficult isn't much regarded by us if we learn it without difficulty and without any stretch of thought or judgment. We love to track through the demonstrations of

mathematicians; but we wouldn't get much pleasure from someone who merely reported the conclusions, telling us the facts about the proportions of lines and angles, even if we were quite sure that he was well-informed and trustworthy. In listening to this person we wouldn't be obliged to focus our attention or exert our intellect; and these—attending and stretching—are the most pleasant and agreeable exercises of the mind.

But although the exercise of intellect is the principal source of the satisfaction we get from the mathematical sciences, I don't think that it alone is sufficient to give us any considerable enjoyment. If we are to get pleasure from it, the truth we discover must also be of some importance. It's easy to multiply algebraic problems to infinity, and there's no end to the discovery of the proportions of conic sections; yet few mathematicians take any pleasure in these researches—most turn their thoughts to what is more useful and important. The question then arises: *How* does this utility and importance operate on us? It is a tricky question because of a strange fact:

Many philosophers have consumed their time, destroyed their health, and neglected their fortune, in the search for truths that they regarded as important and useful to the world; although their over-all conduct showed that they weren't endowed with any share of public spirit and had no concern for the interests of mankind.

We have here something that seems to be a contradiction: These philosophers would lose all enthusiasm for their studies if they became convinced that their discoveries wouldn't matter to mankind; and yet they haven't the least interest in the welfare of mankind!

To remove this contradiction we must take into account the fact that certain desires and inclinations go no further

than the imagination, and are the faint shadows and images of passions rather than real emotions. Consider someone who surveys in great detail the fortifications of a city; it's clear that in proportion as the bastions, ramparts, and so on are fitted to achieve what they were built for, he will have a suitable pleasure and satisfaction. This pleasure arises from the utility of the objects, not from their form, so it has to be an instance of sympathy—i.e. sympathy with the city's inhabitants, for whose security all these fortifications were designed and built. And yet the pleased surveyor may be a stranger who has in his heart no kindness for those people, or even an enemy who hates them.

You may want to object: 'Such a remote sympathy is a very slight foundation for a passion, and is not nearly strong enough to be the source of so much industry and application as we frequently observe in philosophers.' [These 'philosophers' are scientists, and Hume has focussed on the special case of mathematicians. You'll recall that he is trying to explain why such a person might be motivated by the thought of his work's utility to mankind, even though he doesn't much care for mankind.] But here I return to my earlier point that the pleasure of study consists chiefly in the action of the mind, and the exercise of high intellect and understanding in the discovery or comprehension of a truth. If the *importance* of the truth is needed to complete the pleasure, it's not because that in itself adds significantly to the person's enjoyment, but only because it is somewhat needed to fix our attention. Work that would give us great satisfaction if we did it in a focussed and attentive way won't satisfy us if we do it—the very same work—in a casual and inattentive manner.

Along with the pleasure of doing the work there has to be also some prospect of success in it, i.e. of discovering the truth that is being sought. A general remark that may be useful in many contexts is relevant here: When the mind



pursues any end with passion, even if the passion originally comes not from the end but from the action of pursuing it, we naturally come to care about the end itself, and are unhappy with any disappointment we meet with in pursuing it. . . .

[Hume illustrates this with the psychology of hunting. A very wealthy man gets great satisfaction from a session of hunting and shooting ‘partridges and pheasants’, and may want his catch to be prepared, cooked and eaten. But the resultant food doesn’t motivate his hunt or provide his pleasure, because he could get such food in much less expensive and time-taking ways. On the other hand, he wouldn’t be interested in hunting and shooting ‘crows and magpies’. Why? Because they aren’t edible! —And a second example: Playing cards for money. This can be found enjoyable by someone who already has plenty of money and has no use for more, yet would find the game flat and boring if it were not played for money. Hume winds up:] This is like the chemical preparations where by mixing two clear and transparent liquids you get a liquid that is opaque and coloured.

[In the next two sentences, what Hume means by our ‘interest’ in a game, and our ‘concern’ as we play it, is our caring what happens in it, our wanting to win.] The interest we take in a game engages our attention; without that we can’t enjoy *any* activity. Once our attention has been engaged, the difficulty, variety, and ups and downs still further interest us; and it’s from that concern that our satisfaction arises. Human life is such a tedious and boring scene, and men generally are so slack and lazy,

that anything that helps them to pass the time—even with a passion that is mixed with unpleasure—mostly gives them pleasure. And in our present case this pleasure is increased by the nature of the objects—the coins—which are small and perceptible, making them •easy to get one’s mind around and •agreeable to the imagination. This theory that accounts for the love of truth in mathematics and algebra can be extended to morals, politics, natural philosophy, and other studies, where we our topic is not the •abstract relations of ideas but rather their •real connections and existence.

But along with the love of knowledge that displays itself in the sciences, there’s a certain *curiosity* implanted in human nature that is a passion derived from a quite different mechanism. Some people have an insatiable desire to know about the actions and circumstances of their neighbours, though •their interests aren’t in any way involved in them, and •they must entirely depend on others for their information; so that there’s no room here for •the pleasures of •study or of •useful application. Let us try to see why this is so.

[Hume’s explanation comes down to this: *Believing* can be a source of pleasure or something like it. That’s because (according to his theory about belief) to believe something is to have a *lively* idea that is fixed *firmly* in the mind; liveliness is a source of pleasure, and stability connects with pleasure too, because its opposite is mental unsettledness which is a source of unpleasure. The desire for stability comes into play only when for some reason the relevant ideas ‘strike on us with force and concern us nearly’. That’s why I am curious about my next-door neighbours but not about yours.]