substantive ethical beliefs cause in our moral judgments. Hume gives up simple-minded naturalism and argues 1) that moral experience is only possible for people that *can* adopt a common point of view, that 2) the common point of view is a historical one, in the sense discussed above, and 3) that the experience of value conflict is a causal condition, rather than an obstacle, for adopting the common point of view and, thus, for having an universal standard of morals. Cultural and historical conflicts are, thus, at once, a condition for *having* moral experience and a condition for establishing a universal standard for moral judgments.

11

Negotiating Pluralism in Taste and Character: Reading the Second *Enquiry* with "Of the Standard of Taste"

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1. A Comparison

Like many contemporary philosophers of art, Hume thinks of moral and aesthetic judgments as complementary. Both spring from our sentimental dispositions in a way that makes them closely analogous, perhaps even continuous. But unlike many contemporary philosophers of art, Hume affiliates them as much by granting an aesthetic character to our moral judgments as by attributing moral status to our aesthetic judgments. For Hume, moral judgments are grounded in aesthetic responses to beauties (or deformities) of character. This is so not only for those judgments that concern immediately agreeable (or disagreeable) qualities of character, but also for those directed at useful traits, whether useful to self or useful to others. Utility pleases, and its pleasure is not some merely secondary pleasure transferred from ends to means. Rather, we internalize an aesthetic response to those qualities that are reliably or familiarly useful (T 3.3.1.20; SBN 584–5). In the same way, we find fertile and well-cultivated landscapes, or the sleek build of a racehorse beautiful (T 3.3.5.1; SBN 615). The response is immediate, although the explanation of why the trait evokes it is not.

Book III of the *Treatise* is littered with examples of such aesthetically flavored moral evaluations.[1] So too is the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*,[2] and its insistence on aestheticizing our moral responses may be yet more noteworthy

[1] Particularly salient passages include T 2.1.8.3–5; SBN 300, T 3.1.2.3–4; SBN 471, T 3.3.1.8-9; SBN 576–7, T3.3.1.28–30; SBN 590; in yet other places, Hume casually speaks of "moral beauty" (e.g., T 3.1.1.22; SBN 465, T 3.2.1.8; SBN 479).

[2] Notable examples appear at EPM 1.3; SBN 170, EPM 1.9; SBN 172, EPM 1.9; SBN 173, EPM 5.4; SBN 214, EPM 6.23–5; SBN 244, EPM 7.10n; SBN 253, n. 4, EPM 8.14–15; SBN 267, EPM 9.10; SBN 276, EPM App 4.21; SBN 322, and perhaps most striking of all, EPM App 1.13; SBN 291.

because of its focus on questions concerning utility.[3] Much of the case Hume makes there against the "selfish" theorists rests on the psychological character of judgments directed at useful traits. Arguing against the reduction of our approval of such traits to self-love, Hume cites the "delicate feeling" with which we respond, stressing that it involves an aesthetic pleasure that is indifferent to our own relative interests and situation, and thus, seems utterly unlike calculating advantages and disadvantages to self.[4] Although it is the similar phenomenology of moral and aesthetic judgments that Hume stresses, he takes aesthetic phenomenology to offer the most immediately accessible example of the disinterested appeal of the useful.[5]

That Hume paints our moral judgment in aesthetic colors will serve as my starting point for a reading of Hume that draws together the *Treatise*, EPM, and the essay "Of the Standard of Taste." The textual evidence for this initial claim seems compelling, and so I will argue it no further here. One can, of course, debate the extent of the assimilation. I think it goes pretty far: Hume sometimes suggests that aesthetic qualities *are* virtues—most obviously, agreeable qualities of body (e.g., sweet breath) and mind (e.g., wit) count as virtues. Indeed, the very ability to exercise delicate taste typical of a good aesthetic judge seems to count as a Humean virtue, falling among the qualities immediately agreeable to self (see EPM 7.28; SBN 260). To be sure, moral sentiments have a particular flavor and moral judgments are directed at those personal traits stable enough to count as parts of character; as such, they differ from our responses to beautiful poetry, landscapes, or pottery. Still, the distinctive phenomenology and object of Humean moral judgments might do no more than differentiate them as a special species of aesthetic judgments. Although I find it plausible to think of them so, I do not need to insist on it for my present purposes. All I require is the fairly weak claim that aesthetic and moral sentiments and judgments are analogous in several crucial respects.

But that fairly tame analogy leads directly to my central proposal: that Hume allows for a kind of taste pluralism in his account of the standard for aesthetic judgment, and that the structural similarities he finds between moral and aesthetic judgments extend the pluralism to the moral sphere. This pluralism, however, does not eliminate genuine distinctions of value. Good aesthetic judges may exhibit a variety of different aesthetic preferences, and virtuous people (or evaluators) may embody a variety of different characters (or evaluations of character), yet still plausibly be differentiated both from philistines and from scoundrels. The root of this pluralism is diversity in sentimental dispositions—a diversity of what

[3] See, e.g., EPM 6.23–5; SBN 244. Some of the same sorts of arguments appear in the *Treatise* (T 3.3.1.8–9; SBN 576–7, T 3.3.1.19–20; SBN 584–5). But Hume spends less time on them, and sometimes even contrasts the pleasing quality of the useful, but artificial with that of "natural" moral beauty (T 3.2.6.3–4; SBN 527–8).

[4] See EPM 5.38; SBN 225 (and indeed all of Sec 5 Part 2). Hume's distinction in this section seems rather different from that Kant would later make between judgments of the merely agreeable and judgments of taste: Hume instead contrasts a prudential calculation of individual means and ends with the contemplation of pleasing traits. As I will shortly argue, such contemplation is generalizable in a way comparable to the Kantian judgment of taste—but not fully universalizable (in a sense to be explained).

[5] *Mutatis mutandi*, Hume also points to the moral burden of judgments about aesthetic qualities, e.g., insisting that moral faults "disfigure" a poem (E-ST 246). But striking though it is, this move is less frequent.

well-positioned judges might *appropriately* feel in various contexts. Such feelings are "sentiments," or their close kin, "passions." They drive aesthetic judgments, moral evaluations of characters, *and* (I take it) the performances that we assess as signs of character. The move to moral agency is, I admit, a bit of a jump, and those who do not wish to make it may rest with the claim about pluralism in character evaluation. But if we hold that agents can be motivated—indirectly and in part—by the prospects of happiness, satisfaction, pride, and sympathy with others that come from surveying their own characters, then it is a fairly small extra step (see T 3.3.6.5–6; SBN 620 and EPM 9.10; SBN 276).[6] There are puzzles, to be sure, about how we can be moved by the moral sentiments aroused by character traits, but my suggestion here assumes simply that we can, so that our moral judgments succeed in exercising some influence on how we live our lives. In general, if Humean psychology does admit sentiment, and taste pluralism as I propose, it should surface in our judgments and the actions that are sensitive to our judgments of value. That means that judgments should either compensate for that pluralism or manifest it. I will argue for the latter: the processes of correction our sentiments undergo in order to be expressed in judgments do not eliminate their pluralism. And so, irreducible sentimental diversity results in a pluralism of moral judgments. Such pluralism, however, means only that we can tolerate diverse styles in tastes, judgments, and characters, without thereby jettisoning standards of either moral or aesthetic appropriateness.

The sort of taste pluralism I attribute to Hume may violate expectations that differences should be resolvable and legitimate judgments universalizable if they are to be anything other than merely subjectively valid. We can call this the "Kantian intuition." I think it's an important intuition and that it is particularly urgent in the moral sphere.[7] I hope to use Hume's account to explain why we should nonetheless find such pluralism plausible and unthreatening, at least enough so that we do not need to invoke full Kantian universalizability to render either critical or practical judgments generally valid. The first step is to show that there are indeed standards for our sentiments and judgments—standards that suffice to qualify a few people as aesthetic experts and many people as genuinely competent moral judges, even when the standards do not fully *converge*. This point may be enough to satisfy many qualms—and indeed, may be as far as Hume goes in the *Treatise* account of moral sentiments and judgments. But I think Hume takes a further step to defuse the worry raised by the Kantian intuition in his claims for the sentiment of "humanity" and the "sense of public utility" in the second *Enquiry*. The work introduces these notions with little fanfare, even as it finds the foundation for our social virtues in them. On the reading I will advance, they function to plug an explanatory hole opened up by Hume's pluralism: how we can appreciate diverse styles of moral judging. The basis

[6] Working out the *mechanisms* by which seemingly indirect passions and sentiments motivate and overcome often more violent direct passions, however, is no easy matter. Juan Santos Castro explores these issues nicely in "The Historical Convergence of Happiness and Virtue: A Reading of Hume's Theory of Moral Motivation," PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2015, https://doi.org/10.7939/R3DB7W25R.

[7] Some advocates of a kind of taste pluralism, such as Alexander Nehamas (and as Nehamas reads him, Nietzsche), take this pluralism to divide the aesthetic from the moral; see Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 10, 133.

for such appreciation is our humanity. When it is cultivated into a full-blown sense of public utility, it allows us to give diverse styles their due as components of, not threats to, social order. Our feeling for humanity, I suggest, thus figures less as one normatively inflected sentiment among many than as a kind of comprehensive responsiveness to, and respect for, the plurality of morally (and aesthetically) appropriate responses humans may feel. If we develop it into a sense of genuine public utility, it can adjudicate among such pluralities by considering how they might find a fit within a complex human society (like modern civil society). As it evolves from the sentiment of humanity, this sense of public utility is thus *not* simply the ordinary, garden-variety, ground-level sense of utility that is at play when we approve of acts either of benevolence or justice in isolation. Rather, it is the sense that allows us to see the worth of both benevolence and justice, despite the possibility of conflicts, and to grant them both a place within a complex society, despite their incommensurability. My proposed gloss is, I admit, pretty speculative: Hume's account of how our senses of humanity and public utility work is so sketchy as to be nearly invisible.[8] But what he says seems amenable to the reading I suggest, while that reading addresses important and long-standing issues in Hume's work. That seems some warrant for speculation.

2. How Hume's Sentimentalism leads to Pluralism

What I take to generate Hume's taste pluralism is his reliance on our sentiments as the source of distinctions in both moral and aesthetic taste, and on specially processed and corrected sentiments for his various standards. If competent aesthetic or moral judges in the proper position for judgment can exhibit a variety of sentimental dispositions, then we might expect a similar plurality of standard-constituting judgments and tastes. And the reasons for expecting such pluralism in our sentiments are those that motivate the turn to sentiments in the first place. Against moral rationalists, such as Clarke, who locate moral qualities in the eternal relations of fitness among things, Hume argues that moral qualities are not susceptible to the sorts of relations that would allow demonstration, that is, to relations of entailment,

[8] And what he does say may not be fully consistent. A handful of recent authors have valiantly contended with the sparse remarks Hume drops about the workings of "humanity" in the second *Enquiry*. Some ally it in various ways with the enlarged sympathy of the *Treatise*; see e.g., Kate Abramson, "Sympathy and the Project of Hume's Second Enquiry." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 83.1 (1999): 45–80; to some extent, Rico Vitz, "Sympathy and Benevolence in Hume's Moral Psychology." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42.3 (2004): 261–75; and Remy Debes, "Has Anything Changed?: Hume's Account of Association and Sympathy after the Treatise." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15.2 (2007): 313–38. Others document the distinctive claims that EPM makes for humanity, and argue for its novelty, however similar it might seem to sympathy; see, e.g., Ryan Hanley, "David Hume and the 'Politics of Humanity.'" *Political Theory* 39.2 (2011): 205–33; and in a different way, Jacqueline Taylor, "Hume's Later Moral Philosophy." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hume* (2nd edition), eds. David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 311–40. I am skeptical that any fully satisfactory, settled account can be given of its psychological status (see also Hanley, "David Hume and the 'Politics of Humanity,'" p. 220); instead, I hope here only to offer an account of the *role* it plays in EPM, and will avoid the thorny issue of the relation between humanity (whether "sentiment," or "principle") and the mechanism of sympathy described in the *Treatise*.

incompatibility, or contradiction. By the same token, the *sentiments* that discover moral qualities are likewise not susceptible to such logical relations or constraints. Whatever corrective appraisals we practice on our passions and sentiments are different from rational norms, and *a fortiori* from logical ones. This should follow from the claim that each sentiment is a *distinct* perception, albeit a perception that can be associated with others by resemblance and which we discover to stand in patterns of causal relations with others. The *Treatise* describes passions as "original facts and realities, compleat in themselves"; thus, they make "no reference to" anything else, and need not "agree or disagree" even with other perceptions of the same kind (T 2.3.3.5; SBN 415).[9] I take it that the same should apply to our sentiments. To be sure, some passions (or sentiments) tend to give rise to other passions (or sentiments) either intra- or intersubjectively, and feeling one may affect our experience of others. As such, certain tendencies and bents in our affective experience may smooth over differences and give a kind of "consistency" to the progress of sentiments. Moreover, Hume may switch from talking of "passions" to talking of "sentiments" precisely for those cases where he wants to indicate that our responses have been subjected to such refining processes.[10] Nonetheless, there seems to be nothing *internal* to a passion or sentiment that prevents its co-existence with any other, even in the same subject at the same time. Moreover, the second Book of the *Treatise* spells out causal mechanisms, particularly sympathy and comparison, that allow ingrained causal patterns to take different directions, and thus direct the will in very different directions. As such, the progress of our passions may well be erratic, volatile, and difficult to predict. This sort of "inconsistency" is one reason why we undertake processes of correction in order to "agree in terms" or form "a general system."

That is the work for which the "general and steady points of view" introduced in the Book III of the *Treatise* do the heavy lifting. I will argue shortly that adopting a general point of view is important for overcoming invidious partiality and making our judgments publicly accessible. But that is not tantamount to eliminating all forms of heterogeneity, and I do not think we can find a mechanism for doing so imbedded in a general point of view. Unlike the formal Kantian categorical imperative, neither our sentimental dispositions, nor a general point of view provides a rank ordering for what is overriding in case of conflicts. This, I think, means that genuinely normative judgments can fail to converge, so there is no demand of universalizability that everybody *ought* to form the same judgments. Yet Hume *could* have structured his sentimentalism to accommodate a demand of this sort. Shaftesbury did so, although he too based our ability to judge in a distinctive form of receptivity to particular

[9] This passage is the "unfortunate paragraph" that many commentators have bemoaned for its implausible denial of intentionality for the passions (see, e.g., Annette C. Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 164. But its assertion that the passions lack relations that produce agreement or disagreement with other perceptions fits nicely with my point here.

[10] The difference between what Hume calls "sentiments" and what he dubs "passions" is an issue of great controversy. See Amy Schmitter "Passions, Affections and Sentiments: Taxonomy and Terminology." In *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. James Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 197–225; see especially pp. 204–7.

qualities of objects and events.[11] But Shaftesbury provided a systematic measure for evaluating and ordering our responses—namely, by the scope of the "social love" they express, or the universality of the object to which they are directed. The more holistically our benevolence is directed, the greater the approval it should elicit. Such ordering guarantees that our reflective responses will converge, and allows Shaftesbury to hold them subject to rational standards, particularly to those of internal consistency and avoidance of contradiction.[12] As I shall argue further below, Hume offers no such homogenizing mechanism. Indeed, he poses a disparity between benevolence and justice as if to illustrate his own divergence from Shaftesbury's system.

But it is one thing to deny homogeneity and convergence, another to tolerate outright contradictions in our moral or aesthetic judgments. Hume's account does not admit that what is properly deemed a vice may also properly be judged a virtue by someone contingently equipped with different sentimental dispositions. For example, anybody who takes pleasure in sticking small children with pins has an "unnatural" constitution, which all right-thinking people condemn as vicious. Similarly, Hume would not allow that anybody with an iota of taste could judge Ogilby's work to be good. We agree on much just because humans share a vast terrain of "natural" dispositions. We also make additional demands in correcting our sentiments and judgments of value. The way in which we judge character traits in terms of their usefulness or agreeableness from the general point of view will do a lot of work in explaining why we cannot tolerate those who torment children, or those who fail to condemn such torment. Then too, some of the regulative demands Hume makes of aesthetic judgments explain why we should expect other people to share some of the good judge's tastes. The good judge of taste is in a position to offer her judgments to public critical appraisal: it would be surprising were nobody to adopt her sentiments after considering her grounds for judging. There may, in fact, be a counterfactual condition for considering a judge's determinations to be judgments of good taste: namely, that they could be adopted by other good judges. This is a kind of publicity criterion. As such, judgments issuing from an appropriately positioned expert can expand the range of shared sentiments and judgments by helping to form and reform yet other sentiments: they can secure converts, who may themselves be causes of "some new conversion" (E-ST 243). Nonetheless, I still maintain that Hume can allow that various tastes and corresponding judgments are formed as they ought to be—i.e., publicly accessible, impartial, properly informed, under the appropriate circumstances, and by someone with the appropriate level of discernment and experience—and yet show an irreducible plurality.

[11] On whether and how Shaftesbury should be counted a sentimentalist, see Michael Gill, "Shaftesbury's Two Accounts of the Reason to Be Virtuous." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38 (2000): 529–48.

[12] Indeed, Shaftesbury characterizes failures to abide by the measure he offers as particularly grotesque errors of reason: to have only a "partial affection, or social love in part, without regard to a complete society or whole, is in itself an inconsistency, and implies an absolute Contradiction." See Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions,* Times, ed. L. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 205.

3. Diversity in the Judgment of Taste

The effect of this pluralism for aesthetic judgments, I maintain, is that we may expect *some* others to share a good judge's verdicts without demanding that *all* others should. I hope that result seems plausible for matters of aesthetic taste: lacking a single measure for standards or a mechanism to force conformity in judgment simply opens up room for different aesthetic preferences. Although some people read him differently, I think this is just what Hume claims (and celebrates).[13] For despite talking of "catholic and universal beauty" (E-ST 233) and "the general principles of taste [that] are uniform in human nature," Hume allows "two sources of variation, which are not sufficient indeed to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, but will often serve to produce a difference in the degrees of our approbation or blame" (E-ST 243). These are "the different humours of particular men [and] the particular manners and opinions of our age and country." These are legitimate sources of variation, ones that do not spring from "some defect or perversion in the faculties" (E-ST 243), but rather from "such diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides" (E-ST 244). Both sources produce variation in our dispositions to form sentiments. Most importantly, that variation lasts through the corrective processes required for good judging, for no further standard exists to impose conformity. Although Hume seems to downplay the effects of these different sources, he also catalogues a numerous and diverse list of such sources: people of different ages, nationalities, sexes, classes and historical periods will have different tastes, so that "at twenty, OVID may be the favourite author; HORACE at forty; and perhaps TACITUS at fifty" (E-ST 244).[14] Likewise, different forms of drama will appeal to different, but still unobjectionable tastes. This diversity in taste arises from different dispositions between individuals in their tendencies to form pleasurable or painful sentiments. Such proclivities may be deeply personal: "we choose our favourite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humour and disposition" (E-ST 244). As such, we might expect diversity in tastes to track differences among individuals and among relations between individuals. And just as many kinds of diversity among individuals are harmless, even agreeable, some differences in their tastes are "innocent and unavoidable, and can never reasonably be the object of dispute, because there is no standard, by which they can be decided" (E-ST 244).

Hume does admit that it would be a fault in our judgment simply to overlook or deride the qualities in a work (a point to which I shall return). But he also maintains there is no error simply in feeling a "predilection for that which suits our particular turn and disposition." Here we should appreciate all that he countenances among our "predilections," which include some so different in kind that we may have no way to calibrate them to each other. For one, the qualities of a work we select as salient for judgment may diverge. These qualities should be publicly accessible in the sense (and

[13] James Shelley offers a catalogue of commentators who criticize Hume specifically for assuming that the tastes of true judges converge; see "Hume and the Joint Verdict of True Judges." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 71.2 (2013): 145–53; see pp. 145–6.

[14] Thanks to Sergio Tenenbaum for prompting me to think about the implications of this passage.

to the extent) I explained above, but finding them salient for judgment is not universally required. One example of such contrast Hume offers is that between a critic who studies correctness and another who favors "elevated" strokes. Were the contrast simply a matter of recognizing the same aesthetic qualities, while weighing them differently, we might readily reconcile their different tastes as being directed at different aspects of the works. But I do not think things can be quite so easy. A contrast between how good judges select features—and kinds of features—as salient to judgment may often be described equally as well as a contrast between how they respond to the "same" qualities in different works, since how we identify and attribute *aesthetic* qualities are shaped by our responses.[15] For instance, that which I find cloying in Renoir, I may find charming in Correggio. In doing so, I do not claim that I find the cloying quality also to be charming. Rather, I judge that Renoir does badly what Correggio does well. Both judgments may be appropriate, and even exemplary of the standard-setting taste of a good judge. At the same time, they are so heterogeneous that I do not think their divergence can be resolved simply through shifts in attention or emphasis. Nor do I think we should *require* that they be coordinated so in order to count them both as plausible verdicts. What makes aesthetic judgments authoritative has little to do with the kind of consistency we demand conclusions bear to their premises: it is not as if I could not be entitled to my sentiment in the face of the Correggio unless it were to override the sentiment of distaste directed at the Renoir. Now, *if* I were trying to convince you to share my judgments, I might draw your attention to distinctive (and irksome) features in the Renoir in hopes that they will overwhelm whatever sentiments of pleasure you feel for the qualities his work shares with the Correggio. But that does not mean that I have measured all the various qualities I might adduce as aesthetically salient against a common evaluative yardstick to form my response. To suppose that doing so is a requirement for my sentiment to be apt for judgments of taste is to suppose that our sentiments and the standards for forming our sentiments must converge on pain of being standard-less. That is not a demand that I think Hume's account makes.

If my analysis is correct, then we should avoid relying exclusively on Hume's talk of the "joint verdict" of good judges as standard-setting.[16] Rather, what forms the

[15] Although Hume does not expound on the nature of the different predilections he cites, he offers a number that are amenable to the sort of analytic ambivalence I explain above, as when he contrasts "the ear of this man [that] is entirely turned towards conciseness and energy" with "that man [who] is delighted with a copious, rich, and harmonious expression" (E-ST 244). Likewise, the critic of correctness may not describe the stroke as elevated, but as overdone, while the proponent of the sublime may characterize "correctness" as mere pettiness.

[16] I thus disagree with Shelley, who reads Hume as denying that sentimental variety will issue in a diversity of taste-setting judgments. On his view, "unprejudiced" judges correct their judgments to conform to the time-tested majority of verdicts of true judges, which sets the standard ("Hume and the Joint Verdict," p. 147). But I think that Shelley misreads the analogy between moral and aesthetic judgments slightly in asserting that the good judge's corrections and elimination of prejudice show that she adopts the "general point of view." Aesthetic judgment does not require all the counterfactual amendments constituting a genuinely general point of view (to be examined further in the next section). Instead, the verdicts of particular good judges exercising their delicate sensibilities take the place of the demand to consider how "one" might respond to the trait in question. Shelley's view would require critics to subject the determinations of their sensibility to counterfactual considerations about verdicts of the entire community of judges to form their judgments. Such efforts might be very useful for *developing* one's taste, but Hume does not seem to require that a standard-setting judge must defer to the community in forming any judgment. And since I think Hume's "two sources of variation" opens the door to much greater variation in judgment than Shelley allows, a demand to conform would be challenging. Rather I agree with Michelle Mason's claim that "for the true judge in [proper] circumstances, judging good and liking do not come apart"; see "Moral Prejudice and Aesthetic Deformity: Rereading Hume's 'Of the Standard of Taste.'" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59.1 (2001): 59–71; see p. 63). However, in the final analysis, these differences might amount to little more than a matter of emphasis: Shelley thinks that true judges will find themselves differently moved, but issue judgments similar enough to set rough boundaries for the beautiful ("Hume and the Joint Verdict of True Judges," pp. 149–50); as I will argue shortly, I think that true judges exhibit a taste pluralism that issues in a variety of judgments, but still find the judgments of their fellow judges intelligible.

standard for taste includes the full panoply of personal predilections found within the community of true judges. Even after eliminating attempts that suffer from "defect or perversion in the faculties" or situation (E-ST 243), we should not expect to find all preferences to be shared among good judges. Indeed, the kinds of variations in taste Hume indicates do not arise merely around disputed or marginal candidates for beauty; his examples of "innocent" variations run a wide gamut, and the differences in response are not susceptible to segregation within distinct genres.[17] To be sure, Hume also insists that we should not restrict "approbation to one species or style of writing, and condemn all the rest" (E-ST 244), just as we should avoid parochial reactions to vicissitudes in (non-moral) manners. At the same time, he admits that it is impossible that we be "so sensibly touched" by what does not suit our temper. We cannot demand—even of true judges—that they actually feel the sentiments grounding judgments that a work is beautiful. Instead, Hume seems to require something less stringent: that good critics not thereby attribute irredeemable faults to the object (E-ST 245). Refusing to blame the piece or its author is tantamount to recognizing that a good judge *might* well appreciate the beauty of the object. That is, the good judge who is unmoved by such a work admits that it is intelligible that someone might experience pleasure and approbation in the face of the object without laboring under a fault or defect of some sort. As Hume emphasizes in some similar cases of moral judgment, this sort of intelligibility is necessary for us to converse on intelligible terms.[18] But it does not require that all good judges actually experience similar sorts of sentiments in similar situations. And since it is the sentiments that good judges experience in the appropriate situations that determine their verdicts,

[17] That, I suggest, is just another way to interpret the examples of correct and sublime critics, or those who prefer simplicity and those favoring ornament. On this point, I disagree with a reading of Hume that Paul Guyer suggested (which I hope I characterize properly) in conversation at the 2011 annual meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics. Guyer suggests that the sort of innocent variations of taste as those found among the differently aged readers of Latin authors can be accommodated by relativizing the value of the object to a particular kind of audience; see Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 343. Qualifying verdicts so would make them genre-specific and locatable within a single canon of taste (see Guyer, *Values of Beauty*, pp. 58–62, 74).

[18] It may also be the product of actual conversations—particularly if it is through interacting with other true judges that a judge comes to appreciate that the work *could* intelligibly be counted beautiful. For somewhat similar points, see Jacqueline Taylor, "Hume's Later Moral Philosophy." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hume* (2nd edition), eds. David Norton and Jacqueline Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 311–40.

intelligibility does not require agreement among their verdicts. *Ex hypothesi*, some good judges are unmoved by pieces that excite strong responses in other good judges. There is no standard to decide between them, because the only standard is their predilections. By admitting different predilections among those who qualify as perfectly good judges and who are exercising their judgment with perfect propriety, Hume thus refuses to admit that having a standard at all demands complete convergence in taste or some sort of decision procedure for override competing appraisals. He may not have found a strict "rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled," but what he does offer is enough that "at least, a decision, [may be] afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another" (E-ST 229).

4. Variability in Moral Evaluation and the *Treatise of Human Nature*

I think that the effects of taste pluralism for our moral sentiments and judgments will turn out to be both relevantly similar and importantly different from those we have just examined. The differences are particularly important since it seems intuitively obvious that we seek more conformity across moral judgments than aesthetic. The stakes involved in moral pluralism—for social solidarity, public order, and everyday interactions—are much higher, and the dangers of conflict more pronounced than those connected with aesthetic diversity. And *prima facie*, Hume seems to demand much greater convergence for what goes into moral judgment than he does for what contributes to expert verdicts about beauty.[19] This demand may motivate the turn in the last section of the *Treatise* to how we coordinate our natural dispositions of approval or disapprobation to form mutually intelligible judgments. Our natural dispositions—even the other-regarding or those involving limited sympathy—are subject to fluctuation and variation. For this reason, Hume insists that we need to "arrive at a more *stable* judgment of things [by fixing] on some *steady* and *general* points of view" (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581). The *Treatise* offers several components of this fixing: first, we must expand our sentimental purview through extensive sympathy, so that we can take account of how qualities affect those not in our close proximity. Such sentiments must also be corrected by reflection on general rules that embody abbreviated causal associations in the imagination. These general rules allow us to respond to the customary effects of qualities—so that, for instance, we can counterfactually appreciate virtue even when circumstances conspire to thwart its expression (T 3.3.1.19; SBN 584). But what is central to establishing our point of view as general is that our reflection involves the sort of general rules that allow us to consider how a person's character traits might affect "those, with whom he has any commerce" (T 3.3.1.29; SBN 590). By extending sympathy through general rules, we come to feel what we think others might feel in such-and-such a position.

[19] Kate Abramson stresses this point in "Correcting *Our* Sentiments About Hume's Moral Point of View." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 37.3 (1999): 333–61; see pp. 341–2. Note that the last section of the *Treatise* makes a few comparisons to similar issues for aesthetic and perceptual judgments. Even so, Hume clearly expends the lion's share of discussion to the problems of idiosyncratic variations in forming moral judgments.

The mechanism for generalizing works through imaginative associations forged by general rules in order to channel in a new direction our natural feelings for what touches *us*. Much like the "oblique" redirection of our sentiments accomplished by the artifices of justice or fidelity (T 3.2.2.22; SBN 497), our sentiments can be redirected toward the general effects of character. To be sure, we may not succeed in redirecting our *passions* fully, but the corrective mechanism still provides "some other standard of merit and demerit," which does "not admit of so great variation" as would relying merely on idiosyncratic personal interest, present position, or momentary appearance (T 3.3.1.18; SBN 583). The oblique redirection provided by a general point of view thereby imparts a kind of impartiality to our feelings—or at least our language about our feelings—which would otherwise be restricted to what is closely related to self. This is absolutely necessary for our responses to gain the standing to qualify as moral. To feel liking, or even love for some quality cannot count as moral approval unless we think of the trait as somehow demanding or deserving our liking. (And we may continue to think of the trait as deserving affection even if we fail to feel it in a particular case.) Adopting a general point of view with its provision of impartiality is supposed to mean that our approval is not founded on some idiosyncrasy of our own situation, and that similarly situated others would feel likewise.

Establishing ourselves in such a position alone may not suffice to qualify our judgments as moral.[20] I take it that if some general position is appropriate to a certain kind of judgment, then it provides the stance for judging as one *ought* to respond; deciding what positions are appropriate to moral judgment will depend on what Hume means by the points of view of "those with whom [an agent] has any commerce." (I will return to this point shortly.) Still, it is the very generality of a general point of view that is supposed to coordinate our sentiments, and dispositions for sentiments, so that we are consistent with others and indeed even with ourselves from moment to moment. Moreover, adopting it is a way of responding *as if* we were attributing a quality to the object; we direct our responses to enduring features of the object, and supposing something in the object causes it to appear to us in such-and-such ways. That supposition can be captured counterfactually: we suppose that there is some quality that is durable, and that it would be conjoined with a particular response were a spectator to take the relevant position. A general point of view of this sort can thus appear so impartial as to be "objective," for we consider what response *one* would have if one were in the relevant position. By providing a judging position accessible to anybody who engages in the requisite counterfactual corrections and grounded in durable qualities, the general point of view provides the condition for pointing to *publicly* available objects. As such, it ensures public accessibility for the *content* of our judgments. But this does not mean that we must agree in all the particularities of our judgments: it means simply (and crucially) that we can agree *in*

[20] Abramson distinguishes the general point of view from the moral point of view (see "Correcting *Our* Sentiments," p. 335). Although I agree with much of what she says about the general point of view, I do not adopt her account of "extensive sympathy." In another paper, Abramson assimilates "humanity" to extensive sympathy, so perhaps we share more than might appear at first blush; see "Sympathy and the Project of Hume's Second *Enquiry*." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 83.1 (2001): 45–80.

the terms of our judgments. We can thus "converse together," for our sentiments and judgments share the same content and are directed at what is in principle accessible to anyone (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581).

So, the demand to adopt some general point of view in the name of "steadiness" and intelligibility does work to homogenize some of the diversity in feeling to which we are naturally disposed. But I think that important kinds of pluralism remain. Let me try to identify just what kinds by considering what might seem like a particularly unpromising candidate, namely, the artificial virtue of justice. Justice qualifies as an artificial virtue because it rests on a convention or "artifice," which is generally useful, even when not every instance of the convention (and thus not every display of the virtue) is useful. But to uphold the general utility of the convention, the demands of justice are framed with a seemingly "universal" character. Respect for justice requires abstracting from *anybody's* interest or pleasure in particular cases, to attach utility instead to the convention of property as such. For instance, it remains just to pay back your debts to a disagreeable wastrel, even though compassion, taste and social utility militate against it. So, to be exact, the demands of justice are unconditional and exceptionless. They provide "general and inflexible principles," ones that are not only "unchangeable by spite and favour," but also "by particular views of private or public interest" (T 3.2.6.9; SBN 532).

Yet that is not the same as holding that justice *itself* is unconditionally demanded—in the sense that the duties of justice *override* all other expressions of all other virtues. Perhaps most obviously, the demands of justice may conflict with considerations of benevolence, or kindness: there may be, for instance, legitimate claims for payment to be lodged against kindly, but impoverished, widows. Kindness is context- and consequence-dependent in a way that justice is not. However, that relativity does not mean that considerations of kindness simply wither away in situations where the unconditional requirements of justice apply. In some circumstances, we might judge that a violation of strict justice constitutes a true kindness. Approval of just qualities does not prevent us from also experiencing painful sentiments toward the same traits insofar as they motivate a cold-hearted dispossession of benevolent do-gooders. The possibility of such ambivalence in judgment shows that the corrective processes by which we raise our sentiments to various kinds of moral evaluation do not always force them into a single template. We can hope that the occasions for conflicts in evaluation are few, but they do remain as possibilities: a magistrate charged with carrying out property laws may have no choice but between harsh justice and well-intended dereliction of duty.[21]

The *Treatise*, perhaps understandably, does not make much of these sorts of tensions. But I think they are endemic to its account. For one, Hume holds that we are naturally attuned to the context-sensitivity marking such natural virtues as kindness and benevolence; whereas the unconditional nature of justice sets it "contrary to the common principles of human nature, which accommodate themselves to circumstances, and have no stated invariable method of operation" (T 3.2.6.9; SBN 533).

[21] For reasons I will indicate toward the end of this essay, we may prefer that *magistrates* opt for the former course. But our approval is more complicated than can be captured simply by calling it moral.

The very account of the artificiality of justice that frames the second part of Book III of the *Treatise rests* on our ambivalent appreciation of both what justice stipulates and how outcomes may turn unhappy under some circumstances. Did we not feel pulled to each side, there would be no puzzle about justice. That pull is compelling because each of our conflicting responses is morally inflected, and may be formulated as a judgment from some perfectly general point of view. So, the mere generality of general points of view does not provide a single morally worthy and appropriate way to adjudicate such conflicts.

At this point, the outcome looks similar to the kind of pluralism we saw among true aesthetic judges, with the proviso that because they require general, common, and impartial points of view, moral tastes have less leeway than do aesthetic tastes. Still, what is required "in order for us to converse on reasonable terms" is simply that we adopt enough of a general and steady point of view to feel responses that touch "our taste or language." What is *not* required is that such responses overwhelm, eliminate, swamp, or otherwise repudiate every other sentiment we may experience. As such, one judge may experience ambivalent sentiments, or sentiments that fail to conform to the sentiments of other evaluators; those differences may surface in heterogeneous judgments, without thereby impugning anyone's competence. Yet as I said before, that should not signal toleration of outright moral "contradiction," such that one observer might properly praise exactly what another might properly condemn. The ambivalence of judgment that peculiar and challenging circumstances can provoke is important as a measure for differentiating among the packages of qualities and traits that constitute various character *styles*. As such, the heterogeneity I propose here only supposes that competent moral appraisers may approve of diverse styles of character. Hume clearly admits a wide variety of character traits that can be deemed useful or agreeable from the general point of view: justice is a virtue, polite behavior is a virtue, kindness is a virtue, wit is a virtue, cleanliness is a virtue—perhaps even being well-dressed is a virtue. These traits are not in outright conflict. But they are rather different in kind, different enough that they may inform different kinds of pursuits. And those pursuits could, on occasion, conflict. In such cases, what sorts of virtues are approved, and how we adjudicate competing demands among virtues is a matter of the evaluative "style" we adopt, and how we cultivate approval for particular kinds of moral character.

This is the most that can be said for the *Treatise* account. Although it supports what appears to be a plausible pluralism of evaluations directed at diverse character styles, it might seem to leave important matters unresolved. Divergent, ambivalent, or conflicting evaluations can pose genuine difficulties for social life. How will we negotiate these hurdles when they arise? Here, I suggest the *Treatise* has little to say, or at least little that is satisfactory. To be fair, it does offer two qualifications of the position for moral evaluation that that might seem to restrict appropriate points of view further than do requirements of simple generality. If so, these restrictions might eliminate much of the variability and pluralism under consideration. I doubt that they succeed in doing so, however. The first is found in the claim that to provide a steady and general point of view, we should consider how a person's character traits might affect "those with whom he has any commerce" (T 3.3.1.17; SBN 583, T 3.3.1.29; SBN 590). But talk of *any* commerce offers no restriction at all, for it is

just different types of "commerce" that give rise to the examples of diverse and ambivalent judgments. By the same token, we will be no better off understanding the directive as requiring us to consider how a person's character affects *all* those forms of commerce. In EPM, Hume suggests that we might draw a "model of perfect virtue" by considering the character of a Cleanthes whose sterling qualities win approval from everyone and in every situation (EPM 9.2; SBN 269–70). But the story of Cleanthes simply ignores the problems sketched here. Cleanthes might provide an ideal for character, but not one that can be instantiated for all imaginable situations. Later in the *Treatise*, Hume offers a different touchstone for selecting among our responses, when he urges that we "confine our view to that narrow circle, in which any person moves, in order to form a judgment of his moral character" (T 3.3.3.2; SBN 602).[22] The phrase "narrow circle" is, of course, open to interpretation. But trying to interpret it as more determinate than the circle drawn by "any commerce" can raise fresh problems. If we understand the narrowness of this circle as a matter of contiguity (which would explain some of its psychological import), then it will fail to accommodate some of our most important moral feelings. For the utility of justice, like that of other artificial virtues, is rarely manifested in one's narrow (or even medium-wide) circle. It may be that Hume does not have justice in mind when recommending this narrow purview: the proposal appears when he turns from the rarefied topic of human "greatness" to the more humanly accessible virtues of "goodness or benevolence." So perhaps, Hume here means only that the narrow circle is the appropriate viewpoint for the subset of virtues associated with benevolence. But then the narrow circle cannot be determinative for all humanly accessible virtues, for surely, justice is within our grasp. Moreover, evaluation on behalf of the narrow circle is not itself free of variability or ambivalence: card-carrying members of a narrow circle may well receive varying degrees of pleasure or utility from an agent's attention to care, practice of fairness, or exercise of wit. Although there may be other relations we could use to understand the "narrowness" in question, e.g., closeness of familial or social relation, they seem subject to at least some of the same objections.

5. The Problem and How EPM Deals with It

As we saw in passing before, some commentators find the "joint verdict" mentioned in "Of the Standard of Taste" to be a benchmark that offers an alternative sort of condition for restricting plurality. I have already argued that demanding convergence among the particular judgments of true judges leaves us with no standard at all—but against many commentators, I think that shows only that Hume does not require such convergence. Looking to areas of settled agreement may be helpful for some purposes; for instance, a kind of conservatism is often appropriate for teaching good taste, according to some. But Hume does not require that true judges defer to consensus views in forming their judgments. Without such a proviso, it seems utterly implausible to expect a single set of general favorites to emerge from among the

[22] Some commentators rely heavily on this notion of the narrow circle, although it too is open to controversy, as Abramson nicely documents in "Correcting *Our* Sentiments," pp. 337–9.

various preferences that true judges show. Rather, I argued that the essay concedes both that there exists an irreducible plurality of critical preferences, whether Ovid, Horace, or Tacitus (E-ST 244) and that all are worthy. Individuals may have their favorites. Nonetheless, the twenty-year-old should acknowledge the virtues of Tacitus, and the geezer the charms of Ovid: that is, they should acknowledge that a good critic might well find them pleasing, however little they are moved themselves. In short, both young and old should appreciate that Ovid, Horace, and Tacitus are in a different class from Ogilby. That, I think, is all the "joint verdict" requires.[23]

What then has happened between the *Treatise* and the essay on taste? Sometime in the interim, Hume has come to believe that, at least for aesthetic tastes, we can recognize and mediate among various, genuinely diverse dispositions and judgments, without collapsing into a standard-less subjectivity that loses all distinctions among values. What gives him such confidence in our abilities? I think we can find the answer indicated in EPM where Hume cites the same example of taste pluralism he elaborates later in "Of the Standard of Taste": "When I was twenty, says a French poet, Ovid was my favourite: Now I am forty, I declare for Horace." Here, however, Hume goes on to argue that although "we enter... more readily into sentiments which resemble those we feel every day..." we, nonetheless, have "the seeds and first principles" to enter into any passion that is well represented (EPM 5.30; SBN 222). As the rest of the work makes clear, those seeds and principles are to be found in our humanity.[24] More generally, our sense of humanity allows us to appreciate, in some sense to "enter into," the plurality of sentiments and judgments humans may appropriately feel. That these judgments are appropriate is important: there may be some traits that we can find admirable, even from a general point of view, but refuse to endorse as morally worthy, such as the martial bravery of the scalp-wearing Scythians. Their bravery no longer appears a virtue to those who retain a feel for humanity, even if it still shows a slightly horrifying sublimity (EPM 7.14; SBN 255). But cultivating the sentiments whereby we appreciate the borders of moral virtue and vice makes us a member of "the party of humankind against vice or disorder, its common enemy" (EPM 9.9; SBN 275).

The entry card to this party, the sentiment of humanity, is just what Hume needs to address the issues opened up by the *Treatise* account of our diverse moral tastes. The *Treatise* account of how we form our judgments from a steady and general point of view makes diverse, even conflicted judgment possible; its account of the artificiality of the virtue of justice makes the possibility of such cases salient. To be sure, the *Treatise* confronts possible conflicts between demands of morality and of self-interest and suggests that even if we act for the sake of self-interest or out of the limited sympathy we might feel with those near to us, we may still find that morally significant sentiments affect our "taste." The problem is that similar conflicts can arise where we feel sentimental tugs toward approving *both* what supports a relatively

[23] Both Shelley ("Hume and the Joint Verdict," p. 149) and Guyer (*Value and Beauty*, p. 342) agree that the joint verdict requires at least this much.

[24] Remy Debes offers a useful account of the differences between the "sentiment" and the "principle" of humanity; "Humanity, Sympathy and the Puzzle of Hume's Second Enquiry." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15.1 (2007): 27–57; see p. 32. But the differences do not matter here.

abstract notion of justice) *and* what benefits others directly—whether those nearest and dearest, our fairly narrow circle, or distant strangers. The sorts of conflicts between duty and the pursuit of self-interest (or interests for which we have limited sympathy) also arise between courses of action that receive moral endorsement. The account in the *Treatise* opens up this possibility, but the work fails fully to acknowledge it.

That is where the *Enquiry*'s introduction of humanity steps in: it works to explain how we can retain our taste for morality, even as we are pulled toward different sorts of endorsements. Indeed, it is because it serves this function that it is tricky to explain just what constitutes our humanity. Hume ends the work by declaring, "there is no circumstance of conduct in any man, provided it have a beneficial tendency, that is not agreeable to my humanity, however remote the person" (EPM 9.8; SBN 274).[25] Although the context emphasizes explaining how we extend approval to those far removed from us, I want to draw our attention to the claim that humanity is what makes all "beneficial tendencies" agreeable. Nor do I think that is all that can be said for it: although Hume is most concerned with showing the role of humanity for the specifically social virtues, he also argues generally that "the notion of morals implies some sentiment common to all mankind, ... [as well as] some sentiment, so universal and comprehensive, as to extend to all mankind ... These two requisite circumstances belong alone to the sentiment of humanity here insisted on" (EPM 9.5; SBN 272). Our appreciation of whatever counts as moral—whether useful or agreeable, to self or to others—depends on the sentiment of humanity. Indeed, Hume even goes on to claim that since there must be "an original propensity of some kind, in order to be a basis to self-love, by giving a relish to the objects of its pursuit," there is "none more fit for this purpose than benevolence or humanity" (EPM 9.20; SBN 281). Humanity thus seems to underlie a remarkably wide variety of evaluative drives, even as it sets limits to what we can consider moral. I want to stress that humanity takes on many roles in Hume's account and that it seems to be the difference between moral and other kinds of appraisal.

Because it plays a complicated set of roles, humanity evades easy description, although Hume often places it in apposition to benevolence. For this reason, Remy Debes maintains that the principle of humanity is "like a disposition towards benevolence, at least insofar as we conceptualize benevolence as the desire for another's good."[26] There is surely something right about associating humanity and benevolence, at least insofar as humanity involves what Hanley calls "our preference for the well-being of others."[27] But it can be misleading to identify this preference with benevolence *simpliciter*, since the *Enquiry* uses "benevolence" in a variety of ways, and some of the most specific are not interchangeable with "humanity."[28]

[25] The line seems clearly to echo Terence's "*humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" [I consider nothing human to be alien to me"]

[26] Debes, "Humanity, Sympathy," p. 29. See also Rico Vitz, "Sympathy and Benevolence in Hume's Moral Psychology." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42.3 (2004): 261–75; see p. 263.

[27] Ryan Patrick Hanley, "David Hume and the 'Politics of Humanity.'" *Political Theory* 39.2 (2011): 205–33; see p. 221.

[28] For textual reasons to refuse to identify humanity with benevolence, see Hanley, and Taylor, "Hume's Later Moral Philosophy," p. 320.

But identifying it with a preference for others' well-being does not tell us much either. To be sure, humanity is what equips us to care for others, at least enough to avoid their gouty toes when we can instead tread hard pavement (EPM 5.39; SBN 226). It might even be what equips us to care for ourselves (EPM 9.20–1; SBN 281). Many kinds of evaluations seem to be driven by the preferences enabled by our sentiments of humanity—too many perhaps to identify any particular one as constituting the sentiment of humanity.

That, I think, is how it should be. The sentiment of humanity underlies all our moral sentiments, particularly the justice and benevolence that Hume identifies as the twin headings under which most social virtues fall. But that shows the somewhat indeterminate, or better, pluralistic nature of this "sentiment." Our justice-approving sentiments and our benevolence-loving ones are directed at pretty different objects, even if both count as useful. Moreover, justice arises only because we do not have fully extensive benevolence; it provides a kind of backup plan for when our benevolence runs out. Again, both are useful, but these forms of utility operate at such utterly different levels that we cannot measure their degrees on a single scale.[29] What I think this shows is that there are many ways to advance the interests of the party of humankind; they cannot all be jointly realized; and it seems unlikely that any one way is always best.[30] Within a society complex enough to have supplemented natural benevolence with artificial virtues such as justice, individuals will often find themselves faced with evaluating the social worth of various dispositions on incommensurable grounds. The issue in question may always be a kind of "utility," but the kinds may operate in different ways and at different levels of generality, abstraction, artifice, and the like. Yet Hume says that it is our sentiment of humanity that allows us to approve of them all, much as it enables our approval of the virtues of remote figures, and sometimes alien virtues of remote societies.

I take it that this sentiment of humanity gives us an appreciation for *all* the varying moral sentiments we can feel, and thus for the varying virtues capable of evoking such approval. What it does not do is tell us how to sort through those sentiments (and virtues) when we experience real ambivalence and yet must make some kind of choice. But because we have a sense for humanity, we should want to develop some skills for negotiating among the plurality of incommensurable values we may somehow encounter. And that I propose is the role Hume sees for our sense of public utility. Having a nose for public utility allows us to find a way among multifarious moral claims: thus,

> in all determinations of morality, this circumstance of public utility is ever principally in view; and wherever disputes arise, either in philosophy or common life, concerning the bounds of duty, the question cannot by any means be decided with greater certainty, than by ascertaining, on any side, the true interests of mankind. (EPM 2.17; SBN 180)

[29] The general utility of what Hume calls "extensive benevolence" (of which he is highly skeptical) is quite different from the general utility of justice. It is impossible to say that one is more general than the other.

[30] This point is related to, but not the same as the claims made throughout EPM about the historical contingency of the conditions for and forms taken by many virtues.

The sentiment of humanity seems to be among our primary impulses, indispensable, but in need of further refinement. A mature moral judge mediates and conditions the impulses of humanity by the sense of public utility: for instance, the giving of alms to beggars appears less praiseworthy if we discover that it has deleterious effects, although we can continue to appreciate the urge.[31] As such, considerations of public utility can lead us to "retract our first sentiment, and adjust anew the boundaries of moral good and evil" (EPM 2.17; SBN 180). As this example shows, our sense for public utility may be conditioned by simple empirical knowledge about what consequences can be expected under certain circumstances; it may also be sensitive to social and historical contexts, although the sentiment of humanity springs from some principle universal in human nature.

Read in isolation, the claims made for our senses of humanity and public utility may make it seem as if EPM has simply papered over the diversity and heterogeneity implicit in the *Treatise* account. But I have argued that the important sources of sentimental pluralism remain, most notably in the very different kinds of utility invoked, but also in the fourfold distinction by which morally appealing traits can be characterized. So, despite emphasizing that the "notion of morals implies some sentiment common to all mankind, which recommends the same object to general approbation, and makes every man, or most men, agree in the same opinion or decision concerning it," when Hume says that "there is no circumstance of conduct in any man, provided it have a beneficial tendency, that is not agreeable to my humanity," he presents us with a problem about how to negotiate among a plurality of tastes and values.

I propose that EPM maps how the sentiment of humanity develops into a cultivated sense of public utility, which allows us to deliberate about the available styles of moral evaluation: it gives us the sense for when we should take the abstract-holistic viewpoint of justice, or the more immediate one of benevolence. We can do so because our basic sentiment of humanity equips us to appreciate many different moral styles, while a developed sense of public utility allows us to see how those moral styles might fit together—to see how different sorts of characters can jointly contribute to public utility and private enjoyment. Our humanity gives us a flexible capacity for appraisal. We particularly need to develop such flexibility in a complex civil society that practices not only an economic, but a moral division of labor.[32] Such societies require us at least to appreciate some degree of moral polyvocity, and better yet, to recognize how it can be integrated in a politically harmonious way. Ultimately, I suspect that Hume aims at using our taste for public utility to explain how we can engage in a division of moral-affective labor

[31] See EPM, where Hume entertains the hypothesis that alms-giving encourages indolence and dependence—a common view, but one that seems empirically unsupportable.

[32] For a further discussion of divisions of valuing labor in Hume, see my "Family Trees: Sympathy, Comparison and the Proliferation of the Passions in Hume & his Predecessors." In *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. L. Shapiro and M. Pickavé (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 255–78.

and specialization in the social-political realm. And that is just what complex modern political society both needs and allows.[33]

[33] Early versions of this paper were presented at the Workshop on Reading Hume on the Principles of Morals, University of San Francisco, Spring 2011, and at a panel on Hume at the Western Canadian Philosophical Association, Lethbridge, AB, October 2011. Audiences at both events were both helpful and tolerant of its inchoate form. I presented a more recent version for a department colloquium at Boston University in April 2013, and am very grateful for the insights from the audience there (as well as their readiness to reschedule at the last minute): particular thanks go to Aaron Garrett and Maité Cruz Tleugobulova for penetrating questions. Jackie Taylor has offered invaluable editorial help, for which I am very grateful. Research on this paper was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.