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In his brief autobiography, David Hume tells us that 'as I took particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them.' This double-edged remark is typical of Hume's references to women. Suggesting as it does that what pleased Hume was the women's pleasure in his pleasure in *their* company, it both diminishes the significance of their welcome to him, since 'whoever can find the means either by his services, his beauty, or his flattery to render himself useful or agreeable to us, is sure of our affections,'<sup>1</sup> and makes us wonder about the sources of his particular pleasure in their company. Pleasure in the ample returns he got for a little flattery? Yet his flattery of women in his writings is itself double-edged, as much insult as appreciation. Women's 'insinuation, charm and address,' he tells us, in the section on justice in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, will enable them to break up any incipient male conspiracy against them. His archness of tone in 'Of Love and Marriage' and his patronizing encouragement of the greater intellectual effort of reading history instead of romances in 'Of the Study of History' were reason enough for him to suppress those two essays (as he did, but for unclear reasons, and along with the more interesting and more radical 'Of Moral Prejudices,' in which he describes a man who is totally dependent, emotionally, on his wife and daughter, and a woman who makes herself minimally dependent on the chosen father of her child).<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising that despite his popularity with the women, modest and less modest, who knew him, his writings have not met with a very positive reception from contemporary feminists. They fix on his

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references to the 'fair' and the 'weak and pious' sex and on his defense in the essay 'The Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences' of the claim that male gallantry is as natural a virtue as respect for one's elders, both being ways of generously allaying others' well-founded sense of inferiority or infirmity: 'As nature has given *man* the strength above *women*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body, it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions.' Hume's 'polite' displays of concern for the sex that he saw to be weaker in mind and body are not likely to encourage feminists to turn to him for moral inspiration any more than Kant's exclusion, in the *Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, §46, of all women from the class of those with 'civil personality,' fit to vote, will encourage them to look to him.

My main concern here is not with feminism, however, but with the implications, for ethics and ethical theory, of Carol Gilligan's findings about differences between males and females both in moral development and in mature versions of morality. Whether those differences reflect women's weakness, their natural inferiority to men in mind and body, or their social inferiority, or their superiority, is not my central concern. I am focusing here on the concept of morality many women have and the sort of experience, growth, and reflection on it that leads them to develop it. My interest in a moral theory like Hume's in this context, then, is primarily with the extent to which the version of morality he works out squares or does not square with women's moral wisdom. Should the main lines of his account prove to be true to morality as women conceive of it, then it will be an ironic historical detail if he showed less respect than we would have liked for those of his fellow persons who were most likely to find his moral theory in line with their own insights. And whatever the root causes of women's moral outlook, of the tendency of the care perspective to dominate over the justice perspective in their moral deliberations, now that we have, more or less, social equality with men, women's moral sense should be made as explicit as men's moral sense and as influential in structuring our practices and institutions. One way, not of course the only or the best way, to help make it explicit is to measure the influential men's moral theories against it. That is what I propose to do with Hume's theory. This can be seen as a prolegomenon to making wise women's theories influential. Then, once I have examined Hume's theory and its fit or misfit with women's moral wisdom, I shall briefly return to the

question of how his own attitude toward women relates to his moral theory.

As every student of the history of philosophy knows, Hume was the philosopher Kant set out to 'answer,' and both Kant's theory of knowledge and his ethics stand in significant contrast to Hume's. And Kant's views, through their influence on Jean Piaget and John Rawls, are the views which are expressed in Lawrence Kohlberg's version of moral maturity and the development leading to it, the version which Gilligan found not to apply to girls and women as well as it did to boys and men. We may wonder, therefore, whether other non-Kantian strands in Western ethics, as developed in the philosophical tradition, might prove less difficult to get into reflective equilibrium with women's (not specifically philosophical) moral wisdom than the Kantian strand. For there certainly is no agreement that Kant and his followers represent the culmination of all the moral wisdom of our philosophical tradition. Alasdair MacIntyre's attacks on the Kantian tradition and all the controversy caused by attempts to implement in high schools the Kohlberg views about moral education have shown that not all men, let alone all women, are in agreement with the Kantians. Since the philosopher Kant was most notoriously in disagreement with was Hume, it is natural to ask, after Gilligan's work, whether Hume is more of a women's moral theorist than is Kant. We might do the same with Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Mill, MacIntyre, with all those theorists who have important disagreements with Kant, but a start can be made with Hume.

He is inviting, for this purpose, in part because he did try to attend, for better or worse, to male-female differences and in his life did, it seems, listen to women; and also because he is close enough in time, in culture, and in some presuppositions to Kant for the comparison of their moral theories to hold out the same hope of the reconciliation that Gilligan in *In a Different Voice* wanted to get between men's and women's moral insights. There are important areas of agreement as well as of disagreement or difference of emphasis. I should add two more personal reasons for selecting Hume—I find his moral theory wise and profound, and I once, some years ago, in an introductory ethics course where we had read a little Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume, Kant, Mill, then Rawls and Kohlberg, had my students try to work out what each of our great moral theorists would have said in answer to Kohlberg's test question about whether Heinz should steal the drug which he cannot afford to buy and which might save his dangerously ill wife.<sup>3</sup> By hypothesizing how each philosopher would answer that

question, and support his answer, we tried to measure *their* stage of moral development by the Kohlberg method.<sup>4</sup> Hume seemed to check out at as merely second level, stage three, with some stage four features, just as did most of Gilligan's mature women. So I have, since then, thought of Hume as a second 'conventional' level challenger of Kohlberg's claims about the superiority of the third postconventional level over the second, or as an exemplar of a fourth level, gathering up and reconciling what was valuable and worth preserving in both the conventional and the postconventional Kohlberg levels—a fourth level which we could call 'civilized,' a favorite Humean term of approbation. For this reason, when I read Gilligan's findings that mature, apparently intelligent and reflective women 'reverted' to Kohlberg's stage three (lower stage of level two, the conventional level), my immediate thought was 'perhaps we women tend to be Humeans rather than Kantians.'

I shall list some striking differences between Kant's and Hume's moral theories, as I understand them, then relate these to the differences Gilligan found between men's and women's conceptions of morality.

First, Hume's ethics, unlike Kant's, make morality a matter not of obedience to universal law but of cultivating the character traits which give a person 'inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity' (*E.*, p. 283) and at the same time make that person good company to other persons. Hume uses 'company' in a variety of senses, ranging from the relatively impersonal and 'remote' togetherness of fellow citizens, to the more selective but still fairly remote relations of parties to a contract, to the closer ties among friends, family members, lovers. To become a good fellow-person one doesn't consult some book of rules; one cultivates one's capacity for sympathy, or fellow feeling, and also stands ready to use one's judgment when conflicts arise among the different demands that such sympathy may lead us to feel. Hume's ethics requires us to be able to be rule followers in some contexts, but does not reduce morality to rule following. Corrected (sometimes rule-corrected) sympathy, not law-discerning reason, is the fundamental moral capacity.

Second, Hume differs from Kant regarding the source of the general rules he does recognize as morally binding—the rules of justice. Where Kant sees human reason as the sole author of these moral rules, and sees them as universal, Hume sees them as authored by self-interest, instrumental reason, custom and tradition, and rationally 'frivolous' factors such as historical chance and human fancy and what

it selects as salient. He sees these rules, such as property rules, not as universal but as varying from community to community and as changeable by human will as conditions, needs, wishes, or human fancies change. His theory of social 'artifice,' and his account of justice as obedience to the rules of these social artifices, formed by 'convention' and subject to historical variation and change, stands in stark opposition to rationalist accounts, such as Aquinas's and Kant's, of justice as obedience to laws of pure practical reason, valid for all people at all times and places. Hume has a historicist and conventionalist account of the moral rules which we find ourselves expected to obey and which, on reflection, we usually see it to be sensible for us to obey, despite their elements of arbitrariness and despite the inequalities their working usually produces. He believes it is sensible for us to conform to those rules of our group which specify obligations and rights, as long as these do redirect the dangerous destructive workings of self-interest into more mutually advantageous channels, thereby giving all the 'infinite advantages' of increased force, ability, and security (compared with what we would have in the absence of any such rules), although some may receive *more* benefits of a given sort, say, wealth or authority, than others, under the scheme we find ourselves in. So Hume's ethics seems to lack any appeal to the universal principles of Kohlberg's 'higher' stages. The moral and critical stance Hume encourages us to adopt toward, say, the property rules of our society, before seeing the rights which those rules recognize as *moral* rights, comes not from our ability to test them by higher, more general rules but from our capacity for sympathy, from our ability to recognize and share sympathetically the reactions of others to that system of rights, to communicate feelings and understand what our fellows are feeling, and so to realize what resentments and satisfactions the present social scheme generates. Self-interest and the capacity to sympathize with the self-interested reactions of others, plus the rational, imaginative, and inventive ability to think about the likely human consequences of any change in the scheme, rather than an acquaintance with a higher law, are what a Humean appeals to at the postconventional stage.

This difference from Kantian views about the role of general principles in grounding moral obligations goes along in Hume with a downplaying of the role of reason and a playing up of the role of feeling in moral judgment. Agreeing with the rationalists that when we use our reason we all appeal to universal rules (the rules of arithmetic, or of logic, or of causal inference) and failing to find any such

universal rules of morality, as well as failing to see how, even if we found them, they should be able, alone, to *motivate* us to act as they tell us to act, he claims that morality rests ultimately on sentiment. This is a special motivating feeling we come to have once we have exercised our capacity for sympathy with others' feelings and also learned to overcome the emotional conflicts which arise in a sympathetic person when the wants of different fellow persons clash, or when one's own wants clash with those of one's fellows. Morality, on Hume's account, is the outcome of a search for ways of eliminating contradictions in the 'passions' of sympathetic persons who are aware of both their own and their fellows' desires and needs, including emotional needs. Any moral progress or development a person undergoes will be, for Hume, a matter of 'the correction of sentiment,' where what corrects it will be contrary sentiments plus the cognitive-cum-passionate drive to minimize conflict both between and within persons. Reason and logic are indispensable 'slaves' to the passions in this achievement, because reason enables us to think clearly about consequences or likely consequences of alternative actions, to foresee outcomes and avoid self-defeating policies. But 'the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by *reason*, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependance upon intellectual faculties' (*E.*, p. 293). A lover of conflict will have no reason, since he will have no motive, to cultivate the moral sentiment, nor will that man of 'cold insensibility' who is 'unaffected with the images of human happiness or misery' (*E.*, p. 225). A human heart, as well as human reason, is needed for the understanding of morality, and the heart's responses are to particular persons, not to universal principles of abstract justice. Such immediate responses may be corrected by general rules (as they will be when justice demands that the good poor man's debt to the less good miser be paid) and by more reflective feeling responses, such as dismay and foreboding at unwisely given love and trust or disapproval of excessive parental indulgence. But what controls and regulates feeling will be a wider web of feelings, which reason helps us apprehend and understand, not any reason holding authority over all feelings.

The third point to note is that Hume's version of what a typical human heart desires is significantly different from that of both egoists and individualists. The 'interested passion,' or self-interest, plays an important role, but so do sympathy and concern for others. Even where self-interest is of most importance in his theory, in his account of justice, it is the self-interest of those with fairly fluid ego

boundaries, namely, family members, concerned with 'acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends' (*T.*, pp. 491–492). This is the troublesome passion that needs to be redirected by agreed rules, whereby it can control itself so as to avoid socially destructive conflict over scarce goods. Its self-control, in a society-wide cooperative scheme which establishes property rights, is possible because the persons involved in it have already learned, in the family, the advantages that can come both from self-control and from cooperation (*T.*, p. 486). Had the rough corners of 'untoward' and uncontrolled passions, selfish or unselfish, not been already rubbed off by growing up under some parental discipline, and were there no minimally sociable human passions such as love between man and woman, love of parents for their children, love of friends, sisters, and brothers, the Humean artifice of justice could not be constructed. Its very possibility as an artificial virtue depends upon human nature's containing the natural passions, which make family life natural for human beings, which make parental solicitude, grateful response to that, and the restricted cooperation thereby resulting, phenomena that do not need to be contrived by artifice. At the very heart of Hume's moral theory lies his celebration of family life and of parental love. Justice, the chief artificial virtue, is the offspring of family cooperativeness and inventive self-interested reason, which sees how such a mutually beneficial cooperative scheme might be extended. And when Hume lists the natural moral virtues, those not consisting in obedience to agreed rules and doing good even if not generally possessed, his favorite example is parental love and solicitude. The good person, the possessor of the natural virtues, is the one who is 'a safe companion, an easy friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, an indulgent father' (*T.*, p. 606). We may deplore that patriarchal combination of roles—master, husband, father—but we should also note the virtues these men are to display—gentleness, agreeability, indulgence. These were more traditionally expected from mistresses, wives, and mothers than from masters, husbands, and fathers. Of course they are not the only virtues Humean good characters show; there are also due pride, or self-esteem, and the proper ambition and courage that that may involve, as well as generosity, liberality, zeal, gratitude, compassion, patience, industry, perseverance, activity, vigilance, application, integrity, constancy, temperance, frugality, economy, resolution, good temper, charity, clemency, equity, honesty, truthfulness, fidelity, discretion, caution, presence of mind, 'and a thousand more of the same kind' (*E.*, p. 243).

In Hume's frequent lists of virtues, two are conspicuous by their absence, or by the qualifications accompanying them, namely, the martial 'virtues' and the monastic or puritan 'virtues.' Martial bravery and military glory can threaten 'the sentiment of humanity' and lead to 'infinite confusions and disorders . . . the devastation of provinces, the sack of cities' (*T.*, p. 601), so cool reflection leads the Humean moral judge to hesitate to approve of these traditionally masculine traits. The monastic virtues receive more forthright treatment. Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude 'are everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve to no manner of purpose . . . We observe, on the contrary, that they cross all these desirable ends, stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper' (*E.*, p. 270). Here speaks Hume the good companion, the one who enjoyed cooking for supper parties for his Edinburgh friends, the darling, or perhaps the intellectual mascot, of the pleasure-loving Parisian salons. Calvinist upbringing and the brief taste he had in youth of the military life seem to have left him convinced of the undesirability of such styles of life; and his study of history convinced him of the dangers for society both of religious dedication, 'sacred zeal and rancor,' and of military zeal and rancor. His list of virtues is a remarkably unaggressive, uncompetitive, one might almost say womanly list.

Although many of the virtues on his list are character traits that would show in a great range of contexts, most of those contexts are social contexts, involving relations to others, and many of them involve particular relationships such as parent-child, friend to friend, colleagues to each other, fellow conversationalists. Even when he tries to list virtues that are valued because they are useful and agreeable to their possessor rather than valued primarily for their contribution to the quality of life of the virtuous person's fellows, the qualities he lists are ones involving relations to others—the ability to get and keep the trust of others, sexual self-command and modesty as well as sexual promise, that is, the capacity to derive 'so capital a pleasure in life' and to 'communicate it' to another (*E.*, p. 245), temperance, patience, and sobriety, are virtues useful (long term) to their possessor; while among those he lists as immediately agreeable to their possessor are contagious serenity and cheerfulness, 'a proper sense of what is due to one's self in society and the common intercourse of life' (*E.*, p. 253), friendliness and an avoidance of 'perpetual wrangling, and scolding and mutual reproaches' (*E.*, p. 257), amorous adventurousness, at least in the young, liveliness of emotional response and expressive



powers—all agreeable traits which presuppose that their possessor is in company with others, reacting to them and the object of their reactions. There may be problems in seeing how a person is to combine the various Humean virtues—to be frugal yet liberal, to be sufficiently chaste yet show amorous enterprise, to have a proper sense of what is due one yet avoid wrangling and reproaches. Hume may, indeed, be depending on a certain sexual division of moral labor, allocating chastity to the women and amorous initiative to the men, more self-assertion to the men and more avoidance of wrangling to the women, but we should not exaggerate the extent to which he did this.

The title page of Book Three of the *Treatise* invokes Lucan's words referring to the lover of difficult virtue, and Humean virtues may be difficult to unify. Only in some social structures, indeed, may they turn out to be a mutually compatible set. Some investigation, not only into what virtue is and what the true virtues are but into the social precondition of their joint exemplification, may be needed in the lover of difficult virtue. Indeed everything Hume says suggests that these are not independent enterprises. What counts as useful and agreeable virtues will depend in part on the social and economic conditions in which their possessors live, just as the acceptability of those social and economic conditions depends on what sort of virtues can flourish there and how they are distributed within the population. Hume points out that the usefulness of a trait such as a good memory will be more important in Cicero's society than in his own, given the lesser importance in the latter of making well-turned speeches without notes, and given the general encouraged reliance there on written records in most spheres of life. The availability, accessibility, and portability of memory substitutes will vary with the customs and the technological development of a society, and Hume is aware that such facts are relevant to the recognition of character traits as functional virtues. The ease of simulation or perversion of such traits will also affect the recognition of virtues—in an age when private ambition is easily masked as public spirit, or tax exemption as benevolence, the credit given to such easily pretended virtues may also understandably sink. The status of a character trait as a virtue need not be a fixed matter, but a matter complexly interrelated with the sort of society in which it appears. This makes good sense, if moral virtues are the qualities that enable one to play an acceptable part in an acceptable network of social roles, to relate to people in the variety of ways that a decent society will require, facilitate, encourage, or merely permit.

The fourth point I want to stress in Hume's moral theory is that in his attention to various interpersonal relations, in which our Humean virtues or vices show, he does not give any special centrality to relationships between equals, let alone between autonomous equals. Because his analysis of social cooperation starts from cooperation within the family, relations between those who are necessarily unequals, parents and children, are at the center of the picture. He starts from a bond which he considers 'the strongest and most indissoluble bond in nature' (*E.*, p. 240), 'the strongest tie the mind is capable of' (*T.*, p. 352), the love of parents for children, and in his moral theory he works out, as it were, from there. This relationship, and the obligations and virtues it involves, lacks three central features of relations between moral agents as understood by Kantians and contractarians—it is intimate, it is unchosen and it is between unequals. Of course the intimacy need not be 'indissoluble,' the inequality may be temporary, or later reversed, and the extent to which the initial relationship is unchosen will vary from that of unplanned or contrary-to-plan parenthood to intentional parenthood (although not intentional parenting of a given particular child) to that highest degree of voluntariness present when, faced with an actual newborn child, a decision is taken not to let it be adopted by others or, when a contrary decision is taken by the biological parent or parents, by the decision of adoptive parents to adopt such an already encountered child. Such fully chosen parenthood is rare, and the norm is for parents to *find themselves* with a given child, perhaps with any child at all, and for parental affection to attach itself fairly indiscriminately to its unselected objects. The contractarian model of morality as a matter of living up to self-chosen commitments gets into obvious trouble with the duties both of young children to their unchosen parents, to whom no binding commitments have been made, and of initially involuntary parents to their children. Hume has no problem with such unchosen moral ties, because he takes them as the paradigm moral ties, one's giving rise to moral obligations more self-evident than any obligation to keep contracts.

The last respect in which I wish to contrast Hume's moral philosophy with its more Kantian alternative is in his version of what problem morality is supposed to solve, what its point is. For Kantians and contractarians, the point is freedom; the main problem is how to achieve it, given that other freedom aspirants exist and that conflict between them is likely. The Rousseau-Kant solution is obedience to collectively agreed-to general law, where each freedom seeker can

console himself with the thought that the legislative will he must obey is as much his own as it is anyone else's. For Hume, the problem of the coexistence of would-be unrestrained self-assertors is solved by the invention of social artifices and the recognition of the virtue of justice, namely, of conformity to the rules of such mutually advantageous artifices. But the problem morality solves is deeper; it is as much intrapersonal as interpersonal. It is the problem of contradiction, conflict, and instability in any one person's desires, over time, as well as conflict among persons. Morality, in theory, saves us from internally self-defeating drives as well as from self-defeating interpersonal conflict. Nor is it just an added extra to Hume's theory that the moral point of view overcomes contradictions in our individual sentiments over time. ('Our situation, with regard to both persons and things, is in continual fluctuation; and a man, that lies at a distance from us, may, in a little time, become a familiar acquaintance' [*T*, p. 581].) His whole account of our sentiments has made them intrinsically reactive to other persons' sentiments. Internal conflict in a sympathetic and reassurance-needing person will not be independent of conflicts among the various persons in his or her emotional world. 'We can form no wish, which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer. Every pleasure languishes when enjoy'd a-part from company, and every pain becomes more cruel and intolerable. Whatever other passions we may be actuated by; pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge, or lust; the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy; nor wou'd they have any force were we to abstract entirely from the thoughts and sentiments of others' (*T*, p. 363).

I have drawn attention to the limited place of conformity to general rules in Hume's version of morality; to the historicist conventionalist account he gives of such rules; to his thesis that morality depends upon self-corrected sentiments, or passions, as much or more than it depends upon the reason that concurs with and serves those passions; to the nonindividualist, nonegoistic version of human passions he advances; to the essentially interpersonal or social nature of those passions which are approved as virtues; to the central role of the family, at least at its best, as an exemplar of the cooperation and interdependency morality preserves and extends; to the fact that moral cooperation, for him, includes cooperation in unchosen schemes, with unchosen partners, with unequal partners, in close intimate relations as well as distanced and more formal ones. And finally, I emphasized that the need for morality arises for Hume from conflicts within each

person as well as from interpersonal conflict. It is a fairly straightforward matter to relate these points to at least some of the respects in which Gilligan found girls' and women's versions of morality to differ from men's.<sup>5</sup> Hume turns out to be uncannily womanly in his moral wisdom. 'Since the reality of connection is experienced by women as given rather than as freely contracted, they arrive at an understanding of life that reflects the limits of autonomy and control' (*D.V.*, p. 172). Hume lived before autonomy became an obsession with moral and social philosophers, or, rather, he lived while Rousseau was making it their obsession, but his attack on contractarian doctrines of political obligation, his clear perception of the given-ness of interconnection in the family and beyond, his emphasis on our capacity to make others' joys and sorrows our own, on our need for a 'seconding' of sentiments, and on the inescapable mutual vulnerability and mutual enrichment that the human psychology and the human condition, when thus understood, entail, make autonomy not even an ideal, for Hume. A certain sort of freedom, freedom of thought and expression, is an ideal, but to 'live one's own life in one's own way' is not likely to be among the aims of persons whose every pleasure languishes when not shared and seconded by some other person or persons. 'The concept of identity expands to include the experience of interconnection' (*D.V.*, p. 173).

The women Gilligan studied saw morality as primarily a matter of responsibilities arising out of their attachment to others, often stemming from originally given rather than chosen relations. The men spoke more of their rights than of their responsibilities, and saw those rights as arising out of a freely accepted quasi-agreement between self-interested equals. Hume does in his account of justice have a place for quasi-agreement-based rights serving the long-run interests of those respecting them, but he also makes room for a host of responsibilities which presuppose no prior agreement or quasi-agreement to shoulder them. The responsibilities of parents are the paramount case of such duties of care, but he also includes cases of mutual care and duties of gratitude where 'I do services to such persons as I love, and am particularly acquainted with, without any prospect of advantage; and they may make me a return in the same manner' (*T.*, p. 521). Here there is no right to a return, merely the reasonable but unsecured trust that it will be forthcoming. (There may even be something of an either/or, duck-rabbit effect between his 'artificial virtues,' including justice, and his 'natural virtues,' including mercy and equity, in all those contexts where both seem to come in to play.)

Hume's conventionalism about the general rules we may have to obey to avoid injustice to one another has already been mentioned as dooming his theory of justice to mere 'stage four' moral marks, if to get any critical appraisal of customary rules one must have moved on to social contracts or universal principles. Hume is a realist about the historical given-ness and inevitable arbitrariness of most of the general rules that there is any chance of our all observing. Like Gilligan's girls and women, he takes moral problems in concrete historical settings, where the past history as well as the realistic future prospects for a given group are seen as relevant to their moral predicaments and their solutions. Even the fairly abstract and ahistorical social artifices of the *Treatise* are given a quasi-historical setting, and they give way in the *Essays* and *History of England* to detailed looks at actual concrete social and moral predicaments, in full narrative depth.

For Kohlberg, the distrust of abstract ahistorical principles, the girls' need to fill out Kohlberg's puzzle questions with a story before answering them, led to the suspicion that this poor performance on the application of universal principles to sketchily drawn particular cases, shorn of full narrative context, showed that their 'reason' was less well developed than the boys' (*D.V.*, p. 28). But the performance might rather have indicated, as it did in Hume's case, a conviction that this was a false model of how moral judgments are made. He endorses the emotional response to a fully realized situation as moral reflection at its best, not as one of its underdeveloped stages, and he mocks those rationalists who think abstract universal rules will ever show why, say, killing a parent is wrong for human beings but not for oak trees (*T.*, pp. 466-467).

At this point it may be asked whether Hume's account allows for any version of stages of moral development, whether it is not one of those 'bag of virtues' accounts Kohlberg derides. Can one who thinks morality is a matter of the passions find room for any notion of individual moral progress or development? The answer is yes. Although he does not give us such a theory for the individual, Hume does speak of a 'correction of sentiment' and of a 'progress of sentiments,' especially where 'artificial' virtues are concerned. Since morality depends for him on a *reflective* sentiment, and on self-corrected self-interest and corrected sympathy, it is plain that more experience and more reflection could lead an individual through various 'levels' of moral response. The interesting questions are those of what the outlines of such an alternative developmental pattern might be. Clearly this is not a matter that can be settled from a philosopher's

armchair, and psychological research of the sort Gilligan is doing would be needed to find out how human passions do develop and which developments are seen as moral progress by those in whom they occur, and by others. Some features of women's development, features which would not necessarily show up on the Kohlberg tests, are indicated in the latter chapters of *In a Different Voice*. In the chapter 'Concepts of Self and Morality' Gilligan describes transitions from self-centered thinking (which presumably is likely in women reacting to being let down by the fathers of the fetuses the women interviewed were considering aborting, rather than a natural starting point for a girl or woman) to a condemnation of such 'selfishness' (or an alternation between 'selfish' and 'unselfish' impulses) to what is seen as a clearer perception of the 'truth' concerning the human relations in which they are involved, leading perhaps to a cool or even ruthless determination to protect themselves from further hurt and exploitation, then later to a revised version of what counts as their own interests, to a realization that those interests require attachment to and concern for others (see especially *D.V.*, p. 74).

If alternatives to Kohlberg's rationalist scenario are to be worked out in detail, probably some guiding moral as well as psychological theory will be needed, as well as empirical tests. There will be a need for something to play a role like that which Rawls's and Kant's moral theory played in getting Kohlberg to look for certain particular moral achievements, and to expect some to presuppose other earlier ones. It might even be that, once we had a nonrationalist yet dynamic moral theory, and an expected developmental pattern accompanying it, empirical tests would show it to be true not merely of women but of men. The gender difference may be not in the actual pattern of development of passions, nor in our reasoning and reflection about the satisfaction of our passions, but merely in our intellectual opinions, as voiced in interviews, as to whether this is or is not *moral* development. For both Gilligan's and Kohlberg's tests have so far looked at verbally offered versions of morality, at intellectual reflection on morality, not at moral development itself, at motivational changes and changed emotional reactions to one's own and others' actions, reactions, and emotions. As I understand it, only in Gilligan's abortion study were people interviewed while actually in the process of making a moral decision—and those women may not have been a representative sample of women decision makers, since they were selected for their apparent indecisiveness, for what was judged their need to think and talk more about their decision. The

clear-headed or at least the decisive women simply did not get into this study (*D.V.*, p. 3).

We should not equate a person's moral stance with her intellectual version of it, nor suppose that a person necessarily knows the relative strength of her own motives and emotions. To test people's emotional and motivational growth, we would need emotion and motive experiments, not thought experiments, and they can be tricky to design safely. Hume said, 'When I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up after the same manner any doubt in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phaenomenon' (*T.*, p. xix). By moral philosophy, here, he means simply the investigation of human nature, in both its unreflective and its more reflective operations. Moral psychology, as he understands it, is indeed a matter of letting reflection and premeditation make a difference to the operation of natural motives and passions, so moral experiments, in the narrow sense of 'moral,' would not necessarily be contaminated by the reflection or self-consciousness that the self-experimentation would involve. Knowing that when we react in a given situation, what we are doing is being treated as a display of moral character, as a test of moral progress, might merely encourage that progress, not lead to its misrepresentation. But the 'experiments' Hume is thinking of are real-life ones, not either our own, after-the-fact versions of them or our responses, intellectual or emotional, to merely imagined situations, in which one knows one is not really involved. Not only are these too thin and sketchy, as Gilligan's girls clearly felt in the story of Heinz and the expensive medicine, but even if a fully worked out fictional narrative were given—a whole novel, let us say—there is still no reason to think that one's response to a fictional situation is a good indicator of what one's own response would be, were one actually in a predicament like that of a novelist's character. Reading good novels and attending or acting in good plays may be the most harmless way to prepare oneself for real-life moral possibilities, but this isn't moral 'practice.' There is no harmless practicing of moral responses, no trial run or dress rehearsal. Children's play, the theater, novels, knowledge about and sympathy with friends' problems may all play a useful role in alerting us to the complexities of moral situations, but one's performance there

is no reliable predictor of what one's response to one's own real-life problems will be. As Aristotle said, the only way to learn to be morally virtuous is to perform virtuous actions—real ones, not fantasy ones. And only from one's moral practice, not from one's fantasy moral practice or rationalized versions of past moral practice, can we learn the stage of moral development a person actually exhibits. As Hume said, it seems that only a cautious observation of human life, of 'experiments' gleaned as they occur in the 'common course of the world' in people's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures' (ibid.) can found any empirical science of moral development.

Let me repeat that I am not saying that knowledge that one is being observed is what would spoil the results of contrived moral 'tests'; what would spoil them, rather, would be the knowledge that the tests are fantasy ones, not real-world ones. I do not want to deny that what one takes to be one's sincere beliefs about what morality demands, as they might be expressed in an interview with a psychologist or in a reaction to a fictional situation, have some connection with one's actual moral choices. But I agree with Gilligan in wondering how close the connection is, especially for reactions to sketched fictional situations. The old question 'How can I know what I think until I see what I write?' can be adapted for moral convictions: 'How can I know what I judge right until I see what decisions I make and how I then live with them?' But even that may be too optimistic about our ability to size up how we are living with our past decisions—we naturally tend either to avoid recognizing bad conscience or to exaggerate and self-dramatize it in our own follow-up reactions to a moral decision. We tend to interpret our own pasts deceptively, as possibly displaying tragedy or demonic wickedness, but not moral error, stupidity, or ordinary vice. We glaze our own pasts over with the pale cast of self-excusing or, in some cases, self-accusing, self-denigrating, self-dramatizing thought. I see no nonsuspect way, by interviewing people about other people's actual or hypothetical decisions or even about their own past actual ones, to gauge what are or were their *effective* moral beliefs.

I resume my exploration of what sort of pattern of development one might expect as experience of the common course of the world changes our passions as well as the thoughts that guide them when they motivate our actions. Two things that several of the Gilligan women *say* happened to them are that they developed a sense of their own competence to control their lives and affairs and that their attitudes toward selfishness and unselfishness underwent change. Clearly



both these dimensions, of general competence at and confidence in responsible decision making and of understanding the relations between self-concerned and other-concerned passions, are ones along which one would expect change and variation, as experience deepens and opportunity widens. A child's opportunity for responsible decision making is small, and yet the child's experience of having to live with others' decisions, to react to inconsiderate decisions, or to be willing to discern, protest, understand, or forgive decisions by superiors which affect her badly is a vital preparation for later responsible decision making. The person who has forgotten what it was like to be the relatively powerless one, the decided-for and not the decision maker, is not going to be able even to anticipate the protests or grievances his or her own decisions produce, let alone be a wise or compassionate decision maker. So development along what we could call the sympathy and memory dimensions—development and enrichment of the ability to understand others' reactions—will be something one hopes will occur in normal development.

Recent studies by Judith A. Hall and Robert Rosenthal and their associates<sup>6</sup> have shown, interestingly enough, that women typically are better readers of other people's *nonverbal* communications of feelings (in facial expression, 'body language,' and tone of voice) than are men, and that women also are more easily read. It seems to make good evolutionary sense to suppose that there is an innate basis for such superiority, since women have been the ones who had both to communicate with infants and to interpret their communications before the child has learned a natural language. Not only may women's moral voice be different from men's and often unheard by men, but women's *tone* of voice and nonverbal expression may be subtler, more expressive, and understood more easily by other women than by men. Both in the Humean virtue of 'ease of expression' and in facility in recognizing expressed feelings, women seem to outperform men.

The second dimension of expected change and development concerns the weight a person gives to the understood preferences of the various others involved in her decision, when she decides. How one sees their interests in relation to one's own will also change as experience grows. Even if infant egoism is where we all start, it seems to be infant egoism combined with infant trust in parents and with faith in the ease of communication of feelings. In parent-child and other intimate relations, Hume says, the other 'communicates to us all the actions of his mind; makes us privy to his inmost sentiments and affections; and lets us see, in the very instant of their production, all

the emotions, which are caus'd by any object' (*T.*, p. 353). Where we start, in infancy, seems to be in optimism about ease of mutual understanding, even without language, and about harmony in wills. What we may have to learn, by experience, is that conflict of wills is likely, that concealing one's feelings can be prudent, and that misunderstanding is frequent. Hume's own versions of childhood attitudes in, for example, the *Treatise*, Book Two, the section 'Of the Love of Relations,' show an incredibly strong and dominant memory or fantasy of such parent-child trusting and harmonious intimacy. Parents and children are seen to take pride in one another's achievements and successes, and not to compete with one another for eminence. 'Nothing causes greater vanity than any shining quality in our relations' (*T.*, p. 338). But this idyll of shared interests, concerted wills, and shared pride or self-assertion must soon be interrupted by experience of what Hume calls 'contrariety,' and that 'comparison' or competition which interferes with sympathy and cooperation. A most important dimension of the moral development one would look for on a Humean moral theory would be this one, the interplay of what he calls the opposed principles of sympathy and comparison. Although on his account sympathy is what morality chiefly depends upon, the opposed principle of comparison, a due sense of when our interests are or would be in conflict with those of others, and of what is then our due, also plays a not unimportant role in the generation of a sense of the virtue of justice, as he describes it. But the interpersonal problem to which various versions of morality give better or worse solutions, on Hume's account, is the problem of how to *minimize* opposition of interests, how to arrange life so that sympathy, not hostile comparison, will be the principle relating our desires to those of our fellows. Where, on the more contractarian model, morality regulates and arbitrates where interests are opposed, on a Humean view, as on Gilligan's girls', morality's main task is to rearrange situations so that interests are no longer so opposed.

There is, for Hume, an intimate interplay between the operation of sympathy and the sense of what are one's own interests. It may seem that only relative to some already fixed sense of which desires are and are not my own desires could I recognize any reaction of my own as sympathy with another's desires. But in fact, as Hume describes the workings of sympathy, they serve as much to determine, by outward expansion as well as by reinforcement of the inner core, what counts as 'my interests.' Since he believes that every human desire languishes unless it receives sympathetic reverberation from another (*T.*, p. 363),

then unless someone sympathizes with my 'selfish' pleasures they will not persist. But that another does so sympathize both makes that pleasure less purely selfish, more 'fertile' for others, and also evokes in me a sympathy with the other's sympathy for me—a 'double reverberation'—and a grateful willingness to sympathize with that one's pleasures, as long as sympathy is not drowned by comparison of our respective social statuses. Hence Hume can say that 'it seems a happiness in the present theory that it enters not into that vulgar dispute concerning the *degrees* of benevolence or self-love, which prevail in human nature' (*E.*, p. 271).

Hume has a famously fluid concept of the self, and the fluid ego boundaries that allows work interestingly in his moral psychology. One could say that, on a Humean version of moral development, the main task is to work to a version of oneself and one's own interests which both maximizes the richness of one's potential satisfactions and minimizes the likely opposition one will encounter between one's own and others' partially overlapping interests. This is both an individual and a social task—a matter of the social 'artifices' which divide work so as to increase, not decrease, the real ability of all workers, which conjoin forces so that not just the collective power but each person's power is augmented, and which arrange that 'by mutual succour we are less expos'd to fortune and accidents' (*T.*, p. 485). The additional force, ability, and security which acceptable social institutions provide, he later says, must be a 'system of actions concurr'd in by the whole society, . . . infinitely advantageous to the whole and to every part' (*T.*, p. 498). This may seem an absurdly high demand to make, one which no set of social institutions has yet met. But if we remember those endless added satisfactions which sympathetic enlargement of self-interest can bring to Humean persons, then we can see that a set of institutions that really did prevent oppositions of interest might indeed bring 'infinite' or at least indeterminately great increase of power of enjoyment (such as that he described at *T.*, p. 365). Whether these increased satisfactions in fact come about will depend not just on the nature of the institutions but on the individuals whose lives are structured by them—'a creature absolutely malicious and spiteful' or even a man of 'cold insensibility or narrow selfishness' (*E.*, pp. 225–226) will not receive infinite advantages from even the best institutions. Hume, perhaps overoptimistically, thinks that given halfway decent institutions and customs of upbringing, these nasty creatures will be 'fancied monsters' (*E.*, p. 235), not real possibilities (he excuses Nero's actions by citing his grounds for fear, Timon's by his 'affected spleen').

One dimension of moral development, then, for a Humean version of morality, will be change in the concept of one's own interest. 'I esteem the man whose self-love, by whatever means, is so directed as to give him a concern for others, and to render him serviceable to society' (*E.*, p. 297). But equally important, and perhaps slower to develop in women in our society, is a realistic sense of whether or not one's agreeable moral virtues are being exploited by others, whether or not there is any 'confederacy' of the more narrowly selfish and of the sensible knaves, free-riding on the apron strings of those whose generous virtues they praise and encourage but do not envy or emulate. Due pride is a Humean virtue, and one cannot be proud of tolerating exploitation. Still, a realistic appraisal of the relative costs and benefits of cooperative schemes to their various participants and an unwillingness to tolerate second-class status require a realistic estimate of just how much real gain the 'narrowly selfish' get from their exploitation of others' more generous other-including self-love. By Hume's accounting, the sensible knaves and the narrowly selfish don't do better than their victims—they are 'the greatest dupes.' The very worst thing the exploited can do to improve their situation is to try to imitate the psychology of their exploiters. The hard art is to monitor the justice of social schemes, to keep an eye on one's rights and one's group's rights, without thereby contracting one's proper self-love into narrow selfishness in its 'moralized' version—into insistence on one's rights, even when one gains nothing, and others lose, by one's getting them. A sense of what is due one can easily degenerate into that *amour propre* which is the enemy of the sort of extended sociable and friendly *amour-de-soi* which Hume, like Rousseau, sees as the moral ideal for human beings.

Will there be anything like Kohlberg's level-difference in the moral development of Humean passions, if we see this as a change in concepts of self in relation to others, in our capacity to understand facts about likely and actual conflicts, and in our capacity to sympathize with others' reactions, developed through experience and maturation? For Hume a defining feature of a moral response is that it be a response to a response—that it be a matter of a 'reflexion,' that it be a sentiment directed on sentiments. One can postulate a fairly clear difference between levels of 'reflection,' parallel to Kohlberg's jumps in critical ability, if one distinguishes the mere ability to sympathize (and to react negatively to others' feelings) which young children show, a sort of proto-moral response, from that more legitimized version of it which comes when we sympathize with others as right-holders in

some conventional scheme and sympathize with their resentments at insult or injury (a level two response), achieving a sort of officially 'seconded' sympathy, comparison, sense of self, and recognition of recognized conflicts of interest. One would reserve the title of really moral response to the reflexive turning of these capacities for sympathy, for self-definition, and for conflict recognition onto themselves, to see if they can 'bear their own survey.' Doing this would involve the sympathetic comparative evaluation of different styles of self-definition, styles of watching for and managing conflicts, of inhibiting or cultivating sympathy. The Humean concept of 'reflexion' performs the same sort of job as Kantian reason—it separates the mature and morally critical from the mere conformers. A moral theory which developed Gilligan's women's moral strengths could make good use of Hume's concept of reflection.

I end with a brief return to the question of how this wise moral theory of Hume's could allow its author to make the apparently sexist remarks he did. Now, I think, we are in a position to see how harmless they might be, a display of his social realism, his unwillingness to idealize the actual. Women in his society *were* inferior in bodily strength and in intellectual achievement. Neither of these, however, for someone who believes that reason should be the slave of reflective and moralized passions, is the capacity that matters most. What matters most, for judging moral wisdom, are corrected sentiments, imagination, and cooperative genius. There Hume never judges women inferior. He does call them the 'timorous and pious' sex, and that is for him a criticism, but since he ties both of these characteristics with powerlessness, his diagnoses here are of a piece with his more direct discussions of how much power women have. In those discussions he is at pains not just to try to point out the subordination of their interests to those of men in the existing institutions (marriage in particular) but also to show women where their power lies, should they want to change the situation.

As he points out, a concern for 'the propagation of our kind' is a normal concern of men and women, but each of us needs the cooperation of a member of the other sex to further this concern, and 'a trivial and anatomical observation' (*T*, p. 571) shows us that no man can know that his kind has been propagated unless he can trust some woman either to be sexually 'faithful' to him or to keep track of and tell him the truth about the paternity of any child she bears. This gives women great, perhaps dangerously great, threat advantage in any contest with men, a power very different from any accompanying the

'insinuation, address and charms' (*E.*, p. 191) that Hume had invoked as sufficient to break any confederacy against them. The non-self-sufficiency of persons in reproductive respects that he goes on in the next paragraphs to emphasize, and the need of the male for a trustworthy female in order to satisfy his postulated desire for offspring he can recognize as his (a desire Hume had emphasized in the *Treatise* section 'Of Chastity and Modesty'), put some needed iron into the gloved hands of the fair and charming sex. Hume gives many descriptions in his *History* and *Essays* of strong independent women, and he dwells on the question of whether the cost of their iron wills and their independence is a loss of the very moral virtues he admires in anyone but finds more often in women than in men—the 'soft' nonmartial compassionate virtues. Need women, in ceasing to be timorous and servile, cease also to be experts at care and mutual care? His moral tale of a liberated woman who chooses to be a single mother (in 'Of Moral Prejudices') suggests not—that avoidance of servile dependence on men can be combined with the virtues of caring and bearing responsibility, that pride and at least some forms of love can be combined.

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POSTSCRIPT

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This essay was written before Carol Gilligan had clarified and slightly revised her views about women and the care perspective. Indeed this essay was written for the conference at which Gilligan made the clarification.<sup>7</sup>

I now find a slight distortion or oversimplification of Hume's views at one place (p. 248) in this essay. I would not now say that his characterization of the 'good' person as 'a safe companion, an easy friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, an indulgent father' is intended to summarize the person with all or even the most important natural virtues, but merely to characterize the person who has that subset of them which confers moral 'goodness,' as distinct from moral 'greatness' and moral 'ability.' Hume, as I go on to say here, recognizes a great variety of natural virtues, and he subdivides them in various ways. One way is by varying the narrowness and width of the circle of others with whom the moral judge must sympathize, in order to judge the impact of the character trait on its possessor's fellows. Gentleness typically affects those in the 'narrow circle' of family, friends, and

workmates. But the general's courage and the diplomat's wisdom may affect very wide circles. These traits therefore have a special moral 'importance and weight' (*T.*, p. 613). Hume writes that some natural virtues make their possessor amiable while others make her estimable (*T.*, p. 608). 'Goodness' tends to be a term reserved by him for those virtues which make their possessor lovable rather than estimable, qualities which favorably affect the narrow circle around her rather than affecting the 'great confederacy of mankind.'

This point of Hume's linguistic usage is of interest primarily to Hume interpreters rather than to moral philosophers more generally. It does, however, raise a deeper question concerning just how we can be sure how widely the effects of a given character trait spread their beneficial or baneful influence. The gentle parent may not influence the fate of empires in his lifetime in the way that the great national leader does, but the gentle parent may influence not only his children but also his children's children, just as the violent parent tends to bring about the replication of his own vices in his victims. Hume notes the special degree of shame which attaches to diseases that 'affect others,' for instance, any venereal disease that 'goes to Posterity' (*T.*, p. 303). Most of the natural vices which prevent a person from being 'good,' in Hume's sense, are ones that may well 'go to posterity,' and so do have weight and moment. The line between the 'great' and the 'good,' the estimable and the amiable, may be difficult to draw. The 'narrow circle,' over several generations, can widen out quite dramatically.

My usage of the term 'natural vices' may be un-Humean, since Hume requires of a natural virtue that it be the norm, not the exception, in a human population (*T.*, p. 483). All the vices which are opposed to these virtues therefore become in one sense 'unnatural.' I have discussed elsewhere some of the problems that this makes for Hume.<sup>8</sup>

## Notes

1. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 348. References in the text will be given as *T.* Other works by Hume referred to in the text are *Enquiries*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), to be given as *E.*; and *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Classics, 1985), to be given as *Es.* I also refer to *History of England*, any edition.
2. The three essays referred to in this section were published by Hume in the first edition of *Essays Moral and Political* (1741-42), but were removed by him in

- subsequent editions. They can be found in David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Classics, 1985) in the appendix 'Essays Withdrawn and Unpublished.'
3. Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 12. See also Kohlberg, *Collected Papers on Moral Development and Moral Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Moral Education Research Foundation, 1971).
  4. See Introduction to Eva Kittay and Diana Meyers, eds., *Women and Moral Theory* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987). I discuss Kohlberg's theory in Essay 2, pp. 21-22.
  5. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 25ff. Future references to this work will be given in the text as *D.V.*
  6. Robert Rosenthal, J. A. Hall, M. R. DiMatteo, P. L. Rogers, and D. Archer, *Sensitivity to Nonverbal Communication: The PONS Test* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). See also Judith A. Hall, *Non-Verbal Sex Differences* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, trans. John Ladd (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).
  7. Carol Gilligan, 'Moral Orientation and Moral Development,' in *Women and Moral Theory*, ed. Kittay and Meyers, pp. 19-33.
  8. 'Natural Virtues, Natural Vices,' *Social Philosophy & Policy*, 8, Ethics, Politics, and Human Nature (Autumn 1990): 24-34.