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Hume's Passion-Based Account of Moral Responsibility

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Abstract: Many scholars have claimed that the psychology of the indirect passions in the *Treatise* is meant to capture how we come to regard persons as morally responsible agents. My question is exactly *how* the indirect passions relate to responsibility. In elucidating Hume's account of responsibility, scholars have often focused not on the passionate responses themselves, but on their structural features. In this paper, I argue that locating responsibility in the structural features is insufficient to make sense of Hume's account of responsibility. I argue this on the grounds that without reference to the passions, Hume does not have the resources to distinguish between responsible and non-responsible entities. Instead, I attribute to Hume a distinctive, sympathy-based response-dependent conception of responsibility.

Introduction

In the *Treatise of Human Nature*,¹ Hume distinguishes between two conceptions of person, that is, “personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves” (T 1.4.6.5). The focus of this paper is the latter, the passion-based notion of person. Hume never clearly explains what the passion-based view is, but we can extrapolate it from his theory of the passions in Book 2 of the *Treatise*. Hume divides the passions

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into direct passions (e.g., joy, hope, fear) and indirect passions (e.g., pride, humility, love, or hatred). The “indirect” passions involve the notion of person and therefore occupy a central place in Hume’s discussion of the passion-based notion of person. Many scholars have claimed that the psychology of the indirect passions is meant to capture how we come to regard persons as what I will call “responsible” agents.² Unlike mere inanimate objects, persons are subject to normative evaluation, that is, they are responsible for what they do. According to these interpretations, Hume’s account of the indirect passions is meant to capture this aspect of personhood.

However, there can be multiple ways in which the passions are related to our conception of responsibility, and it has not been fully clarified *how* they are related to each other. To see this, aside from Hume, consider P.F. Strawson’s influential view that the “reactive attitudes,” or certain kinds of person-directed emotions, are essential to our practice of responsibility attribution.³ This view allows at least two interpretations: either responsibility essentially depends on our emotional responses themselves, or the extrinsic features of our emotional responses. The former proposes the response-dependent view that being responsible is “a function of being a target of such responses.”⁴ The latter view is, for example, that “the reactive attitudes are *evidence* about when to hold people responsible, but not something that constitutes them being responsible.”⁵ According to this view, what constitutes responsibility is some response-independent property, and perhaps the reactive attitudes, such as resentment, just serve to facilitate our responsibility practice. For example, this proposal might say, the fact that a person acts *voluntarily* makes her a responsible agent, and our anger at her immoral actions would be a response to an *already* responsible agent. In which way are emotions involved in our practice of responsibility?

Although commentators have not explicitly addressed this question in interpreting Hume's account of the indirect passions, they often attempt to elucidate Hume’s account of responsibility

by focusing on some response-independent, structural features of the indirect passions.⁶ In this paper, I argue that locating responsibility in some response-independent properties is insufficient to make sense of Hume's account of responsibility. I argue this on the grounds that without reference to the passions, Hume does not have the resources to distinguish between responsible and non-responsible entities. Instead, I attribute to Hume a distinctive, sympathy-based response-dependent conception of responsibility.

1. Responsibility as Attributability and the Indirect Passions

In this section, I would like to clarify what kind of "responsibility" I attribute to Hume. Hume himself rarely uses the word "responsibility," but we can find some notion of it in his philosophy. Then, I would like to confirm that Hume consistently connects the indirect passions with the notion of responsibility, postponing considering exactly how they are related until the following sections. Here I should also note that I limit my considerations to *moral* responsibility, the responsibility we have for our moral qualities, simply because Hume seems most interested in moral praise or blame, and most textual considerations will be based on Hume's reference to the moral one. Note, however, that this does not mean at all that Hume's concept of responsibility cannot be applied to non-moral domains.⁷

To elaborate on Hume's notion of responsibility, it is useful to look at Gary Watson's influential distinction between responsibility as attributability and responsibility as accountability.⁸ To regard a person as morally *accountable* is to regard a person as being under certain moral demands. Those who violate these demands are subject to punishment and other sanctions. Complying with or exceeding the demands, one is praised and sometimes rewarded. Accountability often comes with the control condition: if people are accountable for their

activities, then they have control over their activities. For usually we do not penalize people for something out of their control. In contrast, responsibility as *attributability* forms a broader category, and responsibility as accountability is a subset of it. Attributability encompasses cases where moral qualities are attributed to a person without such strict moral demands. For example, one's cowardice is not necessarily something to be penalized, but it is still attributable to the person and it expresses her moral character. Here, the control condition becomes less prominent, because some moral items can express one's moral worth even though she has no control over them.⁹

With the two conceptions of responsibility, I agree with Vitz that Hume is mainly concerned with responsibility as attributability.¹⁰ Hume writes:

Philosophers, or rather divines under that disguise, treating all morals, as on a like footing with civil laws, guarded by the sanctions of reward and punishment, were necessarily led to render this circumstance, of voluntary or involuntary, the foundation of their whole theory. Every one may employ terms in what sense he pleases: But this, in the mean time, must be allowed, that sentiments are every day experienced of blame and praise, which have objects beyond the dominion of the will or choice, and of which it behoves us, if not as moralists, as speculative philosophers at least, to give some satisfactory theory and explication. (EPM App 4.21. Cf: T 3.3.4.3-4)

Here, rather than narrowly focusing on the sanction-involving moral practice, Hume is interested in the fact that we attribute morality to people even in matters that are not under their control or intention.¹¹ Intentional actions are just one of the traits which we blame or praise. Thus, Hume's primary concern consists in responsibility as attributability. In what follows, by "responsibility," I mean it in the sense of attributability.¹²

Then, what makes a person a morally responsible agent, that is, a being to whom morality can be attributed? To answer this question, Hume seems to appeal to the indirect passions. According to Hume, we are responsible for our actions only when the actions are closely connected to us in such a way that they cause the indirect passions. Hume writes, “Actions themselves, not proceeding from any constant principle, have no influence on love or hatred, pride or humility; and consequently are never consider’d in morality” (T 3.3.1.4). “The action itself may be blameable; it may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion” (T 2.3.2.6), but when the action does not belong to us in a way that it does not provoke the indirect passions, “the person is not responsible for it” (ibid.). For example, my accidentally stepping on my friend’s foot would not make her angry (or if it does, her anger would be momentary), and thus I am not (at least fully) responsible for it. In this way, Hume seems to accommodate the notion of responsibility with reference to the indirect passions.

We observe the same point when Hume seems to claim the indirect passions provide the distinction between responsible and non-responsible agents. Hume takes it for granted that we regard inanimate objects as neither morally praiseworthy nor blameworthy. In Book 3 of the *Treatise*, this assumption figures as a premise to argue that moral rationalism is untenable because it would entail that we could find morality in inanimate objects (T 3.1.1.15n68, T 3.1.1.24). His own sentimentalist view that “virtue and vice be determined by pleasure and pain” might also seem open to the same objection that “any object, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, might become morally good or evil, provided it can excite a satisfaction or uneasiness” (T 3.1.2.4). Hume argues that the objection does not apply because we do not, in fact, have the same kind of response to inanimate objects, which he shows by considering the possible objects of the indirect passions (pride, humility, love or hate): “They [virtue and vice] must necessarily be plac’d either

in ourselves or others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore must give rise to one of these four passions; which clearly distinguishes them from the pleasure and pain arising from inanimate objects” (T 3.1.2.5). Inanimate objects can produce pleasure or pain for us, but they cannot be “morally good or evil” (T 3.1.2.4). This is because they cannot be the objects of the indirect passions. The account seems to claim that since inanimate objects never stir the indirect passions, no inanimate objects are responsible for the pleasure or pain they produce.¹³ Thus, Hume seems to appeal to the indirect passions to distinguish between responsible agents and non-responsible ones.¹⁴

The same point is repeated in the moral *Enquiry*. “Inanimate objects may bear to each other all the same relations which we observe in moral agents; though the former can never be the object of love or hatred” (EPM App. 1.17). “[A]n inanimate object may have good colour and proportions as well as a human figure. But can we ever be in love with the former?” (EPM 5.1.1n1) Hume seems to think that being an object of the indirect passions is somehow a mark of morally responsible entities.¹⁵

2. Describing the Indirect Passions and Previous Interpretations

Now we should ask *how* the indirect passions contribute to the perception of the responsible agent. In this section, I first describe Hume’s account of the indirect passions: they are a certain kind of feeling, but they are also characterized by their structural features.¹⁶ I then point out that many commentators, in interpreting Hume’s account of responsibility, have focused primarily on the structural features of the passions.

2.1 The Indirect Passions and Their Structural Features

In themselves, the indirect passions are simple impressions (T 2.1.2.1, T 2.2.1.1) and thus, something we feel (T 1.1.1.1). The feeling can take a positive or negative valence, that is, be pleasurable or painful. The indirect passions of “pride and love are agreeable passions; hatred and humility uneasy” (T 2.2.2.3). Furthermore, Hume endorses a seemingly strong claim that the passions as simple feelings cannot be representational: “A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification” (T 2.3.3.5). Here Hume conceives the passions very narrowly as a specific kind of simple feeling that is incapable of “representing” an object.

But Hume also conceives the indirect passions in a structural way. As simple feelings, no further description of the passions is possible. But we can describe extrinsic circumstances in which the feelings arise: “The passions of PRIDE and HUMILITY being simple and uniform impressions, ’tis impossible we can ever, by a multitude of words, give a just definition of them, or indeed of any of the passions. The utmost we can pretend to is a description of them, by an enumeration of such circumstances, as attend them” (T 2.1.2.1). The same point applies to love and hate (T 2.2.1.1). Such “circumstances” include the *objects* and *causes* of the passions.

The *causes* of the indirect passions are hedonically qualified perceptions (pleasure in the case of pride or love, and pain in the case of humility or hatred). More precisely, causes of the indirect passions consist of an impression of pleasure or pain and an idea of the bearer of such a hedonic quality (T 2.1.2.6, T 2.2.1.5). This does not mean that any perception of pleasurable or painful things always causes an indirect passion. In order for such perceptions to cause the indirect passions, they have to be associated with persons. A pleasurable or virtuous action alone does not cause me to feel pride. It has to be conceived as *my* action. Hume frequently stresses this point: “these subjects [which come with pride-producing hedonic qualities] are either parts of ourselves,

or something nearly related to us” (T 2.1.5.2, my insertion).¹⁷ Only perceptions of painful or pleasurable things that we perceive to have a close connection to a person become causes of the indirect passions.

The *objects* of the indirect passions are always self or others.¹⁸ Although it is not clear what it is to be an “object” of the passions, Hume expresses it as at least involving the fixing of attention. “Pride and humility, being once rais’d, immediately turn our attention to ourself” (T 2.1.2.4; see also T 2.2.2.17).¹⁹ The relation between the fixation of attention and the passions seems to be causal: Hume says that pride “never fails to produce” (T 2.1.5.6) an idea of the self.²⁰ This suggests that for persons to be objects of the passions is a matter of the passions’ fixing attention on persons.

2.2 Previous Interpretations

To interpret Hume’s view of responsible agents, commentators have often focused on the structural features. Amélie Rorty is an example. She explains the appeal to structural features by anticipating a possible objection to using Hume’s theory of pride to account for responsible agents:

Second objection: how can pride, a simple and uniform impression incapable of definition, illuminate the construction of the fictional idea of the self as an agent? Although pride is, as Hume says, a given, an original and unanalysable impression, and although it is only contingently connected to its causes, consequences and objects, the circumstances of its production are law-like Its characteristic feeling is necessary but not sufficient for the identification of pride: it is also identified by its causal role.²¹

As this passage shows, she thinks that simple feelings could not capture the complex notion of agents, and accordingly argues that our perceptions of them are grounded in the causal roles of the indirect passions rather than just in their feeling. Indeed, she holds that pride produces the idea of the self as a bearer of causes of the passion.²² For example, in taking pride in my beautiful house, I come to see myself as an owner-of-a-beautiful-house. According to Rorty, in characterizing myself again and again in terms of what I take pride in, I become aware of which of my traits I am “motivated to preserve or care for.”²³ I thereby see myself as a source of my actions, namely an agent. Then, Rorty continues, I come to take pride in virtues and internalize concerns for others.²⁴ Now I conceive myself as a moral agent, with a sense of justice. Here by “agent,” Rorty seems to mean a being to whom some items such as actions or property are attributable (e.g., homeowner or morally evaluable persons), so she seems concerned with “responsibility” in my sense. According to this view, the emphasis is on the structural aspects of the passions: moral responsibility is grounded in the intimate relations between a person and her moral qualities.

Hsueh Qu argues that what is distinctive of the passion-based person is its durability, and that this durability allows the person to be the object of normative evaluation.²⁵ Hume's account of “personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination” (T 1.4.6.5) in Book 1 of the *Treatise* describes a person as a bundle of transient perceptions. But Hume frequently maintains that the persons involved in the production of the indirect passions are durable. For example, Hume writes, “What is casual and inconstant gives but little joy, and less pride We compare it to ourselves, whose existence is more durable; by which means its inconstancy appears still greater” (T 2.1.6.7). This durability allows a person to be normatively evaluable. If one's actions do not derive from a durable disposition within that person, then “'tis impossible he can, upon its account, become the object of punishment or vengeance” (T 2.3.2.6). Now, what has durability is the person who is the

object of the passions, or the trait that causes the passions. Here, then, responsibility or normativity is explored through the structural features of the indirect passions.

Many scholars have pointed out that the distinguishing feature of Hume's passion-based conception of person is that it describes person as *embodied*,²⁶ and this insight is sometimes connected to Hume's account of responsible agents. As Ainslie points out,²⁷ Hume's thought-based account of person in Book 1 discusses the nature of person as *mind*, as revealed by introspection. In contrast, when speaking of person in relation to the passions, Hume portrays it as having a body. For example, Hume speaks of "the qualities of our mind and body, that is self" (T 2.1.9.1). Pitson makes the point that this embodiment is significant for us to be responsible agents.²⁸ He does not fully develop this idea, but his point seems to be that through embodiment we become publicly evaluable entities.²⁹ This proposal would say that the fact that we are responsible for what we do is not simply a matter of how we privately evaluate what we do, but is closely related to the fact that what we do is evaluated by others. Pitson suggests that under this embodied and publicized concept of person, we can be said to be responsible for our actions we ourselves do not remember.³⁰ Again, Hume mentions bodily features of a person as *causes* of the indirect passions: our body "must still be allow'd to be near enough connected with us to form one of these double relations, which I have asserted to be necessary to the *causes* of pride and humility" (T 2.1.8.1, my emphasis). The passions do not make me an embodied being; it is my embodiment that produces the passions. Thus, Pitson seems to approach Hume's concept of responsibility by looking at the causes of the indirect passions.³¹

Thus, in interpreting Hume's account of responsibility, previous interpretations have often focused on the structural features of the indirect passions, such as the close relations between persons and moral properties, durability, and embodiment.³² They do not actively deny that our

passionate responses are involved in the attribution of responsibility, but when explaining Hume's account of responsibility, they seem to appeal mostly to the structural features and do not give positive explanatory roles to the passions themselves.³³

3. Insufficiency of the Structural Features

In this section, I argue that looking at the structural features of the indirect passions is not sufficient to make sense of Hume's account of responsibility. This argument is based on Hume's insight that through the indirect passions we can distinguish between inanimate objects and responsible agents. Again, Hume writes: "Inanimate objects may bear to each other all the same relations which we observe in moral agents; though the former can never be the object of love or hatred" (EPM App. 1.17). I contend that the structural features of the indirect passions alone cannot capture this distinction because of Hume's various naturalistic commitments. Recall that the structural features of the passions consist of the objects and causes of the passions. The objects of the indirect passions are perceptions of oneself or others, and their causes are perceptions of painful or pleasurable qualities in subjects that have close connections to perceptions of persons. The previous interpretations seem to attempt to find a responsibility-making factor somewhere in these. In what follows, I argue that none of these elements is sufficient to distinguish between responsible entities and inanimate objects.

3.1 Perceptions of Painful or Pleasurable Things

The perceptions of painful or pleasurable things are part of the causes of the indirect passions. For example, my virtuous and pleasurable actions generate pride. However, mere perceptions of things with hedonic qualities cannot provide the distinction between responsible and non-responsible

entities. “A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure” (T 3.1.2.4), but they are not responsible for it. Still, one might think that we can distinguish between attributable and non-attributable pleasures by appealing to their qualitative difference. Pleasure in wine and pleasure toward moral traits of responsible agents might be simply felt differently. Hume himself offers such a view: “[A]n inanimate object, and the character or sentiments of any person may, both of them, give satisfaction; but as the satisfaction is different, this keeps our sentiments concerning them from being confounded, and makes us ascribe virtue to the one, and not to the other” (T 3.1.2.4). Hume claims that there is an introspectively accessible difference between pleasure toward wine and pleasure directed at moral traits. This difference might reveal the difference between morally responsible and non-responsible entities.³⁴

Nevertheless, Hume seems to think that the phenomenological difference between the two kinds of pleasure is not rigid enough. Hume says that the associations between moral pleasure and the indirect passions provide “a still more considerable difference” (T 3.1.2.5) between the different kinds of pleasure than their intrinsic feeling, which suggests that the phenomenological difference in pleasure alone is somehow insufficient.³⁵ Hume does not explain in what sense the effects of the indirect passions are “more considerable.” I take it that the intrinsic difference between different kinds of pleasure is not salient enough for the substantive distinction between responsible and non-responsible agents.³⁶ Hume notes that when we focus on their intrinsic feeling alone, different kinds of pleasure are “apt to be confounded” (T 3.1.2.4).³⁷ We might confuse pleasures toward an accurate computer and an astute person. Still, these pleasures can be easily distinguished because only the pleasure we feel toward the person is accompanied by love or respect. Perhaps the indirect passions are required for us to arrive at a more robust distinction between morally evaluable pleasure and other kinds of pleasure.³⁸ In any case, for Hume, the rigid

distinction between pleasure we feel toward moral traits and pleasure toward inanimate objects requires the aid of the indirect passions.

3.2 Perceptions of Persons

Persons are the objects of the indirect passions. Also, since the causes of the indirect passions must be closely related to persons, they are also part of the causes. The entities may have characteristics that explain their difference from inanimate objects in responsibility. Durability, which Qu and others focus on in elucidating Hume's view on responsibility, is a property of persons or personal traits.

I think that Hume's deflationary notion of person makes this option unlikely. In discussing the passions, Hume describes persons at whom the indirect passions are directed as non-substantial collections of perceptions. He uses expressions such as "self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness" (T 2.1.2.2), or "that connected succession of perceptions, which we call self" (T 2.1.2.3).³⁹ This is pretty much the notion of person "as it regards our thoughts" (T 1.4.6.5), developed in Book 1 of the *Treatise*.⁴⁰ Hume proposes that the thought-based notion of person is a "collection of different perceptions" (T 1.4.6.4), but due to the associative relations (resemblance and causation) among the different perceptions, we attribute unity to the collection. Hume says that the way we attribute identity to a person is the same as the way we attribute identity to some complex inanimate objects. To explain personal identity as it regards our thought, Hume states:

[T]he same method of reasoning must be continu'd, which has so successfully explain'd the identity of plants, and animals, and ships, and houses, and of all the compounded and changeable productions either of art or nature. The identity, which

we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one, and of a like kind with that which we ascribe to vegetables and animal bodies. It cannot, therefore, have a different origin, but must proceed from a like operation of the imagination upon like objects. (T 1.4.6.15)

It is controversial whether Hume ascribes moral responsibility to non-human animals,⁴¹ but as we have seen, he clearly takes it for granted that inanimate objects cannot be responsible for what they produce. Thus, in stressing the continuity between persons and inanimate objects such as a ship, Hume seems to regard the thought-based notion of person as pertaining to non-responsible aspects of a person.⁴² This makes it unlikely that Hume has the resources to make a meaningful difference between inanimate objects and people in the notion of person as a unified collection of perceptions.⁴³

It might be said that the constituents of a person are psychological items, which inanimate objects cannot have. This presence of the mental, one might argue, is a crucial difference between them. However, for Hume, the psychological/non-psychological distinction does not seem to be what distinguishes responsible entities from those that are not. For example, Hume thinks that non-human animals are equipped with basic psychology consisting of reason and passion (T 1.3.16, 2.1.12, 2.2.12), but sometimes they are not responsible for morally bad actions, such as incest (T 3.1.1.25).⁴⁴ Here one might further maintain that a more complicated form of cognition, which non-human animals presumably lack, provides a crucial distinction between us and non-human animals. But Hume claims that even human beings seldom act based on highly abstract reasoning, which suggests that the attribution of responsibility in most cases does not require the attribution of complex cognitive capacities.⁴⁵ Thus, if responsibility consists in the presence of psychological constituents, it becomes unclear why non-human animals are sometimes not responsible for what

they do, while people with the same psychology are fully responsible.⁴⁶ Having psychology seems insufficient to be a responsible agent.

3.3 Perceptions of Close Connections Between Painful or Pleasurable Things and Persons

Now, one might nevertheless maintain that the relation between painful or pleasurable things and persons, an aspect of the causes of the passions, contains some element that can distinguish between responsible and non-responsible agents. A person may be related to a beautiful house or a virtuous action in a distinctive way that no inanimate object can be. The embodiment on which some scholars focus may involve some close relationship between ourselves and our bodily actions in particular. An intentional or purposive relation would be a good candidate for such a distinctive relation. One might say that wine is not responsible for its taste because the wine does not intend it. In contrast, I can be criticized for my action because I intended the action. Non-human animals might be said not to have intention in a full-fledged sense.⁴⁷ Thus, the presence of an intentional relation might mark the difference between responsible and non-responsible entities. Rorty may have something like this in mind in saying that pride makes us aware of our own motivational structure, and that the awareness constitutes the perception of ourselves as agents.⁴⁸ In section 2, I pointed out that Hume aims to account for responsibility practices that are not limited to those that involve intention and control, but all this means is that according to Hume, having an intention is not necessary for being responsible, and this does not prevent Hume from claiming that having an intention is sufficient for being responsible. For Hume, the intention-involving responsibility can still be an important subset of the broader category of responsibility as attributability.

However, this strategy runs aground in the face of Hume's views that intentional relations are simply garden-variety causal relations. He explicates causal necessity by virtue of constant

conjunction between objects and our inference from one object to another based on observations of the conjunction (T 2.3.1.4). When we say that heat causes boiling water, we mean that there has been constant conjunction between these types of things, and when we see water boiling, we infer the existence of heat. Hume points out that intentional actions are causal relations in this sense. There is a constant conjunction between intentions and actions (T 2.3.1.8), and we infer from an action a motive or intention of the person who performs it (T 2.3.1.15). Hume expects an objection to the effect that human actions involve more uncertainty than material objects and thus cannot be explained in terms of causal necessity. His reply is that when we find someone's action and intention irregular, we think that the seeming irregularity comes from our ignorance (T 2.3.1.12). When someone acts unexpectedly, we look for a hidden intention behind the action: if someone suddenly pokes me, I ask her why she did that, and when it turns out that she intended to chase away a mosquito, I understand the situation. And if someone acts in a completely irregular way, we no longer call her actions voluntary (T 2.3.1.13). Regularity is thus at the heart of our understanding of human actions.

Intentional actions, then, are instances of causal relations. Hume further argues that there are not two kinds of causal relations, one in material objects and one in human conduct.⁴⁹ Both of these two relations are comprised of constant conjunction and our inference, and therefore “are of the same nature, and deriv'd from the same principles” (T 2.3.1.17). Hume concludes: “The same experienc'd union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volitions and actions; or figure and motion. We may change the names of things; but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change” (T 2.3.1.17).

To conceive wine as a cause of a pleasurable taste and to conceive intention or desire as a cause of a virtuous action are “of the same nature” (ibid.). This makes it difficult to see why only

intention's causal power, and not wine's, should be accompanied by responsibility. Hume's identification of intention with ordinary causation suggests that the intentional relation does not make people different from inanimate objects in an important sense.⁵⁰

Focusing exclusively on intention also fails for another reason to fully capture Hume's view of moral responsibility. As I have pointed out in section 2, Hume recognizes responsibility even for unintentional qualities. Hume claims that the causes of the indirect passions need not always possess intentionality in the sense of volition (T 2.2.3.6). For Hume, voluntariness is just a subset of the intimate connections between us and our moral qualities to which the indirect passions respond. The relationship between ourselves and our unintentional moral qualities are presumably the associative relations, that is, resemblance, contiguity, and causation. These relations hold between inanimate objects and their traits, and do not appear to make us and inanimate objects different in any significant way.

4. A Response-Dependent Interpretation of Hume on Responsibility

If the above discussion is correct, the structural features of the indirect passions, that is, perceptions of painful or pleasurable qualities in subjects that have close connections to perceptions of persons, do not provide a meaningful difference between inanimate objects and responsible agents. Hence, focusing on the structural features is insufficient to accommodate Hume's account of responsibility. Then, if Hume seeks to grasp responsibility through the indirect passions, Hume seems to be left with a response-dependent account to the effect that the indirect passions themselves enable us to distinguish between responsible and non-responsible entities. In this final section, I elaborate on what this position could look like in Hume's system.

The response-dependent interpretation holds that feeling the indirect passions is precisely what constitutes the perception of the responsible agent. I love or hate my friend for what she has done. Or the friend feels proud of, or humiliated by, her actions. These passions are an essential part of seeing her as a responsible entity. On the other hand, I do not love or praise wine, no matter how good it tastes, and wine never takes pride in its taste. As we have already seen, there is no significant, responsibility-making difference between my friend who performs pleasurable (virtuous) actions and wine that brings pleasurable taste. But I only love the former.

This proposal does not have to say that we must actually feel the indirect passions whenever we think of responsibility. The experiences of the indirect passions are stored in memory, and we come to have beliefs about particular entities to whom responsibility is attributed, without feeling the passions. Hume's account of abstract ideas (T 1.1.7) suggests that through this process, we come to associate terms such as "responsibility" and "moral agent" with the passion-eliciting objects. Then we acquire the habit of recalling a few objects in a set of the passion-eliciting objects, what Garrett calls the "revival set" of abstract ideas,⁵¹ when we hear these words. In this way, we conceptualize responsibility, and we can have general conversations about who the responsible agents are, without actually feeling the passions.

The remaining important question, however, is how we *correct* our passionate responses. Sometimes we may love inanimate objects, and we may blame infants for what they have done. We may accordingly misuse the concept of responsibility. In the *Natural History of Religion*, Hume says that we have a natural tendency toward anthropomorphism: we "by a natural propensity . . . ascribe malice or good-will to every thing, that hurts or pleases us" (NHR 3.2), and even "philosophers . . . have oft ascribed to inanimate matter the horror of a vacuum, sympathies, antipathies, and other affections of human nature" (NHR 3.2). Then, Hume seems to admit that we

could hate or love unaccountable entities. These situations are an improper basis for the attribution of responsibility. What makes us correct our passionate responses?

To begin with, the structural features of the passions would rule out some of the indirect passions. My discussion thus far is only to argue that the perceptions of the structural features of the passions are not sufficient for the perception of the responsible agent, not to deny that they are necessary. Thus, my interpretation acknowledges that if some of its structural features are found to be missing, then the indirect passion would subside. For example, I might love a friend of mine based on the belief that she made a generous donation. However, if it turns out that it was done by someone else and that there is no connection between her and that donation, my love would be withdrawn (recall that the causes of the indirect passions include the close relationship between pleasurable qualities and self or others).⁵²

However, the structural features alone cannot determine who is to be the object of the passions. My point up to the previous section is that the structural features of the indirect passions are too general to provide a distinction between responsible and non-responsible entities. In Hume's picture, both people and inanimate objects are bundles of properties situated in causal necessity, and it seems difficult to discern any significant difference in their structural features. But we are supposed to feel the indirect passions only for the responsible agent. On what grounds, then, can we say that the indirect passions directed toward inanimate objects should be withdrawn, when the structural features are alike?

Hume sometimes seems to think that it is a brute fact that the indirect passions are directed toward *persons*, that is, entities we normally regard as responsible. He says that it is "absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind" (T 2.1.5.3) that pride or humility have objects other than self. Pride "never fails to produce" (T 2.1.5.6) the idea of self. However, Hume

has no explanation as to why this is the case. He claims that having oneself or others as an object is an “original quality” (T 2.1.5.3) of the passions, which means that we cannot give a further explanation of why the passions have those objects. He “pretend[s] not to give any reason” (T 2.1.5.3) for this close connection between the passions and persons. Thus, Hume might say that although there is no difference in responsibility between inanimate objects and persons, our indirect passions are anyway determined to go toward persons, and he cannot explain why this is so. However, this view does not help to explain why we should not have the indirect passions for inanimate objects. It only assumes the appropriateness of person-directed indirect passions, but does not explain why they are appropriate. Criticizing our superstitious tendency to love inanimate objects by asserting without reason that love is to be directed toward persons does not seem to be convincing. Hume’s official view might be that this assumption is a brute fact, but it would be more desirable if we could find in his philosophy a reason as to why the indirect passions directed toward the inanimate objects tend to subside.

I suggest that the social nature of the indirect passions, which Hume frequently emphasizes, could motivate us to correct our indirect passions toward non-responsible entities. Hume describes the passions as essentially interacting with the passions of others. His notion of sympathy is crucial in this process. Sympathy is the mechanism by which we actually feel the passions that others are feeling (T 2.1.11.3). Through sympathy, one’s indirect passion generates others’ indirect passion. For example, my admiration or love for my friend is communicated to her through sympathy and she feels proud. Contempt from others, perceived through sympathy, is a major source of humility (T 2.1.11.15). When a person is faced with misfortune, and perhaps thereby becomes an object of hatred and humility, we feel an indirect passion of pity for the person by sympathizing with her distress, and desire that her distress be removed (T 2.2.7). Or, since her humility or distress is

unpleasant to me, I may simply contempt or hate her through sympathy (T 2.2.9). In addition, Hume points out that sympathy sometimes brings about the opposite passions from those felt by others, a phenomenon Hume calls comparison. In comparison, the happiness or unhappiness of others, revealed through sympathy, generates pain or pleasure respectively, when compared to one's own circumstances (T 2.2.8.8). This is how we come to feel malice and envy toward others. Hume analogizes this sympathetic interplay of passions to mirrors: "In general we may remark, that the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each other's emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may decay away by insensible degrees" (T 2.2.5.21). My love for a person generates her pride, her pride in turn brings about my further love for her, and then I may envy her. The passions are "reverberated," of course, not only between me and her. Through sympathy, her pride would also make other people love or envy her. The indirect passions are not just isolated, private experiences, but constantly interact with the passions of others.⁵³

I suggest that the failure of the indirect passions to become part of this sympathetic network provides a reason for us to correct them. I may hate a mountain because of the danger it poses. But the mountain is not humiliated by my hate. Here, the sympathetic exchange of my hatred is disconnected. As a result, I and other people would not feel further passions towards the mountain, such as pity or malice. Thus, the failure to form a sympathetic network of the passions would weaken the initial passion. I may feel love for a newborn baby for what she has done, but she may not be enough of a "mirror" to reflect the passions, and my initial love may not lead to the production of further passions such as pride, benevolence, and envy. In this regard, we may tend not to attribute responsibility to a newborn baby. On the other hand, our love or hatred of adult

persons whom we normally regard as responsible produces a variety of passions through sympathy. This would explain why we tend to maintain the passion.⁵⁴

My proposal may seem tantamount to the idea that the response-independent property of having a (mature) mind constitutes responsibility, because those without a mental life cannot respond to the passions. I do not think so. If all of us lacked the sensitivity to feel the indirect passions, even a being with a mind would be a mere bundle of perceptions, indistinguishable in any significant way from an inanimate object. It is our passionate responses that make the difference, and our sympathetically interacting passionate responses especially contribute to our stable practice of responsibility attribution.

This sympathy-based response-dependent account remains sketchy, and I cannot do full justice to this view here. Still, Hume's appeal to sympathy can make his response-dependent account of responsibility defensible to the extent that it can explain why we tend to withdraw the passions for inanimate objects, and why we tend to have stably the passions for persons.

In sum, I attribute to Hume a response-dependent account of responsibility according to which the passionate responses constitute the perceptions of responsibility. Outside of the network of the passionate responses forged through sympathy, we do not find any responsibility-making features that distinguish normative beings from inanimate objects. Hume's sentimentalist anti-rationalism begins even before moral sentiments come into play; it begins with the very conception of what counts as a possible object of the indirect passions, a responsible agent.⁵⁵

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NOTES

¹ References to the *Treatise* are to David Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature: A Critical Edition*, Vol. 1, edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), and abbreviated "T." Citations are by Book, part, section, and paragraph number. References to the first *Enquiry* are to Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000) and abbreviated "EHU." References to the second *Enquiry* are to Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) and abbreviated "EPM." Citations of the two *Enquiries* are by part, section (if any), and paragraph number. References to *The Natural History of Religion* are to Hume, *A Dissertation on the Passions and the Natural History of Religion*, ed. Tom Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007) and abbreviated "NHR." Citations are by section and paragraph number.

² Jane McIntyre, “Personal Identity and the Passions,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27, no. 4 (1989): 545–57; Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, “Pride Produces the Idea of Self: Hume on Moral Agency,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 68, no. 3 (1990): 255–69; Paul Russell, *Freedom and Moral Sentiment: Hume’s Way of Naturalizing Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), chap. 4; Donald C. Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons in Book II of Hume’s Treatise,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 37, no. 3 (1999): 469–92; Tony Pitson, *Hume’s Philosophy of the Self* (London: Routledge, 2002), chap. 7; Lorenzo Greco, “The Self as Narrative in Hume,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53, no. 4 (2015): 699–722; Hsueh Qu, “Hume’s Dispositional Account of the Self,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 95, no. 4 (2017): 644–57.

³ Peter Fredrick Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” in *Free Will*, 2nd edition, ed. Gary Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 72–93.

⁴ David Shoemaker, “Response-Dependent Responsibility; or, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Blame,” *Philosophical Review* 126, no. 4 (2017): 481–527, 482.

⁵ David Brink and Dana Nelkin, “Fairness and the Architecture of Responsibility,” *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility* no. 1 (2013): 284–313, 287 (emphasis in original).

⁶ Note that there is a gap between Hume and contemporary philosophers: while the latter talks about the responsible agent itself, Hume seems to be concerned with the *perception* of the responsible agent.

⁷ Given that the indirect passions involve not only moral properties but also various properties in cognitive activities, occupations, etc. (T 2.1.2.5), we might find in Hume non-moral responsibility such as epistemic or professional responsibility. But this paper focuses on moral responsibility. Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons” also suggests that the indirect passions are not solely concerned with moral attribution.

⁸ Gary Watson, “Two Faces of Responsibility,” *Philosophical Topics* 24, no. 2 (1996): 227–48, 230–31.

⁹ This does not mean that responsibility as attributability refers to mere causal responsibility. Even if an infant is causally responsible for her immoral behavior, it would not be attributed to her. Attributability perhaps requires causal responsibility, but the latter is not sufficient for the former.

¹⁰ Rico Vitz, “Doxastic Virtues in Hume’s Epistemology,” *Hume Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 211–29, 216–17.

¹¹ Since control seems to require intention or choice, if Hume accepts responsibility for non-intentional activities, it would seem that he also accepts responsibility for things that are out of control. Although I should note that contemporary philosophy of responsibility sometimes makes a distinction between control and intention, it seems difficult to find such a fine-grained distinction in Hume. For example, see Michael McKenna, *Conversation and Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 194–95.

¹² One more clarification. Hume seems to think we are responsible for morally good/bad *actions* and *character traits*. Hume says that we are typically blamed or praised for our enduring character traits (T 3.2.1.2, 3.3.1.3). However, we are also responsible for our actions when they are intimately connected to us (T 2.2.3.4, 2.3.2.6). In what follows, I include both actions and character traits in the moral properties for which we are morally responsible.

¹³ Of course, inanimate objects can be causally responsible for pleasure or pain, but causal responsibility is not the issue here. See endnote 9.

¹⁴ What separates the bearers of moral responsibility from those who are not was also an important question for Hume's predecessors. The most obvious example would be John Locke. He distinguishes between mere human beings, who are continuous with plants and non-human animals, and the persons, who are the bearers of responsibility, and proposes that “consciousness” is the constitutive feature of person in John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 335. Shaftesbury claims that an entity can be a bearer of virtue when it has the ability to reflect on morality, or “when it can have the Notion of a publick Interest, and can attain the Speculation or Science of what is morally good or ill, admirable or blameable, right or wrong.” Lord (Anthony Ashley Cooper) Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 173. Hutcheson suggests that we do not morally admire inanimate beings because they “have no Intention of Good to us.” Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatise*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2008), 89.

¹⁵ To be clear, in my view, the moral sentiments, a crucial concept in Hume's ethics, are not genuinely central to this issue. The texts strongly suggest that the moral sentiments are distinct from the indirect passions. Hume frequently claims that the indirect passions are the *consequences* of the moral sentiments, rather than identical to them (T 2.1.7,

3.1.2.5, 3.3.1.3). Following Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons,” I understand the moral sentiments and the indirect passions to have different roles. When we observe a character trait and feel pleasure from it, we morally approve of it. This is the role of the moral sentiments. Then, based on that approval, we love or admire the person who possesses that character trait. In other words, we attribute the virtuous trait to the person. In my view, this is where the indirect passions come in. As I understand it, the question of responsibility is not which properties we morally approve or disapprove, but to which entity the properties we morally approve or disapprove can be attributed. So, in thinking about responsibility, Hume seems to focus particularly on the indirect passions.

¹⁶ I owe this terminology to Elizabeth Radcliffe, *Hume, Passion, and Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 99.

¹⁷ See also, among others, T 2.1.8.1, 2.1.9.1, 2.2.2.7-8, 3.3.1.4.

¹⁸ Given that non-human animals also have the indirect passions for their fellows (T 2.1.12, T 2.2.12), “self” and “others” here may not be limited to humans.

¹⁹ Schmitter also takes “being an object” to mean that attention is fixed on the object in Amy M. Schmitter, “Making an Object of Yourself: Hume on the Intentionality of the Passions,” in *Topics in Early Modern Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Jon Miller (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 223–40, 235.

²⁰ However, Qu argues that this relation between pride and self cannot be only causal and that the intentionality of the passions is intrinsic to their phenomenal character in Hsueh Qu, “The Simple Duality: Humean Passions,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 42, sup1. (2012): 98–116. Discussing this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, but even if Qu is correct, his interpretation is compatible with my response-dependent interpretation of responsibility.

²¹ Rorty, “Hume on Moral Agency,” 257.

²² *Ibid.*, 259–60.

²³ *Ibid.*, 262.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 266–69.

²⁵ Qu, “Hume’s Dispositional Account.” A similar point can be found in Pitson, *Hume’s Philosophy of the Self*, 127.

²⁶ Nicholas Capaldi, *Hume's Place in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 171–72; Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), chap. 6; Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons”; Greco, “The Self as Narrative.”

²⁷ Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons,” 481–82.

²⁸ Pitson, *Hume's Philosophy of the Self*, 125, 127.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 125. A similar idea can be found in Baier, *Progress of Sentiments*, 131.

³⁰ Pitson, *Hume's Philosophy of the Self*, 127.

³¹ In interpreting the agential or normative aspect of person, Pitson, *Hume's Philosophy of the Self*, 92–95 and Greco, “The Self as Narrative,” attribute the narrative conception of person to Hume. Since they do not explicitly discuss which aspects of the indirect passions contribute to this narrative, I refrain from classifying the narrative interpretation as focusing on the structural features. McIntyre, “Personal Identity and the Passions,” proposes that the passions help us to be concerned with and responsible for our past and future actions. Again, since she does not explicitly discuss which aspects of the passions contribute to our temporally extended practice of responsibility, I do not address her interpretation extensively above.

³² To be clear, these commentators do not explicitly claim that the perception of the structural features is sufficient for the attribution of responsibility. Perhaps what can be unproblematically attributed to them is the view that the structural features are necessary for the perception of responsibility. The point I argue below is that to understand responsibility in Hume, we need to identify not only the structural feature as its necessary condition, but also the passions themselves as part of its sufficient condition.

³³ Donald Ainslie seems to think that structural aspects alone fail to accommodate the passion-based notion of person when saying that causal reasoning is insufficient to reveal a person's distinctive character traits, or “person-defining markers” (Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons,” 480). His reason for the insufficiency is that causal reasoning is unable to distinguish person-defining features from incidental features of a person, such as being at such-and-such latitude (*Ibid.*, 478, 480). But it is not very clear if causal reasoning is really unable to do so. Hume states: “By them [the rules of causal reasoning] we learn to distinguish the accidental circumstances from the efficacious causes; and when we find that an effect can be produc'd without the concurrence of any particular

circumstance, we conclude that that circumstance makes not a part of the efficacious cause, however frequently conjoin'd with it" (T 1.3.13.11). This suggests that causal reasoning can exclude an incidental feature: it would say that I would continue to be who I am, even if I were at a different latitude. Although I share with Ainslie a similar conclusion, in what follows, I will provide a different justification from Ainslie's for the insufficiency of causal or structural aspects of the passions for our normative conception of person. Paul Russell, in his work on Hume on moral responsibility (*Freedom and Moral Sentiment*, chap 4), seems to think that Hume grounds the notion of responsibility in feeling rather than in the structural features of the passions. He seems to argue for this, on the basis of Hume's moral sentimentalism, that we discern moral distinctions through feeling, equating the moral sentiments with the indirect passions. However, as noted in endnote 15, there is ample textual evidence that the moral sentiments are distinct from the indirect passions. Thus, although I share the same conclusion with Russell, I think that we need a different ground to support the response-dependent interpretation of Hume on responsibility.

³⁴ In this case, our perceptions of responsible agents would not be response-dependent with respect to the indirect passions, even if they depend on the feeling of the moral sentiments.

³⁵ In the moral *Enquiry*, too, Hume puts more emphasis on the effects of the indirect passions. The appeal to the intrinsic difference among different kinds of pleasure is less explicit or sometimes omitted. See EPM 5.1.1n1 and App. 1.17.

³⁶ Gill criticizes Hume by saying that we cannot sufficiently distinguish between different kinds of pleasures, such as self-interested pleasure and unbiased pleasure, solely by looking at their intrinsic qualities. Michael B. Gill, "Moral Phenomenology in Hutcheson and Hume," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47, no. 4 (2009): 569–94, 584–86.

³⁷ But note that Hume makes this claim regarding, not confusion between pleasures we feel toward human traits and pleasures we feel toward inanimate objects, but between self-interested pleasure and pleasure from an unbiased point of view.

³⁸ Moreover, in practice, we rarely conceive moral pleasure independently of the indirect passions because moral traits which elicit pleasure immediately lead to one of the positive indirect passions, and practically they are "inseparable" (T 2.1.5.10. See also T 3.3.1.3).

³⁹ However, Ainslie, “Scepticism about Persons,” 482n27, and Greco, “The Self as Narrative,” 708, still stress the difference between the notions of self in Book 1 and Book 2, by pointing to the presence of the modifier “intimate,” which is not explicitly present in Book 1. I think that even if this modifier makes a difference, we should be able to explain it with reference to the presence of the passions. Qu, “Hume’s Dispositional Account,” proposes that the person who is the object of the passions must be a bundle of durable dispositions, not just a bundle of transient perceptions which Hume discusses in T 1.4.6. Even so, it would not be clear how this durability of person differs from the kind of durability that is also found in inanimate objects.

⁴⁰ Because of the presence of such phrases in Book 2, I disagree with interpretations that take the passion-based notion of person as fundamentally discontinuous from the thought-based one. For such an interpretation, see Eugenio Lecaldano, “The Passions, Character, and the Self in Hume,” *Hume Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 175–93. For critiques of this line of interpretation, see Åsa Carlson, “There Is Just One Idea of Self in Hume’s Treatise,” *Hume Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 171–84 and Qu, “Hume’s Dispositional Account.”

⁴¹ For discussion of this point, see Deborah Boyle, “Hume and Animal Ethics,” in *The Humean Mind*, ed. A. Coventry and A. Sager (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019): 470–80. She convincingly argues that in Hume’s philosophical system, non-human animals can be objects of moral evaluation by humans.

⁴² McIntyre, “Personal Identity and the Passions,” 549, also points out that agential aspects are less prominent than non-agential aspects in the thought-based notion of person.

⁴³ It may be said that the being an object of the passions is not simply having an idea of the person as a collection of perceptions, but involves fixation of our attention on the person (T 2.1.2.4), and this unique way of directing our attention is what makes the person special. Something like this idea can be found in Schmitter, “Making an Object of Yourself,” 236. I think the natural explanation is that the indirect passions make this mode of attention special. Insofar as this is the case, the proposal is compatible with a response-dependent interpretation.

⁴⁴ However, as Boyle, “Hume and Animal Ethics,” 475, points out, it does not follow from this that non-human animals are not evaluable for *any* quality.

⁴⁵ Hume writes: “Animals, therefore, are not guided in these inferences by reasoning: Neither are children: Neither are the generality of mankind, in their ordinary actions and conclusions: Neither are philosophers themselves, who,

in all the active parts of life, are, in the main, the same with the vulgar, and are governed by the same maxims” (EHU 9.5).

⁴⁶ Hume says that non-human animals cannot discern virtue because they are not as intelligent as humans (T 2.1.12.5). But all this says is that those who make moral judgments need a higher intelligence, not that those to whom morality is attributed need a higher intelligence.

⁴⁷ For example, Davidson suggests that a creature without language cannot relate to the world with “propositional attitudes.” Donald Davidson, “Rational Animals,” *Dialectica* 36, no. 4 (1982): 317–27. The distinctive relation of propositional attitude (or the lack thereof) may explain why non-human animals do not have as much responsibility as humans.

⁴⁸ Rorty, “Hume on Moral Agency,” 262–63. Johnson also takes intention as central to Hume’s view of moral responsibility. Clarence Shole Johnson, “Hume’s Theory of Moral Responsibility: Some Unresolved Matters,” *Dialogue* 31, no. 1 (1992): 3–18.

⁴⁹ Hume criticizes the Aristotelian taxonomy of four causes, insisting that “all causes are of the same kind” (T 1.3.14.32).

⁵⁰ One might think that the difference in a perspective makes a difference. From the third-person point of view, everything, whether it is an action or a motion, belongs in the web of causal necessity as Hume claims. But it might be thought that we can have a sense of agency only from the first-person perspective, which is absent in inanimate beings. Hume admits that when performing an action, we have a sense that we are not bound by necessity (T 2.3.2.2). But Hume maintains that however loose we feel our actions are, there is always a motive discoverable by a spectator with sufficient knowledge (T 2.3.2.3), and in saying this, he seems to think that such a looseness does not play any positive role in the attribution of moral responsibility.

⁵¹ Don Garrett, *Hume* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 55.

⁵² In what Hume calls “limitations” (T 2.1.6.1) to his account of the indirect passions, he adds some structural conditions that the production of the indirect passions requires: (1) Their causes are intimately connected to a person. (2) They are peculiar to the bearers of the causes. (3) They are publicly approved or disapproved. (4) They

are durable to some degree. (5) They conform to general rules. These structural features would help to rule out some of the inappropriate passions.

⁵³ This point is in line with Taylor's interpretation that this sympathetic communication and its stabilizing effect on social values are the core of Hume's theory of passion. Jacqueline Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵⁴ Note that the above suggestions are intended to be a descriptive account of how we particularly correct our indirect passions for what we regard as non-responsible entities such as inanimate objects. My point is that when we have such passions, there are psychological factors in Hume's system that would compel us to withdraw that passion. I do not intend to make a strong normative claim that the indirect passions are appropriate all things considered when they are part of a sympathetic network (and come with their structural features). Such a normative claim would be implausible. According to Hume, sympathy works strongly with people who are similar and contiguous to us (T 2.1.11.5–6). Then our love for someone remote from us would be considered inappropriate because the love fails to be part of a sympathetic network, and as a result, she would be ruled out from a community of responsible agents. This could lead to a highly problematic view that diminishes the personhood of those who are very different from us. My proposal is a descriptive claim about a restricted range of cases: it suggests that Hume provides the psychological resources for us to modify the passions toward non-responsible entities such as inanimate objects, without saying that such modified passions are genuinely legitimate. How Hume answers the fundamentally normative question of which passionate propensities are genuinely appropriate is controversial, and requires careful consideration of Hume's ethics, which I cannot address here. As for the question of whether Hume's sentimentalism can genuinely accommodate normativity, see Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality: Feeling and Fabrication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), chap. 9. I thank a referee for raising this issue.

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