

Ethics: Hume's central claim is that when we ascribe praise or blame, that blame or praise derives from an attitude of sympathy. His ethical theory is an example of altruism for central to Hume's theory is the concept which he refers to as "sympathy" or "humanity" or "fellow feeling." There are no moral facts. 'Selfishness & confined generosity.'

1. Sympathy is the source of moral approval (not an object of moral approval). His goal is basically the discovery of human nature.
2. Sympathy is the capacity (psychological mechanism) to be moved or affected by others, to be pleased or displeased. The strength of people's sympathy vary according to circumstances. In Enquiry he places more emphasis on phenomenon of sympathy with whole of society.
3. It is unanalyzable, rooted in our human constitution. He understands virtue to be a psychological disposition consisting of a tendency to feel a certain sentiment or complex sentiments—one that moves the possessor to act in. Hume rejects monkish virtues—mistakenly elevate craven humility, penance, fasting and others because it goes against the "common sentiments of humanity."
4. Moral judgments are primarily about virtues and vices. We morally praise people in so far as they exhibit virtues, and blame then in so far as they exhibit vices. Only secondarily are moral judgments concerned with individual actions. We praise or blame actions because they reveal morally admirable qualities in the agent.
5. What makes carious qualities "virtues" is that they are useful or agreeable, either to possessor or others. In Enquiry they are all the traits we know from common sense. Hume proposes that feeling, not thought that an action s exhibits virtue/vice.

Agreeable = immediately pleasing.

Useful =indirect advantage—possession will help to promote states of affairs which in their turn are pleasurable.

Qualities useful to others: benevolence, justice, fidelity. Useful to possessor: discretion, industry, strength of mind; good sense. Agreeable (immediately pleasing) to others is cheerfulness, magnanimity, courage, tranquility; agreeable to others is politeness, modesty, and decency.

What holds them together as virtues is their evoking sentiment of approval in spectators itself itself-grounded in sympathy.

**Three Steps: Operation of sympathy enables us to adopt certain criteria for the ascription of moral praise or blame and moral judgments are made by application of these criteria. He explains our sympathy is a manifestation of our sentiment s of humanity in Enquiry.**

1. Sentiment induces us to take account of the happiness and suffering of others as well as our own.
2. General standards correct the operation of sympathy so that we attach the same importance to the happiness or suffering of anyone, ourselves or others, close to us or remote to us.
3. In some cases we need to take into the account not merely the utility of particular acts, but the usefulness to society of a whole system of general rules and conventions.

Benevolence marks a decisive shift for Aristotle (benevolence is a quality of exercise which promotes the happiness or well being in general, because we take pleasure in the well-being of others. In fact, we naturally approve of those with a marked benevolence, especially to those who are far away; benevolence is infectious and generates corresponding feelings in others, setting off a dynamic of mutual reinforcement. Sensible Knave in (*Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Sec. 9, Pt. 2), is one who observes the general rules of justice and honesty, but who takes advantage of exceptions that he can make when doing so benefits him. Many approaches to ethics require that there is something irrational about this behavior and set out to show that it is akin to self-contradiction; Hume himself sensibly regards the character as simply abhorrent. The sensible knave problem highlights that sometimes moral sentiments do not map on to events with the corresponding utility (e.g., bad moral sentiments attach to useful actions, or good moral sentiments attach to non-useful actions). Consider Hume's description of the sensible knave: First, he thinks that sensible knaves will be torn apart by their nagging consciences. "Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct, these are circumstances very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man, who feels the importance of them" (EPM 9.23). Hume's second reply to the sensible knave problem is that given enough time of his knavery, the knave will be caught, which is ultimately not useful (EPM 9.24).

Aesthetics: "Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character (p. 278). Truth is disputable, not taste (8)

1. Treats aesthetic pleasures as an instinctual & natural human response. Successful arts exploit our natural sentiments by employing appropriate composition & design. Only empirical inquiry can establish reliable ways to elicit the approval of taste.

a. Sentiment-essence of moral evaluation; they are responses to sensory impressions; truth is disputable, not taste. Taste is immediate and spontaneous, yet the application of "good sense" and "reason" improves it. Taste is the capacity to respond with approval or disapproval (wine judges) with experience & education. Feeling, not thought, informs us that an object is beautiful/or ugly or that an action exhibits virtue/vice.

Aesthetic Judgment: (1) "Strong" sense are feelings that inform us that X is beautiful or ugly; they are expressions of taste rather than reasoned analysis. Taste is immediate and spontaneous yet fallible. (2) The more experience you have in examining art, more discerning your judgment becomes. (3) Taste improved in making comparisons among objects and using good sense; (4) Attempt to be a disinterested observer.

Four preliminary observation: (1) First, David Hume's aesthetics is not a novel view. Rather, it is a combination of the views of Joseph Addison and Francis Hutcheson. Addison proposed that tastes (pleasures) are the operations of imagination. Hutcheson suggested that emotions are the foundation of moral judgments. (2) We have to remember that Hume's work was written during the time of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment may be read as an ongoing negotiation of polarization between reason and sensibility, thought and taste. (3) The goal of Hume's Standard of Tastes at first seems to find a rule or standard that will reconcile conflicts of sentiments. It seems at first that works of art that win universal approval are themselves Hume's standards. But following the illustration regarding the kinsmen and wine (which I hope to later talk about) it is obvious that aesthetic judgment is placed in the hands of the discerning critic who has developed certain sensitivities via experience and education (empiricism as opposed to *a priori* concepts). And finally, Hume's aesthetics, while not complete or fully developed, appears to be an illustration of his moral theory.

Hume argues that "judgments" are not matters of facts or opinions but sentiments (the source of moral and aesthetic approval). He seeks to reconcile two contradictory positions: Tastes (which is the capacity to respond with approbation (feelings of approval) or disapprobation (feelings of disapproval)) which are strictly individualistic: beauty is the mind of the beholder with the other idea that there are judgments that are approaching universal judgments. This he raises the issue whether there can be an account of taste be given that allows for variety but also provides a rule by which various sentiments of people may be reconciled, or at least a decision afforded approving one sentiment and condemning the other. Since we share the same human constitution we will tend to have "common sentiments."

There are rules of composition but they are not binding because of delicacy of taste (on-going development of sensibility). Our tastes can be refined by both experience and education even though tastes are immediate and spontaneous. Taste can be improved by practice in making "comparisons" among objects and good sense.

Attempt to be a disinterested observer. What he means is we that we should free ourselves from prejudice is that we judge things from a limited and prejudiced prejudice.

We should consider remember the general point of view which takes notice of pleasure that the object is fitted to bring to other people. The idea of their benefit generates sympathetic pleasure, increasing the sentiment of approbation.

SOF should provide rules for "confirming one sentiment and condemning another."

Defense of Hume:

1. Reasons without sentiments lack motivation for moral action.
2. Moral and aesthetic judgments have practical consequences that mere reason lacks.
3. It offers a middle position between 2 prevailing theories: egoism and rationalism..