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Humean Nature

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ABSTRACT

It has been argued that there is an irreconcilable difference between those advocating animal liberation or animal rights, on the one hand, and those preferring a wider environmental ethic, which includes concern for non-sentient life-forms and species preservation, on the other. In contrast, I argue that it is possible to provide foundations for both seemingly environmentalist positions by exploring some of the potential of a 'collective-projectivist' reading of Hume – one that seems more consistent with Hume's texts than other readings. In short, this article seeks to advance our understanding of some of the possibilities within Humean moral theory, while simultaneously providing new foundations for both animal welfare and a wider environmental ethic.

KEYWORDS

Animal rights, intrinsic value, projectivism, secondary qualities, subjectivism, sympathy, welfare

I.

For many of us, to inflict unnecessary suffering on individual nonhuman animals or to bring about the extinction of a whole species would be to commit a morally wrong action. But while both kinds of action strike many of us as immoral, it is far from certain that any widely accepted moral theory would actually consider *both* sorts of action to be morally wrong.

Indeed, it can be argued that moral theories which regard the suffering experienced by individual nonhuman animals as bad are either silent on species loss or, even more counter-intuitively, seem to imply that some species ought to be allowed to become extinct. For example, if suffering by individual nonhuman

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animals is bad, there might, arguably, be less suffering in the world if predators were simply allowed to die out painlessly. A world where the only animals were herbivorous might well be a world with less suffering than the natural world as it has evolved. On the other hand, it can be argued that if ecosystems have intrinsic value, or if species diversity is a good, or if nature itself is of value, then environmental ethics are either silent on suffering or imply, as J. Baird Callicott insists, that certain animals which increase the overall level of suffering ought to be valued as core components of the natural world[1] – a view ostensibly influenced by Aldo Leopold's land ethic.[2]

Can we make sense, then, of this seeming contradiction? Must we either oppose suffering (like many animal liberationists) and oppose environmental integrity *or* value environmental integrity (like many environmental ethicists) and be indifferent to suffering? Or, rather, might we be able to have our cake and eat it? Callicott has argued more recently that we might be able to eat at least some of our cake, while keeping the rest, by extending to Leopold's 'biotic community' and to certain nonhuman members of our 'mixed community'[3] our seemingly-natural sentiments.[4]

There is nothing new, of course, in extending some moral approach with the aim of widening our moral horizons. Peter Singer[5] has, famously, extended utilitarianism to include nonhuman suffering. But such an approach leaves out whatever is simultaneously natural and non-sentient. In opposition to Singer's welfarism, Tom Regan[6] has, also famously, extended a deontological approach to include nonhuman animals as ends-in-themselves. But insofar as this requires any 'moral patient' to be viewed as the 'experiencing subject of a life' (which, Regan claims, entails the possession of inherent value and, therefore, rights), then whatever is natural without being a subject of experiences escapes moral considerability. In other words, while each extension encompasses either the welfare or rights of individual nonhuman animals, both seem incapable of accommodating the concerns of environmental ethicists for the preservation of species and/or ecosystems as a whole.

Interestingly, while both utilitarian and deontological approaches have been famously extended in order to accord greater weight to nonhuman animals within our moral calculations than is usually the case, attempts at developing a Humean approach in that direction have not enjoyed the same degree of popularity. But David Hume might seem to be an obvious moral philosopher to employ in the service of animal liberation, for he is usually regarded as basing moral judgements on sympathy. And if any 'sentiment' has motivated concern for the plight of nonhuman animals, it is surely sympathy. In addition, if our intuition is that the infliction of unnecessary suffering on individual nonhuman animals is wrong, then our sympathy for their plight is an obvious explanation for why we might be inclined to consider it to be wrong. Consequently, it seems plausible, at least *prima facie*, that Hume can provide a solid basis for the views of animal liberationists or the advocates of animal rights.

HUMEAN NATURE

One plausible explanation for why it is that a Humean approach has not been widely embraced as a worthwhile candidate for grounding animal liberation or animal rights is that Hume's moral theory is commonly regarded as non-cognitivist. Animal liberationists and animal rights activists wish to extend our moral boundaries beyond the limits of the human. Moreover, they insist that they are right to do so, and that it is wrong not to so extend them. Because Hume, as a seeming non-cognitivist, is often thought to deny that moral claims have a truth-value, and even to deny that there are any moral properties at all, he is frequently taken to be a subjectivist and a relativist – clearly not the stuff campaigning moral reformers are usually made of. Still, given that sympathy plays an important role in Hume's moral philosophy, perhaps we should pay closer attention to the possibilities of a Humean approach to morality.

Callicott, however, in his earlier emphasis on a deep divide between the proponents of animal welfare or animal rights, on the one hand, and environmental ethicists, on the other,[7] argues that Hume's moral theory in fact supports the environmental ethicists' 'holistic' approach, rather than the limited, and supposedly 'individualistic', preoccupations of the likes of Singer and Regan. Furthermore, in Callicott's view, if we do have duties to individuals, human or otherwise, it is because they are members of our 'mixed' or 'biotic community',[8] and not because of utilitarian or rights-based considerations.[9] And Hume's moral theory provides the basis for valuing such communities, or so Callicott has claimed.

II.

What, then, are the key features of Hume's moral theory? Hume is concerned with explaining how it is that we are able to make moral judgements. The moral judgements he primarily focuses upon concern the virtues and vices. What, though, provides the basis for judging whether a character or an action is virtuous or not? Hume's answer seems to be: a human sentiment, passion or feeling (terms he employs more or less interchangeably). In other words, why some characters are considered virtuous rather than vicious, in Hume's view as traditionally presented, is because we have a different feeling in each case. And the particular feeling which is the source of our judgements regarding vice and virtue is sympathy. So, Hume seems to claim that in praising or blaming someone, it is the human tendency to experience sympathy which lies behind our attitudes.

Why, though, does Hume think that human nature is 'sympathetic'? He considers the mind to contain impressions and ideas. Impressions consist of sense perceptions, passions, pains, pleasures, and so on. Ideas are, for Hume, copies of these impressions. They are less forceful and motivate us less than impressions do. What happens when we think, according to Hume, is that ideas are associated. We move from one idea to an associated one. Moreover, if our

idea of *X* is associated with a more forceful idea of *Y*, then our idea of *X* will become more forceful, too. Further, an idea can become so forceful through association with an impression that it, too, becomes an impression. And this process explains the feeling of sympathy.

So, the sympathy mechanism works something like this: Each of us has a forceful idea of himself or herself – for a person will have a constant impression of his or her own body. And human beings all resemble each other in certain respects. Now, imagine that I have an impression of your screaming in agony as a result of some injury. Because of our resemblance, I associate the idea I have of you with the forceful idea I have of myself. But I also associate my feeling pain with receiving some injury and with my screaming. Hence, I associate your injury and subsequent screaming with your experiencing pain. Therefore, I have an idea of your pain. But because we resemble each other, I associate myself with your being in pain. The idea I have of myself is very forceful, hence the idea of your pain that I associate with becomes forceful, too.[10] In fact, the idea of your pain becomes so forceful through association that it becomes an impression. I actually feel pain as a result of your injury and your screaming in agony. (For example, I wince.). As Hume writes in his *Treatise of Human Nature*:

> The minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations, nor can anyone be actuated by any affection, of which all others are not, in some degree susceptible. As in strings equally wound up, the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all the affections readily pass from one person to another, and beget correspondent movements in every human creature. When I see the *effects* of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes, and forms such a lively idea of the passion, as is presently converted into the passion itself. In like manner, when I perceive the *causes* of any emotion, my mind is convey'd to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion. Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery, 'tis certain, that even before it begun, the preparation of the instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patients and assistants, wou'd have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror. No passion of another discovers itself immediately to the mind. We are only sensible of its causes or effects. From *these* we infer the passion: And consequently *these* give rise to our sympathy.[11]

But do we all feel sympathy? Hume seems to think that sympathy is something everyone feels – that it is universal. Is this plausible? It is less implausible if he doesn't mean by 'sympathy' the sort of kindness or concern for others that we ordinarily mean by 'sympathy'. As Richard Norman remarks: 'His claim is merely that everyone is to some degree affected by other people's happiness or suffering.'[12] Moreover, one could defend Hume, as Norman does, by pointing out that 'someone who is incapable of sympathy in this rudimentary sense would normally be regarded as an instance of a psychopathic condition.

We are envisaging not just someone who acts inconsiderately or cruelly towards others, but someone who is literally incapable of responding to others as human beings.'[13] And we do not argue morally with such individuals. Nor do we consider them morally responsible. We regard them as sick, and we protect ourselves from them, usually by incarcerating them. Thus, Hume might be wrong in thinking that everyone experiences sympathy. But he might have been right had he thought that *all moral agents within our moral community* experience sympathy for others.

Well, if all normal people do feel the sort of minimal sympathy that Hume presumes they do, how might this provide the basis for moral judgements? He argues that we are induced to take into account the pleasure and pains of other people. Sympathy leads us to take into account not just our own happiness or suffering, but that of others, too – in particular, those we most 'associate' with. We come to judge a person's character in terms of qualities that, for example, promote the happiness or minimise the suffering of those close to us. So, because of our sympathy for others, we admire those qualities. Hence, we assess a person's character in their light. We praise people insofar as they possess these qualities, and we criticise them to the extent that they lack them or possess characteristics that lead to others' suffering. Hence, according to Hume, sympathy is the ultimate foundation of our moral judgements.

But if Hume *has* succeeded in identifying sympathy as the ultimate foundation of our moral judgements, it would seem that an environmental ethic, just like any other ethic, would have to rest upon this sentiment. How, then, might Hume provide a basis for an environmental ethic? Callicott argues that Leopold has a 'fundamentally Humean understanding of ethics as grounded in altruistic feelings'.[14] However, Callicott also argues that Leopold's land ethic is overwhelmingly holistic.[15] This latter claim might not sound particularly Humean; but, in Callicott's view, Hume's moral theory does provide the basis for an holistic ethical approach which can include environmental concerns.

How? The key move in Callicott's original argument is to include all environmental components within the concepts 'society' and 'community'. As he writes: 'Ecology, Leopold points out, represents living nature as a biotic community, i.e., as a *society* of plants, animals, minerals, fluids, and gases. This is a genuinely novel conception of nature.'[16] Or as Callicott remarks elsewhere: 'In Leopold's land ethic, the *summum bonum* resides in the "biotic community" and moral value or moral standing devolves upon plants, animals, people, and even soils and waters by virtue of their membership in this (vastly) larger-than-human society.'[17]

All Callicott then has to do is give some basis for valuing the community. And Hume's moral theory ostensibly provides the basis for such an holistic ethical approach because it supposedly contains the view that we care 'for our communities per se, over and above their individual members'.[18] And in support of this claim, Callicott cites Hume: 'We must adopt a more *publick affection* and allow

that the interests of society are not, *even on their own account*, entirely indifferent to us.'[19] So, by widening our society – for which we all feel some sentiment[20] – to include our environment, Callicott has been able to construct an environmental ethic on Humean foundations.

III.

But is such a move legitimate? There are reasons for thinking that it is not. When Hume talks of public affection, is he revealing holistic thinking? In the passage from 'An enquiry concerning the principles of morals' cited by Callicott, where Hume remarks that 'We must adopt a more public affection, and allow, that the interests of society are not, even on their own account, entirely indifferent to us',[21] all that he seems to be arguing is that not every moral sentiment can be accounted for by self-love. As Hume continues:

> Usefulness is only a tendency to a certain end; and it is a contradiction in terms, that anything pleases as means to an end, where the end itself no wise affects us. If usefulness, therefore, be a source of moral sentiment, and if this usefulness be not always considered with a reference to self; it follows, that everything, which contributes to the happiness of society, recommends itself directly to our approbation and good-will.… Have we any difficulty to comprehend the force of humanity and benevolence? Or to conceive, that the very aspect of happiness, joy, prosperity, gives pleasure; that of pain, suffering, sorrow, communicates uneasiness?[22]

Certainly, Hume talks of society, here. But when he talks of the happiness of society, he is surely not talking about some happiness which is over and above that of the individuals who comprise that society. Equally, when he talks of suffering, he is surely not referring to society suffering in some manner apart from the suffering experienced by its members. For in the pages which immediately follow this passage, Hume provides several examples, all of which concern the sharing of our sentiments with other *individuals*, and which show how their emotions matter to us.

Public affection, therefore, appears simply to be an extension of the sympathy mechanism. And if public affection is affection for other individuals, as it appears to be for Hume, then 'communities per se, over and above their individual members' are unlikely to be proper objects of Humean concern. Thus, Hume's remark about public affection appears to provide no basis for attributing to him the kind of holism which Callicott's approach requires. In which case, Callicott's Leopoldian inclusion of water and soil within our *communities* remains unsupported. *See correction on p.38.*

Nevertheless, one might still think: If one has feelings for other people, then why not for human communities? And why not for everything within our 'biotic communities'? And this might seem a plausible Humean extension. But it only

seems plausible until one recalls the nature of the sympathy mechanism, which Hume's theory rests upon. Because another human resembles me, because he or she can be injured like me, and because he or she reacts as I do when injured, I feel sympathy for that person. Insofar as a nonhuman animal resembles me (for example, insofar as I can look into its eyes and, from its expression, read fear), insofar as it can be injured in ways similar to how I might be injured, and insofar as it squeals or squirms when injured, I might feel sympathy for it. But how do I injure water (even when I evaporate it)? And when I gash a scar in the landscape with giant earth-moving equipment, does it cry out or writhe? And even if I were to attempt to 'heal' the cut in the soil (perhaps weld the fractured rock?) with hot irons and bandages, would anyone be overcome with terror, or even wince? Irrespective of the questionable inclusion of inanimate entities within the notions of 'community' and 'society', the moment one considers the Humean mechanism which plausibly lies behind our unselfish responses and behaviour, it becomes clear that there are limits to any extension of Humean sympathy.

In short, Callicott's sole justification for attributing a holistic approach to Hume is his acknowledgement of public affection. But, for Hume, public affection is an extension of the sympathy mechanism. Unfortunately, it is highly implausible that the sympathy mechanism can be extended to include soils and waters – which is what Callicott's Leopoldian land ethic requires. Societies construed as entities over and above the individuals who comprise them do not appear to be the sorts of entities with which we can sympathise, and even less can we *sympathise* with 'biotic communities' as a whole,[23] for the simple reason that neither human nor biotic communities, nor many of the latter's component parts, are individual entities which either groan or writhe in agony.

IV.

But there is a way in which we might include the wider environment within our moral considerations. We might value a community because of the benefits it provides its members.[24] Consequently, we might value the biotic community because of the benefits membership provides to all those with whom we feel sympathy. But this seems to be a welfarist argument. And it is welfarist arguments (such as Singer's) which Callicott originally sought to reject and to replace with an alternative environmental ethic.

In addition, valuing a biotic community because of the benefits it provides makes the value of both the whole and most of its component parts – its plants, perhaps many of its nonhuman animals, and certainly its soils and waters – instrumental and not intrinsic. Yet one key argument within environmental ethics (moreover, an argument which has been stressed by Callicott)[25] suggests that intrinsic value cannot be dispensed with. Richard Routley has pointed out that many of us would disapprove of the last person on Earth engaging in

environmental destruction when there was little to be gained from it.[26] For example, many of us would disapprove of such a person needlessly causing the extinction of a species of non-sentient life-form. But if no sentient being were ever to experience that life-form, why should it be wrong to destroy it? Yet many of us do feel that it would be wrong to engage in any such action (indeed, it would strike many of us as mindless vandalism), even when no one would ever observe its effects. And this suggests to many environmental ethicists that non-sentient nature must have intrinsic value. Unfortunately, if we adopt a Humean approach, and if the mechanism whereby we feel sympathy would not, plausibly, extend our sympathetic feelings towards biotic communities as a whole, then their value and that of the non-sentient life within them would not appear to be intrinsic. It would merely be instrumental to the well-being of those sentient creatures who live within such communities. Hence, a Humean approach seems unable to provide the justification which environmental ethicists seek for ascribing intrinsic value to nature.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Callicott, after having first embraced a Humean ethic, should later have attempted to move beyond it, favouring for a while an approach supposedly informed by the new physics[27] – an approach which, Callicott maintains, takes things to be 'what they are because of their relations with other things'.[28] This, he assumes, implies that everything is continuous with everything else. And

> if we assume, (a)…that nature is one and continuous with the self, and (b) with the bulk of modern moral theory that egoism is axiologically given and that self-interested behavior has a *prima facie* claim to be at the same time rational behavior, then the central axiological problem of environmental ethics, the problem of intrinsic value in nature may be directly and simply solved. If quantum theory and ecology both imply in structurally similar ways in both the physical and the organic domains of nature the continuity of self and nature, and if the self is intrinsically valuable, then nature is intrinsically valuable. If it is rational for me to act in my own best interest, and I and nature are one, then it is rational for me to act in the best interests of nature.[29]

Unfortunately, this approach can be argued to *weaken* our moral obligations, instead of providing a solid grounding for a cogent environmental ethic. Callicott is here arguing that if I know that I am not distinct from non-human nature, then I will not want to harm it, for I do not want to harm myself. And if I have intrinsic value, so, too, must nature, for we are one. But as John O'Neill points out:

> the argument provides the wrong kind of grounds for duties to others. While it appears to give an easy route to duties to the 'non-human' world, the duties it provides are too weak. Duties to oneself are in significant ways *less* stringent than duties to others. Thus, while it may be foolish, and perhaps also a dereliction of one's obligations to oneself, to smoke, take no exercise, let one's teeth rot and generally abuse one's body,

> abuse of the bodies of others is an altogether more serious affair. What is permissible in the former case is impermissible in the latter.[30]

In other words, while it might be the case that regarding other entities as inseparable from oneself would reduce one's *desire* to harm them, it seems to weaken one's *moral responsibility* towards them, for, ordinarily, one has a greater moral responsibility to others than to oneself. (Most people would agree, for example, that it is far worse to kill another person than it is to commit suicide.) Hence, Callicott's 'continuity of self and nature' approach could very well attenuate any duty we might otherwise have to save the planet either for its own sake or for the sake of future generations of humans and other sentient beings. *See correction on p.38.*

V.

Perhaps, though, rather than throw out a Humean approach altogether, we might, instead, try a different tack to that originally pursued by Callicott. If we are to deal effectively with Routley's last person argument, it would seem that we must avoid reducing either moral judgements or moral properties to the internal feelings of approbation and disapprobation, as many would have us read Hume.[32] For how are we to feel sympathy for a world comprising non-sentient objects which will never be experienced by any sentient being we might actually have sympathy for? In other words, if we are to establish a Humean basis for environmental ethics, it would seem that we require a very different – a less subjectivist – reading of Hume than is common. Now, Norman portrays Hume as presenting a three-stage argument.[33] But Callicott's earlier Humean approach seems to confine itself to the first stage. Consequently, Callicott might have failed to develop a cogent Humean environmental ethic through relying upon a partial reading of Hume. If so, it might be profitable to consider all three stages of Hume's argument.

The first stage, as we have seen, consists in Hume's claim that, in assessing characters or actions, we take into account the effects on people whom we 'sympathise' with. However, disagreements sometimes arise in judging people's characters. And this is because, although we do extend some concern to our relatives and acquaintances (through the sympathy mechanism), we tend not to extend quite so much to strangers. In short, we are more 'sympathetic' to some people than to others. And this would not be surprising, given the nature of the sympathy mechanism, for we would expect someone to be more sympathetic towards those he or she most 'associates' with.

Thus, we arrive at the second stage of Hume's argument: Hume claims that general standards are adopted which correct the partiality of the sympathy mechanism. This involves our taking into account the happiness or suffering of everyone as being important, whether they are close to us or not. So, what comes

to matter is not that someone has qualities which are beneficial just to people I am close to, but that he or she has qualities which are beneficial to people in general. Hence, we come to praise agents for having qualities – namely, virtues – that are generally beneficial, while criticising them for having characteristics – namely, vices – that are generally harmful. Such virtues and vices Hume describes as 'natural' because they 'naturally', as it were, meet with our approval insofar as they promote general well-being; whereas 'natural vices', on the other hand, 'naturally' meet with our disapproval insofar as they diminish general well-being. Thus, given the partiality of the sympathy mechanism, we are only likely to agree on who possesses such virtues and vices when we employ our reason to correct for bias and thereby adopt a general standpoint.[34] As Hume writes in his *Treatise*:

> every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and it is impossible we could ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his particular point of view. In order, therefore, to prevent those continual *contradictions*, and arrive at a more *stable* judgement of things, we fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation.[35]

Now, as we have noted, many assume that, in Hume's view, virtue and vice consist in internal feelings of approbation or disapprobation. But this cannot be right, for *we could not continually contradict each other unless we were referring to objective, or seemingly objective, properties.* We would not contradict each other's moral judgements if there were nothing to morality but subjective sentiments. For, whereas my claim that *X* is wrong contradicts your claim that *X* is right, my claim that I have sympathy for *X* does not in any way contradict your claim that you lack sympathy for *X*. As Hume puts it in his 'Enquiry concerning the principles of morals': 'Truth is disputable; not taste: what exists in the nature of things is the standard of our judgement; what each man feels within himself is the standard of sentiment.'[36] But as Hume explicitly acknowledges that we *do* contradict other people when each of us makes moral judgements from our own particular viewpoint, there must be more to moral judgements, in his view, than mere internal feelings – otherwise Hume is contradicting *himself*. And if moral judgements refer to objective, or seemingly objective, properties, then we might be able to accommodate Routley's last person argument. What else, then, is there to morality other than internal feelings? Perhaps a clue is to be found in the third stage of Hume's argument.

The third stage consists in Hume pointing out that some individual actions, if widely adopted, would be harmful to the general well-being of society. Such actions lead us to adopt a system of general rules and conventions – a human 'artifice' – which is generally accepted because it increases the level of well-being. However, individual infringements of those rules might, on occasion, do some good. But because harm would be caused if everyone were to infringe the

rules, it is better that everyone follows them, as everyone following the rules is to the benefit of society as a whole. And it is acting according to these general rules which we contrive for the benefit of society as a whole that justice consists in. Thus, acts are just insofar as they comply with the collectively-agreed system of rules that is generally beneficial. Unjust acts consist of infringements of those rules.

For Hume, then, justice is a human convention, which means that the disposition to act justly is an artificial virtue as opposed to a natural one. But although the rules of justice are a convention, they are not a *mere* convention. In Hume's view, the rules of justice are vital to society, and living socially has a number of advantages both for oneself and for those one sympathises with.[37] So, just as a general standpoint is necessary to prevent contradictory moral judgements, general rules – the rules of justice – are also necessary because of our tendency to be partial to our friends, family, and so on. As this partiality would make social life very difficult were it completely unchecked, we have to employ our reason in order to work out how to create the conditions for a more harmonious social existence, which, in Hume's view, must include a collective agreement on the rules of justice. In other words, a necessary condition for the social harmony we value is a collectively-accepted set of conventions, which, although arising gradually, become formalised into a system of general rules that serve to regulate and facilitate social intercourse.

Now, although Callicott recognises that reason has a role to play in Hume's moral philosophy, he has described it as 'part of the supporting cast'.[38] It can be argued, however, that reason plays a far more important role in Hume's moral theory than Callicott's remark would suggest. Certainly, moral judgements are, according to Hume, ultimately founded on sympathy. And Hume's view seems to be that sympathy becomes generalised to take into account the suffering of everyone, and not just those near to us. It is further extended, or so it would appear, when we adopt general rules, the infringement of which meets our disapproval. But this means that morality is not founded *solely* on sympathy. It also means that moral judgements do not consist in mere subjectively-felt sentiments. For reason has an important role to play insofar as it allows the adoption of a general standpoint necessary for reaching agreement on moral judgements. Reason is also necessary for providing the general rules – the rule of justice – which we collectively adopt.

Within Hume's moral philosophy, then, although sympathy is the *ultimate* basis of moral judgements, reason plays an essential role. And in employing both sympathy and reason within his moral philosophy, Hume is able to explain two of the core, and otherwise puzzling, features of morality: (1) the basis in sympathy explains why moral discourse has an altruistic tone; and (2) the role that reason plays explains how it is that we can have moral disagreements.

VI.

But if we can argue about morals and if we cannot argue about taste – one's taste being just one's subjective feelings or personal sentiments – why should morality not be regarded as ultimately grounded on reason rather than on sentiment? It is Hume's rejection of this suggestion which seems to have led many to assume that reason does not play an essential role in his moral theory.

In his *Treatise*, two of the things Hume wants to demonstrate are: '*first*, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and *secondly*, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.'[39] But as morality does motivate us to do things we would not otherwise do, and as it inhibits us from performing actions that we would otherwise perform out of 'passion', then, if Hume can establish that reason on its own can neither provide motivation nor oppose our passions, morality cannot be derived ultimately from reason.

Hume's principal strategy is to procure our agreement on the source of our motivation. And what plainly motivates us to act, in Hume's view, is not reason, but the prospect of pain or pleasure.[40] As he writes:

> 'Tis obvious, that when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity, and are carry'd to avoid or embrace what will give us this uneasiness or satisfaction. 'Tis also obvious, that this emotion rests not here, but making us cast our view on every side, comprehends whatever objects are connected with its original one by the relation of cause and effect. Here then reasoning takes place to discover this relation; and according as our reasoning varies, our actions receive a subsequent variation. But 'tis evident in this case, that the impulse arises not from reason, but is only directed by it. 'Tis from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises towards any object: And these emotions extend themselves to the causes and effects of that object, as they are pointed out to us by reason and experience.[41]

So, Hume rejects reason as the ultimate basis of motivation. But as morality motivates, it seems that reason cannot be the ultimate basis of morality, either. This seems to have led some into thinking that, for Hume, moral judgements are simply a matter of how an individual feels.

However, all Hume is actually denying here is that reason *on its own* can motivate us to act. Certainly, in Hume's opinion, we are only motivated to act if by so doing pleasure might be derived or pain avoided. But reason plays a central role in this, for it tells us what will cause pleasure and what will cause pain. In short, reason tells us what we must do in order to gain pleasure or to avoid pain – and that is why we can give reasons for doing one thing rather than another. But when there is no pleasure or pain involved, reason on its own cannot motivate us to do anything; and the view that it can is simply mistaken, or so Hume argues.

It is also a mistake, in Hume's view, to think that there is some conflict between reason and passion. What we use reason for is to ascertain how to

indulge our passions, as it were. As Hume famously expresses it: 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.'[42] Thus, if I want to indulge some passion, reason can correct my mistaken belief that the action I intend to perform will actually bring about what I want. But reason cannot correct mistaken passions, because passions are not the sorts of things that can be mistaken. Our beliefs about how to indulge our passions can be true or false, but the passions themselves are simply what we have. Hence, as Hume infamously remarks: 'Where a passion is neither founded on false suppositions, nor chuses means insufficient for the end, the understanding can neither justify nor condemn it. 'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger.'[43]

However, it is worth emphasising that Hume is not an ethical egoist, as this infamous remark might seem to suggest, for it is immediately followed by what appears to be the opposite claim: ''Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an *Indian* or person wholly unknown to me.'[44] Hume's point, then, is that whether one prefers to act egoistically or altruistically is not, in his view, ultimately determined by reason. Rather, why it is that I do not 'prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger' is because of my sentiments. Without such sentiments, reason could not choose between a scratched finger and global destruction. In other words, as Hume writes: 'a passion must be accompany'd with some false judgement, in order to its being unreasonable; and even then 'tis not the passion, properly speaking, which is unreasonable, but the judgement.'[45]

Now, this provides us with an important clue to the actual form of Hume's presentational method. Hume states explicitly that 'a passion must be accompany'd with some false judgement, in order to its being unreasonable', which is a repetition of an earlier claim: namely, 'passions can be contrary to reason only so far as they are *accompany'd* with some judgement or opinion'.[46] So, Hume clearly states that *passions can be unreasonable*. But then he qualifies this claim, pointing out that it isn't 'the passion, *properly speaking*, which is unreasonable, but the judgement.'[47] In other words, as Hume is at pains to argue, *passions are never unreasonable*! Isn't this just contradictory?

It certainly appears to be; but if considered carefully, Hume's fully developed view seems quite consistent. Hume occasionally misleads many of his readers in two ways. First, he often makes his points imprecisely – he does not always 'speak properly'. Rather, he speaks in a common tongue, putting points in the way that many of his readers would. Second, Hume does not employ the presentational form: 'At first glance, it seems to be the case that *p*. Let us consider what would follow if *p* were true. This implication is unacceptable. Therefore, let us modify *p* to read *q*.' If he had written in this way, his view would be clearer. Instead, Hume tends to argue as follows: 'It is the case that *p*. But this has an unacceptable implication. Therefore, *q*.' Moreover, he often states *p* several

times, while only stating *q* once. Not surprisingly, this form of presentation often misleads his readers into thinking that his view is *p* when it isn't.

So, in order to understand Hume, one must not take his initial formulations at face value. Rather, one must be sensitive to his method of building up a complete theory, often by rejecting or qualifying claims which he thinks have to be considered *en route*, and which he first states in a manner which suggests that he accepts them. And because of the presentational form he adopts, sometimes it is only from the standpoint of the complete theory that it is possible to see which claims Hume does, and which claims he does not, sanction. Moreover, a recognition of Hume's presentational method allows the possibility of a very different reading of Hume to the simple subjectivism which many attribute to him.

VII.

We have seen that Hume argues that, as reason alone cannot motivate us to act and cannot provide us with grounds for doing one thing rather than another, morality cannot be founded ultimately on reason. But, Hume proceeds to add, it is not only the case that we would be unable to ascertain what we ought to do or what sorts of people we should be by means of reason alone, it also seems to be the case that we would not be able to do so simply by examining 'objects' in the external world. As he puts it: 'morality consists not in any relations, that are the objects of science;' nor does it consist 'in any *matter of fact*, which can be discovered by the understanding.'[48] For

> can there be any difficulty in proving, that vice and virtue are not matters of fact, whose existence we can infer by reason? Take any action allow'd to be vicious: Wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call *vice*. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object. So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it.[49]

This passage has been the source of much confusion. And at first glance it certainly appears to imply subjectivism. Hume tells us that, when pronouncing an action or a character vicious, all we mean is that we have a feeling of disapproval. He also tells us that we cannot find any 'matter of fact, or real existence' called vice, no matter how hard we examine the action or character in

question. Not surprisingly, then, Hume has been described as a non-cognitivist, who reduces ethical terms to inner feelings.

However, any such interpretation of Hume is at odds with other claims he makes. In particular, immediately after this passage, where he claims that we will never find vice in an object by considering it alone, and that we will find it only after we have turned our reflection into our own breasts and found 'a sentiment of disapprobation', he adds something that is very important if we are to understand him: 'Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind'.[50] As John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* had argued (following Galileo), there are qualities which an object 'constantly keeps', such as solidity, extension, and so on, and these are its primary qualities. On the other hand, there are '*Qualities*, which in truth are nothing in the Objects themselves, but Powers to produce various Sensations in us by their *primary Qualities*, *i.e.* by the Bulk, Figure, Texture, and Motion of their insensible parts, as Colours, Sounds, Tastes, *etc*.'[51] These Locke calls secondary qualities. Secondary qualities, then, are dependent upon us.[52] In other words, if vice is comparable to a secondary quality, an object will not display it outside of some relation to a perceiver, because vice is not like a primary quality – the qualities that objects do possess irrespective of whether or not there are any perceivers. So, if vice is more like a secondary quality, then it only subsists because of the way in which humans sense it.[53]

This notwithstanding, although secondary qualities are 'nothing in the objects themselves, but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities', we nevertheless take it to be the case that they are qualities residing in objects. But if Hume believes that vice is comparable to secondary qualities, then he would seem to be claiming that we ordinarily consider vice to reside in the objects themselves. But we only do so because those objects have the power, as it were, to give rise to the sentiment of disapprobation within us. Without the sentiment, we would not describe certain characters as vicious.

In short, as Hume compares moral properties to secondary qualities, he cannot actually hold, as he appears to be claiming when considering the example of wilful murder, that we cannot 'see' them, in some sense. For Hume does not deny that we can see colours. However, if we are to take seriously his comparison between moral 'properties' and secondary qualities, given his insistence that 'when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it', he would have to be able to state intelligibly that when you pronounce an object yellow, you mean nothing but that from the constitution of your nature you have the experience of colour as a result of seeing it. But then, if this is not to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of his comparing moral properties with secondary qualities, we would have to be able to interpret this statement in such a way that it did not entail denying that, in some sense, we see

colour. But this poses no insurmountable difficulty. For all we have to do is construe such a statement as meaning that *there are no primary qualities present in this case to which colour terms refer*.

But none of this Hume says explicitly. Rather, he seems to say that, when pronouncing an action or a character vicious, all we mean is that we have a feeling of disapproval. And he also seems to say that we cannot find any 'matter of fact, or real existence' called vice, no matter how hard we examine the action or character in question. However, we have seen that Hume's presentational method involves 'improper ways of speaking' and the making of claims which he later rejects or, at least, qualifies. In the light of his remark about secondary qualities, it would seem that his claims about what we mean and what we see need to be qualified. Hume's actual view would appear to be not that 'he is vicious' is synonymous with 'I disapprove of him', but, rather, that there is no *primary quality* – no 'real existence' – which is the *referent* of 'vice'. And 'to mean' can mean 'to refer'.

However, what of the following passage (which might be taken to prove that Hume reduces ethical terms to inner feelings)?

> To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very *feeling* constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no farther; nor do we enquire into the cause of the satisfaction. We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous. The case is the same as in our judgements concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations. Our approbation is imply'd in the immediate pleasure they convey to us.[54]

This passage seems to suggest not only that virtue is no more than a feeling but also that we do not infer that it is the cause of our feeling. This seems, at first glance, to suggest a considerable disanalogy between moral properties and secondary qualities, for do not coloured objects cause us to see them as coloured?

But Hume might equally say that to have the sense of colour is nothing but to *feel* a certain sensation, and that the experience of colour is not caused by the colour. For the experience of colour depends upon our natures (how we respond to light) and on the *primary* qualities of the object seen, not on its *secondary* qualities, which are 'phantasms'. Moreover, every time we see a colour, we do not consciously deduce that the sensation is caused by an object which only possesses primary qualities, nor do we *consciously* deduce that the object is coloured. 'Seeing' yellow is much more immediate. Similarly, we can take the above passage to read that there is no primary quality 'virtue'. All we are aware of is a particular 'feeling' (just like when we see a coloured object). And, ordinarily, we do not *consciously* go through a process of deduction in order to attribute the property of 'being virtuous' to a character. 'Perceiving' a character to be virtuous is, usually, much more immediate.

In short, as Hume compares vice and virtue to colours, sounds, and other secondary qualities, and as we can perceive colours, sounds, and so on, then it seems unlikely that his actual view consists in denying that we 'perceive' virtue and vice in some way. In other words, although we have sentiments within that give rise to moral judgements, those judgements are about the 'properties' of objects in the external world. We 'see' vice in people, but we 'see' it because we have sentiments within. Vice is not a quality of an object in the same way that a primary quality is a property of the object. But we do, as it were, 'sense' the vice. And, it could be argued, *even if vice and virtue were to begin as ideas about what cause our sentiments, through association with those forceful impressions, they, too, would become impressions.*

Thus, Hume appears to *build up* an account of morality. First, we sympathise. Then we usually 'perceive' objects as possessing a property (for example, virtue) that would appear to cause the results we sympathise with. Then, perhaps, we note that, as a seemingly objective property, it would have to be constant (for example, a yellow object is still supposed to possess the property 'yellowness' even in the dark). And the general standpoint for assessing the seemingly objective property is rather like looking at a yellow object in the best light. Hence, a virtue is not just an emotional response. It is a 'property' (discovered by employing reason to adopt a general standpoint) which seemingly causes our actions, and those actions have effects that we respond to emotionally.

VIII.

In order to add weight to the above claims, let us consider some remarks that Hume makes elsewhere. When he states, in the passage quoted above, that '[t]he case is the same as in our judgements concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations', Hume is explicitly comparing morality with aesthetics. So, let us consider what he writes in his famous essay on aesthetics – 'Of the Standard of Taste'. There, Hume observes:

> It appears…that, amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ.[55]

An imperfection or defect can arise when someone is in a fever, say. (For example, in Hume's day it was assumed that when a person suffers from jaundice everything appears yellower to him or her.) Hume continues:

> If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in daylight, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.[56]

So, beauty, too, is like a secondary quality. And we can agree that an object is beautiful if we all tend to agree on the sentiment of approbation that the perception of the object gives rise to. Of course, it is not merely a question of our own sentiments, for the objects that give rise to them play a role. As Hume writes: 'there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings.'[57]

But not everyone will agree that an object is beautiful. In which case, we have to rely on those whose sensibilities have been most developed – those who have 'a delicacy of taste'. But how do we ascertain who has such a delicacy of taste? Hume's answer is that we can 'appeal to those models and principles which have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages.'[58] Now, one explanation for why a work of art will be criticised by some is because of prejudice. Hence, as Hume remarks: 'It belongs to *good sense* to check its influence…; and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty.'[59] Here, it seems that Hume is arguing that reason is inessential. But what he is actually arguing is that, while it is an inessential part of personal taste, reason is not inessential when judging beauty. Rather, reason is, to the contrary, necessary when it comes to arriving at 'the true standard'.[60]

So, Hume tells us that we should not just rely on our sentiments. At times we will come to realise that our judgement of an object's beauty is not sound. And reason can point that out to us. Reason, therefore, plays a part, as well as sentiment. But what grounds might there be for thinking that we are prejudiced? Well, if we disagree with everyone else, either we are mistaken, or there is something very different about us that results in our having different sentiments. As Hume writes:

> The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature…. But where there is such a diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other; in that case a certain degree of diversity in judgement is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments.[61]

What Hume appears to be saying, therefore, is that human nature is by and large uniform, and that is why we can agree on a standard of taste. And we can discover that we are prejudiced, say, when we do not agree to what is considered to be good by those who have good taste. However, if there are cases where we actually do have different natures (for example, if a very large proportion of the

population reacted differently to a particular stimulus), then there would be no common standard. One final quotation from 'Of the Standard of Taste': 'a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgement of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind, from long custom, has been familiarised.'[62]

The most important of these elements are common to both Hume's aesthetic theory and his moral philosophy. For example, in both cases he assumes that there is a fairly constant human nature that is such that there will usually be a fair level of agreement concerning what is approved of. But we can often be prejudiced. Fortunately, we can compensate for this by employing reason in order to adopt a general standpoint from which to make our assessments.

IX.

But this seems to give rise to a serious problem. Why would we bother to take a general standpoint? And, more problematically, why would assessments made from the general standpoint, rather than from our own individual standpoint, motivate us? It is my contention that the answer to these questions enables Routley's last person argument to be accommodated. But if we are to answer these questions, we must turn to Hume's 'Enquiry concerning the principles of morals'. There, Hume writes:

> the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: the other has a productive faculty, and guilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation. Reason being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination, by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery: Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition.[63]

And Hume adds that the standard of taste arises 'from the internal frame and constitution of animals'.[64] Put another way, it results, in our case, from human nature.

So, the faculty of taste, which gives the sentiments of both morality and aesthetics, 'guilds' and 'stains' what we 'perceive', and thereby gives rise to 'a new creation'. In other words, Hume seems to be claiming that, because of our sentiments, we see certain objects through coloured spectacles, as it were. But in so doing, we 'colour' those objects. For example, we see characters and actions as vicious or virtuous. But the vice and virtue are our 'creations'. As J. L. Mackie interprets this passage, we 'project' vice and virtue into the world.[65]

But then, it could be added, having projected them onto characters or actions, we are likely to regard the projected properties as the causes of our sentiments. Just as we think that the yellowness of objects causes us to see them as yellow, we would tend to assume that it is the virtue and vice which cause us to have feelings of approbation and disapprobation, respectively. Moreover, in assuming that vice and virtue cause sentiments which motivate us, we would consider the presence of vice and virtue to be motivating.[66]

But would their ostensible presence actually be motivating? One reason for thinking that their seeming presence would motivate is provided by Hume's notion of the association of ideas, which, as we have seen, underpins his account of the sympathy mechanism. Just as the association of ideas leads to our 'feeling' another's pain, it also leads to our feeling motivated by another's virtue or vice. Through the association of ideas, we associate virtue with our feeling of approval, and vice with our feeling of disapproval. The feelings motivate us, so we associate the motivation with virtue and vice. Our motivating feeling of approval is transferred through association to the projected quasi-property 'virtue', and our motivating feeling of disapproval is transferred through association to the projected quasi-property 'vice'. The result is that we are attracted by what we take to be virtue, and we are repelled by what we take to be vice.

Now, consider the following. Mary walks into her garden and sees Fred kicking the cat. Mary feels disapproval. She assumes that there is a real property causing her disapproval: Fred is not just red-haired, he is also *vicious*. Mary thus 'sees' the viciousness in Fred. Tom then walks into the garden and likewise 'observes' Fred's viciousness. So, too, does Jane. Hence, they all assume that there must be an objective property 'viciousness' there to be observed, for they can all 'see' it – or so they believe.[67] But when Peter walks into the garden he doesn't feel bad about Fred kicking the cat. So, Mary, Tom and Jane ask: 'Can't you see how vicious Fred is?' Peter thinks that he must be morally blind, and that he *should* see the viciousness. Moreover, Mary, Tom and Jane think that he *should* see the viciousness. Their disapproval motivates them. They are repelled by Fred, and they assume that it is the viciousness which is repulsive. Hence, they not only think that Peter *should* see the viciousness, but also that he *should* be repelled by it. And as Peter knows that he is partial – for Fred is his brother – he comes to adopt the general standpoint – that of Mary, Tom and Jane – and agrees that he *should* now find Fred repulsive, because, 'objectively', Fred is vicious, and viciousness is repulsive. Furthermore, Peter agrees that he *should* be repelled by the thought of imitating Fred's behaviour, because that would be to display viciousness, which is repulsive.

What we seem to have here is a Humean deduction of moral injunctions![68] And it is *ultimately* founded on sentiment, for without the sentiment of disapproval there would be no assumption that an objective property caused that disapproval. Nevertheless, reason remains necessary in order for Peter to

identify the general standpoint which it is thought he should, but does not initially, share. Moreover, Peter can employ reason to 'deduce' the property 'viciousness' which he assumes causes the reactions Mary, Tom and Jane have towards Fred's behaviour, all three claiming to see the viciousness directly. And what this means is that *'vice' is not simply an individual feeling, for it is assumed to be such that any token of it is capable of being perceived by all.*

Most importantly, vice is assumed to be correctly 'perceived' only when the perceiver corrects for bias, and it is also assumed to be such that one should 'perceive' it as repulsive, and be repelled by it. (And if one is not repelled, then one is considered abnormal – a state which usually elicits disapproval.) This is the reason why the view from the general standpoint is sought, and this is why it can motivate. The general standpoint is assumed to allow vice and virtue to be perceived correctly. And the motivating feelings of disapprobation and approbation are transferred onto these seemingly objective properties.

X.

All of this suggests that, for Hume, an individual's moral judgements do not reduce to his or her inner feelings. It also implies that engaging in moral discourse is not premised upon any particular individual having feelings of sympathy. Rather, sympathy is the sentiment without which there would be no moral discourse. And what moral judgements refer to, on the interpretation here endorsed, are those seemingly 'objective properties' which we project onto characters and actions: 'properties' we assume to be 'observable' by everyone. This is why we can have moral disagreements – because they are about seemingly factual, non-subjective properties – whereas the reduction of moral discourse to talk about one's inner sentiments rules out the possibility of moral disagreement. All that would remain would be expressions of personal taste. However, as Hume explicitly acknowledges that the possibility of disagreement is a central feature of moral discourse, then a Humean moral theory is not necessarily as non-cognitivist as it first appears. For just as we can describe an object's colour incorrectly, even if it is a 'projected' secondary quality, we can mistake a character's moral 'properties' and an action's injustice. But this is only so because neither colour claims nor moral claims are reducible to the individual feelings of the speaker.[69]

Unfortunately, this might now be thought to vitiate the possibility of a Humean moral theory grounding the views of animal liberationists or the advocates of animal rights. A Humean approach seemed, at first glance, to provide a possible grounding because of its stress on sympathy. To the extent that we can feel sympathy for those nonhuman animals whose injury causes them to squirm or squeal, we might desire to include them within our boundaries of moral concern. But if moral discourse is not, as the above argument suggests it is not,

reducible to inner feelings of sympathy, then such a simple extension of Humean moral theory appears to be blocked.

However, the interpretation of Hume's moral theory which is sketched out above opens up the possibility of a new route for a Humean foundation for the views of animal liberationists or animal rights advocates. In order to explore this new route, let us begin by noting that if moral properties are 'projected' onto objects, then it is unlikely that many of us would 'perceive' the same properties unless our values were similar. And several considerations push in the direction of value convergence. First, if moral properties are assumed to be objective, then there will be a tendency for anyone whose 'perception' differs from the rest to conform. Second, because of the benefits of a social existence, we are likely to try, at the very least, to make our individual sets of values compossibly realisable with everyone else's within our moral community. Third, our own values strike us as what we ought to live by, and we disapprove of behaviour which is incompatible with our values. Hence we will usually attempt to 'educate' others into thinking as we do. We might also be expected to attempt to 'educate' others into thinking in a way that serves our interests. This last point can be expanded in an interesting way. For example, in *Utilitarianism*, John Stuart Mill observes:

> Not only does all strengthening of social ties, and all healthy growth of society, give to each individual a stronger personal interest in practically consulting the welfare of others; it also leads him to identify his *feelings* more and more with their good, or at least with an even greater degree of practical consideration for it. He comes, as though instinctively, to be conscious of himself as a being who *of course* pays regard to others. The good of others becomes to him a thing naturally and necessarily to be attended to, like any of the physical conditions of our existence. Now, whatever amount of this feeling a person has, he is urged by the strongest motives both of interest and of sympathy to demonstrate it, and to the utmost of his power encourage it in others; and even if he has none of it himself, he is as greatly interested as any one else that others should have it.[70]

So, I have an interest in 'socialising' everyone else (including my children, who, perhaps I exert greatest influence over) into valuing me and taking my interests into account. But equally, everyone else has an interest in 'socialising' me (including my parents) into taking others into account. Consequently, it is not too surprising that moral communities should arise, that the values of their members should converge, and that they should be, to some degree at least, altruistic.

But once there is a convergence of values, it is likely that individuals will frequently 'perceive' the 'same' seemingly objective moral properties, thus reinforcing their belief that such properties are real. However, if moral properties are seemingly objective, then it might strike us as odd that we do not always agree in our moral judgements. Hence, we might assume that one party is partial or is unaware of all of the facts of the case. But if the moral property were objective,

then we would want to 'perceive' it as it is, and we would want others to 'perceive' it so. Hence, we would engage in arguments in order to ascertain who 'perceives' the moral property clearly. And this would require us to consider the arguments supporting the various moral judgements.[71]

In short, in order to resolve the otherwise paradoxical problem of moral disagreement, we will have to see whether or not any of the justifications offered for the various moral judgements are based on unsound reasoning. But any reason offered to justify a particular moral judgement regarding object *X* will equally justify the same moral judgement regarding any object which is relevantly similar to *X*. In which case, in order to judge *Y* differently to *X*, *Y* would have to be shown to have some morally relevant difference to *X*. There would have to be some difference which prevented the moral argument when applied to *Y* arriving at the same conclusion as when it is applied to *X*. But this is all that Singer and Regan need in order to offer their justifications for animal liberation and animal rights, respectively.[72] Both of them argue that whatever characteristic (with the one exception of species membership, which they insist is as irrelevant as race or sex) is employed to demand the granting of moral considerability to other humans will either leave out too many humans or include too many nonhumans.

Put another way, whenever we wish to justify our treatment of someone, we must supply a reason. But then, the reason proffered requires that we similarly treat anyone (or anything) who (or which) is relevantly similar. And this is why, if we are to treat nonhuman animals differently to how we treat humans, we must establish that there is some morally significant difference between them and us. And this is so whether one's moral theory is utilitarian, deontological or Humean.

XI.

Thus, a Humean argument for including nonhuman animals within the boundaries of our moral concern is quite possible.[73] But could the Humean moral theory outlined above be employed to provide some basis for a wider environmental ethic, as well as for animal liberation or animal rights?[74] One possible route would be to argue that whatever requires us to take others into account would also require us to take future generations into account.[75] And if we ought to respect what others value, then we ought to respect what future generations are likely to value. In short, the argument that can be employed to extend our moral boundaries to include nonhuman animals could, in principle, be further deployed to include future generations of human and nonhuman animals.

What, though, are future generations of humans (and nonhuman animals) likely to value? They are likely to need, and hence value, an ecosystem which is

stable and uncompromised. Future humans are also likely to value, as we do, the beauty of the natural world. Hence, if we extend our moral horizons in order to accord moral consideration to what future generations can be expected to value, then we might conclude, as Leopold did (though for other reasons), that '[a] thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community.'[76]

However, a problem remains. This argument seems to restrict everything of value to everything which is valued by a valuer. This might be thought to rule out all possibility of non-sentient life having intrinsic value.[77] But, as we have seen, a key argument within environmental ethics – Routley's last person argument – suggests that intrinsic value is indispensable. This is precisely where we can deploy our projectivist theory.[78] If, as a result of human sentiments, we 'project' supposedly objective properties onto objects in the world (properties such as virtue, vice, beauty and ugliness), and if we consider them to be real properties that exist in their own right (even though, in fact, they would only subsist in relation to us), then this would explain why we might regard some objects as possessing intrinsic value. While, in a sense, beauty is, on a Humean reading, beauty-for-us, it appears to us, nevertheless, as an objective and independent property. And on the Humean account outlined above, while the sentiment of approbation which arises within us is the source of our motivation, we nevertheless, through the association of ideas, transfer the feeling of approval onto the beautiful object so that it is considered to be such that it *ought* to be approved of. In other words, the beauty itself is deemed to be 'attractive' (i.e., positively motivating). And because approval is action-guiding, the seemingly objective property 'ought-to-be-approved-of' is similarly regarded as action-guiding.

What this implies is that, whereas the grounding of beauty in subjective human sentiment might suggest that a beauty which could never be enjoyed would be no beauty at all[79] (and hence the last sentient being might just as well destroy the last specimen of a beautiful non-sentient life-form), the assumption that beauty is an objective property – a property which implies that it ought to be preserved for its own sake – leads us to think that it would be wrong to destroy a beautiful object even if its beauty were never to be enjoyed. Hence, insofar as the source of value of ecosystems, diverse species, natural landscapes, and so on is our perception of their seemingly objective beauty,[80] then the Humean account sketched here can explain the wider environmental concerns of environmental ethicists.[81]

In summary, then, sympathy is the ultimate foundation of morality, according to Hume. For if no one ever felt sympathy, certain actions and certain behavioural dispositions would never have been viewed as immoral, because they would not have met with any disapproval. But living socially – something we value – requires agreement on what is immoral. Such agreement is possible by employing our reason to assess actions and behavioural dispositions impar-

tially. This much is true to Hume. But we can go further. The employment of reason in order to arrive at impartial moral judgements requires us to take other sentient life-forms and future generations into account. Consequently, just as we can act immorally towards other humans, we can act immorally towards certain nonhuman life-forms, and we can act immorally with respect to future generations.

Hume also argues that certain general rules – the rules of justice – are required if we are to live socially. And it is in our interests that others value, or be brought to value, whatever rules are (genuinely)[82] necessary for a social existence. Furthermore, sympathy for others requires that all of us value those rules.

Hence, given our interests in a social existence, and given our sympathy for others, we have *reason* to disapprove of those actions and dispositions we label 'unjust' or 'immoral'. But neither injustice nor immorality are reducible to personal sentiments. For *just as the artificial virtues consist of behavioural dispositions concerning collectively agreed rules, the natural virtues consist of behavioural dispositions concerning 'collectively-agreed projections'*. And not only do we have reason to disapprove of those actions and dispositions we label 'unjust' or 'immoral', we also have reason to support their being *viewed* as unjust or immoral. Everyone 'seeing' certain actions and dispositions as 'objectively' unjust or immoral could be considered to be socially useful, and it is rational to value what is good for the preservation of any particular social form we might value. Thus, it might be argued, rather than exposing, say, 'vice' as a mere projection or as quasi-real, it is socially useful for us to continue 'seeing' certain actions as 'objectively' vicious.[83] But once we 'objectify' moral 'properties', we will tend to 'objectify' aesthetic ones, too, for they arise in a similar manner. (And this is why we are likely to condemn needless destruction by the last sentient agent, for he or she would be destroying something which we viewed as 'objectively' valuable.)

So, we disapprove of actions and behavioural dispositions which are likely to prove destructive of any object, including any social form, we might value[84] – for example, a social form which we believed would serve our interests and the interests of those whom we sympathise with. But were certain actions and behavioural dispositions to compromise the integrity and stability of ecosystems, in damaging the ecological preconditions of all continued social existence, they would be both destructive of any social form we might value and harmful to future generations of human and sentient nonhuman animals. On both counts, ecologically unsustainable behaviour is therefore immoral. Moreover, in its greater harmfulness than the kinds of behaviour which have traditionally been regarded as immoral or unjust, impartiality tells us that ecologically unsustainable behaviour is far more immoral. To be blunt, ecologically unsustainable lifestyles are the height of immorality.[85]

XII.

Thus, the Humean approach outlined above has the resources to account for both the concerns of animal liberationists and advocates of animal rights, on the one hand, and environmental ethicists concerned with biodiversity, ecological integrity and natural beauty, on the other.

However, while providing us with an explanation of our moral discourse (and thus a possible explanation for the views of environmental ethicists), Hume is not engaging in substantive ethics. For he 'is not concerned to put forward a normative thesis',[86] according to Mackie. Does this mean that a Humean account, including the one outlined above, cannot tell us what we ought to do? Do we merely have an explanation of the beliefs of animal liberationists, animal rights activists and environmental ethicists, without any grounding for normative injunctions?

This might seem to be the case. But given that humans are value-orientated, and given that our very identities are tied up with our values, then it is clear what we ought to do. We ought to do what we think, upon reflection, to be the moral thing to do. If we feel sympathy for nonhuman animals, then we will campaign against their needless suffering. If we feel that it is unreasonable not to include nonhuman animals within the boundaries of moral considerability, then we will campaign to have them so included. And if we feel that a species, or nature as a whole, has inherent value, we will campaign to preserve it.

These values may, indeed, conflict. And they might need to be traded off.[87] For example, the preservation of an ecosystem may well require the continuation of individual suffering. But the preservation of an ecosystem does not require the suffering imposed upon nonhuman animals by certain agricultural practices, sport or animal experimentation. Consequently, they can all be opposed uncompromisingly.[88] Moreover, those who act out of the sympathy they feel for the individual members of other species, and who act out of a wish to preserve those species they take to have inherent value, will feel that they are acting morally, for the feeling of sympathy and the response to (seemingly) objective moral properties will underpin their moral discourse, as will their reasoned extension of moral considerability. Moreover, they will feel that those who fail to show compassion to nonhuman animals, or who undermine the integrity of ecosystems, are immoral. And driven on by their moral zeal they will campaign unremittingly against factory farming, bloodsports, and animal experimentation, on the one hand, and to preserve the natural environment, on the other. And I will be one of them – all Humean theory notwithstanding – for upon leaving my study, too violent an effort would be required on my part to change my judgements from those to which my mind, 'from long custom, has been familiarised.'

But perhaps there is more to be said. Perhaps, in fact, environmental ethics might have the last word. If, as Hume argues, the values and the general rules we

come to adopt are those which are socially useful, then faced with environmental crises, the most useful ethic would appear to be an environmental one – an ethic that encourages us to live in an environmentally benign way. In fact, if the environmental crises that we appear to face threaten our continued survival as a species, as numerous environmentalists argue, then the only kind of ethic that will survive is an environmental one. Any other kind of ethic will lead to our ultimate demise. Consequently, any other kind of ethic will die out along with those who practise it.[89] To adapt a remark by H. J. N. Horsburgh: only those subscribing to an environmental ethic can inherit the earth; subscribing to any other ethic can only deny them a world to inherit.[90]

NOTES

[1] As Callicott writes: 'The lynx, cougar, and other wild feline predators, from the neo-Benthamite perspective (if consistently and even-handedly applied) should be regarded as merciless, wanton, and incorrigible murderers of their fellow creatures, who not only kill, it should be added, but cruelly toy with their victims, thus increasing the measure of pain in the world. From the perspective of the land ethic, predators generally should be nurtured and preserved as critically important members of the biotic communities to which they are native.' J. Baird Callicott, 'Animal liberation: a triangular affair' (1995), p. 39. This article, both influential and, as Callicott now admits, highly divisive, was first published in *Environmental Ethics*, **2**(4), 1980: 311-38. Subsequent page references are to the 1995 version, which contains an additional Preface (written in 1994). It should be noted that Callicott now 'winces' at the 'stridency' of the original article and has expressed a wish that he were 'not so closely identified with this particular piece of work' (Callicott 1990: 103).
[2] See Leopold 1949.
[3] This is a notion which Callicott takes from Mary Midgley (1983).
[4] See Callicott 1995b, pp. 193-4. Also see the 1994 Preface added to Callicott 1995a.
[5] A concise summary of Singer's welfarist argument can be found in Singer 1996.
[6] For a summary of Regan's rights-based argument, including his opposition to utilitarianism, see Regan 1985.
[7] See Callicott 1995a.
[8] Ibid.
[9] In fact, Callicott, even in his most recent attempt to reunite to some degree the concerns of environmental ethicists and animal liberationists, has retained both an emphasis on the 'mixed community' and an antipathy to 'the Modern Classical Paradigm' (which includes the utilitarianism of Singer and the deontology of Regan). See Callicott 1998a, especially pp. 472-3.
[10] Interestingly, just as the association of ideas can give rise to the idea of another's pain, it could also give rise to the idea of another entity as being an experiencing subject of a life, valuing his or her own autonomy just as much as I value my own.
[11] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, pp. 575-6.
[12] Norman 1983: 81.
[13] Ibid.

[14] Callicott 1995a: 193.
[15] Ibid., p. 196. And given that the preservation of biotic communities might require the culling of deer, rabbits, and so on, then '[t]he land ethic…not only has a holistic aspect; it is holistic with a vengeance' (Callicott 1998b: 109).
[16] Callicott 1982a: 173.
[17] Callicott 1982b: 314.
[18] Callicott 1995b: 196.
[19] Quoted in Callicott 1995b. The emphases are Callicott's, not Hume's.
[20] See Callicott 1982a: 173.
[21] David Hume, 'An enquiry concerning the principles of morals' in *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, p. 219.
[22] Ibid., pp. 219-20.
[23] It is not surprising, therefore, that some have wished to regard the whole biosphere as a living entity – namely: 'Gaia'. However, self-regulation or homeostatic mechanisms are not sufficient for life to be attributed, and there are many things which planet Earth does not do that are usually characteristic of living entities: for example, it neither breeds nor feeds. And while it *might* make sense to say that Gaia had been injured, it doesn't appear to contort and cry out in pain in the way that sentient life-forms do. Hence, for everyone to feel sufficient Humean *sympathy* towards the planet in order to be motivated to display the requisite environmental concern the present environmental crises demand seems rather hopeful.
[24] For example, Hume points out that living within a society can increase our force, our ability and our security. See Hume, *Treatise*, p. 485.
[25] See Callicott 1985: 257-8.
[26] See Routley 1973: 207.
[27] See Callicott 1985: 267.
[28] Ibid., p. 273.
[29] Ibid., pp. 274-5.
[30] O'Neill 1993: 150. Furthermore, O'Neill insists that the new physics does not have the implications which a number of green thinkers presume it has. See O'Neill 1992: 135-6, n. 21.
[31] Eckersley 1992: 50. Eckersley's insertion of 'say' clearly implies that, in her view, it is a mistake to regard oneself as separate from not merely the rest of the *animal* world.
[32] Callicott, for one, invites such a reading of Hume at times. For example, he writes: 'Good and evil are not, as we should say today, objective qualities; they are, in Hume's terms, neither "matters of fact" nor "real relations" among objects. We find them rather in our "own breast"; *they are feelings of approbation or disapprobation*, warm approval or repugnance, which spontaneously arise in us upon the contemplation of some action or object.' Callicott 1982a: 167, emphasis added. Nevertheless, Callicott insists that a Humean approach, while being 'subjectivist', does not entail a 'radical relativism', for there is a 'human consensus of feeling' which provides the yardstick for adjudging 'abnormal moral sensibilities' to be morally 'wrong'. See Callicott 1992: 189-91. This notwithstanding, the interpretation of Hume which follows is considerably less subjectivist than Callicott's.
[33] See Norman 1983: 76.
[34] How might we do this? Imagine that Sara ranks Mike above Jenny, Jenny above Tim, and Tim above Cathy. George, however, ranks Tim above Jenny, Jenny above Cathy, and Cathy above Mike. But Sue ranks Cathy above Jenny, Jenny above Tim, and Tim above

Mike. We then discover that Mike is Sara's best friend, Tim is George's, and Cathy is Sue's. We can then employ our reason to correct for the partiality displayed in each ranking, and thus arrive at the 'true' ranking: Jenny is more virtuous than Tim, Tim is more virtuous than Cathy, and Cathy is more virtuous than Mike.

[35] Hume, *Treatise*, pp. 581-2.

[36] Hume, 'An enquiry concerning the principles of morals', p. 171.

[37] Interestingly, then, adhering to the rules of justice can be defended on grounds of both sympathy and self-interest. And this means that Hume's theory can accommodate these two seemingly contradictory aspects of moral discourse: while, on the one hand, morality appears to have an altruistic tone, on the other hand, it often includes an appeal to self-interest – for, in order to motivate someone to act morally, it is often expedient to argue that it is in his or her self-interest to act in the manner urged.

[38] Callicott 1995b: 193.

[39] Hume, *Treatise*, p. 413.

[40] It might be thought that Hume argues the contrary in Appendix II of his Second Enquiry. However, all he is denying in that appendix is that we only ever act from self-love. As he writes: 'Were there no appetite of any kind antecedent to self-love, that propensity could scarcely ever exert itself; because we should, in that case, have felt few and slender pains or pleasures, and have little misery or happiness to avoid or pursue.' Hume, 'An enquiry concerning the principles of morals', pp. 301-2. To which he immediately adds: 'Now where is the difficulty in conceiving, that this may likewise be the case with benevolence and friendship…'. Ibid., p. 302. In other words, we can be benevolent as well as selfish; but benevolence, like selfishness, also relies upon pains and pleasures.

[41] Hume, *Treatise*, p. 414.

[42] Ibid., p. 415. And note: the rules of justice serve our desire to live socially.

[43] Ibid., p. 416.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Emphasis added.

[48] Hume, *Treatise*, p. 468.

[49] Ibid., pp. 468-9. Note, again, that Hume is imprecise. First he tells us that there is no other matter of fact, then he tells us that there is! Clearly, his actual view is that there are different *kinds* of matter of fact: those concerning 'objects' of feeling; and those concerning 'objects' of reason.

[50] Ibid., p. 469.

[51] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 135. If my left hand is cold and my right hand is very warm, then when I place both of them into the same bowl of lukewarm water, the water feels hot to my left hand and cold to my right. But the water cannot be simultaneously hot and cold. This is the sort of phenomenon which has led to the view that some of the seemingly objective properties attributed to objects are, in fact, dependent upon our senses, whereas other properties are not (for example, a sphere is spherical whether or not anyone perceives it to be so).

[52] Nevertheless, they can still be given a realist interpretation if they are viewed as powers to appear in a certain way to normal observers in normal conditions. See McDowell 1985. However, on the basis of his understanding of the less obvious facts of colour perception, Alan Goldman concludes that 'our everyday agreements in ascribing colours such as red to objects result from the breadth of such terms and concepts, from the fact that they cover

a very large number of discriminable shades' (1987: 353). The more precisely one identifies a shade, the less the agreement. Hence, if the empirical facts are as Goldman describes, 'then we cannot specify in any nonarbitrary way a class of normal perceivers and normal conditions such that objects have those shades of colour which appear to such subjects in such conditions.' Ibid.

[53] To the extent that Goldman's challenge to the realist interpretation of secondary qualities is convincing, moral anti-realism is all the more compelling.

[54] Hume, *Treatise*, p. 471.

[55] Hume, 'Of the standard of taste', p. 238.

[56] Ibid., pp. 238-9.

[57] Ibid., p. 240.

[58] Ibid., p. 242.

[59] Ibid., p. 245.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., pp. 249-50. Interestingly, if transferred to morals, this would deal with the case of the psychopath.

[62] Ibid., p. 253.

[63] Hume, 'An enquiry concerning the principles of morals', p. 294.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Mackie writes: 'Although the only hard fact of the matter is that the speaker and others have or would have certain sentiments, that there is an interpersonal system of sentiments with regard to actions, characters, and so on, we tend to project these sentiments onto the actions or characters that arouse them, or read some sort of image of these sentiments into them, so that we think of those actions and characters as possessing, objectively and intrinsically, certain distinctively moral features; but these features are fictitious. Since these fictitious features are projections of sentiments which are intrinsically action-guiding, these features too are naturally thought of as intrinsically action-guiding. Since the system of sentiments includes a social demand that certain things be done or not done, the fictitious features are taken to involve corresponding requirements and necessities. Where the sentiment is hostility to the action and a demand that it not be done, the supposed wrongness of this action, resulting from the objectification of that sentiment, is something which in itself, if anyone were aware of it, would dissuade him from doing it. This projection or objectification is not just a trick of individual psychology…. [T]here is a system in which the sentiments of each person both modify and reinforce those of others; the supposedly objective moral features both aid and reflect this communication of sentiments, and the whole system of thought of which the objectification, the false belief in the fictitious features, is a contributing part, flourishes partly because…it serves a social function.' (Mackie 1980: 71-2).

[66] For causal relations are, ordinarily, transitive.

[67] Clearly, there is a confusion between type and token at work here – one that I am inclined to think is at work in everyday discourse regarding moral properties. Mary, Tom and Jane are each projecting different tokens of the same type of quasi-property. And while they 'perceive' the same type of quasi-property, they all presume that they perceive the same token, and it is to that which they all 'refer'.

[68] This completely goes against the traditional interpretation of Hume, which emphasises this famous comment: 'I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance. In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the

ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention wou'd subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceiv'd by reason.' Hume, *Treatise*, pp. 469-70. Because Hume says that it 'seems altogether inconceivable' that the 'new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it', it has traditionally been assumed that he is claiming that ought-statements cannot be derived from is-statements. It has thus been assumed that Hume does not regard moral judgements as factual statements, and that one cannot, in Hume's supposed view, derive them from something quite different – namely, matters of fact. In other words, it has traditionally been thought that, in this famous passage, Hume is pointing out that we cannot derive statements telling us what we ought to do from statements that merely describe what is the case. However, Hume does not say that such a derivation *is* inconceivable, only that it *seems* to be. He doesn't say that ought-statements cannot be derived from is-statements; rather, what he seems to be saying is that we need to *explain* how we have arrived at ought-statements, not merely jump from is-statements to ought-statements.

[69] Of course, none of what I have argued might be Hume's actual view. He *might* be a non-cognitivist who reduces moral judgements to individual personal feelings, while making passing observations that are inconsistent with his view. It is also possible that his views changed over time. But the moral theory here adumbrated at least has the merit of making him appear more consistent not only across texts but also within each text than do other interpretations. And, more importantly, the moral theory proffered here does seem to be consistent with his writings. Hence, even if it is not Hume's actual view, at the very least there are grounds for considering it to be Humean. However, if these grounds should turn out to be insufficient, I would not be dismayed. I would gladly have such a view referred to as 'Carterian'. But I would not presume, myself, to claim any originality for developing a moral theory which I take to be Hume's.

[70] Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 285.

[71] Interestingly, this means that not all Humean approaches are as different from Thomas Nagel's own view as he presumes. Nagel counters the claim that our reasons for acting always rest upon motivating personal desires, holding instead that genuine altruism is possible, and that it rests on a principle requiring 'that all reasons be construable as expressing objective rather than subjective values.' (Nagel 1970: 88). And he supports this claim by asking us to imagine the response of an egoist with 'gouty toes' to someone who happens to be standing on them. 'Can he truly affirm that the owner of the heel has no reason whatever to remove it from the gouty toes? Particularly if one owns the toes, it shows a rare detachment not to regard the pain as simply in itself a bad thing, which there is reason for anyone to avert. It is difficult, in other words, to resist the tendency to objectify the negative value one assigns to pain, or would assign to it if one experienced it, regarding the identity of its owner as irrelevant.' Ibid., p. 85. But a Humean approach

premised upon objectification or projection and which acknowledges the important role played by reason in moral thinking is equally bound to emphasise reasons which express seemingly objective values. Nevertheless, the key move towards altruism is surely provided by Humean sympathy, which directs our concern to others. See, for example, Williams 1973.

[72] See Singer 1986 and Regan 1985.

[73] And such an argument would thus require a reappraisal of the virtues and vices. The natural virtues, for example, consist in dispositions which are generally beneficial or agreeable either to oneself or to others, while the natural vices consist in dispositions which are generally harmful or disagreeable either to oneself or to others. If consistency requires that greater weight be accorded nonhuman animals within our moral deliberations, then the relevant 'others' which the virtues and vices are liable to benefit or harm must be reinterpreted accordingly. In other words, it can be argued that the willingness to inflict gratuitous suffering on a sentient nonhuman animal would be just as much a vice as the willingness to inflict it upon a human being.

[74] After having first driven a wedge between environmental ethics, on the one hand, and animal welfare and animal rights, on the other, Callicott has since come to think, as we have noted, that some reconciliation might be possible if one were to adopt a Humean moral theory. Nevertheless, as we have also noted, even when at his most conciliatory, he has continued to reject both Singer's and Regan's approaches wholesale (see Callicott 1995b and Callicott 1998a: 466-7), whereas I claim that a key feature, if not more, of their approaches can, in principle, be incorporated into a Humean theory.

[75] Considerations of space do not permit a response to the many objections that could be levelled against this claim. For some counter-arguments to several such objections, see Carter 1998: 37-40.

[76] Leopold 1949: 224.

[77] However, such an assumption may well rest on equivocations between different senses of 'intrinsic value', or on confusions between metaethics and substantive ethics. See O'Neill 1992.

[78] It is odd that Callicott should describe his own Humean environmental ethic as owing much to Mackie (see Callicott 1985: 260, n. 7), when Callicott also writes: 'If we should witness some act of willful murder, for example, the evil or vice is not a quality of the act as red is a quality of spilled blood; rather, "from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it."' (Callicott 1982a: 167). Red is paradigmatically a secondary quality, with which Hume explicitly compares vice and virtue. Moreover, this comparison is the whole basis of Mackie's projectivist reading of Hume!

[79] As Holmes Rolston III characterises subjectivism: 'Nonsensed value is nonsense.' (Rolston 1983: 157).

[80] Note: there is a difference between aesthetic value, which natural objects might be thought to possess, and artistic value, which (implying, as it does, a product of creativity) natural objects do not possess. Yet Robert Elliot appears to confuse the two when he remarks that 'an apparently integral part of aesthetic evaluation depends on viewing the aesthetic object as an intentional object, as an artefact, as something that is shaped by the purposes and designs of its author.' Elliott 1995: 85. For a different view of the aesthetic appreciation of nature – one which considers its aesthetic worth to provide grounds for an obligation to preserve it – see Thompson 1995: 291-305.

[81] Consequently, such a Humean approach seems to generate an environmental ethic in the widest sense of the term, for as Elliot and Gare write: 'An environmental ethic…is an ethic which allows that future generations, nonhuman animals and nonsentient nature are all morally considerable', even though they might 'not be counted as considerable in exactly the same ways.' (Elliott and Gare 1983: x).
[82] The principal rules of justice, for Hume, are evidently those concerning rights in private property. While it is certain that some rules are essential for social harmony, private property rights are surely not. For a critique of Hume's argument concerning private property, see Carter 1989, Ch. 10.
[83] For example, the claim that we project intrinsic value might be thought to undermine our motivation to preserve objects deemed to possess it. But it would only do so if we were motivated for dubious reasons – such as attempting to follow the will of a non-existent God. See Blackburn 1985: 10-11.
[84] It should be noted that John Passmore regards this as a reason for limiting our obligations to future generations: 'we ought not to act, out of concern for posterity's survival, in ways which are likely to destroy the civilised ideals we hope posterity will share with us. We should try so to act that our successors will not be wholly without electricity, but we need not, should not, close down our civilisation merely in the hope that a remote posterity will have some hope of surviving.' (Passmore 1980: 91). However, the Humean argument offered here is not confined to a love of our present civilisation, which appears to be the limit of Passmore's concern.
[85] In saying this, clearly I am in disagreement with Passmore. On the unsustainability of our present social form, see Carter 1999a.
[86] Mackie 1980: 151.
[87] Regarding the importance of value trade-offs within moral theory, see Carter 1999b.
[88] But if we have sympathy for nonhuman animals, shouldn't we stop predators harming their prey? As keeping chickens in batteries (or calves in veal pens), driving bulls into bullrings, and strapping to chairs chimpanzees with electrodes implanted into their brains (or squirting new cosmetics into the eyes of rabbits) are all unnecessary activities, then they can easily be viewed as immoral. But nonhuman predators are not moral agents. Hence their predatory behaviour cannot be immoral. Should we save their prey in any case? Probably not, because ecosystems have evolved with predators playing an essential stabilising role. To prevent them from carrying out that role would be to threaten the stability and integrity of the ecosystem. But perhaps we could preserve stability without the pain? However, given the ecologically destructive consequences of most technological fixes, it would be safer to allow ecosystems to retain their stability in the way that we know works. Nevertheless, knowing how certain ecosystems work might require occasional interference on our part – for example, the removal of feral house-cats which, as a result of their introduction by humans into ecosystems in which they are not indigenous, threaten those species which constitute its functional parts. For further on this issue, see Clark 1979: 171–88.
[89] Cf. Garrett Hardin's justification for his notorious life-boat ethics. See Hardin 1983.
[90] Horsburgh asks: 'Is it not possible – even likely – that the acceleration of nuclear conflict may prove fatal to our species?' – which suggests that 'only the non-violent can inherit the earth', and that 'the violent can only deny them a world to inherit.' Horsburgh 1981: 73.

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Errata

p.8, 4 lines from bottom. '…remains unsupported.' *should be replaced by*

remains as bizarre as it initially appears. *Return to p.8.*

p.11. The following paragraph of Alan Carter's article was omitted during typesetting. It should be inserted at the end of Section IV, after the sentence ending '… humans and other sentient beings.'

Even worse, this approach might remove our moral obligations entirely. For example, Robyn Eckersley endorses the deployment by 'nonanthropocentric ethical theorists' of an 'absence of any rigid, absolute dividing line between humans and nonhumans to point out the logical inconsistency of conventional anthropocentric ethical and political theory that purports to justify the exclusive moral considerability of humans on the basis of our separateness from, say, the rest of the animal world'.[31] But one implication of claiming, as Callicott appears to, that we are not separate from anything or anyone else is that cutting another person's throat would be morally equivalent to lancing a boil on one's arm. Another implication is that there would be no moral difference between a murderer and his or her victim, because neither is a discrete entity separate from the other – an implication which is both absurd and morally objectionable. This, surely, is not the kind of approach to base a cogent moral theory upon. In short, if Callicott's Humean ethic fails to convince, his even more 'holistic' 'continuity of self and nature' approach seems to be incoherent. *Return to p.11.*

The publishers apologise for any inconvenience caused.