

Hume on the Origin of Morality

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Received: June 14, 2024

Accepted: July 16, 2024

Published: September 30, 2024

To cite this article: HU Lijun & Pu Jingxin. (2024). Hume on the Origin of Morality. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(3), 239–249, DOI: 10.53789/j.1653–0465.2024.0403.028

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.53789/j.1653–0465.2024.0403.028>

Abstract: Some moralists believe that the Supreme Being makes morality possible because sinful humankind cannot save them from falling into corruption. Some moralists claim that morality derives from humankind's other regard or benevolence, which should take care of the other in their life. Other moralists think that morality comes from the convention of human reason for the public good of society because human self-interest without restraints would lead to ceaseless conflicts and clashes. Hume goes beyond and argues that morality originates from the subject of human sympathy, which has moral sentiments of pleasure and easiness by nature. Morality doesn't derive its origin from exterior objects of fact or from reason, which merely connects cause and effect or compares various concepts. Hume doesn't consider the Supreme Being the origin of morality because he thinks everything is in the world of experience and perceptions. Moreover, self-love and self-interest let human beings have to invent artificial rules of virtue for the common good of society. Moral education is also essential to extend the natural boundary of moral sentiments beyond one's inner circle into taking care of other strangers to a higher degree. And the highest morality is the love of self-sacrifice in one's interest. In Hume's theory of morality, moral judgment is derived from moral distinction, which derives from moral sentiment, and moral sentiments originate from human sympathy.

Keywords: sympathy; moral origin; moral sentiment; moral judgment; moral education

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1 Introduction

In a human world, how is morality possible, and where does morality originate? Some moralists claim that morality derives from the Supreme Being; others claim that other-regarding or benevolence makes humankind



moral. But Hume argues that morality arises from the subjective disposition of human sympathy, which brings about moral sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness, subsequently resulting in the moral distinction of judging human behavior from a moral perspective. Hume's teaching of morality is an outstanding contribution to moral philosophy. Hume's doctrine of moral sympathy is distinguished from other moralists' thoughts that seek moral origin from an external Supreme Being or objective facts. They regard morality as something independently existing in the external world or actual actions. However, Hume's theory of morality will prove that this kind of attempt to connect objective facts with morality is invalid. From Hume's view, morality cannot derive from actual actions; "Ought" cannot be deduced from "Is." Furthermore, he argues that morality, in essence, is a moral sentiment that derives from human sympathy by nature. Human sympathy makes morality possible. Therefore, it is the origin of morality. In this article, I will first discuss other moralists' thoughts on morality and then articulate Hume's teachings of morality.

2 Clarke's Supreme Being as the Moral Origin

Some moralists like Clarke argue that there has necessarily existed from eternity a unified, unchangeable, and self-existing Being who is not only infinite, omnipotent, and the cause of everything but also is a Being of infinite goodness and justice and all the other moral characteristics appropriate to the Supreme Governor and Judge of the world (Norton et al. 2008: 271). This means there is a Supreme Being who is almighty enough to govern everything but is also good enough to create moral order for the world. That Super Being is not merely a Creator but also a Governor and a Judge of the world. Then, that Supreme Being is the origin of morality. For them, human beings are sinful by nature and cannot save themselves from falling into a state of corruption if only through their moral efforts. They claim that moral quality depends on human beings' faith in the external Supreme Being's almighty and infinite good, who can transform sinful humankind into moral beings. Without this kind of religious faith, morality is impossible. They put religious faith over humanity in that they trust faith but discredit the moral abilities of humankind. They don't believe humans can independently create a moral world without faith in the Supreme Being.

3 Shaftesbury and Levinas's Other-regarding as the Moral Origin

Unlike Clarke, Shaftesbury agrees that religion and morality seem to relate to each other. Still, religion can hinder morality since many religions teach their followers that "treachery, ingratitude, or cruelty" has been endorsed by a divine ordinance, resulting in their followers' persecuting friends or destroying themselves out of religious fanaticism. Shaftesbury then claims that humankind naturally has a moral attribute of other-regarding, which compels them to act for others' benefits and points to the public good. Thus, he focused on fostering and cultivating human beings into gentlemen who care for others and treat others politely. Levinas also claims that the Other is the ground of ethics, not the "I." Justice for the other is the starting point for ethics. Justice is a gesture to welcome the other and is an attitude to consider the other. In a word, justice is "for the other," not "for itself." Morality does not exist for and by itself, but only the other is the natural origin of morality. For Levinas, the Other is the absolute infinity and cannot be neutralized into any general concept but an impenetrable

particularity that should be treated with face-to-face interaction and communication. Accordingly, morality is not for itself as sovereign reason claimed and not for one's benefit as utilitarianism claimed, but for the welfare of the Other. In this sense, without consideration of the Other, there would be no possibility for morality. The Other invites humans to meet and take of them but should not be ignored. For Levinas, justice and freedom for the Other guaranteed justice and freedom for "I" (HU Lijun 2024: 16 – 21). Therefore, for Shaftesbury and Levinas, other-regarding is the chief principle for moral origin.

4 Mandeville's Convention as the Moral Origin

However, Mandeville claims that moral principles are merely conventions created by humankind through necessity for the public good, and no morality is inherent in human nature. He argues that no animal is as headstrong, selfish, cunning, and difficult to control as humans are. Humans invent morality to govern them more effectively. This control is achieved by maxims telling people that if we constrain our desires but focus our concern and interest on the public good, we will be morally better. To attain this purpose, Mandeville claims that a lie must be imparted to human beings and then let them believe that those constraints to their selfish dispositions will be rewarded, while those failing to do so will be punished. Mandeville further claims that we should nominate morality as an honorable thing, which makes people think that if they act morally, they will be more honorable than others. However, his claim entails that to acquire morality, we need to flatter people and *induce* many of them, especially "the fiercest, most resolute, and best among them, to endure a thousand Inconveniences, and undergo as many Hardships, that they may have the pleasure of counting themselves Men of the [superior] Class" (Mandeville 1988: 45). What's worse, over time, people may realize that their interests would be better satisfied by sacrificing others for their benefit. Hence, from Mandeville's view, instead of believing that human beings are moral naturally, we can say that human beings are self-interested and lovers of honor and pleasure. His theory of moral convention established morality on the foundation of interest, though on the public interest. That destroys morality in the long run because its core is an interest in gain. However, true morality cannot be based on one's or the public's interests. Moreover, it isn't easy to distinguish whether the public interest is for the public or one's benefit. Many immoral things are practiced in the name of the public interest. In reality, there is no universal public interest for all people, and all interests are private and exclusive from others. The so-called public interest for some people is even public damage for other people. For example, some people take land to build a golf course for themselves in the name of the public interest but at the sacrifice of building affordable houses for low-income people. Therefore, the public interest is not the moral origin. Moreover, it cannot derive moral origin from the human convention for the public interest because it is a public collection of particular self-interests of some people involved but excludes the other uninvolved. In essence, self-interest cannot be the moral origin, for it is opposite to morality, which is actually about overcoming it. Moreover, it can't make humans become moral persons by teaching them various lies for the public good.

5 Hutcheson's Benevolence as the Moral Origin

To reconstruct morality and defend Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, in his *Inquiry*, claims that "the universal

Foundation of our Sense of moral Good” is benevolence (2008: 120). He further points out that this benevolence is not founded on self-love or a view of interest. Moral actions are motivated by this benevolence to concern for others. Moreover, he reveals that human beings have been “implanted in our Nature” a complex moral disposition, a *moral sense* (2008: 198). This moral sense consists of an inherent benevolence that can direct our actions under morality and an innate “disinterested ultimate Desire for the Happiness of others” (2008: 229). Hutcheson claims that “Virtue itself, or good Dispositions of Mind, are not directly taught, or produced by Instruction; they must be originally implanted in our Nature, by its great Author; and afterwards strengthened and confirmed by our own Cultivation” (2008: 179).

Unlike the moralists mentioned above, Hume no longer regards Clark’s Supreme Being as the moral origin. He also doesn’t stop at Shaftesbury or Levinas’s moral claim of other-regarding. He doesn’t think Mandeville’s regard of humans as immoral beings is true, though self-interest is in human nature. Hume goes further beyond them into something more fundamental to moral origin.

6 Moral Judgment

Before judging whether an action is moral, we must already know morality. All of the various moralists already presumed there is morality. If there were no morality at all, as in an animal world, there would be no moral phenomena in the human world. Just as Kant reveals that principles are not in the external objects but in the subject a priori, Hume also admits that moral judgment is inherent in human nature. Therefore, human beings spontaneously make some moral judgments about people’s actions, which usually don’t relate to one’s interests. These disinterested moral judgments detach oneself from involvement, making moral evaluations fair without mixing with various considerations of self-benefits. Moral judgments are critical in promoting moral quality for human beings. After all, Hume points out that human beings care for their reputations in society. Good judgment from a moral perspective means a good reputation and confirms our self-worth in society. Therefore, people will take care of their conduct for their reputation. Hume said, “There is nothing which touches us more nearly than our reputation and nothing on which our reputation more depends than our conducts” (2003: 321); for human beings have a very high need for self-esteem which convinces one own merit (2003: 381). Therefore, free expression of moral judgment is indispensable for a good society, as it promotes moral behavior and reduces immoral actions.

Hume considers this natural disposition of moral judgment and points out 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*” (2003: 302). He further argues that “For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, ’tis necessary that it should be observed and explained” (2003: 302) since “Is” or “Is not” and “Ought” or “Ought not” are different from each other. Some moralists mistake the question of “Ought” for the question of “Is” in their attempt to find morality from some objective elements of actions. Hume also points out that reason is not the origin of morality. Therefore, how can we know something moral? Hume reveals that moral sentiment spontaneously lets us judge some actions from a moral perspective. In other words, we are naturally inclined to make moral judgments. As self-interest is a part of human nature, moral judgment is also an indispensable part of human nature. In the modern world, God has lost its meaning for lots of people since

Nietzsche's overwhelming claims about God's death and the human will to power prevail over the world. Therefore, it necessarily needs to reconstruct morality from a new foundation in human beings; otherwise, human beings would become "last man" who only cares about their natural desires without any concern about morality, and consequently, there would be no moral concern in the modern people, who would merely indulge in their self-interest. Moral teaching should change this situation, which rests on the solid foundation of human nature. This is the significance of studying Hume's morality, which builds up a cornerstone for modern moral philosophy.

7 Reason Not as the Moral Origin

Hume claims that moral distinction doesn't derive from reason because human reason has two major defects. One is that reason is inactive or inert; the other is that reason belongs to the field of speculative philosophy. He states that "reason has no influence on our passions and actions, 'tis in vain to pretend that morality is discovered only by a deduction of reason. An active principle can never be founded on an inactive," and "that reason is perfectly inert, and can never either prevent or produce any action or affection" (Hume 2003: 294). This indicates that the impotence of reason can't move moral actions, and morality is not derived from reason. Hence, Hume criticizes that "virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason; that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them" (2003: 294). Hume also points out that people make that mistake because they believe that morality is "like truth, is discerned merely by ideas, and by their juxtaposition and comparison" (2003: 294). That is to say, they confuse two categories: practical morality and speculative truth. Hume states, "Philosophy is commonly divided into *speculative* and *practical*; and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division" (2003: 294). Morality belongs to the practical domain, which influences our passions and actions and goes beyond the calm and indolent understanding. This is Hume's division between reason and morality. Morality doesn't involve speculative reason, which is inactive. Hume's viewpoint of morality not only invalidates ancient moralists like Socrates but also disproves modern rational moralists. Socrates mainly relies on reason to establish his moral doctrine. From his view, there is a fundamental struggle between the body and the soul in human beings. The body always desires more material, like money, power, honor, etc. On the contrary, the soul yet seeks the divine teaching from a divine deity and lives for the sake of virtue. Therefore, whether we are moral or not is determined by the struggle between the body and the soul. If the soul controls and moderates the body, we become moral beings; otherwise, we would be immoral. Socrates' soul has two parts: one is rational, and the other is divine; that is, the soul is a mixture of rational and divine. Therefore, on the one hand, we need to recollect a pure soul, which is utterly divine from God, and follow his command to conduct our actions; on the other hand, we need a reason to moderate and control our desires for the sake of virtue. Hence, we can see that Socrates trusts reason to control natural desires, although he provides a divine command to support it (Plato 1997: 28d). Nonetheless, in some sense, his consideration of divine command rightly indicates that reason alone is not powerful enough to lead people to live morally. However, Hume doesn't consider the divine command of God and relies on human nature to think over morality because he regards human beings as empirical beings, mainly within experience and perception. Though Socrates claims that knowledge is a virtue, Hume points out that "'Tis one thing to know virtue, and another to

conform the will to it” (2003: 299). He finds out that reason belongs to the speculative domain, which concerns itself with the truth of objective knowledge. Furthermore, this truth of objective knowledge isn’t involved with activating morality because inert reason alone cannot push the will to follow the principle of virtue.

Moreover, Hume points out that reason contemplates objective relations between external things like cause-effect connections, but reason cannot speculate moral relations between them. Hume’s discovery strikes heavily on rational moralists who believe they can find morality in reason or the relations among objects. For example, a young tree grows up but overshadows its parent’s sunshine, which results in the older tree’s death, and people would not judge that as immoral. On the contrary, if one child grows up and doesn’t take care of his older parents, this horrible ingratitude is sharply blamed by human beings. Although these two examples have the same relation of cause and effect, the former doesn’t pertain to morality, but the latter does. Therefore, we cannot find morality from objective relations since they are just objective knowledge. Otherwise, human beings would reproach inanimate beings, making them susceptible to moral judgment. Moreover, Hume points out that reason can’t speculate morality merely from comparison between internal concepts because “it would follow that we might be guilty of crimes in ourselves, and independent of our situation, which respect to the universe” (2003: 299). An actual human being lives in a natural environment with many complicated contexts and impacting factors. Different contextual situations will affect the outcome of an action. Hume even points out that fortune plays a vital role in human actions. It is a big mistake for reason to rule out various factors in making moral reasoning by simply comparing actions with whether fitting or unfitting pure internal ideas of morality. Therefore, Hume states, “Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the *real* relations of ideas or to *real* existence and matter of fact.” Furthermore, “’tis evident our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagreement” (2003: 295). Therefore, he reveals that actions do not derive their merit from conformity to speculative or instrumental reason. Moreover, “Actions may be laudable or blamable; but they cannot be reasonable or unreasonable: laudable or blamable, therefore, are not the same with reasonable or unreasonable” (Hume 2003: 295). Therefore, he concludes that moral distinctions are not the offspring of reason.

Hume furthermore argues that even if someone may say reason can work on us, it just does function only in two ways: either by informing us that there exists a proper object desired by our passions or by providing us with the connection of cause and effect, then tells us the means to reach that goal. Hume points out that reason cannot work well even for these simple tasks because reason may give us wrong targets. For example, reason thinks something sweet is good for us, but in fact, it is poisonous and harmful to our health. Furthermore, the rule of causality is not solid since it results from our habits and customs. Hume claims that “nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions, and that the mind can never employ itself in any action which may not comprehend under the term of perception” (2003: 293). That is to say, there is no reason *a priori*, but all are perceptions. Such discovery is similar to that of Descartes. Descartes searches for a solid ground for all sciences through his method of doubt and concludes that the perceptions of the mind are the indubitable foundation for science. In this sense, reason can be regarded as a perception of the mind originally or intuition of the mind (Descartes 1985: 100). It is the mind’s perception that supplies knowledge. Descartes claims that the truth of knowledge can be perceived by the mind directly and immediately, and his famous saying is that “what perceived clearly and distinctly is always true.” This distinct perception of the mind is the foundation of objective knowledge. By

contrast, Hume's outstanding claim is that moral distinction is perceived by moral sentiment or feeling, which resides in the constitution of the human mind. Human beings have this capacity of moral distinction by nature. That is when some moralists seek a moral foundation from objects or God, which many scholars doubt or deny and results in moral relativism or moral mechanism. Hume demonstrates that morality is innate in human beings by nature, and human nature provides a substantial foundation for morality. Like Descartes establishes solid ground for knowledge against skepticism, which asserts there is no reliable and certain knowledge, Hume builds up the certainty and authority of morality against moral skepticism.

8 Moral Sentiments of Pleasure and Uneasiness

Hume points out that humans have moral sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness when we see something virtuous or vicious. A feeling of pleasure arises when we encounter something virtuous, but if something vicious occurs, we will become uneasy. That is, morality is our natural feeling and affection. Reason must find them but can never produce them (Hume 2003: 301). Like Descartes' intuition of reason, which existed before we used logical reasoning, moral sentiments exist to provide moral judgment. Hume points out that any action virtuous or vicious:

It is 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... Nothing can be more real, or concern us more, than our sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness; and if these be favourable to virtue and unfavourable to vice, no more can be requisite to the regulation of our conduct and behaviour. (2003: 302)

Hume claims that "Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of; though this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle" (2003: 302). In some sense, this moral feeling is a moral intuition, as Max Scheler once pointed out in his moral phenomenology. Like categorical intuition, in the sense that cognitive phenomenology can intuit the essence of objectives immediately, moral intuition can feel moral phenomena in reality.

Hume furthermore points out that we obtain moral distinction from our impressions. Some impressions from virtue are agreeable, but those who proceed from vice are uncomfortable. This fact is not abstruse but can be experienced by our common sense. Hume says, "There is no spectacle so fair and beautiful as a noble and generous action; nor any which gives us more abhorrence than one that is cruel and treacherous" (2003: 302). But how do we know various impressions, virtuous or vicious or not? Hume explains that we can immediately know this distinction by our feeling of pleasure or pain. If the impression is pleasure morally, it is virtuous; if pain, it is vicious. That is to say, to know whether a character or an action is laudable or blamable, we have such moral standards that if it brings us pleasure, it is virtuous, but if it leads us to feel pain, it is vicious. Hume points out that:

To have the sense of virtue is nothing but to feel the 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 inquire 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. (2003: 303)

We don't need to rely on a series of logical reasoning among different moral ideas to evaluate moral actions; we know it immediately from our moral feelings. But Hume reminds us to be aware of such pre-conditions that this moral feeling or sentiment doesn't involve our particular interest. Therefore, an enemy's good qualities like courage and sincerity may make us feel pleasure, and then we may consider those as moral good. However, if related to our interest, nobody will consider an enemy's qualities moral good since they would hurt us. This fact also implies that our moral sentiment always occurs when it points to the actions of other people that don't relate to our interests. For example, when we see someone rescue a child out of a well, we will feel pleasure, but if someone beats a child, we will feel vicious and sharply reproach this behavior. It is a moral force that can watch out for others to act morally in a society. Though moral sentiment is very soft and gentle, it primitively supports our society, and this power of moral sentiment makes a society good. If humans were without an original moral sense, the human world would be filled with entirely selfish considerations without any morality or beauty. However, fortunately, human beings are blessed by nature, which bestows on them the nature of moral sentiment, which potentially lets them be moral beings. Hume further points out that if nature can be understood as being opposed to miracles and also be opposed to rare and unusual since these sentiments are so rooted in our constitution and temper, "there never was any nation of the world, nor any single person in any nation, who was utterly deprived of them (moral sentiments), and who never, in any instance, showed the least approbation or dislike of manners" (2003: 305). Hume further states that if nature is understood as something inartificial, then the question of whether the sense of virtue is natural or artificial cannot be answered precisely since "our sense of some virtues is artificial, and that of others natural" (2003: 305). That is to say, some of our virtues are natural, but some are artificial because human beings can be transformed into moral beings by moral education, convention, etc. Originally, there was a natural moral sentiment in human nature, which can be expanded by moral education to a more significant degree.

9 Human Sympathy as the Moral Origin

Hume further points out that moral sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness derive from the chief principle of human sympathy. He states that one of two conspicuous principles of human nature is:

The first of these is the sympathy, and communication of sentiments and passions above-mention'd. So close and intimate is the correspondence of human souls, that no sooner any person approaches me, than he diffuses on me all his opinions, draws along my judgment in a greater or lesser degree... This principle of sympathy is so powerful and insinuates a nature, which enters into most of our sentiments and passions... The sentiments of others can never affect us, but by becoming, in some measure, our own; in which case they operate upon us, by opposing and increasing our passions, in the very same manner, as if they had been originally derived from our own temper and disposition. (2003: 378)

Humankind, by nature, has the ability of sympathy, which can transmit sentiments and passions of the other into our souls. This capacity of sympathy makes communication of human souls possible. So human beings can put themselves in the other's shoes. We can feel pleasure from the pleasure of the other and pain from the pain of the other. This sympathy with the other not only makes our moral sentiment of pleasure and uneasiness possible but also makes us out of our domain and projects into the field of strangers of the other to take care of them.

Hume further points out that:

Now we have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy; and consequently 'tis that principle, which takes us so far out of ourselves, as to give us the same pleasure or uneasiness in characters which are useful or pernicious to society, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or loss. (2003: 370)

Sympathy also makes humans concerned for the social virtues of others, which are helpful for society. Moreover, Hume points out that sympathy from the human soul but not from the mind is something more fundamental and extensive:

It requires but very little knowledge of human affairs to perceive, that a sense of morals is a principle inherent in the soul, and one of the most powerful that enters into the composition...Those who resolve the sense of morals into the original instincts of the human mind, may defend the cause of virtue with sufficient authority; but want advantage, which those possess, who account for that sense by an extensive sympathy with mankind. (2003: 394)

Hume regards such a claim as true: morality is the instinct of the human soul, like Hutcheson's instinct of benevolence. But he goes beyond human benevolence into sympathy for a further defense of morality. Hume concludes that "sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions" (2003: 390) and is also a powerful principle in human nature. Moreover, Hume points out that it is sympathy that arises from human passions of benevolence and pity, love, and kindness. He states that:

From that compleat sympathy there arises pity and benevolence ... this phenomenon of the double sympathy, and its tendency to cause love, may contribute to the production of kindness... We rejoice in their pleasures, and grieve for their sorrows, merely from the force of sympathy. (2003: 250)

Human sympathy generally produces benevolence, and benevolence produces love. Love produces kindness to other friends and strangers, which lets us have moral sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness with the pleasure and pains of the other. In this sense, sympathy is the ultimate origin of human morality. Hume points out that love is more about our nearest friends, which is accompanied by benevolence, but benevolence also has a sense of pity that arises from the misery of the other. The more misfortune with a disadvantaged person, the more pity will arise for that person. Hume further stresses that sympathy is made by human resemblance with the other in a universal relationship with everything, and he points out that:

We have a lively idea of everything related to us. All human creatures are related to us by resemblance. Their persons, therefore, their interests, their passions, their pains, and pleasures must strike upon us in a lively manner and produce an emotion similar to thatone. (2003: 238)

Human beings live in a universal relation with everything, in which especially they are in resemblance with other humans, no matter if they are friends or strangers, which invites our moral sympathy to them, as Shaftesbury and Levinas claimed. It is this primitive and universal relationship that lets sympathy be extensive in

the world. In this sense, the human universe is a moral universe filled with moral sympathy and humanity for all human beings. The moral horizon is the primary background for human beings. Humans are moral beings at first, then they are beings of other things. However, there is not only moral sympathy but also hatred or malice, and even selfishness of self-interest is inherent in human nature. Hence, Hume points out that moral education is indispensable for moral good in society, and human sympathy also makes moral education possible.

10 Moral Convention and Education

Hume undoubtedly knows that selfishness of self-interest is inherent in human nature and is too strong to be eradicated. Hume points out that “but ’tis certain, that self-love, when it acts at its liberty, instead of engaging us to honest actions, is the source of all injustice and violence” (2003: 309). Hume also points out that human beings naturally have no universal motive to observe equity or justice, and their love is confined to a few persons in relation to themselves; also, human beings prefer their relatives or friends over strangers in their affections. (2003: 310, 12–13) He points out that:

A man naturally loves his children better than his nephews, his nephews better than his cousins, his cousins better than strangers, where everything else is equal. Hence arise our common measures of duty, in preferring the one to the other. Our sense of duty always follows the common and natural course of our passions. (2003: 311)

The love of human passions is limited and has its preference in the sequence of love, which never distributes among various people equally. Natural love doesn’t produce fairness but partiality to their relatives or friends. Therefore, in some sense, natural love is an extension of self-love. For the lover of preference, the self is in the center, which gets the majority of love, and the degree of love shared with the other depends on their distance of relation with oneself. It is a projection of self-love to the other by one’s own relationship with them. Moreover, Hume points out, “This avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, is insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly destructive of society” (2003: 316). What’s worse, he points out that:

This is certain, that no affection of the human mind has both a sufficient force, and a proper direction to counter-balance the love of gain, and render men fit members of society, by making them abstain from the possessions of others. The Benevolence to strangers is too weak for this purpose. (2003: 316)

There is no solid impulse to push back human passions to gain possessions, not to say that benevolence is very weak in relating to strangers. Self-love and self-interest will unavoidably lead to conflicts and clashes among human beings without restraints and regulations. Hence, Hume points out that there must be justice to restrain human appetites and maintain a good society. Therefore, social justice is invented for the human community. Hume points out that “the sense of justice and injustice is not deriv’d from nature, but arises artificially, tho’ necessarily from education, and human conventions” (2003: 311). He further points out, “Tho’ justice be

artificial, the sense of its morality is natural” (2003: 395). Though speculative reason is not the moral origin, practical reason can invent various rules of justice based on multiple social needs. Many of these social rules finally become laws that require human beings to obey under observation from legal enforcement institutions. Moreover, moral education is also indispensable for human beings to extend their practice of moral rules beyond their relatives and friends into people of strangers. Hume pointed out that “from their earliest infancy, the principles of probity, and teach them to regard the observance of those rules, by which society is maintain’d, as worthy and honourable, and their violation as base and infamous” (2003: 321). Therefore, moral education is good for instilling moral rules in human beings and also good for them to observe these rules in their daily life.

11 Conclusion

Hume establishes his teaching of morality by grounding morality on human nature and claims that human sympathy in the soul is the origin of human morality by criticizing speculative reason and relying on moral sentiment. Human beings, by nature, have a moral feeling, which leads to moral distinction and evaluation. This moral sentiment is the fundamental motive for human beings to make moral judgments and create moral rules for social good. Though natural affection of love and benevolence is limited to their inner circles, human beings can extend their natural boundary through moral education and social convention to other strangers. Moral dignity should be respected by human beings with good moral tastes.

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(Editors: Joe ZHANG & Bonnie WANG)