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Hume on Pride-in-Virtue: A Reliable Motive?

LORRAINE BESSER-JONES

Abstract: Many commentators have argued that on Hume's account, pride turns out to be something that is unstable, context-dependent, and highly contingent. On their readings, whether or not an agent develops pride depends heavily on factors beyond her control, such as whether or not her house, which is beautiful, is also the most beautiful in her neighborhood and whether or not her neighbors will admire the beauty of her house rather than become envious of it. These aspects of Hume's theory of pride, the peculiarity requirement and the social dependency of pride, stand in tension with Hume's claims that virtue reliably produces pride-in-virtue and that pride-in-virtue serves as a powerful motive to virtue. If pride depends on the affirmation of others and arises only from qualities that are peculiar to their possessor, will the virtuous person reliably develop pride-in-virtue? And if not, can pride-in-virtue serve the motivational role Hume attributes to it? This paper tackles these problems by showing how the virtuous develop pride-in-virtue and how the desire for pride-in-virtue can serve as a powerful and admirable motive to virtue.

Throughout his discussion of pride and virtue, Hume claims that with virtue comes pride-in-virtue. As a result, the virtuous are able to experience a particular kind of enjoyment and self-satisfaction that is unavailable to the vicious.¹ Hume also suggests that a desire for pride-in-virtue can function as a motive to cultivate virtue. These three claims, that the virtuous take pride in their virtues, that this

pride affords them a pleasure and self-satisfaction not available to the vicious, and that pride-in-virtue can serve as a motive to virtue, together constitute a view which I will call the Pride-in-Virtue View. Despite his apparent endorsement of this view, Hume never explains how it works. For example, he claims that the virtuous experience pride-in-virtue, yet he does not explain in detail how this pride arises and how the prospect of pride-in-virtue can function as a motive. The Pride-in-Virtue View develops over the course of the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*² but does not receive explicit acknowledgement until Hume's discussion of the sensible knave in the final two pages of the *Enquiry*. My discussion will show that the plausibility of this view rests upon whether or not Hume is correct in his contention that virtue *reliably* produces pride in such a way that a desire for pride-in-virtue can function as a motive. This contention stands in contrast with features of Hume's account of pride that, according to many of his interpreters, make whether or not an agent develops pride a highly contingent matter. These features are, first, Hume's requirement that the causes of pride be "peculiar," which leads Donald Ainslie and Michael Gill, among others, to claim that the production of pride is context-dependent;³ and second, his insistence that the production of pride is socially-dependent, in virtue of requiring the affirmation of others. This requirement leads Annette Baier to worry that pride is inherently unstable and problematically contingent upon the opinions of others.⁴

In this paper, I show that despite these concerns about the contingent nature of Humean pride, Hume is able to maintain successfully his claim that virtue reliably produces pride. I do so by arguing that the sources of contingency traditionally attributed to Hume's theory of pride do not threaten virtue's power to produce pride.

The Pride-in-Virtue View

Hume's most explicit description of the Pride-in-Virtue View comes in his *Enquiry* discussion of the sensible knave. While in this passage he does not use the terminology of "pride-in-virtue," the state he describes in terms of "enjoyment of a character" is one easily recognizable as the state of self-satisfaction distinctive of possessing pride-in-virtue.⁵ Hume claims that, in virtue of treating as flexible the inviolable rules of justice and honesty, sensible knaves "have sacrificed the invaluable enjoyment of a character, with themselves at least, for the worthless acquisition of toys and gewgaws" (EPM 9.23; SBN 283). He then suggests that enjoyment of a character with oneself is invaluable to the agent who experiences it insofar as it is connected to happiness: "Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances, very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man, who feels the importance of them" (EPM 9.23; SBN 283). While these passages link enjoyment of character, and so pride-in-virtue, explicitly to the artificial virtues

of justice and honesty, Hume says elsewhere that the prospect of “inward peace of mind” and enjoyment of character serves as a motive to every virtue: “this constant habit of surveying ourselves, as it were, in reflection, keeps alive all the sentiments of right and wrong, and begets, in noble natures, a certain reverence for themselves as well as others, which is the surest guardian of every virtue” (EPM 9.10; SBN 276).⁶

Although Hume’s Pride-in-Virtue View finds its clearest expression in the *Enquiry*, its foundation is developed in the *Treatise*. In a number of places throughout Books 2 and 3 of the *Treatise*, Hume writes of the connection between pride and virtue and suggests that virtue is a significant cause of pride. In fact, virtue is one of Hume’s standard examples of the causes of pride: he includes it, or its particular instantiations, in his oft-repeated lists of the causes of pride,⁷ and it serves as an example in the experiments he uses to confirm his account of the production of pride (T 2.2.2.9; SBN 336–37). Hume refers to virtue and vice as “the most obvious causes” of pride and humility (T 2.1.7.7; SBN 297) and claims that the capacity of virtue and vice to produce either pride and humility, or love and hate is “the most considerable effect that virtue and vice have upon the human mind” (T 3.1.2.5; SBN 473).

The reason Hume believes that virtue is so intricately connected to pride traces back to his account of the virtues. The virtues are durable or constant principles of mind that produce a pleasing sensation in the person considering them; when those virtues are one’s *own* qualities of mind, they will, when contemplated, produce the double relation of ideas and impressions requisite to the production of pride. One’s virtues are model causes of pride insofar as they are “related to self, and produce a pleasure or uneasiness separate from the passion” (T 2.1.7.1; SBN 294–95). The connection between virtue and pride is so strong, Hume argues, that we can understand virtue to be “equivalent” to the power of producing pride (when the virtue is possessed by ourselves) or love (when the virtue is possessed by another):

[S]ince every quality in ourselves or others, which gives pleasure, always causes pride or love; as every one, that produces uneasiness excites humility or hatred: It follows, that these two particulars are to be consider’d as equivalent, with regard to our mental qualities, *virtue* and the power of producing love or pride, *vice* and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge of the one by the other; and may pronounce any *quality* of the mind virtuous, which causes love or pride; and any one vicious, which causes hatred or humility. (T 3.3.1.2; SBN 574)

Noting this tight connection between virtue and the power of producing pride, Hume says “nothing operates more strongly” on pride and humility than the “good and bad qualities of our actions and manner” (T 2.1.5.2; SBN 285).⁸

Given this causal connection between virtue and pride, we can now see how Hume might support his *Enquiry* claim that only the virtuous agent is able to

take pride-in-virtue. Possession of virtue enables a person to enjoy her character; the result is that the pride she takes in her character then serves to amplify her desire to be virtuous. While the sentiment of pride cannot motivate directly, it motivates indirectly by giving “new force to our desire or volition, joy or hope” (T 2.3.9.4; SBN 439). The virtuous agent *is* motivated, albeit indirectly, by pride and the prospect of continued “inward peace of mind” (EPM 9.23; SBN 283) and enjoyment of a character with herself.

Those who are not so motivated, nonetheless, may find themselves generally led towards virtue. For instance, they may be moved by a concern for justice *most* of the time and so treat the rules of justice, as the knave does, as “good general rule[s]” (EPM 9.22; SBN 283). However, because pride does not serve to amplify their original motive(s) to justice, they often find themselves lacking a sufficiently forceful motive to be just, as in instances where it looks as if violations of the rules of justice would promote their interests. Their actions, thus, do not reflect an inviolable commitment to the rules of justice, and lacking the virtue of justice, they are unable to take pride in their virtue. They have, in consequence, lost one motive to virtue, the pride that serves to amplify whatever motive originally led them to follow the rules of justice most of the time. This does not mean that they have no motive whatsoever to act justly, only that they have lost the motive that leads them to treat the rules of justice as inviolable.⁹

The desire for pride-in-virtue functions as a moral motive by amplifying original motives which, on their own, are too weak. Hume scholarship has long recognized in Hume’s theory of justice the need for a moral motive to play this kind of a role. For instance, when discussing the motive to justice, John Bricke emphasizes the need for “specifically moral desires” to fill in the gaps and ensure inviolable adherence to the rules of justice even amongst those subject to akratic failures.

Without the introduction of independent—and independently compelling—sources of motivation, akratic co-operaters must, with increasing frequency, fail to comply. Introduction of specifically moral desires provides, however, just the sort of independent source of additional motivation that is needed. If equipped with an independent, because impartial, desire to do what justice demands, an otherwise akratic co-operator—akratic so far as his narrowly interested concerns go—has additional reason, reason that may well prove to be efficacious, to conform to the convention’s rules.¹⁰

A moral motive is clearly needed to amplify our non-moral ones; however, standard interpretations of the moral motive offer a motive that is too weak to play this role. Bricke’s own suggestion is that the extra moral motivation has, at its basis, moral approval generated from a moral point of view characterized by its impartiality, a factor Bricke believes to be the essential difference between moral motives and

non-moral motives. But can the move to an impartial viewpoint really function as Bricke hopes? Rachel Cohon seems correct in expressing skepticism that the move to the moral point of view and, in her words, the corresponding prospect of moral approval that must motivate such a move can generate a desire “sufficiently strong to move us to act in a way that will give us that pleasure, especially when there are personal costs to the behavior.”¹¹ I agree with Cohon that the prospect of moral approval on its own does not seem to provide a motive that can live up to this challenge. However, if the desire for pride-in-virtue amplifies already existing motives, then we have a moral motive sufficiently strong to offset the personal costs acting virtuously incurs, a motive seen to be invaluable to all but the knave.

Of course, the motive of pride-in-virtue is sufficiently strong only to the extent we have reason to believe not only that the virtuous *can* develop pride-in-virtue but also that they *will* develop pride-in-virtue. That is, for the desire for pride-in-virtue to function as a sufficiently strong moral motive, the agent must believe that virtue reliably produces pride, and that the virtuous will, in fact, feel pleasure and self-satisfaction in her possession of the virtues. Reliability is essential to the production of this belief: if motives were not reliably connected to their outcomes, it is difficult to see how they could function as motives given the Humean framework in which our will exerts itself only when an action promises to produce pleasure or lead to an avoidance of pain (T 2.3.9.7; SBN 439). This means that in order to be motivated, an agent must, at the very least, believe that her actions will result in pleasure (or the avoidance of pain). If reflecting on one’s own virtue did not reliably produce pride, then it is unreasonable to think that the prospect of pride-in-virtue could motivate. Certainly, it would be implausible to claim that it could serve as a motive sufficiently strong to lead us to forego the immediate pleasures to be had by vice (such as the pleasures of toys and gewgaws) for the sake of virtue.

It is, thus, essential to the Pride-in-Virtue View that virtue reliably produces pride. On this point, we might have some real concerns. Many interpreters of Hume’s theory of pride have emphasized the limitations that Hume’s technical account of the production of pride places on what kinds of things we are justified in taking pride in and when we can do so. A consequence of this view is that Hume’s theory of pride itself carries with it a contingency that threatens virtue’s capacity to reliably cause pride.

In what follows, I explore the two aspects in Hume’s theory of pride that appear to give rise to this high degree of contingency: Hume’s peculiarity requirement and his view of the social dependency of pride. These are the features of his theory of pride that many interpreters have argued make pride unstable, context-dependent, and highly contingent.¹² However, none of these interpreters have considered in detail how these features play out specifically for the Pride-in-Virtue View. As I will argue, while these two aspects of Hume’s theory of pride threaten contingency, understanding how they play out in the production of pride-in-virtue shows

these threats to be merely apparent. The result is that Hume's theory of pride is consistent with his claim that virtue reliably produces pride.

Peculiarity: Required or Optional?

The peculiarity requirement is a well-known and much discussed aspect of Hume's theory of pride. It is presented straightforwardly in Hume's discussion of the limitations of the system of pride, where he writes that causes of pride must be "peculiar to ourselves, or at least common to us with a few persons" in order to produce a pride that is well-grounded (T 2.1.6.4; SBN 291–92).¹³ The peculiarity requirement also speaks to our ordinary understanding of pride and the circumstances in which we think it is warranted: we think our pride is well-grounded when we take pride in things that are special and distinctive, that set us apart from others. Most of us have had the experience of taking pride in a given accomplishment only to feel that pride deflated when we realize that others around us have accomplished the same thing, and so we recognize that our pride lacks warrant. However, if peculiarity is a *requirement* of pride, then this places significant limitations upon what we can justifiably take pride in. Many have argued that this is indeed the case, and that it leaves Hume with a context-dependent, highly contingent view of pride. Donald Ainslie, for instance, discusses this implication with respect to the development of pride in one's nationality, noting that the peculiarity requirement entails that "how we think of ourselves" will vary depending on "who we are surrounded by."¹⁴ Taking this observation one step further, Michael Gill worries that this context-dependency infects Hume's theory of pride with a radical form of contingency; the stability of my pride will be threatened by the possibility that I could come to think that the cause of my pride is common.¹⁵

The context-dependency and consequent instability of pride brought about by the peculiarity requirement generates significant problems for the thesis that virtue will reliably produce pride. The peculiarity requirement entails that one can take pride in a beautiful house only if its beauty stands out amongst neighboring houses; it likewise entails that I can only take pride in my character when I (and others) think I am uncommon in my possession of virtue, when I stand out against people around me. In other words, the peculiarity requirement makes pride-in-virtue contingent upon comparative judgments that establish peculiarity. In the case of virtue, as Gill notes, the peculiarity requirement entails that "I possess virtue only when I think I possess a certain pleasant quality to a greater extent than most."¹⁶ If the peculiarity requirement holds in the case of virtue, then a desire for pride-in-virtue cannot serve as a reliable motive to virtue, for the peculiarity requirement makes it highly contingent whether or not developing virtue will in fact produce pride-in-virtue. To answer this objection we must explore in more detail the scope of and justification for the peculiarity requirement.

As we have seen, Hume lays out the peculiarity requirement in his discussion of the “limitations to the general system” of pride, which holds “*that all agreeable objects, related to ourselves, by an association of ideas and of impressions, produce pride, and disagreeable ones, humility*” (T 2.1.6.1; SBN 290). The specific limitations he wants to explore are limitations on the range of “agreeable objects” that can serve as causes of pride. His suggestion here is that not all objects that cause pleasure and are related to us are *actual* sources of pride. Hume’s proposed limitations, of which there are five, are meant to narrow the playing field. In addition to being both agreeable and related to ourselves, the object must be (1) *closely* related to ourselves; (2) *peculiar* to ourselves; (3) *discernibly* and *obviously* agreeable; and (4) related to us for a *durable* and *constant* period of time. Finally, (5) all of the operations of pride and its object fall under the influence of *general rules* (T 2.1.6; SBN 290–92).

Hume illustrates his second limitation, the peculiarity requirement, through consideration of the good of “health.” Health, he writes, is an object that gives us a “very sensible satisfaction” (especially after we have been sick), yet it is “seldom” an object of pride “because ’tis shar’d with such vast numbers” (T 2.1.6.4; SBN 291–92). Further reference to the peculiarity requirement arises in his discussion of contempt. Contempt, Hume argues, contains a “mixture of pride” that arises “from a tacit comparison of the person contemn’d” (T 2.2.10.3; SBN 390). His idea is that when we are faced with the bad qualities of another, we compare that person to ourselves. When we find that we are superior to the other in virtue of lacking the bad qualities in question, we develop both pride in our own qualities and contempt for the other person. Hume notes that these passions are thus contingent on the points of view involved and the peculiar comparisons made: “in changing the point of view, tho’ the object may remain the same, its proportion to ourselves entirely alters; which is the cause of an alteration in the passions. These passions, therefore, arise from our observing the proportion; that is, from a comparison” (T 2.2.10.3; SBN 390).¹⁷

While there is much that is plausible about the peculiarity requirement, there is also good reason to explore the extent to which Hume is really committed to it. Specifically, we ought to consider whether, on Hume’s account, peculiarity is really a *requirement* of pride, as his discussion at T 2.1.6.5 (SBN 292) suggests, or whether it is something that *enhances* pride, as his more general discussion of our tendency to judge objects by comparison at T 2.2.8.8 (SBN 375) suggests. There is good evidence supporting the latter reading, which holds peculiarity to be an enhancing, yet not requisite, quality of causes of pride. A thorough analysis of Hume’s writings shows that, despite his remarks in T 2.1.6 (SBN 290–94), Hume himself treats peculiarity as an optional feature of pride, a feature which is sometimes helpful to determine an object’s value but not itself a contributing factor to that object’s value and potential to be a cause of pride.

Hume’s presentation of the peculiarity requirement is as follows:

The second limitation is, that the agreeable or disagreeable object be . . . peculiar to ourselves, or at least common to us with a few persons. 'Tis a quality observable in human nature . . . that every thing, which is often presented, and to which we have been long accustom'd, loses its value in our eyes, and is in a little time despis'd and neglected. We likewise judge of objects more from comparison than from their real and intrinsic merit; and where we cannot by some contrast enhance their value, we are apt to overlook even what is essentially good in them. These qualities of the mind have an effect upon joy as well as pride; and 'tis remarkable, that goods, which are common to all mankind, and have become more familiar to us by custom, give us little satisfaction; tho' perhaps of a more excellent kind, than those on which, for their singularity, we set a much higher value. But tho' this circumstance operates on both these passions, it has a much greater influence on vanity. We are rejoic'd for many goods, which, on account of their frequency, give us no pride. Health, when it returns after a long absence, affords us a very sensible satisfaction; but is seldom regarded as a subject of vanity, because 'tis shar'd with such vast numbers. (T 2.1.6.4; SBN 291–92)

The first thing we ought to notice in this passage is the point Hume makes immediately after formally presenting the second limitation, which is that the peculiarity requirement reflects our tendency to become accustomed to and increasingly uninterested in things that are presented with frequency. This tendency, Hume then asserts, is similar to our tendency to judge objects by comparison. It is thus reasonable to see the peculiarity requirement as having its roots in our tendency to judge objects by comparison.

Hume attributes this tendency to the fact that we are governed by sentiments and opinions rather than reason: “So little are men govern'd by reason in their sentiments and opinions, that they always judge more of objects by comparison than from their intrinsic worth and value” (T 2.2.8.2; SBN 372). If reason were in control, the suggestion seems to be, then we would judge things as they truly are: if an object had worthy qualities, we would always recognize it as worthy. But reason is not in control, and as a result, we are swayed by circumstantial factors when we judge an object's worth. Once we become “accustom'd” to it, even if the object is in fact worthy of our esteem, we may not esteem it and may instead judge it as equal to “what is defective and ill” (T 2.2.8.2; SBN 372). In acknowledging that an object may be “really esteemable,” yet not judged as such, Hume allows that the worth of an object does not depend entirely on our approval of it. His discussion also suggests that we can become aware of the discrepancy between the comparative judgments we make of an object and the judgments we make of its true or intrinsic worth. These points together suggest that while comparative judgments

may be helpful to identify or enhance an object's value, they are not requisite, for an object's worth can be ascertained independently of them.

In his discussion of the requirements of pride, Hume claims that pride depends on comparative judgments and particularly so, given that in the production of pride, there are two objects that are being judged: "the *cause* or that object which produces pleasure; and self, which is the real object of the passion" (T 2.1.6.5; SBN 292). At least one of these objects, he argues, must stand out: "where neither of them have any singularity, the passion must be more weaken'd upon that account, than a passion, which has only one object. Upon comparing ourselves with others, as we are every moment apt to do, we find we are not in the least distinguish'd; and upon comparing the object we possess, we discover still the same unlucky circumstance. By two comparisons so disadvantageous the passion must be entirely destroy'd" (T 2.1.6.5; SBN 292).

Despite these admittedly strong statements in support of the peculiarity requirement, Hume proceeds in the rest of the *Treatise* to all but ignore it. Not one of his seven experiments detailing the formation of pride, humility, love, and hate via the double relation of ideas and impressions makes any mention of the peculiarity requirement. Moreover, in T 2.1.8.5 (SBN 300–01), Hume starts to refer repeatedly to the qualities of pride-producing objects as being "useful, beautiful, *or* surprising" (my emphasis).¹⁸ By Book 3, Hume seems to have completely abandoned, if not repudiated, the peculiarity requirement: "A man of sense and merit is pleased with himself, *independent of all foreign considerations*. But a fool must always find some person, that is more foolish, in order to keep himself in good humour with his own parts and understanding" (T 3.3.2.7; SBN 596).¹⁹ This emphasis on the need to establish a non-comparative basis for pride in one's virtue is consistent with his contention that virtue *must* cause pride in its possessor. Virtue and vice, he writes, "must *necessarily* be place'd either in ourselves or others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore *must* give rise to one of these four passions [pride and humility; love and hatred]" (T 3.1.2.5; SBN 473, my emphasis).

These considerations suggest that comparative judgments are *not* requirements of pride and, more specifically, are not essential to the pride one takes in virtue. While the recognition that the beauty of our house or the specific features of our nationality are rare or uncommon might help us to ascertain the value of these possible causes of pride, establishing peculiarity is not necessary in the case of virtue, whose value is apparent to anyone who considers the matter. Because peculiarity is not a requirement of taking pride-in-virtue, this potential source of contingency is removed.

Unfortunately, the peculiarity requirement is not the only threat to virtue's reliable production of pride: there remains to be addressed the social dependency of pride, which stands as a second possible source of contingency. Let us now turn to consideration of this concern.

The Socially Dependent Nature of Pride

While the peculiarity requirement was a supposed requirement on causes of pride and so easily removed upon the realization that peculiarity itself does not always contribute to our assessment of the value of an object, the claim that pride is socially dependent is more deeply rooted in Hume's conception of pride and so poses a greater threat. According to Hume, we depend largely upon the approval of others in order to feel pride; the approval of others is an important component of Hume's explanation of how we come to feel pride. How could this *not* entail that it is highly contingent whether or not we will feel pride in any given case? This concern is particularly acute for Hume, who recognizes that a person's pride can lead others to hate her and who notes the importance of keeping one's pride well-concealed. Baier worries that the social dependency of pride "makes pride vulnerable to the contempt of others, and also to their mere refusal to 'second,' to their indifference or ignoring of the proud person's implicit appeal for reassurance."²⁰ This vulnerability, she argues, makes pride inherently unstable and threatens its capacity to be self-sustaining.²¹ Yet, as we have seen, it is essential that pride-in-virtue be stable in order to be motivating. To maintain that virtue reliably produces pride in its possessor, we must be able to show that the social dependency of pride does not function as a source of high contingency or to show that pride-in-virtue, if not *self*-sustaining, is nonetheless sustained through regular interactions with others. I argue that acknowledging the social dependency of pride does not leave Hume with a theory that makes whether an agent can develop pride-in-virtue highly contingent on the approval of others. To see why, we must examine in detail pride's social dependency and examine where the approval of others enters into the production of pride.

Hume believes that pride depends on the approval of others and so is socially determined: "Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others" (T 2.1.11.1; SBN 316). Hume also says that it is difficult to take pride in our characters unless others approve of them, and we are for this reason led to seek out the approval of others: "[O]ur regard to a character with others seems to arise only from a care of preserving a character with ourselves; and in order to attain this end, we find it necessary to prop our tottering judgment on the correspondent approbation of mankind" (EPM 9.11; SBN 276). We are in a situation in which we view ourselves and gauge our own merit through the eyes of others: "By our continual and earnest pursuit of a character, a name, a reputation in the world, we bring our own deportment and conduct frequently in review, and consider how they appear in the eyes of those, who approach and regard us" (EPM 9.10; SBN 276). These passages clearly express Hume's belief that the development of

pride depends significantly upon obtaining the approval of others: to feel pride, it seems, we must look good not just to ourselves but also to others.

This basic social dependency threatens the stability of our pride: if pride-in-virtue is produced largely through consultation of how I appear to others, can I really count on virtue's power to produce pride-in-virtue? This threat is exacerbated by what is involved when others second one's pride: others must affirm the pride we take in ourselves. They must see us in the same manner as we see ourselves. To expect that this "correspondent approbation" will occur regularly seems optimistic at best, particularly given Hume's observation that pride is as capable of generating hate as it is of generating love in an agent considering the pride of another (T 3.3.2.17; SBN 601–02).

Common experience teaches us that when we look to others for approval, we often find that approval lacking, at least in the degree to which we seek it, in which case we begin to feel bad and to think poorly of ourselves. This observation drives Rousseau's analysis of the destructive nature our pride ("amour-propre") can take; Rousseau believes the destructive nature of pride results directly from pride's social dependency. The social dependency of our pride, he argues, is "the source of emulation, rivalries and jealousy" and spurs "dissensions, enmity, and hate" (*Emile* 4, 214–15).²² Because it teaches us to live in the eyes of others, it is ultimately "what makes [us] essentially wicked" (*Emile* 4, 214).

Rousseau paints a dramatic, yet not at all implausible picture of what likely happens when our pride depends on the affirmations of others. When our pride depends on others, it depends on the "tottering judgments" of others, judgments that seem unlikely to correspond to the judgments we make of ourselves. In contrast, Hume for the most part expresses optimism about what follows from our social dependency. As we have seen, not only does Hume believe it is *possible* to secure the love and approval of others, he thinks our continued need to do so can and ought to lead us into positive relations with others, governed by virtue and absent envy and hatred. Rather than spin us on a destructive path, the need to secure the approval of others makes us good.

Essential to the success of Hume's vision of the positive ways in which a desire for pride can function is that others do not make comparisons when they consider the pride-seeking individual. If those to whom we look for affirmation could not help but compare their situation to ours, then it seems unlikely they would give us the affirmation we require. Our desire for approbation would be frustrated.²³ This tendency towards comparison, however, is largely absent from Hume's account of the love and approval essential to pride.²⁴ Hume stresses that the opinions of others are communicated via sympathy rather than comparison: through sympathy, we simply "receive by communications [other's] inclinations and sentiments" (T 2.1.11.2; SBN 316).

But why *do not* others make comparisons when considering the pride-seeking individual? After all, we all have the experience of judging things frequently by comparison, and Hume does believe there exists, as part of our psychology, a principle of comparison that can interfere with the sympathetic sharing of feelings. This principle of comparison, which, following Gerald Postema, I will call “reversal-comparison,”²⁵ works in the opposite direction of sympathy: whereas sympathy operates to transfer the feelings of one to another, comparison reverses these feelings, thus generating “contrary sensations in the beholder, from those which are felt by the person, whom he considers” (T 2.2.8.9; SBN 375–76). It is essential to pride-in-virtue’s success as a motive that reversal-comparison does not interfere with the development of pride. We thus need, first, to examine Hume’s understanding of how the approval of others enters into the production of pride and, second, to examine his account of the circumstances under which reversal-comparison, rather than sympathy, operates.

Hume writes that pride is a “passion plac’d betwixt two ideas,” the first of which serves as the *cause* of pride, and the second of which is the *object* of pride (T 2.1.2.4; SBN 278). The cause of pride, he writes, is distinguished both by its quality, by which he means its capacity to produce pleasure, and its subject, or that in which the quality inheres (T 2.1.2.6; SBN 279). In analyzing the pride a homeowner can take in her beautiful home, Hume specifies that “the quality is the beauty, and the subject is the house” (T 2.1.2.6; SBN 279). The reason the homeowner can take pride in her house is because both the quality and the subject are of the right kind: beauty produces pleasure in those considering it (and moreover, is something possessed by only a few), while the house stands in a close relation to its owner.²⁶ Were either the quality or the subject to fall short in these respects, the house would not generate pride: “Beauty, consider’d merely as such, unless plac’d upon something related to us, never produces any pride or vanity; and the strongest relation alone, without beauty, or something else in its place, has as little influence on that passion” (T 2.1.2.6; SBN 279).

Hume believes we can easily separate the quality from its subjects, leading interpreters such as Donald Davidson, James King, and Rachel Cohon to emphasize the importance of a cause having a pleasing quality independently of its subject’s relation to the agent.²⁷ Cohon, for instance, writes:

The causes of pride, humility, love, and hatred are items with qualities that also produce a pleasure or uneasiness quite independent of the indirect passions themselves; for example, a beautiful suit of clothes produces aesthetic pleasure in an observer, and an ugly one displeasure. This pleasure or uneasiness would occur whether or not the item occasioned any pride, humility, love, or hatred, and even if it were not appropriately related to the self or any other person (as when the suit of clothes hangs in a shop).²⁸

Hume's discussion of the kinds of things that can generate pride affirms this observation: "every valuable quality" of the mind and body can serve as a cause of pride, provided it inheres in subjects appropriately related to the agent (T 2.1.2.5; SBN 278–79).

These are the components of the first idea; let us now consider the second idea to which pride stands in relation, which, Hume writes, is produced by pride and serves as its object (T 2.1.2.4; SBN 278). This, of course, is nothing other than our idea of our self, "or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness" (T 2.1.2.2; SBN 277). The idea of the self must come into play only as the *object* of pride: we will always be proud of ourselves in virtue of the self's relation to the pleasant subject (that is, the cause), it is on the self that "the view always fixes when we are actuated by [pride]" (T 2.1.2.2; SBN 277). While the idea of the self stands as the object of pride and not the cause, it plays, nonetheless, an integral role in pride: "When self enters not into the consideration, there is no room either for pride or humility [its opposite]" (T 2.1.2.2; SBN 333). The idea of the self does not cause the passion of pride, yet it must be generated and so, present, in order for the passion to have an object to fix on; it is, in Hume's words, the "ultimate and final" object of pride (T 2.1.2.4; SBN 278).

Readers will notice that, although Hume claimed that pride requires the approval of others earlier in the *Treatise* (T 2.1.11.1; SBN 316), his official presentation of pride in T 2.1.2 (SBN 277–79) does not explain how the approval of others enters into the production of pride. Since Hume stresses in his earlier remarks that the approval of others is essential to determining the influence of the cause, we must look to others' opinions when we are determining the influence of the cause. As we have seen, Hume believes that, when considering whether a particular cause can be a source of pride, two components are essential: the cause must be related to the agent, and it must have a distinctive quality. Since the approval of others is not necessary in order to ascertain the relation between the cause and the agent, it must come into play when determining whether the cause has the distinctive quality that can generate pride. We thus can hypothesize that we look to others for affirmation that this cause is worthy of our pride.²⁹

The causes of pride thus require social affirmation of their value: only when others affirm the quality of a cause as producing pleasure independently of its relation to its possessor can the possessor develop pride in that quality. This explains Hume's emphasis on how custom and practice, which reflect widely held attitudes towards particular causes of pride, enable us to find agreement upon "the just value of every thing" and "contribute to the easy production of the passions" (T 2.1.6.10; SBN 294), a point Hume also makes in his essay "The Sceptic," where he emphasizes that "value" is a quality objects acquire from the responses of others.³⁰

This interpretation affirms and justifies Hume's insistence on separating the quality from the subject when reflecting on the possible causes of pride. As we

have seen, Hume believes it is important to consider the quality of the cause independently of its subject.³¹ The point that Hume seems to make is that we cannot take pride in something simply because of our relation to it (T 2.1.2.6; SBN 279); rather, in order for us to take pride in something, it must be valuable on its own. When others second the pleasure we take in considering it, they affirm its value.

This interpretation also helps to explain Hume's distinction between vicious and virtuous pride. When we do not obtain the affirmation of others, we run the risk of taking pride in something that lacks this distinctive quality and so develop what Hume calls an "over-weening conceit of our own merit," something which is "vicious and disagreeable" (T 3.3.2.8; SBN 596). On the other hand, when we do attain the affirmation of others and become secure in our belief that the cause in question possesses value, we develop a pride that is praiseworthy, for "nothing can be more laudable, than to have a value for ourselves, where we really have qualities that are valuable" (T 3.3.2.8; SBN 596).

Hume believes this affirmation is communicated through sympathy, writing that "in order to account for this phaenomenon [of the social dependency of pride] 'twill be necessary to take some compass, and first explain the nature of *sympathy*" (T 2.1.11.1; SBN 316). Indeed, it is in the context of explaining how others "second" our affirmation of the causes of pride that sympathy makes its first appearance in the *Treatise*. Sympathy enables us to feel the pleasure of another by transmitting the idea of another's pleasure and by converting the idea to an impression of pleasure, a "conversion which arises from the relation of objects to ourself" (T 2.1.11.9; SBN 320). It is from this new impression of pleasure, one that is produced by the pleasing quality of the cause and transmitted through sympathy, that we come to feel "a pride or self-satisfaction" upon seeing its relation to our selves (T 2.1.11.9; SBN 320).

Having identified the social determinants of pride and explained how the approval of others is essential to the production of pride, we can turn to the original objection and consider whether or not agents can reliably secure the approval requisite to the development of well-grounded pride. The obvious question is: why is Hume so confident that sympathy will convert the pleasure of one agent into a similar pleasure in the spectator, and that reversal-comparison will not generate a reversal of these feelings and so cause pain rather than pleasure in the spectator? The result of such a conversion would be the same phenomenon that, Rousseau believes, likely results from our need to seek the affirmation of others: a situation of envy, hatred, and, in particular, unfulfilled desires to develop pride.

An explanation can be found in Hume's discussion of when reversal-comparison, as opposed to sympathy, operates. Hume does not give an explicit account of when and why reversal-comparison operates, but his description of the phenomenon of reversal-comparison suggests that it intervenes when a sense of one's self plays a prominent role in the production of one's feelings. When our sense

of self is front and center, it is inevitable that we will compare another's feelings to our own. This comparison, Hume argues, generates a reversal of the other's feelings: "the direct survey of another's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure, and therefore produces pain when *compar'd with our own*" (T 2.2.8.10; SBN 376, my emphasis).³² What seems to happen in the case of reversal-comparison, which does not happen in the case of sympathy, is that a view of our own condition is constantly in perspective, making it the case that thoughts about the self affect the content of the resulting passion. This prominent sense of self, as Baier notes, creates a "blurriness of our vision of another's state."³³ It is the view of our own condition that blocks the otherwise natural transference of feelings via sympathy and prompts the operations of reversal-comparison. In contrast, in order for sympathy to operate, the self must not be in focus. Hume says, "in sympathy, our own person is not the object of any passion, nor is there any thing, that fixes our attention on ourselves" (T 2.2.2.17; SBN 340). Where the self is prominent, it interferes with the communication of another's feelings, creating the reversals distinctive of reversal-comparison.

We thus have good reason to believe that reversal-comparison occurs when a view of one's self plays a prominent role in the transference of feelings.³⁴ Yet, if this is so, then it looks as though we are farther than ever from understanding Hume's claim that sympathy, rather than reversal-comparison, operates in the production of pride. This is because, as we have seen, the object of pride is, and must be, the self. If reversal-comparison operates whenever thoughts about the self come into the development of our feelings in a prominent way, then it seems inevitable that those considering the pride-seeking individual will likewise be focusing on their selves, in which case reversal-comparison would prevent them from affirming the pride-seeking individual.

This reading, however, fails to appreciate exactly where it is that sympathy (or comparison) operates in the production of pride. On Hume's view, pride-seeking individuals seek out the love and approval of others not to affirm their *selves*, but to affirm the pleasing quality of the *cause* in question (for instance, their generosity).³⁵ The "seconding" essential to the production of pride is a seconding of the pleasing quality of a particular *cause*; and, as Hume was careful to insist, the self serves only as the *object*, and not the *cause* of pride (T 2.1.2.2; SBN 333). What we need from others is their approval of the *causes* of pride; it is, thus, only indirectly, through the association of ideas, that their approval of the causes of our pride influences our judgments about our selves.³⁶ We do feel self-satisfaction in virtue of being the possessor of pride-generating qualities (indeed, this is just what is it to feel pride), but it is a double relation of ideas and impressions that ultimately produces this self-satisfaction, not sympathy *or* reversal-comparison. These mechanisms come into play only in the creation of the impressions of pleasure that arise from consideration of the quality of the cause, impressions which are essential to the production of—yet nonetheless distinct from—the impression of pleasure that is pride.³⁷

If this is correct, and we need others to approve of the qualities we possess rather than our selves, then there is no reason to assume that their approval will usually or often be blocked by reversal-comparison. If pride had the self as both its cause and its object, then I would need others to approve the pleasant nature of my self. It is natural to expect that in considering the pleasure I take in my self, you will be led by principles of association to think about your self. This begets the likely possibility that your view of your self would prevent you from affirming the pleasing quality of my self and that, through reversal-comparison, you would feel pain when considering the pleasure I take in my self. However, because pride cannot have the self as its cause and must, instead, have specific qualities as its cause, an alternative picture of the proud person's need for the affirmation of others is possible: I need others to approve the qualities that I possess, such as my generosity, rather than my self. Since considerations of my self are removed from the scenario, there is no reason to assume that when you consider my generosity, you will be led to think of your self. Rather, you will be able to consider the value of my generosity and to affirm the pleasure it generates within me.

There is, thus, no reason to think that reversal-comparison, rather than sympathy, will be the dominant mechanism in those who have to affirm the pride-seeking person. While reversal-comparison has the potential to interfere with the production of pride,³⁸ we can now make sense of Hume's claim that sympathy will guide the regular course of pride. We also, thereby, eliminate the threat of contingency posed by the whims of others: we value and require others to approve of that in which we take pride, but because we do not require others to approve of our selves, we do not have to worry about comparison interfering with their approval. Whether or not an agent is able to take pride in her character is still socially dependent, and so is still contingent, but it is contingent in the weak sense in which all of Hume's theory is contingent; it is contingent on principles of human nature and subject to change if the principles of human nature were to change dramatically. Assuming Hume is correct in his view of human nature, we can be assured that the virtuous will develop pride-in-virtue. The prospect of developing pride-in-virtue, thus, can serve the function Hume attributes to it: it consistently amplifies our motives and presents an invaluable benefit that outweighs the personal sacrifices we often have to make in the name of virtue.

Conclusion

Having removed the threat of a high degree of contingency from the development of pride-in-virtue, we can take seriously Hume's contention that the virtuous *do* develop pride in their virtuous traits and that this pride serves as an indirect, moral motive to virtue. This view elevates pride: rather than being a potentially corrupting by-product of healthier passions, pride is, instead, both praiseworthy

and virtuous. This elevation of pride might strike many as wrong-headed, an ill-advised invitation for individuals to develop conceit, a concern that leads Baier to characterize Hume's talk of virtue and pride as appealing to vanity and as encouraging the exhibition of moral self-conceit.³⁹ We are now in a position to see that this concern is mistaken, and to affirm Hume's belief that there is something genuinely admirable about the virtuous person's enjoyment of her character.

We tend to think of pride-seeking individuals as people driven by an exclusive need to feel good about themselves and motivated by a desire to be loved more than anyone else. We can all agree there is nothing praiseworthy about individuals so motivated. However, Hume's account of pride-motivated individuals departs from this understanding in important respects.

On Hume's account, pride itself can never motivate directly, but rather, must rely on some other motive by amplifying it and giving it new force (T 2.3.9.4; SBN 439). This suggests from the start that even the pride-motivated individual can never be motivated exclusively by pride, a point well-supported by Hume's account of the structure of pride. The pride-motivated individual seeks to possess certain qualities, but in order for her to take pride in possessing those qualities, she has to see those qualities as themselves being pleasing, and so be motivated to pursue them independently of their capacity to produce pride.⁴⁰ She must be confident that those qualities are valuable on their own before she can take pride in them. And, as we have seen, viewing the qualities as distinct from (although related to) her self is essential to the determination of the qualities as pleasing. In order to attain the affirmation of others, one's self must not play a prominent role: this is so because where the self is the object of one's attention, reversal-comparison will operate in those considering the agent. Because, in the end, what is most important for obtaining the approval of others are the *qualities* one possesses and not one's self, the desire to take pride in one's virtuous traits can serve as an amplifying motive to virtue, for it motivates people to develop qualities that will be deemed, by oneself *and* others, pleasing and worthy of pride.

This analysis also provides us with the material to differentiate cases where one's pride generates approval in others from those cases where one's pride generates hate, envy, or contempt. The latter cases arise when pride is either not well-concealed or not well-grounded; in such cases, Hume writes, comparisons prevent us from approving of an agent's pride (T 3.3.2.7; SBN 596; T 3.3.2.17; SBN 601–02). My analysis shows that one of the things going wrong in these cases is that agents are focusing too much on their selves and not enough on the qualities they have. When pride is not well-grounded, one lacks those praiseworthy qualities; when pride is not well-concealed, one's elevated sense of self, or "haughtiness" (T 3.3.2.17; SBN 601–02), displaces the praiseworthy qualities. In neither of these cases will an agent attain the approval of others; as a result, she will not be able to develop pride-in-virtue. We thus see that Hume's account of pride-in-virtue and of

how the desire for pride-in-virtue can serve as a motive to virtue not only avoids the worries that crop up because of the social dependency of people's pride but also demonstrates how social dependency operates as a mechanism to ensure that agents are able to develop pride-in-virtue only when they have qualities worthy of pride (such as, virtuous character traits) and when they understand that what is most important is the possession of these qualities, as opposed to some elevated sense of self. Surely, this is something to be proud of.

NOTES

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1 See James King, "Pride and Hume's Sensible Knave," *Hume Studies* 25 (1999): 123–38 for a defence and further elaboration of this claim.

2 References to the *Treatise* are to David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), abbreviated "T" in the text and cited by Book, part, section, and paragraph number, followed by the page number in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), abbreviated "SBN" in the text. References to the *Enquiry* are to David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), abbreviated "EPM" in the text and cited by section and paragraph numbers, followed by page numbers in *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), abbreviated "SBN" in the text.

3 Donald Ainslie, "The Problem of the Natural Self in Hume's Theory of Justice," *Hume Studies* 21 (1995): 289–314; Michael Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 265–66.

4 Annette Baier, "Hume on Resentment," *Hume Studies* 6 (1980): 133–49.

5 While Hume does not himself assign a label or otherwise classify exactly what sort of thing "enjoyment of character" is, he writes that "the *sentiment* of conscious worth, the self-satisfaction proceeding from a review of a man's own conduct and character . . . though the most common of all others, has no proper name in our language" (EPM App. 4; SBN 314–15). Hume goes on, in a footnote, to suggest that this sentiment is pride, although he distinguishes it from pride as "commonly taken in a bad sense" (EPM App. 4n66; SBN 314–15). The pride he has in mind "may be either good or bad, according as it is well or ill founded" (EPM App. 4n66; SBN 314–15). These comments give us good reason to believe that enjoyment of a character, unlike the enjoyment of good health,

involves a state of pride. This interpretation is further warranted by King's compelling arguments establishing that the knave cannot take pride in herself (King, "Pride and Hume's Sensible Knave"). While King himself does not extend his argument in the direction I propose here, the extension follows naturally.

6 Hume does not claim that lack of any one natural virtue threatens the enjoyment of character, as it does with respect to the artificial virtues. This is consistent with Hume's view that most characters are essentially mixed and that it will be rare that any one individual possesses all the natural virtues, in addition to the artificial virtues.

7 Hume lists the qualities at T 2.1.2.5 (SBN 278–79), T 2.1.5.2–3 (SBN 285–86), and T 2.1.11.1 (SBN 316).

8 Hume modifies this claim in his discussion of respect and contempt, where he writes that there are some good qualities (for example, good nature, good humor) that "have a peculiar aptitude to produce love in others, but not *so great* a tendency to excite pride in ourselves" (T 2.2.10.8; SBN 392; my emphasis). Because the good qualities he references are natural virtues, which still have a tendency to excite pride in oneself, even if they may have a greater tendency to produce love in others, this does not change the thrust of the thesis defended here.

9 This interpretation is supported, as well, by Hume's discussion of reputation in the *Treatise*. There, he writes that an interest in reputation increases the "solidity" of other incentives to justice: "There is nothing which touches us more nearly than our reputation, and nothing on which our reputation more depends than our conduct, with relation to the property of others. *For this reason*, every one, who has any regard to his character, or who intends to live on good terms with mankind, must fix an *inviolable* law to himself, never, by any temptation, to be induc'd to violate those principles, which are essential to a man of probity and honour" (T 3.2.2.27; SBN 501; my emphasis). Hume also believes that in some cases, agents who lack virtuous motives hate themselves for it and perform virtuous actions out of self-hatred (T 3.2.1.8; SBN 479). Doing so, however, will still not generate inward piece of mind, for, as Hume notes, actions so motivated only simulate virtue.

10 John Bricke, *Mind and Morality: An Examination of Hume's Moral Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 225.

11 Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality: Feeling and Fabrication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 177.

12 Baier, "Hume on Resentment"; Jane McIntyre, "Hume's Passions: Direct and Indirect," *Hume Studies* 26 (2000): 77–86; Ainslie, "Problem of the Natural Self"; Gill, *British Moralists*.

13 In discussing "well-grounded" pride, the contrast I have in mind is between the emotion an agent experiences when she takes pride in qualities that are truly worthy of pride and the emotion an agent experiences when she takes pride in qualities that are not worthy of pride. Hume describes the latter as "ill-grounded conceit" (T 3.3.2.7; SBN 596).

14 Ainslie, "The Problem of the National Self," 299.

15 Gill, *British Moralists*, 244.

16 Ibid., 249, my emphasis. Another problematic implication of this view is that, if this contingency were to hold in this nature and to this degree, then a desire for pride-in-virtue threatens to become a perversely functioning motive, as what becomes most important is not necessarily that I develop high degrees of virtue, but that I develop higher degrees of virtue than those around me, something that can easily be secured by associating only with vicious people.

17 Hume repeats these remarks on comparison, pride, and contempt in a footnote in the *Enquiry*, where he reminds us that “[a]ll men are equally liable to pain and disease and sickness; and may again recover health and ease. These circumstances, as they make no distinction between one man and another, are no source of pride and humility, regard or contempt” (EPM 6.28n33; SBN 233). See also EPM 6.33n34 (SBN 233).

18 He repeats these qualities twice in this passage. See also T 2.1.9.8 (SBN 307): “beauty, utility, and rarity”; T 2.1.10.2 (SBN 310–11): “useful, beautiful, or surprising.”

19 Baier uses this passage to argue that there are, in Hume’s view, two different forms of pride: the vicious pride characteristic of “conceit” and the virtuous pride characteristic of “self-esteem.” It is only the former sort, she argues, that requires its object to be unique and so, necessarily involves comparison. The latter, “moralized” version of pride is “freed from this restriction” (Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991], 207). According to Baier, it is clear that this is the form of pride that Hume has in mind when he discusses the pride in virtue: “Pride in virtue still requires the verdict that something about one is good of its kind, but that verdict is now less directly based on simple comparison with what other persons have” (Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, 207–08). While I agree with Baier that what she calls “pride proper” does not depend on comparisons, I am hesitant to endorse her further claim that there are two distinct forms of pride. I think the interpretation I offer here provides a more natural reading of the text, namely, that while comparisons are helpful to judging an object’s worth, they are not requisite, and that in the case of virtue, they all but disappear from the picture.

20 Baier, “Hume on Resentment,” 145.

21 Annette Baier, “Master Passions,” in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 403–24.

22 J. J. Rousseau *Emile, or On Education*. trans. Allen Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), noted as *Emile* in the text and cited by section and page number.

23 As Rousseau notes, this is particularly the case when what we are seeking is the love or approval of another. Since, by nature, we love ourselves more than anyone else, when we look to others for affirmation, we will always come in second. Envy will dominate as long as comparisons are being made. See his discussion of *amour-propre* at *Emile* 4, 213–15.

24 Although, as I discuss below, Hume recognizes elsewhere the comparative mechanism and its ability to transform sentiments through comparisons, he seems to think comparison is not going to appear in this instance.

25 Gerald J. Postema, “‘Cemented with Diseased Qualities’: Sympathy and Comparison in Hume’s Moral Psychology,” *Hume Studies* 31 (2005): 249–98, 275.

26 These are, respectively, the second and first limitations Hume places on the causes of pride in T 2.1.6.1–2 (SBN 290–91).

27 Donald Davidson, “Hume’s Cognitive Theory of Pride,” *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976): 744–57; King, “Pride and Hume’s Sensible Knave”; Rachel Cohon, “Hume’s Indirect Passions” in *A Companion to Hume*, ed. Elizabeth Radcliffe (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 159–84.

28 Cohon, “Hume’s Indirect Passions,” 163.

29 Further defence of this view can be found in Postema, “Cemented with Diseased Qualities,” 280.

30 Hume, “The Sceptic,” *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), 171.

31 As James King argues, this ensures that we are not able to take pride in qualities that others do not find valuable (King, “Pride and Hume’s Sensible Knave,” 126–27).

32 There exists some debate over exactly how comparison operates and whether or not it requires a preliminary act of sympathy to transmit the feelings of another, which then become reversed. Baier suggests it does (*Progress of Sentiments*, 150); Postema disagrees and argues that, through (reversal-) comparison, “one’s existing sentiment . . . is simply ‘augmented’” (“Cemented with Diseased Qualities,” 276). On Postema’s account, the reversal that occurs is not a reversal of the feelings of another, but a reversal of what we expect the impact of our feelings will have on those who observe it. These details of the mechanisms of reversal-comparison do not affect my point that through comparison, one’s self is taken to be an object.

33 Baier, *Progress of Sentiments*, 150.

34 Postema agrees: “what is striking in all cases of reversal-comparison, as Hume describes its operation, is that, in contrast with sympathy, the self is not only *operative* but is a very present *object* or focus of the heart’s movement, an essential and consciously represented *term* of the relation from which the sentiment is generated” (“Cemented with Diseased Qualities,” 276).

35 We might wonder whether Hume’s discussion of dignity in his essay “Of The Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature” presents a view of pride that takes the cause of pride to be human nature itself, thus challenging my interpretation that one only takes pride in particular traits rather than in one’s self. Here Hume writes that dignity consists in having “a high notion of his rank and character in the creation” and that the possession of dignity provides its possessor with a motive to live up to this rank and character by acting well (Hume, “Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature,” *Essays*, 81). While Hume’s language here does suggest that he is thinking of valuing oneself qua “human being,” his consequent discussion of how we develop this notion maintains that we construct our understanding of what it means to be a human being through consideration of the traits specific to human nature, which stand in contrast to the traits possessed by animals.

36 While this approval may rely on *contrasting* one object with another, it is possible for others to make this form of comparative judgment without engaging in reversal-comparison.

37 In its suggestion that the approval of others enters into the production of pride insofar as people approve of the causes of pride, this interpretation identifies a distinction between the approval or “seconding” requisite to pride and “esteem.” Esteem, Hume writes, results from a reverberation of passions: “the pleasure, which a rich man receives from his possessions, being thrown upon the beholder, causes a pleasure and esteem, which sentiments again, being perceive’d and sympathiz’d with, encrease the pleasure of the possessor; and being once more reflected, become a new foundation for pleasure and esteem in the beholder” (T 2.2.5.21; SBN 365). This process of reverberation has its origination in the *pleasure* of the possessor—the spectator feels pleasure through sympathy with the possessor, then esteems the possessor on the basis of the pleasure, which leads the possessor to enjoy a “secondary satisfaction or vanity,” which is a “reflection of the original pleasure, which proceeded from himself” (T 2.2.5.21; SBN 365). What seems to be distinctive of the process of this form of *esteem* (but not pride) is that esteem based on possessions results from sympathetic affirmation of the *pleasure* in the possessor. When the possessor is so esteemed, she is able to take pride (the “secondary satisfaction or vanity”) in her pleasure, qua generator of pleasure in the spectator. We can thus see esteem of possessions as a specific case of pride, where the cause of the pride—what is getting seconded by the spectator—is the pleasure one takes in objects. The fact that esteem of rich persons is generated through the seconding of pleasures, however, should not lead us to think that all cases of pride contain the same sort of “reverberation” of pleasures. This would be a clear mistake, as Hume consistently says (in both the *Treatise* and the *Dissertation*) that the opinions of others come into play in determining the distinctive quality of the cause: “Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others” (T 2.1.11.1; SBN 316). The object of approval and seconding is the *quality* itself and not the *pleasure* that the cause generates in the possessor, even if the spectator goes on to sympathize with that pleasure.

38 In his discussion of the shipwreck, Hume considers a case where an individual is actively trying to invoke reversal-comparison and “willingly reap some pleasure” from thinking about “those who are at sea in a storm” (T 3.3.2.5; SBN 594–95). Here he concludes that it is possible for one to activate reversal comparison as long as the idea we are considering is of medium strength: it must be neither so faint that we do not care about it nor so strong that it overshadows our sense of self thereby preventing the self from playing a prominent role. This discussion establishes the possibility that mean-spirited individuals could withhold their affirmation by actively thinking about their selves rather than truly considering the qualities that another takes pleasure in.

39 Annette Baier, “Enquiry Concerning the Principle of Morals: Incomparably the Best?” in *A Companion to Hume*, ed. Elizabeth Radcliffe (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 313–14.

40 She can find some pleasure in her virtuous traits, even absent the approval of others. Yet, if the qualities are genuinely praise-worthy, she will go on to secure the approval of others and so develop the pride and the more stable and robust pleasure that is distinctive of “enjoyment of character.” If the qualities are not genuinely praiseworthy, any pleasure she initially takes in them will be thwarted by the disapproval of others.