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Hume's Natural Determinism of the Will

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HUME'S NATURAL DETERMINISM OF THE WILL

by

Matthew Daniel Cook, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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LIFE

Matthew Daniel Cook, S.J., was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, September 2, 1930.

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CHAPTER I

KNOWLEDGE

I. ASSUMPTIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

The Treatise of Human Nature¹ bears the significant subtitle, "Being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects." Hume found inspiration for this endeavor in the marked success realized in physical science by the introduction of Newtonian experimental method. In contrast, he felt philosophy was only deepening its failure by metaphysical reasonings. Therefore he determined to approach the central problem of philosophy, human nature, with a new outlook. "The only solid foundation we can give to this science itself [the science of man] must be laid on experience and observation."² Moreover, "tho' we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible . . . 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as pre-

¹David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1946). Hereafter the Treatise will be referred to by the letter T.

²T, p. xx.
sumptuous and chimerical."3 Thus experience is the "foundation" of Hume's philosophical outlook, the first point of departure, the last court of appeal.

True to experimental, scientific method, Hume gives us a sort of laboratory test of this principle of experience. "Suppose a person, though endowed with the strongest faculties of reason and reflection, to be brought on a sudden into this world; he would, indeed, immediately observe a continual succession of objects, and one event following another; but he would not be able to discover anything farther."4 It is the "continual succession of objects" on which Hume founds his philosophy.

What are the rules which Hume lays down as governing the use to which the mind puts experience? There seem to be five major assumptions in Hume's epistemology: (1) that experience may be exhaustively analyzed into elements, (2) that every simple idea is the copy of a simple impression, (3) that what is distinguishable is separable, (4) the attraction of association, and (5) philosophical comparison of ideas.5 If his insistence on experience makes Hume's philosophy phenomenological, and it does, his theory

3Ibid., p. xxi.


5This list is copied, with one adaption, from Ralph W. Church, *Hume's Theory of the Understanding* (London, 1935), p.218.
of knowledge makes it logically atomistic. Let us examine the basic tenets of Hume's theory of knowledge.

First, what are the contents of experience? "It has been observed," Hume says, "that nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions; and that all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking fall under this designation." Generically, then, the contents of experience are perceptions. And it is the perceptions themselves that are known and not something else through the perceptions. Moreover, all reality, internal and external, is a matter of perception and experience. Negatively, of course, what is not a matter of perception and experience is not a matter of knowable reality.

Perceptions further "resolve themselves into two distinct classes, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference between these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind." Both are, then, objects of the mind. Their difference in tone or liveliness follows their difference in function. Impressions are roughly the things we feel, the primitive awarenesses and reactions of man. Ideas are instruments of thought. Hume assures us there is little difficulty in understanding the difference between ideas and impressions. "Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling

6Ibid., p. 456.
7Ibid., p. 1.
and thinking." But Hume did not recognize this difference by making ideas and impressions different in kind. He merely assigned them a difference in quality or tone.

Hume goes on to tell us that ideas are copies of impressions. However, to understand how ideas and impressions are related we must distinguish between simple and complex ideas and impressions. For "tho' there is in general a great resemblance between our complex impressions and ideas, yet the rule is not universally true, that they are exact copies of each other." But Hume affirms, "every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it." Thus perceptions are either impressions or ideas, both of which may be simple or complex; simple ideas are exact copies of simple impressions. Once again it is made clear that reality, even mental reality, is immediately dependent on experience, radically on the experience of impressions.

The last statement is true to such an extent that if we doubt the validity of any idea (as, for example, Hume doubts the notion of substance) we have only to ask ourselves whether such an idea "be derived from the impressions of sensation or reflection."
If it is not to be found in either category, the idea is to be rejected as of no philosophical use. Thus all our knowledge of reality is traceable to impressions. Therefore, Hume’s starting point, experience, can be further qualified as sense experience. This is true not because he says all perceptions are sensations. In fact, he includes such spiritual acts as judging and loving in the term perception. But he does not distinguish carefully between spiritual and sensitive faculties and operations. Therefore, he confuses them in practice by treating them univocally and, thus, lays himself open to the charge of being a sensist.

Hume makes the further point that complex ideas can be resolved into simple ideas. "Where-ever the imagination perceives a difference among ideas, it can easily produce a separation." Such a power of the mind is based ultimately on the nature of impressions, of which it is said, "that there are not any two impressions which are perfectly inseparable." In this regard Hume maintains, "that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences." Therefore, experience is a compound of many integral percepts. Reality is atomic, contrary to what vul-

13Ibid., p. 10.
14Ibid.
15Ibid., p. 636. There is a difference of opinion among authors as to the interpretation of this passage. A literal interpretation has been given, following Norman Kemp Smith, The Philosophy of David Hume (London, 1941), p. 558.
gar consciousness might at first attest. But let us review briefly and catch up the thread of Hume's thought.

Thusfar we have considered the components of experience. Hume has argued that perceptions are ultimately traceable to sense impressions which are atomic. The next logical question is how are perceptions conjoined. The general order that exists in man's passive reception of sense experience obviously is not caused by his activity. The order in man's mental experience is, however, the direct result of his own activity. Having, as it were, examined the foundations of experience and found them to be atomic sense impressions, he now addresses himself to an examination of the structure of experience and the relation of impressions and their copies, ideas.

Hume's radical disjointing of experience has been noted and may be summed up in three principles: (1) experience may be exhaustively analyzed into elements, (2) every simple idea is the copy of a simple impression, and (3) what is distinguishable is separable. But obviously our mental experience does not appear disjointed. Rather, both common unstudied understanding and deliberate mental inquiry disclose an orderly marshaling of ideas. Hume prescribes two principles to explain this order: (1) the attraction of association, and (2) philosophical comparison of ideas.

Neither of these principles implies an "absolute" quality in-
herent in the ideas involved, by reason of which they are inter-related. Such would be contrary to Hume's theory of the radical isolation of the events of experience. He teaches that in ordinary perception events are "naturally" conjoined by experience, and in studied mental activity ideas are arbitrarily compared. But each idea is atomic and in no way other-related.

Hume describes the two states of mind in question in treating of relations. "The word RELATION is commonly used in two senses considerably different from each other. Either for that quality, by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination, and the one naturally introduces the other . . . or for that particular circumstance, in which, even upon the arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think it proper to compare them."26 In the former sense the ideas are said to be naturally related; in the latter, philosophically.

In the concept of natural relation we note three factors. The first we have already seen, namely, the radical separability of impressions and consequently of ideas. The second, consonant with the first, is the "liberty of the imagination to transpose and change its ideas."17 As a result of this power we have our notion of a winged steed or a golden mountain. However, freedom of composition would result in a completely casual arrangement of ideas

16T., p. 13.
17Ibid., p. 10.
(contrary to common experience) without "some associating quality, by which one idea naturally introduces another." The attraction of association is the third, and most important, element in the concept of natural relation.

"This uniting principle among ideas is not to be consider'd as an inseparable connexion; for that has been already excluded from the imagination: nor yet are we to conclude, that without it the mind cannot join two ideas: for nothing is more free than that faculty: but we are only to regard it as a gentle force . . ." This gentle force is "a principle of connection between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind." Thus, in spite of the atomic nature of ideas themselves, and the complete freedom of imagination in uniting ideas, nature points out how ideas are to be related by the force of association. It is said to be nature that points because this force "must be resolv'd into original qualities of human nature." So the association of ideas might be referred to as a sort of natural determinism of the mind.

The notion of philosophical relation has the first two ele-

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ep, p. 21.
21 The major types of attraction "from which this association arises, and by which the mind is after this manner convey'd from one idea to another, are three, viz. RESEMBLANCE, CONTIGUITY in time and place, and CAUSE and EFFECT" (T, p. 11).
22 T, p. 13
ments in common with natural relation, namely, the atomic nature of ideas, and the complete freedom of imagination. The distinguishing mark of philosophical relation lies in this, that it is a relation which, "we extend to mean any particular subject of comparison, without connecting principle." 23

Thus, although natural relation has the gentle force of attraction (provoked, as we shall see, by experience) to vouch for the extrinsic connection of two ideas, philosophical relation has no connecting principle, but rests on a comparison of intrinsic qualities of ideas "without connecting principle." Lacking the gentle force of association, which "constitute[s] the connecting factor in the perceptual situation," 24 philosophical relation is able only to compare the intrinsic notes of ideas. Such inquiry might be fruitful for action and science or not. It's usefulness can only be judged by matter-of-fact knowledge. And natural relation, through the factor of association by the gentle force of attraction, assures us of matter-of-fact connection.

The end result of his theory of relation is the preservation of Hume's theory of atomic ideas. For, in natural relation, which founds the operations of common understanding, the ideas are not intrinsically but extrinsically connected by the gentle force of attraction. And, in philosophical relation, which founds deliber-

23Ibid., p. 14.

24Church, p. 13.
ate mental activity, ideas are compared, but not connected. Thus ideas remain atomic even in the orderly progress of experience.

Moreover, as noted above, knowledge of the gentle force of attraction is ultimately based on experience. Hume says that "knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings a priori; but arises entirely from experience." Of course this experience means the history of the remembered past and not the intuition of the immediate perception had in impressions. However, both are rooted in sense experience. Thus, not only all our ideas and impressions, but their relations to one another are dependent on sense experience.

It should be noted in passing that the mental activity of man is founded on sense experience, and that the mind does have the power to abstract an event of experience from its "perceptive situation." But ideas are more than washed out impressions, and abstraction does not insulate ideas from their neighbors. Hume's sensism and atomism are half-truths flowing from his naturalism. Men are not naturally determined machines, or even miniature planetary systems. The most unmechanical fact about man is his living intellectual response of insight into a perceptual situation, his ability to see into the events of sense experience, understand them and their relation to other events.26

25FHE, p. 26
26Hume's attack on the metaphysical and psychological arguments for freedom is already taking shape. For there can be no
Hume confuses the real and logical orders. Only such a procedure could result in his peopling reality with the numberless entities created by the principle: what is distinguishable is separable. William James has several comments on this point. "The 'simple impression' of Hume, the 'simple idea' of Locke are abstractions, never realized in experience"27 "Simple substantive 'ideas,' sensations and their copies, juxtaposed like dominoes in a game, but really separate, everything else verbal illusion,--such is the upshot of this view."28 "He [Hume] makes events rattle against their neighbors as drily as if they were dice in a box."29 "Our reflective mind abstracts divers aspects in the muchness, as a man by looking through a tube may limit his attention to one part after another of a landscape. But abstraction is not insulation; and it no more breaks reality than the tube breaks the landscape."30

But we do not intend to give an exhaustive criticism of Hume's theory of knowledge. Our intention is rather to sketch the out-

freedom of the will where the intellect can not transcend sense and matter, and can not know anything of the nature of reality, including the personal self.

27 William James, Psychology, Living Library ed. (Cleveland, 1948), p. 244.

28 Ibid., p. 161


30 Ibid., p. 199.
lines of his theory in order the better to understand his theory of will. At this point it can be said that for Hume all knowledge is "founded" on experience, and that he erred in equivalently denying intellectual insight.

There is one epistemological point that should be alluded to while we discuss Hume's principles of knowledge. Hume's naively realistic expressions, especially in the Treatise, can lead one to believe him a subjectivist. He makes statements like "nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions,"31 or "by will I mean nothing but the impression we feel."32 One might think he means the will is an impression. Norman Kemp Smith warns against misjudging the case. He says "the employment of the term 'object' as synonymous with 'impressions' and 'ideas' leads the reader to think that Hume is adopting a subjectivist point of view even more extreme than that of Berkeley . . . He has given no warning to his readers that later he will ask them to distinguish between impressions as objects of immediate experience and physical bodies as objects of belief."33 Individual statements, therefore, must be judged in the light of Hume's whole doctrine, in which case we must affirm the existence of extramental realities as presented in consciousness.

31 I, p. 456
32 Ibid., p. 399.
33 Smith, p. 116.
This concludes the brief summary of Hume's epistemological principles. We have touched the points requisite for an understanding of Hume's doctrine of the will. However, before proceeding to a consideration of will, it is necessary to touch, again briefly on some of his psychological principles.

II. THE OPERATION OF MIND

Three areas of cognition are noted in Hume's theory by Norman Kemp Smith. They are immediate awareness, knowledge, and belief. These are, first the immediate awareness through which we apprehend all perceptions or ideas . . . secondly, the mode of awareness through which, in reflective thinking, we obtain knowledge in the strictest sense of the term . . . and thirdly, the mode of awareness which he entitles belief." These areas are implied in the epistemological foundations already examined. Ideas and impressions fall under the heading of immediate awareness, natural relations under belief, and philosophical relations under knowledge. Let us examine the three areas.

A. DEMONSTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE

The simplest area to treat is that of knowledge or demonstrative thinking, because it is the most circumscribed in itself, according to Hume, and the most scantily treated by him. In intro-

34Ibid., p. 356.
ducings the topic of the kinds of knowledge Hume says the following:

"All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, relations of ideas and matters of fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetical; and in short every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain." After giving some examples from mathematics Hume arrives at his conclusion. "Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe." Thus mathematics, the only example given of relations of ideas, demonstrates the operation of strict knowledge. Ideas, unrelated and atomic, of course, are blended into a coherent system by "fancy" without any attempt to verify the relationships with matters of fact. The system is rendered consistent by the philosophical relations: resemblance, identity, space and time, degrees of quality, cause and effect, and proportions in quantity and number.

Hume distrusts demonstrative knowledge and metaphysics. Such reasoning has little to contribute to his experimental science of man, and he counsels distrust of reflective thinking. "'Tis usual with mathematicians to pretend, that those ideas, which are their objects, are of so refin'd and spiritual a nature, that they fall

\[35^{\text{EU}}\, \text{p. 24.}\]
\[36^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
\[37^{\text{T, p. 14.}}\]
not under the conception of fancy, but must be comprehended by a pure and intellectual view . . . The same runs through most parts of philosophy . . . 'Tis easy to see, why philosophers are so fond of this notion of some spiritual and refin'd perception . . . But to destroy this artifice, we need but reflect on that principle so oft' insisted on, that all our ideas are copy'd from our impressions." 38 The prudent philosopher, then, returns to the great flood of events and there drinks the saving waters of experience. Experience alone can lead to knowledge of matters of fact, which regulates not only the endeavors of science but the active life of man as well. Therefore, while granting the value of demonstrative thinking for mathematics and recognizing it as the sphere of philosophical relations, Hume denies this shadow world of arbitrarily arranged ideas the power of being of assistance in the practical world. In everyday life the clarity of impressions enlightens all useful knowledge.

B. PRACTICAL REASON

The second area of awareness, reasoning of matters of fact, or, as Hume calls it, moral reasoning, is based on belief, through which the mind has as its objects independently existing, causally operative physical bodies and selves." 39 This is the use of rea-

38 Ibid., p. 72.
39 Smith, p. 357.
son had by man in everyday, practical experience and by the scientist in his experiments. Thus, "in this theory of belief taken as a whole, we have Hume's account of the different ways in which impressions and ideas are so related as to constitute various perceptions of the mind."  

We have left behind us the rarified atmosphere of the mathematician and are now breathing the healthy air of common experience. The first thing to note is that practical reason does not enjoy the certitude of demonstrative knowledge. Rather reason is a matter of probability. Matter-of-fact relations take on an appearance of certitude as experience deepens the rut of invariable occurrence. This repeated pattern becomes customary, and custom causes the natural relating of ideas through association. Thus we see that the conclusions of practical reason are probable, and are therefore called belief and not strict knowledge. Practical reason is, moreover, intimately connected with the natural relation of cause and effect. The two points, then, to be considered are: (1) the probability of belief, and (2) its relation to cause and effect.

Reasoning on matters of fact does not render the truth or certitude of demonstrative reasoning. As limited as strict knowledge is, it is, nevertheless, certain within these narrow con-

40 Church, p. 193.
41 EU, p. 24.
fines. But, it must be noted. "The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceivable by the mind with the same facility and distinctness as if ever so conformable to reality." 42 So as far as our practical reason is concerned, it is as easily and truly said that the sun will not rise tomorrow as the contrary.

What, then, is responsible for the measure of certitude we have that the sun will rise? Our only guarantee in the discovery of truth or falsehood in these contrary statements is experience. 43 Hume notes, "nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact." 44 Thus we see the difference between the judgments of demonstrative thinking, which are always true, and those of belief, which depend on experience for their truth or falsehood. The notion of the regular rising of the sun can be examined by the mind from every angle, but its validity comes not from the elaborations of knowledge but from the experience of sunrise repeated over and over.

Our thinker notes a difficulty here. All the past experience imaginable does not guarantee anything about the future. "These two propositions are far from being the same, I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect and

42 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
I foresee that other objects, which are, in appearance, similar will be attended with similar effects."45 Just because it has always been this way in the past is no reason to say that it will always be this way in the future; and just because it has always been this way with one object is not to say it will be this way with similar objects. Thus all reasoning based on experience is probable. This conclusion drove Hume to "reasonable" or restrained philosophizing, to "mitigated skepticism."46

Therefore, since reason depends on experience, and since experience speaks for the past and not the future, we can never be absolutely certain of practical reasoning concerning the future. There are varying degrees of certitude. "Fire has always burned ... But there are other causes which have been found more irregular and uncertain; nor has rhubarb always proved a purge."47 We are all aware of this variation of probability and take it into account in reasoning. "Here, then, it seems evident that when we transfer the past to the future in order to determine the effect which will result from the cause, we transfer all the different events in the same proportion as they have appeared in the past ... As a great number of view do here concur in one event, they fortify and confirm it to the imagination, (and) beget the senti-

46Ibid., p. 40.
47Ibid., p. 58.
ment which we call belief." Thus the strongest form of probability is belief. It is the link between past and future and between thought and fact. It is the foundation of practical reasoning. And of course belief is rooted in experience.

Practical reason proceeds principally by means of the natural relation of cause and effect. "All reasonings concerning matters of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses." For by means of this relation we can argue to the unseen cause or effect from its seen correlative. Letters received from France give knowledge of our friend who is there, etc. "Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the ideas of those objects commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses; and we should never have been able to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good, or the avoiding of evil." Therefore practical reasoning or belief depends almost entirely on the relation of cause and effect.

This area of awareness, called "belief" by Norman Kemp Smith, could have any number of names to describe it: practical reason, moral reason (this name is used occasionally by Hume himself),

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48 Ibid., p. 59
49 Ibid., p. 25.
50 Ibid., p. 50
causal reasoning. But in every case what is meant is the experiential, probable knowledge had by everyone. By using the term belief, it is not intended to say that all beliefs are matter of reason. The existence of the external world, for example, is believed, although it can not be proven, according to Hume. Belief, rather, indicates the dependence of practical reason on the two great beliefs, causality and the existence of the external world.

While dealing with practical reason, it would be good to investigate one of the primary uses of reason, its function in morality. This will be a good illustration of the second area of awareness, and will help us in treating of the will. How does Hume relate reason and morality, both as regards placing moral acts and judging the morality of acts?

Hume says clearly that "reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will." Abstract reason can not supply motives for will action, since it has to do only with relating ideas, whereas will action is very much involved in matters of fact. But what about practical reason? Hume says it is connected with will action only indirectly. "'Tis obvious that when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity ... 'Tis also obvious, that this emotion rests not here, but making us cast our view on every side, comprehends whatever objects are connected with its original by the relation..."

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\[S^1_{\text{Hume}}, \text{p. 413.}\]
of cause and effect. Here then reasoning takes place to discover their relation . . . But 'tis evident in this case, that the impulse arises not from reason, but is only directed by it. "52 Thus Hume places the relationship between mind and will in practical and not demonstrative reason. Moreover, the relation is an extrinsic one. Reason does not supply motives but only affects willing indirectly by presenting the matter-of-fact relations pertinent to the case. Passion supplies the motive.53

So much for reason as actively helping in the production of a will act. How about the relationship of reason to the morality of an act already produced? Traditionally, the morality of an act is said to be based on its conformity with an objective norm. This relationship is perceived by reason and the judgment of conformity or deformity is delivered by reason. What is Hume's theory?

"Reason," as Norman Kemp Smith says, "enables us to inform ourselves as to the facts; but it does no more; it passes no verdict."54 He notes further, "moral approval or blame arises in the mind, not as an act of knowledge but as a feeling to which we are immediately determined."55 He cites the following passage from Hume. "In these sentiments then, not in a discovery of relations

52Ibid., p. 414.
53This topic is treated fully below, p. 29.
54Smith, p. 196.
55Ibid., p. 197.
of any kind, do all moral determinations consist. Before we can pretend to form any decision of this kind, everything must be known and ascertained on the side of the object or action. Nothing remains but to feel, on our part, some sentiment of blame or approbation; whence we pronounce the action criminal or virtuous. 56 The moral sense delivers moral judgments. 57

Once again, reason plays a subordinate part to the sensitive nature of man. As in the placing of acts reason did not move the will but only informed it of the circumstances of a proposed act, so in the moral judgment rendered on an act, reason merely establishes the circumstances of the act. In the former case reason is the slave of a violent passion; in the latter, of a calm passion. "Reason is and ought only to be the slave of passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." 58

Thus Hume, who has already demoted demonstrative reason to the status of merely transposing ideas, now subjects practical reason, in one of its principal functions, to the passions. This weighty reference to the passions brings us to the third area of awareness within the human mind, impressions, under which Hume

56 David Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals," Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy, ed. Henry D. Aiken (New York, 1948), p. 266. Hereafter this Enquiry will be referred to by the letters EM.

57 This topic is considered more fully below, p. 41.

58 T, p. 415.
C. IMMEDIATE AWARENESS

The third area is, "the immediate awareness through which we apprehend all perceptions, whether passions, sense perceptions, or ideas—a mode of awareness which he accepts as being infallible, and as therefore yielding its own type of de facto certainty and assurance." We are primarily interested in the immediate awareness of impressions, that is, passions and sense impressions. Ideas will be mentioned only in passing. Also, the treatment of the extremely important connection between the passions and human activity will be deferred to the next chapter. The present discussion will center wholly on the definition of this area of awareness by tabulating its factors.

"All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. . . . Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions; and under this name I comprehend . . . ."

59Ideas are understood here as isolated experiences and not factors in knowledge or belief.

60Smith, p. 356.

61Ideas as copies of impressions and their relation to one another by natural association, demonstrative reason, and practical reason have already been treated.

62This tabulation is illustrative of Hume's experimental technique. All these factors can be recognized in the chain of human experience.
all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul."^63

Impressions (and ideas) are divided first into simple and complex. ^64 Impressions are further divided into "Those of SENSATION and those of REFLEXION. The first kind arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes. The second is derived in a great measure from our ideas."^65 Impressions of sensation may be exemplified by "heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or other."^66 "Original impressions ... without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs."^67 The impressions of reflexion, which result from other sensations or ideas, may be exemplified by "desire and aversion, hope and fear."^68 The latter are also called "passions, desires, emotions."^69

"The reflective impressions may be divided into two kinds, viz. the calm and the violent. Of the first kind is the sense of

^63Ibid., p. 1.
^64Ibid., p. 2.
^65Ibid., p. 7.
^66Ibid., p. 8.
^67Ibid., p. 275.
^68Ibid., p. 8.
^69Ibid.
beauty and deformity in action, composition, and external objects. Of the second are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility.70 The calm reflective passions are often confused, Hume thinks, with reason. We are said to judge, presumably by reason, of the morality or beauty of objects. These judgments are actually the result of our moral and aesthetic sentiments, which are calm passions. Hume's chapter "Of the causes of the violent passions" indicates that calm and violent refers not only to different classes of passions, but to the experience of various passions of the same kind in different circumstances.71

The passions are also divided into direct and indirect. "By direct passions I understand such as arise immediately from good or evil, from pleasure or pain. By indirect such as proceed from the same principle, by the conjunction of other qualities. . . . under the indirect I comprehend, pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, generosity, with their dependents. And under the direct passions, desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair, and security."72

The direct, violent impressions of reflection, as being primarily generative of action, are of chief interest in treating the will. They are referred to simply as passions. Any consideration

70 Ibid., p. 276.
71 Ibid., p. 418.
72 Ibid., p. 276.
of will has been purposely omitted here, since it is the subject of the next chapter.

This completes the treatment of the three areas of awareness, which might be called demonstrative reason (knowledge), practical reason (belief), and impressions—-including, especially, the passions—-(immediate awareness).

The first chapter might be briefly summarized as follows. Hume is consecrated to the experimental method, and from the prejudice follows his theory of knowledge. Vulgar consciousness is the starting point and is conceived as a chain of atomic experiences. These experiences are naturally related in everyday life by association, although man is able to manipulate ideas by his powers of deductive reasoning. However, for deductive reasoning to be consonant with reality, it must rely not on demonstrative methods but experience. Experience alone informs us of the nature of reality, and must guide all valid reasoning on matters of fact. Experience also informs us of the contents of mind, which are ideas and impressions. The latter include the passions, which are the principles of direction and drive in human activity.

This concludes our brief inspection of Hume's epistemology and psychology of mind. It hardly seems necessary to point out the rooting of his psychological principles in his epistemology, but the following points might be noted. The theory of philosophical relations, which arbitrarily and without intrinsic justification unite atomic ideas, begets the theory of demonstrative knowl-
edge, which has no certitude of matters of fact. The theory of natural relations, which unite atomic ideas extrinsically and merely by association, begets the theory of belief, which is only probable knowledge. The theory of atomic ideas itself begets the immediate awareness of numerous, distinct "passions." And through it all Hume has been marvelously true to his promise of adherence to experience--whether by experience be meant the remembered past or immediate awareness. In this respect he can never be accused of inconsistency. But the justification of his radical empiricism must be questioned. Are the experimental methods copied from the science of the material universe justly applied to the study of human nature? Are they adequate? Or does human nature transcend the material universe? It is assumed by Hume that the methods are adequately applicable, and therefore that man is not more than the material universe in which he lives. Specifically, in conclusion to this chapter on Hume's idea of knowledge, man is the slave of experience and is incapable of rising above experience in his intellectual life. In a word, man is denied intellectual insight by Hume.
CHAPTER II

HUMAN ACTIVITY

I. THE WILL

Having given some attention to Hume's approach to philosophy and his theory of knowledge, we now come to the factors directly involved in his theory of determinism of the will. The first factor is the will itself. How does Hume's doctrine of will fit in with the rest of his philosophy? Does this doctrine reflect his theory of knowledge? What is the will's relation to reason? To the passions? Let us begin by considering a few of Hume's statements about the will.

"Of all the immediate effects of pain or pleasure, there is none more remarkable than the WILL; and tho' properly speaking, it be not comprehended among the passions, yet as the full understanding of its nature and properties, is necessary to the explanation of them, we shall here make it the subject of our enquiry."¹ So, will is not strictly a passion, but is closely bound up with these fonts of energy and direction.

"I desire it may be observed that by the will, I mean nothing

¹T, p. 399.
but the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind."\(^2\) This describes the impression of will—it is an impression and not an idea—which is one of the common perceptions of mankind. Like all simple impressions it is an atomic perception related naturally by association to other perceptions.

To which, we might ask. "The will exerts itself, when either the good or absence of evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body."\(^3\) The circumstances, then, of the operation of will, like the passions themselves, include good and evil. I say good and evil, "or in other words pain and pleasure,"\(^4\) because the notions are identified by Hume. Thus the will is associated with, or 'founded on,"\(^5\) pleasure and pain or good and evil.\(^6\)

What other factors is the will related to? Reason? If so, how?\(^7\) "Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason . . . In order to shew the fallacy of all this philosophy, I shall endeav-

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\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 439.

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 438.

\(^6\)There is some controversy as to whether Hume should be called a hedonist. However the discussion is not essential to our theme. The problem is treated at some length by Smith, p. 139.

\(^7\)This problem was already indicated, p. 21.
our to prove first, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will." Hume succeeds to his satisfaction and maintains that although reason is connected with willing, the relationship is not as usually conceived. But if reason does not move the will, what does? "Nothing can oppose or retard the impulse of passion, but a contrary impulse." So it is passion which causes action, while reason according to its nature, acquaints man with the matter-of-fact relations prevailing in the situation. "In general, we observe, that both these principles operate on the will." Such operation is not confused or in conflict since passion is a real existent whereas reason deals in representations. Being of different orders, reason and passion can not be in conflict.

Thus the factors associated with willing are pleasure and pain, reason, and passion. But how are these factors interrelated? How does the psychological act of willing take place?

The first movement in the chain of events that leads to human action is in the passions. The passions, Norman Kemp Smith tells us, "determine the ends of conduct, and . . . in determining them

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8Ibid., p. 413.
9Ibid., p. 415.
10Ibid., p. 416.
11Ibid., p. 418.
supply also the energies required for their pursuit. They are its incentives, and decide us in the 'election' to this or that action."¹² Hume tells us negatively of the power and purposiveness of the passions. "'Tis certain, that no affection of the human mind has both a sufficient force, and a proper direction to counter-balance the love of gain."¹³ Thus the passions are appetites, tendencies to certain goods.

Moreover, "in the production and conduct of the passions, there is a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy."¹⁴ This statement is instrumental in our characterization of Hume's theory of human nature as "Natural Determinism."

Let us briefly look into this mechanics of the passions in their connection with will action. As enumerated above, the direct and indirect, and calm and violent passions are most in question in the matter of human conduct, that is, desire and aversion, joy and grief, pride and humility, love and hatred. Let us see how a volition comes about.

Hume observes that "in order to produce an affection of any

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¹²Smith, p. 159.

¹³T, p. 492. Italics added.

¹⁴David Hume, Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary, eds. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, II (London, 1889), 166.
kind, 'tis only requisite to present some good or evil."\(^{15}\) This presentation is necessary unless we are dealing with one of those direct passions which arises from natural impulse or instinct.

"Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies, and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections."\(^{16}\)

Supposing, then, that either a natural impulse has arisen or a good has been presented, what follows? "'Tis obvious, that when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity, and are carry'd to avoid or embrace what will give us this uneasiness or satisfaction. 'Tis also obvious, that this emotion rests not here, but making us cast our view on every side, comprehends whatever objects are connected with its original one by the relation of cause and effect. Here then reasoning takes place to discover this relation."\(^{17}\)

Thus at the first solicitation of emotion we are moved to reason about the relationships surrounding the desired object. As noted, however, reason alone can not produce or prevent a volition.\(^{18}\)

Specifically, reason points out whether the emotion is based on a

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 438
\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 439.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 414.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 415.
true appraisal of the situation and whether means adequate to the desired and are at hand. But reason's office is rather instruction than motivation.

Although reason is removed from direct influence on the will, it would be erroneous to assume that the will is ruled by passionate violence. For the will may be moved by a calm or a violent passion. Passions are calm or violent either naturally—benevolence, love of life, love of children, etc.—or because of the proximity of the object—"When I am immediately threaten'd with any grievous ill, my fears, apprehensions, and aversions rise to a great height, and produce a sensible emotion."19 And it is not always the violent passion that rules. In fact, "passions influence not the will in proportion to their violence, or the disorder they occasion in the temper; but on the contrary ... when a passion has once become a settled principle of action, and is the predominant inclination of the soul, it commonly produces no longer any sensible agitation."20 Thus, even though the passion that rules the will may not be violent, passion is still the moving power of will action. "Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the

19Ibid., p. 418.
20Ibid.
actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind." 21

The passions rule even when there is a conflict of passions. Hume notes that "an opposition of passions commonly causes a new emotion in the spirits, and produces more disorder, than the concurrence of any two affections of equal force. This new emotion is easily converted into the predominant passion, and increases its violence, beyond the pitch it would have arrived at had it met with no opposition." 22 Thus the passions, even when in conflict, resolve themselves into a more or less violent impulse "according to the general character or present disposition of the person." 23 And reason, as it can not produce passion, can not control passion. Nor are there grounds for appealing to reason as having such control, for the control is intrinsic to the system of passions as explained.

To sum up. Hume's psychology of will includes four factors: pleasure and pain, passion, reason, and will. The pleasure and pain may excite passion or be produced by it. But in either case, passion is "founded" on pleasure and pain. Passion can be calm or violent, but all will activity is based on passion and not reason. Reason can not cause volition, but instructs a man being moved by

21 T., p. 85.
22 Ibid., p. 421.
23 Ibid., p. 418
passion as to the matter-of-fact relations obtaining in the situation. Lastly, the will moves body and mind to the attainment of the good in question.24

At this point we may question Hume on the fundamental nature of the will. Is it a generic appetite? Hume has spoken of a calm instinct originally planted in our nature of "the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil, considered merely as such."25 He also says, "the mind by an original instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid evil."26 "All men," he notes elsewhere, "it is allowed, are equally desirous of happiness."27 But none of these statements is attached to the faculty of will.

24The critique of Hume's theory of will that follows is given by James Collins, A History of Modern European Philosophy (Milwaukee, 1954), p. 449; "Despite his extreme language, Hume is moving here toward a moderate position that recognizes the guiding function of practical reason, the distinctive contribution of the appetitive powers, and the need for the mutual impenetration of reason and the appetitive powers in human conduct. But he is hindered from achieving a balance among these factors, because of his denial of free choice, his preoccupation with the rationalistic view of reason, and his own difficulties about the relation between reason and experience. Hence he tends to give a watered-down conception of reason in its moral function, coalescing it with the relatively mild and moderate passions. The practical reduction of reason to the mild passions corresponds to the speculative reduction of reason to imagination. In neither case does Hume preserve the distinctive role of reason in human experience."

25Ibid., p. 417.

26Ibid., p. 438.

27Ibid., p. 227.
Therefore, although man is conceived of as having a general appetite for good, and individual passions seek individual goods, the will is not conceived of as an appetite for good.

The will is a power at the disposal of all the passions. It has command over body and mind, and as the passions require implementation, the will acts. "The WILL exerts itself, when either the good or absence of evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body." Hume is being faithful to his analysis of all reality into perceptions of experience. It is certainly true that the will-in-act is experienced as the power of command. The far more subtle notion of will as intellectual appetite is metaphysical in the extreme. But such considerations are to be shunned. Therefore, although Hume says the will effects the movement to good, it is man or an individual passion that is satisfied.

The truth is that Hume has very little to say about the nature of the will. And the little said can only lead to the conclusion that the will is a power of command. "An act of volition produces motion in our limbs, or raises a new idea in our imagination. This influence of the will we know by consciousness." We must conclude that for Hume the will is not a generic appetite of man but merely the power of command he exercises over his body and mind.

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28 T, p. 439.

29 EU, p. 65.
The basis for this concept of will and its adjuncts is to be found in Hume's atomistic phenomenalism. His experiential approach to reality isolates individual appetites into a number of different and distinct "passions." The process of willing is broken up into the before, during, and after of passion, reason, and command. Each phase is erected into an independent element. To each passion is assigned its own end and energy. To reason is assigned the power of grasping matter-of-fact relations. To will, the power of command over body and mind. To passion, the power of causing the will to act.

Concerning the problem of determinism of the will, we can say the following. In his theory of knowledge, man is limited by Hume to knowledge of individual events. In his theory of will, man is limited to willing individual goods. There is no such thing as knowing and willing the good. The result is that long before Hume has ever addressed the problem of freedom he has denied the elements necessary to establish liberty of the will.

II. ETHICAL MAN

There are several more factors of human activity which are prerequisites to a full understanding of Hume's treatment of freedom. They are: (1) virtue and natural ability, (2) good and evil, and (3) obligation. In a sense Hume's stand on these matters is logically consequent to his theory of determination of the will. However he himself treats them independently, and they are of in-
terest for the light they throw on the method he uses in approaching these problems related to the human activity of willing. Also these matters are, for Hume, a direct introduction to his consideration of the moral argument for freedom.

A. NATURAL ABILITY AND VIRTUE

Two points of interest arise in this matter: (1) what is the relationship between natural ability and virtue, and (2) what does Hume think of the complexus of natural abilities, that is, temperament. As regards the first, there is no foundation for a distinction between natural ability and virtue, according to Hume. As to the second, Hume is logically forced to grant, and freely does so, that an individual's temperament and its exercise is purely the result of fortune. In other words, a man's character is predetermined by his natural endowment. And more noteworthy, his every action is predetermined in his temper. Let us take up first the relationship between natural ability and virtue.

Hume notes that the dispute about the distinction between the two is a mere quibble. Of primary interest is his dismissal of a distinction based on voluntary and meritorious acquisition and non-voluntary, passive reception of pleasing qualities of character. He puts forth three objections to a distinction based on free choice. First, many so-called moral virtues are quite as in-

\[30\text{, p. 606; EM, p. 283.}\]
voluntary and necessary as qualities of judgment and imagination. Moreover, "I might say the same, in some degree, of the others [other virtues]; it being almost impossible for the mind to change its character in any considerable article, or cure itself of a passionate or splenetic temper, when they are natural to it." 31 Thus neither virtue nor perversity are matter of choice. Second, virtue and vice are so denominated from the fact that they give pleasure or pain, not because they are voluntary or involuntary. Just as beauty or deformity are not so called because of any voluntary quality, so virtue and vice depend rather on pleasure and pain. "Now I believe no one will assert, that a quality can never produce pleasure or pain to the person who considers it, unless it be perfectly voluntary in the person who possesses it." 32 Third, since free will has no influence on the actions of men, neither has it influence on the qualities of men. "The fabric and constitution of our mind no more depends on our choice than that of our body." 33

In addition to these negative considerations, Hume makes some positive statements about the identification of natural ability and virtue, and their opposites. It seems evident, in fact, that they are quite the same thing, for "both of them equally produce

31 Ibid., p. 608.

32 Ibid., p. 609.

pleasure and have of course an equal tendency to procure the love and esteem of mankind." Likewise their opposites agree. "A blemish, a fault, a vice, a crime--these expressions seem to denote different degrees of censure and disapprobation, which are, however, all of them, at the bottom, pretty nearly all the same kind of species."35

Since, then, a man's character is not a matter of choice, it must be entirely predetermined by nature. "Whoever considers without prejudice the course of human actions will find that mankind are almost entirely guided by constitution and temper."36 If a man be virtuous, he will act accordingly. And if he be perverse "such a one must be allowed entirely incurable, nor is there any remedy in philosophy."37

It must, of course, be conceded that education helps, and that good habits are a powerful means of reforming the mind.38 But ultimately natural temper will win out. "In a word, human life is more governed by fortune than by reason."39

We conclude that, according to Hume, human qualities are to

34 T, p. 606.
35 EM, p. 291.
37 Ibid.
38 Hume's logical right to such a claim is hard to see.
be distinguished solely on the grounds of the pleasure or displeasure they cause men. In this respect, natural ability and virtue are indistinguishable. And further, since the notions of voluntary and involuntary have no place in human ethics, so-called free acts have no place in the development of character. Man's temperament, the vehicle of his impact on society, is not the result of reasoned effort, but the gift of fortune.

Hume seems to confuse temperament (natural endowment) and character (developed personality). Without such a distinction it seems impossible to explain the cultivation and flowering of the personality of certain less endowed men, or, on the other hand, the deterioration of other highly gifted persons.

B. GOOD AND EVIL

As noted above in the treatment of reason, moral judgment is a matter of sentiment and not of reason. Moral judgment is the result of the calm, reflective impression or passion called moral sentiment. But at that point we did little more than note Hume's teaching in this matter. Here we wish to go into the matter more thoroughly.

"In this view, cleanliness is also to be regarded as a virtue; since it naturally renders us agreeable to others, and is a very considerable source of love and affection. No one will deny, that

40 This problem was indicated on p. 22.
a negligence in this particular is a fault; and as faults are nothing but smaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneasy sensation, which it excites in others, we may in this instance, seemingly so trivial, clearly discover the origin of the moral distinction of vice and virtue in other instances. 41

Clearly then, men judge evil by a certain uneasy sensation in the presence of the vicious event. And "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." 42

Hume holds vigorously to the view that morality is a matter of sentiment and not of reason. "Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason." 43 B. M. Laing points out another of Hume's arguments against the influence of reason. "The consequences which Hume draws are that morality is not, as some have held, capable of demonstration; for all demonstrations rest on relations. If morality were derivative from factual relations, it would involve relations characteristic of external things and animate creatures, and would be equally valid for them. But this is

41 T., p. 611.
42 Ibid., p. 469.
43 Ibid., p. 457.
not the case; it is something peculiarly human. Having therefore rejected reason as the basis of morality, he must find that basis elsewhere." 44 Briefly, since all perceptions are either ideas or impressions, and morality is not a matter of ideas, it must be an impression.

"Of what nature are these impressions, and after what manner do they operate upon us? Here we cannot remain long in suspense, but must pronounce the impression arising from virtue, to be agreeable, and that proceeding from vice to be uneasy." 45

At this point Hume does not emphasize the object of moral sentiment. In his treatment of free will, however, he is careful to point out the object. "The constant and universal object of hatred or anger is a person or creature endow'd with thought and consciousness." 46 Thus he teaches that the adequate object of the moral sentiment is a person.

Thus good and evil are judgments or sentiments or moral reactions arising from the natural sentiment of the viewer of a given human event. Therefore, according to Hume, good and evil do not in any sense inhere in things or events. "When you pronounce any Action or Character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that from the particular Constitution of your Nature you have a Feeling or

45Ibid., p. 470
46Ibid., p. 411
Sentiment of Blame from the Contemplation of it. Vice & Virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to Sounds, Colours, Heat & Cold, which, according to modern Philosophy, are not Qualities in Objects but Perceptions in the Mind."47

This point brings us to the matter of obligation. For, although reason, grounded in experience and thus being objective and more or less universal, might provide some norm of obligation, sentiment, so much a matter of temperament and natural endowment, would seem never to be able to provide an objective and universal norm of obligation. How does Hume provide an objective and universal morality and on what fact does he base the obligation to do good and avoid evil?

C. OBLIGATION

Hume affirms that obligation is a matter of sentiment, but that it is also universal. The source of obligation is sympathy with the human species and a consequent desire for events to be ordered to the utility and pleasure of the species. What is useful and pleasant for humanity ought to be done. It must be noted, however, that this passion of universal sympathy is contained in the natural endowment of any individual of the species, with the result that some individuals may be naturally endowed with less than the fullness of this sentiment. Thus arises the necessity

for external means to insure the execution of socially useful acts.

We can distinguish two phases in this argument: (1) obligation, as arising from sympathy with mankind, and (2) sanction, as insuring the execution of the dictates of sympathy. These phases might be called moral obligation and physical obligation.

Norman Kemp Smith observes that "there is, on Hume's theory of morals, no such thing as moral obligation, in the strict sense of the term. There is, that is to say, no intrinsically self-justifying good that with authority can claim approval. The ultimate verdict rests in the de facto constitution of the individual. As he is a member of the species, the human species, we can count on certain uniformities of preference; but all individuals have in some degree their own special preferences, and these (so long as they continue unchanged) are as final for the individual as the more widely prevailing preferences are for the species qua species. The only available sanctions are external; they are due to the control exercised by the species over the individual."48

Obligation is said to rest on sympathy or humanity.49 Humanity is said to be a universal sentiment with which nature endows each and every member of the human race. "One man's ambition is

48Smith, p. 201.

49Hume's use of the term "humanity" is ambiguous. At times he means the species of men. At other times he means sympathy, benevolence, philanthropy, etc. In some arguments, as below, he makes an easy transit from the abstract idea to the sentiment.
not another's, nor will the same event or object satisfy both; but the humanity of one man is the humanity of everyone, and the same object touches this passion in all human creatures."50  Frank C. Sharp comments on Hume's teaching. "In the Enquiry he affirms that regard for others ("humanity") is either universal in the race or is universal in all those who have not destroyed it by a career of crime. Ignoring the demands of malevolence and treating, as he usually does, morality as a matter of the service of others, he thence concludes to the existence of a code which is valid either for all or for practically all the members of the race."51

As a result of this passion we hope for others what we hope for ourselves. "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 the characters of others, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or loss."52 Thence flows obligation. B. M. Laing comments. "In what does the obligation to act justly consist? There is no natural impulse of justice. The obligation is due to the recognition of the utility of society and of rules of justice; and this utility produces a peculiar pleasure, which

50EM, p. 253.


52T, p. 579.
is the sense of the goodness of justice and is the obligation to act justly."  

The basic font of obligation is the desire for happiness. Our personal happiness depends on the satisfaction of our passions, the passion of humanity included. "Whatever contradiction may vulgarly be supposed between the selfish and social sentiments or dispositions, they are really no more opposite than selfish and ambitious, selfish and revengeful, selfish and vain." All passions must be satisfied in one way or another, and all these are passions. The miser finds gratification in feeding his avarice. But unsymmetrical gratification leads not to happiness. "Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our conduct--these are circumstances very requisite to happiness." Thus satisfaction of the passion of sympathy is as requisite to happiness as satisfaction of self-interested passions. And obligation rests on one's desire for happiness.

B. M. Laing summarizes Hume's teaching as follows. "Morality is thus grounded in human nature, which everywhere is uniform. In this respect it is analogous to the element of necessity present in the idea of causation. The idea of obligation arises from, or

53Laing, p. 199.
54EM, p. 259.
55Ibid., p. 261.
rather is, that peculiar experience of pleasure or pain."^56 He
cites the Treatise: "when an action or quality of the mind pleases
us after a certain manner, we say it is virtuous; and when the
neglect or non-performance of it displeases us after a like manner
we say that we lie under an obligation to perform it."^57

But, what if one is underendowed with sympathy and overendow-
ed with self-interest? What if one does not want to be happy?
What if one does not feel "after a certain manner" about good and
evil? Sanction forces the nonconformist to conform.

There are various agencies of sanction, for example, organized religion, public opinion, and, perhaps most obvious, government. Let us investigate the last of these. Human nature has the
lamentable weakness of allowing itself to be moved more by the
here-and-now than by the remote, even though the latter is better.
"This is the reason why men so often act in contradiction to their
known interest; and in particular why they prefer any trivial ad-
vantage, that is present, to the maintenance of order in soci-e-
ty."^58

Now, "as 'tis impossible to change or correct anything mate-
rial in our nature, the utmost we can do is to change our circum-

^56 Laing, p. 192.
^57 T., p. 517.
^58 Ibid., p. 535.
stances."59 In the present instance the change if effected by making the desire for order in society immanent. Government officials are appointed, who are induced to make the order of society their primary interest and also to constrain others to regularity. "These persons, then, are not only induced to observe those rules in their own conduct, but also to constrain others to a like regularity, and enforce the dictates of equity thro' the whole society."60 Thus, euphemistically, Hume justifies prisons, fines, capital punishment, etc.

In summary, obligation is the result of personal desire for happiness. The passion of sympathy must be satisfied along with other passions. And should some individual be lacking in sympathy, social sanction, the natural outgrowth of mankind's sympathy, is present to regulate individual activity to the pleasure of society.

Throughout Hume's treatment of ethical man runs the notion of the natural operation of man's powers. Nature directs a man's life by remote control, as it were, since Nature has endowed him with moral, aesthetic, and other sentiments and passions. It is by the analysis of these natural gifts and their influence that Hume puts forth his theories of the qualities of character, good and evil, and obligation. And it is his constant assumption that

59 Ibid., p. 537.
60 Ibid.
reason and effort have no direct influence on the ethical life of man, whether he be considered as spectator or agent. By moral sentiment and sympathy, Nature unerringly supplies whatever intellectual or voluntary effort might seem necessary. In this respect Hume is only carrying out his general principles of knowledge and volition.

Norman Kemp Smith notes that his ethical position is only as strong as his overall position:

I am not questioning that his [Hume's ethics] shares in the defects, and therefore in the insecurities, of his fundamental assumptions. Should judgments genuinely cognitive in character have to be recognised as entering into belief—as ultimately, by implication, Hume himself admits is the case—the capital positions in his ethics, no less than in his general philosophy, will at once be endangered. For if, as then follows—a further step than Hume has given any sign of taking—judgments cognitive in character have similarly to be allowed as entering into all judgments of moral approval and disapproval, i.e., if moral judgments involve judgments of apprehension as well as of appreciation, the whole question of the interrelations of feeling and reason—so fundamental in his ethics and from his ethics carried over into his general philosophy—may have to be very differently viewed. The problem, too, of moral obligation may then be found to demand a quite different answer from any that Hume has been able to give. On these, as on other questions of theory, Hume's ethics is integral to his general philosophical outlook, and stands or falls together with it.61

In this chapter we have seen that in Hume's theory will is the power of command. It is moved by the passions and is not itself an ultimate mover or appetite. Nor is reason involved directly in moving the will. These elements of willing have been

61Smith, p. 565.
set forth by Hume according to the place each holds in the chain of human experience. This procedure is in accord with Hume's epistemology.

Further, it has been noted that an individual temperament is a unique endowment, casually made by nature. In view of Hume's theory of willing, then, an individual is quite incapable of going beyond his original endowment.

In this theory of Natural Determinism, man's natural abilities are not to be distinguished from his virtues, since both cause pleasure in others. Likewise, vices and faults cause uneasiness. This feeling of pleasure or uneasiness is the criterion of good and evil. The feelings arise from man's moral sentiment.

Man is morally obliged as a result of his desire for happiness. Should an individual not desire his true happiness--as a result of faulty endowment--society imposes good conduct on him by sanction. Thus man is physically obliged to perform certain actions either by his nature or by the threat or fact of sanction. Hume notes that "there is but one kind of necessity, as there is but one kind of cause, and that common distinction between moral and physical necessity is without any foundation in nature."62

Hume set out to imitate Newton's science of the universe, and like Newton ended up with a determined system. But in Hume's system man became determined. In concluding the treatment of Hume's

62T, p. 171.
theory of knowledge, the question was posed whether the basic as-
sumption that the principles of natural science are applicable to
man without modification. Now in concluding the treatment of
man's active life, the same question becomes more urgent. For in
pursuing his goal, Hume has imprisoned, first, man's intellect,
and now his will, in the material element of his nature. Man is
denied intellectual insight and freedom of the will.
CHAPTER III

"OF LIBERTY AND NECESSITY"

I. OF NECESSITY

Having completed the sketch of human knowledge and activity, we can now consider in detail the problem of freedom of the will, and understand how Hume arrived at the position he did. This treatment will be presented in two parts: (1) Hume's arguments for necessity, and (2) his answers to certain objections.

Hume presents one minor and one major argument for determinism. The minor argument he never really set forth formally. It is from the nature or the will. The major argument is the fruit of his theory of knowledge, and specifically, his theory of causality. The second he sets forth thoroughly. Both will be considered here, first the minor, then the major.

Hume's theory of will has already been presented. At this point it is only necessary to recall the latent determinism in that theory. Hume's notion of will is radically different from the traditional notion. His will is not an appetite, except in the trivial sense that its end is to move the body and mind. It is merely power over mind and body, and is directed by the passions.
Now to predicate freedom of such a blind faculty is meaningless, for freedom of the will means that the will can determine the body or mind (man) to do either this or that, or nothing. Now, although Hume's will has the power to move man, it can not determine itself to cause man to act. It has no capacity for self-determination. It merely converts the appetitive impulses of passion into bodily or mental activity. Of itself, therefore, the will can not be free to determine human conduct.

Hume's definition of will as a power of command, therefore, makes it impossible to attribute freedom to the will. Thus his analysis of the will is in effect an argument for determinism.

Hume's second argument for determinism is set forth in both the Treatise and the Enquiry. Both treatments are identical in their handling of this argument. It might be summarized as follows. "According to my definitions necessity makes an essential part of causation, and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes also causes, and is the same thing with chance."¹ Thus the same necessity which prevails in the conjunction of material events prevail also in psychic events, that is, in man's volitions. If this is not the case, the purest chance reigns in man's life. This line of reasoning as Hume develops it is not only an apology for determinism but also a polemic against the traditional metaphysical argument for liberty, as he interprets it.

¹T, p. 407.
Let us begin our consideration by reviewing Hume's theory of causality. It has been shown that according to Hume the independent events of experience are associated by natural relation. This natural relation of events is not the result of an inseparable connection perceived between the events, but of the experience of their regular conjunction in the past. The most common natural relation, and the one which is the foundation of practical reasoning, is cause and effect.

Hume thus describes his theory of causality:

It has been observed already, that in no single instance the ultimate connexion of any object is discoverable either by our senses or reason, and that we can never penetrate so far into the essence and constitution of bodies, as to perceive that principle on which their mutual influence is founded. It is their constant union alone with which we are acquainted; and it is from the constant union that necessity arises, when the mind is determined to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and infer the existence of one from that of the other. Here then are the two particulars, which we are to regard as essential to necessity, viz. the constant union and the inference of the mind, and wherever we discover these we must acknowledge a necessity.

Now, as in judging whether one material event is the necessary cause of another we find two factors, constant union of the two and the inference of the mind from one to the other, so we find this union and inference in psychic events. Hume continues

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2 See p. 7.

3 See p. 19.

the above quoted passage. "Now nothing is more evident than the constant union of particular actions [of the will] with particular motives." He adds the following. "And as there is often a constant conjunction of the actions of the will with their motives, so the inference from the one to the other is often as certain as any reasoning concerning bodies."6

Hume goes on to show how will action fulfills the essential notes of causality, constant conjunction and mental inference. He gives many examples of the conjunction of motives and actions.7 However, to this regularity one might object, and maintain that there are as many examples of irregularity. Hume replies by reducing the problem to an objection against his general principle of causality. There are, he points out, cases of perfectly regular activity. And he continues:

But below this there are many inferior degrees of probability, nor does one single contrariety of experiment entirely destroy all our reasoning. The mind balances the contrary experiments, and deducting the inferior from the superior, proceeds with that degree of assurance or evidence, which remains. Even when these contrary experiments are entirely equal, we remove not the notion of causes and necessity; but supposing that the usual contrariety proceeds from the operation of contrary and conceal'd causes, we conclude that chance or indifference lies only in our judgment on account of our imperfect knowledge, not in the things themselves, which are in every case equally necessary, tho' to appear-

5Ibid.  
6 Ibid., p. 264.  
6See, for example, EU, pp. 85-88.
ances not equally constant or certain.  

Briefly, irregularity lies not in things but in our imperfect knowledge of them.

Hume goes on to show that not only is the constant union of motives and actions to be found in human activity, but that we infer actions from motives. "The poorest artificer, who labours alone, expects at least the protection of the magistrate, to insure him the enjoyment of the fruits of his labour. He also expects, that when he carries his goods to market, or offers them at a reasonable price, he shall find purchasers . . . In proportion as men extend their dealings, and render their intercourse with others more complicated, they always comprehend, in their schemes of life, a greater variety of voluntary actions, which they expect, from the proper motives, to co-operate with their own." Thus, in human activity as in merely material events we observe that men infer actions from motives and that there is constant conjunction between them. The conclusion must be, feels Hume, that human actions are determined by motives.

In summary, therefore, it can be seen that Hume concludes to determination of the will. On the one hand it is absurd to predicate freedom of a power of command. On the other it is quite clear that motives cause will acts, and that such causality im-

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\(^8\) T, p. 403.

\(^9\) EU, p. 91.
plies necessity. If necessity is denied, so is causality. And if the causality is denied, man's actions are merely casual, unpredictable, and the result of the purest chance.

In evaluating this position it is good to keep in mind the criticism already made of Hume's concept of the will.\textsuperscript{10} There it is noted that his definition of the will as power of command over mind and body results from an atomistic theory of knowledge. Also, Hume's theory of causality finds its source in an atomism in which isolated events need to be related by the mind and have no known intrinsic relation to one another. Hume's atomism has already been criticized.\textsuperscript{11}

One cardinal point needs evaluation at this time. Hume has equated causality and necessity. "I begin by observing that the terms efficacy, agency, power, force, energy, necessity, connexion and productive quality, are all nearly synonymous."\textsuperscript{12} Further, "there is but one kind of necessity, as there is but one kind of cause, and that the common distinction betwixt moral and physical necessity is without foundation in nature."\textsuperscript{13} Thus causality means physical necessity.

This is truly the crucial point in a discussion of freedom of

\textsuperscript{10}See p. 37.
\textsuperscript{11}See p. 11.
\textsuperscript{12}I, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 171.
the will, since liberty can be maintained only if motives can cause the will to act and yet not necessitate it. That motives do cause the will to act, no one would deny. Thus, in a sense, Hume's elaboration of the conjunction of motives and actions and the inference of their connection is arguing a point that needs no argumentation. And that a cause of willing is "necessary" in the sense that there must be a sufficient reason for the new determination of the will is also granted by all. But how do motives cause and yet not predetermine the will to one course of action? Hume says they do determine it. To refute his position and establish a sound one we must indicate Hume's hidden metaphysical assumption.

For Hume, being is a univocal term, and all being is material. Consequently, all causes are material and necessitating. Specifically, motives, the acknowledged causes of human action, physically necessitate the will. "Let no one, therefore, put an invidious construction on my words, by saying simply, that I assert the necessity of human actions and place them on the same footing with the operations of senseless matter. But I ascribe to matter, that intelligible quality, call it necessity or not, which the most rigorous orthodoxy does or must allow to belong to the will."14 It is all in one's point of view! But there is only one kind of causality, one kind of being.

14Ibid., p. 410.
This supposition of univocity, as indicated before, is to be denied. Hume has assumed an experimental method. "It would seem, indeed, that men begin at the wrong end of this question concerning liberty and necessity, when they enter upon it by examining the faculties of the soul, the influence of the understanding, and the operations of the will. Let them first discuss a more simple question, namely, the operations of body and brute unintelligent matter." But as Fr. Rickaby points out, his method is transformed into a metaphysics. "I remark that, though Hume speaks of beginning with matter, his reasoning not only begins with matter but ends there. He asserts certain facts and lays down certain laws about the operations of brute agents, and thence proceeds to extend those laws to intelligent agents, as though there were no new facts in the case." The "Newton of the Moral Life" can not be given a logical license to apply his scientific method to man without adaptation to the immaterial nature of man's intellect and will.

In reality, being is analogous. And, man, although he has a material body, has a spiritual intellect and will which are only extrinsically dependent on matter. Thus Hume's law of causality (granting its validity for the sake of argument) as drawn from

15See pp. 27 and 51.
16BU, p. 96.
physical nature has at most only analogous application to man. Thus Hume's universal equation of causality and necessity is not warranted.

A further point, based on Hume's own principle of the probability of matters of fact, is made by James Collins. He says, "the causal inference concerns matter of fact. Consequently, on Hume's own principles, the only type of necessity that is involved in historical and statistical inferences is a moral one. If such a moral necessity could be transferred from the associative habits of the spectator to the elections of the agent, it would not eliminate the free nature of the choice. Moral necessity has no more than probable weight, and this probability is compatible with human freedom." Thus, although Hume constantly speaks of the necessity that holds between motives and actions, he has a logical right only to probability. The latter is consonant with true freedom.

The basic objection, however, is not to inconsistencies, but to the theory of causality itself. "The necessary then is not what always has been, but what in the nature of things must be; the two ideas are not the same. Necessity is not constant conjunction, but implication." But Hume's phenomenalism will not

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18See p. 16.
19Collins, p. 440.
20Rickaby, p. 121.
give knowledge of natures and implication. Therefore, the radical source of Hume's determinism of the will is his theory of knowledge.

II. OF LIBERTY

After he establishes the necessity of human activity, Hume goes on to show that this is not to say that man does not enjoy the truest liberty. He proposes four objections that might be leveled against his position by those who preach a fatuous and nonexistent "liberty of indifference." The first difficulty arises about the very word liberty itself. The second concerns the misunderstanding of the feeling of freedom. The third deals with a misrepresentation of the moral order. And the fourth flows from our ignorance of God and His connection with the world. Now, Hume's answers vindicate "true" liberty. Moreover in answering these difficulties he applies his theoretical explanation of man's freedom to practical experience.

A. TERMINOLOGY

The first difficulty appears to be simply a matter of terms. However, such is not the case. In fact, in discussing terms Hume summarizes his whole position. He points out two terminological confusions which he believes exist in the traditional handling of the problem of liberty. (It will be seen that the two are really one and the same.) The first is between liberty of spontaneity and
liberty of indifference. The second is between liberty as opposed to constraint and liberty as opposed to necessity. Hume affirms liberty of spontaneity and liberty as opposed to constraint.

"Few are capable of distinguishing betwixt the liberty of spontaneity, as it is called in the schools, and the liberty of indifference; betwixt that which is oppos'd to violence, and that which means the negation of necessity and causes. The first is even the most common sense of the word; and as 'tis only that species of liberty, which it concerns us to preserve, our thoughts have been principally turn'd towards it, and have almost universally confounded it with the other." 20

Liberty of spontaneity is opposed to force, violence, and constraint. When a man is not forced to perform an action, or constrained from its performance, that is, when he is not physically forced or constrained, he has liberty of spontaneity. This is the liberty, Hume says, which alone needs to be preserved by philosophy. That other, liberty of indifference, is opposed to necessity and causality. With such liberty a man would act without cause altogether. Clearly, such a concept of liberty is erroneous and is maintained by philosophers because they are confused.

The same confusion is noted by Hume in the Enquiry, where he teaches his usual doctrine of liberty of spontaneity but gives it a new verbal twist. His definition of liberty, if taken out of

20 T, p. 407.
context, might lead one to believe that Hume teaches a true liberty of exercise. But the context shows that if the words have changed, the doctrine has not. "By liberty, then, we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determination of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest we may; if we choose to move we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone who is not a prisoner and in chains." In the same consideration Hume adds the following. "And if the definition above mentioned be admitted, liberty, when opposed to necessity, not to constraint, is the same thing with chance, which is universally allowed to have no existence." On his own interpretation, then, Hume holds that liberty, no matter how he has defined it, is opposed to constraint and not to necessity. Thus he is free who is not under duress, although his motives necessitate his actions.

Hume concludes that if philosophers would realize that the denial of necessity in human actions and the affirmation of liberty of indifference are based on a confusion, all the trouble about freedom would pass away. He exhorts philosophers to believe that only constraint is opposed to liberty and that when a man is not constrained he has true liberty.

21EU, p. 98.
22Ibid., p. 99.
23Ibid., p. 82.
This distinction between liberty of spontaneity and liberty of indifference is crucial to Hume's theory of freedom. We shall therefore study it very closely. There are four points to be noted: (1) the distinction rests on Hume's previously presented theory of causality, (2) it fails to explain certain human facts, (3) it misrepresents true liberty of indifference, and (4) true liberty of indifference does explain human experience.

(1) Hume says liberty of spontaneity is opposed to constraint. A man not physically forced to act otherwise is free to let his own motives cause his will act. On the other hand, liberty of indifference does not refer at all to constraint, but, on Hume's interpretation, the will acts without motive. Philosophers propose such liberty in order to say that the will is not necessitated. Now, the underlying assumption of Hume's distinction is that cause and necessity are coextensive. Thus, liberty of indifference, in affirming that the will is not necessitated, lets the will act without cause. And, liberty of spontaneity, although the motives cause and thus necessitate will acts, affirms "freedom" since the will is not constrained. However, as has been noted, the equation of cause and necessity is not to be admitted. 24 Nor need we admit this distinction between liberty of spontaneity and liberty of indifference, since it is merely a restatement of the equation of cause and necessity.

24See p. 58.
(2) Liberty of spontaneity, despite its name, is neither freedom nor liberty. It differs in no way from the spontaneous movement of sense appetite or instinct. It is purely extrinsic freedom of external movement and not intrinsic freedom of will and choice. Thus were someone suddenly to throw an object at a man, he would immediately react to catch the object or deflect it, unless his hands were tied. And a dog runs to his master, unless he is on a leash. Nor should such a comparison seem out of place. Hume himself notes the psychic similarity between men and animals. "The same care of avoiding prolixity is the reason why I wave the examination of the will and direct passions, as they appear in animals; since nothing is more evident, than that they are of the same nature, and excited by the same causes as in human creatures." Therefore Hume's liberty of spontaneity does not account for the evident difference between sensible activity in men and animals and human voluntary actions in which we say they are free.

Furthermore even when men are under constraint, they are held to be free. Thus prisoners of war, even though tortured, are expected not to betray their country. If they do, they are believed to have abused their freedom. Thus liberty is not opposed to constraint.

True freedom must also be intrinsic. Extrinsically man is the subject of necessary laws like any other material body. As

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25T, p. 448.
the heavy body falls naturally and necessarily, as the animal is trained by feeding and beating, so man in his body is subject to gravity, hunger, and pain. But man in his spirit can choose to step off a cliff or not according to his intrinsic motivation. And only intrinsic freedom is true freedom. The mere lack of constraint (spontaneity), the freeing from certain external, physical laws is not liberty in the true sense of the word.

We must conclude, then, that Hume's notion of liberty of spontaneity fails to fulfill the requirements of true freedom. Liberty of spontaneity leaves certain facts unexplained.

(3) Moreover, Hume's view of liberty of indifference as causeless will action is a misrepresentation of the theory of the free-will school. He assumes that by denying a necessary connection between motives and actions, they deny a causal connection. This is not the case. Liberty of indifference does not remove all causes, it merely denies the efficacy of all causes but the ultimate final cause of man to move man necessarily. Thus the causal influx of motives is affirmed, but their power to necessitate the will is limited according to their position in the hierarchy of human ends. Thus man is "indifferent" to all but his last end.

(4) True liberty of indifference fully explains facts left unexplained or contradicted by Hume's theory of liberty of spontaneity. Man is endowed with intellectual power to comprehend individual good things, his own ultimate good, and the relation between them. He has a universal appetite which follows his intell-
lect which can perceive the difference between good and the good and thus he knows that he is necessitated only to the good and is free to choose among individual goods. The will chooses good things as intellectually perceived.

The will is, then, determined to its ultimate end, but its freedom lies in the multiple choice of the means to this end. The will act is truly caused by these means (motives) but not necessitated by any one of them, as it remains free to choose one means rather than another. Any of the means may be chosen to a single final end which moves the efficient cause to act.

Such a theory of liberty of indifference leaves man intrinsically free to choose and act. It is not just a matter of freedom from constraint, or a spontaneous reaction to stimuli. Such freedom explains why a man, even though in prison, still has freedom of the will. Such a system also explains why a man's motives truly cause his actions and yet do not necessitate them.

Moreover, various means are open to a man, no one of which forces his will to act, but any one of which—under the influence of the end to which it is directed—can cause the will to act. Thus a man is morally responsible for his actions, according to his choices among means, some good and some evil. And thus man, and not God, is responsible for the sin in the world, since man chooses among many means and is not determined by his created nature to choose certain means, some of which may be evil.

Hume has summed up his theory in the distinction between lib-
erty of spontaneity and liberty of indifference. His presentation of indifference as causeless action must be rejected. And his presentation of liberty of spontaneity as true liberty must be rejected. True liberty of indifference, on the other hand, preserves the causality of motives and the intrinsic freedom of choice between motives.

B. THE FEELING OF FREEDOM

The second objection Hume raises against himself is based on what he considers the misrepresentation of the feeling of freedom. It is argued against his theory of determination of the will that in the act of willing we feel that we are free to follow more than one course of action and that we choose the preferred course. He handles this objection the same way in the Treatise and the Enquiry,26 as follows:

The prevalence of the doctrine of liberty may be accounted for from another cause, viz. a false sensation or seeming experience which we have, or may have, of liberty of indifference in many of our actions. . . . Now we may observe that, though in reflecting on human actions we seldom feel such a looseness or indifference, but are commonly able to infer them with considerable certainty from their motives and from the dispositions of the agent. Yet it frequently happens that, in performing the actions themselves, we are sensible of something like it [liberty]: and as all resembling objects are readily taken for each other, this has been employed as a demonstrative and even intuitive proof of human liberty. . . . And it seems certain that, however we may imagine we feel a liberty within ourselves, a spectator can

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26 T, p. 408; EU, p. 97.
commonly infer our actions from our motives and character. 27

James Collins comments on this argumentation. "He argues from a determination in the spectator's knowledge to a determination of the agent's conduct." 28 Thus Hume misses the point of the objection from introspection. In effect he says that such internal data can not be true because it is not in conformity with the previously explained theory of determination.

An even more basic fallacy is to be found in this present line of reasoning. The objection from introspection is placed against the premise of determinism, and Hume answers the objection by reaffirming the premise! As. Fr. Rickaby says, "the defects of the premisses are made good by begging what should have been proved." 29 For here Hume supposes that our introspection is erroneous because our wills, as he feels he has already proven, can not be free.

Hume seems to perceive the weakness of his position against this argument from introspection and attempts to disprove the evidence of consciousness. In effect he states that there is no evidence for consciousness of freedom because no one can prove it exists. "We feel that our actions are subject to nothing; because when by a denial of it we are provoked'd to try, we feel that it

27 E.U., p. 97.
28 Collins, p. 440.
29 Rickaby, p. 128.
moves easily every way, and produces an image of itself even on
that side, on which it did not settle. This image or faint mo-
tion, we persuade ourselves, could have been compleated into the
thing itself; because, shou'd that be deny'd, we find, upon second
trial, that it can. But these efforts are all in vain; and what-
ever capricious and irregular actions we may perform; we can never
free ourselves from the bonds of necessity. 30

Hume argues that the only way we could prove we are free, as
our conscience testifies, is to reduplicate the circumstances and
perform some other action. But even here there is a motive at
work, namely, the desire to prove ourselves free. Therefore, the
instance only goes to show that we are necessitated.

Collins wonders, "how the desire to display a nonexistent
freedom can mysteriously arise in human experience." 31 But the
deeper point at issue, evidence provided by personal intellectual
experience, has already been settled by Hume. 32 Evidence of an
intellectual nature, testimony of things and ideas which goes be-
yond impressions is not to be admitted. Thus the "faint motion"
of freedom is not an impression and any attempted proof dependent
upon it is false. Hume's rejection, therefore, of this psycholog-
ical argument for freedom stems directly from his theory of knowl-

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30 T., p. 408.
31 Collins, p. 441.
32 See p. 10.
edge, and his denial of true intellectual insight into the motivation of our own free activities.

That we have such insight is born out in our striving for personal happiness. We are well aware that certain means, perhaps more difficult here and now, will better bring about our happiness than others. Happily we choose the better means, or unhappily we choose otherwise. But in either case we know that the means are not themselves happiness. And we know that the means are chosen to attain happiness, and that various means are apt to the desired goal. And we are also quite conscious in choosing one means to happiness that that means in itself did not necessitate us to its choice, and that we could, if we so wished, have chosen another means instead. This consilium furnishes an example of the intelligent insight we have into the motivation of our activities. And consciousness of our choice based on this consilium is valid testimony to our genuine freedom.

The evidence of consciousness presents a difficulty for Hume, one which he can overcome, in fact, only by denying that evidence. True freedom of indifference, on the other hand, finds in the consciousness of freedom a verification. Consciousness testifies to a diversity of means which are considered, and one of which is freely chosen in order to attain the desired end.

C. THE MORAL ORDER

Hume foresees a third objection to his theory of determinism
arising from the moral order. It might be said that his doctrine would endanger religion and morality. But he would "dare venture to affirm, that the doctrine of necessity, according to my explanation of it, is not only innocent, but even advantageous to religion and morality." Thus he finds in the moral order a proof, not for man's freedom, but for his determination. Liberty, he maintains, is incompatible with the imputation of responsibility and with the influence of sanction. Thus only necessity can explain and save the moral order as we know it. The argumentation is mainly positive, but by implication the traditional argument for freedom from the moral order is impugned. Let us examine Hume's vindication of necessity as essential to the concepts of sanction and responsibility.

After reciting his principles of constant conjunction of motives and actions and the universal inference from one to the other by mankind, he states that the necessity thus proven is essential to all law, human and divine. "All laws being founded on rewards and punishments, it is supposed as a fundamental principle that these motives have a regular and uniform influence on the mind; and both produce the good and prevent the evil actions. We may give to this influence what name we please; but, as it is usually conjoined with the action, it must be esteemed a cause, and be looked upon as an instance of that necessity which we would

33 T, p. 409.
here established.  

An unexpressed conclusion of this argument is that liberty can not explain sanction. For, were liberty of indifference enjoyed by men, sanctions could not be motives, since there would be no motive which could cause action. But, as it is an observed fact that sanctions do influence human actions, men do not have liberty of indifference. Thus Hume finds in his teaching on sanction an affirmation of his determinism and an argument against liberty of indifference.

Let us note several points about this argument from sanction. Hume's allusion to laws as "founded" on sanction indicates his positivistic approach to law. Both his theory of knowledge, which does not allow man to know the laws, or natures, of things, and his theory of sanction, which makes all agencies of sanction extrinsic to man, preclude the possibility of a concept of natural law. He presents a theory of justice as an artificial virtue at some length in Book III of the Treatise.

Hume looks upon sanction as one of many motives which influence men. It can not be denied that sanctions do influence men. However, Hume does not consider the essential question of the purpose, beyond that of motivation, or the equity of sanctions meted out to men. In other words, although he uses the unqualified

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34 EU, p. 101.

35 See p. 48.
term "sanction," his meaning is always "sanction as motive."

This restriction of the meaning of sanction to its influence on men fits in with the manner in which Hume uses sanction as a confirmatory proof for determinism of the will. It is this proof which is principally to be criticized. Hume is attempting to prove his general principle, that influencing motives necessitate the will, by illustrating it from the common employment of sanctions. Thereby, he hopes to justify his determinism in the moral and religious spheres. In the particular case of sanctions, which are acknowledged to influence the will, there is a constant conjunction between motives and actions. But this, he says, is a confirmation of the general principle of the necessity between motives and actions. Therefore, the general principle is placed on a stronger footing.

However, it is to be noted, that if there were necessity, as Hume claims, the same actions would always follow in the same complete circumstances. In particular, similar sanctions would always effect similar actions. This Hume asserts is the case. "These motives have a regular and uniform influence on the mind." But such a statement needs to be proven, not just asserted. As a matter of fact, the evidence would seem to indicate a general ineffectiveness of sanction. Witness growing adult and juvenile delinquency, and perennially crowded prisons. Therefore, we must conclude that Hume's theory does not give a satisfactory explanation of human experience.
On the other hand, the free will theory already explained does fit the facts of the case. The reward or punishment for performing a certain action is one of many motives which are apt to influence the will. However, no one motive necessitates the will, and the will freely chooses the course of action it will follow. This explains our experience that sanctions commonly do influence the will, but not in every case.

Hume goes on to consider responsibility. He begins from the fact that we censure or approve only personal actions of men, that is, actions which arise from the very character of man and are not merely casual and accidental. But on the supposition of liberty of indifference, he says, there is no connection between a man's character and his actions. "According to the principle, therefore, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted after having committed the most horrid crime as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character anywise concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as proof of the depravity of the other." Therefore, liberty of indifference is incompatible with responsibility.

Only on the supposition of liberty of spontaneity can the person be justly censured or praised for his actions, for only then

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36See p. 43.

37EUM, p. 101.
can we be sure that his actions are truly the manifestations of his character. Hume says that, "liberty, according to the definition above mentioned, in which all men agree [They do?], is also essential to morality, and ... no human actions, where it is wanting, are susceptible of any moral qualities, or can be objects either of approbation or dislike. For as actions are objects of our moral sentiment as far only as they are indications of the internal character, passions, and affections; it is impossible that they give rise to praise or blame, when they proceed not from these principles, but are derived altogether from external violence."38 Thus only where causal necessity is in evidence between motives and actions is the notion of responsibility verified. And as men universally acknowledge the concept of responsibility, they implicitly acknowledge liberty of spontaneity only.

The main force of this argument is negative. It goes: since liberty of indifference can not explain responsibility, and since liberty of spontaneity corrects the precise point in which liberty of indifference is in error, the latter must be true. Or, since liberty of indifference means causeless action, and since liberty of spontaneity emphasizes a caused action, only the latter can be the true explanation of a responsibility which everyone acknowledges to exist. However, as already noted, it is simply false

38 Ibid., p. 102.
to say that true liberty of indifference means causeless action.\(^{39}\) Furthermore, precisely in affirming a necessary causal connection between character and actions, liberty of spontaneity removes all responsibility, since a man is not responsible for an action he is bound to perform.

Responsibility is had only where the agent could have acted otherwise. Now in Hume's system of natural determinism, no agent can act otherwise than the necessary laws of his character and circumstances allow. On the other hand, a system which proposes true liberty of indifference allows an agent to have various motives which may be chosen as means to desired goals. Thus only in the latter is freedom and responsibility possible.

Hume supposes that wherever there is a cause of action, based on some motive, there is always necessity. He assumes determinism of the will which precludes free choice among real alternatives. This is false. It is precisely the presence of various motives and the possibility of choice among various means to a desired goal, which makes freedom and responsibility possible.

Hume has further obscured the problem by confusing temperament and character.\(^{40}\) It is true that a man is born with his temperament, and that his actions manifest his temperament. But character, or the lack of it, grows and is molded by freely en-

\(^{39}\)See p. 67.

\(^{40}\)See p. 41.
couraging or restraining temperament. It is a matter of common experience that a man may improve on his temperament if he chooses to do so, and this results in his true character, for which he is really responsible. Character is the result of free activity; it is not the cause of determined activity.

D. THE ULTIMATE CAUSE OF EVIL

Hume foresees a fourth objection to his determinism from the goodness of the Creator. He draws a picture of the consequences of his system in the darkest colors. "This is an objection which Hume urges against himself with a vivacity and force that deserves the best thanks of his opponents."⁴¹ In proposing the objection and indicating what he thinks of it, Hume hopes to locate his philosophy where he thinks it belongs. In fact, he hopes to restrict all philosophy "to her true and proper province, the examination of common life."⁴² As a matter of fact in the end he virtually admits that he is unable to reconcile his system with God's goodness, but "the failure does not worry him very much."⁴³

Hume puts the objection as follows. He says that

if voluntary actions be subjected to the same laws of necessity with the operations of matter, there is a continued

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⁴¹Rickaby, p. 160.
⁴²EU, p. 107.
chain of necessary causes, preordained and predetermined, reaching from the original cause of all, to every single volition of every human creature. No contingency anywhere in the universe; no indifference; no liberty. While in act, we are at the same time, acted upon. The ultimate Author of all our volitions is the Creator of the world, who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in that particular position, whence every subsequent event, by an inevitable necessity, must result. Human actions, therefore, either can have no moral turpitude at all, as proceeding from so good a cause; or if they have any turpitude, they must involve our Creator in the same guilt, while he is acknowledged to be their ultimate cause and author.  

Nor should one assume that here Hume is merely urging a trumped up objection against himself. He has said elsewhere that man's character, and consequently his actions, are predetermined by nature.  

It is to be noted that this objection is correctly leveled at liberty of spontaneity and has no force against true liberty of indifference. The latter allows man free choice among various means and therefore true responsibility. Therefore, man is responsible for sin in the world and not God.

Hume answers the first horn of his dilemma, that human actions have no turpitude, by maintaining that regardless of speculative evidence to the contrary evil actions are indeed evil. He uses two full pages of the Enquiry to do so. As to the second horn, involvement of God in evil, he confesses little can be said. He

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44 EU, p. 103.
45 See p. 40.
46 EU, pp. 104-106.
spends a short paragraph saying it.\footnote{Hume, p. 106} It "admits of not so easy and satisfactory an answer, nor is it possible to explain distinctly how the Deity can be the immediate cause of all the actions of men, without being the author of sin and moral turpitude. These are mysteries which mere natural and unassisted reason is very unfit to handle."\footnote{Ibid.} One commentator remarks the following. "He concluded that this is a 'mystery' which reason cannot fathom (for which, read, in accordance with the canons of Humean exegesis, that we must indeed impute sin to God.)."\footnote{W. I. Matson, "On the Irrelevance of Free-will to Moral Responsibility, and the Vacuity of the Latter," \textit{Mind}, LXV (October 1956), 493.}

Our criticism of Hume's stand will be that of Fr. Rickaby. "There is a certain vulpine humility in all this. But it had been more honest either to admit the objection as valid and unanswerable, an admission tantamount to a denial of God—for a bad god is no god at all; or else to repudiate that Humian doctrine from which the whole objection proceeds, that 'voluntary actions be subjected to the same laws of necessity with the operations of matter.'"\footnote{Rickaby, p. 161.} In other words, Hume placed the ultimate objection against his own system, was unable to answer it, but was likewise unwilling to modify his system.
Hume's only attempt to meet this problem is a retreat into skepticism. He pleads that the mind be restricted within the bounds set down for it in previous considerations. Over and above this admonition, D. G. C. MacNabb notes, there is another attempted solution in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. This commentator says the following of Hume. "What he actually says elsewhere is that moral sentiments have their origin in human nature and human society.... God is not a human being; there is, therefore, no more sense in calling him unjust or unkind than there is in calling an alligator unjust or unkind. Experience affords no evidence that the Creator's sentiments are at all similar to ours." But this line of reasoning is just a more verbose retreat into skepticism. For, it is also an admission of the possibility of evil in God, and by emphasizing the limitation of knowledge to "experience" it reiterates skepticism about "nonexperienced" things.

Thus here in the final stage of our consideration of determinism of the will Hume himself directs us back to the beginnings of his philosophy, to his theory of knowledge. Hume has been consistent in applying the method of his approach, "Being an Attempt to introduce the experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Sub-

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52 MacNabb, p. 203.
jects." The result is philosophical skepticism, the denial of free will (which also involves a denial of moral responsibility), and the imputation of all evil to God.
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The thesis submitted by Matthew D. Cook, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date: September 5, 1959

Signature of Adviser: [Signature]