

## THE DELICATE CAUSALIST: REPLY TO MY CRITICS

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I am grateful to Livia Guimaraes Fred Wilson and Karánn Durland for their criticism of *Hume's Theory of Causation: A Quasi-Realist Interpretation*. My ideas have been significantly improved by their comments. I am unable to respond to every point in the allotted time although I'd like to get the chance to respond in greater detail very much. I focus on two important points of each critic. Opportunities to address other issues will perhaps arise in the discussion period. Sincere thanks also to Wes Anderson, Avram Hiller, Peter Kail, Ted Morris, Tom Seppalainen and Chad Wiener for helpful discussions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The following abbreviations will be used for Hume: EHU (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. T. L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and EPM (*Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. T. L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); EMPL (*Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* (revised edn). Ed. Eugene Miller, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985) and THN (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by D. F. Norton and M. J. Norton, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). References to the *Treatise* and the *Enquiries* cite the book, chapter, section, and paragraph. References to the *Essays* cite page numbers only.

**SECTION I: REPLY TO LIVIA GUIMARAES “COMMENTS ON ANGELA COVENTRY’S HUME’S THEORY OF CAUSATION: A QUASI-REALIST INTERPRETATION”**

I am happy that Livia finds value in three aspects of my work: first, the exploration of the concept of standard in Hume’s philosophy, second the character portrayal of the delicate and practiced causalist, and third, the opening up of a new intermediate “space” in the debate between realists and anti-realists (1, 8). I’ll respond to two main difficulties Livia raises to do with the analogy drawn between causation and aesthetics and the notion of an ‘ideal’ standard.

*I.I. Causal and Aesthetic Judgments*

Livia questions my reliance on “Of the Standard of Taste” to illuminate Hume on causal truth. First, she thinks that “the truth or falsehood of causal judgments is already established in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*—where “real existence and matter of fact” could consist in regular experience” (5). Second, Livia argues that if I “remain close to the standard of taste”, then I must concede that Hume leaves room for aesthetic disagreements that cannot be resolved, “or at least for diversity,” and that there are simply differences in judgment which cannot be decided by any standard (6). This finding, “transferred to causal judgments” results “in less, not more fixity” (6). Now if I choose to distance myself from the essay on aesthetics, then I may have “to allow a disanalogy between epistemic and aesthetic standards of truth” (6).

I am sympathetic to Livia’s view that the truth or falsehood of causal judgments has already been established in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*. However I do consider the standard of truth presented in the essay “Of the Standard of Taste” to be a natural complement as applied to the account of causal truth presented in the *Treatise* and *Enquiry*.

Truth or falsehood about causes consists in their agreement “to the *real* existence and matter of fact” (THN 3.1.1.9; 2.3.10.2). Now I was impressed by two passages from ‘Of the Standard of Taste’ that linked the

phrase “real existence or matter of fact” with a true and decisive standard. In ‘Of the Standard of Taste’ there is a “species of philosophy” which “represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste” since there are an abundance of truths about beauty and deformity (EMPL 229). What is beautiful depends on the particular person at hand, so it is true for that particular person, and so on, such that there is no such thing as a right or wrong response to a work of art, in which case again seeking the real beauty or deformity would be a wasted effort. On this view “All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real” however “all determinations of the understanding are not right; because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, to wit, real matter of fact; and are not always conformable to that standard” (EMPL 230). Now Hume “opposes” this philosophy with “a species of common sense” that some sentiments of taste are preferable to others and later in the essay he takes to have “proved” “that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing” (EMPL 242). The point of the essay then is to show that while it is “certain, that beauty and deformity ... are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment”, we can nevertheless determine a standard of taste it being natural for us “to seek a *Standard of Taste* ... by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another’ (EMPL 229-34; EHU 12.3.33). To deal with the problem of conflicting judgments between art critics, he says that “men can do no more than in other disputable questions which are submitted to the understanding: They must produce the best arguments, that their invention suggests to them; they must acknowledge, a true and decisive standard to exist somewhere, to wit, real existence and matter of fact; and they must have indulgence to such as differ from them in their appeals to this standard” (EMPL 242).

The first mention of the standard when characterizing the opposed species of philosophy is significant because he sets the criterion for truth and falsity in terms of conformity to a standard in judgments of the

understanding and the second passage is significant because the criterion for truth and falsity is also set in terms of conformity to a standard in judgments of taste. The standard in matters of taste is not found in the nature of things however but in the joint verdict of the practiced aesthetic judges. I extend the true and decisive standard of taste to a true and decisive standard of causes produced directly in the delicate imagination of the practiced causalist. The standard can then be used to judge between differing causal judgments. The standard is needed because the rules to judge causes and effect outlined in the *Treatise* do not alone establish that one particular causal judgment is better than another. After all, one can misunderstand and/or misapply the rules to judge causes and effects; Hume was well aware that people vary greatly in reasoning abilities. To use the rules to judge causes and effects properly, one needs keen observation and concentration skills. When applying the rules, one must to “carefully separate whatever is superfluous, and enquire by new experiments” to make sure that every particular circumstance of the first experiment is essential to it. The new experiment is subjected to that same scrutiny and so on. The person conducting these experiments needs persistence, caution, and good sense because the surrounding circumstances can be very complex and might even escape “our strictest attention”. Even so, it is very important to engage in repeated experiments to separate what is superfluous in causal relations. A certain delicacy of imagination is thus needed so as to perceive every single component in experiments about causes, without allowing any element to be overlooked. After spending some time correcting our judgments about causes via the rules, surely it is a natural step for the imagination to then form an ideal standard of a necessary connection between cause and effect. The standard produced in the mind of such a practiced causalist affords a decision between conflicting causal judgments and not the sole application of the rules themselves.

Further, I defend the fixity of the standard in both causes and aesthetics by disputing the claim that remaining close to the standard of

taste entails as Livia puts it “the acceptance of unavoidable ... differences in judgment, and of the fact that there is no standard by which they can be decided” (6). Hume acknowledges “two sources of variations” however the good critic minimizes even these sources of variation. That variation in judgment due to differences of character can be minimized is I take to be the point of Hume’s example of the two literary critics, one “a young man whose passions are warm,” who prefers the amorous and tender images of Ovid, and the other “a man advanced in years, who takes pleasure in wise, philosophical reflections” and prefers the work of Tacitus (EMPL 244). Hume admits that while it is “almost impossible not to feel a predilection for that which suits our particular turn and disposition”, but that “it is plainly an error in a critic, to confine his approbation to one species or one style of writing and condemn all the rest” (EMPL 244). The good critic always suspends their own particular interests, circumstances, opinions, passions in the act of judging a particular piece of work. A person who is “influenced by prejudice, complies not with this condition” and as “far his taste evidently departs from the true standard, and of consequence loses all credit and authority” (EMPL 239). The good critic must also attempt to overcome the second source of variation, “the particular manners and opinions of the age one lives in”. Of his own work he writes that, “A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration” (EMPL 239). To deal with both sources of variation, Hume appeals to a true standard or a true judgment to settle the matter.

### *I.II. The Ideal Standard*

A final point concerns the notion of an ideal standard. Livia wonders why I insist that the standard must be ideal and wants to drop the notion of ideal altogether and substitute an ideal standard with an

imaginary standard (7). Livia's worry is no doubt a genuine one and I admit my attempt to explain the role of ideal standards was poorly expressed but I still want to keep the notion of an ideal standard. So let me try another explanation focusing on the sort of ideal standard I had in mind.

Hume's first mention of a perfect standard is invented by the imagination occurs in Book 1, Part 2 of the *Treatise*. He says that once we become accustomed to reviewing, comparing, and correcting our judgments of equality, the mind naturally supposes "some imaginary standard of equality, by which appearances and measuring are exactly corrected" (THN 1.2.4.24). So, after correcting many judgments of equality, the imagination, which Hume describes as being "like a galley put into motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse", proceeds to invent a 'correct and exact standard of that relation', that is 'not liable to the least error or variation' (THN 1.4.2.22). In the case of lines and curves we correct "the first appearance by a more accurate consideration" and we do so by means of comparing it with "some rule", of which we are assured by repeated experiences. After all these comparisons and corrections, the imagination forms the idea of a perfect standard of these figures (THN 1.2.4.25).

Now it must be emphasized that the perfect standard of these figures is a "loose idea" and not something we can "explain or comprehend" and in the case of time, the "various corrections of our measures and their different degrees of exactness" gives an "implicit" but "obscure" notion of a "perfect and entire equality" (THN 1.2.4.24). Now one might initially think the ideal standard is not much use: not only is the ideal standard obscure (we are unable to explain or comprehend it) but also the standard exists only in the imagination and so cannot be directly examined. Nonetheless, the emergence of this ideal standard is a natural upshot of reflective judgments that then serves as a decisive criterion, or perhaps some sort of fixed reference point, that makes possible or assists our practices of consistently and continually improving our judgments, causal or oth-

erwise. So we can call upon the ideal standard when we systematically work on improving our judgments and the more effort we put into it, the closer we may approach the ideal but there is no need to think the ideal is ever realized, although it is natural enough to think of improving our judgments in terms of aiming toward such an ideal. (This is where I see the influence of Hume on Blackburn most clearly as a matter of fact). The existence of the ideal standard therefore does not mean the disappearance of critical disagreement or the end of improving one's judgments but rather turns out to be an important part of the practice of sorting through critical disagreement in the progressive movement toward arriving at a true judgment on the matter at hand.

## **SECTION II: REPLY TO FRED WILSON'S "REFLECTIONS ON ANGELA COVENTRY'S HUME'S THEORY OF CAUSATION"**

Wilson thinks that my interpretation is "nearer to the truth about Hume than any realist could be" but remains convinced that "Hume's full account of cause" is best classified as anti-realist (4, 10). I'll focus on two main lines of criticism: first, that Hume's account of cause is emotivism and not projectionism, and second, that my elaboration of an ideal causal network doesn't pay sufficient attention to Hume's rules to judge causes and effects (5-10). I will defend my interpretation against each objection in turn.

### ***II.I. Projection***

Wilson allows that "projection does occur" and that "projection might in a sense be natural" but thinks that projection is a "false reading of Hume" (5). This is because projection always brings with it "confusion" and so ought to be rejected by any philosophy like Hume's that "aims for clarity of thought" (5). Objective necessary connections (understood as projections) are "illusions" so "discourse about them is

nonsense” (5). Now if we do happen to “project the subjective tendencies into or onto objective things, then we are doing something that clear philosophy will eliminate,” and so projection “disappears” in his philosophy (5). Projection is not only a false interpretation of Hume but is also a “positively dangerous” view because if we allow people the illusion that there are objective causal necessities, then that person becomes “impervious to criticism” (5).

I find this to be a rather limited understanding of the notion of projection at work in Hume’s philosophy. Projection plays an integral role in varying ways in many areas of Hume’s philosophy such as causation, external objects, religious belief and morals. For the current purpose, Hume’s target is our linguistic expressions to do with necessary connections between cause and effect. Like Locke, Hume thinks that words signify ideas. Ideas themselves are copies of impressions. In the Abstract to the *Treatise*, Hume writes when he suspects that any philosophical term has no idea annexed to it, he always asks, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? And if no impression can be produced, he concludes that the term is altogether unintelligible. He endeavors to fix the “precise” meanings of words like that of power, force, energy, and necessary connection (EHU 7.1.3). This is no small matter since words such as power or necessary connection are employed “either in philosophical reasonings, or common life” at every moment (EHU 7.2.27-29). In famous footnote near the end of Section 7 in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, the topic under discussion is “the frequent use of the words, Force, Power, Energy, &c., which every where occur in common conversation, as well as in philosophy” (EHU 7.2.n17).

The projectivist part of my reading is Hume’s explanation that when we use words like necessary connection, power or force, we are indicating ideas in our own minds to the effect that a connection between two events is associated in my imagination and we have a natural tendency to project our feeling of confidence onto those two objects or events linguistically by pronouncing them to be connected. This sort of



expression of attitude is only a mistake when we continue to suppose the world really does contain these features after we learn they are in fact features of the mind. Hume makes this clear when he diagnoses why people won't be happy with his view that the use of terms like power, force or necessary connection etc. result from a feeling of customary connection between ideas. The bias is accounted for by the "common observation, that the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects" and—that the same propensity is the reason, why we suppose necessity and power to lie in the objects we consider, not in our mind that considers them" (THN 1.3.14.24-5). He says that "when we speak of a necessary connexion betwixt objects" and "suppose, that this connexion depends upon an efficacy or energy, with which any of these objects are endow'd; in all these expressions, so apply'd, we have really no distinct meaning, and make use only of common words, without any clear and determinate ideas" (THN 1.3.14.14). Later, Hume says that "If we have really no idea of a power or efficacy in any object" we certainly have no idea of "an efficacy is necessary in all operations" and that "we do not understand our own meaning in talking so" as is the case, when we "transfer the determination of the thought to external objects" (THN 1.3.14.25).

Using terms like power, force, or necessary connection while at the same time assuming these terms depend on something objectively inheres in objects is an error or a confusion that Hume's philosophy is supposed to eliminate. So, contrary to Wilson, the projectivist reading is not dangerous as it does not allow people to succumb to the illusion that there are objective causal necessities in the world. My reading allows that confusion arises when we terms like power, force or necessary connection while supposing at the same time that they objectively in the world. However, the notion of projection need not always bring with it confusion. Projection is an important part of Hume's explanation as to how we come to apply the terms like necessary connection, power or force in the world and we can continue to use the terms error-free

however once the proper explanation of the origin of the terms has been properly understood and accepted. This is illustrated in Hume's positive use of the term necessity in relation to the free will debate. By necessity he means the constant union of events and the consequent inference of the mind represented by the famous two definitions of a cause; these two components are "essential to necessity" (THN 2.3.1.4). Hume shows no signs of abandoning the terms in his philosophy; in fact the usage of these terms continues after discovering their source in the mind. Finally, accepting projectionism does not mean that everyone suddenly is rendered immune to criticism. In fact, it is part of the view that people ought to actively correct causal judgments wherever possible. This is where the rules to judge causes and effects come into place.

### *II.II. The Ideal Causal Network*

The second issue concerns the relation of the rules to the ideal causal network. Wilson thinks that the ideal causal network "is not far from Hume's thought but leaves out the importance of the rules by which to judge causes and effects: the theory must be one inferred from our sensible experience of the world in conformity with these rules" (5-8). I'll admit that my explanation of the rules to judge cause and effect was limited and lacked detail. However I'd certainly deny that the ideal causal network neglects the importance of the rules by which to judge causes and effect. In fact, my understanding of an ideal causal network is grounded in the rules to judge causes and effects.

The ideal causal network is a natural upshot of the delicate imagination of those who have had plenty of practice correcting their causal judgments. The practiced causalist has in the imagination an ideal standard of a necessary connection between cause and effect as a natural upshot of reflective judgments. Now the imagination extends to an ideal network consisting solely of these sorts of connections between cause and effect.

To elaborate on this notion of the ideal causal network consider the two systems of reality. The first system is “the object of the memory and senses” and the second is the object of judgment. The first reality is “the system of perceptions”, and the second reality is a system connected by custom or the relation of cause and effect whereby “it proceeds to the consideration of their ideas; and as it feels that ’tis in a manner necessarily determined to view these particular ideas, and that the custom or relation, by which it is determined, admits not of the least change” (THN 1.3.9.3). At this level of judgment, wherein the objects presented by true relations of cause and effect are “fixt and unalterable” (THN 1.3.9.7). By the causal connections among events or objects in reality or the world I mean nothing other than the causal relations between perceptions in first system and the causal connections formed in the network represented in the second system are supposed to accurately represent the causal relations in the first system. After all, an adequate idea for Hume is one that accurately represents an object (a perception) and particular ideas that adequately represent particular objects reveal the nature of the objects (perceptions) they represent (THN 1.2.2.5). The idea is that the causal network, that second system of reality populated by the imagination, adequately represents or matches up with the first system of reality, that of relations between perceptions, and so reveals the causal structure of the world (nothing more than relations between perceptions). There need not be mention in my account of real powers or forces that are the causes of perceptions. We can however talk about the causal relations between perceptions that form a system of reality and we can rely on it when regulating our causal judgments on the second system of reality.

The importance of the rules to judge causes and effects is secured in my account on at least two occasions. First, both the ideal standard and the ideal causal network develop in the imagination only after one has engaged in the practice of correcting their judgments and here is the relevance of the rules as regulators of causal judgments. Second, the rules

can be used as regulators of causal judgments when inferring the second system of reality from the first.

I look forward to further discussion.

### **SECTION III: REPLY TO KARANN DURLAND'S "A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT ANGELA COVENTRY'S *HUME'S THEORY OF CAUSATION: A QUASI-REALIST INTERPRETATION*"**

I am grateful to Karann Durland for not only organizing an Author-meets-Critics session on *Hume's Theory of Causation: A Quasi-Realist Interpretation* but also for her insightful questions about the project. I am pleased that she finds my interpretation "provocative" and "a significant contribution to discussions of Hume's work" despite her reluctance to accept it (1-2). Karann's commentary focuses on dissimilarities between causes on the one hand, morals and aesthetics on the other in contrast to my emphasis on the similarities between causes, morals and aesthetics in *Hume's Theory of Causation*. In what follows, I address two main questions on this issue.

#### ***III.I. Causal, Moral and Aesthetic Sentiments***

The first concern is whether the feelings involved in causal judgments are "appropriately analogous" to moral and aesthetic feelings (2). Moral and aesthetic qualities appear as features of the world in a "particularly robust way" in the sense that even if one believes they exist in the mind alone, "one cannot help but experience them as located outside it" (2). Feelings of anticipation however are different in that once one "appreciates how very odd" it is to project feelings of anticipation onto objects then those properties no longer "stubbornly present themselves as qualities of the world" (2). Thus, what is projected in causal judgments is unclear.

Karann raises an interesting issue to do with the phenomenology of projective experience and its variations but this is surely not where the

focus of Hume's interest in projection lies. The use of the projective mechanism is explanatory in two ways: first, projection explains the origin of the common belief that there are necessary connexions between the objects themselves. Most people believe that "they perceive the very force or energy of the cause by which [a cause] is connected with its effect" and this is because we project our own feeling of anticipation onto the observed events and think we are experiencing a necessary connection that inheres in the events themselves (EHU 7.1.21; THN 1.4.3.9). Second, the projective mechanism also explains why his view that the necessity and power of causes is located in the determination of the mind and not in the object will likely be treated as "extravagant and ridiculous" (THN 1.3.14.25). Hume claims that a certain "biass of the mind will prevail, and give them a prejudice against the present doctrine" (THN 1.3.14.24). The bias of the mind is accounted for by projection: the "common observation, that the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects" so that when "we *feel* a customary connexion between the ideas, we transfer that feeling to the objects" (THN 1.3.14.24-5; EHU 7.2.29.n17). This same propensity is the reason why we mistakenly suppose that "necessity and power to lie in the objects we consider, not in our mind that considers them" (THN 1.3.14.24-5). So, the mechanism of projection in part explains why the causal properties do present themselves "stubbornly" if you will as part of the world as "nothing is more usual that to apply to external bodies every internal sensation, which they occasion" (EHU 7.2.29.n17).<sup>2</sup>

### *III.II. Custom and Reflection in Causes, Morals and Aesthetics*

The second concern is that there is a significant difference between the conditions for making causal judgments and the conditions for making moral or aesthetic judgments (3). Generating the standards to

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<sup>2</sup>For more on the use of projection see my "Reply to Fred Wilson" III.I.

make genuine judgments in morals and aesthetics requires “considerable cognitive sophistication” as it involves extensive critical reflection and applying general rules however the role of custom or habit however “strongly suggests” that causal judgments do not require the “careful consideration and the application of rules” (2-3). One response would be that my account identifies the conditions that must be met for causal utterances to have truth values and show that Hume “distinguishes genuine causal statements from mere causal utterances that lack truth values” (3). A second response is to deny that the “developing and employing a causal standard is completely analogous to the processes by which aesthetic and moral standards are cultivated and applied” and so the dissimilarities identified are real but unimportant” (3). If the differences are insignificant more needs to be said about it because “if careful, critical reflection plays an essential role in moral and aesthetic contexts but not causal ones” then “the value of modeling Hume’s treatment of causal judgments on his handling of moral and aesthetic claims becomes unclear” (3-4).

There is no significant difference between the conditions for the standard involved with causal judgments on the one hand and moral and aesthetic judgments on the other. The objection assumes that critical reflection is essential in moral and aesthetic judgments but not causal judgments given the role of custom or habit. However, I argue that custom or habit makes possible moral and aesthetic judgments in addition to causal judgments and that critical reflection is required to reach genuine judgments in all these areas.

Hume explains that “custom ... operates immediately, without allowing any time for reflection” in ‘Of the Probability of Causes’ (THN 1.3.12.7). Aesthetic and moral responses are also “immediate” in the sense that the feeling occurs spontaneously in anyone who makes customary imaginative associations. For example, moral sentiments are made possible by our natural ability to sympathize. Hume understands our ability to sympathize as a fundamental principle of human nature “to

receive by communication” the “inclinations and sentiments” of others resembling us (THN 2.1.11.2). This natural propensity is one among many species of the general associationist operation of enlivening ideas related to impressions to the point where they approach or equal the vivacity of the impressions themselves. More specifically, the mechanism of sympathy increases the vivacity of an idea related to the passion felt by another to the point where it equals or approaches the original impression (THN 2.1.11.3-7). This is explained through the liveliness of the pervasive idea or impression of ourselves that works together with general resemblance between human beings allowing us “enter into” or “embrace” the sentiments of others as if they are my own so that my idea of say your happiness, when vivid enough, is actually “converted into the very impression they represent” (THN 2.1.11.4-8). The strength of the communication of sentiments varies depending upon the degree of resemblance and contiguity between the observer and the person with who he or she sympathizes.<sup>3</sup>

Aesthetic and moral sentiments are immediate and yet such discriminations can be influenced by consultation of “general rules of art” or “rules” that “are founded only on experience and observation” and so the application of “good sense” and “reason” improves them (EMPL 270, 277; THN 3.1.2.3). Hume writes that “Some species of beauty ... on their first appearance, command our affection and approbation ... But in many orders of beauty ... it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment; and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection” (EPM 173). In morals, to compensate for any variation in the observer’s sympathies resulting from physical or temporal closeness to or distance from the person judged, or

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<sup>3</sup>My understanding of Hume’s account of the passions and moral sentiments is much indebted to Lilli Alanen’s article “Powers and Mechanisms of the Passions” and Jane MacIntyre’s “Hume’s “New and Extraordinary” Account of the Passions” in the *Blackwell Guide to Hume’s Treatise*, edited by Saul Traiger, Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

from the degrees of resemblance, Hume recommends contemplation of the person or action from a common perspective that appears the same to every spectator “without reference to our particular interest” (THN 3.1.2.4; 3.3.1.30). In fact, moral sentiments tend to be felt only when “we fix on some steady and general point of view” in which we abstract from “our situation of nearness or remoteness, with regard to the person blam’d or prais’d, and according to the present disposition of our mind” (THN 3.3.1.15-16). The consideration of a character in general is what “causes such a feeling or sentiment as denominates it morally good or evil” or produces “that particular feeling or sentiment, on which moral distinctions depend” (THN 3.1.2.4; 3.3.1.30). This means that we have only to contemplate the character from the general point of view for the pleasant or unpleasant feelings produced by sympathy to cause a corresponding pleasant or unpleasant moral sentiment depending on whether the character in question possesses virtuous or vicious mental qualities. Only these sorts of common, general feelings can form the basis of morality, which recommends “the same object” of approval or disapproval to all humankind (EPM 9.1.5).

Like aesthetic and moral judgments, causal judgments are liable to correction. In *Treatise* 1.3.15, Hume states eight “rules by which to judge of causes and effects” by which “we ought to *regulate* our judgment concerning causes and effects; and these rules are form’d on the nature of our understanding, and on our experience of its operations in the judgments we form concerning objects” (THN 1.3.15.11; 1.3.15.2). These sorts of corrections are necessary because “[i]n almost all kinds of causes there is a complication of circumstances, of which some are essential, and others superfluous; some are absolutely requisite to the production of the effect, and others are only conjoin’d by accident” (THN 1.3.13.9). Sometimes the “superfluous circumstances” when “frequently conjoin’d with the essential” they have such an influence on the imagination “that even in the absence of the latter they carry us on to the conception of the usual effect, and give to that conception a force and vivacity, which make



it superior to the mere fictions of the fancy” (THN 1.3.13.9). A bit of reflection corrects the propensity “but ‘tis still certain, that custom takes the start, and gives a bias to the imagination” (THN 1.3.13.9). In causes, morals and aesthetics then custom is required to make the judgments and correction and application of rules are needed to regulate these judgments.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>For more on the importance of the standard for the regulation of judgment see my “Reply to Livia Guimaraes” I.I-II.