A Dissertation on the Passions

David Hume

1757

[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis .... indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. —The division into sections is Hume's; the titles of the sections are not.

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Contents

Glossary

affection: A feeling regarding someone, not necessarily positive. On page 11 hatred is called an affection.

efficient cause: What we today would call 'cause', as distinct from 'final cause' = purpose.

evil: Meaning 'bad' quite generally, not excluding any of the intense special meanings the word carries today, but not requiring them.

meanness: Lowness of socio-economic level.

object: In this work an 'object' can be a thing or event or state of affairs. The question of whether an 'object' is 'existent' (as in the second paragraph of item **3.** on page 1) may concern the existence of a thing, the occurrence of an event, or the obtaining of a state of affairs.

original: Basic, in-born, not resulting from any mechanism such as those Hume is theorising about.

principle: In this work, a 'principle' is sometimes a certain kind of proposition (as it is for us); but more often it is a cause, drive, source of energy.

sentiment: feeling or emotion. In the few occurrences where it means 'opinion', this version replaces it by 'opinion'.

temper: emotional state.

uneasiness: A state somewhere on the spectrum with mild dissatisfaction at one end and misery at the other.

Section 1. Fluctuations and mixtures

1. Some objects [see Glossary] immediately produce an agreeable sensation, by the original [see Glossary] structure of our organs, and are therefore called 'good'; others from their immediate disagreeable sensation acquire the label 'evil' [see Glossary]. Thus moderate warmth is agreeable and good; excessive heat painful and evil.

Again, some objects by being naturally conformable or contrary to passion, arouse an agreeable or painful sensation, and are therefore 'good' or 'evil'. The punishment of an adversary is good because it gratifies revenge; the sickness of a companion is evil because it affects friendship.

2. All good or evil, whatever it arises from, produces various passions and affections [see Glossary], according to the light in which it is surveyed.

When good is certain or very probable, it produces joy; when evil is certain or very probable, there arises grief or sorrow.

When either good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to fear or hope, according to the degree of uncertainty on one side or the other.

Desire arises from good considered simply, and aversion from evil. The will exerts itself when either the presence of the good or absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body.

3. None of these passions seems to contain anything curious or remarkable, except hope and fear, which—being derived from the probability of any good or evil—are mixed passions that deserve our attention.

Probability arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, an opposition that prevents the mind from fixing on either side, and incessantly tosses it from one to another, making it at one moment consider an object as existent and the next moment as not so. The imagination or understanding—call it which you please—fluctuates between the opposite views; and though it may be oftener turned to one side than the other, the opposition of causes or chances makes it impossible for it to rest on either. The pro and con of the question alternately prevail; and the mind, surveying the objects in their opposite causes, finds a contrariety that destroys all certainty or established opinion.

If the object we are doubtful about produces either desire or aversion, it is obvious that our mind must feel a momentary impression of joy or sorrow, according as it turns itself to one side or the other. An object whose existence we desire gives satisfaction when we think of the causes that produce it; and for the same reason arouses grief or uneasiness [see Glossary] when we think the opposite way. So it happens that in probable questions just as **the understanding** is divided between the contrary points of view, so **the heart** is correspondingly divided between opposite emotions.

Now, the human mind with regard to the passions is not like a musical wind instrument which immediately loses the sound when the breath ceases, but rather resembles a string-instrument where after each stroke the vibrations still retain some sound that gradually fades away. The imagination is extremely quick and agile; but the passions, in comparison, are slow and restive [= 'hard to budge']. For that reason, when any object is presented that provides a variety of views to the one (·**the understanding**·) and emotions to the other (·**the heart**)·, though the imagination may change its views with great speed, each stroke will not produce a clear and distinct note of passion, but the one passion will always be inextricably mingled with the other. According as the probability inclines to good or evil, the passion of **grief** or **joy** predominates in the composition; and these passions being intermingled by means of the contrary views of the

imagination produce through their union the passions of **hope** or **fear**.

4. As this theory seems to carry its own evidence along with it, I shall be more concise in my proofs.

The passions of fear and hope can arise when the chances are equal on both sides. Indeed, in this situation the passions are rather the strongest, as the mind has then the least foundation to rest upon, and is tossed with the greatest uncertainty. Increase the degree of probability on the side of grief and that passion immediately diffuses itself over the composition and tinctures it into fear. Keep increasing the probability (and thus the grief), and the fear keeps growing, and the joy component keeps diminishing, until eventually there is pure grief. Then diminish the grief by the contrary operation of lessening the probability on the melancholy side, and you will see the passion changing gradually into hope, which in turn runs by slow degrees into joy, as you increase that part of the composition, by the increase of the probability. Are not these as plain proofs that the passions of fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy, as it is in optics a proof that a coloured ray of the sun passing through a prism is a composition of two others, when as you diminish or increase the quantity of either you find it to prevail proportionally more or less in the composition?

5. Probability is of two kinds. In one, the object is itself uncertain, and to be determined by chance. In the other, the object is already certain ·in itself·, but is uncertain to our judgment, which finds proofs or presumptions on each side of the question. Both these kinds of probability cause fear and hope, which comes from the property they have in common, namely the uncertainty and fluctuation they bestow on the passion through the contrariety of views that is common to both.

6. It is a probable good or evil that commonly causes hope or fear, because probability, producing an inconstant and wavering survey of an object, naturally produces a similar mixture and uncertainty of passion. But whenever this mixture can be produced from other causes, the passions of fear and hope will arise even if probability doesn't come into it.

An evil conceived as barely possible sometimes produces fear, especially if the evil is very great. A man cannot think about excessive pain and torture without trembling, if he runs the least risk of suffering them. The smallness of the probability is outweighed by the greatness of the evil.

But even impossible evils cause fear; as when we tremble on the brink of a precipice, though we know we are in perfect security and can choose whether to advance a step further. The immediate presence of the evil influences the imagination and produces a sort of belief; but being opposed by our awareness of our security that belief is immediately retracted, and causes the same kind of passion as when from a contrariety of chances contrary passions are produced.

Evils that are certain sometimes have the same effect as the possible or impossible. A man in a strong prison without the least means of escape trembles at the thoughts of the rack to which he has been sentenced. The evil is here fixed in itself; but the mind has not courage to fix on it, and this fluctuation gives rise to a passion like that of fear.

7. Fear or hope can arise not only where good or evil is uncertain as to its *existence*, but where it is uncertain as to its *kind*. If a man were told that one of his sons has been suddenly killed, the passion occasioned by this event would not settle into grief until he knew for sure *which* of his sons he had lost. Though each side of the question produces here the same passion, that passion cannot settle, but receives from the unfixed imagination a tremulous unsteady motion resembling the mixture and contention of grief and joy.

8. Thus all kinds of uncertainty have a strong connection with fear, even when they do not cause any opposition of passions by the opposite views they present to us. If I leave a friend who is sick, I will feel more anxiety upon his account than if I were still with him, even if I am unable to give him any assistance or to judge concerning the outcome of his sickness. There are a thousand little details of his situation and condition that I desire to know; and the knowledge of them would prevent the fluctuation and uncertainty that is so nearly allied to fear. Horace has remarked on this phenomenon:

> *Ut assidens implumibus pullus avis*
> *Serpentium allapsus timet,*
> *Magis relictis; non, ut adsit, auxili*
> *Latura plus praesentibus.*

['Just as the mother hen fears the gliding of the serpent near her unfledged chicks more when they are not near, though she could bring no more help to them if they were.'] A virgin on her bridal night goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, though she expects nothing but pleasure. The confusion of wishes and joys, the newness and greatness of the unknown event, so crowd in on the mind that it doesn't know in what image or passion to fix itself.

9. A point about the mixture of affections: when contrary passions arise from objects that have no connection with one another, they take place ·not in a mixture but· alternately. Thus when a man is afflicted for the loss of a lawsuit and joyful for the birth of a son, his mind—however swiftly it runs from the agreeable object to the calamitous one—can scarcely temper the one affection with the other and remain in a neutral state between them.

It more easily attains that calm situation when a single event is of a mixed nature, containing something adverse and something prosperous in its different details. For in that case, it often happens that the two passions mingle with each other and cancel one another out, leaving the mind in perfect tranquillity.

But if the object is not a compound of good and evil but is considered as probable or improbable in any degree, then the contrary passions will both be present at once in the soul, and instead of balancing and tempering each other, will subsist together, producing by their union a third impression or affection such as hope or fear.

The influence of the relations of ideas (which I shall explain more fully later) is plainly seen in this affair. In contrary passions, if the objects are totally different, the passions are like two opposite liquors in different bottles, which have no influence on each other. If the objects are intimately connected, the passions are like an alkali and an acid, which when mingled destroy each other. If the relation is more imperfect and consists in the contradictory views of the same object, the passions are like oil and vinegar, which never perfectly unite and incorporate, however thoroughly they are mingled.

The effect of a mixture of passions when one is predominant and swallows up the other will be explained later.

Section 2. Pride and humility

1. Besides the above-mentioned passions that arise from a direct pursuit of good and aversion to evil, there are others of a more complicated nature that imply more than one view or consideration. Thus **pride** is a certain satisfaction with ourselves on account of some accomplishment or possession that we enjoy; whereas **humility** is a dissatisfaction with ourselves on account of some defect or infirmity.

Love or **friendship** is satisfaction with someone else on

account of his accomplishments or services; **hatred** is the contrary.

2. In these two sets of passions, there is an obvious distinction to be made between the object of the passion and its cause. The object of pride and humility is self; the cause of the passion is some excellence in the former case, some fault in the latter. The object of love and hatred is some other person; the causes are again either excellences or faults.

With regard to all these passions, the causes are what arouse the emotion; the object is what the mind directs its view to when the emotion is aroused. For example, our merit raises pride, and it is essential to pride to turn our view on ourselves with pleasure and satisfaction.

The causes of these passions are very numerous and various, though their object is uniform and simple; so it is interesting and challenging to think about what all these various causes have in common, or in other words what is the real efficient [see Glossary] cause of the passion. I begin with pride and humility.

3. In order to explain the causes of these passions, we must reflect on certain principles [see Glossary] which have a mighty influence on every operation of the understanding and the passions but are not commonly stressed much by philosophers. The first of these is the *association of ideas*, i.e. the principle by which we make an easy transition from one idea to another. However uncertain and changeable our thoughts may be, they are not entirely without rule and method in their changes. They usually pass with regularity from one object to what •resembles it, •is contiguous to it, or •is produced by it. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other that is united to it by these relations naturally follows it, and enters the mind with more facility by means of that introduction.

The second property that I shall observe in the human mind is a similar *association of impressions or emotions*.[1] All resembling impressions are inter-connected; and no sooner does one arise than the rest naturally follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again. Similarly, when our temper [see Glossary] is elevated with joy, it naturally throws itself into love, generosity, courage, pride, and the like.

In the third place, it is observable that these two kinds of association very much assist and forward each other, and that the transition is more easily made when they both concur in the same object. A man who is very much discomposed and ruffled in his temper by an injury received from someone else is apt to find a hundred subjects of hatred, discontent, impatience, fear, and other uneasy passions; especially, if he can find them in or near the person who was the object of his first emotion. The principles that forward the transition of •ideas here co-operate with those that act ·in the same way· on the •passions; and the two, uniting in one action, give the mind a double impulse.

Upon this occasion I may cite a passage from an elegant writer [Addison] who expresses himself thus:

> 'As the fancy delights in everything, that is great, strange or beautiful, and is still the more pleased the more it finds of these perfections in the same object, so it is capable of receiving new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense. Thus, any continual sound, as the music of birds, or a fall of waters, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and

[1] [For Hume 'impressions' are something like sense-impressions, as in the quotation from Addison, and not much like emotions (or passions). But he writes here as though a single association-mechanism covered both. The present version follows him verbatim in this, not trying to sort things out.]

> makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place, that lie before him. Thus, if there arises a fragrancy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasure of the imagination, and make even the colours and verdure of the landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than where they enter the mind separately: As the different colours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of the situation.'

We can see in these phenomena the association both of impressions and of ideas, and the mutual assistance these associations lend to each other.

4. It seems to me that both these species of relation have a role in producing pride or humility, and are the real efficient [see Glossary] causes of the passion.

With regard to the **relation of ideas**, there can be no question. Whatever we are proud of must in some way belong to us. It is always *our* knowledge, *our* sense, beauty, possessions or family on which we value ourselves. Self, which is the •object of the passion, must be related to the quality or circumstance that •causes the passion. There must be a connection between them; an easy transition of the imagination in passing from one to the other. Where this connection is lacking, no object can arouse either pride or humility; and the more you weaken the connection, the more you weaken the passion.

5. The only subject of enquiry is whether there is a similar **relation of impressions or sentiments** [see Glossary], wherever pride or humility is felt; whether whatever it is that causes the passion previously arouses a sentiment similar to the passion; and whether there is an easy transfusion of the one into the other.

The feeling or sentiment of pride is agreeable, which gives it a relation to an agreeable sensation. The feeling or sentiment of humility is painful, which gives it a relation to a painful sensation. Now, if after examination we find that every object that produces pride also produces a separate pleasure, and that every object that causes humility also arouses a separate uneasiness, we must allow that the present theory is fully proved and ascertained. The double relation of ideas and sentiments will be acknowledged as incontestable.

6. I shall begin with personal merit and demerit, the most obvious causes of these passions. It would be entirely foreign to my present purpose to examine the foundation of moral distinctions ·such as that between merit and demerit·; the theory I have advanced concerning the origin of the passions can be defended on any hypothesis. The most probable explanation of the difference between vice and virtue is this:

> Either from a primary constitution of nature or from a sense of public or private interest, certain characters produce uneasiness when they are encountered or thought about; and others in a similar way arouse pleasure. The uneasiness or satisfaction produced in the spectator are essential to vice and virtue. To approve of a character is to feel a delight upon its appearance. To disapprove of it is to feel an uneasiness.

Because ·according to this theory· pain and pleasure are in a way the primary source of blame or praise, they must also be •the causes of all their effects and consequently •the causes of pride and humility, which are inevitable effects of praise and blame.

But even if this theory of morals is rejected, it is still obvious that pain and pleasure are at least inseparable from moral distinctions, if not the source of them. A generous and noble character affords a satisfaction even in the survey

[= 'even when we are just thinking about it']; and when it is *presented to* us, though only in a poem or fable, it never fails to charm and delight us. On the other hand, cruelty and treachery displease from their very nature; we can never be reconciled to these qualities, either in ourselves or others. So virtue always produces a pleasure distinct from the pride or self-satisfaction that comes with it; and vice produces an uneasiness separate from the ·associated· humility or remorse.

But a high or low conception of ourselves arises not only from •the qualities of the mind that common systems of ethics define as parts of moral duty, but also from •any other qualities that have a connection with pleasure or uneasiness. Nothing flatters our vanity more than the talent of pleasing by our wit, good-humour or any other accomplishment; and nothing gives us a stronger feeling of mortification than a failure in any attempt of that kind. No-one has ever been able to say precisely what *wit* is, and to show why one system of thought must be accepted as an example of wit and another rejected. It is by **taste** alone that we can make such a distinction; we have no other standard by which to form a judgment of this nature. Now what is this **taste** which in a way creates the difference between true and false wit and without which no thought can qualify as 'true wit' or 'false wit'? It is plainly nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of disgust from false, without our being able to tell the reasons of that satisfaction or uneasiness. The power of exciting these opposite sensations is, therefore, the very essence of true or false wit, and so it is the cause of the vanity or mortification that arises from one or the other.

7. Beauty of all kinds gives us a special delight and satisfaction, as ugliness produces pain; and this holds true for every kind of beautiful or ugly subject, whether animate or inanimate. If the beauty or ugliness belong to our own face, shape, or person, this pleasure or uneasiness is converted into pride or humility; as having in this case all the features needed to produce a perfect transition, according to my theory.

It seems that the very essence of beauty consists in its power of producing pleasure. So all its effects must come from this fact about it; and if beauty is so universally the subject of vanity, it is only from its being the cause of pleasure.

Concerning all other bodily accomplishments, we may observe in general that whatever in ourselves is useful, beautiful or surprising is an object of pride. . . . There is a special kind pleasure that these qualities all produce; they have nothing else in common.

We are vain about the surprising adventures we have encountered, the escapes we have made, the dangers we have been exposed to; as well as about our surprising feats of vigour and activity. This is the source of vulgar lying, in which men merely out of vanity—and not for any advantage they could get—heap up a number of extraordinary events that are either **a** wholly fictional or are **b** real but have no connection with themselves. Their **a** fruitful invention supplies them with a variety of adventures, and if they don't have that talent they **b** appropriate adventures that belong to others, in order to gratify their vanity. For there is always a close connection between that passion and feelings of pleasure.

8. Though the natural and more immediate causes of pride and humility are the qualities of our mind and body—i.e. of *self*—we find by experience that many other objects also produce these affections. We base vanity on houses, gardens, equipage and other external objects, as well as on personal merit and accomplishments. This happens when the external objects are associated or connected with

ourselves through some special relation. A beautiful fish in the ocean, a well-proportioned animal in a forest—indeed, anything that neither belongs nor is related to us—has no influence on our vanity, whatever extraordinary qualities it may have and however much surprise and admiration it may naturally occasion. To touch our pride, it must be in some way associated with us. The idea of it must somehow hang on the idea of ourselves, and the transition from one idea to the other must be easy and natural.

Men are vain about the beauty of their country, or their county, or even their parish. Here the idea of beauty plainly produces a pleasure. This pleasure is related to pride. The object or cause of this pleasure is related to self, the object of pride. By this double relation of sentiments and ideas a transition is made from one to the other.

Men are also vain about the excellence of the climate in which they are born, about the fertility of their native soil, about the goodness of the wines, fruits or other food produced by it, about the softness or force of their language, and other things of that kind. These objects have plainly a reference to the pleasures of sense, and are basically regarded as agreeable to the feeling, taste or hearing; how could they become causes of pride except through the transition that I have explained?

Some people reveal a vanity of an opposite kind, depreciating their own country in comparison to countries they have travelled to. When these persons are at home and surrounded by their countrymen, they find that the strong relation between them and their own nation is shared with so many others that it is in a way lost to them; whereas the less strong relation to a foreign country which is formed by their having seen it and lived in it, is strengthened by their thought of how few have done the same. For this reason they always admire the beauty, utility, and rarity of what they met with abroad above what they find at home.

Since we can be vain about a country, climate, or any inanimate object that has a relation to us, it is no wonder that we are vain about the qualities of people who are connected with us by blood or friendship. Qualities that make us proud when we have them also produce pride, though in a lesser degree, when revealed in persons related to us. The beauty, skill, merit, credit, and honours of their kindred are carefully displayed by the proud, and are considerable sources of their vanity.

As we are proud of riches in ourselves, we want—in order to gratify our vanity—everyone who has any connection with us to be wealthy also, and are ashamed of such as are mean [see Glossary] or poor among our friends and relations. Our forefathers being regarded as our nearest relations, everyone naturally claims to be of a good family and to be descended from a long line of rich and honourable ancestors.

Those who boast of the antiquity of their families are glad when they can add that their ancestors have been uninterrupted proprietors of the same portion of land for many generations, and that their family has never changed its possessions or been transplanted into any other county or province. It is an additional subject of vanity when they can boast that these possessions have been transmitted through a descent, composed entirely of males, and that the honours and fortune have never passed through any female. Let me try to explain these phenomena in terms of the theory I have presented.

When someone values himself on the antiquity of his family, what he is vain about is not merely •the extent of time and number of ancestors (for in that respect all mankind are alike), but •these circumstances joined to the riches and credit of his ancestors, which are supposed to reflect a lustre on himself because of his connection with them.

So the passion depends on the connection; and therefore whatever strengthens the connection must also increase the passion, and whatever weakens the connection must diminish the passion. But it is evident that the sameness of the possessions must strengthen the relation of ideas arising from blood and kindred, and convey the imagination more easily from one generation to another—from the remotest ancestors to their posterity who are both their heirs and their descendants. Because of this ease of conveyance, the sentiment is transmitted more completely and arouses a greater degree of pride and vanity.

It is the same with the transmission of the honours and fortune through a succession of males, without their passing through any female. It is an obvious quality of human nature that the imagination naturally turns to whatever is important and considerable, and where two objects are presented—one small, one great—it usually leaves the former and dwells entirely on the latter. That is why children commonly have their father's name, and are regarded as being of a nobler or meaner birth according to *his* family. Even if the mother has qualities superior to those of the father, as often happens, the general rule still holds, despite the exception. (I'll explain later this fact about rules and exceptions.) Indeed, even when the children represent the mother's family rather than the father's (because of a great superiority on that side, or for some other reason), the general rule still makes itself felt, weakening the relation and making ·the transmission through a female· a kind of breach in the line of ancestors. ·In such a case·, the imagination does not run along the line of ancestors as easily, and cannot transfer the honour and credit of the ancestors to their posterity of the same name and family as readily, as when the transition conforms to the general rule and passes through the male line, from father to son or from brother to brother.

9. But property, as it gives us the fullest power and authority over any object, is the relation that has the greatest influence on these passions ·of pride and humility·.

Everything belonging to a vain man is the best that is anywhere to be found. He regards his houses, equipage, furniture, clothes, horses, hounds as excelling all others; and it is easy to observe that from the least advantage in any of these he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you will believe him, has a finer flavour than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table more orderly; his servants more expert; the air in which he lives more healthful; the soil he cultivates more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier, and to greater perfection. One thing is remarkable for its novelty, another for its antiquity. *This* is the workmanship of a famous artist; *that* once belonged to such a prince or great man. In short, anything that is—or is related to something that is—useful, beautiful, or surprising may by means of *property* give rise to this passion ·of pride·. These all agree in giving pleasure, and that is the only thing they have in common; so it must be what produces the passion that is their common effect. As every new instance is a new argument, and as there are countless instances, it seems that this theory is sufficiently confirmed by experience.

Riches imply the power of acquiring whatever is agreeable; and as they include many particular objects of vanity they necessarily become one of the chief causes of that passion.

10. Our opinions of all kinds are strongly affected by society and sympathy, and it is almost impossible for us to support any principle or opinion that is rejected by all our friends and acquaintances. But of all our opinions, the ones we form in our own favour—however lofty or presuming—are basically the frailest and most easily shaken by the opposition of others. . . . Our consciousness of partiality makes us dread a mistake; and the very difficulty of judging concerning

an object that is never set at a due distance from us or seen from a proper point of view makes us listen anxiously to the opinions of others who are better qualified to have sound opinions concerning us. This is the source of the strong love of *fame* that all mankind are possessed of. They seek the applause of others not from any original [see Glossary] passion but in order to fix and confirm their favourable opinion of themselves. When a man wants to be praised, it is for the same reason that a beauty is pleased with seeing the reflection of her own charms in a favourable looking-glass.

It is often difficult to distinguish a cause that increases an effect from one that produces it single-handed, but in the present case the evidence for the thesis I have presented seems pretty strong and satisfactory:

- We get much more satisfaction from the approval of those whom we ourselves esteem and approve of than of those whom we hold in contempt.
- Someone's esteem gratifies our vanity in a peculiar manner when it is obtained after a long and intimate acquaintance.
- The approval of those who are shy and backward in giving praise brings additional pleasure and enjoyment if we can obtain it in our favour.
- Everyone courts with greater earnestness the approval and protection of a great man who is careful in his choice of favourites.
- Praise never gives us much pleasure unless it squares with our own opinion and extols us for the qualities we chiefly excel in.

These phenomena seem to prove that the favourable opinions of the world are regarded only as. . . .confirmations of our own opinion. . . .

11. Thus, few things can arouse a great degree of pride or self-satisfaction in us—however they are related to us and whatever pleasure they give us—unless they are also obvious to others and engage the approval of the spectators. What disposition of mind is so desirable as the peaceful, resigned, contented one that preserves constant serenity amidst the greatest misfortunes and disappointments? Yet this disposition, though acknowledged to be a virtue or excellence, is seldom the foundation of great vanity or self-applause, because it has no brilliance or exterior lustre, and cheers the heart rather than animating the behaviour and conversation. This holds also for many other qualities of the mind, body, or fortune; and **this circumstance** [i.e. the facts about the attitudes of others], as well as the double relations discussed in items **4** and **5** on page 5, must be admitted to have a role in the production of these passions.

A **second circumstance** that has a role in this affair is the constancy and durableness of the object. Something that is very casual and inconstant. . . .gives little joy and less pride. We are not much satisfied with the thing itself, and are even less apt to feel any new degree of self-satisfaction because of it. We foresee and anticipate its change, and that makes us little satisfied with the thing itself; we compare it to ourselves, whose existence is more durable, and this makes its inconstancy appear still greater. It seems ridiculous to make ourselves the object of a passion on account of a quality or possession that we have for such a small part of our lifetime.

A **third circumstance** is that for something to produce pride or self-value in us it must be exclusively ours, or at least shared with very few others. The advantages of sunshine, good weather, a happy climate, etc. do not distinguish us from any of our companions, and give us no preference or superiority. . . .

Because health and sickness vary incessantly in all men, and no-one is solely or certainly fixed in either, these

accidental blessings and calamities. . . .are not considered as a foundation for vanity or humiliation. But when a malady is so rooted in our constitution that we lose all hope of recovery, from that moment it damps our self-conceit; this can be seen in old men, whom nothing humiliates more than the thought of their age and infirmities. They try for as long as they can to conceal their blindness and deafness, their rheums and gouts, never owning up to them without reluctance and uneasiness. And though young men are not ashamed of every headache or cold they contract, nothing is more apt to pull down human pride and make us entertain a mean opinion of our nature than the fact that we are every moment of our lives liable to such infirmities. This shows that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility; though the custom of estimating everything by comparison more than by its intrinsic worth and value makes us overlook the calamities that we find incident to everyone, and to leave them out of our idea of our merit and character.

We are ashamed of maladies that affect others, and are either dangerous or disagreeable to them:

- of epilepsy, because it gives a horror to everyone present,
- of the itch, because it is infectious,
- of scrofula, because it often goes to posterity.

Men always consider the opinions of others in their judgment of themselves.

A **fourth circumstance** that has an influence on these passions concerns the general rules by which we form a notion of different ranks of men, suitably to their power or wealth; a notion that is not changed by any peculiarities of their health or temperament which may deprive them of all enjoyment of their possessions. Custom easily carries us too far in our passions as well as in our reasonings.

Perhaps this is the place to observe that the influence of general rules and maxims on the passions greatly facilitates the workings of all the principles [see Glossary] or internal mechanisms that I have been explaining. For it seems evident that if someone with the same nature as ourselves were suddenly transported into our world, he would be puzzled by every object, and would not easily determine what degree of love or hatred, of pride or humility, or of any other passion should be aroused by it. The passions are often varied by very inconsiderable principles, which do not always play with perfect regularity, especially on the first trial. But as custom or practice has brought all these principles to light and settled the just value of everything, this must contribute to the easy production of the passions and guide us—through general established rules—in the proportions we ought to observe in preferring one object to another. This remark may serve to meet difficulties that may arise concerning some causes that I here ascribe to particular passions, causes that may be thought too refined to operate as universally and certainly as they are found to do.

Section 3. Love and hatred

1. Circumstances that produce the passion of pride or of humility, if transferred from ourselves to another person, make him the object of love or hatred, esteem or contempt. The virtue, genius, beauty, family, riches, and authority of others create favourable sentiments on their behalf; and their vice, folly, ugliness, poverty and meanness [see Glossary] arouse the contrary sentiments. The double relation of impressions and ideas still operates on love and hatred, as on pride and humility. Whatever gives a separate pleasure or pain, and is related to another person or connected with him, makes him the object of our affection or disgust.

Hence also injury or contempt towards us is one of the greatest sources of our hatred; services or esteem, of our friendship.

2. Sometimes a person's relation to ourselves arouses affection towards him, but there is always here implied a relation of sentiments, without which the other relation would have no influence.[1]

A person who is related to us by blood, or connected to us by similarity of fortune, adventures, profession or country, soon becomes an agreeable companion to us, because we enter easily and familiarly into his sentiments and conceptions. Nothing ·about him· is strange or new to us; our imagination runs smoothly along the relation or connection from our self to the person who is nearly related to our self, conceiving him with a full sympathy. . . .

Relation has here the same influence as custom or acquaintance in arousing affection, and from similar causes. In each case, the ease and satisfaction that attend our intercourse or commerce is the source of the friendship.

3. The passions of love and hatred are always conjoined with benevolence and anger. This conjunction is what chiefly distinguishes these affections [see Glossary] from pride and humility. For pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, not accompanied by any desire, and not immediately arousing us to action; whereas love and hatred are not complete in themselves. . . .but carry the mind to something further. Love is always followed by a desire for the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery; just as hatred produces a desire for the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated. These opposite desires seem to be originally and primarily conjoined with the passions of love and hatred. It is a constitution of nature that we cannot further explain.

4. Compassion frequently arises where there is no preceding esteem or friendship. It is an uneasiness over someone else's sufferings, and seems to spring from the intimate and strong conception of his sufferings. Our imagination proceeds by degrees from the lively *idea* to the real *feeling* of another person's misery.

Malice and envy also arise in the mind without any preceding hatred or injury, though their tendency [here = 'usual effect on behaviour'] is exactly the same as that of anger and ill-will. The source of envy and malice seems to be the comparison of ourselves with others: the more unhappy someone else is, the more happy we think of ourselves as being.

5. The similar tendency of compassion to that of benevolence, and of envy to anger, forms a very close relation between these two sets of passions; but it is a different kind of relation from the one I have been discussing. It is not a resemblance of feeling or sentiment, but a resemblance of tendency or direction. But it has the same effect of producing an association of passions. Compassion is seldom or never felt without some mixture of tenderness or friendship; and envy is naturally accompanied with anger or ill-will. To desire someone else's happiness, from whatever motive, is a good preparative to affection towards him; and to delight in another's misery almost unavoidably creates aversion towards him. . . .

6. Poverty, meanness [see Glossary] and disappointment produce contempt and dislike. But when these misfortunes are very great or are presented to us in very strong colours,

[1] The affection of parents to children seems to be founded on an original [see Glossary] instinct. The affection towards other relations depends on the principles I am explaining here.

they arouse compassion, tenderness and friendship. How is this contradiction to be accounted for? The poverty and meanness of someone else initially gives us uneasiness through a kind of imperfect sympathy; and this uneasiness produces aversion or dislike, because of the resemblance of sentiment. But when we enter more intimately into his concerns, and wish for his happiness as well as feel his misery, friendship or good-will arises from the similar tendency of the inclinations.

A bankrupt at first meets with compassion and friendship while the idea of his misfortunes is fresh and recent, and while the comparison of his present unhappy situation with his former prosperity operates strongly on us. After these ideas are weakened or obliterated by time, he is in danger of dislike and contempt.

7. In respect, some humility is mixed in with the esteem or affection; in contempt, pride is part of the mixture.

The amorous passion is usually compounded of •enjoyment of beauty, •bodily appetite, and •friendship or affection. The close relation of these sentiments is very obvious, as well as their origin from each other by means of that relation. If there were no other phenomenon to reconcile us to the present theory, I think that this alone would be sufficient.

Section 4. Relations of feelings and of ideas

1. The present theory of the passions depends entirely on the double relations of sentiments and ideas, and the mutual assistance these relations provide for each other. So it may be worthwhile to illustrate these principles by some further instances.

2. The virtues, talents, accomplishments and possessions of others make us love and esteem them. That is because these objects arouse a pleasing sensation related to love, and also have a relation or connection with the person; this union of ideas promotes the union of sentiments, according to the reasoning I have presented.

If the person whom we love is also related to us by blood, country or friendship, there must obviously be a kind of pride aroused in us by his accomplishments and possessions, because there is here the same double relation that I have been expounding throughout this discussion. The person is related to us, so there is an easy transition of thought from him to us, and the sentiments aroused by his advantages and virtues are agreeable and consequently related to pride. So we find that people are naturally vain of the good qualities or high fortune of their friends and countrymen.

3. But when the order of the passions is reversed, the same effect does not follow. We pass easily from love and affection to pride and vanity; but not from the latter passions to the former, though all the relations are the same. Our merit does not make us love those who are related to us, though it naturally makes them proud of us. What is the reason for this difference? ·As regards their pride in us·: the transition of their imagination to themselves from objects related to them is always easy, because of **a** the relation that facilitates the transition, and because **b** they are passing from remoter objects to ones that are contiguous. But ·as regards our love for them·: in passing from ourselves to objects related to us the **a** former principle helps the transition of thought but the **b** latter opposes it; and consequently there is not the same easy transfusion of passions from pride to love as from love to pride.

4. The virtues, services and fortune of one man easily inspire us with esteem and affection for another related to him. The son of our friend is naturally entitled to our friendship; the kindred of a very great man are valued by

others—as by themselves—on account of that relation. The force of the double relation is here fully displayed.

5. The following are instances of another kind where these principles are still at work. Envy arises from a superiority in others; but what arouses it is not the great disproportion between ourselves and the other, but on the contrary our proximity. A great disproportion cuts off the relation of the ideas, keeping us from comparing ourselves with the other or at least diminishing the effects of the comparison.

A poet is not apt to envy a philosopher, or a poet of a different kind or different nation or different age. All these differences, if they do not prevent the comparison at least weaken it and consequently weaken the passion.

This explains why objects appear large or small only by comparison with those of the same species. A mountain doesn't magnify or diminish a horse in our eyes; but when a Flemish and a Welsh horse are seen together, one appears larger and the other smaller than when viewed on its own.

The same principle accounts for something that historians have noted, namely that any party in a civil war would prefer to face a foreign enemy, however dangerous, rather than submitting to their fellow-citizens. Guicciardin applies this to the wars in Italy, where the different states are alike in everything but name, language, and geographical location. These likenesses, when joined with superiority, make the comparison more natural and thus make it more grievous, and cause men to search for some other superiority that will have a less sensible influence on the imagination. When we cannot break the association, we feel a stronger desire to remove the superiority. This seems to be the reason why travellers, though commonly lavish of their praise to the Chinese and Persians, take care to depreciate nations that are near to their native country and may be rivals to it.

6. The fine arts provide parallel instances. If an author composed a treatise of which one part was serious and profound and another light and humorous, everyone would condemn this strange mixture and would blame him for neglecting all the rules of art and criticism. Yet we do not blame Prior for joining his *Alma* and *Solomon* in a single volume, though that likable poet has perfectly succeeded in the gaiety of the one as well as in the melancholy of the other. Even someone who read these two compositions without any interval would feel little or no difficulty in the change of the passions. Why? Because he considers these performances as entirely different; and that break in the ideas breaks the progress of the affections and hinders one from influencing or contradicting the other.

An heroic and burlesque design, united in one picture, would be monstrous; but we have no scruples about placing two pictures of such opposite characters side by side in the same room.

7. It is not surprising that the easy transition of the imagination has such an influence on all the passions. It is this very circumstance which forms all the relations and connections among objects. We know no real connection between one thing and another. We only know that the *idea* of one thing is associated with the *idea* of another, and that the imagination easily passes between them. And because the easy transition between ideas helps and is helped by the easy transition between sentiments, it is only to be expected that this principle will have a mighty influence on all our internal movements and affections. And experience sufficiently confirms the theory.

Suppose I am travelling with a companion through a country to which we are both strangers: obviously, if the views are beautiful, the roads agreeable, and the fields finely cultivated, this may serve to put me in a good humour, both

with myself and fellow-traveller. But because the country has no connection with us, it cannot be the immediate cause of self-value or of other-regard to either of us. . . . But if the view we are enjoying is provided by his country-seat or by mine, this connection of ideas gives a new direction to the sentiment of pleasure derived from the view, and arouses the emotion of regard or vanity, according to the nature of the connection. There is not much room for doubt or difficulty here, I think.

Section 5. Passions and reason

1. It seems evident that *reason*, understood in a strict sense as meaning *the judgment of truth and falsehood*, can never move the will on its own; to have any influence it must touch some passion or affection. Abstract relations of ideas are the object of curiosity, not of volition. . . .

2. What is commonly in a popular sense called 'reason', and is so much recommended in moral discourses, is nothing but a general and calm *passion*, which takes a comprehensive and a distant view of its object and actuates the will without arousing any felt emotion. A man, we say, is diligent in his profession 'from reason', i.e. from a calm desire for riches. A man adheres to justice from reason, i.e. from a calm regard for public good or for being seen by himself and others as having a good character.

3. Things that recommend themselves to 'reason' in this sense of the word are also the objects of what we call 'passion' when they come near to us and acquire some other advantages—either of external situation or of relation to our present feelings and attitudes—and by that means arouse a turbulent *felt* emotion. Evil at a great distance is avoided through 'reason', we say; evil near at hand produces aversion, horror, fear, and is the object of 'passion'.

4. Metaphysicians have commonly erred by ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles [see Glossary] and supposing the other to have no influence. Men often act knowingly against their own interest; so they are not always influenced by the view of the greatest possible good. They often counteract a violent passion in order to further their distant interests and designs; so it is not the present uneasiness alone that determines them. In general we may observe that both these principles—·reason and passion·—operate on the will; and that which of them prevails in cases where they are contrary depends on the person's general character or present disposition. What we call 'strength of mind' implies the prevalence of the calm passions over the violent ones; though it is easy to see that no-one is so constantly possessed of this virtue that he *never* yields to the solicitation of violent affection and desire. These variations of temper create the great difficulty of predicting the future actions and resolutions of men in cases where motives and passions push in different directions.

Section 6. The strength of passions

1. I shall here enumerate some of those circumstances that make a passion calm or violent, that heighten or diminish any emotion.

It is a property of human nature that any emotion that comes with a passion is easily converted into it, even if in their natures they are originally different from each other and even contrary to each other. It is true that in order to cause a perfect union among passions, making one produce the other, there always has to be a double relation, according to the theory I have presented here. But when two passions are already produced by their separate causes, and are both present in the mind, they readily mingle and unite, even

if they have only a single relation and sometimes without relation at all. The predominant passion swallows up the lesser ne and converts it into itself. Once the spirits have been aroused, they easily receive a change in their direction; and it is natural to imagine that this change will come from the prevailing affection. . . .

When a person is heartily in love, the little faults and caprices of his mistress, the jealousies and quarrels to which that relationship is so subject—although unpleasant and rather connected with anger and hatred—are often found to give additional force to the prevailing passion. It is a common trick by politicians, when they want someone to be much affected by a matter of fact of which they intend to inform him, first to arouse his curiosity, delaying as long as possible the satisfying of it; by that means they raise his anxiety and impatience to the utmost before giving him a full insight into the business. They know that this curiosity will precipitate him into the passion that they intend to raise and will increase the influence on the mind of the matter of fact in question. A soldier advancing to battle is naturally inspired with courage and confidence when he thinks of his friends and fellow-soldiers; and is struck with fear and terror when he reflects on the enemy. So whatever new emotion proceeds from the former naturally increases the courage, as the same emotion proceeding from the latter increases , the fear. Hence in martial discipline, the uniformity and lustre of clothing, and the regularity of figures and motions with all the pomp and majesty of war, encourage ourselves and our allies; while the same things in the enemy, though agreeable and beautiful in themselves, strike terror into us.

Hope is in itself an agreeable passion, allied to friendship and benevolence; yet it can sometimes expand anger when that is the predominant passion. *Spes addita suscitat iras* [Virgil; 'The addition of hope increased their anger.'].

2. Since passions, however independent, are naturally transfused into each other if they are both present at the same time, it follows that when good or evil is placed in such a situation as to cause some particular emotion in addition to its direct passion of desire or aversion, the desire or aversion must acquire new force and violence.

3. This often happens when something arouses contrary passions. For it is observable that an •opposition of passions commonly causes a new emotion, producing more disorder than the •concurrence of any two affections of equal force. This new emotion easily becomes the predominant passion, and is often observed to increase its violence beyond the pitch it would have reached if it had met with no opposition. That is why we naturally desire what is forbidden, and often take pleasure in performing actions merely because they are unlawful. The notion of duty, when opposed to the passions, is not always able to overcome them; and when it fails to do that, it is apt rather to increase and irritate them by producing an opposition in our motives and principles.

4. This happens whether the opposition arises from internal motives or from external obstacles. The passion commonly acquires new force in both cases. The mind's efforts to surmount the obstacle arouse the spirits and enliven the passion.

5. Uncertainty has the same effect as opposition. The agitation of the thought, its quick turns from one view to another, the variety of passions that succeed each other according to the different views—all these produce an emotion that transfuses itself into the predominant passion.

Security, on the other hand, diminishes the passions. The mind when left to itself immediately slackens; it cannot preserve its ardour unless it is at every moment supported by a new flow of passion. For the same reason, despair—though contrary to security—has a similar influence.

6. Nothing more powerfully arouses any affection than to conceal some part of its object by throwing it into a kind of shade, which •shows enough to prepossess us in favour of the object while still •leaving some work for the imagination. In addition to which obscurity is always accompanied by a kind of uncertainty, so that the effort the imagination makes to complete the idea rouses the spirits and gives an additional force to the passion.

7. . . . .Absence is observed to have contrary effects, and in different circumstances either increases or diminishes our affection. Rochefoucault has very well remarked that absence destroys weak passions but increases strong ones, as the wind extinguishes a candle but blows up a fire. Long absence naturally weakens our idea and lessens the passion; but where the affection is so strong and lively as to support itself, the uneasiness arising from absence increases the passion and gives it new force and influence.

8. When the soul applies itself to performing an unfamiliar action or conceiving an unfamiliar object, there is a certain stiffness in the faculties and a difficulty of moving the spirits in their new direction. As this difficulty arouses the spirits, it is a source of wonder, surprise, and all the emotions that arise from novelty; and it is in itself agreeable, like everything that enlivens the mind to a moderate degree. But though surprise is agreeable in itself, by agitating the spirits it increases not only our agreeable affections [see Glossary] but also our painful ones, according to the principle I have presented. Hence everything that is new is most affecting, and gives us more pleasure or pain than would naturally follow from it. When it becomes more familiar, the novelty wears off, the passions subside, the hurry of the spirits is over, and we survey the object with greater tranquillity.

9. The imagination and the affections have a close union: the vivacity of the former gives force to the latter. So the prospect of a pleasure that we have had before affects us more than any other pleasure that we may come to regard as superior but of whose nature we are wholly ignorant. Of the one we can form a particular and determinate idea; we can conceive the other only under the general notion of pleasure.

Any satisfaction that we enjoyed recently, with the memory of it still fresh, acts on the will more strongly than another whose traces are decayed and almost obliterated.

A pleasure that is suitable to our present way of life arouses our desire and appetite more than does another that is foreign to it.

Nothing is more capable of infusing any passion into the mind than eloquence, by which things are represented in the strongest and most lively colours. . . .

It is remarkable that lively passions commonly accompany a lively imagination. In this respect, as well as in others, the force of the passion depends as much on the temperament of the person as on the nature and situation of the object.

What is distant in place or time has less influence than what is near and contiguous.

I do not claim to have here exhausted this subject. It is enough for my purpose if I have made it appear that in the production and conduct of the passions there is a certain regular mechanism that can be laid out with as much precision as can the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy.