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A TREATISE  
OF  
HUMAN NATURE

BY  
DAVID HUME

REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITION  
IN THREE VOLUMES

AND EDITED, WITH AN ANALYTICAL INDEX, BY

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A  
T R E A T I S E  
O F

Human Nature ;

B E I N G

An A T T E M P T to introduce the ex-  
perimental Method of Reasoning  
I N T O

M O R A L S U B J E C T S .

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*Rara temporum felicitas, ubi fensire, quæ velis ; & quæ  
fentias, dicere licet.*

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T A C I T .

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B O O K I .

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O F T H E  
U N D E R S T A N D I N G .

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L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN NOON, at the *Wife-Hart*, near  
*Mercer's-Chapel* in *Chapel-side*.

M D C C X X X I X .

PART II. are the most obvious and natural sentiments of these affections, but not the only ones. The passions may express *Of love and hatred.* themselves in a hundred ways, and may subsist a considerable time, without our reflecting on the happiness or misery of their objects; which clearly proves, that these desires are not the same with love and hatred, nor make any essential part of them.

We may, therefore, infer, that benevolence and anger are passions different from love and hatred, and only conjoin'd with them, by the original constitution of the mind. As nature has given to the body certain appetites and inclinations, which she encreases, diminishes, or changes according to the situation of the fluids or solids; she has proceeded in the same manner with the mind. According as we are possess'd with love or hatred, the correspondent desire of the happiness or misery of the person, who is the object of these passions, arises in the mind, and varies with each variation of these opposite passions. This order of things, abstractedly consider'd, is not necessary. Love and hatred might have been unattended with any such desires, or their particular connexion might have been entirely revers'd. If nature had so pleas'd, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love. I see no contradiction in supposing a desire of producing misery annex'd to love, and of happiness to hatred. If the sensation of the passion and desire be opposite, nature cou'd have alter'd the sensation without altering the tendency of the desire, and by that means made them compatible with each other.

## SECTION VII.

*Of compassion.*

But tho' the desire of the happiness or misery of others, according to the love or hatred we bear them, be an arbitrary and original instinct implanted in our nature, we find it may be counterfeited on many occasions, and may arise

from secondary principles. *Pity* is a concern for, and *malice* Sect. VII. a joy in the misery of others, without any friendship or enmity to occasion this concern or joy. We *pity* even strangers, *Of compass* and such as are perfectly indifferent to us: And if our ill-will to another proceed from any harm or injury, it is not, properly speaking, malice, but revenge. But if we examine these affections of pity and malice we shall find them to be secondary ones, arising from original affections, which are varied by some particular turn of thought and imagination.

It will be easy to explain the passion of *pity*, from the precedent reasoning concerning *sympathy*. We have a lively idea of every thing related to us. All human creatures are related to us by resemblance. Their persons, therefore, their interests, their passions, their pains and pleasures must strike upon us in a lively manner, and produce an emotion similar to the original one; since a lively idea is easily converted into an impression. If this be true in general, it must be more so of affliction and sorrow. These have always a stronger and more lasting influence than any pleasure or enjoyment.

A spectator of a tragedy passes thro' a long train of grief, terror, indignation, and other affections, which the poet represents in the persons he introduces. As many tragedies end happily, and no excellent one can be compos'd without some reverses of fortune, the spectator must sympathize with all these changes, and receive the fictitious joy as well as every other passion. Unless, therefore, it be asserted, that every distinct passion is communicated by a distinct original quality, and is not deriv'd from the general principle of sympathy above-explain'd, it must be allow'd, that all of them arise from that principle. To except any one in particular must appear highly unreasonable. As they are all first present in the mind of one person, and afterwards appear in the mind of another; and as the manner of their appearance, first as an idea, then as an impression, is in every case the same, the transition must arise from the same



PART II. principle. I am at least sure, that this method of reasoning  
 ↳↳↳  
 ↳↳↳ would be consider'd as certain, either in natural philosophy  
*Of love and*  
*Natural.* or common life.

↳↳↳ Add to this, that pity depends, in a great measure, on the  
 ↳↳↳ congenity, and even sight of the object; which is a proof  
 ↳↳↳ that 'tis deriv'd from the imagination. Not to mention that  
 women and children are most subject to pity, as being most  
 guided by that faculty. The same infirmity, which makes  
 them faint at the sight of a naked sword, tho' in the hands of  
 their best friend, makes them pity extremely those, whom  
 they find in any grief or affliction. Those philosophers, who  
 derive this passion from I know not what subtle reflec-  
 tions on the instability of fortune, and our being liable to the  
 same miseries we behold, will find this observation contrary  
 to them among a great many others, which it were easy to  
 produce.

↳↳↳ There remains only to take notice of a pretty remarkable  
 ↳↳↳ phenomenon of this passion; which is, that the commu-  
 ↳↳↳ cated passion of sympathy sometimes acquires strength from  
 ↳↳↳ the weakness of its original, and even arises by a transition  
 ↳↳↳ from affections, which have no existence. Thus when a  
 ↳↳↳ person obtains any honourable office, or inherits a great for-  
 ↳↳↳ tune, we are always the more rejoic'd for his prosperity, the  
 ↳↳↳ less sense he seems to have of it, and the greater equanimity  
 ↳↳↳ and indifference he shews in its enjoyment. In like manner  
 ↳↳↳ a man, who is not detected by misfortunes, is the more  
 ↳↳↳ lamented on account of his patience; and if that virtue  
 ↳↳↳ extends so far as utterly to remove all sense of uneasiness, it  
 ↳↳↳ still farther encreases our compassion. When a person of  
 ↳↳↳ merit falls into what is vulgarly esteem'd a great misfortune,  
 ↳↳↳ we form a notion of his condition; and carrying our fancy  
 ↳↳↳ from the cause to the usual effect, first conceive a lively idea  
 ↳↳↳ of his sorrow, and then feel an impression of it, entirely over-  
 ↳↳↳ looking that greatness of mind, which elevates him above  
 ↳↳↳ such emotions, or only considering it so far as to encrease  
 ↳↳↳ our admiration, love and tenderness for him. We find from

↳↳↳ experience, that such a degree of passion is usually con-  
 ↳↳↳ nected with such a misfortune; and tho' there be an excep-  
 ↳↳↳ tion in the present case, yet the imagination is affected by  
 ↳↳↳ the general rule and makes us conceive a lively idea of the  
 ↳↳↳ passion, or rather feel the passion itself, in the same manner,  
 ↳↳↳ as if the person were really actuated by it. From the same  
 ↳↳↳ principles we blush for the conduct of those, who behave  
 ↳↳↳ themselves foolishly before us; and that tho' they shew no  
 ↳↳↳ sense of shame, nor seem in the least conscious of their folly.  
 ↳↳↳ All this proceeds from sympathy; but 'tis of a partial kind,  
 ↳↳↳ and views its objects only on one side, without considering  
 ↳↳↳ the other, which has a contrary effect, and wou'd entirely  
 ↳↳↳ destroy that emotion, which arises from the first appearance.

↳↳↳ We have also instances, wherein an indifference and insen-  
 ↳↳↳ sibility under misfortune encreases our concern for the mis-  
 ↳↳↳ fortunate, even tho' the indifference proceed not from any  
 ↳↳↳ virtue and magnanimity. 'Tis an aggravation of a murder,  
 ↳↳↳ that it was committed upon persons asleep and in perfect  
 ↳↳↳ security; as historians readily observe of any infant prince,  
 ↳↳↳ who is captive in the hands of his enemies, that he is more  
 ↳↳↳ worthy of compassion the less sensible he is of his miserable  
 ↳↳↳ condition. As we ourselves are here acquainted with the  
 ↳↳↳ wretched situation of the person, it gives us a lively idea and  
 ↳↳↳ sensation of sorrow, which is the passion that generally  
 ↳↳↳ attends it; and this idea becomes still more lively, and the  
 ↳↳↳ sensation more violent by a contrast with that security and  
 ↳↳↳ indifference, which we observe in the person himself. A con-  
 ↳↳↳ trast of any kind never fails to affect the imagination,  
 ↳↳↳ especially when presented by the subject; and 'tis on the  
 ↳↳↳ imagination that pity entirely depends.<sup>1</sup>

↳↳↳ <sup>1</sup> To prevent all ambiguity, I must observe, that where I oppose the  
 ↳↳↳ imagination to the memory, I mean in general the faculty that presents  
 ↳↳↳ our former ideas. In all other places, and particularly when it is oppos'd  
 ↳↳↳ to the understanding, I understand the same faculty, excluding only our  
 ↳↳↳ demonstrative and probable reasonings.