

## STING OF REASON

Max Deutscher

.. sting of reason  
 .. splash of tears  
 .. northern ... southern hemispheres  
 Love emerges ... disappears

[elided from “I do it for your love”, Paul Simon]

A philosopher may be dedicated in his or her self-image to argument that is conceived as rational in pursuing the implications of concepts and syntax. A close reading—or even a casual one perhaps—will reveal systems of imagery at play in their writings. Metaphor, allegory, metonym, and symbolism will be part and parcel of his or her practice. Even in demonstrating this, Michèle Le Dœuff argues against romanticism about the fact of it.<sup>1</sup> As we sweep out these demons of counter-reason another lot invades the room. In any critique of one *imagerie* we shall find we have employed another. This is a cautionary tale that requires us not only to enjoy and deploy imagery but also to be critically vigilant towards the figuration we use as writers and encounter as readers. Those who are dedicated against figuration in philosophy will pass off the exposure of their incorrigible use of it with a ‘nod or a wink’ that indicates the use as a moment’s ‘light’ relief from the presentation of ‘heavy’ argument. They may even forget to wink when they allude to ‘cold’ or ‘hard’ fact as against ‘cloudy’ metaphor. I borrow from Le Dœuff a philosophical method in dealing with this dialectic. We accept that there will be figuration but do not thereby accept any particular figuration we encounter. When we critically expose some figuration, we do this in the name of the distortions or occlusions involved in that figure. However much we criticise some particular argument we still accept the value of *argument*. That is how it works, too, with a critique of some particular metaphor. We handle with all the critical rigour that we bring to argumentation any figuration we would countenance or employ.

Plato figures the relation of reason to passion as that of a charioteer controlling horses of differing temperament.<sup>2</sup> Hume figures the relation of reason to passion as that of slave to master.<sup>3</sup> Kant figures the relation of (pure) reason to the whole field of sensibility—particularly ‘inclination’—as that of detached judge to witnesses giving evidence and lawyers pleading their case.<sup>4</sup> Le Dœuff suggests a ‘minimal’ and a ‘maximal’ interpretation of the function of imagery in philosophical texts:

The ‘narrow version’ states that imagery signifies a point of tension in a work, from which the imagery is inseparable. On the ‘broad version’, “images work for the system that deploys them ... because they sustain something that the system cannot justify, but [still] needs.” The images equally “work against the system that uses them ... because their meaning is incompatible with feasibility<sup>5</sup> of the system.”<sup>6</sup>

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The division of ‘reason’ and ‘emotion’ has come under immense scrutiny of late. There is a more particular intent of the attention the reader will find to some imagery in Plato, Hume, Kant, and Hegel. There is a ‘sting’ of reason that stuns (Socrates) or wounds (arguments that bring ‘tears before bedtime’) or refreshes like sea spray on the face. Is there a force in reason itself? Would it have to be confined to Kant’s realm of the noumenal, or in the domain of Hegel’s *Geist*? I shall argue, not for a new dichotomy of reason and affect, but rather for the maintenance of a distinction between their roles in our emotionally intelligent lives.

## DRIVER AND HORSES

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates delivers a palinode to atone to the gods for a previous speech on love’s evils. To mark the event, Plato writes him a new allegory. This time there is no dark-caved illusion<sup>7</sup> cruelled by the sun’s revelation. Now Socrates projects a new-wave cinema. Galloping horses and chariot chattering, whose driver with a practised hand gains freedom in his full flight by respectful use of ‘unruly passions’—those horses that keep it all in motion. The driver would neither wish nor dare to stand in their way. This is a moving picture of what commonsense might have vaunted as a stasis of *self-mastery*. The effect is deconstructive.

The entity is *charioteer-horses-chariot*. Dependent for its motion on the interaction of its elements (including those very ‘horses’ whose excessive spirit might lead the whole caboose over a cliff edge), it moves itself.<sup>8</sup> This melodrama offers a good deal that is lacking in post-Platonic accounts of our ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ nature. As represented by *two horses*, the passions are neither blind nor stupid. Being of opposed temperaments, the horses recognise each other’s tricks. They pit their wits against each other. They play ‘good cop-bad cop’ in the face of the charioteer in his pretexts to quit the very field of passion. Passion rendered as equine becomes a pair of creatures—each with its own temper of reason and passion. As to the charioteer—Plato renders him as reduced to brute force rather than reason. He struggles to guide the cunning horses with a savage use of lash and bridle. Thus rendered as driver, Reason is a being whose passion is for control at any cost. It is with passionate energy that the charioteer guides the horses. Even in the moment that the driver deploys ‘good horse’ to slow down the soul’s approach to what it loves he depends upon ‘bad horse’ to bring him up short—out of prevarication and up against the reality he loves and which terrifies him.<sup>9</sup>

So the story portrays the *soul* as a bunch of contending individuals who barely comprehend their own natures. They come to know something of themselves as they are forced to know something of each other in their need to deal with a confronting shared reality. Yes, thus we nod towards Hegel. We might bow to Freud; we shall draw down Derrida as we deconstruct the myth. Plato’s story here never fitted that old cliché of a platonic reason versus earthy passion. Plato’s intricate myth springs clear of any snapshot. Socrates is given to depict how control that involves some violence arises from passionate reason in contention with thinking passion. And up there between the shafts that reckless bad horse is in sore need of its own reason. He will learn the rewards of timing and tact in the approach to what one loves:

Finally, after several repetitions of this treatment<sup>10</sup>, the wicked horse abandons his lustful ways; meekly now he executes the wishes of his driver, and when he catches sight of the loved one is ready to die of fear. So at last it comes about that the soul of the lover waits upon his beloved in reverence and awe.<sup>11</sup>

The Phaedrean movie shows us its own narrative in process of unravelling. The charioteer himself must be *controlled* in dealing with his own complexity of thought and multiple passions. He has his inner steeds, then. The *charioteer* needs a *meta*-charioteer to control those passionate *meta*-horses within. The model falls *en abîme*. The picture explodes to infinity.

## MASTER AND SLAVE

When Hume figures reason as ‘slave’ of the passions he subverts the politics of Socrates’ phantasmagoria. Draw the cartoon of Hume’s new arrangement. Now the horses of passion *ride* in the chariot! There they are, each

squatting on its haunches, reins wound about one front hoof. With the other they lash out at Reason—a coolie who sweats it out between the shafts up there ahead of the chariot. As thus personified Reason might choose to be not compliant to Passion’s orders, nor easily subject to its lash. And what if Passion chooses to be not passionate in its task of steering Reason? Where there is master and slave there is disobedience to one’s allotted place on both sides of the fence. If Passion is master and Reason slave then passion must control its reason and reason must bring its passion into play. A slave can serve a master only by dint of reason and intelligence. As servant of passion, reason must adjust to its situation by prudence or principle. Reason must be willing to serve. As Slave of Passion, Reason must learn the hard lesson of mastering itself in order to obey. Hume’s way of relating reason to passion inscribes the problem again within the answer.<sup>12</sup>

Thus Hegelian dialectic reveals that ‘reason is slave of the passions’ has a reverse effect. In subordinating Reason, Hume has countenanced its power. As slave, Reason must have the energy to carry out orders. So Reason has some power of revolt against Passion. Hume sets his analysis and rhetoric against any such possibility for reason. Trouble is brewing. By making a dichotomy of the distinction between reason (as reasoning and understanding) and passion (as feeling, emotion, and motive) Hume has in fact demoted passion. Stripped of reason it can neither possess nor consult reason. It would be blind and helpless in its role of directing it.<sup>13</sup> If there is the dichotomy between reason and passion that Hume insists upon then to be master is a poisoned chalice, whoever gets it. When Hume binds reason as servant of passion he blinds passion even as he breaks reason’s spirit. He divides them in opposition to what they control. For our own part, we must go on learning to think outside and beyond Hume’s reversal of the modern cliché of Plato’s allegory. We might call upon Hannah Arendt’s idea of *thinking as friendly conversation with oneself*.<sup>14</sup> It would be a *sweet* reason then, that would understand and thus moderate the whims and weaknesses of the mastering passions. Instead of mastering passion by whip and punishment, reason must project the passions within itself so as to understand passion’s whims and weaknesses and its strength in bringing reason face to face with reality.<sup>15</sup> And, conversely, before Passion can be commanded by Reason it must import reason within its own province.

What appears from our analysis so far may be at least one step beyond the platitude that neither *Reason* nor *Passion* can be a master—neither can unload its chores onto its ‘other’. In the *Phaedrus*’ speech to the god of love, reason is charioteer and the passions, its driven horses. Still, reason can only nudge and steady the horses. Perhaps more moderate than Hume, Socrates speaks of a control that is moderated even as it is motivated by reason’s own inner passion, and properly limited by passion’s inner intelligence. Thus the *sting* of reason ... or the lash ... the movement of an eye-lash ... or the injection that numbs ... the ‘brush with reality’ returning colour to the scene.<sup>16</sup> This is a double ‘realisation’ — of what it is that we want, what is involved in it, and the ways and means of attaining it.<sup>17</sup> We shall understand by appeal to examples, theories and images this involvement of reason in passion and passion in reason.

## WE WHO THINK AND FEEL

Even as we work to deconstruct these personifications of allegory we are reminded of the power of any kind of figuration to resist efforts to deconstruct it. We might take as a general principle that it takes a new trope to drive out an old one. This is because the use of tropes *is* part of the work of reason. Allegory, with its personification of qualities, lays out a visible structure of the relationship between what we now like to figure as ‘capacities’, ‘powers’ and ‘tendencies’.<sup>18</sup> And yet, for all its vivid clarity, allegory is limited not only in its power of analysis but even in its resources to picture what it deals with. By attributing agency to (reified) capacities, allegory injects capacities *within* the structure of a personified quality. (In Derrida’s terms, allegory creates an endless deferral in dealing with what we wanted to understand.) So we had better do our best not to personify reason or passion.<sup>19</sup>

If reify we must, it might as well be *someone* who reasons and *someone* who suffers passion.<sup>20</sup> It is someone who *feels* that calls upon reason. It is someone who *reasons* that questions what they feel. In those terms, if feeling and desire (Kant’s ‘inclinations’) are the motive forces of action then they are neither slaves nor masters. The one who reasons and feels is not slave or master in either capacity. Rather, we modify, enhance, or shelve our

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passions—and our tendencies to reason and analyse. This is neither dominance nor submission. If Hume cannot accept this as simple fact, it is because he pictures reason as constitutionally unable to oppose passion. “Reason is the slave of the passions” is the banner of a system of concepts, not an idle slip that we can rectify by amending his *Treatise* at some isolated point. Hume writes as if reason’s inertness were axiomatic<sup>21</sup>—as if to think to the contrary would confuse reason (conceptualising and theorising) with feeling and motive (brute non-conceptual existences). For Hume, reasoning can only remind us of what we desire, and suggest means to attain it.<sup>22</sup> On this account, feeling that is elicited by reasoning or understanding was there already. Reason cannot initiate one passion as counter to another: “abstract or demonstrative reasoning ... never influences any of our actions, but only as it directs our judgment concerning cause and effect.”<sup>23</sup>

Hume writes that it is a mistake to think of any ‘combat’ between passion and reason: “we speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason”—as if reason is not the *kind* of thing that could have an *effect*.<sup>24</sup> But as he develops his discussion Hume concedes, as evident common sense, facts that entail that reason does have some power over desire and motive. Yet he iterates concessions while never openly proclaiming the power of reason that they entail. For instance he insists that reason cannot take the form of a counter *impulse*, and we would be right to agree. Reason is a capacity (our use of it) rather than an impulse. As such, reasoning (as a process) and understanding (as a stable grasp of situation and concept) provide a structure that contains and directs thinking, desire, and will. This is a causal role, other than impulse, for reason.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, though not an impulse, reason might also have a generative role in the formation of desire, motive and willingness. To argue *ad hominem* against Hume, he is the one who places no *a priori* limits on what can cause what. So, after all, he cannot be sure that reason is only ‘slave’ of passion. For him, reason is at least our power to recognise tautologies and the valid moves to be made from premises. He does not realise, however, that in admitting such a power he has countenanced reason as a causal factor in determining how we think and act. He admits this only in a concessionary syntax that leaves his admission of the force of reason essentially undeclared:

A merchant is desirous of knowing the sum total of his accounts ... to learn what sum will have the same *effects* in paying his debt ... as all the particular articles taken together. Abstract reasoning, therefore, never influences any of our actions *but only* as it directs our judgments concerning causes and effects.<sup>26</sup>

That last sentence is equivalent to: “abstract reasoning *does* therefore influence our actions by directing our judgments concerning causes and effects.” By ‘directing’ our judgment it has an effect—measurable and observable—on us and in the world of commerce. One’s grasp of principles and facts is necessary to the strength of mind it requires to *apply* one’s understanding when the occasion demands it. Out of her understanding of structural principles an architect persists in opposing the plans of her employer—a developer. The building is radically unsafe. The architect is no hero who leaps into burning fires, but simply one whose comprehension of an intellectual error lends her a strength that may surprise. This is at least one of the powers of reason that we would hope that Hume, in his good sense, would not have meant to reject. There is much uneasiness in Hume’s text from this point. The dubious implications of “reason as slave of the passions” begin to emerge. Hume rightly emphasises how effective is the empirical side of reason. He can see how by use of reason, as the power to gain knowledge and to make useful generalisations, we modify not only how we think and act but also how we feel. We consider facts and principle and come to oppose what in passion we had first proposed. “*But reason just brings into play other sympathies*” one says, in the spirit of Hume. “*Perhaps it does more than that*” says the one who more thoroughly pursues the implications of an empirical view of causality. “*And, in any case, think of the strength of mind it takes to handle one emotion while bringing to bear the implications of another.*” So must we posit a second-order emotion (rather than reason) that exercises the needed control? Then we would have in play two passions and a meta-passion. Thus we would need something to hold them in all in focus—to judge their merits and implications. We would place *passion as active* and *reason as inert* once more *en abîme*.

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## KINDS OF CAUSALITY

In any causal field there are factors other than initiating conditions. That a billiard ball is made of hardwood rather than rubber is crucial to what happens when it is struck by the cue. That the table is flat is a causal factor relevant to where the ball rolls, though neither being hard or being flat is an impulse. There are other distinctions amongst causes that upset Hume's vision of reason as inert. When out running you collide with someone. The momentum of your body supplies the energy for you and your victim's changed vectors. (This seems to be Hume's picture when he denies that reason can set itself up as an oppositional force.) In contrast, when you press a power switch to set powerful machinery in motion, you release but do not supply the colossal energy of the machinery. The operation of reason may be (*inter alia*) as a trigger or switch. A line of thought could lead to such a switch point. And, as our *capacity* to understand a situation, for instance, it is reason that has the strength to structure our various motives, heeds, and information so that we can focus on a coherent objective. In steadily modifying his first bold denial that reason can control passion, Hume himself points us towards these distinctions. He concedes, for instance, that when you learn that it is impossible to achieve your aims you may lose your desire to pursue them.<sup>27</sup> Here he relies upon reason having a causal relevance other than that of an impulse. So reason—not a counter passion since it is not a passion—can corrode or dismantle passion.

Such an approach to Hume's denial that reason has efficacy readies us for what he comes to admit—that by reasoning and by use of the *strength* of understanding we can shape, deflect, or corrode what initially we desire. We can partially deconstruct and reconstruct the elements and the system of our motivation.<sup>28</sup> By reason we comprehend information that can trigger a new aim, or deflect us from a course on which we had been set. Thus, suddenly to comprehend the implications of what we observe can release our total energy for fight or flight—or for sustained and steady work. Also, not only events of reasoning have an effect. Abstract understanding of principle shapes the strategies and plans we follow, and therefore makes a difference to a physical outcome. An aerodynamic problem is solved by a certain kind of mathematics. A designer finds a mathematical flaw in their calculations. It would be a 'sting' of reason to admit this since it might bring his or her reputation into question. Nevertheless their comprehension of the issue makes them admit it. One cannot allow an aircraft to take to the air at risk of failure under certain conditions of stress.<sup>29</sup>

We have considered the bearing of Hume's concessions on his rejection of 'combat' between reason and passion. Hume's opponent is one who would "regulate his actions by reason," but Hume has gone on to describe us regulating feeling and conduct by use of reason. We inform ourselves of what is possible, arrange to be warned in advance of hazards, and work out the implications of acting as we are inclined to. This makes a difference to what we think, feel, and do. Passion and Reason work in reciprocity or in tension. In tension, still they are not placed as two locomotives heading at each other on the same track. To pursue the metaphor—by reason we learn how to lower Passion's head of steam. Alternatively, we stand to one side of the track and change the switching points to send the locomotive onto a divergent line.<sup>30</sup>

We have already recalled how Hume, properly, distinguishes kinds of reason. There are 'demonstrative' matters—matters that are strictly provable from axioms and definitions as in systems of logic and mathematics. There are matters of experience and probability. We have observed (and are currently observing) what happens, and it is part of reason that we use this stored and current knowledge both in forming desires and in seeing them through to operation. Hume has allowed reason various ways of taking effect—short of being an impulse or a passion. In addition, reason as *understanding* is that by which we shape and give texture to our motives and desires. Hume says nothing of this but it is open to him to accept it. What we now observe is how wide and intricate is the net of reason's power to shape passion and action. In contemporary terms Hume might insist at least that Reason is not a base-load energy source. We are in step with him in not setting up reason as a competitor to passion in that respect. But his point that reason is not a *motive* is a truism of classification. It is no objection to reason's causal role. As a capacity, reason is not an impulse. Still, that leaves room for many ways in which by use of reason we modify not only what we do in the face of passion, but weaken or deconstruct that

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passion. Even within Hume's concessions to reason's power we can find room for a certain *power* of reason to shape and deploy passion.

Hume would claim that we take his concessions too far. He reminds us, for instance, that facts, principles and deductions that bear upon someone's well-being (whether one's own or that of another) have no influence upon one who does not *care* about that well-being: "'Tis [not] contrary to reason to prefer even my own acknowledg'd lesser good and have a more ardent affection for [that],"<sup>31</sup>

But to *what* reason is this not 'contrary'? After all, it is a tautology to say that it is useless to reason about needs with someone who has no susceptibility to those needs. For all that, various methods of reason might *make* that person more susceptible to the needs in question. In suggesting that possibility, we take at least one small step beyond an empty version of Hume's proposition—that if in fact someone is not susceptible to any relevant considerations however presented, then we shall have been wasting our time in advancing them. Such a tautology is consistent with all matters of fact and does not entail any limit upon reason's powers.<sup>32</sup> Regarding any issue whatever it is no use arguing with someone who is not susceptible to reasons relevant to that issue. It may be, though, that Hume does make a more specific point—not just a tautology—in his famous claim, "'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my little finger."<sup>33</sup> In such an elemental state of total self-absorption it is certainly very unlikely that one could reason adequately with someone only in terms of cause and effect—the destruction of whole world would impinge on him too. But Hume has argued that it is not "contrary to reason" to prefer one's own ("acknowledg'd") lesser good. It is not contrary to any tautology or valid principle of inference, but that does not make it a reasonable choice.

## INTERPLAY OF REASON AND PASSION

There are two main points to make about this argument of Hume's. One point is quite definite and the other is more conjectural. The first sets out from various examples Hume gives of reasoning that is effective in getting someone to cease to care about something. In general this reasoning works when it shows one's desire to be "founded on a false supposition, or when it chuses means insufficient for the design'd end."<sup>34</sup> He speaks of himself as in a more reasonable frame of mind than when he dismissed the destruction of the whole world as nothing to him: "I may desire any fruit of excellent relish, but whenever you convince me of my mistake (about its 'relish') my longing ceases."<sup>35</sup> In Hume's example someone who has a passion for getting something is persuaded by reason that it is quite impossible that she should succeed. She comes to lose interest in it. To spell out the case more fully in Hume's terms we would say that she already has a passion to get something out of life and when she learns that she cannot get one thing, she is persuaded by reason to pursue some more approachable object. But this posit of a pre-existing framing passion is conjectural at best.

Commonly, people find it far more difficult to modify their passions in the light of information than does Hume's very reasonable subject. I shall sketch an example of this—one that brings out more sharply how Hume tacitly invokes the *force* of reason in order to make his kind of concession that reason may change our passions. Someone is driving—on his way to a remote country town, let us say. Her 'passion' is to get there to meet someone with whom she is involved. She is absorbed in driving and can think of nothing but getting to the next town and letting nothing stand in his way. She notices that her fuel gauge indicates she can scarcely get to her destination. By reason, we can say, that person understands what she observes as a threat to her getting where she wants to go. A sign comes into view that advertises fuel at the terminus of a detour of some kilometres from his road. The sign warns of a very bad road surface and advises low speed and caution. She apprehends the frustration and impatience she would suffer in going out of her way and driving slowly. She needs not only perception and reason but also some *power* in his understanding of her situation if she is to break the spell of her breakneck progress. She must have the capacity to keep the facts and their implications firmly before her mind so that they can sufficiently disturb her in her present passion to keep driving regardless—towards where she yearns to be.

It is by force of reason that she will have to handle (even if she cannot banish) the painful irritation she must suffer in dealing with what her passion to get to the next town entails. Yes. It does depend upon her passions too, whether she will have the strength of mind to take the detour and to negotiate it with care. On a leisurely drive she would need no strength of mind to take the detour. Or, if she only wanted the thrill of a fast drive then taking the chance of running out of fuel before the next town might be a reasonable risk. In speaking about the force of reason we need not strain to deny such platitudes. The point is that the will she forms out of her conflicting passions cannot be explained as their simple vectorial sum.

When passions can be reconciled only when modified then (at our best) we apply reason and understanding to change or defer one or more of them. This exhibits the power peculiar to reason. The driver's passions are not the only forces in play, but the force of reason that she may bring to bear upon them is no mystery.<sup>36</sup> The use of it involves a variety of skills and practices. We speak of *strength* of mind as part of a picture of conflicting impulses being reshaped within that resilient container we call the understanding. Or (as suggested earlier) we might use a metaphor of conversation, in line with Arendt's neo-platonic figure of thinking as conversation with oneself.<sup>37</sup> We make our various passions 'talk' to each other. To reason might be important but it might not be enough. I reason to the right conclusion ("I must take that detour"). If I lack strength of mind I drive on regardless, muttering inwardly "*I'll just make it to the next town.*" By knowledge of fact and powers of deduction I learn that I must no longer pursue something I want, but what I know is not enough in itself. I must bring it to bear on my situation. To understand my situation is not only to be aware of conflicting or unreal aims and to be informed about facts relevant to my chances. Understanding can resolve passions into a resultant vector that partially satisfies them. Understanding is not therefore master or mistress, but had better not be slave, either. The second point is more conjectural. It is an empirical question, after all, whether reasoning about why something matters achieves nothing with someone who does not already care about it, or care about any causal or logical implication of it. If we clear away the tautology that reason is ineffective when it appeals to reasons that matter nothing to the person concerned, we are left with an interesting question. Do some uses of reason enable someone to begin to care?<sup>38</sup> We surprise ourselves by what we do and by what we find ourselves incapable of doing. What we do in a crisis, for instance, is no simple resultant of the passions and concerns that we carried into it. Observers read us as demonstrating new and unexpected passions in response to unexpected demands upon our reason and our capacity to care. In a crisis you may be stirred to powers of perception and imagination that provoke (produce?) fellow feeling of which you had been hitherto incapable. Reason is at play here. It is from vivid perception and an enlivened mind that we understand what is at stake. That brings us to the point of caring about the lives of others even if we risk our own. A Humean critic might insist that the passion of care must have preceded this work of extreme reason—"there must have been a latent concern released by the crisis!" The "*must have been*" speaks of prior theoretical commitment rather than certainty of fact. You might find that the one who risked life to help another whose need was inescapable to sense and mind, had never been bothered to support charities or to put money in busker's hat.

It speaks tellingly about the force of reason that what we learn and understand in unexpected situations can disrupt stasis of feeling by re-animating powers of perception, imagination and deduction. (Compare: "The manner of presentation in a judgment of taste ... can be nothing but [that of] the mental state ... when imagination and understanding are in free play ... as required for cognition in general."<sup>39</sup> What we come to understand when circumstances force reason and perception into operation can convert a numb life into one of active reciprocity with others.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps a blighted vision of the range of *methods* of reason has inclined us to assent to the Humean dictum about reason and passion. Just to *tell* someone they ought to care, or to *inform* them of principles from which it follows that they should care is unlikely to elicit a positive response. But similarly, to use such didactic or authoritarian methods of teaching mathematics or science is not likely to be effective, either. In all matters, the presentation of a case in a fashion that permits the learner to participate, feel with and work within what is being taught is what brings them to comprehend and thus to be moved by reason. There is that 'splash of tears.' It may cost more than a twinge when we cross the line between intellectual insulation and accessibility to another's appeal. Once we cross the line we are immersed in caring. We are affectively involved and interactive. We may need no further 'force of reason' to keep us going. But perhaps it was only by reason

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that, when cold, we crossed the boundary in the first place.

### ‘ABSTRACT IDEA’ AND ‘BRUTE NATURE’

We have outlined powers one may attribute to reason—principally our ability to steady emotion and modify and pace the expression of desire. To concentrate upon what we understand of logic and of cause and effect is a means to that end. Like Hume, we reject reason as a *rationalism* that seeks to achieve fundamental understanding of nature by appeal to principles that have the self-evidence of principles of logic or of mathematics. Certainly we see no power in that appeal. The principles of reason that we still share with Hume are those of the various sciences, including the ‘pure’ realms of logic and mathematics. We are interested in reason, in this sense, both in itself and as a means of achieving our aims.<sup>41</sup>

Hume writes sometimes as if formal reason—the recognition of tautologies and valid inferences—can play no causal role because its field is abstract ideas rather than cause and effect:

I believe it will scarce be asserted that the first species of reason [demonstration by the abstract relation of ideas] is ever the cause of action. As its proper province is the world of ideas, and as the will always places us in that of realities, demonstration and volition seem ...totally removed from each other.<sup>42</sup>

But a grasp of principles and facts is necessary to the strength of mind it requires to *apply* such understanding when the occasion demands it. The comprehension of an intellectual error possessed by the architect we described earlier lent her strength. In his more considered concessions Hume accepts such cases but not their implications about the nature of reason. Yet Hume opens his attack on any possible conflict between reason and passion on the basis that reason, as abstract understanding, cannot be an operative cause.

We have seen how in the face of common experience Hume has to concede that reason can perform an ancillary role in relation to passion’s aims. Tacitly Hume grants some power to reason.<sup>43</sup> In the first paragraph of “The influencing motives of the will”, Hume declares that he will “prove, *first*, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and *secondly*, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.” We agree that reason is not a *motive* but still in the opening line of the next paragraph Hume himself finds it natural to say, “*the understanding exerts itself [in two different ways].*” Thus he associates understanding with some kind of force. We ‘exert’ ourselves in our efforts to judge what is ‘demonstrable’ (mathematical and logical principles) and ‘probable’ (scientific principles and issues of cause and effect). He must be right in saying the first sort of exertion “cannot *alone* be the cause of any action.” Unfortunately his reason (*we are dealing in ‘the world of ideas’ removed from that of action*) confuses the issue. The use of mathematics makes a crucial difference to our conduct of business affairs. Abstract understanding is *not* intrinsically removed from practice.<sup>44</sup> Hume has confused the *abstract* character of understanding with a sort of *inertness*. What he does is more acute than what he says, fortunately. What he does is to exhibit a number of cases in which reason does act as a *partial* cause. The ‘exertions’ of the understanding are said ‘*never alone*’ to cause action. But reason and passion are on the same level then.

Passions *alone* do not bring about action. Putting aside the countless contextual conditions for cause and effect, embarrassment (a passion) might be named the *whole* cause of one’s blushing (a reflex). But blushing is not an action, and does not involve the will. Embarrassment cannot be a *whole* cause of a specific action such as exiting the room in one’s discomfiture. One might equally have made a joke of one’s predicament. To exit the room is already to use one’s understanding of a situation in a particular manner. To deny that reason *alone* is the cause of passion or action is to concede that reason can be at least part of their cause.<sup>45</sup> Hume’s general argument that demonstrative reasoning cannot be a cause because it deals only with the relation of ideas (not of ideas to things) is a step in quite the wrong direction. Whether mathematics really does deal with a ‘world of ideas’ separate from that of action is beside the point. Even if you accept a dualism of ‘pure’ and ‘applied’

mathematics, dealing with that ‘world of ideas’ leaves reason in touch with action.

Throughout his discussion of the relation between reason and passion Hume has two main issues at play. One issue is whether reason has a causal relation with passion (and thus with action), and the other is whether by reason we can *justify* how we feel and what we are concerned with. These issues (though easily confused) have a connection. It is the abstract nature of ideas in contrast with the sheer existence of the passions that makes it seem to Hume that reason cannot get a grip on them. By the same token, passions as ‘brute existences’ would lack intentional structure and so reason could not exhibit them to be rational or irrational. Hume argues that it is reason’s *representational* power that gives it the status to confer reasonableness. Correlatively, it is only a *representational* character in what is *made* reasonable that permits it to accept that endowment. It follows straight off that whereas one can by reason show why one should have a certain belief about fact or abstract principle, one cannot use reason to gain some logical purchase on the passions. Those who deny Hume’s conclusion come to a dilemma here. They might take issue with his concept of the passions as brute existences lacking the wit of concept or proposition. Alternatively, they might challenge the apparently impregnable doctrine that when it comes to rational justification it takes two to tango—each partner being formed within the same intentional structures.<sup>46</sup>

Thus Hume originates a tradition of analytical philosophy—that strictly speaking only the *beliefs* that accompany passions are rational or irrational. In the case of sensations this is evident. To have a toothache is not rational or irrational. Reason can bear only upon the remedy one might employ to alleviate it. That passions cannot be rationalised follows from Hume’s premises. It does not follow that reasoning can have no effect upon them, but if by chance some effect did occur it would be as blind to its cause. But whatever the truth about some blind effect of reasoning on passion, Hume is right to this extent—if passions cannot be rationalised then our main reason for thinking that reason can modify them disappears.<sup>47</sup> Except by lucky coincidence<sup>48</sup>, reasoning works to modify my passions by the fact that in my passion I understand how the points of reason that are brought to me bear upon it. Reason brings fact, inference, and conceptual judgment to bear on the passion of dedicated aspiration—as it does upon reflective thoughts.

It becomes apparent that the issue of the conceptual structure of passion in its relation to reason is too large to pursue further in this paper. What I hope to have made clear at this stage is the strong *prima facie* case that various modes and uses of reason are causally relevant to the state, intensity, and texture of our passions, and upon the timing of their expression. Hume’s own examples of reason’s influence assume that within our passions we comprehend reason’s demands. Reciprocally, his examples (and ours) assume a comprehension *within* reason of the character of passionate life. The causal bearing of reason upon passion remains credible only by taking the passions as not ‘brute existences’ but as having conceptual structure and intentional content.

Perhaps it was because of a certain vision of reason’s *methods* that people found a strong appeal in Hume’s picture of reason as passion’s slave. They must, too, have had some prior disposition to be persuaded by his arguments that it is impossible to reason in relation to the passions except in terms of beliefs accidentally connected with them. It takes care to construct a good model of the reasonable effect of reason upon passion. Just to *tell* someone they ought to care, or to flatly inform them of principles from which it follows that they should care, is not the way to elicit any positive response. Certainly. But those are only lazy and unimaginative uses of reason. To use such didactic or authoritarian methods when teaching mathematics or science rarely works either. When we use reason properly, we present a case so as to permit the learner to participate in what is being taught. That is what brings him or her to comprehend and thus to be moved by reason. That is what is involved in making reasons one’s own. That is how we gain and develop what Kant called our ‘autonomy’ in reason.

## PURE PRACTICAL REASON

Kant appeals to pure practical reason both as a source of comprehension of what is right, and as a power that enables us to *follow* that principle. Kant is determined first to establish the autonomy of pure practical reason in

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the understanding of what is right. He has reason to be wary of Hume's appeal to the sentiments alone as the basis for recognising and doing what is right. Since Hume stresses the role of *good* feeling as a basis for doing what is right, what he says seem reasonable and appealing. But a cruel repressive morality can also be founded on feeling—on vicious and punitive sentiment. If reason can say nothing about the difference between good and bad feeling then the prospects of fundamental reasoning about what is right are bleak.

Kant argues that 'pure practical reason' can be a full determining consideration for the will. This would be in direct opposition to Hume's subordination of reason to passion. Kant's second critique, *The Critique of Practical Reason* has the task of grounding the validity and the power of pure reason to form a *pure* will to do what is right. His principle of pure practical reason is designed as if specifically to counter Hume's denial that reason can initiate what we desire (then to resolve and pursue to an end). In "determin[ing] the will *a priori* with regard to its object", Kant's pure practical principle is supposed to give us the power to be willing to do what is required. The business of pure practical reason is to ask of our maxims of conduct whether we would find them acceptable as laws of nature.<sup>49</sup> Practical reason will not be distracted by the micro-causality of its business. An empirical enquiry into that takes place outside the realm of pure reason. Our action in the phenomenal world has its causes in that world, and yet the noumenal will is effective in the noumenal realm while free of the net of phenomenal causality. Kant is frank about the predicament:

It seems paradoxical to want to find in the world of sense a case which ... falls only under the law of nature [and] nonetheless permits the application of a law of freedom to it [Then Kant begins to see a way out.] The concern is not [as it is in theoretical reason] with the schema of a case according to laws, but with the schema of a law itself, because the *determination of the will* through the law alone ... ties the concept of causality to conditions that are entirely different from those that amount to natural connection.<sup>50</sup>

Can this division of 'worlds' make sense? Kant sketches how pure practical reason becomes an incentive for this pure will. To avoid a clash of freedom and of causality he has marked pure reason as *noumenal* and actions in the world as *phenomenal*. Now he must bridge the two. How can noumenal reason *bear upon* the will to act? Traffic on this bridge must not pollute the noumenal realm. The will is to be pure though effective upon phenomenal action. Kant proposes an idea of pure reason evoking our *respect* for 'moral law'.<sup>51</sup> Respect is a *feeling* and as such can be an incentive in the phenomenal realm. Since its object is only pure practical reason itself, the purity of reason is preserved even as it engages with the everyday world.<sup>52</sup> This may be an appealing idea but it takes for granted the possibility of traffic from noumenal to phenomenal. Work of pure reason in the noumenal realm summons up respect in the phenomenal, Kant observes. But if the power of noumenal pure reason and that of phenomenal causality are of different orders, the noumenal could not affect us with respect.

We do have Kant's capacity to judge what is right in the face of contrary inclination but he constructs his *pure* reason as divorced from every kind of passion. And yet reason's pure principle can evoke our awed respect—a pure passion. We can go further in this direction. In doing what we take to be right we are *pleased* at the very fact of its being done, despite the costs.<sup>53</sup> I take that pleasure for myself, and I recognise the same pleasure in another—at how he or she is open to information whether or not it is agreeable. I take pleasure in the disinterested rigor of judgment, which neither rushes when there is more time for thought, nor spins out the process of deliberation until it is too late. Like Kant we admire purity of reason, but we accept it *phenomenally* as part of the purity of considered sentiment. But Kant insists that respect for the moral law provides an incentive that has nothing to do with any sort of pleasure:

So *little* is respect a feeling of *pleasure* that we give way to it only reluctantly in regard to a human being. We try to discover something [in him] that could lighten the burden of it for us ... On the other hand, there is nonetheless so *little displeasure* in respect that once we have shed our self-conceit ... we can not take our eyes off the splendor of this law.<sup>54</sup>

While insisting on the austerity of this ‘respect’ Kant becomes inconsistent. ‘Splendour’ speaks of *pleasure*. Kant will write of our “awe at the moral law within.” Awe too is a pleasure, albeit austere. Whether in awe or in simple satisfaction, being pleased at what is right in itself has the same purity as the practical reason that gives it focus. Contrary to Kant’s strictures, this is how pure practical reason might supply motivation. Judgment draws upon it; to judge is already to be affected.

Kant has another argument against pleasure as at the heart of pure judgment. In the light of our preceding argument, I read it as a case against impertinent motivation:

If this feeling of respect were ... a feeling of pleasure based in *inner sense* then [trying to] discover *a priori* a link of it to any idea [such as what we ought to do] would be futile; however [respect] applies only to the practical; moreover, it attaches to the presentation of a law [only] in terms of the law’s form and not on account of any object of the law.<sup>55</sup>

Kant is arguing that if being pleased at something were a mode of understanding there could be no ‘practical *necessitation*’ of the will by pure practical reason. His manner of division of phenomenal (observable matters of fact) and noumenal (issues of pure principle) misleads him here. This *necessitation* (of will by principle *via* an *a priori* link) cannot exist in any world, phenomenal or noumenal. Kant deplores how we hide from the implications of what we understand, but he cannot deny that we do. Also when we deliberately refuse to pay the price of principle we are not ‘necessitated’ by what we understand to be right. We might respond, for Kant, that this ‘necessitation’ is the conceptual connection between what the principle states and the justice of following it. But that reasonable suggestion proposes no kind of *cause*. Causality is not a conceptual relation. Causality in *doing* what is right is the force of the understanding of what we do that makes us willing to undertake its costs. Kant holds that as ‘objectively’ practical, reason excludes influence from any kind of ‘inclination.’<sup>56</sup> He is thinking of inclination as a tendency to proceed as we please, irrespective of what is right. By providing understanding of what is right, pure practical reason gives us the power to do it. In that case pure practical reason generates its own inclination. We shall proceed to do what is right unless it is so dangerous that we turn away from that course. We can agree with Kant in distinguishing the concerns of pure practical reason from irrelevant inclinations. But though it cannot *necessitate*, Kant’s pure practical reason can provide strength in the understanding and pursuit of what is right.<sup>57</sup> Rather than a distraction, this ‘inclination’ is intrinsic to the concerns of reason.<sup>58</sup> As *being pleased at* what is being done judgment would not thereby be *motivated* by pleasure. To be pleased at what we do takes more than doing what we please. This *being pleased at* is no prior or improper ‘inclination.’ The considered way of being pleased that *constitutes* judgment cannot be a prejudicial inducement upon *itself*.<sup>59</sup>

Also, in thus respecting the autonomy of reason we can agree with Kant that when we judge an action as *right* we consider the ‘form’ of a principle rather than an action’s ‘subject matter.’ When I pay a debt I take no pleasure in my action as *handing over my money to a stranger*. But in judging that I *should* pay it I am pleased—as Kant says—at the ‘form’ of what I do. It is *the debt’s being paid* that I am pleased at. (This is a far cry from paying the debt out of disguised self-interest.)

So we can agree in our own terms with Kant’s notion that what we realise in the use of pure reason can generate the will to act.<sup>60</sup> It is from this use of reason (‘understanding’ in contemporary terms) that we draw the *power* to bracket off ‘inclinations’ that obstruct our good will. That is the source of the ‘sting of reason’ that causes the ‘splash of tears’ at what we relinquish in the face of our situation. But, unlike Kant, we permit this pure intellect to live in the same house as the ‘inclinations’ that would corrupt it. Perhaps every phenomenon trails clouds of the noumenal—of what is in itself. Still, pure reason cohabits with pure passion and thus, like sense and desire, appears as a phenomenon.

It is the *power* of understanding gained by our use of reason to sustain the will to act that is at the heart of Kant’s *pure* practical reason. It falls to us to comprehend this *purity* as existing in the midst of the busily

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impure world of phenomena that is the arena of action. What makes the action right rather than convenient or profitable is preserved on that arena by our undivided and unswerving attention to what is relevant to an action as right. Thus we hold pure practical reason within experience.<sup>61</sup> Kant founds the purity of practical reason on a noumenal realm outside phenomenal causality. His determination upon preserving the autonomy of pure reason generates a theory that renders it incapable (in any way he can comprehend) of affecting the phenomenal world. But Kant analyses examples in social and political life of people who do what is just despite extreme or fatal consequences for themselves. Kant has demonstrated despite himself that pure reason operates upon the same plane as affectivity. Hume has demonstrated despite himself that reason takes hold on passion. Though with a motive the opposite of Kant's, Hume also tries to remove pure reason from the field of passion. Inevitably, this scenario has the same weakness as Kant's more florid picture of noumenal and phenomenal realms. Hume argues that pure (abstract) reason cannot oppose passion because it deals only with the world of relations between ideas. But in that case our understanding of mathematics and logic cannot work even to *serve* passion. Passion would have no hold upon it.

## FREEDOM IN REASON

There is, then, this continuing tension between Kant's separation of sensibility and pure reason (speculative or practical), and his need for the will (as responsive to the validity of a maxim) to influence conduct. In the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, published some three years before the second *Critique* he writes:

[It is] entirely impossible for us human beings to have an explanation of how and why the universality of the maxim as a law, hence morality, should interest us.<sup>62</sup>

This vision of exclusive realms of the phenomenal and noumenal is at the centre of Kant's thinking. What for us appears as philosophical myth, for him secures the autonomy of what is right as against what is only agreeable. Yet, having separated these 'realms' Kant then has to find a way of placing them in communication with each other. He has to rescue pure practical reason from irrelevance. Even as we escape the myth, we find that the problems that brought it into crisis remain on our own contemporary agenda. The use of reason is a key part of the freedom we have in relation the world we understand, even as we understand ourselves ever more fully within that world of cause and effect. And for Kant, as for our almost contemporary Arendt, this problem of freedom is prior to that of understanding by pure practical reason what is right.

Contemporary analytical philosophy takes the question of freedom as "Could I have done otherwise?" That is not Kant and Arendt's central concern. The challenging question for them is how, in a world of causes, I can initiate a new sequence of events that breaks with hitherto fixed patterns. Kant tells two stories in immediate apposition. By use of reason we have the power *not to do* what, under the force of passion, we feel we *must*. And by use of reason, also, we know that we have the power *to do* what natural inclination would seem to place beyond our powers:

Suppose that someone alleges that his lustful inclination is quite irresistible to him when he encounters the favored object and the opportunity. [Ask him] whether, if in front of the house where he finds this opportunity a gallows were erected on which he would be strung up immediately after gratifying his lust, he would not conquer his inclination. But ask him [too] whether, if his prince demanded on the threat of the same prompt penalty of death, that he give false testimony against an honest man whom the prince would like to ruin under specious pretenses, he might consider it possible to overcome his love of life, however great it might be.<sup>63</sup>

If Kant's character sets aside inducements and threats he might think, clearly, whether he would want a world in which it was a law of nature to destroy someone's life by a lie in order to save one's own. In understanding that he would not will such a world he realises that he has the power to refuse the sovereign's command. In this freedom of mind he might break with what 'they' think that he 'has to do'. Sovereignty might crumble; new

sequences of events might unfold.

Kant claims that in grasping a pure practical principle we become determined to do what is right. The double meaning of *being determined* works out to the benefit of his theory. In a resolute action that ends a cycle of oppression one is *fully determined* to make that change. In becoming absorbed in what justice requires, one can say finally, *'I could have done nothing else.'* My freedom, then, consists not in the mythical 'contra-causal' opposition to an easier and safer option but in putting that option out of play by attending to the 'pure practical principle' at stake.

We say that someone was free *not* to do something right (it was demanding and dangerous) but in the same breath observe how she was *determined* to do it. It is facile to dismiss this as 'bad' ambiguity. The play on 'determined' is a creative one. There is a proper link between *being obliged by (appropriate) factors* and *being fully set upon doing*. When someone has become involved in a connected series of dangerous actions in order to do what is right, it has become (for that person) only an imaginary possibility to suddenly retreat into isolation. It is not necessary to treat the noumenal realm of pure reason as therefore cut off from the phenomenal realm of cause and effect. Still, we are at best only moving *towards* a model that goes beyond Kant's. His own examples integrate the noumenal with the phenomenal even if his theory does not countenance that. The reality of Kant's 'purity' of reason is demonstrated to us even in the simple capacity of a jury to obey a judge's injunction to ignore tantalising evidence that has been ruled inadmissible. We place the operation of that reason 'always already' as within the field of determining factors. We think of a person as *becoming* determined (*I am quite determined!*) within the factors *by which* they are determined (*by factors within and without*). To be free is to be willing to do what you understand the situation requires. The purity of reason within the myth of the noumenal emerges as our becoming *determined* (in both senses) in the light of what we understand.

Hume invoked only the *phenomenal* realm but still he placed reason outside the structure of causes that impel us. Though he had the good sense to concede reason at least a subsidiary role he thought of it as constitutionally ineffectual. We have outlined something of what reason requires if it is to carry out passion's needs. For his part, Kant set out by placing reason outside the causal framework and then tried to resolve reason's efficacy and phenomenal causation by dividing *noumenal* power from *phenomenal* causality—each within its own sphere.<sup>64</sup> As we work out the complementary structures of empirical and transcendental thought, we discover reason operating as within a causal framework even as it retains the normative power that binds it with judgment.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is Kant's distinction of *phenomenal* and *noumenal* as a division of different orders of being that makes so implausible his appeal to pure principle as itself a kind of 'higher' motivation. And yet, when we return from a critique of Hume it is Kant's approach that offers better prospects for understanding reasons' power. While Hume's appeal to humanity in its natural habits, propensities and sympathies is initially attractive, his default position is that reason is inert. For Kant it is only by reason that we *can* take the initiative. Hume makes reasonable concessions about reason's role, but does not revise his main principle. In consequence he finds too limited a role for reason, and is less able than Kant<sup>65</sup> to account for its peculiar power. Husserl<sup>66</sup> and then Ryle<sup>67</sup> would encourage us to examine as inspired allegory, myths such as that of the noumenal. Kant's mythology dramatises the force of reason when directed purely at what is relevant to an issue. That he has to resort to myth alerts us to the need to understand that power.

Kant's exemplary moral tales and the use he would make of them as a proper method of moral education counter the vision of him as a philosopher of unfeeling duty. For Kant, reason is not only logic coupled with an appreciation of cause and effect. It involves our most abstract comprehension of principle, whether formal, speculative, or practical. His 'pure reason' is not required to abolish our impulses towards pleasure and safety. Reason's clear understanding does not—as if only one more impulse — *overpower* those self-protective passions. Rather, absorbed in what we understand we set them aside.<sup>68</sup> By reason we defer, rather than dominate them.

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With good fortune, in all good time, we may come to fulfil them.

Kant linked practical reason with being willing to act *rightly*. He claimed that the force peculiar to practical reason derived not only from its *purity* but also its *practicality*. It operates in the *imperative* mood from the outset, bypassing Hume's barrier between 'ought' and 'is.' In judging what is right we start with what we grasp ought to be. Like Hume, Kant recognises that neither facts nor theories of science determine what we ought to do. Hence, he turns to imperatives—principles that make no appeal to facts hidden from science. Our objectivity derives from imperatives that shape the mind.

MAXWELL DEUTSCHER studied philosophy at Adelaide, then Oxford, with Gilbert Ryle. Appointed Foundation Professor at Macquarie University in 1966; published on themes of remembering, inferring, and physicalism. After involvement in Vietnam protests, wrote *Subjecting and Objecting* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1983), papers on Sartre, Ryle, and Husserl, and then three essays in conceptual analysis after deconstruction. A free-lance philosopher since 1998, he has published *Michèle Le Deuff: Operative Philosophy and Imaginary Practice* (ed.) (Humanity Books, Amherst, 2000), *Genre and Void: Looking Back at Sartre and Beauvoir* (Ashgate, Aldershot 2003), and *Judgment After Arendt* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007). He is presently writing further on the role of judgment.

## NOTES

1. Michèle Le Dœuff, “Introduction: ‘The Shameful Face of Philosophy,’” in *The Philosophical Imaginary*, trans. Colin Gordon (London: Athlone, 1989).
2. Plato, *Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin 1973).
3. David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Cambridge: Hackett 2002). I refer to his use of the metaphor of *law* to characterise the use and result of pure practical reason.
5. In his translation, Colin Gordon translates ‘les possibilités du système’ as ‘possibilities of the system’, as if the system *does* have them. But the use of the image signifies that the system lacks them. The Robert *Français~Anglais* suggests ‘feasibility’ for ‘possibilité’ used in connection with a project.
6. Le Dœuff, “Introduction: ‘The Shameful Face of Philosophy,’” 3.
7. Plato, “Republic,” in *The Dialogues of Plato* (Fourth Edition), trans. B.Jowett, vol. 3, 4th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University of Press), Book Seven, 376-378.
8. This capacity for auto-motion is a definition of ‘soul’ that Plato invokes.
9. One horse is high-minded; the other represents ‘base’ impulsive lust. But each is a source of motive power upon which the driver depends. Between the three of them, the resultant vector of the ‘soul’ is an alternate acceleration and deceleration towards a reality that will be known because it is loved by all three of them. The horses supply the positive and the negative energy for movement in the face of fear of the unknown. The charioteer must encourage the noble horse’s tactful approach to beloved reality and haul back the base horse’s rush to overpower it. The power of the object to be known—the beloved that attracts them all—is a key part of the system’s dynamics. It is the impending presence of loveable reality that triggers the action, after all.
10. Reason, in mastering Passion, is savage in its methods: “The driver experiences even more intensely what he experienced before ... and with a still more violent backward pull jerks the bit from between the teeth of the lustful horse, drenches his abusive tongue and jaws with blood (and so on)” Plato, *Phaedrus*, 63. .
11. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 63.
12. ‘Master and slave is a leap back to Plato and ahead of Hume’s successor, Kant, to his successor, Hegel.
13. The ‘classical’ view of *reason* as master will mirror the same internal regress. (In reading the *Phaedrus* allegory we have seen how far a classic can depart from the ‘classical’ picture of reason in combat with passion.)
14. Hannah Arendt, *Life of the Mind*, Book I (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978).
15. That this is a primary role for bad horse in the allegory shows how ‘Platonism’ as a cliché occludes the allegory’s nuances. Good horse has the vice of procrastination and the driver, being preoccupied with hauling back on bad horse’s impulsiveness, only aids and abets this vice.
16. I acknowledge a work in progress by Daniel Nicholls (“A Whisper with Reason”) in which my talk of this ‘sting’ provokes his telling a story in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* about the “bees that settled on the mouth of Plato as a young child and foretold the charm of his very pleasing eloquence.” Nicholls reads the ‘sting’ to reason as the meeting of surfaces: “Words too can brush against each other.”
17. From that point one could trace movements of thought since Hume, such as the German mid twentieth century ‘Critical School’—attacks upon the limiting reason to considering means to ends.
18. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).
19. In analytical philosophy the fact that we *can*, or *are inclined to* is reified as *disposition*—as a kind of entity.
20. Certainly, the notion of ‘the person who ...’ has its own vicissitudes.
21. Provisionally, I take reason to be the powers of reasoning and of understanding, and our uses of these powers.
22. Hume deconstructs “reason is the slave of the passions” by iterating concessions—“Reason has no force of its own, *but to* ...” and so on. Each iteration concedes another mode of reason’s force. (He might thus have argued that it is the *passions* that have no force *except to* enable reason etc. etc.)
23. David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 414
24. Hume is alleging that this is the sort of error that in another century Gilbert Ryle will call a category mistake. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, 11.
25. A.T. Nuyen is amongst various contemporary writers who argue that in consigning reason as ‘slave’ to the passions Hume still reckoned reason to have some kind of power. A.T.Nuyen, “David Hume on Reason, Passion and Morals”, *Hume Studies*, Vol. X, No.1, 26-45.
26. Hume, *Treatise*, 414
27. Hume, *Treatise*, 416-7.
28. For Hume such reflections are as minor corrections to a major principle.
29. Hume would be right to point out in his usual way the relevance of passion here. One would reason in vain with an engineer who cared nothing about the product failing or the safety of passengers. As a cause, however, this leaves reason on

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an equal footing with passion. Caring about these things will not give the engineer any power to fix the matter. Only the use of reason has the power to do that.

30. 'In your dreams!' the reader may retort. Yes, there is each morning the headlines of disaster and crime. We may admit that thought and judgement are slight and erratic in their effect. Still they make a difference.

31. Hume, *Treatise*, 416.

32. Yes, this argument appeals to Humean principles. The point is that one of his principle conflicts with another.

33. Hume, *Treatise*, 416.

34. Hume, *Treatise*, 416.

35. Hume, *Treatise*, 416-7.

36. In the next section we shall draw upon Kant's notion of the autonomy of reason while regarding his division of phenomenal and noumenal realms as a guiding myth.

37. Arendt, *Life of the Mind*, 187-9.

38. It would be one way of reading Kant's challenge that we live only by maxims that we would will as universal natural law, that reflection on that dimension of a principle can be enough to effect a shift in the world of phenomena. We shall turn to Kant on the power of reason in the next section.

39. This is Kant's analysis of the pleasure peculiar judging *as beautiful*. My last remark on the force of reason echoes it. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.)

40. It is quite enough for the point that this *can* happen. I am not suggesting crisis as a panacea for moral torpor!

41. With Hume, Kant rejects *a priori* analytic scientific principles. But in his next *Critique* he argued that by pure reason we can understand a universal principle of what is right; he considered it as *a priori* although 'synthetic'. The principle of this *Critique* takes the form of an autonomous imperative—an internalised power to act.

42. Hume, *Treatise*, 413.

43. We have seen how the initial subjugation of reason to passion betrayed his acceptance of reason's causality.

44. There is some irony here, in the light of Kant's opposition to Hume. Kant's 'noumenal' realm is Hume's 'world of abstract ideas' writ large. Each of them makes a radical separation of pure reason from practice, only to make radical concessions in the name of common experience and of theoretical coherence.

45. We have already sketched the possibility that new comprehension of a situation may initiate a sympathy not previously connected by with pre-existing concerns.

46. Our opening critique of passion as 'slave' is again relevant. Passion cannot be cast by allegory as reason's slave if it passion is a brute existence that shares no world with the master. The question of whether perception itself might be at its heart such a brute existence, too, has become a renewed controversy in a new genre of analytical philosophy, represented particularly by John McDowell who brings a neo-Hegelian critique against the very idea of sheer sensory experience providing our reason for believe in the existence of what we sense. Hume's version is that reason cannot justify a brute existence. McDowell's is that brute existence cannot justify a propositional attitude. John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3-23.

47. The epistemology is like that of believing in God after evolutionary theory. The theory does not establish that there is no God, but it does remove (at least what used to be) the prime reason for belief.

48. One might think of lulling to sleep someone who is upset at some disaster. Your steady murmuring of facts that do establish it is not so bad are not understood at all but in the event of the giving of reasons does the trick.

49. Kant has an alternative formulation—we ask of our maxims of conduct whether we would will them as universal *legislation*.

50. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

51. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 102-4.

52. Circularity still threatens since noumenal reason must *evoke* phenomenal respect.

53. The detail of this argument is in my 'In Sensible Judgment', forthcoming in *Symposium*.

54. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* 101.

55. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 104.

56. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 19-34.

57. I import understanding ('Verstand') within noumenal reason ('Vernunft'). Kant cannot comprehend how noumenal power coordinates with phenomenal causality.

58. In the *Critique of Judgment* (Division I, Book I, §1-2) Kant cites pleasures irrelevant to beauty. Still an aesthetic judgment has its 'first moment' in its particular pleasure.

59. Kant recommends exemplary stories to open the mind. A principle's validity can work in itself but narrative may be more effective than contemplation of the principle.

60. Where Kant speaks of (pure) reason (*Vernunft*) in contrast with understanding (*Verstand*), I would speak of judging what is right *by* using reason to understand it. His 'will' to do what is right proceeds from *pure reason* but we need make no mystery of that *purity*. Kant's examples are utterly of 'this world'—if we treat customers fairly as 'good for business' then our motive is

mixed. When *pure* reason is out in the open it has a hold on the mind that prudence can only weaken.

61. Max Deutscher, *Judgment after Arendt* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 134-136, 142-146, 157-162. Also, "Thinking from Underground", *Power, Judgment and Political Evil*, eds. Andrew Schaap, Danielle Celermajer, and Vrasidas Karalis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 27-54.

62. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Allen Wood (New York: Yale University Press, 2002), 77.

63. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 44.

64. The division of noumenal reason and phenomenal feeling, under stress in the second *Critique*, comes under direct challenge in the *Critique of Judgment*.

65. I admit that success in this depends on integrating the phenomenal and noumenal.

66. "Kant get[s] involved in ... mythical talk, whose literal meaning points to ... a mode of the subjective which we [cannot] make intuitive": Edmund Husserl, *Transcendental Phenomenology and the Crisis of European Sciences*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern, 1970), Part III, §30, 114.

67. Ryle uses the myth of the 'ghost in the machine' in making conceptual distinctions.

68. One might think here of Husserl's 'bracketing' of the objects of our natural attitudes.