

Active Powers of the Human Mind

Ruth Boeker

University College Dublin

ruth.boeker@ucd.ie

Forthcoming in *Scottish Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 2, edited by Aaron Garrett and James A. Harris. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Throughout the eighteenth century Scottish philosophers engage in lively debates about human agency, the will, and the powers that influence, incite, or determine human action. These debates culminate in the publications of Thomas Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (2010 [1788]) and Dugald Stewart's *The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man* (1854–1860: VI–VII).

Reid distinguishes active powers from intellectual powers and understands action as the exertion of active power (2010 [1788]: I.1, 12–13). He argues that only beings equipped with understanding and will can have active powers (2010 [1788]: I.5, 27–29). Reid agrees with John Locke (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.5, 236) that our will enables us to begin, forbear, continue, or end actions. However, Reid understands active power in a more restricted sense than Locke does. For Locke, active powers are dispositions to produce change (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.2, 234). If active powers are exercised they produce actions, which for Locke include motions and thoughts (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.4, 235). This means that Locke allows that there can be active powers not only within the mental realm, but also in the external material world.¹ Reid, by contrast, argues that all activity originates from a mind. For Reid, active powers are dispositions that are realised by volitions. Reid understands volition as 'a Determination to do, or not to do, something which I believe to be in my Power.' (2002: 131) Volitions presuppose some conception of what one wills; thus, they require understanding. Although volition and the will are not always carefully distinguished, Reid reserves the notion 'the will' for the faculty, and 'volition' for the act of willing (2002: 130, 2010 [1788]: II.1, 46) The will, which manifests itself in acts of volition, is a power to

¹ For further discussion, see Mattern (1980).

determine actions (2010 [1788]: II.1, 46). Reid's conception of the will builds on Locke's philosophy, but he observes that it is unfortunate that some other philosophers have used the term 'will' in a broader sense to include 'desire, aversion, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, all our appetites, passions and affections, as different modifications of the will' (Reid 2010 [1788]: II.1, 46). For Reid it is important to distinguish the incitements and motives that influence actions from the determination of action itself. Thus, he makes explicit that he 'do[es] not comprehend under [the] term ['will'] any incitements or motives which may have an influence upon our determinations, but solely the determination itself, and the power to determine.' (2010 [1788]: II.1, 47)

Reid and Stewart both follow Locke (1975 [1690]: II.xxi) in distinguishing desire from volition and in arguing that actions are produced by the agent, rather than by motives or desires (Reid 2010 [1788]: II.1, 46–49, 2002: 131–32, Stewart 1854–1860: VI:344–50). According to Reid, motives can give advice, but they do not determine actions. Reid and Stewart oppose the view that the will is necessarily determined by motives—a view that Henry Home, Lord Kames and others defend. In Reid's view, Kames is one example of a philosopher who fails to distinguish between motives and the determination of action. Yet it is not obvious that the distinction between desires, motives, or incitements, on the one hand, and volition, or the determination of action, on the other hand, holds attraction to all philosophers. It plays an important role for Reid and Stewart, who are both defenders of libertarian free will, but is there any ground for a defender of the doctrine of necessity such as Kames to distinguish motives from determinations of actions?

This essay traces the development of the philosophical debates concerning active powers and human agency in eighteenth-century Scotland. I examine how and why Scottish philosophers depart from Locke's and other traditional conceptions of the will. Moreover, I show that one consequence of altering the understanding of the will is that desires, passions, or motives often play a more significant role than in Locke's, Reid's or Stewart's accounts of the production of action. The different views about human agency are often informed by widely disputed questions concerning liberty and necessity and, where relevant, I turn to these disputes.

Since Reid, Stewart, and several other Scottish philosophers build upon Locke's philosophy, it is helpful to start with Locke, whose account of power and the will is the focus of section I. Next, I show in section II how Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull shift the focus of debates about liberty and the will and emphasise the importance of self-mastery and the cultivation of right habits. Section III focuses on David Hume's account of human

agency. His claims that volition and action are separate and that the supposed causal mechanism between volition and action is incomprehensible are widely accepted in the eighteenth century, but Hume's novel contribution to the debates lies in his new definitions of cause and necessity. I argue that his new definition of necessity needs to be taken seriously by interpretations of his claim that moral responsibility presupposes necessity. More precisely, I propose that Hume can be said to emphasise that moral responsibility presupposes a constant conjunction between stable character traits and action. Thus, like in Hutcheson's and Turnbull's philosophy, the cultivation of habits and the development of stable character traits play an important role in Hume's philosophy. Henry Home, Lord Kames, criticises of Hume for reducing necessary connection to a customary act of the imagination. Kames is a defender of the doctrine of necessity and his arguments that all actions necessarily presuppose prior motives are the focus of section IV. Section V examines responses by the common sense philosophers James Beattie, Thomas Reid, and Dugald Stewart to Hume and Kames. All three are defenders of libertarian free will and I pay particular attention to Reid's account of motives, including his distinction between animal and rational motives. Section VI focuses on the role of the passions in Hume's, Adam Smith's, and Reid's moral philosophy. I show that Reid aims to restrict the boundaries of the passions, but at the same time he is not very sensitive to the sophisticated account of the passions that Hume develops. For Hume passions can be regulated both by our selves and by others through sympathetic interaction. Given that sympathy plays an extensive role in Hume's and Smith's philosophy, I ask whether sympathy, understood in Hume's or Smith's sense, could play the same role that rational principles of action play in Reid's philosophy. I argue that Reid would not be willing to adopt Hume's or Smith's views due to their underlying disagreement about liberty. In the final section VII I reflect on the changes that classifications of principles of actions undergo in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scotland.

I Background: Locke

John Locke's (1632–1704) *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1975 [1690]) is widely read by Scottish philosophers in the eighteenth century. As becomes clearer below, several Scottish philosophers directly engage with Locke's account of power and the will and

develop his views or distance themselves from Locke. This section introduces aspects of Locke's account that influenced the philosophical debates in Scotland.

Locke distinguishes the power of thinking from the power of volition. The former is called the *understanding* and the latter the *will*. Understanding and will are two different faculties of the mind (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.2, 234). He introduces the will as follows:

This at least I think evident, That we find in our selves a *Power* to begin or forbear, continue or end several actions of our minds, and motions of our Bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering, or as it were commanding the doing or not doing such or such a particular action. This *Power* which the mind has, thus to order the consideration of any *Idea*, or the forbearing to consider it; or to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and *vice versâ* in any particular instance is that which we call the *Will*. (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.5, 236)

This means that the will is our power to self-determine some actions of the mind and motions of the body. This power is exercised by means of volitions.

The exertion of power involves change; it involves someone or something that acts and something that is acted upon. This prompts Locke to claim that '*Power* ... is twofold, *viz.* as able to make, or able to receive any change: The one may be called *Active*, and the other *Passive Power*.' (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.2, 234)² For Locke active and passive powers are always together. This means that whenever there is active power there is also passive power; they are like two sides of the same coin. Although Reid is generally sympathetic to Locke's view, he rejects Locke's invention of the notion of passive power as 'a misapplication of the word.' (2010 [1788]: I.3, 21) For Reid it does not make sense to speak of a passive power, because it 'is no power at all.' (2010 [1788]: I.3, 21) Instead Reid argues that powers should be divided into *speculative* and *active* powers. The former belong to the understanding and the latter to the will.

Locke argues that from observing that we have the power to begin, forbear, continue or end an action, we form the ideas of liberty and necessity (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.7, 237). He emphasises that liberty belongs only to agents, because liberty is a power and powers belong to substances (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.14–16, 240–41).³ Hence, he claims that it does not make sense to ask whether the will is free or not, because those who ask this question ask 'whether

² See also Locke (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.72, 285–86).

³ Reid makes a similar point in Reid (2002: 132).

one Power has another Power, one Ability another Ability' (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.16, 241). He considers this to be an absurd question, because the will is not a substance. Although these passages intimate that an agent for Locke is a substance, it is worth noting that Locke remains agnostic concerning the materiality or immateriality of thinking substances.⁴ In that respect his view differs from Reid's who argues that all action presupposes an immaterial substance or mind that initiates the action (1995).

As already mentioned, Locke makes another important observation by noting that desire and volition are two distinct acts of the mind:

For he, that shall turn his thoughts inwards upon what passes in his mind, when he *wills*, shall see, that the *will* or power of *Volition* is conversant about nothing, but our own Actions; terminates there; and reaches no farther; and that *Volition* is nothing, but that particular determination of the mind, whereby, barely by a thought, the mind endeavours to give rise, continuation, or stop to any Action, which it takes to be in its power. This well considered plainly shews, that the *Will* is perfectly distinguished from *Desire*, which in the very same Action may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our *Wills* sets us upon. (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.30 2–5, 250)

According to Locke, it is important to distinguish desire from volition, because it is possible to have desires that are contrary to volitions. For instance, I may desire to be at a beach on a sunny island, while at the same time I form the volition to go to my office to work. Both Reid and Stewart draw attention to Locke's distinction between volition and desire when criticising their predecessors who neglect it (Reid 2010 [1788]: II.1, 46–49, Stewart 1854–1860: VI:345–46).

Given that one can have multiple desires, including conflicting desires, the question arises which of these desires become volitions. According to Locke, unattainable desires can be put aside; they do not result in volitions, because it would be a waste of labour and contrary to the nature of rational beings to try to bring about something that is unattainable (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.40 2–5, 257–258). With regard to all other desires, he asserts, that commonly the strongest and most pressing desire results in volition, and subsequently action (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.40 2–5, 47 2–5, 257–258, 263). However, Locke acknowledges that we are not always governed by the strongest and most pressing desires. As intelligent beings, human agents have the power to suspend desire. Suspension of desire makes it possible 'to

⁴ See Locke (1975 [1690]: IV.iii.6, 539–43, 1823: 4:33–37).

examine, view, and judge, of the good or evil of what we are going to do' (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.47 2–5, 263). Thereby agents can consider whether an action contributes to their real long-term happiness and disregard immediate pleasures in favour of long-term happiness. For Locke the ability to suspend desire is 'the source of all liberty' (1975 [1690]: II.xxi.47 2–5, 263).⁵

II Freedom and self-mastery in Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull

Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) plays a major role in the development of British moral philosophy and Scottish Enlightenment philosophy. His metaphysical and moral writings advance the debates concerning human nature of his day. He opposes egoist views of human nature advocated by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville. For Hutcheson humans are not merely self-interested beings, but rather he argues that benevolence and sociability form an inherent part of the human constitution and are rooted in a moral sense. Moreover, his account of human nature and his emphasis on human benevolence offers an alternative to the Calvinist doctrine that humans are by nature sinful.⁶ This section focuses on his understanding of liberty and the will and elicits how he rethinks existing conceptions of liberty and the will in light of his account of human nature.⁷

Hutcheson does not offer a detailed treatment of liberty and the will in his mature writings and the most detailed treatment of the topic can be found in his *A Synopsis of Metaphysics Comprehending ONTOLOGY and PNEUMATOLOGY* (2006 [1742]). This early work is a textbook, written in Latin for the instruction of students. It provides Hutcheson's critical commentary on *Determinationes Pneumatologicae et Ontologicae*, a textbook by the Dutch metaphysician Gerard de Vries (1703 [1690]). This textbook was recommended by John Loudon, who was regent at the University of Glasgow and in 1727 became the first Professor of Logic and Rhetoric—a post that he held until his death in 1750. When Hutcheson studied at Glasgow between 1710 and 1712 Loudon was one of his teachers (Moore 1990: 43). In 1718 Hutcheson returned to his home country Ireland and established a dissenting academy

⁵ For further discussion, see LoLordo (2012), Rickless (2013, 2014), Stuart (2013), Walsh (2014, forthcoming), Yaffe (2000).

⁶ For further discussion, see Carey (2006), Moore (1990, 2006), (Moore and Silverthorne 2008), (Suderman 2015).

⁷ For a more detailed treatment of the topic and Hutcheson's role in the education of students in Ireland and Scotland, see Boeker (forthcoming).

in Dublin to prepare students for study in Scotland, and Glasgow in particular. Although *A Synopsis of Metaphysics* was not published until 1742, we can assume that he composed it in the 1720s for the instruction of students at the Dublin academy. Hutcheson never fully endorsed *A Synopsis of Metaphysics*. The first edition was published without his consent and he was not fully satisfied with the altered and enlarged second edition of 1744 (Moore 2006). Nevertheless, the work was influential for the instruction of students in the eighteenth century, as the five more posthumous editions of 1749, 1756, 1762, 1774, and 1780 attest. *A Synopsis of Metaphysics* provides insight into Hutcheson's contribution to the textbook tradition of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy, though we have to keep in mind that the positions presented there may not always reflect Hutcheson's own mature philosophical views.

Part II of *A Synopsis of Metaphysics* focuses on the human mind. There Hutcheson adopts the traditional distinction between the understanding and the will and introduces them as two powers of the mind. He characterises 'the faculty of *understanding* and the faculty of *willing*' as 'concerned respectively with knowing things and with rendering life happy' (Hutcheson 2006 [1742]: II.i.2, 112). Already at this stage it becomes clear that Hutcheson adds his own voice to the debates. Neither de Vries nor Locke⁸ introduce the will in terms of happiness.⁹ For de Vries the will concerns freedom and is distinguished from brute impulses (1703 [1690] 31).

Why does Hutcheson understand the will as a faculty that seeks happiness? In chapter 2 of Part II, titled 'On the Will,' Hutcheson maintains that the will is activated '[a]s soon as an image of good or evil is presented to the mind.' (2006 [1742]: II.ii.1, 126). For Hutcheson, the will 'seeks (*appetens*) every kind of pleasant sensation and all actions, events, or external things which seem likely to arouse them, and shuns and rejects everything contrary to them.' (2006 [1742]: II.ii.1, 126) As he elaborates in the 1744 edition, a constant desire for happiness is part of our human constitution, but we are not equipped with an 'innate notion of the supreme good, or of an aggregation of all good, to which we may refer all our intentions.' (2006 [1742]: II.ii.1, 126)

How does Hutcheson explain that we choose the greater good rather than other options that may appear pleasant in the present moment? He distinguishes between two kinds of desire, sensual desire that we share with animals and rational desire, 'or *will* in the proper sense.' (2006 [1742]: II.ii.1, 127) The former 'directs us toward pleasure by a kind of

⁸ Details of Locke's view can be found in section I above.

⁹ At this stage my interpretation diverges from Moore (2006) who suggest that Hutcheson builds on Locke to challenge de Vries's account of the understanding and the will.

blind instinct; it is driven by a quite violent emotion of the mind to obtain certain sensual goods and avoid sensual ills. The other is a calm emotion which calls in the counsel of reason and pursues things that are judged, in the light of all the circumstances, to be superior, and are seized by a nobler sense.’ (2006 [1742]: II.ii.1, 127)¹⁰ According to Hutcheson, we have control over our desires and the important task is the cultivation of rational desires and a calm state of mind:

Whatever men’s freedom may be, if adequate signs of superior goods are put before them, anyone who has carefully examined the things which arouse desire, and has directed the powers of his mind to this thing, [will find that] all his appetites and desires will be stronger or milder in proportion to the goods themselves. Everyone, therefore, who has seriously done this will be able to make all his desires for superior goods and aversion from the graver evils so strong that he will easily be able at need to suppress weaker desires for bad things and his aversion to lesser evils. Thus he will be able to shape the whole pattern of his life, so that he will pursue all the nobler goods and ignore all the lower things which are incompatible with them. (2006 [1742]: II.ii.3, 131)

Although Hutcheson acknowledges the existence of sensual desires as part of our human psychology, he argues for the superiority of the rational or calm desires. Thereby his project takes an intellectual turn and the pursuit of happiness becomes a search for moral truth, accompanied by the cultivation of good habits. For Hutcheson deliberation ‘does not depend on the will, but necessarily follows the evidence of truth which is put before it’ (2006 [1742]: II.ii.3, 129). This leads him to claim that ‘there is no question of *liberty* here at all, whether liberty is taken as *the power of doing what we wish and omitting what we do not wish, or a certain indifferent power of the mind to turn equally in any direction.*’ (2006 [1742]: II.ii.3, 129) He does not see the need to decide which of the different definitions of liberty that are introduced in metaphysics textbooks is to be preferred, but rather the important point is that deliberation is guided by moral truth.

Having downplayed, or arguably denied, the significance of the question of liberty, Hutcheson shifts the focus away from traditional questions of liberty that concerned his predecessors and contemporaries towards an experimental study of human desires and a

¹⁰ See also Hutcheson (2006 [1742]: II.ii.4, 132–33).

normative project that aims at character development and is meant to enable us to control our desires.

According to Hutcheson, ‘the lower desires get their special force from incautious *associations of ideas*’ (2006 [1742]: II.ii.6, 136). For instance, if after eating raspberries one has an upset stomach, one may start to imagine that raspberries are unhealthy. In this example one erroneously associates raspberries with being unhealthy. More generally, by an act of the imagination we often combine certain ideas that are not naturally connected and erroneously associate happiness with certain things and evil with others. In order to gain control over our lower desires, Hutcheson argues that we have to take these erroneously associated ideas apart so that we can discover real goodness (2006 [1742]: II.ii.6–136–37).¹¹

Although Hutcheson does not offer a detailed discussion of liberty in his later works, he develops a detailed theory of different senses and corresponding desires in *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (2002 [1728]). There Hutcheson argues that humans are not merely equipped with external senses, but also with an internal sense, a public sense, a moral sense, and a sense of honour (2002 [1728]: 17–18). Each of these senses is paired with corresponding desires, namely

1. The Desire of *sensual Pleasure*, (by which we mean that of the external Senses); and Aversion to the opposite Pains.
2. The Desires of the *Pleasures of Imagination* or Internal Sense, and Aversion to what is disagreeable to it.
3. Desires of the Pleasures arising from *Publick Happiness*, and Aversion to the Pains arising from the *Misery of others*.
4. Desires of *Virtue*, and Aversion to *Vice*, according to the Notions we have of the Tendency of Actions to the Publick Advantage or Detriment.
5. Desires of *Honour*, and Aversion to Shame. (2002 [1728]: 18–19)

Hutcheson does not explicitly invoke the traditional distinction between the understanding and the will in *An Essay*. Commonly the external senses are classified under the understanding. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that Hutcheson’s account of the different senses replaces more traditional conceptions of the understanding and his account of the

¹¹ Hutcheson further develops his account of the association of ideas in his later work *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral sense* (2002 [1728]: 20–21, 28, 65–86, 92–93, 104–105, 108–12, 131–32). A more detailed discussion of association of ideas can be found in Gill (1996) and Tabb and Wright in this volume.

different classes of desires more traditional conceptions of the will.¹²

In *Illustrations on the Moral Sense* he anticipates objections from opponents, who may question whether his moral sense theory can properly explain the merit of actions, which his predecessors have based in free self-determination (2002 [1728]: 178). Hutcheson's strategy is to show that other accounts of merit are consistent with his moral sense theory (178–87). Thus, he concludes 'that the intricate Debates about human *Liberty* do not affect what is here alledged, concerning our *moral Sense* of Affections and Actions' (2002 [1728]: 186).

It is worth noting that, as he engages with potential objections by critics, Hutcheson contemplates the possibility that 'perhaps 'tis not the *mere Freedom of Choice* which is approved, but the *free Choice of Publick Good*, without any *Affection*. Then *Actions* are approved for *publick Usefulness*, and not for *Freedom*.' (2002 [1728]: 180) These remarks intimate that Hutcheson sees the need to supplement existing debates that focus on the freedom of individual agents with considerations of public benevolence. However, what resources does Hutcheson have to convince his critics of the importance of public benevolence?

Hutcheson regards agents not merely as individuals, but rather as members of 'one great *System*' and those who live in harmony with the system as a whole will be happy. He writes:

It was observed above, how admirably our Affections are contrived for good in the *whole*. Many of them indeed do not pursue the *private Good* of the Agent; nay, many of them, in various Cases, seem to tend to his detriment, by concerning him violently in the Fortunes of *others*, in their *Adversity*, as well as their Prosperity. But they all aim at *good*, either private or publick: and by them each particular Agent is made, in a great measure, subservient to the *good of the whole*. Mankind are thus insensibly link'd together, and make one great *System*, by an invisible Union. He who *voluntarily* continues in this Union, and delights in employing his Power for his *Kind*, makes himself happy: He who does not continue this Union freely, but affects to break it, makes himself wretched; nor yet can he break the *Bonds of Nature*. His *publick Sense*, his *Love of Honour*, and the very *Necessities* of his Nature, will continue to make him depend upon his *System*, and engage him to serve it, whether he inclines to it or not. Thus we are formed with a View to a general good *End*; and may in our own Nature discern a universal Mind watchful for the whole. (2002 [1728]: 118)

¹² Further support for this reading can be found in Hutcheson (2007 [1742]).

This passage resembles ideas that Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury develops in *The Moralists*, which is one of the works included in volume 2 of his major work *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (2001 [1711]). Shaftesbury proposes that the search for true happiness leads to the realisation that individuals are part of a universal mind and that individual selves are copies of the universal mind, or self of nature. Since individuals are not only part of a universal mind, but also resemble it insofar as they are copies of it, it seems natural ‘That the *particular* MIND should seek its Happiness in conformity with the *general-one*, and endeavour to resemble it in its highest Simplicity and Excellence.’ (2001 [1711]: 2:201)¹³

In light of the striking similarities, Hutcheson’s considerations concerning public benevolence and the universal mind are certainly indebted to Shaftesbury.¹⁴ For Shaftesbury happiness is a matter of moral truth and to reach genuine happiness one has to understand one’s place in the universe as a whole and live in harmony with it. Hutcheson follows Shaftesbury in emphasising the importance of character development for reaching happiness. Thereby he shifts the focus of debates concerning liberty and the will.

George Turnbull (1698–1748), like Hutcheson, emphasises the natural benevolence of human beings. Moreover Turnbull also builds on Shaftesbury’s philosophy.¹⁵ We can assume that as a member of the Rankenian Club—a society of intellectuals in Edinburgh, founded around 1716–17,—Turnbull had an opportunity to engage closely with Shaftesbury’s works and other new and radical ideas in politics and religion, and that these years shaped his intellectual development.¹⁶

Hutcheson and Turnbull, following Shaftesbury, both agree on the importance of self-mastery and the cultivation of the right habits.¹⁷ However, the nuances of Turnbull’s project differ from Hutcheson’s. While freedom plays only a very limited role in Hutcheson’s philosophy, Turnbull understands freedom as self-mastery in *The Principles of Moral and Christian Philosophy* (2005 [1740]: I:58–70, 138–41). The differences can be explained if we take seriously Turnbull’s methodological approach and his larger philosophical project.

¹³ For further discussion, see Boeker (2018, 2019), Winkler (2000).

¹⁴ For further discussion of Hutcheson’s intellectual debts to Shaftesbury, see Carey (2006, 2015), Garrett and Heydt (2015), and Suderman (2015).

¹⁵ See Broadie (2009: 108–11), Suderman (2015: 208).

¹⁶ For further discussion, see Broadie (2009), Gomez Paris (2013), Stewart (1985), Wood (2004b), and *The Scots Magazine* (1771).

¹⁷ Although Hutcheson and Turnbull hold many similar positions, they presumably developed their views independently of each other without much direct influence. According to Broadie (2005), the similarity of their views arises probably due to the fact that both were ‘educated in the same philosophical-theological canon’ (xiii).

Turnbull is the first philosopher in Scotland to apply the Newtonian experimental method to moral philosophy.¹⁸ He argues ‘that in order to bring moral philosophy ... upon the same footing with natural philosophy ... we must enquire into moral phenomena, in the same manner as we do into physical ones: that is, we must endeavor to find by experience the good general laws to which they are reducible.’ (2005 [1740]: I:56) Taking experience seriously, Turnbull asserts that there is no question that humans have liberty, by which he means that certain effects depend upon our will; ‘but how far it extends, is another question’ (2005 [1740]: I:58).¹⁹ He approaches moral philosophy like a science and argues that the moral world is governed by general laws just as the natural world. Thus, Turnbull’s aim is to show ‘that freedom, or power, as such, supposes, nay necessarily requires, in order to its subsistence and exercise, established general laws.’ (2005 [1740]: I:61, see also I:70)

For Turnbull it is significant that freedom presupposes general laws, because they make it possible to have a ‘fixed way’ for obtaining goods and shunning away from pain (2005 [1740]: I:61). He argues that there is no doubt that humans have a ‘sphere of activity’ and that this sphere of activity must be governed by general law. It is important that humans understand their sphere of activity so that they are in a position to know how to regulate themselves (2005 [1740]: I:58–62). He writes:

Whatever metaphysical janglings there have been about the freedom of our will; our moral dominion, liberty, and mastership of ourselves certainly consist in the established habit of thinking well before we act; insomuch as to be sure of ourselves, that no fancy or appetite shall be able to hurry us away into action, till reason and moral conscience have pronounced an impartial sentence about them. It is this command over ourselves, this empire over our passions, which enables us to put trust or confidence in ourselves, and renders us sure and trust-worthy in society to others. In it do true wisdom and freedom lie. (2005 [1740]: I:139)

Turnbull further elaborates on our power to improve our understanding and to master ourselves in volume II of *The Principles of Moral and Christian Philosophy*, where he aims to show that divine providence is consistent with the liberty of moral agents—a view that he takes to be rooted in scripture (2005 [1740]: II:665–77).

¹⁸ See Garrett and Heydt (2015) and Wood (2004b).

¹⁹ See also Turnbull (2005 [1740]: II:665–77).

The true liberty of a rational agent is placed by the holy scripture in his being able to govern all his appetites, and his whole conduct, by reason, with delight and complacency. It consists therefore in a just un-biassed judgment, and in a power of acting conformably to its dictates. Man therefore, in the scripture sense, is free, when his reason hath the place or authority due to it in his mind, and gives laws to all his appetites and choices. And he is then free, because he is master of himself; his better part rules, the guiding principle within him has the power and authority which of right belongs to it, and all the parts made to be ruled by it are under proper subjection to it. (2005 [1740]: II:666)

Drawing on Locke's *Of the Conduct of the Understanding* (1823: III:205–206), Turnbull argues that we are accountable for our understanding and capable of improvement. It is only after a bad act has been repeated several times that it starts to acquire ruling power. Thus we must take care to cultivate right habits and 'it is by repeated acts that reason can alone acquire or preserve its rightful power and authority of governing.' (Turnbull 2005 [1740]: II:669) However, do we really have a power to improve our understanding? Turnbull anticipates this worry and maintains that our power of self-mastery is beyond doubt once we consult our 'inward feeling and experience.' (2005 [1740]: II:669) Again, it becomes clear that experience plays a major role in Turnbull's philosophy.

Although Turnbull grew up within the Calvinist tradition, his philosophical views are clearly distanced from the Calvinist view that humans are corrupted by sin.²⁰ Rather as we have seen, he argues, like Hutcheson, and influenced by Locke and Shaftesbury, that our important task is to become masters of ourselves, which for Turnbull is true liberty.

III David Hume on human agency and moral responsibility

David Hume (1711–1776), like Turnbull, adopts the experimental method, as he makes explicit in the subtitle of his first major work *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subject* (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]). However, in contrast to Turnbull, Hume is more cautious to infer metaphysical conclusions from psychologically given phenomena. Hume often takes an agnostic, or even

²⁰ For further discussion, see Suderman (2015).

sceptical stance, on questions that his predecessors treated as metaphysical problems.²¹ This section focuses, first, on Hume's treatment of human agency and the will and then turns to his views on liberty, necessity, and moral responsibility. Since we find a more detailed and advanced discussion of human agency in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (2000 [1748], 1975), it will be my main source, but I will additionally draw on the *Treatise*, where helpful.²²

How, according to Hume, can we understand the relation between the will and subsequent action? Hume argues that we are conscious that our volitions lead to bodily movements as a matter of common experience. 'But the means, by which this is effected; the energy, by which the will performs so extraordinary an operation; of this we are so far from being immediately conscious, that it must for ever escape our most diligent enquiry.' (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.10, SBN 65)

The context of Hume's discussion in section 7 of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* is an examination of our idea of power or necessary connection. Having shown that we neither acquire the idea of power or necessary connection by reason nor by observing interaction among external objects, Hume turns to the question of 'whether this idea be derived from reflection on the operations of our own minds, and be copied from any internal impression.' (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.7, SBN 64) In particular, he considers whether the idea of power is derived from our internal consciousness of volitions that lead to bodily movements. Applying his copy principle,²³ Hume concludes that it is not (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.15–16, SBN 67). Consequently, our idea of power or necessary connection is unintelligible. To reach this conclusion he argues both for the separability of volition and action and for the incomprehensibility of the supposed causal mechanism between volition and action.²⁴

Hume argues that causes and effects are two distinct objects or events. Similarly, he argues that volition is separate from action. To support this point he presents an example of a man with paralysed limbs who has the volition to move his limbs, but is unable to do so (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.13, SBN 66). This shows that there can be volition without action.

²¹ For example, see Harris (2005).

²² As Wood (2014: 88–90) argues, Hume started to develop his views on human agency when he wrote the Abstract and the Appendix of the *Treatise* in 1740, but the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* presents his most advanced views on the topic.

²³ Hume introduces the copy principles in *Treatise* 1.1.1 and *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, section 2.

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of Hume's separability and incomprehensibility arguments, see Wood (2014).

Moreover, even in the ordinary case where one is able to move one's limbs, volition does not *immediately* lead to bodily motion. For instance, if I have a volition to stretch my leg, my volition does not immediately result in the movement of my leg, but rather, Hume argues, anatomy shows that it is successively mediated by 'certain muscles, and nerves, and animal spirits, and, perhaps, something still more minute and more unknown.' (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.14, SBN 66)

Hume further supports his view that we are not entitled to form a belief in the necessary connection between volition and action by arguing repeatedly that the supposed causal mechanism is incomprehensible. He maintains that when we know a power we must 'know both the cause and effect, and the relation between them.' (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.17, SBN 68) However, we understand very little about the nature of the human mind and how it interacts with the body. In another argument Hume points out that the command of the will over mind and body is limited and that 'these limits are not known by reason or any acquaintance with the nature of cause and effect; but only by experience and observation, as in all other natural events and in the operation of external objects.' (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.18, SBN 68) Thus, for Hume experience is our only guide for examining how the will influences our action. However, experience does not provide us with any notion of necessary connection or power, but only teaches us how certain actions constantly follows certain volitions, or more generally how one event constantly follows another.

How novel are Hume's arguments? The claim that volition and action are separate is not unique to Hume, but rather, as Joshua Wood (Wood 2014: 98–101) has shown, it is widely held by Hume's predecessors and contemporaries, among them Descartes,²⁵ Locke,²⁶ and Andrew Baxter.²⁷ It can also be found in the works of Scottish philosophers, who objected to other aspects of Hume's philosophy. For instance, Thomas Reid in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (2010 [1788]) defines action as the exertion of active power (I.1, 13) and distinguishes power from its exertion. He writes: 'It is true, there can be no exertion without power; but there may be power that is not exerted.' (I.1, 11) In a letter to Kames, dated 6 October 1780, Reid is even more explicit and illustrates the distinction between volition and action, like Hume, with a paralysis example:

²⁵ See Descartes (1984–1991: I:315).

²⁶ See Locke (1976–1989: VII:404).

²⁷ See Baxter (1733: 69).

I think, my Lord, there is an Act of the Mind which I call Volition that precedes the external Action & is the Cause of it; though in most Cases we attend chiefly to the Effect. I shall put a Case in which they are easily distinguished. I will, to stretch out my Arm; but by a stroke of Palsy, which I was not aware of, I have lost the Power. Here I am conscious of an Exertion, yet there is no external Action. I repeat this Exertion, I make a strong Effort; but all in vain. No Motion follows. There is surely a difference between trying to extend my Arm, & doing nothing. This trial is a Volition. (2002: 130)

Reid makes a similar point in a manuscript, titled ‘Of Power’, where he invites us to compare the volition to walk immediately with the volition to walk an hour later. While in the former case volition and exertion seem inseparably conjoined, in the latter case volition and exertion are disjoined and thus Reid infers that they are different (Reid and Haldane 2001 [1792]: 5).

Although the view that volition and the exertion of action are separate is widely held, a notable exception within the Scottish tradition can be found in the works of Mary Shepherd (1777–1847). Shepherd endorses the simultaneity of causes and effects and argues that effects are contained in causes. Thereby she opposes Hume’s view that causes and effects are distinct objects or events (Shepherd 1824, 2020 [1827]).

Hume’s view that the supposed causal mechanism between volition and action is incomprehensible is also widely accepted by seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers (Wood 2014: 107–108). For instance, Hutcheson in *An Enquiry into the Original of Beauty and Virtue* (2004 [1725]) regards it as ‘mysterious’ how ‘the Act of Volition should move Flesh and Bones’ (180). Although Reid is not as sceptical as Hume about powers, he too acknowledges that humans have limited understanding of the production of action and writes: ‘So we, knowing that certain effects depend on our will, impute to ourselves the power of producing them, though there may be some latent processes between the volition and the production which we do not know.’ (Reid and Haldane 2001 [1792]: 8)²⁸ In the same vein, Dugald Stewart writes:

It is scarcely necessary for me to observe, that we are altogether ignorant of the connexion between the volitions of the mind and the consequent actions. We will the end, and it is accomplished in a way inexplicable to us. (1854–1860: VI:347)

²⁸ See also Reid (1995) and Wood (1995).

Hume's new contribution lies in the application of the copy principle and in his psychological explanation for how we form beliefs in necessary connections. Since we cannot find an impression from which our idea of power or necessary connection is derived, he regards our idea of power or necessary connection as meaningless. As a consequence, he proposes to alter our definitions of cause (2000 [1748], 1975: 7.29, SBN 76–77)²⁹ and necessity (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.27, SBN 97).³⁰ For present purposes, it will be sufficient to consider the latter:

Necessity may be defined two ways, conformably to the two definitions of *cause*, of which it makes an essential part. It consists either in the constant conjunction of like objects, or in the inference of the understanding from one object to another. (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.3, SBN 81)

Hume's new definition of necessity is at the heart of his attempt to settle the longstanding disputes about liberty and necessity. For Hume the entire controversy is merely verbal and arises due to ill-defined terms. Section 8 of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* aims to establish that once we adopt his definitions of necessity and liberty, it will become clear that liberty and necessity can be reconciled and 'that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty' (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.3, SBN 81).³¹

Liberty, according to Hume, consists in '*a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will*'; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may.' (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.23, SBN 95). Although Hume presents his definition of liberty as uncontroversial, it does not satisfy defenders of libertarian free will, who are not only interested in the question of whether we are free to act, but additionally raise the question of whether our will itself is free. As we will see in section V, James Beattie, Thomas Reid, and Dugald Stewart critique Hume's view on such grounds.

Let us consider how Hume's conceptions of liberty and necessity inform his approach to questions of moral responsibility. First, it is worth noting that he not only argues that liberty and necessity can be reconciled, but rather he makes the stronger claim that liberty presupposes necessity (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.23–25; SBN 95–96). Otherwise, if liberty was

²⁹ Cf. Hume (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 1.3.14.31, SBN 169–70).

³⁰ Cf. Hume (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.2.4, SBN 409).

³¹ For a more detailed discussion, see e.g. Garrett (1997: ch. 6), Harris (2005: ch. 4).

‘opposed to necessity, not to constraint,’ it would be ‘the same thing with chance’ (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.25, SBN 96).

For Hume, moral responsibility presupposes both liberty and necessity (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.26, 28–31; SBN 96–99). Liberty is required, because actions that are not done in accordance with one’s will and arise from external violence are not proper objects of moral praise or blame. It may be tempting to assume that moral responsibility presupposes necessity, because there must be a causal connection between the agent and the action that results from it. This means that the agent must have caused the action. However, this interpretation rests on the presence of necessary connections between an agent and the action and cannot easily be reconciled with Hume’s new definitions of cause and necessity.³² To better understand in what sense necessity is presupposed, the following passage is insightful:

The only proper object of hatred or vengeance, is a person or creature, endowed with thought and consciousness; and when any criminal or injurious actions excite that passion, it is only by their relation to the person, or connexion with him. Actions are, by their very nature, temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some *cause* in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they can neither redound to his honour, if good; nor infamy, if evil. The actions themselves may be blameable; they may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: But the person is not answerable for them; and as they proceeded from nothing in him, that is durable and constant, and leave nothing of that nature behind them, it is impossible he can, upon their account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. According to the principle, therefore, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character any wise concerned in his actions; since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of the depravity of the other. (2000 [1748], 1975: 8.29, SBN 98)³³

Here Hume emphasises that a person is only answerable for actions if they arise from stable character traits. To analyse Hume’s understanding of moral responsibility and the role

³² On this point I am in agreement with Russell (2008: 234).

³³ Cf. Hume (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.2.6, SBN 411).

that necessity plays within it, it is helpful to distinguish two interrelated issues: The first concerns the causal relation between character traits and actions; the second concerns the role of the indirect passions in producing feelings of approval and disapproval directed at the self or another person upon the presence of certain character traits.³⁴

As regards the former, Hume regards character traits as mental qualities. They are causes of actions, but the mere possession of a certain character trait does not automatically lead to the production of the action. For instance, a person may possess the character trait of generosity, but if she does not find herself in situations where she can be generous this character trait may not manifest itself in actions. Thus character traits can be understood as dispositions.³⁵ It remains to ask in what sense character traits cause actions. Since actions require an influencing motive for Hume and since motives involve passions (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.3), character traits will involve passions. In light of the dispositional nature of character traits, actions will only be produced when a person is in a particular situation. Frykholm (2012) proposes that ‘how she acts in that situation depends on which passions motivate her; which passions motivate her are (often) determined by which ideas and beliefs are called to mind for her most vividly in this situation; and which ideas and beliefs are vividly called to mind depends on the associations of ideas she has, as built upon her past experience, her habits, her education, etc.’ (92) The advantage of Frykholm’s interpretation is that it is consistent with Hume’s new definitions of causation and necessity and his larger philosophical project. Thus the causal relation between character traits and actions is best understood in terms of constant conjunction, which are grounded in habit, education, and one’s association of ideas. This reading can nicely accommodate Hume’s second definition, because habit leads our mind to infer one object upon the presence of another. On this basis, we can take seriously both Hume’s claim that moral responsibility arises only for actions that arise from stable character traits and his claim that moral responsibility presupposes necessity. Moreover, this reading reveals the continuities with Hutcheson’s and Turnbull’s philosophical views.

Nevertheless, Hume’s views on character traits and moral responsibility are clearly embedded in his own philosophical system. His discussion of the causal relation between character traits and actions is closely linked with his theory of the indirect passions. The indirect passions pride and humility, love and hatred, which are the main focus of Hume’s

³⁴ While I agree with Russell (1995: ch. 4, 2008: 234–35) that the indirect passions play an important role in Hume’s account of moral responsibility, I diverge from Russell by distinguishing these two issues.

³⁵ For further discussion, see Frykholm (2012).

discussion of the indirect passions in *Treatise* 2.1–2, are governed by psychological mechanisms. Character traits can be causes of pleasure and pain, which in turn give rise to the indirect passions pride or love, if the feeling is pleasant, and humility or hatred, if the feeling is painful. Pride and humility are directed towards self, and love and hatred towards another person. Thereby character traits become subject of approval and disapproval. Hume does not discuss the details of his account of the indirect passions in the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. Yet in the first sentence of paragraph 8.29—the passage cited above—Hume distinguishes the cause of hatred, namely criminal or injurious actions from the object, namely a person, to which the cause is related. This intimates that his account of the indirect passions and the psychological mechanisms that govern them is still present in the second *Enquiry*. I will return to Hume’s account of the passions in section VI.

IV Kames’s defence of necessity

Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696–1782) is unwilling to accept Hume’s view that our belief in necessary connection arises due to a customary act of the imagination. In Part II, Essay V of his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (2005 [1779]) Kames admits that we cannot acquire the idea of power through experience. Experience can inform us that certain objects are constantly conjoined, but ‘such conjunction is far from being the same with the idea of power.’ (2005 [1779]: 185) According to Kames, ‘[p]ower is a simple idea, and therefore incapable of being defined; but no person can be at a loss about it; for it is suggested to the mind by every external action.’ (2005 [1779]: 185)

According to Kames, Hume’s view is inconsistent with common sense and his strategy is to show that Hume’s arguments concerning the origin of our idea of power and necessary connection fail, because they presuppose the reality of power (2005 [1779]: 186–89). Hume considers, for example, ‘a power or quality in bread to nourish; a power by which bodies preserve in motion.’ (Kames 2005 [1779]: 189) For Kames this shows that Hume not only acknowledges that we have an idea of power, but also ‘the reality of this power.’ (Kames 2005 [1779]: 189)

Kames is committed to the principle that ‘nothing can happen without a cause’ (2005 [1779]: 97).³⁶ Consequently, everything, including human action, is necessitated by prior causes. For Kames it is necessary that a motive precedes an action. In contrast to Hume,

³⁶ See also Kames (2005 [1779]: 110–11, 118, 122–23).

who explains the causal relation between motive and action in terms of regular conjunctions, it is not relevant for Kames that there is a regular conjunction between motives and actions, but rather he holds that the prevailing motive causes the action. Indeed, for Kames it is possible that motives that have not previously influenced actions or are irrational to choose can become causes of actions:

It is true, that, in debating upon human liberty, a man may attempt to show that motives have no necessary influence, by eating perhaps the worst apple that is before him, or, in some such trifling matter, preferring an obviously less good to a greater. But is it not plain, that the humor of showing that he can act against motives, is the very motive of the whimsical preference? (2005 [1779]: 102)

Kames's *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* was first published in 1751, a revised second edition that included major revisions of the Essay 'Of Liberty and Necessity' (Part I, Essay III) appeared in 1758, and a third editions that contained further revisions in 1779. Throughout all three editions Kames is committed to the view that everything is governed by necessity, but his understanding of liberty changes.³⁷ While Kames regards our feeling of liberty as a delusion in the first edition (1751), he steps back from this view in later editions and acknowledges that human freedom is compatible with necessity. In the third edition he writes:

Man is a free agent, because he acts according to his own will. He is at the same time a necessary agent, because his will is necessarily influenced by motives. These are perfectly consistent. The laws of action which respect the human mind, are as fixed as those which respect matter. (2005 [1779]: 103–104)

In the following, I focus on Kames's views concerning human agency and moral accountability in the third edition of 1779. To establish that human actions are both necessary and voluntary, Kames's distinction between moral necessity and physical necessity is crucial

³⁷ For a detailed analysis of the changes that Kames made, see Harris (2005: ch. 5). See also Broadie (2009: 273–80), Ross (1972, 2000). Besides philosophical criticism Kames was threatened to be excommunicated from the kirk of Scotland and at risk of losing his position as a judge of the Court of Session. The social pressure he was exposed may have contributed to his willingness to revise the first edition.

(2005 [1779]: 105–106).³⁸ Humans are passive when under the influence of physical causes, but under the influence of moral causes they act themselves. Moral causes, in contrast to physical causes, act by ‘solicitation and persuasion’ (2005 [1779]: 106) rather than force. The action ‘is directed by the will, and is in the strictest sense voluntary.’ (2005 [1779]: 106) Nevertheless, it is also necessary, because as a matter of human constitution ‘desire always determines the will.’(2005 [1779]: 106) Kames believes that his view that humans are necessary agents has been widely ignored, because many fail to realise that moral necessity differs from physical necessity and fail to distinguish necessity from constraint. For Kames, liberty is opposed to constraint, but not to necessity (2005 [1779]: 104–107, 117).

Kames anticipates that critics may worry that his system of voluntary necessity does not leave room for moral accountability, praise and blame. How could someone be held accountable who necessarily acts upon evil motives? In response to this variant of the traditional theological problem of evil, Kames rejects the traditional free will defence (2005 [1779]: 107–108).³⁹ He equates liberty of indifference with chance or arbitrariness and claims that it would not leave scope for rational or moral government, because a person who is free in this sense would act independently of motives; indeed, contrary to traditional assumptions, freedom of indifference would turn one into ‘a most bizzare and unaccountable being’ (2005 [1779]: 108).

For Kames virtue and vice have their foundation in human nature. ‘[A]n action is always approved when it proceeds from a virtuous motive ... On the other hand, an action is disapproved when it proceeds from a vitious motive.’ (2005 [1779]: 114–15) Both virtue and vice come in degrees and are proportional to the strength of the motive. Kames observes that we are constituted in such a way that we ‘blame ourselves, even when we have the clearest conviction of inability to behave better.’ (2005 [1779]: 115) Kames simply accepts that some humans are by nature virtuous and thus deserve reward, while others are by nature vicious and therefore guilty and deserve punishment (2005 [1779]: 115). It is our own conscience that makes us accountable for actions that we perform in accordance with our will (2005 [1779]: 117). For Kames there is no need to postulate liberty of indifference. To illustrate this point, he assumes that a criminal had been free to act otherwise. Now the question arises as to why the criminal did not act otherwise, but rather acted upon the vicious motive. The answer, Kames argues, is that the criminal has a bad disposition and deserves punishment. His strategy is to show that a defender of liberty of indifference ultimately offers

³⁸ This distinction is already present in the first edition, but is refined in later editions.

³⁹ For further discussion, see Ross (2000).

the same answer as he does. Hence, Kames regards liberty of indifference as superfluous, let alone incomprehensible, and concludes that his system, by contrast, is perfectly consistent with morality (2005 [1779]: 116).⁴⁰

V Common sense, free will and the role of motives in James Beattie, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart

The Scottish common sense philosophers Thomas Reid (1710–1796), James Beattie (1735–1803), and Dugald Stewart (1753–1828) all oppose the doctrine of necessity. In 1751 Reid was appointed as regent at King’s College, Aberdeen, and became Adam Smith’s successor as professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1764.⁴¹ Beattie was professor of moral philosophy and logic at Marischal College, Aberdeen. Although Reid and Beattie worked at different colleges, they were both actively involved in the Aberdeen Philosophical Society—a society that Reid founded in 1758. Stewart was educated at the University of Edinburgh and upon Ferguson’s suggestion attended Reid’s lectures at the University of Glasgow in 1771–72. In 1772 Stewart started teaching at the University of Edinburgh and in 1785 he succeeded Ferguson as professor of moral philosophy at Edinburgh.⁴²

All three believe that acting in accordance with one’s will is not sufficient for freedom, but rather they emphasise that our will itself must be free. They argue that this libertarian account of free will is grounded in common sense.

Beattie in his *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* (1771 [1770]) opposes Hume’s account of power. For Beattie ‘[c]ausation implies more than priority and contiguity of the cause to the effect.’ (333) Rather, in order to conceive the relation of cause and effect, one has to suppose power or energy in the cause. He holds that our own consciousness of power or energy when we contemplate two causally related things is sufficient to establish that we have an idea or conception of power (1771 [1770]: 333–34).

Moreover, Beattie opposes Kames’s necessitarianism, which he equates with fatalism (Beattie 1771 [1770]: 366–67). Beattie does not see the need to engage closely with Kames’s arguments, but rather he regards it as evident that humans have free agency and writes that

⁴⁰ For further discussion, see also Kames (2007 [1774]: 744–56).

⁴¹ For further details, see Wood (2004a).

⁴² See Brown (2004).

he has been unable to doubt his own free agency (1771 [1770]: 367–68). In his later work *Elements of Moral Science* (1790) Beattie equates freedom with the ability to act, which leads him to reject the notion of necessary agency as a contradiction in terms; just as contradictory as the notion of a free slave (197).

Beattie's position elicits his moral and religious concerns.⁴³ In contrast to the doctrine of necessity, he sees the doctrine liberty as 'perfectly consistent with religion, conscience, and common sense.' (1771 [1770]: 384) According to Beattie, freedom understood as self-determination is a prerequisite for morality:

Unless some events depend upon my determination, *ought*, and *ought not*, have no meaning when applied to me. Moral agency further implies, that we are accountable for our conduct; and that if we do what we ought not to do, we deserve blame and punishment. My conscience tells me, that I am accountable for those actions only that are in my own power; and neither blames nor approves, in myself or in others, that conduct which is the effect, not of choice, but of necessity. (1771 [1770]: 388)

As we have seen, Beattie rejects the doctrine of necessity by taking consciousness of our own freedom as authoritative. Although Reid and Stewart, like Beattie, oppose necessity and instead endorse libertarian free will, Reid and Stewart do not merely appeal to consciousness, since both accept that the exact connection between volition and action is incomprehensible and acknowledge the limitation of human understanding as well as the difficulties with attempts to establish free agency by appeal to consciousness (Stewart 1854–1860: VI: 347, 351, 382–90). Both engage more closely with their opponents than Beattie, and Reid, in particular, offers detailed arguments for liberty (Reid 2010 [1788]: IV).⁴⁴ I do not have the space to engage closely with all of Reid's arguments for liberty here. Instead I focus on the role of motives in both Reid's and Stewart's philosophy. I will begin with Stewart and then turn to Reid's distinction between animal and rational motives.

Stewart intends to show that voluntary agency is not analogous to relations of cause and effect in the external world. Stewart accuses Hobbes of giving too much weight to motives by replacing the traditional distinction between the understanding and the will with the new names '*Cognitive powers*' and '*Motive powers*' respectively (Stewart 1854–1860:

⁴³ For further discussion, see Harris (2005: ch. 6).

⁴⁴ For further discussion of the differences between Beattie and Reid, see Harris (2005: 147–48). For detailed discussions of Reid's arguments for liberty, see Harris (2005: ch. 8), Rowe (1991), Yaffe (2004).

VI:349). Once the will is understood in terms of motive powers it becomes trivial to establish that the will is determined by motive powers, which provides the ground for the doctrine of necessity. Rather than claiming that motives necessarily determine actions, Stewart emphasises that we have to realise that voluntary agents have a power of self-determination; thereby they are authors of their actions (1854–1860: VI:351–52).

The argument for Necessity derives all its force from the maxim, “*that every change requires a cause.*” But this maxim, although true with respect to inanimate matter, does not apply to intelligent agents, which cannot be conceived without the power of self-determination. Upon an accurate analysis, indeed, of the meaning of words, it will be found that the idea of an *efficient cause* implies the idea of *mind*, and consequently, that it is absurd to ascribe the volitions of *mind* to the efficiency of causes foreign to itself. (1854–1860: VI:352)

Reid also challenges the necessitarian view that every action must have a motive (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 213). He accepts that motives influence actions, but rejects that they cause or necessitate them (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 214). He sees the role of a motive as analogous to giving advice. ‘For in vain is advice given when there is not a power either to do, or to forbear what it recommends. In like manner, motives suppose liberty in the agent, otherwise they have no influence at all.’ (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 214)

Reid, in contrast to Hume and Kames, argues that it is ‘unreasonable to conclude, That if men are not necessarily determined by motives, rewards and punishments would have no effect.’ (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 220) Reid understands the doctrine of necessity in mechanist terms. For him it does not make sense to reward or punish humans for effects that are produced mechanically, because reward and punishment ‘imply good and ill desert.’ (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 221) In such circumstances a fault can only be attributed to the lawgiver, but not to the individual governed by the laws of necessity. Thus, Reid concludes that reward and punishment presuppose liberty:

Upon the supposition of liberty, rewards and punishments will have a proper effect upon the wise and the good; but not upon the foolish and the vicious, when opposed by their animal passions or bad habits; and this is just what we see to be the fact. Upon this supposition the transgression of the law implies no defect in the law, no fault in the lawgiver; the fault is solely in the transgressor. And it is upon this

supposition only, that there can be either reward or punishment, in the proper sense of the words, because it is only on this supposition, that there can be good or ill desert. (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 221)

Reid distinguishes two types of motives, namely animal and rational motives. The former are motives that humans have in common with non-human animals, while ‘the latter are peculiar to rational beings.’ (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 218) While non-human animals act upon the strongest animal motive, rational beings have a degree of self-command which enables them to resist animal motives and exercise their rational powers. Reid characterises rational motives as follows:

They do not give a blind impulse to the will as animal motives do. They convince, but they do not impel, unless, as may often happen, they excite some passion of hope, or fear, or desire. Such passions may be excited by conviction, and may operate in its aid as other animal motives do. But there may be conviction without passion; and the conviction of what we ought to do, in order to some end which we have judged fit to be pursued, is what I call a *rational motive*. (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 219)

Rational motives presuppose conceptions of *ought* and *ought not*, which animals lack (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 219). Reid does not assume that rational motives are an innate part of the constitution of rational beings. Indeed, he is explicit that children gradually acquire conceptions of *ought* and *ought not* ‘as their rational powers advance.’ (2010 [1788]: IV.4, 219) Thus as children grow up and their rational capacities develop they gradually learn to act in accordance with rational motives and to resist the impulse of animal motives.

Reid’s distinction between animal and rational motives is integrated into his system of the principles of actions, which he divides into mechanical, animal, and rational principles of action (2010 [1788]: III). Reid’s principles of actions concern ‘every thing that incites us to act.’ (2010 [1788]: III.i.1, 74) This means principles of actions are not restricted to the determining ground of actions, but rather include anything that influences or motivates actions. According to him, instinct and habit belong to the mechanical principles of action, appetites, desires, benevolent and malevolent affections to the animal principles of action, and regard to duty as a whole and conscience—or a sense of duty, or moral sense, as Reid also calls it—are rational principles of action. Rational principles make us capable of moral

or political government (2010 [1788]: III.iii.5, 168).⁴⁵ At the same time he acknowledges that animal principles are part of our human constitution. Reason and virtue are often weak, or only reach maturity at a late stage in life, and thus insufficient for the preservation of the human species. ‘Therefore the wise Author of our being hath implanted in human nature many inferior principles of action’ (2010 [1788]: III.ii.3, 106).

Given that the rational principles of actions are not yet properly developed at a young age, how do we become virtuous moral agents, according to Reid? Appetites govern many actions of non-human animals, but humans are capable of desires that set them apart from animals such as the desire for esteem or knowledge. These desires ‘are not only highly useful in society, and in their nature more noble than our appetites, they are likewise the most proper engines that can be used in the education and discipline of men.’ (2010 [1788]: III.ii.2, 103). For Reid animal principles play an important role in education and are relevant for showing us the path to becoming virtuous moral agents.⁴⁶

VI Hume, Smith, and Reid on the passions and sympathy

It may be worth reflecting further on Reid’s distinction between animal and rational principles of actions and to contrast his view with Hume’s and Smith’s philosophical views. To recall, Reid’s list of animal principles includes appetites, desires, and benevolent and malevolent affections. It may seem surprising that Reid does not include passions on this list. However, this is not an oversight on Reid’s part, but rather he believes that Hume has given the term ‘passion’ a far too extensive meaning:

Mr Hume gives the name *passion* to every principle of action in the human mind; and in consequence of this maintains, that every man is, and ought to be led by his passions, and that the use of reason is to be subservient to the passions. (Reid 2010 [1788]: III.ii.6, 135)

Reid’s aim is to take common usage in ordinary language seriously, which supports that the term ‘passion’ should be used in a more restricted sense than Hume does (2010

⁴⁵ See also Reid (2010 [1788]: IV.5).

⁴⁶ For two different ways of explaining the importance of animal motives in moral development, see Folescu (2018) and Kroeker (2011).

[1788]: III.ii.6, 136). After Reid has introduced appetites, desires, and affections as animal principles of actions, his discussion turns to the passions. However, Reid does not regard passions as a principle of action distinct from desires and affection, but rather ordinary language supports that the word ‘passion’ denotes ‘a degree of vehemence’ (2010 [1788]: III.ii.6, 136) in desires or affections, which produces sensible effects upon the body such as change of voice or gesture, as well as sensible effects upon the mind such as biased judgement or preoccupation of the mind with certain issues (2010 [1788]: III.ii.6, 134–36).

Reid does not deny that passions are an important part of human nature. Indeed, he claims that ‘[t]he passions, when kept within their proper bounds, give life and vigour to the whole man. Without them man would be a slug.’ (2010 [1788]: III.ii.6, 141–142) Nevertheless, there is also no doubt that Reid aims to keep passions ‘within their proper bounds’ and believes that genuine moral agency cannot be understood solely in terms of animals principles or the passions.

A defender of Hume’s philosophy may wonder whether Reid has overlooked the powerful resources that a sophisticated account of the passions, like Hume’s, can offer. In particular, Hume would argue that passions do not need to be regulated by reason, but rather passions can be regulated both by ourselves and by others when we interact sympathetically. This makes it worth examining whether sympathy can play the same role that rational principles play in Reid’s philosophy. Before I engage more closely with Hume’s and Smith’s accounts of sympathy, I want to acknowledge that Reid would be critical about such an attempt, because Reid regards Humean sympathy as an involuntary response, which belongs to the part of human nature that we share with animals. Instead Reid believes that genuine moral agency presupposes libertarian free will. Reid’s criticism of Hume’s view finds clear expression in the following passage:

In this system [i.e. Hume’s], the proper object of moral approbation is not action or any voluntary exertion, but qualities of mind; that is, natural affections or passions, which are involuntary, a part of the constitution of the man, and common to us with many brute-animals. When we praise or blame any voluntary action, it is only considered as a sign of the natural affection from which it flows, and from which all its merit and demerit is derived. (2010 [1788]: V.5, 301)

Reid’s criticism assumes that sympathetic responses, and passions more generally, are involuntary responses outside our control.

Hume's account of the passions is more nuanced and sophisticated than Reid portrays it. For Hume there is scope to regulate passions, but—contrary to other philosophers such as Reid—he believes that we regulate passions by passions rather than by reason (Hume 2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.3–4, SBN 413–22).⁴⁷ Following Hutcheson (2002 [1728]), Hume distinguishes between calm and violent passions and accuses philosophers who hold that actions are governed by reason of confounding calm passions with reason (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.3.8, SBN 417). According to Hume, we are in a position to self-regulate passions. For example, by developing strength of mind the calm passions gain prevalence over the violent passions (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.3.10, SBN 418). If one repeatedly does actions that tend towards long-term good, one can cultivate inclinations towards these types of actions and they become habitual. The cultivation of good habits can be further assisted by the imagination, because the imagination makes it possible to vividly picture consequences and long-term benefits or harms of actions. Thus custom and repetition, assisted by the imagination, are powerful principles that enable us to acquire strength of mind (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.3.5–6, SBN 422–27).⁴⁸

Although individuals can self-regulate their passions, for Hume government of the passions is not solely the task of individuals, but rather is to a large extent a social phenomenon. Sympathetic interaction with others in society alters, regulates, and refines passions and contributes to the development of stable character traits.⁴⁹ As Hume writes, '[o]ur reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others.' (2007 [1739–40], 1978 [1739–40]: 2.1.11.1, SBN 316) The psychological mechanism of sympathy, as Hume understands it, enables us to enter into the feelings of others (2007 [1739–40]: 2.1.11, 2.2.5, 2.2.9, 3.3.1). When I sympathise with another person, I first have a lively idea of the other person's interests, passions, pleasures or pains, which is then converted into an impression. Thereby I start to mirror the feelings of the other person and make them my own. In this way, my social circles shape my passions.⁵⁰

Let us return to Reid's criticism. His objection that passions are involuntary responses overlooks that for Hume passions can be self-regulated and are altered and

⁴⁷ For more detailed discussion, see Radcliffe (2018: ch. 6).

⁴⁸ See also Radcliffe (2018: 171–72).

⁴⁹ For further discussion, see Harris (2013), Radcliffe (2018: 174–75), Waldow (2014).

⁵⁰ For further discussion, see Taylor (2015).

regulated by sympathy. Yet Reid's concern can be reformulated as the worry whether Hume's view leaves adequate scope for correcting and critiquing social circles and their practices of approving and disapproving certain sets of character traits. Reid, as a defender of libertarian free will, would not be satisfied by Hume's view, because from Reid's perspective it does not leave adequate scope for self-determination and genuine authorship of actions.

At this stage, it is worth contrasting Hume's account of sympathy with the views of his contemporary Adam Smith (1723–1790). Smith's notion of sympathy is intimately tied to the concept of an impartial spectator. Sympathy for Smith involves an act of the imagination whereby one enters the perspective of an impartial spectator and considers what feelings an impartial spectator would have in the given situation (1982 [1759]). His account of sympathy is normative right from the opening chapters of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In contrast to Hume, who starts with the idea of the feelings of another person, which is then converted into an impression and a feeling of one's own, Smith by entering the stance of the impartial spectator asks what feelings it would be *appropriate* to have. The feelings of the spectator do not have to match the feelings of the agent and this gap provides space for the correction of sentiments.⁵¹

Manuscripts of Reid's lectures show that he questions that sympathy can be understood as an act of the imagination. For Reid an act of the imagination does not have to give rise to feelings. He writes: 'I can imagine my self to be undergoing a severe chirurgical operation, I can imagine a racking pain to accompany this operation without feeling that pain in the least. To imagine pain and to feel pain are things totally distinct nor does the first imply any degree of the last.' (Stewart-Robertson and Norton 1984: 311)

Perhaps Reid's most pressing objection is that Smith has not properly accounted for the source of normativity. According to Reid, Smith's account of sympathy presupposes a moral faculty that operates antecedent to sympathy:

It is evident that this Sympathy supposes a moral Judgment and consequently a moral faculty. It is impossible to judge that a man ought to be affected in such a manner in certain circumstances unless we have some faculty by which we perceive that [h]is being affected in this way is [wrong] right and that his being affected in such another way is [right] wrong[.] Now this is what we call a moral faculty.

Therefore it appears to me that this definition of Sympathy makes a moral faculty

⁵¹ For further helpful discussion of the differences between Hume's and Smith's accounts of sympathy, see Fleischacker (2013), Sayre-McCord (2013).

to be necessarily antecedent to our Sympathy and consequently our moral Sentiments cannot be the Effect of Sympathy[;] they must go before it, and set bounds to it. (Stewart-Robertson and Norton 1984: 314)

Although Smith's account of sympathy may initially appear to be better suited to accommodate correction of moral sentiments than Hume's account, Reid argues that the normative judgements of propriety that are built into Smith's account of sympathy presuppose a moral faculty. Thus, given Reid's interpretation, the moral faculty rather than sympathy does the relevant work and as a result Smith's view collapses.

VII Classifications of principles of action

Eighteenth-century Scottish philosophers develop detailed systems for the classification of principles of action. My aim in this section is to reflect on the changes and revisions that the classificatory systems underwent. Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* offers one of the most detailed accounts of principles of action that has been developed in the period. Both Beattie (1790) and Stewart (1854–1860) build on Reid's classifications in their own theories. However, Reid's works and the works of his disciples also have their critics. In the early nineteenth century Thomas Brown (1778–1820) develops his own new classifications in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1822 [1820]), which critique Reid's and Stewart's classifications and revive views held by Hume and Joseph Priestley.

As we have seen, Reid and Stewart are both in agreement with Locke that it is important to distinguish volition from desire and Reid remarks that it is unfortunate that several philosophers have extended the scope of the will to include 'desire, aversion, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, all our appetites, passions and affections, as different modifications of the will' (2010 [1788]: II.1, 46). It is likely that his remark targets philosophers such as Hutcheson, Hume, or Kames.⁵² In Hutcheson's philosophy desire becomes the dominant notion that captures the domain of the will. For Hume actions are governed by passions, and for Kames actions necessarily presuppose a prior motive.

As already mentioned Reid identifies three types of principles of actions and classifies them as follows:

⁵² See the editorial note in Reid (2010 [1788]: II.1, 46–47, fn 2).

- Mechanical principles
 - Instinct
 - Habit
- Animal principles
 - Appetites
 - Desires
 - Benevolent affections
 - Malevolent affections
- Rational principles
 - Regard to duty as a whole
 - Conscience, or sense of duty

According to Reid, ‘Mechanical principles of actions produce their effect with any will or intention on our part. ... Animal principles require intention and will in their operation, but not judgement. ... [Rational principles] can have no existence in beings not endowed with reason, and, in all their exertions, require, not only intention and will, but judgment or reason. (2010 [1788]: III.iii.1, 152)

Stewart’s *The Philosophy of Active and Moral Principles* builds upon Reid’s *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Yet he offers his own classification of principles of actions, which diverges from Reid. Stewart identifies the following principles:

1. Appetites.
2. Desires.
3. Affections.
4. Self-love.
5. The Moral Faculty.

The three first may be distinguished (for a reason which will afterwards appear) by the title of *Instinctive or Implanted Propensities*; the two last by the title *Rational and Governing Principles of Action*. (1828: 1:12)

Despite the similarities, Stewart departs from Reid, first, by not including Reid’s mechanical principles instinct and habit, and, second, by rejecting to the use of the term ‘mechanical’ altogether.

In this regard Beattie's classifications in his *Elements of Moral Science* are closer to Reid's:

Our principles of action are many and various; I will not undertake to give a complete enumeration: it may be sufficient to specify a few of the most remarkable; which I arrange under the following heads. 1. Instinct. 2. Habit. 3. Appetite. 4 Passions and Affections. 5. Moral Principles (1790: 220–21)

Why does Stewart eliminate Reid's mechanical principles? Stewart remarks 'that the word *mechanical*, (under which he comprehends our *instincts and habits*,) cannot, in my opinion, be properly applied to any of our active principles.' (1828: 1:13 fn) Reid is aware that in the strict and philosophical sense an action presupposes understanding and will. Thus, strictly speaking, it does not make sense to speak of mechanical principles of actions. Nevertheless, Reid switches to the popular sense of the word 'action' and explicitly alerts his readers to this fact (Reid 2010 [1788]: III.i.1, 74).

Stewart's objection is not merely a terminological point, though. He criticises Reid for failing to see that instincts, like appetites, satisfy Reid's characterisation of *animal* principles:

In Dr Reid's arrangement, nothing appears more unaccountable, if not capricious, than to call our appetites *animal* principles, because they are common to man and to the brutes; and, at the same time, to distinguish our *instincts* by the title of *mechanical*;—when, of all our active propensities, there are none in which the nature of man bears so strong an analogy to that of the lower animals as in these instinctive impulses. Indeed, it is from the conditions of the brutes that the word *instinct* is transferred to that of man by a sort of figure or metaphor. (Stewart 1828: 1:13 fn)

For Stewart the classification 'mechanical' does not serve any purpose that is not already captured by animal principles. Therefore he regards it as redundant. However, why does Reid include mechanical principles in his classification? It is worth noting that Stewart's objection assumes that Reid defines animal principles as common to humans and animals, but he neglects Reid's additional characterisation, namely that '[a]nimal principles of action require intention and will in their operation' (Reid 2010 [1788]: III.iii.1, 152). Since instincts do neither involve intention nor will, Reid has resources to resist Stewart's criticism.

More generally, it can be asked though as to why Reid's arguments for libertarian free will target the doctrine of necessity understood in mechanist term. Mechanism lost its attraction during the eighteenth century, because it is not well suited to explain chemical and physiological processes and philosophers such as Joseph Priestly advanced new versions of materialism that are suitable for explaining the activity of matter, which in turn provides a foundation for explaining how matter can think, act, and be alive.⁵³

Reid is well aware of Joseph Priestley's materialism and necessitarianism, which Reid sees as fundamentally at odds with his own moral and religious views (1995: 164). Following Priestley's publications of *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, *Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*, and *Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion* (1774) and *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, on the Principle of Association of Ideas* (1775), Reid makes it his task to refute Priestley's materialism (Reid 1995, Wood 1995). Reid's refutation of materialism draws on Robert Whytt's attack of materialism. Whytt (1714–1766) was a physician in Edinburgh, whose publication of *Essay on the Vital and other Involuntary Motions of Animals* (1751) received major attention in Scotland and beyond.⁵⁴ As Reid's manuscripts reveal, Reid considers it impossible that matter can be active (1995). He observes that matter cannot be put in motion without force and argues that 'the Inertia of Matter is the only cause why Force is necessary to move it when at rest or to change its direction or Velocity when in Motion.' (1995: 232) Taking for granted that matter is entirely passive, Reid endorses the view that action presupposes an immaterial being. For Reid matter can be divided into three classes, namely inanimate matter, vegetables, and animals (1995: 218). Inanimate matter 'is constantly acted upon by something immaterial' (1995: 218). Animals are distinguished from plants insofar as they are capable of thought, however small it may be. For instance, animals may feel small degrees of pleasure or pain. Reid maintains that 'both vegetables and Animals are United to something immaterial, by such a Union as we conceive between Soul and Body, which Union continues while the Animal or Vegetable is alive, & is dissolved when it dies.' (1995: 218–19) This shows that Reid's division of the principles of action into mechanical, animal, and rational principles is integrated into his understanding of metaphysics and physiology.

Thomas Brown questions the traditional distinction between the understanding and the will, as well as the distinction between intellectual and active powers of the mind in his

⁵³ For further discussion concerning the collapse of mechanism and other forms of materialism, see Gaukroger (2010, 2016) and Wolfe (2015). See also Wright (2005).

⁵⁴ See Maas (2003), Wright (1990, 2000).

Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Like Hume, he starts with mental phenomena and is reluctant to postulate mental faculties and powers outside the boundaries of human understanding. However, Brown's criticism of the common systems of classification is not merely a point concerning human ignorance, but rather he points out that several emotions such as grief or astonishment cannot easily be classified under either of the existing categories. Grief, for instance, is not voluntary. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate to classify it as belonging to the will. However, it is not obvious that it falls under the understanding instead. Similarly, it can be questioned that grief is an active power. However, it is not clear that it is an intellectual power either (Brown 1822 [1820]: Lect. 16). Hence Brown believes that the traditional distinctions are misconceived and advocates for new classifications.⁵⁵ He proposes to distinguish external affections of the mind from internal affections or states of the mind (1822 [1820]: Lect. 16). The latter is further subdivided into intellectual states of mind and emotions, as he explains in the following passage:

The first great subdivision, then, which I would form, of the internal class, is into our *intellectual states of mind*, and our *emotions*. The latter of these classes comprehends all, or nearly all the mental states, which have been classed, by others, under the head of active powers. I prefer, however, the term *emotions*, partly, because I wish to avoid the phrase *active powers*,—which, I own, appears to me awkward and ambiguous, as opposed to other powers, which are not said to be passive; and partly, for reasons before mentioned, because our intellectual states or energies,—far from being opposed to our active powers,—are, as we have seen, essential elements of their activity,—so essential, that, without them, *these* never could have had the name of *active*; and because I wish to comprehend, under the term, various states of the mind, which cannot, with propriety, in any case, be termed *active*,—such as grief, joy, astonishment,—and others which have been commonly, though, I think, inaccurately, ascribed to the intellectual faculties,—such as the feelings of beauty and sublimity,—feelings, which are certainly much more analogous to our other emotions,—to our feelings of love or awe,—for example,—than to our mere remembrances or reasonings, or to any other states of mind, which can strictly be called intellectual. (1822 [1820]: Lect. 16, 251–52)

⁵⁵ For more detailed discussion, see Dixon (2003: ch. 4).

Brown is the first to systematically introduce the term ‘emotion’ and to use it to refer to mental states that have previously been classified as appetites, affections, passions, or sentiments.⁵⁶

However, has Brown actually replaced the traditional distinction between the understanding and the will, or has he simply replaced Reid’s and Stewart’s principles of action with the term ‘emotion’? Brown does not acknowledge Reid’s distinction between active powers, namely the determining grounds of actions, and principles of actions, which include all incitements to action and not merely the determining grounds of actions. As Thomas Dixon (2003: 124-25) notes, emotions are passive and in this regard Brown’s new classificatory system differs from Reid’s and Stewart’s, because it does not include active mental states. Although Brown raises relevant concerns, his new classifications will not satisfy those who like Beattie, Reid, and Stewart believe that human agents are authors of their actions.⁵⁷

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⁵⁶ See Dixon (2003: ch. 4, 2012)

⁵⁷ I would like to thank the editors of this volume, Aaron Garrett and James Harris, for inviting me to contribute and for helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter. I presented drafts of my work at the Rethinking the Enlightenment Conference at Deakin University and at the Science in the Scottish Enlightenment Conference, organised by the Center for the Study of Scottish Philosophy at the Theological Seminary in Princeton. I would like to thank the audience members for their feedback. I also benefitted from discussion and comments from Kathryn Tabb and John P. Wright.

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