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Hume's Double Standard of Taste

It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision, afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another. (p. 229)¹

The above is not only the shortest paragraph of Hume's essay "Of the Standard of Taste," but perhaps also the most important and least understood. It contains Hume's definition of the standard of taste and marks the beginning of the main section of the essay, the section in which Hume offers his characterization of the standard. But even in context it is obscure. Hume appears to be saying that the standard is a rule, or, if not a rule, at least a decision. But what are Hume's reasons for doubting that the standard is a rule? And since he apparently has such doubts, why not simply define the standard as a decision? And supposing the standard in fact is a rule, how could it then also be a decision? What would be the point in having two standards? In speaking of a rule and a decision, is Hume referring respectively to what he later calls the "rules of art" and the "joint verdict" of "true judges"? If so, why speak now of a rule and a decision and later of a set of rules and presumably a set of verdicts? And, finally, what is the meaning of Hume's contrast between "[reconciling] various sentiments" and "confirming one sentiment and condemning another"?

I cannot consider complete any account of Hume's aesthetics which cannot provide answers to such questions about Hume's definition: unless we can answer such questions we simply do not know what Hume's standard of taste is. And, until now, these questions apparently have never been posed, let alone answered. Strangely, in all that has been written on Hume's aes-

thetics, almost nothing has been said about the above paragraph. Only Jeffrey Wieand, in his paper "Hume's Two Standards of Taste," includes a discussion, however brief, of Hume's definition. But rather than elucidate the definition, Wieand admits that he can make no sense of it in the context of the rest of the essay, and therefore rejects it as a representation of Hume's overall view of the standard of taste.² In what follows, I argue, on the contrary, that it is difficult to make sense of the rest of the essay without Hume's definition. First, however, I will consider what I take to be Wieand's best arguments for rejecting Hume's definition, both to clear my path and to take a few steps down it.

I

Even if we ignore what I have been calling Hume's definition of the standard of taste, at least one problem mentioned above will not vanish: it will still appear that Hume has not one standard of taste but two. Shortly after giving his definition, Hume identifies the standard with what he variously calls "rules of composition," "laws of criticism," and "rules of art," and which he defines as "general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages" (pp. 231–237). Later he claims that "the true standard of taste and beauty" consists of the joint verdict of "true judges," that is, the joint verdict of critics who have five characteristics: they possess delicacy of taste, are practiced, have made comparisons, are unprejudiced, and possess strong sense (pp. 234–242). Hume's reader, meanwhile, is left with the task of somehow reconciling these two standards, or, at least, of con-

firming one standard and condemning the other.

Interpreters of the essay have traditionally done neither, but rather have emphasized the alternative of their choice while keeping generally silent about the other.³ Wieand again is the exception. He summarizes his views as follows:

The standard of taste cannot consist in the verdicts of true judges, because these judges may be wrong. This indicates that there is an independent standard of taste, namely the rules of art. But although Hume thinks that these rules are the standard, he also thinks that the verdicts of true judges are a good guide to what the rules are, and so function as a practical standard of taste.⁴

Wieand's reason for rejecting Hume's definition can now be made clear. He believes that when Hume speaks in his definition of "a rule" and "a decision," he is referring respectively to what he later calls the "rules of art" and the "joint verdict" of "true judges." (I think Wieand is right about this, although he owes us an explanation as to why Hume shifts from the singular to the plural.) So when Wieand asserts that in Hume's view the rules of art constitute the standard while the joint verdicts of true judges do not, he could not easily be in greater opposition to Hume's definition, in which Hume holds that while the standard may or may not be a rule, it is certainly a verdict.

The crucial point for Wieand is his claim that according to Hume true judges can be wrong. Wieand believes that Hume implies this on at least two occasions in the essay. One is when Hume requires a *joint* verdict of true judges, which Wieand takes to imply "that true judges sometimes disagree and the fact that we think some of them must be right and others wrong also leads us to suppose that there must be a standard—one independent of their judgments."⁵ An obvious counter to this would be to concede that while any true judge can have an occasional bad day, and that while one or two may therefore occasionally disagree with the rest, this doesn't imply that the joint verdict of true judges can be wrong and is not the standard. This wouldn't get us far, however. If any true judge can be wrong in a particular case, it is in theory possible that all are wrong in that case, and if that is possible, their joint verdict cannot

be the standard. So if, unlike Wieand, we wish to take Hume at his word when he writes that the "joint verdict of [true judges] ... is the true standard of taste and beauty" (p. 241), we must conclude that Hume commits himself to the view that a true judge can never be wrong.

But why would Hume require *joint* verdicts of true judges who can never be wrong? Wieand argues that the requirement of a joint verdict implies that true judges must sometimes disagree, which in turn implies that some are right and some are wrong. The first part of this argument is right: unless true judges sometimes disagree there is no point in requiring a joint verdict. The trouble is with second part. Is it true that for Hume all disagreements of taste imply that someone is right and someone wrong? Hume devotes three pages of the essay to this question, concluding that

where there is such diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other; in that case a certain degree of diversity in judgment is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments. (pp. 243–244)

Thus Hume draws a distinction between differences of taste in which at least one party is at fault and to which the standard applies, and "blameless" differences in which nobody is at fault and no standard exists. Differences of the first sort arise because the faculties of one or more party are imperfect, while "blameless" differences arise because the parties differ, for example, in character, age, or environment.

But how will we determine whether any given difference is blameless or not? It is here that Hume's joint verdict plays its role. Suppose that A and B are engaged in a dispute over some work of art, and that they consult a true judge who renders a verdict in A's favor. This wouldn't necessarily mean that B is wrong, since it may be that in this dispute the true judge's verdict is no better than A's or B's—this may be one of those cases where the difference in taste is blameless. But suppose A consults a second true judge, and a third, and a fourth, and so on. As each true judge sides in A's favor it becomes increasingly difficult for B to maintain that the difference is blameless. So Hume requires joint

verdicts not because true judges can be wrong, but because only a joint verdict can assure us that a particular difference of taste represents an inequality of taste, and, hence, that the judges' verdict is the standard.⁶

The other occasion on which Hume allegedly implies that true judges can be wrong is Hume's recounting of the parable from *Don Quixote*, in which two of Sancho Panza's kinsmen prove themselves to be remarkable judges of wine by respectively detecting the taste of iron and leather imparted to a hogshead of wine by the presence in it of a key and a thong (pp. 234–235). Wieand observes that although both kinsmen have delicacy of taste, both fail to use it, since one fails to taste the iron while the other fails to taste the leather. This leads him to conclude that Hume distinguishes between *having* the five characteristics requisite of a true judge and *using* the five requisite characteristics, and that on any given occasion a true judge may fail to use one or more of the characteristics and hence render an incorrect verdict.

Wieand is right to point out that the verdicts rendered by Sancho's kinsmen are both wrong in part. And this is not insignificant. If we compare the original parable in *Don Quixote* with Hume's retelling of it, we note that Hume in fact changes the parable in order to emphasize the wrongness of the kinsmen's verdicts. In Cervantes's tale we read that one wine-taster simply remarked that "the wine had the flavor of iron," while the other said that "it had a stronger flavor of cordovan leather."⁷ But in Hume's account we read that one kinsmen "pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for the small taste of leather," while the other "gives also his verdict in favor of the wine but with the reserve of a taste of iron" (p. 235). Thus in *Don Quixote* the kinsmen simply note the taste of the foreign substances, while in Hume's essay each incorrectly asserts that the wine would be good if it weren't for the presence of one of the foreign flavors.⁸

So I agree with Wieand that the fact that the kinsmen give faulty verdicts is no mere oversight on Hume's part. But I don't see why this leads Wieand to conclude that the kinsmen fail to use their delicacy of taste, since it would be more reasonable to conclude that they never had delicacy of taste to begin with. Here is how Hume defines delicacy of taste: "Where the

organs are so fine, as to allow *nothing* to escape them; and at the same time so exact as to perceive *every* ingredient in the composition: this we call delicacy of taste" (p. 235, my emphasis). Clearly the kinsmen do not evince delicacy of taste in this particular case, since each of them allows something to escape and/or fails to perceive something in the composition. Wieand's point, of course, is that their delicacy is simply out of order, that normally both of them would be able to detect both the iron and the leather. But what are his reasons for supposing this? Hume never says the kinsmen possess delicacy of taste, and this is the sole example we have of their abilities, which, however remarkable, fall short of the delicacy Hume describes.

What then is Hume's point in altering the parable? As we have seen, Hume is committed to the view that a true judge can never be wrong. But no human being can never be wrong, and Wieand is correct to conclude that "if we think of true judges as *real* people having certain qualities (the five characteristics) we must admit that they may fail to judge correctly."⁹ So perhaps one reason Hume changes the parable is to indicate that true judges are ideal: if Sancho's fabulous kinsmen do not possess delicacy of taste, nobody does; if they can sometimes be wrong, everybody can. We should also note that Hume generally refers to the five characteristics of true judges as "perfections" (pp. 236–241): as such they are not qualities which all of us possess to some degree or other, but like all perfections are qualities which are either possessed in full or not at all.

I conclude, then, that Wieand's arguments give us no reason to abandon Hume's definition. I will now try to provide an account of Hume's essay in which his definition makes sense.

II

As the title of the essay suggests, Hume seeks *the* standard of taste: *the* standard which will or least ought to be accepted by all who dispute concerning matters of taste. How can Hume ensure that his standard will meet with such acceptance? His strategy is first to observe that there is something which already has universal approval, and then to argue that this fact presupposes a standard. Hume, surprisingly, em-

loys this strategy twice: first in the discussion of the rules of art (pp. 231–237), and then in the overlapping discussion of the marks of a true judge (pp. 234–243). I will outline how he does so in each.

1. Although we do not all approve the same works of art, nor do we all approve a standard by which we may determine which works of art merit our approval, Hume observes that we all approve of certain works of art. Hume speaks of such works as “models ... established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages” (p. 237), and mentions the works of Homer, Virgil, Terence, and Cicero as examples (pp. 233, 243). From the observation that we all approve such works, Hume derives his first standard of taste. He assumes that if everybody approves a certain work of art, this must be for some reason: the work must possess features which are the cause of our approval. He also assumes that these features ought also to cause us to approve any other work which possesses them, at least to the degree that the feature is present. If we therefore isolate these features, by observing that they cause our approval when found in a universally approved “model” in which they are “presented singly and in a high degree” (p. 235), the result will be a set of “general observations concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages” (p. 231). Among other things, Hume refers to these observations as “the rules of art,” and jointly they constitute a standard by which we can determine whether any particular work of art merits our approval: we need only determine whether and to what degree that work possesses the features specified by the rules.

2. Although we do not all approve the same works of art, nor do we all approve a standard by which we may determine which works of art merit our approval, Hume observes that we will all approve certain qualities or characteristics applicable to critics. As Hume says: “Whether any particular person be endowed with good sense and a delicate imagination, free from prejudice, may often be the subject of dispute, and be liable to great discussion and enquiry: *But that such a character is valuable and estimable will be agreed in by all mankind*” (p. 242, my emphasis). From the observation that we will all approve of these characteristics,

Hume derives his second standard of taste. That we will prefer, above all others, critics who are free from prejudice and possess both delicacy of taste and good sense (and who presumably have practiced and made comparisons in order to achieve these perfections)¹⁰ means that for us such critics would be the best possible. Because the five characteristics which they would possess are apparently the only ones required to free a person from the “imperfections” under which “the generality of men labour” (p. 241), we must acknowledge that any person combining all five would be a perfect critic—a “true judge” who can never be wrong. That a true judge can never be wrong does not mean, as we have seen, that her verdict always constitutes the standard, since in some cases differences of taste are “blameless” and “unavoidable” (p. 244). But when the verdicts of such critics are in agreement, this joint verdict constitutes a standard which all must recognize.

Hume, then, twice employs the strategy of observing that something has universal approval and then showing that this fact presupposes a standard. What makes this surprising is that he apparently ends up with a separate standard each time, and it is difficult to understand, for one thing, how there could be two separate standards of taste. What will we do in the event the two standards come in conflict? Which will take precedence? Will we need a meta-standard to resolve such conflicts? Hume appears to be aware of such potential problems and provides that his two standards will never come in conflict. Speaking of true judges, Hume writes:

The ascendant, which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any productions of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a faint and dubious perception of beauty, who are yet capable of relishing any fine stroke, which is pointed out to them. Every convert to the admiration of the real poet is the cause of some new conversion. (p. 243)

Hume here describes how it comes about that certain works of art achieve universal approval, or, to put it in Hume’s terminology, how it is that certain “models” become “established.” The process begins with true judges, who not only recognize true “productions of genius,”

but also cause the rest of us to do so by getting us to perceive the “fine strokes” or properties responsible for the work’s excellence. Therefore, inasmuch as the rules of art are to be formulated only from works of art that already have the approval of true judges, and inasmuch as the same properties which cause universal approval have already caused approval in true judges, it follows that a correctly formulated rule of art can never conflict with a joint verdict of true judges. In fact, correctly formulated rules of art turn out simply to be the rules according to which the critical faculty of a true judge operates.

Even so, it may be difficult to understand what Hume would want with two standards, what advantage he could possibly gain in having more than one. We have seen that Hume’s strategy for arriving at each standard is the same: in each case he begins with something which has universal approval and which presupposes a standard, and then derives his standard from it. But the parallel between the two discussions does not end here. In each discussion Hume’s attention focuses on a set of properties by which we determine whether something merits our approval: in the first discussion the rules of art specify the properties by which we determine whether any particular object merits our approval as a work of art; in the second the five characteristics are the properties by which we determine whether any particular person merits our approval as a critic. A difference between the two discussions is that whereas in the first Hume seeks to provide a standard for judging works of art, in the second he seeks to provide a standard for judging critics who provide a standard for judging works of art. And the question naturally arises: why this second standard? Why step backwards to supply a standard for judging critics who supply a standard for judging art, if we already have a standard for judging art?

We must turn to Hume’s definition for the answer. In defining the standard as “a rule ... , at least a decision” (p. 229), Hume is confessing that he is not fully confident that the standard is a rule, although he appears certain that it is *at least* a decision or verdict. This same confession is implicit, I believe, in another passage—a passage which follows soon after Hume finishes detailing the five characteristics

and immediately after he declares that the joint verdict of true judges is “the true standard of taste and beauty.” It reads:

But where are such critics to be found? By what marks distinguish them from pretenders? These questions are embarrassing; and seem to throw us back into the same uncertainty, from which, during the course of this essay, we have endeavored to extricate ourselves. But if we consider the matter aright, these are questions of fact, not of sentiment. (pp. 241–242)

The “uncertainty” of which Hume speaks is our uncertainty in determining which works of art merit our approval; the “course of the essay” during which we have “endeavored to extricate ourselves” refers in particular to the preceding discussion of the rules of art, since that is the only other section of the essay in which Hume attempts to extricate himself from this “same uncertainty.” But it is apparently only now—now that he has identified the five marks of a true judge—that Hume confidently announces he has succeeded. Why? In what way have the rules of art failed Hume?

Although Hume does not say, I believe we can make a very good guess. As we have seen, Hume’s discussions of his two standards share a general similarity: both focus on the properties which something—either a work of art or a critic—must have in order to merit our approval. But in his discussion of the first standard Hume never tells us what those properties are. He does tell us they can be determined by observing that they please when “presented singly and in high degree” in “established models” (p. 236). But that he himself never follows this procedure makes us question his confidence that the properties can actually be specified in this way: possibly he is unsure whether there are any established models in which pleasing properties are “presented singly and in high degree.” In any case, to the degree such properties remain unspecified, we have no rules of art, since the rules simply are “observations” or articulations which specify which properties please.¹¹

In his discussion of the second standard, on the other hand, Hume occupies himself mainly by specifying and detailing each of the properties a critic must have if she is to merit our approval. These properties, of course, are the five characteristics of a true judge, and in them

Hume gives us all we need in order to determine which critics merit our universal approval and which can therefore provide us with the standard of taste. It is little wonder, then, that it is only after Hume details the five characteristics that he announces he has finally “extricated” us from the “uncertainty” which has mired us throughout the essay.

But given that Hume can offer us nothing more than vague advice on how we might formulate the rules, we may well wonder why he bothers to discuss them at all. Again we must turn to Hume’s definition. The standard of taste is “a rule,” Hume writes, “by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision, afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another” (p. 229). I maintain that Hume here suggests that a rule has powers that a decision does not: not only can a rule *reconcile* sentiments, while a decision can merely *confirm* and *condemn* them, a rule can also reconcile *various* sentiments, while a decision can merely confirm *one* and condemn *another*.

To discover what Hume means by contrasting a rule which reconciles with a decision which merely confirms and condemns, we must return to the *Don Quixote* parable, which lies strategically at the intersection of Hume’s discussions of the two standards. Before the hogshead is emptied, there is considerable disagreement of sentiment concerning the merit of the wine: not only do the townspeople disagree with the kinsmen, not even the kinsmen, as we have seen, fully agree with each other. But once the hogshead is emptied, and the key and the thong revealed, all disagreement vanishes and everyone’s sentiments concerning the wine are reconciled (pp. 234–235). After the parable Hume remarks that to produce the rules of art in a critical dispute “is like finding the key with the leathern thong” (p. 235). Some have found this remark puzzling,¹² but I believe this much of Hume’s meaning is clear: once the key is found, once the rules produced, the debate is finished. As Hume later adds:

But when we show [our antagonist] an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove, that the same principle may be

applied to the present case, where he did not perceive or feel its influence: He *must* conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself. (p. 236, my emphasis)

Conspicuously, Hume does not say that producing a joint verdict of true judges is like finding the key and thong. In fact, he says that it is only when the rules are produced that a dispute must end in agreement:

though the beauties of writing had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged; the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another; but it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, *who might always insist upon his particular sentiment*, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. (p. 236, my emphasis)

Even if we never succeed in formulating the rules of art, even if there were no universally approved works from which to formulate them, there would still be a standard of taste, namely, the joint verdict of true judges, by which “different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another.” But if there are no rules, we cannot so easily “silence the bad critic.” Why not? Suppose A and B are involved in a critical dispute, and A produces a joint verdict of true judges in her favor. What allows B to continue to “insist upon his particular sentiment”? Why is the joint verdict of true judges less conclusive than the rules of art?

On this issue Hume says nothing further, but I believe we can answer these questions by posing yet another: exactly how many true judges are needed to render a *joint* verdict? Suppose A produces five who all side in her favor. B can still maintain that his sentiment is not necessarily wrong, since this may be one of those differences of taste which is “blameless” and “unavoidable,” and in which nobody is wrong. Suppose A then produces ten or even one hundred. Although his odds are getting worse, B can still insist that he is not wrong, because all he needs is one dissenting true judge to show conclusively that this particular difference of taste is “blameless,” and as long as the possibility of that one dissenting true judge exists,

the possibility also exists that B is not wrong. To show conclusively that B is wrong, A must have the joint verdict of all true judges, whether they be near or far, living or dead or yet unborn, actual or even possible. “[The] true standard of taste and beauty,” declares Hume, is “the joint verdict of [true judges], *wherever they are to be found*” (p. 241, my emphasis).

I turn now to Hume’s contrast between a rule reconciling *various* sentiments and a decision confirming *one* and condemning *another*. Perhaps its meaning is already clear. Suppose that A and B are disputing over whether a work possessing property X merits our approval: A believes that it does, while B does not. Suppose further that they appeal to a group of true judges who render a joint verdict favoring A. This joint verdict may be useful in settling this dispute, but it can never have any further use unless the very same dispute arises again. But suppose that instead of appealing to the true judges, A and B appeal to a rule of art which specifies that property X ought to cause approval. This rule will not only help A and B settle their dispute, it may also help in settling any dispute in which any work with property X figures. And this provides us with Hume’s point in speaking of the standard as “a rule” and “a decision” in his definition: his point is to indicate that with *each* rule we may be able to settle relatively many disputes, whereas with *each* joint verdict we will be able to settle relatively few.

In summary, we might say that whereas Hume’s second standard, the joint verdict of true judges, has Hume’s confidence, his first standard, the rules of art, has his preference. Hume prefers his first standard because it is the more powerful: it alone can conclusively settle relatively many disputes. But the rules of art can claim to be the standard only to the degree that they have been correctly formulated, and although Hume outlines a procedure for correctly formulating them, he does not himself carry it out. Hume’s second standard, the joint verdict of true judges, is weaker than the first: it is less conclusive and capable of settling relatively fewer disputes. But whereas Hume only gives a procedure for formulating the rules of art, he actually specifies the five identifying properties of true judges, from whom we may obtain joint verdicts. It is for this reason that

Hume has more confidence in the second standard.

III

Until now my interests have been mainly, if not entirely, exegetical. Let me close with a short critical remark. I have suggested that it is a moral of Hume’s version of the *Don Quixote* parable that true judges are ideal, and I have indicated that this moral is not incidental to Hume’s theory of taste, but rather demanded by it. That the joint verdict of true judges is the standard of taste means both that a true judge can never be wrong and that the verdicts of true judges will always be in agreement except where differences of taste are blameless and unavoidable. Thus if Hume were to allow that true judges are real people, he would place himself in the embarrassing position of denying empirical fact, namely, that there are no real critics who can never be wrong, and that there is no group of such critics who usually, if not nearly always, agree in their judgments.

Yet this is precisely the position in which Hume sometimes places himself. We have seen, for example, that in his attempt to guarantee that there can be no question of conflict between his two standards of taste, Hume claims that a work of art attains universal approval only after it is approved first by a true judge. But this means that unless true judges actually exist, there can be no universally approved works; and this is not only to deny what Hume regards as empirical fact—namely, that the works of Homer, Virgil, Terence, and Cicero *have* universal approval—it is also to leave Hume with no foundation from which to derive the rules of art.

I suspect that while this problem can be remedied without doing too much violence to Hume’s theory,¹³ the same cannot be said about the following. Hume’s ostensive purpose in specifying the five marks of a true judge is to enable us to identify true judges so that we may obtain their joint verdicts and thereby settle our disputes. But knowing how to identify true judges is helpful in solving disputes only if there actually are true judges out there to be identified. Thus unless true judges actually exist, Hume brings us no nearer to the standard of taste in specifying their identifying proper-

ties: if true judges are not real, neither are their joint verdicts.

This, then, is Hume's dilemma. If he holds that true judges are real, he denies what is undeniable, namely, that no real critic is beyond making mistakes and that no real group of critics is beyond more than occasional disagreement. If, on the other hand, he holds that true judges are ideal, he robs himself both of a basis for deriving the rules of art and, more importantly, of the possibility of there being real joint verdicts by which we may actually settle our disputes. And if this is the case, we must allow that Hume comes no closer to giving us an actual standard of taste in specifying the identifying properties of a true judge than he does in giving us vague instructions on how to formulate the rules of art.

But to conclude that Hume fails to produce an actual standard of taste is not to conclude that Hume fails. Hume's best insight, I believe, is that it is a fact of human nature that we prefer the judgments of some critics over others, and this fact presupposes that we believe in a standard, whether or not that standard lies within our reach. As Hume himself concludes:

It is sufficient for our present purpose, if we have proved, that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others. (p. 242)

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1. David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), p. 229. Unless otherwise noted, all Hume quotations are from this essay.

2. Jeffrey Wieand, "Hume's Two Standards of Taste," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1983): 130–131.

3. Commentators emphasizing the rules of art include: Stuart Brown ("Observations on Hume's Theory of Taste," *English Studies* [1938]: 193–198), Peter Jones ("Hume's Aesthetics Reassessed," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 26 [1976]: 48–62), Marcus Hester ("Hume on Principles and Perceptual Ability," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37 [1979]: 295–302), and Mary Mothersill ("Hume and the Paradox of Taste," *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*,

eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin, 2nd ed. [New York: St. Martin's, 1989], pp. 269–286). Commentators emphasizing the joint verdicts of true judges include: Peter Kivy ("Hume's Standard of Taste: Breaking the Circle," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 7 [1967]: 57–66), Harold Osborne ("Hume's Standard and the Diversity of Aesthetic Taste," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 7 [1967]: 50–56), Carolyn W. Korsmeyer ("Hume and the Foundations of Taste," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35 [1976]: 201–215), and Richard Shusterman ("Of the Scandal of Taste: Social Privilege as Nature in the Aesthetic Theories of Hume and Kant," *The Philosophical Forum* 20 [1989]: 211–229). Others, including Ted Cohen ("An Emendation in Kant's Theory of Taste," *Noûs* 24 [1990]: 137–145), James Noxon ("Hume's Opinion of Critics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 [1961]: 157–162), Noël Carroll ("Hume's Standard of Taste," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 43 [1984]: 181–194), and Steven Sverdlik ("Hume's Key and Aesthetic Rationality," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 45 [1986]: 69–76), maintain a good balance in discussing both standards, but give little attention to articulating the relation between the two.

4. Wieand, p. 129.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–140.

6. I am indebted here, and I am sure elsewhere, to Ted Cohen, who introduced me to Hume's aesthetics. However, I am equally sure that there is much in this paper, even in the paragraph cited, with which Cohen will not agree, and I do not wish to implicate him in anything he will deem a fault.

7. Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, eds. Joseph R. Jones and Kenneth Douglas, trans. John Ormsby (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 492.

8. I am indebted to Ted Cohen for the insight that there are discrepancies between Hume's telling of the *Don Quixote* parable and the original.

9. Wieand, p. 140, (my emphasis).

10. Peter Jones observes that practice and comparison are best thought of not as characteristics, but rather as "procedures" "for the improvement of our perception." See his "Cause, Reason, and Objectivity in Hume's Aesthetics," in *Hume: A Re-evaluation*, eds. D. W. Livingston and J. T. King (Fordham University Press, 1976), pp. 333–334.

11. It may be objected that Hume sometimes speaks as if the rules had already been formulated. This is true, but when he does so he refers not to the set of correctly formulated rules of art, but rather to what was accepted as such at the time, and he is skeptical that these "rules" are correctly formulated. After Hume concedes that "some negligent and irregular writers have pleased," he writes:

Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general: It would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism, which would establish such circumstances to be faults, and would represent them as universally blameable. (p. 232)

Also relevant is the following remark, made in a footnote in the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*:

The forming of general maxims from particular observation is a very nice operation; and nothing is more usual, from haste or a narrowness of mind, which sees not on all sides, than to commit

mistakes in this particular. (David Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1975], p. 107.)

12. See, for example, Christopher MacLachlan, "Hume and the Standard of Taste," in *Hume Studies* 12.1 (1986): 19–20.

13. Perhaps all we need is to claim that a universally approved work must have been previously approved not by a true judge, but by someone who happens to be making a "true judgment" and who can cause others to arrive at the same.