



# Self-Love or Diffidence? Malebranche and Hume on the Love of Fame

RESEARCH

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## ABSTRACT

Hume's discussion of pride and sympathy in the *Treatise* shows direct engagement with Malebranche's discussion of 'imitation' in the *Search*. For Malebranche, imitation—both of passions and belief—and our tendency to judge ourselves by comparison, generate the passion of pride or grandeur, which plays a useful social role. However, as both cause and effect of the admiration of others, grandeur is ungrounded and thus imaginary. Hume disagrees. He invokes the principle of sympathy to explain how the evaluations of others can support pride by indicating, without constituting, grounds for pride. Hume's argument depends on his underappreciated claim that sympathy can communicate the evaluative opinions as well as the passions of others. Working with the Malebranchian inventory of principles—sympathy and comparison—Hume refines their characterization, thereby redeeming the human tendency to feel pride and humility by characterizing it as corrigible and subject to social regulation.

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## 1. HUME AND MALEBRANCHE AS OPPONENTS

Much of Book II of Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (hereafter, *Treatise* (1740)) could profitably be read as an extended refutation of Nicolas Malebranche's *De la recherche de la verité* (*The Search After Truth*, hereafter *Search* (1958–86, 1997)). Annette Baier suggests that it 'reads like a deliberate spoof' of it (2008: 245–46, see also 250). Two sections in particular, 'of the love of fame' (T2.1.11) and 'of the love of truth' (T2.3.10) provide a deliberately deflationary treatment of central doctrines of the *Search*.

For Malebranche, the search after truth is the virtuous life. To search for truth is to focus attention on God to the exclusion of all finite created things. This focusing is motivated by the love we all inherently have for God, and, as God is coextensive with the True and the Good, this love for God is also what motivates our search for truth. By contrast, in Hume's account, the desire for truth is not what fundamentally motivates inquiry. It is instead the pleasure inherent in the exercise of genius that chiefly motivates us. However, in order to sustain our attention, the exercise of genius needs to be focused on a goal that has some relation to utility. Inquiry is like hunting in this respect:

[T]he utility or importance of itself causes no real passion, but is only requisite to support the imagination; and the same person, who over-looks a ten times greater profit in any other subject, is pleas'd to bring home half a dozen woodcocks or plovers, after having employ'd several hours in hunting after them. (T2.3.10.8/SBN451–52)

Not only does Hume reject Malebranche's claim that an innate desire for truth as such motivates inquiry, Hume implies that the love of truth is not an 'original' feature of our psychology. We will argue that, similarly, Hume's discussion in 'of the love of fame' attempts to show that the allegedly innate desire for fame as such, which Malebranche insists on, is not what motivates people to seek approval from others. Instead their goal is to corroborate their own positive self-evaluations with affirming testimony from others that can confirm that their self-esteem is well-grounded. There is such a thing as the love of fame, but it is derived from other concerns and is not an original passion.

Hume opposes Malebranche's related views about the nature of what Malebranche calls 'grandeur' in a way that shows a profound debt to him. As Susan James and Amy Schmitter have argued, the way in which Hume invokes the principles of sympathy and comparison in his discussion of the pride we feel in response to admiration from others has antecedents in Malebranche's discussion of the role of imitation and deference in producing grandeur.<sup>1</sup> On *this* point, much of Hume's discussion reads like a thoughtful refinement and extension of Malebranche's account: the mechanisms of sympathy and comparison are described more systematically and given a much wider scope of operation.

We think there is another respect in which Hume's discussion is a response to Malebranche, one that has not been remarked on by others. To explain it, we must show what Hume meant to oppose in Malebranche's account of the role of imitation in producing grandeur: the assumption that grandeur must always be ungrounded because it is both the cause and the effect of the admiration of others. Since admiration is a response to the sense of grandeur expressed by the person admired, which is in turn a response to admiration and comparison of ourselves with those who admire us, it exists only in our imaginations as a response to the attitudes of others. Hume's account of pride can be read as an extended attempt to refute Malebranche—and others who identify pride with what Hume will call vanity—by accounting for the role that is played by the admiration of others in intensifying and sustaining pride while insisting that admiration, in itself,

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<sup>1</sup> James focuses on the passions of esteem and contempt, but she explicitly addresses pride and humility (2005: 122–23). Schmitter argues that Hume's account of the social communication of the passions and many elements of his associationist psychology are foreshadowed in Malebranche (2012: 260–64; 2010: 212–13). Their views are discussed in Radcliffe (2015: 580–81). Taylor offers a brief comparison of Malebranche and Hume on sympathy in (2014: 191) and (2015: 43). Harris suggests that Malebranche was a significant influence on Hume's project of providing a comprehensive account of human nature (2015: 83–84) and was 'the greatest single influence on Hume's theory of sympathetic sociability' (2009: 140). Others see Malebranche as Hume's opponent in his discussion of pride; see Kail (2005: esp. 132–33). Other treatments of Malebranche and Hume on topics other than pride include Jones (1982), McCracken (1983: 254–91), Kail (2007; 2008), Doxsee (1916), Le Jallé (2012), Laird (1983: 207–11).

cannot serve as the sole ground for pride.<sup>2</sup> Admiration from others may intensify the feeling of pride or vanity, but it is because their sentiments or evaluative opinions *indicate* the existence of other independent grounds for pride that they sustain our self-esteem. They do not, all by themselves, *constitute* grounds for pride. Hume's argument for this conclusion depends on his claim that the principle of sympathy can communicate both the passions and the evaluative opinions of others.

When Hume introduces the mechanism of sympathy in 2.1.11 of the *Treatise*, in order to explain precisely how admiration from an audience intensifies pride without serving as a ground for it, he is reworking Malebranche's account of the emotional transactions between the man of grandeur and his audience. Charting Hume's response to Malebranche shows us what Hume adopts, what he rejects, and how he extends Malebranche's discussion of imitation.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. MALEBRANCHE ON CONTAGION AND COMPARISON

Malebranche has a low opinion of the role that both sensible pleasures and interpersonal relationships play in the lives of postlapsarians. In *Traité de morale (Treatise on Ethics)* (1958–86, 1993), Malebranche draws an analogy between the conditions that excite desires for sensible things in dangerous ways and the conditions, both in the world and in a person's nature, that excite grandeur. He writes:

Man is subject to two kinds of concupiscence: that of pleasure and that of grandeur ...

When man enjoys sensible pleasures, his imagination gets polluted [*se salit*], and carnal concupiscence is excited and fortified. Similarly, when man disperses himself around the world, seeks relationships [*des établissements*], makes friends, acquires a reputation; the idea that he has of himself spreads and grows in his imagination, and the concupiscence of pride [*concupiscence de l'orgueil*] renews itself and is augmented ...

All unions with creatures weaken the union we have with God, because the brain traces are not subject to our will. (OCXI.144–45/W133)

Before parsing the passage, a note on terminology. Malebranche often uses the terms 'grandeur,' 'orgueil' (pride), and 'vanité' (vanity) as synonyms (see Frigo 2010: 17 note 1). A person in the grips of any of these three states has one thing in common: they believe that their being and well-being depend on something other than God and that, thus, they are in some sense independent from God.<sup>4</sup> Our discussion is focused on the phenomenon that has to do with the passions and beliefs that result from comparisons between self and others, which Malebranche most consistently refers to as 'grandeur.' In what follows, we will thus use 'grandeur' in our discussion of Malebranche on this kind of comparison.

In the above passage, Malebranche states that once we are entangled with sensible pleasures, the imagination reinforces the importance of the sensible pleasures so that the more we have, the more we want. Not only does this weaken our relationship with God, it reinforces our fundamentally mistaken belief that sensible objects do, in fact, cause us pleasure. On Malebranche's Occasionalist account of causation, God alone is causally efficacious. What Malebranche wants to do here, we think, is show that the *exact same thing* happens when we find ourselves seeking ever-greater admiration and approval from others. Just as danger is associated with too much enjoyment of sensible pleasure, so too does the pleasure we take in our reputation and our standing with others disturb our minds in a dangerous way. Malebranche seems to think that love and attention directed towards approval and admiration from others are sinful and dangerous in *exactly the same way* as love and attention directed towards sensible objects: these attitudes separate us from God.

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<sup>2</sup> We borrow from James (2005: 113–14) and Taylor (2015: 65–69) this apt characterization of the effects of the attitudes of others on pride as tending to *sustain* pride and self-esteem.

<sup>3</sup> On Hume's access to Malebranche's texts while writing the *Treatise*, see Perinetti (2018).

<sup>4</sup> See for reference OCII.50/LO290. See also Adam (1995: 135).

Notice that Malebranche does not try to reduce the desire for grandeur to the desire for pleasure and he does not treat the two dangerous processes as two examples of the same kind of thing: pleasure directing our attention to the wrong things by motivating us to seek it. Instead, carnal concupiscence and the concupiscence of pride (that is, the passion associated with grandeur) are both the result of basic tendencies that have a separate origin in God's providence: these tendencies were put in the brain to ensure survival and reproduction (food, sex) and to make us want to form and maintain an interdependent society. They are like basic appetites ('not subject to our will') that can be influenced, shaped, and augmented by the experience of attaining the specific object of each form of concupiscence.

For Malebranche, the perception of an object that seems to promise pleasure is 'naturally followed by an impulse of love' (OCII.158/LO357). While we cannot control our experience of various passions, many of which arise mechanically on the basis of environmental stimuli, we can, in Malebranche's view, control our response to our passions. He explains this control by way of a distinction between 'free' and 'natural' love. All pleasure, Malebranche writes, 'infallibly produces a natural movement of love in the soul, i.e., it makes us naturally, necessarily, purely voluntarily love the object which causes or seems to cause pleasure' (OCXI.49/W66). However, not all pleasures produce free love, which depends on reason. When we love the object of our pleasure with free love, we consent to it. When we do not consent to the object of our pleasure, while we might still feel an inclination or desire for the object, we reject it as something that merits our love (see Greenberg 2010: 203–5).

When Malebranche treats grandeur in the *Search*, he writes about the love of grandeur and the love of pleasure as the two distinct forms that self-love can take. Our love of pleasure makes us aim at felicity and well-being, while the love of grandeur makes us aim at 'the perfection of our being.' He writes that '[t]hrough the love of grandeur we affect [*nous affectons*]<sup>5</sup> power, excellence, independence, and self-subsistence of our being.' By this love, we strive to be like gods because we desire 'the power and independence' that will place us 'beyond the power of others' (OCII.47/LO288). As Malebranche explains, we tend to seek and revere 'everything that gives us a certain elevation over others by making us more perfect, such as science and virtue, or else by giving us a certain authority over them by making us more powerful, such as honors and riches, seems to make us to some extent independent' (OCII.50/LO290). This is also what drives us to engage in comparison with others and to aim to appear to have these perfections to a greater degree than we actually do (OCII.50/LO290). But this love of grandeur, like any other form of love, is of two kinds: 'natural' and 'free.' While we cannot help but experience the natural love of grandeur, it is a mistake to consent to this love, thereby transforming it into free love.

Malebranche offers a harsh epistemological and metaphysical critique of this striving to attain rank in the imagination of others. These judgments are based on comparison, and any comparison of this kind, between men, is based on false evaluative grounds. For, when people make such comparisons,

they do not consider that their being and their well-being depend, in truth, upon God alone, and not upon men, and that true grandeur, which will make them eternally happy, does not consist in the rank that they hold in the imagination of other men as feeble and as miserable as themselves, but in the honorable rank they have in the divine Reason, in that omnipotent Reason that will eternally render to each according to his works. (OCII.51/LO290)

Malebranche puts the point in stronger terms in the *Traité de morale*, where he writes that 'love of grandeur, of fame, of independence, is abominable,' acknowledging that 'anyone who wants to be esteemed and loved is horrified at our saying this' (OCXI.184/W162). Given our concupiscence, it is horrifying to think that seeking to satisfy this strong desire is abominable. But notice that Malebranche's claim here is not about the pleasure that comes from experiencing the passion of

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<sup>5</sup> *Affecter*: 'to be drawn to, have affection or liking for ... to show preference for; to fancy, like, or love' (OED, def.4a, 'affect, v.1'; *Trésor de la langue française*, def.A, 'affecter, verbe trans' <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/>>).

grandeur, but rather about the *love* of grandeur. His point is not to decry the passion itself, but rather the endorsement of it—in Malebranchean terms, the *free love* of grandeur.

While such comparisons between self and other lead to pleasures and advantages that are ephemeral, Malebranche is careful to note that these ephemeral advantages are, nevertheless, real advantages in the terrestrial realm. For instance, having the reputation for being ‘rich, learned, and virtuous’ (OCII.51/LO290) makes those in one’s company behave in ways that increase the comforts of one’s life. If we are known for our riches, our descendants might treat us well hoping for an inheritance; if we are known for our learnedness, our students might treat us well hoping for instruction. This is why all human beings ‘have an inclination toward virtue, knowledge, honors, riches, and for the reputation of possessing these advantages’ (OCII.51/LO291). Note here that Malebranche thinks that the actual possession of such advantages is not even required for enjoying the benefit of being ranked over others that is associated with them—merely the reputation for having them is sufficient.

This point is developed further in a key text from Malebranche’s discussion of the imagination. Malebranche takes the imagination to play a central role when we engage in interpersonal comparison. On his view, the imagination is a dangerous faculty because it can convince us of the reality of things that do not, in fact, exist. People with active imaginations hold all kinds of beliefs that are not well grounded—most commonly that objects have causal power; most perniciously that they themselves have causal power. The latter belief is what leads people to take themselves to be independent of God.

Let us turn now to the passage, which we treat in four parts. Malebranche writes:

[1a] When men, and especially those with an active imagination, consider the best side of themselves, they are almost always very satisfied with themselves, and [1b] their inner satisfaction never fails to increase when they compare themselves to others whose imagination is not so active.

In [1a], Malebranche indicates that when an active imaginer, whom we will call ‘AI’, who holds the false belief that he is independent (the effect of an active imagination), considers the qualities he takes himself to have (like power and independence), he experiences self-satisfaction. When AI compares himself to what he perceives to be weaker minds [1b], he experiences a boost in his conception of his own importance, which is a form of grandeur. For Malebranche, an important feature of the mind with the stronger imagination is that its lively imagination animates its discourse (OCI.336/LO170). The effect is that the audience acquires the idea of greatness, which greatly affects their animal spirits, which, in turn, trace the brain so that the message delivered with the idea of greatness sticks (OCII.189/LO376).<sup>6</sup>

Next, Malebranche describes the effects of the audience’s admiration on AI:

[2a] Moreover, there are so many people who wonder at or admire them and [2b] so few who resist them with any success or commendation [*applaudissement*] (for who commends [*applaudit-on jamais*] reason in opposition to a strong and lively imagination?).

In [2a], Malebranche indicates that the wonder and admiration from the audience contributes to AI’s sense of grandeur. In [2b], another data point is offered for AI’s belief in his power and independence: naysayers are ignored or doubted. But notice also here that the parenthetical comment indicates that the activity of the audience is non-rational—they do not tend to favor or applaud reason in the face of a strong imagination. What Malebranche seems to be getting at is that the audience ought to judge AI by reason, and if they were to use reason, they would see that AI’s self-importance is not legitimate.

The audience communicates deference as well as wonder:

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<sup>6</sup> In the course of his discussion of minds with strong imaginations, Malebranche uses women as exemplars of such minds. However, as Broad (2012) has shown, when Malebranche uses women in this way, he is not arguing that women are, because of a defect in their nature, innately fated to having such minds. Instead, their inordinately strong imaginations are the result of lack of opportunity to be educated.

[3a] Finally, the facial expression of those who listen to them is so obviously one of submission and respect as well as of admiration<sup>7</sup> for each new word they proffer that they begin to admire themselves, and [3b] their imagination, which magnifies all their good points, makes them extremely content with themselves.

In [3a] and [3b] we get Malebranche's explanation of the social phenomenon of ranking in which the passions of grandeur and deference coincide and affirm each other: the audience expresses submission and respect, to which AI responds with heightened grandeur. The contagion of wonder from his audience prompts him to consider himself anew and feel admiration for himself. As Malebranche notes, 'when we consider ourselves or something joined to us, our wonder [*admiration*] is always accompanied by some passion that moves us' (OCII.189/LO376). When we view the positive qualities of our own being, the passion of grandeur is naturally produced; when we view the negative qualities of our own being, the passion of humility is produced. Once AI begins to admire himself, Malebranche notes in [3b], his imagination begins to amplify all his good points. This, in turn, feeds AI's self-satisfaction.<sup>8</sup>

The mechanism of imitation is further elaborated in the final element of this passage:

[4a] For if we cannot see a man moved by some passion without receiving an impression of that passion or without in some way taking part in his sensations, [4b] how would it be possible for those who are surrounded by a great number of admirers not to accede to a passion that flatters self-love so agreeably. (OCII.192-93/LO377-78, enumeration added)

Here, Malebranche highlights the manner in which the mechanism of imitation transmits the passion of admiration to AI from his audience. In [4b] Malebranche observes that when AI is surrounded by an admiring audience, he must 'accede' to this agreeable passion. He explains this phenomenon in [4a]: when we see the expression of a particular passion in another person, either we receive the impression of that very passion or we partake in the sensations associated with it, its pleasant or unpleasant affect. This implies that AI either experiences an impression of admiration, which would take the form of self-admiration, or picks up on the pleasant sensation in his audience's admiration and in some way shares in it.

The role of the deferential passions of submission and respect in increasing AI's grandeur cannot be explained as a case of simple emotional contagion, since AI does not share in the audience's feeling of submission. Malebranche does not limit imitation to *emotional contagion*. Emotional contagion has its cause *in the body*, which 'consists in a certain impression made by persons of strong imagination upon weak minds, and upon tender and delicate brains' (OCI.323/LO162). It is important to note that while Malebranche here refers to people with strong imaginations, he is clear that, for all persons, when we are impassioned, we 'arouse the emotions of others' (OCI.329/LO166). As he puts it in the *Traité de morale*, 'everyone, when moved by passion, and visionaries [those whose imaginations prevent them from seeing any as it really is] at all times, have a contagious and dominant imagination' (OCXI.138/W129).

Malebranche also identifies a distinct form of imitation that has its cause *in the soul*. He observes that the desire for grandeur is one of the causes of the human disposition to imitate others: those who seek honor tend to imitate those who have social prestige. It is 'this inclination that secretly excites us to speak, walk, dress, and comport ourselves with the air of people of quality' (OCI.322/LO162). Malebranche views this not as a matter of instrumental calculation but as the

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<sup>7</sup> The LO offers an inconsistent translation of the French *admiration*; sometimes 'wonder,' sometimes 'admiration.' Malebranche's use of *admiration* in this part of the *Search* seems to consistently refer to the passion of wonder. See Schmitter (2012: 263).

<sup>8</sup> Schmitter argues that this shared passion is a form of wonder and gives rise to the passions that generate social ranking (2012: 263). James, in contrast, argues that imitation will sometimes produce a different passion from the one observed, e.g., a tailor's humility as a response to a nobleman's pride (113), and the nobleman's pride when he observes the tailor's esteem (2005: 112), but she does not explain how this differs from imitation of a passion. The passions associated with wonder, as 'imperfect' passions, do not dispose the body to act. Instead, the effect is, as Schmitter notes, the production of passions that indicate our place in a hierarchy (OCII.190/LO376). For more on wonder, see Schmitter (2010).

result of a nonrational tendency that ‘secretly’ activates us. For this mechanism to be excited, the ‘people of quality’ must be taken to have some feature that confers upon them a kind of authority. Subjects imitate princes; courtiers imitate kings; students imitate teachers; children imitate parents (see OCI.332–33/LO168). Malebranche is especially concerned about the imitation of judgments. He notes that if we think of a particular scholar as possessing the quality of erudition, we tend to adopt their opinions and judgments as our own without reflection (OCI.287/LO141; see also OCI.320–21/LO161). Children also tend to imitate the judgments and beliefs of their parents. A father who tells his children of the value of terrestrial goods and pleasures is imitated by his children, who will adopt the same mistaken beliefs. We will call this form of imitation, which transmits beliefs, *doxastic contagion*. Applied now to our passage, we can account for the influence of the audience’s attitudes of submission and respect on AI as products of doxastic contagion: their attitudes express their belief that he possesses grandeur and is superior to them and it is this belief that is transmitted back to him to act on his imagination and intensify his grandeur.

### 3. THE COST AND BENEFIT OF EMOTIONAL AND DOXASTIC CONTAGION

We have seen that for Malebranche, imitated feeling (emotional contagion) and imitated judgments (doxastic contagion) are a result of nonrational tendencies. It is now time to see what purpose Malebranche takes these tendencies to serve in our psychological makeup. He is clear that both sorts of contagion are (1) good for living together and (2) bad for virtue and truth seeking. These two views are emblematic of Malebranche’s complicated position on interpersonal relationships. Due to the effects of original sin, all postlapsarians are driven by concupiscence. Furthermore, though God has commanded us to have charity for each other, self-love opposes charity. Indeed, Malebranche states that self-love ‘can gradually destroy charity,’ and lead to the dissolution of civil society. To solve this problem, God has also united human beings together by instilling in us a tendency to form ‘natural ties’ that are promoted by imitation and the recognition of ranking. These ties ‘consist in a certain disposition of the brain all men have to imitate those with whom they converse, to form the same judgments they make, and to share the same passions by which they are moved’ (OCI.321/LO161). This disposition to imitate others’ emotional and doxastic states, ‘normally ties men to one another much more closely than charity founded upon reason’ (OCI.321/LO162).

The benefit we enjoy from this disposition to imitate, however, comes at a cost—the obstruction of the search for truth. Malebranche states that these relations of ‘grandeur and independence most often are not in us at all, and they normally consist only in the relations we have to the things around us’ (OCII.48/LO288). In addition, both the haughty man and the humble man who defers to him ‘listen only to men’ and fail to appeal to God who alone can impart truth and instead listen to men and believe falsehoods, ‘both are subjected to vanity and lies’ (OCII.193/LO378). In particular, the humble man underestimates his own value: ‘The falsely humble man, having the same mind and the same principles, is miserable, poor, weak and languid, and imagines that he is practically nothing because he possesses nothing’ (OCII.194/LO378).

For Malebranche, because our passions distort the real value of things, the relations that are revealed by way of a passionate experience cannot track true value. In other words, such relations are ungrounded. In order to see more clearly what it means to have an ungrounded relation, we turn to consider the way that Malebranche employs the concept of *Immutable Order* in his system.

It is in virtue of the mind’s union with God that we can attain truth. This union allows us to see ideas of bodies (the ‘Vision of All Things in God’; see *Search*, OCI.413–47/LO217–36; see also, Alquié 1974: 307–14; Moreau 2004: 63–99; Pyle 2003: 47–74; Robinet 1965: 207–59; Schmaltz 2000) as well as two kinds of relations: of magnitude and of perfection (see Pyle 2003: 246–49; Robinet 1965: 413–35). Relations of magnitude, Malebranche states, are those that obtain between ideas of things of the same nature and can be measured by numbers. For example, a relation of magnitude obtains between ‘the idea of a fathom and the idea of a foot.’ Relations of perfection obtain between ‘ideas ... of beings or of ways of being of different nature, as between the body and

the mind ... roundness and pleasure' and are not measurable with numbers (OCX.38). Relations of perfection constitute what Malebranche calls the immutable order.<sup>9</sup> This set of relations forms the content of what Andrew Pyle has called Malebranche's 'perfectly objective science of axiology' (2003: 246). Just as the relations of magnitude are necessary and eternal, and thus form the necessary and eternal truths of mathematics, so too the relations of perfection are necessary and eternal and form the necessary and eternal truths of morality (see *Search*, OCIII.138/LO613, 618–19).

These relations have the force of law for created minds:

they realize that the immutable order is their own indispensable law, an order which thus includes all eternal laws, such as that we ought to love good and avoid evil, that justice should be prized more than all riches, that it is better to obey God than to command men, and an infinity of other natural laws. (OCI.446/LO234–35; see also *Traité de morale*, OCXI.19/W46)

When we have knowledge of the immutable order and see it as 'our own indispensable law' it will lead us to structure the way that we value things on the model of the relations of perfection. In more familiar language, we will value things according to their position on the great chain of being (see Riley 2000: 234).

Axiology and deontology are thus intertwined for Malebranche. However, when, for instance, our judgment is clouded by passion, we sometimes take something lower on the chain of being to be preferable to something with a higher position. For instance, we might, in a moment of frustration, value our dog more highly than our neighbor. It is in the context of this sort of situation that Malebranche explains the 'unreality' of certain kinds of relations. Once again leaning on the parallel between the truths of mathematics and the truths of morality, Malebranche explains in the *Traité de morale*:

Since speculative and practical truths are nothing but *relations of magnitude and of perfection*, it is evident that falsehood is not real. It is true that 2 times 2 is 4, or that 2 times 2 is not 5. This is true because there is a relation of *equality* between 2 times 2 and 4, and one of *inequality* between 2 times 2 and 5. Anyone who sees these relations thereby sees truths, *because these relations are real*. But it is false that 2 times 2 is 5, or that 2 times 2 is not 4, because there is no relation of equality between 2 times 2 and 5, nor any of inequality between 2 times 2 and 4. Anyone who sees, or rather, anyone who believes he sees such relations, sees falsehoods. He sees relations which are not. He believes he sees, but in effect he does not see at all. Truth is intelligible, but falsehood, taken by itself, is absolutely incomprehensible.

Similarly, it is true that an animal is more estimable than a stone and less so than a man ... anyone who esteems his horse more than his coachman ... does not at all see what he thinks he sees. It is not universal Reason at all, but his own particular reason which leads him to judge as he does. ... What he thinks he sees is neither visible nor intelligible; it is a false and imaginary relation. Anyone who governs his esteem or his love by that relation or others like it, necessarily falls into error and disorder. (OCXI.21–22/W47–48)

Malebranche states that because a false proposition relies on something that does not exist, namely, a nonexistent relation, the false proposition is, by itself, unintelligible. So, for instance, the propositions '2 is greater than 3' and 'a horse is greater than a coachman' are, on his view, not just false but 'absolutely incomprehensible.' For Malebranche, these propositions are unintelligible because they are 'grounded' on something that is not real. The relations expressed here simply *do not exist*. Given that we see relations of magnitude and relations of perfection in virtue of our union with God, to 'see' a nonexistent relation is to see nothing at all. To claim to see something that is nothing at all is, for Malebranche, absolutely incomprehensible. While we may *believe* something false, we cannot *perceive* it (*Search*, OCII.99/LO320).

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<sup>9</sup> See Alquié (1974: 307–08, fn. 2) for defense of the practice of using 'order' to describe the set of relations of perfection, but not the set of relations of magnitude.

How does this relate to the relations that we think obtain between individuals of the same kind? In other words, how does Malebranche describe the relations of perfection between human beings? In the *Search*, he writes:

[T]here are two kinds of truths, those that are *necessary* and those that are *contingent*. I call those truths necessary that by their nature are immutable, or that have been fixed by the will of God, which is in no way subject to change. All others are *contingent* truths. Mathematics, metaphysics, and even a large part of physics and morals contain necessary truths. History, grammar, local custom, and several other things that depend on the changing will of men, contain only *contingent* truths. (OCI.62–63/LO15)

If metaphysics and a large part of physics and morals are necessary truths, and if relations of perfection are metaphysical truths, then relations of perfection cannot be about individual properties. This means that any axiological assessment of individuals based on their particular properties would be an assessment based on relations that do not exist. We may legitimately compare the value of a horse with a coachman because they are two kinds of things that occupy different nodes on the chain of being. But we cannot legitimately compare the value of a coachman to the value of, say, a nobleman in the same way. This is because the coachman and the nobleman occupy the same node on the chain of being. From our perspective, their true value is the same, and to assert otherwise is to assert a relation that is ungrounded because unreal. While we do in fact judge that some people are better than others and that some personality traits are more socially useful than others, Malebranche is clear that there is no metaphysical basis for these claims. Put another way, human beings have a metaphysical opacity when it comes to judging the true virtue or vice of one another.<sup>10</sup>

God's perspective is, of course, different. God can perceive our true merit, based on our relative success of living according to Order. And God loves us in proportion to this merit (OCXI.22/W47). But this merit has no connection to how well we are regarded, how honored we are, or how many people respect us. This means that the way we organize society, and the hierarchies on which it depends, have no obvious relationship to our true value. So, while they are useful in this life, they are meaningless and imaginary with respect to the truth.

From this discussion, we can extract two claims that Malebranche makes about grandeur that will have counterparts in Hume's account of pride:

M1. A passionate expression of belief in one's own grandeur can cause admiration in one's audience through *emotional contagion* and submission and respect through *doxastic contagion*.

M2. Admiration from one's audience can prompt self-admiration via *emotional contagion* and a heightened belief in one's own grandeur via *doxastic contagion*.

The two principles combined explain why the (ungrounded) grandeur of the man of active imagination will have effects that are reflected back to him and will tend to intensify his (ungrounded) belief in his own importance and his (ungrounded) self-satisfaction. As we will see, Malebranche's account of imitation as something that transmits both passions and judgments will appear in Hume's discussion of the mechanism of sympathy in his discussion of the love of fame. Hume describes the admiration of an audience as something that intensifies pride, but he will replace Malebranche's assumption that grandeur is entirely ungrounded with a detailed account of how pride, and in general, self-evaluation, can be both grounded in something other than the approval and disapproval of others and yet sensitive to such approval and disapproval.

Hume's outright opposition to four other claims made by Malebranche organizes his extended discussion of the causes of pride in Book II, Part I of the *Treatise*:

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<sup>10</sup> This element of Malebranche's view entails an extreme sort of egalitarianism. Because we cannot know whether someone is, in God's eyes, virtuous or vicious, we cannot judge them in this way. Taken to its logical conclusion, this view means that any judgments about the virtue or vice (inherent or acquired) of women, the poor, and other oppressed groups are ill-founded.

M3. We have an original appetite to seek grandeur or fame. The experience of grandeur or fame is an immediately agreeable experience that one craves because of an original appetite for it.

M4. Grandeur concerns how one views one's own standing or rank with relation to others: it essentially involves placing oneself in comparison with others and taking oneself to rank over them.

M5. Our experience of grandeur is not grounded in real qualities; it is the result of listening to ourselves or listening to others, while truth comes only from God.

M6. Because grandeur always involves ranking and hierarchy, the feeling of grandeur is always combined with contempt for those less great and the audience to grandeur will automatically feel deference and humility in response.

Hume's reasons for rejecting M3–M5 will be discussed in Sections 4 and 5. Hume's argument for the claim that the audience will often respond with dislike rather than deference to a display of pride, the contrary to M6, will be discussed in Section 6.

#### 4. EMOTIONAL AND DOXASTIC CONTAGION BECOME TWO FORMS OF SYMPATHY IN HUME

Hume decisively rejects the idea that the pleasure we take in the experience of pride should be analyzed as the satiation of an original appetite (contra M3). Instead, the pleasant affect in the passion of pride is derived from the impression of pleasure that is our response to some valuable quality or relation that we possess. This impression of pleasure is converted into the pleasurable affect of the passion of pride through the double relation of impressions and ideas (T2.1.5.5–11/SBN286–90). No special reference to self-love or vanity is needed to explain its genesis, though a certain partiality toward ourselves might explain why vanity 'is so prompt, that it rouses at the least call; while humility requires a stronger impulse to make it exert itself' (T2.2.10.4/SBN390). And this partiality is itself explained as the result of the familiarity of what is closely related to us (T2.2.4.8/SBN 354–55), and as a result of the greater force and vivacity of pride (and hatred) as compared with humility (and love) (T2.2.10.6/SBN391). In addition, Hume insists that our pride is grounded, fundamentally, not in other people's attitudes to ourselves, but in our recognition that we possess some quality that is valuable (contra M4 and M5). Esteem from others can strengthen pride but such esteem does not ground it. Furthermore, on Hume's account, the spectator's esteem need not involve an acknowledgement of rank and does not require a feeling of deference (contra M6).

Hume allows that the evaluative standards we employ in identifying valuable properties related to the self will be influenced by our social experiences. These are the source of the 'general rules' (T2.1.6) that guide our judgments about what is prideworthy or shamesworthy, lovable or despicable. In addition, comparison with others will determine which properties of our own will be sufficiently 'peculiar' or uncommon to catch our attention and to trigger pride (2.1.6.4).<sup>11</sup> Since socially shaped standards will guide our judgment about what counts as a ground of pride, the approval of others can indicate how accurately we have evaluated ourselves by these standards in feeling pride or shame. Approval from others can ratify our judgment in this way without constituting the grounds for pride.

Hume's account of pride implies that Malebranche has it all backwards: pride is not grounded in the admiration of others, the admiration of others is grounded, through the mechanism of sympathy, in the possessor's own grounds for pride. And yet, despite this subversion of Malebranche's most central claims, an interesting line of continuity emerges, one that has been overlooked by many readers of Malebranche and Hume. Malebranche introduces imitation based in the soul to explain

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<sup>11</sup> In T2.1.6 'Limitations of this system,' Hume observes that we are inclined to notice our valuable properties only when they are uncommon, since 'where we cannot by some contrast enhance their value we are apt to overlook them' (T2.1.6.4). Here, Hume seems to be describing the conditions under which valuable qualities related to ourselves tend to generate pride, rather than the conditions under which pride is justified or appropriate; see McIntyre (2014: 154–57).

the transmission of opinions and attitudes that involve acquiescing to a social ranking. Hume's account of the 'seconding' of pride by an approving audience will develop this interesting use of doxastic contagion and demonstrate that it explains phenomena that cannot be based on emotional contagion alone.

## 5. THE MECHANISM OF SYMPATHY AND THE TRANSMISSION OF SENTIMENTS

As we read 'of the love of fame,' Hume's goal is to explain how admiration from others can intensify pride, and can, by corroborating one's self-evaluations, play a crucial role in sustaining pride. This positive account is accompanied by a negative one: admiration from others can have all of these important effects without serving as an 'original' ground of pride. He begins the section by remarking that

beside these original causes of pride and humility there is a secondary one in the opinions of others, which has an equal influence of the affections. Our 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. (T2.1.11.1/SBN316)<sup>12</sup>

Classifying the opinions of others as a secondary *cause* of pride and as a cause without which the original causes would 'have little influence' may seem at first to imply that the opinions of others can constitute grounds for pride. But this is not Hume's approach. He proceeds by offering an ingenious explanation of how admiration could increase pride and be necessary to sustain it without usurping the role of the 'original' or primary causes of pride.<sup>13</sup> These original causes are what will count as grounds for pride when pride is seconded by others.

It is in this discussion of the effect of admiration on pride that the mechanism of sympathy is first explicitly introduced in the *Treatise*. Hume offers two important revisions of Malebranche's account of the ways in which 'imitation' might explain the intensifying effect of the emotional transactions between the admiring and the admired.

The first revision concerns the important role played by doxastic contagion in showing that pride can be more or less grounded. Hume's argument crucially depends on the assumption that admiration and praise can not only intensify pride through simple affect transfer (the counterpart of Malebranche's *emotional contagion*), but can also seem to provide authoritative testimony that confirms the self-evaluations of the person praised (the counterpart of Malebranche's *doxastic contagion*). His account will depend on the claim that the principle of sympathy can communicate not only passions but also the evaluative opinions of others, which he refers to as 'sentiments.' Opinions can be transmitted affectively and involuntarily by the mechanism of sympathy as well as rationally and more deliberately by the principle of authority:

Now nothing is more natural than for us to embrace the opinions of others in this particular; both from *sympathy*, which renders all their sentiments intimately present to us; and from *reasoning*, which makes us regard their judgment, as a kind of argument for what they affirm. These two principles of authority and sympathy influence almost all our opinions; but must have a peculiar influence, when we judge of our own worth and character. (T2.1.11.9/SBN320–21)

It is in T2.1.11 that the term 'sentiment' is first given a special theoretical role in Hume's *Treatise*. Before this section, the term was used most often to describe opinions: Hume described philosophical and even metaphysical opinions as sentiments, though he also used the term to pick

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<sup>12</sup> At T2.1.3.5 Hume argued that the causes of pride are *natural*, but not *original*—there is no explanatorily prior instinct that makes each cause of pride effective, in the way that thirst makes water desirable. In T2.1.11 he uses the term in a different way in order to contrast the original causes of pride with the secondary ones, based on the opinions of others, that he is about to discuss.

<sup>13</sup> This contrast between original and secondary influences on pride reappears as a contrast between two 'sources' of or grounds for the satisfaction felt by the proud (T2.2.5.21/SBN365).

out feelings or sensations.<sup>14</sup> We propose that in T2.1.11, the term is used to pick out an evaluative opinion that is held with feeling and therefore includes an affective component, which may be a feeling of approval or disapproval, or some other agreeable or disagreeable feeling that Hume classifies as involving an impression of pleasure or pain in response to an idea of good or evil.<sup>15</sup> In the second paragraph of T2.1.11, opinions are described as sentiments that are communicable through sympathy.

No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own. This is not only conspicuous in children, who implicitly embrace every opinion propos'd to them; but also in men of the greatest judgment and understanding, who find it very difficult to follow their own reason or inclination, in opposition to that of their friends and daily companions. (T2.1.11.2/SBN316)

Hume will argue in this section that when admiration from others evokes, increases, or sustains our pride, it is because a favorable evaluative opinion—a sentiment—has been communicated by sympathy. This is ultimately a form of doxastic contagion that accompanies the more obvious form of emotional contagion from admirer to admired. Emotional contagion can account for the shared admiration as a kind of mirroring or imitation, but acquiescence to a social ranking must involve complementary judgments—‘I am greater than you’ from the man with an active imagination, ‘I am lesser than you’ from his audience—as well as interlocking passions of pride and humility.

Many commentators emphasize that Hume describes sympathy as capable of transmitting the opinions of others as well as their passions.<sup>16</sup> However, they do not always explain how this can be reconciled with Hume’s characterization of sympathy as a process in which ‘the ideas of the affections of others are converted into the very impressions they represent’ (T2.1.11.8/SBN319). The ideas of the affections of others are often taken to be ideas of passions.<sup>17</sup> We will call this characterization, according to which *ideas of affections are converted into the impressions they represent*, Hume’s official account of the scope of sympathy. Some commentators argue that Hume extends this account of sympathy to include forms of vivification that turn complex ideas that could be merely entertained or considered into the ‘lively ideas’ that constitute beliefs. These commentators point out that Hume’s account of belief as an especially forceful and lively idea can be combined with his account of sympathy as a process of enlivening or vivification. Many of these commentators argue that this process involves a similar enlivening mechanism that increases the vivacity of the idea that is an opinion so that it becomes a belief, thereby

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<sup>14</sup> Hume certainly emphasizes in Book I that the distinction between imagining something and believing it concerns the greater degree of vivacity, liveliness or force in the ideas that constitute belief, and he takes this to be a matter of feeling (T1.3.8.12/SBN104; T1.4.1.5/SBN181–82; T1.4.2.56/SBN217–18). Nevertheless, most of the attitudes called sentiments in Book I have no obvious affective character beyond the fact that they are opinions held on the question under discussion (see, e.g., ‘the common sentiment of metaphysicians’ T1.2.2.3/SBN30–31; T1.3.14.26/SBN167–68; T1.4.2.14/SBN193; T1.4.2.50 & 56/SBN213–14; T1.4.5.17/SBN240; T1.3.13.14/SBN151). Attitudes in general are classified as sentiments when Hume remarks that pride and humility never look beyond the person ‘of whose actions and sentiments each of us is intimately conscious’ (T2.1.5.3/SBN285–86). This is the first use of ‘sentiment’ in Book II. The second use, in T2.1.8, includes a reference forward to 2.1.11; the third instance is in T2.1.11.1. The term appears fourteen times in T2.1.11.

<sup>15</sup> T2.3.9 describes pain and pleasure as responses to some good or evil.

<sup>16</sup> O’Brien (2017: 245–51) provides a comprehensive review of proposals concerning the sympathetic communication of belief.

<sup>17</sup> Brown (2008: 232–34), O’Brien (2017: 643). Farr makes the puzzling claim that our ideas of the attitudes or thoughts of others are included among the ideas that are ‘converted into the very impressions they represent (T319)’ (1978: 249). (The problem here is that these ideas do not become impressions when we come to share these beliefs.) Postema describes sympathy as a process that turns the idea of a passion into an impression of the passion itself, but does not explain how an opinion could be communicated in this way. Nevertheless, he asserts that ‘On Hume’s view, beliefs and opinions, no less than our sentiments—indeed all the actions and contents of our minds—can be communicated by sympathy’ (2005: 257). Postema cites 2.2.2.4 as evidence, but this seems to be an error (2005: 265). Perhaps he means 2.2.4.4. But in that passage, Hume seems to be discussing intimate conversation, i.e., the linguistic communication of ideas (T2.2.4.4/SBN353). We take up the important evidence in T2.3.6.8, which Postema cites, in more detail below.

possessing force and vivacity *similar to* that of an impression, but without actually involving any idea becoming an impression.<sup>18</sup>

We recommend a different approach to making sense of how sympathy communicates opinions, one that preserves the claim in Hume's official account that sympathy causes an idea to become an impression of the very same kind that the idea represents. Our account limits the role of sympathy as a transmitter of beliefs to the transmitting of evaluative opinions, that is, 'sentiments.' Typically, evaluative opinions involve an idea of some good or some evil with a more or less affectively charged attitude of approval or disapproval toward that idea. An approving response to an idea of some kind of good will approach the vivacity of an impression when the approving opinion is held with strong feeling.<sup>19</sup> If sympathy transmits another person's affectively charged evaluative judgment of approval to you, you receive the idea of some good—the idea of whatever is approved of—in the evaluative judgment as well as the idea of the other person's approving response to it. The idea of the other person's approval is then vivified through the mechanism of sympathy to become an impression: your own feeling of approval toward the idea of that good. We could say that when an evaluative judgment is communicated by sympathy to us, the idea of the other person's approval of the idea of some good (or the idea of the other person's disapproval of the idea of some evil) acts on us to solicit our agreement with this attitude by turning our idea of their approval (or disapproval) into a sharing of their feeling of approval (or disapproval).

Direct textual evidence for this approach is supplied by a remark in which Hume comments that sympathy can enliven an idea of good or evil, included in a 'bare opinion' that is expressed with feeling:

The bare opinion of another, especially when inforc'd with passion, will cause an idea of good or evil to have an influence upon us, which wou'd otherwise have been entirely neglected. This proceeds from the principle of sympathy or communication; and sympathy, as I have already observ'd, is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination. (T2.3.6.8/SBN427)

Merely imagining an idea of some good or evil would have little effect on us. Being exposed to another person's evaluative opinion expressed without passion, as a bare opinion, would work on us through the principle of authority, which leads us to attend to the other person's opinion as a form of testimony to be entertained and countenanced, whether or not we ultimately accept it.<sup>20</sup> If this same opinion were to be 'inforc'd with passion,' Hume seems to be suggesting, sympathy could convey such a lively idea of the other person's approval or disapproval of some idea of good or evil that we come to share their attitude to that idea, a kind of doxastic contagion. Hume comments,

Now nothing is more natural than for us to embrace the opinions of others in this particular; both from *sympathy*, which renders all of their sentiments present to us; and from *reasoning*, which makes us regard their judgment, as a kind of argument for what they affirm. These two principles of authority and sympathy influence almost all our opinions; but must have a peculiar influence, when we judge of our own worth and character. (T2.1.11.9/SBN320–21)<sup>21</sup>

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18 Taylor (2014: 194), Mercer (1972: 34), Ardal (1996: 46–48), Butler (1975: 15–18), Vitz (2014: 204–12), Baier and Waldow (2008: 542–44). Taylor states categorically 'Any judgment or belief may be sympathetically communicated' (2014: 195) and cites T1.3.9.19/SBN117; T1.3.10.3/SBN119. We have set aside many complex interpretive issues concerning the impression of the self as the source of this enlivening process; this is discussed in T2.1.11.5–6.

19 Cohon calls a feeling a *sentiment* in her discussion of moral sentiments and moral judgments, and she describes a moral judgment as *manifesting a sentiment* (2008: chap. 5). Hume often uses the term 'sentiment' to refer to the feeling that an evaluative opinion produces, especially in T3. We take this feeling to be the feeling of approval or disapproval.

20 Ardal observes that sympathy working on opinions might well come in degrees, so that it makes another person's opinion merely difficult to resist (1966: 48).

21 Hume cites T1.3.10 here. Especially relevant are his observation at T1.3.10.4 that passions can enliven ideas with sufficient vivacity to turn them into beliefs and his claim at T 2.3.6.1 that nothing which affects the imagination can be 'entirely indifferent' to the affections.

Hume argues that the principles of authority and sympathy will find a ready source of vivifying influence when we encounter praise or admiration from others; the connection with our sense of self-worth is enough to guarantee that praise or admiration will be attended to with passion and can receive an infusion of vivacity from that reservoir of vivacity: the idea or impression of the self (T2.1.11.9/SBN321).<sup>22</sup> When you sympathize with an onlooker's approval of the valuable quality you possess, the mechanism of sympathy transmits the positive affect of the feeling in the onlooker's sentiment of admiration through emotional contagion and enlivens the idea of good in his evaluative opinion to such a degree that you come to share his approval of this quality through doxastic contagion. The principle of authority also presents his opinion of you in such a way that it solicits your agreement with it. These principles combine to cause a sentiment in you that reinforces your own positive self-evaluation.

Hume does not assume that admiration expressed and acknowledged will always involve acquiescence to a system of ranking in which the admirer's deference corresponds to the sense of superiority of the admired. This is the second important revision that Hume proposes to Malebranche's account. Where Malebranche sees a system of ranking being set in place, with each person acknowledging their relation to the other, Hume sees a transaction that functions more as a form of corroboration, in which the admirer responds with approval to some valuable quality possessed by the person admired and reassures the possessor that it is worthy of pride. As he says, "Tis certain, then, that if a person consider'd himself in the same light, in which he appears to his admirer, he wou'd first receive a separate pleasure, and afterwards a pride or self-satisfaction, according to the hypothesis above explain'd" (T2.1.11.9/SBN320). Hume builds on this point when he later argues that the pleasure needed to generate esteem through the double relation of impressions and ideas arises as a response to the very same qualities and relations that tend to cause pride in their possessor (T2.2.1). We will summarize Hume's view with this slogan: when admiration or praise from another contributes to one's pride, it is because the praise is taken to *indicate* the existence of some independent quality or relation one possesses that is apt for generating pride; praise could not in itself *constitute* a ground of pride.

The fact that the approving opinions of others must solicit and obtain our agreement and thereby 'draw [our] own opinion after them' (T2.1.11.13/SBN322) explains why it is that praise that we know to be ungrounded does not give rise to pride. Hume points out that we care more about the 'approbation of those, whom we ourselves esteem and approve of, than of those, whom we hate and despise' (T2.1.11.11/SBN320). Hume takes this to be proof that our experience of pride could not be understood as the result of gratifying an original appetite for recognition and acclaim. He comments:

But if the mind received from any original instinct a desire of fame, and aversion to infamy, fame and infamy wou'd influence us without distinction; and every opinion, according as it were favourable or unfavourable, wou'd equally excite that desire or aversion. (T2.1.11.11/SBN321)

Hume here rejects Malebranche's conception of concupiscence of grandeur as an inherent or instinctive desire ceaselessly operating on us.<sup>23</sup>

In a paragraph that appears in the *Dissertation on the Passions* (hereafter, *Dissertation* (1757)), Hume compresses the discussion found in T2.1.11 to a thoughtful reflection on the difficulty of accurate self-evaluation and the diffidence and anxiety that result from awareness of our own unreliability in evaluating ourselves:

But of all our opinions, those, which we form in our own favour; however lofty or presuming; are, at bottom, the frailest, and the most easily shaken by the contradiction

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<sup>22</sup> We cannot here pursue discussion of the role played by the relations of resemblance and contiguity in generating sympathy or the complex and puzzling role played by the impression of the self as a source of vivacity (T2.1.11.4-5).

<sup>23</sup> This remark also opposes Mandeville's claim in Part I of *The Fable of the Bees*, Remark C, that 'if Reason in Man was of equal weight with his Pride, he could never be pleas'd with Praises which he is conscious he doesn't deserve,' ([1723, 1729] 1988: 63).

and opposition of others. Our great concern, in this case, makes us soon alarmed, and keeps our passions upon the watch: Our consciousness of partiality still makes us dread a mistake: And the very difficulty of judging concerning an object, which is never set at a due distance from us, nor is seen in a proper point of view, makes us hearken anxiously to the opinions of others, who are better qualified to form just opinions concerning us. (DP2.33/Bea14)

Hume's argument in the *Dissertation* quickly touches on the main points raised in T2.1.11. We are diffident and anxious about our own ability to evaluate ourselves (DP2.33, excerpted above). This is why all of mankind comes to possess a strong love of fame, 'not from any original passion;' rather, '[i]t is in order to fix and confirm their favourable opinion of themselves' that people 'seek the applauses of others' (DP2.33).<sup>24</sup>

Hume specifies that the 'applauses of others' should be viewed as intensifying causes that increase an effect, rather than as causes that are capable of originating it: 'Though it be difficult, in all points of speculation, to distinguish a cause, which increases an effect, from one, which solely produces it; yet in the present case the phenomena seem pretty strong and satisfactory in confirmation of the foregoing principle' (DP2.34). Admiration from others intensifies pride by directing our attention to its grounds: 'when a man desires to be praised, it is for the same reason, that a beauty is pleased with surveying herself in a favourable looking-glass, and seeing the reflection of her own charms' (DP2.33).

This view that praise from others can, at most, merely second our own self-evaluation may sound too austere. Why do we take pleasure in praise from any source and why do we shrink from any form of contempt? Why is admiration welcome, as such, even when it comes from unreliable sources of testimony? In particular, Hume inquires, why does the plagiarist take pleasure in praise when he could not treat it as testimony to his own skill? Hume's answer is that sympathy with such praise involves picking up on the pleasant sensation of the sentiment of approval and sharing in that while perhaps also imagining that the approval is grounded. This is why 'Plagiaries are delighted with praises' even though they do not believe they deserve them. Hume describes the plagiarist as doing just what Malebranche thought that the man of strong imagination does when he detects admiration: plagiarists engage in 'a kind of castle-building, where the imagination amuses itself with its own fictions, and strives to render them firm and stable by a sympathy with the sentiments of others' (T2.1.11.19/SBN324).<sup>25</sup> Note that Hume never says that plagiaries feel *pride* as a result of such praise. Since they know it to be undeserved, it fails to indicate to them the existence of any independent ground for pride.

When grounds for pride really do exist, Hume insists that love and esteem can be our response to qualities that have been 'put to view' by another person. He clearly believes that our responses to another person's grounds for pride may be appreciative without involving attitudes of deference or submission (T2.2.1.9/SBN 331–32).

## 6. HOW SYMPATHY AND COMPARISON MIGHT PRODUCE DEFERENCE AS A RESPONSE TO DISPLAYS OF PRIDE

Malebranche describes pride as naturally evoking deference in the audience because these are two different and interlocking perspectives on a single social relationship. The fact that pride and deference stabilize the social world by creating order is viewed as providential by Malebranche.

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<sup>24</sup> Mandeville introduced the concept of self-liking, as distinguished from self-love, in *Part II of The Fable of the Bees*, where self-liking is described as an Instinct that is 'accompany'd with a Diffidence, arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves: It is this that makes us so fond of the Approbation, Liking and Assent of others; because they strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves,' ([1723, 1729] 1988: 130). This may well have influenced Hume in this passage from the DP, but Hume is still opposed to Mandeville's assumption that we possess an Instinct for self-liking that, like an appetite, seeks to be gratified. See Tolonen's discussion of Mandeville's 'whole-hearted shift from self-love to self-liking' in his account of self-preservation (2013: 83–102).

<sup>25</sup> Compare to *Search*: those who abandon themselves to their strong imaginations 'fecund with ideas, they build castles in Spain, as the saying goes, with great satisfaction and joy' (OCI.327/LO165). See also Schmitter (2013: 212).

For similar reasons, pride and contempt are treated as a single fused attitude: feeling pride will involve feeling some form of disdain for others, and feeling deference will involve the experience of humility. Malebranche assumes that the function of grandeur in social life is to help to constitute social relations shaped and ordered by rank and power. If pride is out of scale with what is appropriate for a person with a certain rank, it could be rejected, just as a disordered appetite can be censured.

Hume does not assume that pride will always involve thoughts about occupying a superior social rank to others; in its most basic form it may simply involve the pleased recognition that one possesses a valuable and uncommon quality. That could well be a case of pride unseconded by the opinions of others. In Book III of the *Treatise*, in his discussion of the way in which a proud person might induce feelings of displeasure in his audience, Hume presents a complex explanation of why it is that the audience to a display of pride is as likely to be repelled by it as to acquiesce in it. This discussion, taken as a whole, adds a new element to Hume's opposition to Malebranche's conception of pride as grandeur.

In T3.3.2 'Of greatness of mind,' Hume accounts for the origin of the artificial virtue of modesty by describing the ways in which the pride of others can offend us. The principle of comparison had previously been introduced in his discussion of pity, malice, envy, respect, and contempt in T2.2.8–10. We will argue that Hume's use of the principle of comparison in this discussion requires that the items being compared could not be mere feelings of pleasure or displeasure, but must be self-evaluative opinions, which Hume describes as *sentiments*. This will confirm and extend the interpretation proposed in the previous section about the scope of sympathy as including the transmission of evaluative opinions as well as passions.

While Malebranche lamented our tendency to judge a person's merit by comparison, Hume cheerfully accepts that '[w]e naturally judge of every thing by comparison' (T3.2.10.5/SBN 556–57) and treats this as a source of fallibility for which we have no better replacement.<sup>26</sup> In Book II, Hume had analyzed respect as a blend of two passions, esteem and humility, produced by two distinct processes, sympathy and comparison, that may occur together (T2.2.10). In the presence of a person who possesses a remarkable and valuable quality or relation, love in the form of esteem may blend with humility.<sup>27</sup>

In T3.3.2 Hume explicitly recalls his earlier discussions in Book II about 'sympathy, and communication of sentiments and passions above-mention'd.' His summary of this discussion focuses on the communication of opinions and judgments: 'So close and intimate is the correspondence of human souls, that no sooner any person approaches me, than he diffuses on me all his opinions, and draws along my judgment in a greater or lesser degree' (T3.3.2.2/SBN592). The principle of sympathy is characterized as something that operates more or less strongly in communicating opinions. It can work in such a way as to produce belief, but it can also make the sympathetically communicated opinion occupy the recipient's mind without securing assent. In such a case, it is the other person's 'assent and approbation' that gives authority to his opinion through the workings of sympathy:

And tho', on many occasions, my sympathy with him goes not so far as entirely to change my sentiments, and way of thinking; yet it seldom is so weak as not to disturb the easy course of my thought, and give an authority to that opinion, which is recommended to me by his assent and approbation. (T3.3.2.2/SBN592)

Hume immediately applies this to an example in which acknowledging merit in another gives rise to a comparison with our own merit and generates humility:

We sink very much in our own eyes, when in the presence of a great man, or one of a superior genius; and this humility makes a considerable ingredient in that *respect*, which

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26 See also T2.1.8.8/SBN303; T2.1.11.18/SBN323–24; T2.2.8.2/SBN372; T3.2.10.5/SBN556–57; T3.3.2.4/SBN593–94.

27 See T2.2.10.3/SBN390. In 'Of Respect and Contempt' (T2.2.10), Hume develops a special hypothesis to account for the occasions when esteem arises in response to a good quality in another without much humility. The qualities that would make an object 'peculiarly fitted to produce love, but imperfectly to excite pride' include 'good nature, good humour, facility, generosity, beauty, and many other qualities' (T2.2.10.8/SBN392).

we pay our superiors, according to our foregoing reasonings on that passion. (T3.3.2.6/SBN595–96)

Furthermore, Hume continues, sympathy causes us to respond to an emotionally arresting display of pride as if we were responding to genuine merit: ‘it causes pride to have, in some measure, the same effect as merit; and by making us enter into those elevated sentiments, which the proud man entertains of himself, presents that comparison, which is so mortifying and disagreeable’ (3.3.2.6/SBN595). In such a case even if ‘[o]ur judgment does not entirely accompany him in the flattering conceit, in which he pleases himself’ it is nevertheless ‘so shaken as to receive the idea it presents, and to give it an influence above the loose conceptions of the imagination’ (T3.3.2.6/SBN595–96).

Hume says that sympathy makes us ‘enter into those elevated sentiments, which the proud man entertains of himself’ and then ‘presents that comparison, which is so mortifying and disagreeable.’ The sentiments entertained by the proud man must be particular self-evaluations giving rise to self-approval. Hume notes that our *judgment* does not ‘entirely accompany him in this flattering conceit’ though it is shaken to receive the idea it presents.

Some interpreters have concluded that Hume’s use of the principle of comparison in this section is concerned with a comparison of *sensations*: the sentiments in question must be sensations of pleasure received via sympathy.<sup>28</sup> It is true that Hume describes comparison as resulting in a reversal of sensations, but he does not claim that the items compared are sensations. The items compared are typically described as *ideas* by Hume, and the reversal of sensations is a consequence of the comparison of these ideas.

Comparison, as Hume had first described it in T2.2.8, starts with a comparison of two ideas, one newly received, the other previously held. The comparison has the effect of augmenting or diminishing the previously held idea and this results in a new sensation that is contrary to the sensation that had been produced by the previously held idea before the comparison occurred (T2.2.8.9/SBN375). When Hume says that the pain of another ‘consider’d in itself, is painful to us, but augments the idea of our own happiness, and gives us pleasure’ (T2.2.8.10/SBN376), he means that when it is considered by itself, it causes pain via sympathy, but when the idea of his pain is compared to the idea of our own happiness, it causes pleasure.<sup>29</sup> Although comparison produces new sensations of pleasure or uneasiness, it does so by augmenting or diminishing a previously held idea. Comparison can operate on impressions produced by sympathy, but it can also operate with ideas, which are items of lesser vivacity. This is what explains Hume’s observation that an idea too faint to produce sympathy could still affect us by comparison, ‘Sympathy being the conversion of an idea into an impression, demands a greater force and vivacity in the idea than is requisite to comparison’ (T3.3.2.5/SBN594–95).<sup>30</sup> It is easy to be misled on this point by Hume’s summary of the T2.2.8 discussion at T3.3.2.4: ‘The direct survey of another’s pleasure naturally gives us pleasure; and therefore produces pain, when compar’d with our own’ (SBN 594). This suggests that a sympathetically produced impression is always compared to an impression of our own. That is a possibility, but it is not, as Hume describes comparison, the typical case.

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<sup>28</sup> What Postema identifies in this passage is the operation of ‘reversal-comparison,’ which involves a sympathetically communicated sensation being compared to one of our own with the result that a sensation opposite to the sympathetically communicated one is produced by augmenting the original sensation of our own (2005: 275–76). Baier seems to think of the sentiments being compared as pleasures or pains (1991: 146–47). Our interpretation is consistent with that offered by Taylor, who says that we sympathize with the superior man’s pride and merit because there is evidence of merit, but do not ‘fully engage’ in the absence of evidence, which produces a less strong idea (2015: 146).

<sup>29</sup> This reading agrees with Mercer (1972: 32–33) who argues that comparison does not require a sympathetically communicated impression of pain, the idea of his pain will suffice.

<sup>30</sup> Hume’s rationale shows his continued allegiance to his official account of sympathy and reminds us that comparison may operate more typically upon ideas than impressions. Baier (1991: 147–50) and Taylor (2015: 146) in discussing T3.3.2 suggest that comparison presupposes sympathy. This interpretation assumes that the items compared are impressions of pleasure or pain that must arise through sympathy. It makes better sense of Hume’s observation that ideas that are very strong operate on us by sympathy to produce corresponding impressions while ideas of medium strength are more likely to trigger comparison (T3.3.2.5/SBN594–95) to suppose that comparison is more typically a comparison of ideas and that any sensation produced by comparison is produced by the augmenting or diminishing of a current idea.

There is, therefore, no obstacle to considering that when we encounter the conceited and proud man, what is communicated to us via sympathy is an idea—a complex idea—that takes the form of a sentiment: the self-approval that is expressed through his pride and inferred by those who witness it. Hume remarks that even if our *judgment* does not ‘accompany him in the flattering conceit,’ it receives ‘the idea it presents’ in the imagination. His idea of his merit is then compared with our own self-appraisal with the result that the idea we had of our own standing is diminished. This diminution of our idea of our own standing in turn causes the sensation of displeasure. This can occur, Hume observes, even if we encounter a conceited man ‘whom we are really persuaded to be of inferior merit.’ His sympathetically communicated passion of pride causes his self-appraisal to gain extra force so that ‘the firm persuasion he has of his own merit, takes hold of the imagination, and diminishes us in our own eyes, in the same manner, as if he were really possess’d of all the good qualities which he so liberally attributes to himself’ (T3.3.2.6/SBN595–96). As Malebranche observed, the humble man in the presence of a haughty one may come to undervalue himself by acquiescing to the false self-assessment of the man of inferior merit.

This is the centerpiece of Hume’s explanation of why the rules of ‘good-breeding’ or politeness, have been constructed so that all direct expressions of pride are proscribed because of their ‘natural tendency to cause uneasiness in others by means of comparison’ (T3.3.2.7/SBN596). Restated a few paragraphs later, the claim is that ‘any piece of ill-breeding, or any expression of pride and haughtiness, is displeasing to us, merely because it shocks our own pride, and leads us by sympathy into a comparison, which causes the disagreeable passion of humility’ (T3.3.2.17/SBN601–2).

Why does Hume say that the expression of pride and haughtiness by others *shocks* our own pride (T3.3.2.3/SBN593)?<sup>31</sup> If this was just a matter of the proud man’s pleasure of self-regard being received, via sympathy, and then juxtaposed with our own pleasure of self-regard, we need not be shocked by the comparison. After all, since we are both proud, we could both experience the pleasure of self-regard together. Hume had described the effect of criticism in T2.1.11 as shocking ‘the good opinion we have of ourselves’ (T2.1.11.9/SBN320–21). The collision that takes place must be a collision between two opinions, the proud man’s haughty *opinion* concerning his merit, enhanced by the principle of sympathy so that we can’t help but entertain it, and the good opinion we have of ourselves. The comparison of these two ideas diminishes our sense of our own merit, thereby undermining our grounds for pride and triggering the passion of humility.

Hume’s account of what is unsettling about a display of pride does not depend on the idea that an opinion of superiority is implicit in the display of pride and chiefly what offends us. Nothing as explicitly condescending as conceit is required. However, Hume could have added that when the pleasure taken in superiority is expressed in conceit and is thereby conveyed to the audience, it provides new grounds for displeasure. This is a psychologically plausible claim. After all, we can resent an *air* of superiority in teachers and other experts even when we heartily agree that they are superior to us. Possessing expert skill need not involve taking pleasure in viewing oneself as an expert and putting that pleasure on display.

In making a case for the artificial virtue of modesty (T3.3.2.10/SBN597–99), Hume shrewdly draws a distinction between displaying pride and merely possessing it that makes room for the possibility that what is typical in *displays* of pride might not be necessary or inevitable features in every *experience* of pride. He goes to great lengths to emphasize that pride can have an entirely benign character, as when ‘the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfy’d with ourselves’ (T2.1.7.8/SBN297). Being satisfied with ourselves need not involve viewing ourselves as superior to others and *a fortiori* need not involve taking pleasure in such a feeling and displaying it to others. It can be enough to believe that we have met some socially established standard and to take pleasure in anticipating respect from others. Hume employs this point to undermine

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<sup>31</sup> The term *shock* is used by Hume in a mechanistic sense to pick out a physical collision, as when one billiard ball shocks another and causes it to move (T1.3.14.18/SBN164). This is extended to cover collisions between passions (a predominant passion is increased at the ‘first shock or reencounter’ with a contrary one, T2.3.9.13/SBN441) or opinions communicated by sympathy and authority that are entertained alongside our own (‘being conscious of great partiality in our own favour, we are peculiarly pleas’d with any thing, that confirms the good opinion we have of ourselves, and are easily shock’d with whatever opposes it’ T2.1.11.9/SBN320–21).

the tenet of Christian morality that merely experiencing pride is a sin (T2.1.7.8/SBN297). It also allows him to insist that 'a genuine and hearty pride, or self-esteem, if well conceal'd and well founded, is essential to the character of a man of honour' (T3.3.2.11/SBN598–99) and a virtue (T3.3.2.8/SBN596).

## 7. THE VALUE AND CORRIGIBILITY OF EMOTIONAL AND DOXASTIC CONTAGION

Given his place in the tradition of Christian philosopher-theologians, we might expect that Malebranche would take the passion of grandeur to be a vice and the passion of humility to be a virtue.

But Hume has no reason to associate Malebranche with that conception of grandeur or pride. In fact, Hume and Malebranche share the view that pride and humility are generated by self-appraisal in specific circumstances. In the *Search*, Malebranche writes,

Viewing the perfection of one's own being or of something belonging to it naturally produces pride or esteem for one's self, scorn for others, joy, and several other passions. Viewing one's own grandeur produces haughtiness; viewing one's strength, valor, or boldness and viewing any other worthwhile quality naturally produces another passion that will always be a kind of pride.

The contemplation of some imperfection in one's being or in something belonging to it, on the other hand, naturally produces humility, scorn for one's self, respect for others, sadness, and several other passions. (OCII.189–90/LO376)

Because the passions of pride, or esteem for oneself, or scorn for others on the one hand, and humility on the other are generated mechanically, Malebranche argues, they cannot be virtues or vices (see *Traité de morale*, OCXI.28/W53).

In other words, we cannot be praised or blamed for experiencing the passions associated with grandeur or humility; we can only be held accountable for our consent to what the passions tell us, namely, that we are indeed greater or lesser than, for example, our neighbor:

But this humility, as well as the pride I have just spoken of [that is, the grandeur referred to at the end of the passage just above], is really neither a virtue nor a vice. Both are only passions or involuntary emotions that nonetheless are quite useful to civil society, and, in certain instances, are absolutely necessary for the preservation of the life or goods of those who are moved by them. (OCII.190/LO376)

The key to understanding his position is in the word 'involuntary.' Grandeur and humility, like all of the passions, operate mechanically without requiring any consent or approval from our wills. Just as the passions that move us to run from a tiger or towards an oasis are essential for staying alive, so too the passions of grandeur and humility are essential for living in society. They help us develop the kinds of attitudes to others that allow for an ordered and harmonious social life. But this does not make these passions *virtues*. Malebranche observes that we sometimes wish to resist this mechanical process and cannot. When we consciously consent to feelings of grandeur or humility that are generated by comparing ourselves with other people, these judgments are not virtuous because they take as real what is unreal: the relation of superiority between another and ourselves. Anything, Malebranche writes, that 'gives us a certain elevation over others by making us more perfect, such as science and virtue, or else by giving us a certain authority over them by making us more powerful, such as honors and riches, seems to make us to some extent independent' (OCII.50/LO290) and loving the things that 'flatter' us in this way puts us into a 'wretched state of mind' because they lead us to think of ourselves as independent and thus distance us from God (OCI.15–16/LOxxxvii).

Given the involuntary nature of our passions, it also makes sense that Malebranche does not label the passion of grandeur as a vice. For, we cannot be held responsible for experiencing the involuntary passion that is an appropriate response to our environment. Where a vicious turn

may occur, however, is in the *consenting* to pride as a good or real thing. On his view, we must never consent to anything until ‘we are forced to do so, as it were, by the inward reproaches of our reason’ (OCI.55/LO10). Error can be traced to the hasty consent of the will when it has been ‘dazzled by some false light’ and ‘carelessly relies on the *appearance* of truth’ (OCII.250/LO411, emphasis added).<sup>32</sup>

Can Malebranche make sense of the idea that some forms of grandeur are more warranted or more appropriate than others?<sup>33</sup> He could not allow that the grandeur that results from comparing ourselves to others is ever wholly warranted, given our position in the created realm, namely, under God, who is perfect. Moreover, the only feeling of humility that could be warranted is one generated by our comparison to God. While it is natural, and perhaps even unavoidable to compare ourselves with others, the properties that are the subject of such comparisons, being individual and ephemeral, cannot operate as legitimate *relata*.

It might seem that Malebranche puts us into a double bind: we must *feel* submissive in certain circumstances, but the feeling of submission is not to be consented to. Malebranche believes that he has a way out of this bind, and it is the same strategy he employs when explaining how we can enjoy created things without loving them. We can, for instance, enjoy a tasty pear because it helps preserve our body while simultaneously *not consenting to love* the pear as the cause of our pleasure. The appropriate way to interact with the pear is to enjoy it and love God while doing so, knowing that God is the true cause of our enjoyment, not the pear. Malebranche would hold that we can submit or rule, humble ourselves or display grandeur, without consenting to the truth of these relationships. Our task is to participate in society while simultaneously holding onto the truth that the rankings and relationships, in virtue of their lack of genuine grounding, are meaningless. In Malebranche’s terrestrial city, ranking and comparisons may often be useful in promoting social stability but are sinful with respect to our ultimate goal of citizenship in the city of God. Exactly how to live in this world in a way that qualifies us for election to the next, is an extremely difficult and perhaps an impossible question for us to answer.<sup>34</sup>

Hume agrees that the operations of sympathy with sentiments and passions are involuntary mechanical processes. Like Malebranche, Hume thinks that attitudes of deference, admiration or praise, conveyed from others to us by sympathy, could not provide direct grounds for pride. Just as Malebranche sees a social value to the displays that signal grandeur and humility, Hume concludes that signals of pride must be muted and signals of humility amplified for society to run properly. Hume takes on the task of reconciling the need to acknowledge social rank and its associated pretensions and superficialities with the need to view pride and humility as passions that are capable of being more or less well-grounded. The humility required of us by the rules of politeness or ‘good-breeding’ should not exceed what is appropriate for those of ‘our rank and station’ to display. But such displays of humility need not accord with what we feel:

*I believe no one, who has any practice of the world, and can penetrate into the inward sentiments of men, will assert, that the humility, which good-breeding and decency require of us, goes beyond the outside, or that a thorough sincerity in this particular is esteem’d a real part of our duty. ... There are certain deferences and mutual submissions, which custom requires of the different ranks of men towards each other; and whoever exceeds in this particular, if thro’ interest, is accus’d of meanness; if thro’ ignorance, of simplicity. ’Tis necessary, therefore, to know our rank and station in the world, whether it be fix’d by our birth, fortune, employments, talents or reputation.*  
(T3.3.2.11/SBN598–99)

Hume reminds us, however, that we are not tempted to think of such things as ‘tacit airs of superiority’ as merely outwardly enacted and not really taken to heart. The truth is that we will

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<sup>32</sup> See also OCI.188/LO86, OCI.302/LO151, OCII.158–59/LO357, OCIII.21/LO549. Malebranche’s discussion of consent falls under his general treatment of human freedom.

<sup>33</sup> We thank Jennifer Smalligan Marušić and Anat Schechtman for raising this question.

<sup>34</sup> See Greenberg (2010: 199, 203–5) for discussion of a related point, as well as Bardout (2000: 21–27) and Walton (1972: 75–87).

inevitably experience pride, and because we all know this, we will aim for our pride to be of the well-grounded variety:

'Tis necessary to feel the sentiment and passion of pride in conformity to [our rank and station], and to regulate our actions accordingly. And shou'd it be said, that prudence may suffice to regulate our actions in this particular, without any real pride, I wou'd observe, that here the object of prudence is to conform our actions to the general usage and custom; and that 'tis impossible those tacit airs of superiority shou'd ever have been establish'd and authoriz'd by custom, unless men were generally proud, and unless that passion were generally approv'd, when well-grounded. (T3.3.2.11/SBN598–99)

Hume's final comment challenges Malebranche's view that feelings of grandeur will always lack a legitimate foundation. He argues that our practices must track some sort of value: in order for pride and humility to be capable of structuring the social order through those observances of rank that are dictated by custom, then feelings of pride must be the sort of thing that people would generally approve of 'when well-grounded.'

To sum up, the human tendency to feel grandeur and humility, the dispositions associated with it, and the principles of imitative sympathy and comparison are observantly characterized by Malebranche, while also being proclaimed irredeemable. The approval of someone else, communicated by imitation in the form of emotional contagion and doxastic contagion, can be pointed to as the cause of grandeur but never as a justifying ground for it. Instead, such approval leads us to error by encouraging us to think of ourselves and others as having properties with real ontological value. Our care for reputation, 'the passion for glory and grandeur' will always be opposed to the perfection of the mind (OCI.12/LOxxxv). Only God can be the final arbiter of our success in resisting the temptation to overvalue—or undervalue—ourselves.

Hume has been described as 'Malebranche without God' with respect to causation and with respect to the passions.<sup>35</sup> We propose that a similar claim can be made about the inventory of principles that Hume employs to discuss the effects of admiration on pride: the principle of comparison and, as we have argued, a principle of doxastic contagion (sympathy with sentiments or opinions), as well as a principle of emotional contagion (sympathy with passions). By refining the characterization of these three principles, he shows that the human tendency to feel pride can be redeemed from many different forms of error because it is socially regulated in a way that is sensitive to its grounds. Socially developed and socially enforced customs give rise to the 'general rules' that identify grounds for pride and specify the appropriate degree of pride.

A desire for admiration from others, the goal traditionally imputed to the vain, is reinterpreted by Hume as a desire for a form of corroboration from others that affirms our own positive self-evaluations despite what he describes (in the *Dissertation*) as our diffidence and self-doubt. By the end of the section archly titled 'of the love of fame,' Hume has presented a deflationary account of what Malebranche and many others call 'the love of fame' and view as a clear expression of self-love.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps Hume overplays his hand in deflating his subject in this way, as he certainly did in 'Of curiosity, or the love of truth' (T2.3,10/SBN 448–54) with his similarly deflationary account of our motives for pursuing truth. In both of these sections, Malebranche's *Search* is surely the chief—but not the only—target of Hume's irreverence.

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Jones describes Hume's mature philosophy as Cicero with arguments and as Malebranche without God (1982: 9). Harris proposes that Hume on the passions can be described as justly as 'Malebranche without God' as Hume on causal power (2009: 140).

<sup>36</sup> Hume argues in T2.2 that love can have only another person as its object (T2.21,2/SBN 329–30). This rules out the cogency of referring to 'self-love' as well as 'the love of fame' and 'the love of truth'.

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