

# 흡의 공감이론의 관점에서 본 아크라시아 문제\*

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## 요약문

이 논문에서 나는 감정에 의해 야기된 의지나약한 행위가 합리적일 수 있다는 주장을 정당화하고자 한다. 최근에 아펠리(2003)는 행위자가 그의 더 나은 판단에 반해서 행동했는데도 불구하고 그 행위가 합리적일 수 있으며 심지어 도덕적이기도 하다는 소위 ‘역-아크라시아’의 경우가 있다고 주장한다. 이와 같은 논증을 정당화하기 위해 아펠리와 많은 사람들, 예를 들어, 드 수자(1987), 매킨타이어(1990), 존스(2003) 그리고 태폴릿(2003)은 저 유명한 허클베리 핀의 예를 든다. 이 논문에서 나는 마크 트웨인의 허클베리 핀의 경우를 이용하여 흡의 공감이론에서 소위 ‘역-아크라시아’가 가능한지를 고려해 본다. 흡의 공감에 근거한 도덕이론에서 역-아크라시아가 가능하다면 도덕적 평가를 할 때 규칙이나 원리보다 덕이 더 낮은 것을 나는 주장하고자 한다.

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## Introduction

In recent years virtue ethics has played a very large role in ethical debate. The reason why virtue ethics is attracting attention in recent times is that many people think that there is a question about the adequacy of the account of morality represented by Kant's deontology or utilitarianism: both Kant's ethics or utilitarianism's moral theory focus on the question of 'what is right or obligation to do' and neglected the question of virtue.

Virtue ethics is primarily aimed at developing the virtuous propensities. It argues that the developed virtue is at least as effective as rules and principles to determine right conduct. Virtue ethics has been acclaimed by many people in the modern world because of the fact that it is agent-centered ethics, emphasizing the actions that arise from emotions, and manifesting a more flexible understanding of right action. In this paper I will highlight this aspect of Hume's ethics.

Unlike modern moral philosophers, Hume has dealt with the question of virtue, but this aspect has not been highlighted as Kantian ethics and utilitarianism have been regarded as representing modern moral philosophy. In recent years, however, some people have attempted to interpret Hume's moral theory as virtue ethics, stressing Hume's view on 'motivation' and 'character-trait' in Book Two of the *Treatise*. In this paper, I introduce some key issues of contemporary virtue ethics in order to shed light on the virtue ethical nature of Hume's moral theory.

Let me focus, first, on reasons for action. According to Aristotle,

regarded as the founder of virtue ethics, a reason for action in a virtuous man's behavior is chosen by practical reasoning through rational reflection. In this context Aristotle argues that rational agents act in accordance with all-things-considered judgments, while akratic agents act incontinently in contradiction to all-things-considered judgments because of desire. He calls it 'akrasia'. On Hume's motivational theory, the motivational force of action is emotion, desire, or preference, and belief or reason is a means-end, akrasia can be described as acting contrary to one's all-things-considered desire.<sup>1)</sup> But when Hume speaks sympathy as a moral motive, a puzzle is created. Because he says that when we feel empathy we feel that we agree with the 'general point of view'. If the 'general point of view' is a kind of belief, then if we feel sympathy against the 'general point of view' and act accordingly, can't it be called 'akrasia'? In this paper I will answer this question by showing the role of 'general point of view' and passion in Hume's motivational theory.

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1) Consider Davidson's example of the man who gets up to brush his teeth, against both desires and best judgment. Don relaxes in bed after a hard day when he realizes that he has forgotten to brush his teeth. He comes to the conclusion that, all things considered, it would be better to stay in bed: getting up might spoil his calm, for instance. Still, he gets up and brushes his teeth. Davidson (1970), 30. In this case, he acted against his better judgment. Based on the cognitive view that emotion is identical with the evaluative judgement, Davidson believes that akrasia is an irrational action against all-things-considered judgment. Davidson(1970), 42.

## 1. Emotion and *akrasia*

According to Aristotle, the akratic agent fails to follow reason as a result of passion, in the sense that he knows that what he does is bad (NE VII, 1145b10-15). *Akrasia*, which means a lack of control in Greek, is characterized as an act carried out despite the better judgment of the agent. An akratic act is an act which an agent committed against his better judgment that, all things considered, it would have been better to abstain. But it is said that he is not responsible for the action because his action is compulsive: his emotion gave rise to a desire that forced him to act against his better judgment. In order to appreciate this idea, let us consider a man who suffers from a gaming addiction.<sup>2)</sup> Due to his online game playing, his relationship is breaking down and he is spending little time with his children, and he constantly rings in sick to work so that he can spend the day playing online games. When playing online he claims that he does not have any worries as the game provides an escape from life's pressures. He has tried to quit playing on a number of occasions but could not go more than a few days before he experienced 'an irresistible urge' to play again — even when his wife threatened to leave him. He claims that giving up online gaming is worse than giving up smoking and that he was 'extremely moody, anxious, depressed and irritable' if he was unable to play online. Due to this, he gets fired from his job, his wife also has left him. This has led to his playing all day, every day. It is

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2) I take this example from Mark D. Griffiths's case study. See Griffiths's 'The role of Context in Online gaming Excess and Addiction: Some case Study Evidence (2010).

a vicious circle in that his excessive online gaming was causing many serious problems yet the only way he felt he could alleviate his mood state and forget about all of life's stresses was to play online games. On the one hand, for him, online gaming is the most important thing in his life; he uses gaming as a way of reliably modifying his mood. On the other hand, he suffers withdrawal effects if unable to play online (e.g., feelings of intense moodiness, anxiety, depression, and irritability); and is conflicted as a result of playing online games excessively; but when he tries to stop he soon relapses as he cannot go more than a few days without an irresistible urge to play again. Now let us take into account another case of akrasia, which is the case of addiction. Dostoevsky's novel, *The Gambler*, which is loosely based on the author's own experience, ends with the main character, Alexey Ivanovich's, complete absorption in addiction. Alexey Ivanovich begins gambling as a way to earn a large sum of money that could not be obtained in any other legal way in time to save from ruin the woman he loves, Polina Alexandrovna. But *The Gambler* ends with Alexey Ivanovich's utter absorption in addiction. Here we can see Alexey Ivanovich's ambivalent emotion. On the one hand, he hates his situation. On the other hand, the Gambler takes tremendous pride in winning in roulette.<sup>3)</sup>

Those emotions - delight and hatred - can be about distinct aspects of the object. Thus in our case, the addicts may both feel thrilled about and hate their forthcoming playing of the online gaming or gambling. They are thrilled about the experience that they expect to get

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3) See Dostoevsky (2008), pp. 265-267. I owe this extract from *The Gambler* to Radoilska (2013), p. 61.

from the gaming or gambling and hates the prospect of hurting themselves (e.g., feelings of intense moodiness, anxiety, depression, and irritability) and their families (In the case of the online gamer, for example, his family endure penury due to his being fired from his job). There are plenty of happy addicts who don't hurt either themselves or others. To be sure, these are not the cases on which I want to focus here. I concentrate on the conflicted unwilling addict in order to compare the case of akrasia with one of ambivalent emotion. Although he tries everything that he can overcome his desire for the gaming, it is too hard to resist the temptations, and invariably, in the end, it conquers him. The former emotion (i.e., thrilling) is about the intrinsic phenomenal quality of playing the gaming, whereas the latter (i.e., hatred) is the emotion derived from the prospect of the disastrous consequences.<sup>4)</sup>

In order to explain our unwilling addict case, let's take the account of a perceptual theory of emotion. What is the formal object of our unwilling addict's ambivalent emotion?<sup>5)</sup> In Tappolet's words, is it "the attractiveness of danger" or "the dangerousness of the attractiveness of

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4) Mikko Salmela points out this in terms of the case of bungee-jumping. According to Salmela, in the case of bungee-jumping 'I may feel both thrilled about and afraid of my forthcoming bungee jump.' 'I am thrilled about the experiential kick that I expect to get from the jump, and afraid of hurting myself or even dying should the rope snap or come loose.' Salmela (2006), p. 397.

5) The formal object of emotion view has been defended by those endorsing a perceptual account of emotions (De Sousa 2002, 2004; Prinz 2004; Döring 2003; Tappolet 2005). According to this view, an emotion like fear has correctness conditions that are similar to the correctness conditions of perceptual states. Fear is correct or appropriate in so far as its object is really dangerous, in that this is what makes fear correct or appropriate.

the object”?)<sup>6)</sup> It would seem that perceptual theorists cannot simply answer this question. This is because there can be many different ways in which these ambivalent emotions can manifest both the properties involved, and that these simply constitute different sorts of mixed emotions. Insofar as each one is different, each would then have a different formal object.<sup>7)</sup> Since this might make for excessive complications, in this paper, I shall not address this issue here.

In my view, the unwilling addiction case is comparable to the following cases: the snake is not dangerous and at the same time I fear it; we believe that the Mueller-Lyre lines continue to appear to be of different lengths while they are known to be of equal lengths. Emotion, like sense-perception can persist in the face of relevant and countervailing knowledge. In this respect, we can say that emotion which does not vanish in the face of better knowledge is *recalcitrant emotion*.<sup>8)</sup>

We can also call unwilling addiction case *recalcitrant emotion*. If we take unwilling addiction case to be the case for *recalcitrant emotion*, we can also understand his behavior. (1) If he takes dangerousness

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6) Tappolet(2005), p. 231; In a 2007 paper, Teroni uses a similar example to argue that formal objects are not sufficient to individuate emotions, since dangerousness give rise either to being thrilled or to fear. See Teroni (*Dialectica* 61: 395-417).

7) R. de Sousa in a personal correspondence points out that it's not really a problem. One can take different attitudes to the same danger, and one might correspondingly –if perhaps somewhat vacuously–claim that there are finer grained emotions, defined by fine grained formal objects.

8) Many contemporary emotion theorists suggest that emotions that are conflicting with judgment can be called “recalcitrant emotion”. For example, D’Arms and Jacobson(2003); Susan James(2003). C. Tappolet in her recent work (2012) argues that recalcitrant emotions are a kind of perceptual illusion.

(hatred) and attractiveness to be “ambivalent feeling”, we can say that the two feelings are, in some sense, inconsistent. However, (2) it is not contradictory that he *believes* that it is dangerous and *feels* attractive at the same time. On the one hand, he is directed to the formal object of fear in that he represents dangerousness. Yet we can say that he feels attraction of the drug, gambling, gaming etc. Hence, it makes sense that someone *believes* that it is dangerous and *feels* attraction simultaneously toward the same object.

We can say that the unwilling addict’s emotion is an irrational one, such as when one fears something while judging that there is absolutely no danger involved. Furthermore, we can say that the unwilling addiction case is a kind of *akrasia (incontinence)*, which is taken to be paradigmatic of practical irrationality. The unwilling addict is to blame for taking a drug, gaming, gambling, etc., owing to his weakness of will. It is an act that he committed against his better judgment that, all things considered, it would have been better to abstain. But it is said that he is not responsible for the action because his action is compulsive: his emotion gave rise to a desire that forced him to act against his better judgment.

On the other hand, we can say that a *willing* addict’s emotion is not irrational one. As Frankfurt says, ‘The willing addict’s will is not free, for his desire to take the drug will be effective regardless of whether or not he wants this desire to constitute his will.’ ‘But when he takes the drug, he takes it freely and of his own free will.’<sup>9)</sup>

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9) H. Frankfurt (1971), p. 19.

His desire for the drug is his effective desire because he is physiologically addicted. But it is his effective desire also because he wants it to be. Although his will is outside his control, he has made this will his own in terms of his second-order desire. His desire for the drug should be affected by his second-order desire. Although his addiction has the same physiological basis and the same irresistible thrust as the addictions of unwilling addicts, he is altogether delighted with his condition. ‘If the grip of his addiction should somehow weaken, he would do whatever he could to reinstate it; if his desire for the drug should begin to fade, he would take step to renew its intensity.’<sup>10)</sup> Given this, there is no contradiction involved in the willing addict’s case. Hence, Frankfurt says that the *willing addict* is responsible for the action because he takes the drug *freely* and of his own *free will* when he takes the drug. It is therefore not only because of his addiction that his desire for the drug is effective, he may be morally responsible for taking the drug.<sup>11)</sup>

One might say that the *unwilling addict’s akrasia* caused by emotions involves a *conflict* between a value perception and an evaluative judgment: he is delighted by gambling, for example, while he judges, all things considered, it would have been better to abstain. Why does this happen? As Tappolet notes, ‘the reason why the agent comes to the erroneous conclusion that the akratic action is better than the other one is that she does not ground her conclusion on the relational evaluative judgment, which involves all available reasons, but

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10) Frankfurt (1971), Ibid.

11) Frankfurt (1971), p. 20.

on partial judgment, that is, a judgment which only take into account a limited number of reasons.’<sup>12)</sup>

Moreover, following de Sousa, Tappolet argues that this error is derived from emotion.<sup>13)</sup> Given this, in our case, if Ivanovich indulges his addiction contrary to his better judgment, it is his thrilled experience that is to blame. This means that at least some akratic action involve emotions.

Although some akratic action involves emotions, we can say that emotions do not always disrupt human life. We can find many cases in everyday life that emotions have practical benefits. For example, when I remember my past wrongdoing, I can feel terrible pain today. So I *regret* what I did. I may feel ashamed. I may have reason to get it right. We can say that an emotional absorption in the future pain also give us practical benefit. D. Cockburn argues, for example, that emotional anxiety about future pains serves a practical purpose: it leads us to seek ways to reduce, or completely remove, the pain that will be felt.<sup>14)</sup> Perhaps they lead us to behave better in the future. But then perhaps a greater horror at past pains than we now have would lead us to avoid pains more effectively in future.

The reason why some akratic action involves emotions, in Tappolet’s words, ‘emotions direct our attention, in that they involve what de Sousa calls “species of determinate patterns of salience among objects of attention, lines of inquiry, and inferential strategies”.’<sup>15)</sup> According to

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12) Tappolet (2003), p.102.

13) Tappolet (2003), Ibid.

14) D. Cockburn (1998), “Tense and Emotion,” in *Questions of Time and Tense*, Robin de Poidevin (ed.), Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 85.

de Sousa, ‘emotions limit the range of information that the organism will take into account, the inferences actually drawn from a potential infinity, and the set of live option among which it will choose.’<sup>16)</sup> Furthermore, as Tappolet points out, ‘the pattern of attention that comes with an emotion could have an important role to play in akrasia.’ In the case of Francesca’s passionate love, as Tappolet remarks, ‘her attention is focused on certain aspects of her situation - Paolo’s charms, the expected pleasure of sexual intercourse with Paolo, and so on.’ In this case we can say that the agent fails to keep to the principle of continence. She ignores the danger or her duty, due to ‘the positive traits of the akratic action.’<sup>17)</sup> In our case, given Ivanovich’s passionate gambling, his attention is focused on certain aspects of his situation - a way to earn a large sum of money, the expected pleasure of winning the gambling, and so on. In this respect, recently, Tappolet argues that ‘emotions that are thus conflicting with judgment can be called “recalcitrant emotions”.’<sup>18)</sup> Tappolet suggests that recalcitrant emotions are a kind of perceptual illusion.<sup>19)</sup>

In our case, Ivanovich’s akrasia can be compared to perceptual illusion such as the Mueller-Lyre illusion, in which one sees the lines as being of a different length even though one judges or even knows that they are of the same length. Perceptual illusion like the Mueller-Lyre illusion shows that there is no contradiction involved in

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15) Tappolet (2003), p. 104; de Sousa (1987), p.196.

16) De Sousa (1987), p.195.

17) Tappolet (2003), p.105.

18) C. Tappolet (2012), *Perceptual Illusions: Philosophical and Psychological Essays*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 207.

19) Tappolet( 2012), pp.207-208.

having a perception that conflicts with judgment. As many point out, it is not paradoxical to say, for example, ‘The two lines are the same length, but I do not see it. I see one line as longer than the other.’<sup>20)</sup> If we take emotions to be perceptions of values, we can see that they have the capacity to make akratic action intelligible, as distinct from merely causally explainable.<sup>21)</sup>

## 2. Is Akratic Action Always Irrational?

Why then is the akratic action considered irrational? As we have seen, it has been said that akrasia involves in the usurpation of reason by desires. It is commonly thought that the irrational action is motivated by the agent’s recalcitrant desires. Aristotle makes the distinction between genuine akrasia and akrasia only by resemblance. Genuine akrasia is caused by an excessive concern for satisfying bodily appetites (1148a5-12). Akrasia “by resemblance” is caused by emotion or by strong desires for wealth, victory, profit, honor, or something of value to choose by themselves. Aristotle distinguishes this from akrasia due to desire (1147b24-33, 1148a23-b14). He argues that Akrasia by resemblance should not be blamed. For over-seeking is something good and worth pursuing, but it should be avoided because it is a conflict

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20) C.f. S. Döring, (2009), p. 298.

21) Here I have a way of understanding how perceptions directly lead to action. However, the classic practical syllogism requires a premise that is articulated as a judgment. I am here relying on the contrast between perception and judgment.

with right reason. Although we do not need to take the Aristotelian criteria for Akrasia, accepting his insightful thoughts about the akrasia by resemblance helps us understand that akrasia is not in all cases related to conflict of all things considered judgment with desire. In light of this, McIntyre argues that cases of nonappetitive akrasia need not have a nonrational or irrational motivational source, because nonappetitive akrasia, as Aristotle observes it, is caused by emotion and emotion responds to the justificatory force of consideration, while appetite is moved by mere prospect of pleasure.<sup>22)</sup>

I will defend the view that akrasia is not necessarily irrational. I will argue that in certain circumstances, incontinence may be more rational than continence. In support of this argument, I shall take the famous example of Mark Twain's character Huckleberry Finn.<sup>23)</sup> After helping his friend escape from slavery, Huckleberry Finn decides to return him. But when he has the opportunity to do so, Huck feels pangs of conscience and bows the opposite. Instead of returning Jim to the slave hunter, he lies to protect his friend. It was his compassion for Jim that made Huck act like this. He cannot endorse his emotion, and condemns his own weakness. According to Arpaly, we here have a perfect illustration of 'inverse akrasia.' After all, Twain gets the reader to believe that his protagonist actually did the right thing and even deserves moral praise for his action.<sup>24)</sup>

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22) McIntyre (1990), p. 383.

23) Jonathan Bennett (1974) introduced this example into the philosophical discussion; other discussion includes de Sousa (1987), McIntyre (1990), Jones (2003), Tappolet (2003), and Döring (2009).

24) See Döring (2009), p. 285.

An agent's sensitivity to reasons might on some occasions outstrip his more intellectual ability to see that they are reasons and are such as to justify a course of action.<sup>25)</sup> As McIntyre argues, if such sensitivity is what causes him to choose the course of action that is more rational, then his akratic action is not irrational.<sup>26)</sup> The agent would have been able to justify her action done akratically if she had had more time, more information, more insight or greater powers of self-observation. We can find this idea in Hume's moral motivation theory. Furthermore, we can see the idea that akrasia caused by emotion is sometimes rational in Hume's model. I shall argue that challenging the traditional picture of agency, in Hume's model, there are cases of 'inverse akrasia', according to which the agent acts rationally and even morally but against his better judgment. In support of this claim, I shall apply the example of Huckleberry Finn to Hume's sympathy theory.

### 3. The Possibility of Inverse-Akrasia in Hume's Motivation Theory

Contemporary Humean claims that Hume's theory of motivation is the view that a belief must be conjoined with a desire in order to produce an action. We shall see that this view is based on Hume's thesis that "reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the

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25) McIntyre (1990), p. 390.

26) McIntyre (1990), p. 390.

will”.<sup>27)</sup> One might argue that since for Hume ‘belief’ or ‘reason’ are inert, and lack motivational force, the problem of akrasia regarded as a conflict between better judgment and desire, does not arise. In other words, for Hume motivational force is emotion or preference, and akrasia which arises against agent’s better judgment due to desire or appetite does not arise. But there is a puzzle when Hume discusses sympathy as a moral motivation. Hume says that we should feel sympathy in accordance with a ‘general point of view.’ If the ‘general point of view’ is a kind of belief, it might be said that it is akrasia that an agent has the best judgment (‘the general point of view’) and acts against it due to the emotion (sympathy). Before considering this problem, let us take a close look at Hume’s thesis on the motivational impotence of reason.

In Book III, Part I, Section I of the *Treatise* Hume takes the anti-rationalist view of ethics. He regards his argument as an argument against ‘the greatest part of moral philosophy, ancient and modern.’<sup>28)</sup> According to Hume, these philosophers have often represented human life as a struggle between reason and passions and claimed that we ought to govern our action by reason, and either suppress our passions or bring passions into conformity with reason. However he tries to show that this picture is deeply misconceived. In order to show the misconception, Hume presents the anti-rationalist argument, namely, that reason alone can never provide a motive to any action.

According to this argument, all reasoning is concerned either with ‘abstract relations of our ideas, or with those relations of objects, of

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27) Hume (1978), p. 413.

28) Hume (1978), p. 413.

which experience only gives us information.’<sup>29)</sup> So we can call them demonstrative and empirical reasoning respectively. The one is only concerned with the abstract relations of ideas, while the other is concerned with probability and causal relationships. Abstract relations of ideas are the subject of logic and mathematics, and no one supposes that those by themselves give rise to any motives. Empirical reasoning, too, by itself can never produce an action. Hence Hume concludes that neither sort can alone produce an action. Hume takes pure mathematics as an example of reasoning about the relations between ideas, and points out that in pure mathematics our reasoning yields no conclusions about action. In the second part of the passage at 414 in the *Treatise* concerning the inertness of abstract reasoning, Hume illustrates how abstract reason could influence the will. A man may use his mathematical skills to achieve ends, such as the obtaining of an office through the passing of a test. In the case of applied mathematics, for example, mechanics and accountancy: “the mathematical reasoning of a civil engineer building a dam influences people’s conduct only because they want to build a dam.” “A man who makes up his accounts to find out his debts will be spurred to action by the result only if he wants to pay his debts, or has some other purpose to which the reasoning is relevant.” In either case, a priori arithmetical and mathematical reasoning alone would not lead them to do these things if they did not also desire these ends. Hence Hume argues that something else besides pure abstract reasoning is also needed to lead to action.

Now, according to Hume, in the case of causal reasoning, the same

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29) Hume (1978), p. 413.

point can be made. He argues that causal reasoning can only influence our conduct if the effect in question affects us in some way. We are sometimes moved by the perception of causal relations, but when there is a pre-existing motive in the case, as Hume puts it, if there is ‘the prospect of pleasure or pain from some object,’ we are concerned with its causes and effects. Here we can say that being attracted or not attracted to such results does not exist in anything other than the fact that it gives pleasure or pain. Given this, we can say that reason cannot be the source of moral distinction which influences on morally right or wrong act.<sup>30)</sup>

Hence for Hume moral distinction is not a product of reason. Having established Hume’s view on motivation in this way, we can say that reason for Huck’s action is his emotion, that is, his sympathy for Jim. That is what leads him to disregard his doubtful moral principles which is convention for Hume (i.e., other’s possession should be returned).

Now one might say that we can see ‘akrasia’ in Hume’s moral motivation, because Hume says that we should feel sympathy in accordance with the ‘general point of view’ in order for sympathy to have objectivity. Given this, we can say that the general point of view can inform one’s better judgment, and akrasia consists in the agent’s feeling and acting against the ‘general point of view.’ What is for Hume a general point of view? It can be said that the role of ‘general point of view’ is to enable us to use the responses of other people to calibrate our commerce with objects in the world.

Having established the role of ‘general point of view’ in this way, one

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30) Hume (1978), p. 458.

might then ask whether the ‘general point of view’ as used in moral contexts necessarily commits us to cognitivism, that is, whether it involves conscious awareness, or whether it is the outcome of custom.

31) On a cognitivist interpretation of the ‘general point of view’, when we consider moral matters, it is necessary that there be an immediate awareness of taking up a special point of view. If this view were right, we would need to be disposed to invoke the ‘general point of view’ explicitly every time we adopt it. Since we do not always do so, we cannot accept this interpretation. In our ordinary communication, we naturally speak with some measure of objectivity, though it falls short of absolute objectivity in that it depends to some extent on context. It is on the basis of our shared common view and our communication with one another that we can find objectivity in moral matters.

Having established Hume’s general point of view in this way, the

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31) William Davie calls the former reading “The Conscious Effort View”, while the latter is “The Unconscious Habit View.” I call those readings simply cognitivist and non-cognitivist, respectively. According to the cognitivist reading of the GPV, we achieve the GPV in terms of “a conscious effort of reason and imagination.” This reading is favored by a majority of Hume scholars. The most notable exponents of this reading are Annette C. Baier and J. L. Mackie. See Annette *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); J.L. Mackie, *Hume’s Moral Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 120-123. In a recent work, we can also find this reading in D’Arms and Jacobson (2000). See “Sentiment and Value”, *Ethics* 110: 722-748. On the non-cognitivist reading, on the other hand, we enjoy the GPV “automatically and ordinarily without noticing or making any particular effort.” As William Davie notes, “We are ‘insensible’ of its operation.” (Davie, 1998, p. 275.) The latter reading can be found in Elizabeth Radcliffe (1994) and Marcia Baron (1988). See William Davie, “Hume’s General Point of View”, *Hume Studies*, (1998), 275-294; Marcia Baron, “Morality as a Back-up System: Hume’s view?” *Hume Studies*, (1988), 21-52.

general point of view or ‘common point of view’ is convention which in our case something that Huck learns from his society or his better judgment, all things considered. Then the question is whether Huck’s sympathy fits the convention of the society to which he belongs. Since slavery is regarded as normal at the time when Huck lived, according to the convention at that time, a slave is a possession of somebody, therefore as a property of somebody he should be returned. This is all things considered, the best judgment, and Huck’s sympathy would not be appropriate, because his sympathy does not fit to convention of his society, i.e., ‘the general point of view’ that we may call the all things considered judgment. Given this, we can say that there is a room for so-called ‘inverse-akrasia’ in a Humean model.

Inverse-akrasia caused by emotion is not always irrational. In our case, we can take Huck’s akrasia caused by his sympathy for Jim is inverse-akrasia and rational in the sense that Huck’s sympathy is not subjective, but one that is endorsed by second-order reflection and one that is approved from others. Thus, inverse-akrasia is compatible with Hume’s idea that motivational force of our action is emotion (passion).

Huck’s sympathy can be persistent despite his all things considered judgment that a slave is someone’s possession and should be returned to his owner. Huck’s akrasia can be compared to a perceptual illusion such as the Mueller-Lyer illusion, in which one sees the lines as being of a different length even though one judges or even knows that they are of the same length. Perceptual illusions like the Mueller-Lyer illusion shows that there is no contradiction involved in having a perception that conflicts with judgment. As many point out, it is not paradoxical to say, for example, ‘The two lines are the same length,

but I do not see it. I see one line as longer than the other.’ If we take emotions to be perceptions of values, we can see that they have the capacity to make akratic action intelligible, as distinct from merely causally explainable.<sup>32)</sup>

Although for Hume this belief is instrumental, Huck might be experiencing a conflict between his belief and his sympathy. But when his sympathy is continued, Huck might have the reflection and finally endorses his sympathy against the general point of view, or his better judgment. We can say here that the reflection which Hume uses is a higher-order ‘sentiment’ acquired by custom and cultivation. Huck may have this sentiment as a character-trait. Huck would have been able to justify his action done akratically if he had had more time, more information, more insight or greater powers of self-observation.

So far I have discussed that an agent’s sensitivity to considerations that are reasons might sometimes surpass his more intellectual capacity to see what reasons for action. Hence, as McIntyre notes, if such sensitivity is what causes him to choose the course of action that is more rational, then his akratic action is not irrational. For Hume such sensitivity is regarded as ‘sentiment’ acquired by a custom or cultivation. The concept ‘sentiment’ is welcomed by those who take naturalizing strategy for moral norm in a recent time. According to Karen Jones (2003), emotions contribute to our being able to detect our reason. Furthermore, she claims that all- things- considered judgment has no special normative standing and thus it is not necessarily irrational to act against his best judgment.<sup>33)</sup> In particular cases, an

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32) De Sousa (1987) was a milestone of this new trend. Recently, C. Tappolet (2003) follows this view. I am sympathetic to them.

agent's emotions can be keyed-to her reasons in such a way that they enable the agent to track those reasons, while her all-things-considered judgment does not. In order to understand this idea, let us take an example suggested by Arpaly (2000).

Nomi Arpaly gives us the example of Emily, who has always believed that she should pursue a PhD in chemistry. But when she started this project, Emily felt that her studying was 'restless, sad, and ill motivated.'<sup>34)</sup>

As Arpaly describes the case we are to suppose that Emily's affective discomfort is keying her to the reasons that she has to leave the program - her feelings are responses to the fact that the program is ill-suited to her talents, preferences, and character. However, this evidence does not guarantee understanding her judgment. She herself sees her feelings and 'cites them as the reasons for her quitting, and regards as irrationality not her quitting but that she held on to her conviction that the program was right for her for as long as she did.'<sup>35)</sup>

There are many similar cases to this in our everyday life. We can think of instinctive feelings as the reason, even when we cannot reveal reasons for why we have been doing such an action at that time, and even when our conscious deliberative judgment cannot provide us with any reason. Sometimes we act on these feelings against our better judgment and discover to our relief that our feelings were exactly right and that our weakness saved us from acting on the basis of a misguided all-things-considered judgment.<sup>36)</sup> Given this, as Jones points

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33) Karen Jones (2003), p. 185.

34) Arpaly (2000), p. 504.

35) Arpaly, Ibid.

out, what normative status to accord our all-things-considered judgment becomes an empirical question and we might answer that it has no particular normative standing.<sup>37)</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

I have argued that Hume's view about the role of sentiment has had a crucial influence on the project of naturalizing normativity. Hume's sentiment can be a new basis for the rationality of moral norm in virtue ethics. This new conception of the rationality of norm in explaining our action is 'commitment to rational guidance.' "Commitment to rational guidance includes commitment to the cultivation and exercise of empathy."<sup>38)</sup> The commitment to the rational guidance is to be understood as the commitment to the on-going cultivation and exercise of habits of reflective self-monitoring of our practical and epistemic agency.<sup>39)</sup> This will be so when our emotional disposition are shaped by a process of self-formation; they are not simply mechanism we happen to find in ourselves, but outcome of conscious self-educational process that aims at experiencing when and only when they are appropriate.<sup>40)</sup> In many cases that all-things-considered judgment may be such that the agent would distrust it, if

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36) Jones (2003), p. 187.

37) Jones, Ibid.

38) Jones (2003), p. 194.

39) Jones, Ibid.

40) Tappolet (2003), p. 117.

her self-monitoring capacities were functioning as they should'. Thus, though emotions quite often get us to act irrationally, and though this irrationality often involves acting against our better judgments, they can also help us to overcome the shortcomings of our deliberative faculty. And they can do so without making us less than agents committed to guiding our actions according to our best reasons. Thus emotional akrasia can be more rational than acting on a better judgment.<sup>41)</sup>

Hume's sentiment is a capacity that continually cultivated and trained. It is this capacity that the agent approves or disapproves of his sympathy in terms of the general point of view. When the agent is experiencing mental conflict, on the basis of self-monitoring, he decides whether to go with his considered judgment or with sentiment. This self-monitoring capacity is a character-trait which has been continually cultivated. Owing to this capacity, in some circumstances, for example, Huck's case, the agent is reluctant to follow the all things considered judgment so that he takes emotion to be reason for action. In our case, it is Huck's self-monitoring capacity that he doesn't take the general point of view and that endorses his sympathy. This is what would happen to Huck's akrasia when we take Hume's model.

One might raise an objection to the Humean model in that endorsing his sympathy or emotion does not always bring about a good result. Hume might answer that endorsing all things considered judgment gives us the same result. Hence, we can say that it is more important to be committed to the rational guidance for the on-going cultivation and exercise of habits of reflective self-monitoring of our practical and

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41) Tappolet, Ibid.

epistemic agency. This is the key issue for virtue ethics. Further discussion of virtue ethics is beyond scope of this paper.

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**The Problem of Akrasia in light of  
Hume's Theory of Sympathy  
— A Meta Ethical Approach —**

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In this paper I defend the idea that akrasia can be rational if caused by emotion. Recently Nomi Arpaly (2003) argues that there are cases of so-called 'inverse akrasia', according to which the agent acts rationally and even morally but does so against his better judgment. In defense of this argument Arpaly and others (de Sousa 1987; McIntyre 1990; Jones 2003; Tappolet 2003) take the famous example of Huckleberry Finn. Following Arpaly and others, I take into account whether the inverse-akrasia is possible in Hume's sympathy-based morality by utilizing Mark Twain's character Huckleberry Finn. If the inverse-akrasia is possible in Hume's sympathy-based morality, I argue that virtue is better than rules and principles.

Key words: Akrasia, Inverse-Akrasia, Hume, Sympathy, General Point of View

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