Research Article
Araştırma Makalesi

Emre Arda ERDENK

Assist.Prof.Dr. │ Yrd.Doç.Dr.
Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, Faculty of Literature, Department of Philosophy, Karaman-Turkey.
eerdenk@gmail.com

An Examination of David Hume's Use of "Propositon" and "Deduction" in Hume's Law: An Objection to the Standart Interpretation of the "Is-Ought" Problem

Abstract

Contemporary scholars frequently interpreted Hume's Law as a logical or semantic thesis. Accordingly, no argument can have a conclusion with moral content without having at least one premise containing a moral term. This interpretation depends on the misconception of Hume's use of the terms "proposition" and "deduction". I argue that "proposition" and "deduction" in the relevant context should not be interpreted anachronistically. The correct interpretation of these terms would be that; (i) "proposition" has no special (logical) meaning, and (ii) "deduction" means very broadly all types of multi-step inferences. In this case, Hume's Law offers a wider claim than the logical and semantic thesis suggest. In this paper, I am going to argue for this correct interpretation of Hume's use of the terms "proposition" and "deduction". If we appeal to this correct interpretation, we can see that Hume's thesis has no specifically a logical or semantic point. Hume wants to argue instead that our moral judgments have no underpinning psychological relations of ideas or matters of facts. According to this interpretation, it can be seen that the crucial term of the "is-ought" passage is Hume's "relations".

Keywords

Metaethics, Fact-Value Distinction, Morality, Sentimentalism, Emotivism, Moral Judgments, Normativity.

Introduction

As we are human beings, one of the most distinguishing features of our nature is to evaluate and judge things. It is not to say that we are the true judgers of world, but it is a plain truth that we constantly, insistently, and irresistibly evaluate and judge what we experience, know, or feel. When we see an incorrect calculation, we say that the result is wrong. When we know that people tend to be polite to others, we say that politeness is a virtue. When we come to home at the end of the day, we say that 'I feel comfort'. Nothing in the world, which is not out of our experiential realm or cognitive borders, escapes our evaluations. A big portion of our evaluations consist of our moral concerns. David Hume in his study of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (*Treatise*)[1] provides his analysis and explanation of morality. Against the rationalist idea that morality is derived from reason, Hume provides his counter-arguments especially in *Treatise* 3.1.1. The practicality of morality is justified by the rationalists in terms of divine command, or immutable and eternal laws or principles of morals. They think that morality is essentially practical because we can demonstrate or show certainly that our moral obligations necessarily follow from self-evident or necessary moral principles. The main idea of Hume's rejection of this rationalist conception of morality is spelled out in the following passage:

> In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of **propositions**, *is,* and *is not,* I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought,* or an *ought not.* This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought,* or *ought not,* expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a **deduction** from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention wou'd subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceiv'd by reason (T 3.1.1; Bolds added)

This rejection of the idea that statements of obligation can follow from statements of facts of nature is well acknowledged among the philosophers of today and back then. This passage is referred by several different names[2]. Richard Hare (1954-5: 303) calls it "Hume's Law". The reason why I use Hare's phrase is that the contemporary reception of this passage looks as considering it as one of the most unshakeable principles of moral philosophy. According to the contemporary reception,

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[1]   *Treatise* will be referred as T x.x.x throughout the paper.

[2]   Putnam (2004: 19) calls it "The fact/value Dichotomy". Black (in Hudson (1969: 100)) uses "Hume's Guillotine". Pigden (2010: 13) says "The autonomy of ethics". Thompson (1989: 2) calls it "The Fact-Value Thesis". Sturgeon (1986: 128) refers it as "The is-ought gap". Hudson (1969) calls it "The Is-Ought Question". Snare (1992: 83) uses "Hume's Gap". Schurz (1997: 1) labels it "The Is-Ought Thesis".

it is overwhelmingly interpreted that Hume's Law states either a logical thesis, or a semantic thesis. The logical thesis offers the interpretation that no *ought* can logically follow from an *is*. In other words, there are no *formally valid* arguments of this sort. According to the semantic thesis, the Law suggests that there are no materially valid arguments consisting of non-moral premises and a moral conclusion. The difference between these two theses is that the latter requires an analytic-bridge principle among the non-moral and moral statements, whereas the former claims that there are no syllogistically valid ways to deduce statements with copula *ought* from statements with copula *is*[3].

Since my aim in this paper is not to discuss these two interpretations *per se*, the importance of these interpretations is their common appeal to Hume's use of the words "proposition" and "deduction". Both the logical and the semantic thesis interpretations apprehend these uses of "proposition" and "deduction" literally. In this case, I will claim that this apprehension is anachronistic and cannot provide us an appropriate understanding of Hume's Law as a Humean principle. By means of this, I will provide sufficient explications and interpretations of what Hume means by "proposition" and "deduction" in the relevant passage. Accordingly, I am going to argue that "proposition" has no meaning similar to its conception in logic. Secondly, "deduction" is used as a much broader term: multi-step inferences.

Hume on "Proposition"

In this section, I am going to argue that both in the relevant passage and throughout the *Treatise* Hume does not use the term "proposition" in a technical sense. Although it is a more sophisticated task to posit the early modern notion of proposition –that I am not intended to examine here- there are signs in the *Treatise*, which enable us to infer whether Hume's use of proposition is as stringent as it is understood by the prominent interpretation. In terms of this, I will argue that Hume's use of proposition has no similarity to the current understanding of proposition and also it may most probably have no special or technical meaning which makes its use contextually important in Hume's writings.

I am not going to give any definition of proposition or try to show the specific divergence of the meaning of proposition from sentence. What I want to do instead is to show that such a difference in meaning is clearly not the case in the *Treatise*. Let us look at some statistical search results for the related words. In the *Treatise* Hume uses the word proposition in 51 instances. Surprisingly, the word sentence appears only one time (and two times with an irrelevant meaning) and the word statement is not used at all. First of all, the last result is not interesting because the word statement in its use relevant to our discussion has a fairly new advocate in philosophy[4]. What is more

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[3]   I am discussing this distinction based on Charles Pigden's explanations of the "*Logical Autonomy of Ethics*" and "*Semantic Autonomy of Ethics*". Accordingly, logical thesis and semantic thesis refer to Pigden's distinction. See, Pigden (2010: 13-14).

[4]   See, Strawson (1950).

interesting is that Hume almost always uses the word proposition in any context where it is about the meaning, or the truth-value of a declaration. The only use of the word sentence is about understanding sentences having difficult pronunciations (T 3.3.1). In this case, as it is the case for us, it may also be true for Hume that as David Lewis says, "The conception we associate with the word 'proposition' may be something of a jumble of conflicting *desiderata*" (1986: 54). As far as I understand the use of proposition in those instances, Hume mainly interested in two qualities that a proposition should have: being meaningful and be a truth-bearer[5]. For instance, Hume says:

> The person, who assents, not only conceives the ideas according to proposition, but is necessarily determin'd to conceive them in that particular manner, either immediately or by the interposition of other ideas". (T 1.3.7)

For this, I agree, for instance, with P. J. E. Kail's note that he adds in bracket when he quotes this passage from Hume. Kail understands, as I do, proposition [the Humean use] as "the verbal expression of relations among ideas" (2007: 38). Secondly, David Owen in *Hume's Reason* argues that Hume is not interested in whether ideas have propositional structure or not. According to him, "propositional means 'can be a judgment or belief', not 'has propositional structure'" (1999: 99). This interpretation is quite evident in Hume's following use: "(…) tis far from being true, that in every judgment, which we form, we unite two different ideas; since in that proposition, *God is* (…) we can thus form a proposition, which contains only one idea" (T 1.3.7; n. 1). Therefore, it seems at least fairly straightforward that for Hume proposition has no special meaning as a logical term. Proposition is something which expresses our ideas and their relations. So, his use of proposition is broad and he never distinguishes propositions from sentences. In this case, it is plausible to say that Hume uses proposition both in a technical and a non-technical sense[6].

We can now compare one of his technical uses and the use in the "is-ought" passage and decide whether both uses share any common features or not. At the beginning of T 3.1.1 Hume says, "This is still more conspicuous in a long chain of reasoning, where we must preserve to the end the evidence of the first propositions, and where we often lose sight of all the most receiv'd maxims, either of philosophy or common life." Here, he says that in a chain of reasoning, conclusion must preserve what

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[5]   So, there is at least one thing certain about Hume's notion of proposition. In Rachel Cohon's words, "Hume is not a (translated) Fregean". In other words, "by 'proposition' he does not mean some abstract entity" (2008: 26; ftn. 13). If Hume had been a "translated Fregean", then it could be almost impossible to support it in its historical context because for the view of reality of propositions, as McGrath (2012) puts it, "one looks in vain in the writings of the British empiricists."

[6]   One can argue here that if propositions need to be meaningful and truth-bearer, then why we should conclude that proposition is not a logical term. After all, these two features are enough to make it logical. My answer to this is that for Hume, we will see it in detail shortly, deduction is not syllogistic. Hence, what propositions express are all ideas. And the form or the structure of either propositions, or the argument itself has no importance. As I have shown "God is" is a proposition even if it lacks the subject-predicate form.

is said in the premises. Proposition is used as synonymous to premise. In the "is-ought" passage the emphasis of premises of a chain of reasoning, however, is not on the word "proposition" but instead, on the word "relation". To recall, Hume was saying that propositions express relations either with copulation *ought* or *is*. These relations are the subjects of "deduction". The premises of the chain of reasoning are propositions, of course. Nonetheless, they are not subject to deduction in terms of being proposition but in terms of the relation that they express. Ultimately, here, the word "proposition" is not used as a technical term (i.e. a truth-apt-unit)[7]. The technical term in this context is the word "relation".

As it is not the issue of this paper, I am not going to deal with Hume's account of relations. However, it may be better to mention it briefly. Relations, for Hume, have an important role in his own account of moral psychology. Relations are complex ideas and they constitute the "quality, by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination (…) or for that particular circumstance, in which, even upon the arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think proper to compare them" (T 1.1.5). So, this quality, either being naturally found in the complex ideas (natural relations), or deliberately operated by the mind for comparison (philosophical relations), is what Hume finds crucial for the "is-ought" problem. Hume wants to say that neither of these types of relations contains any quality by which the imagination or the reason can compare ideas having moral meaning. In other words, for Hume there can be no moral relations and this would still be correct whether we have moral propositions (in present sense of "proposition") or not[8].

So I conclude that the word "proposition" cannot help any interpretation, which desire to argue that Hume's Law is a logical thesis. Hume may have used it in a technical sense in quite a few places. However, in the "is-ought" passage, Hume's preference of using the word "proposition" does not indicate that his intention is to use it in the technical sense. As I have shown; the real reason why *ought propositions* cannot be "deduced" from *is propositions* is that there are no relations (qualities of ideas, by which the mind associates them) corresponding to these ought propositions. In other words there can be no moral relations.

Hume on "Deduction"

In this section, it will be seen that the term "deduction" faces a crucial interpretive divergence. My attempt will be to pick the most consistent approaches and try to figure out what is the most adequate interpretation specific to the use of "deduction" in the "is-ought" passage. In this sense, I will not look at in detail the historical encounters of this term in Hume's era. However, it will be seen that the

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7 Cohon continues in the aforementioned note and says that in the "is-ought" passage, "Since he is discussing the words 'is' and 'ought', presumably 'proposition' here is a synonym for 'sentence' and refers to a linguistic entity" (op. cit.).

8 In this paper, I will postpone this discussion because this would require a separate paper. For more discussions of this issue see, Capaldi (1992); Erdenk (2014).

following resources are enough the capture the meaning of "deduction" and specifically the meaning of "(not) deducing *ought propositions* from *is propositions*".

Let's start again with the search results from the *Treatise*. The word deduction appears only four times and its cognates; *deduce* appears only in one instance and *deducing* does not appear in the *Treatise* at all. This result has two alternative interpretations. As many scholars do, we can say that Hume uses the term, *demonstrative reasoning* instead of *deduction* and both of these terms mean the same thing. On the other hand, as quite a few scholars do, we can say that by deduction Hume means *argument in general* and by demonstrative reasoning Hume means *arguments with necessarily true premises and necessarily true conclusion*. Since my purpose is not to delineate Hume's account of demonstrative reason and deduction, my task is in depth to figure out whether Hume used "deduction" in the "is-ought" passage in a stringent way similar to demonstration, or he was just negligent. I will claim that there are signs to conclude that Hume's use of deduction has both of these features and it is more suitable to conclude that he does not strictly mean deduction as we understand this term today.

Let us first compare his four uses of deduction in the *Treatise*. The first two uses appear in the same passage:

> I doubt not but these consequences will at first sight be receiv'd without difficulty, as being evident *deductions* from principles, which we have already establish'd, and which we have often employ'd in our reasonings. This evidence both in the first principles, and in the *deductions*, may seduce us unwarily into the conclusion, and make us imagine it contains nothing extraordinary, nor worthy of our curiosity. (T 1.3.14; Italics added)

There are signs in this passage which show that Hume is using deduction in its stringent sense. First, he says that these consequences are deductions from principles. Secondly, these deductions are evident. Thirdly, they bring out conclusions without the need of careful analysis. Fourthly, because the conclusions are so evident and plain we may think that there is nothing interesting in them. All of these are indications of a deduction in a stringent way and here Hume would not just mean argument in general. However, this does not indicate that these deductions are also demonstrations. A Gentleman lists three reasons why these "evident deductions" are demonstrative arguments. He says:

> (a) Hume uses the word 'evident' which Locke (like other writers of the period) often employs to distinguish those deductions which are demonstrative from those which are not; (b) Hume's cocksure self-confidence that his argument is 'perfectly unanswerable' (T, 1.3.14.19/164), which ampliative deductions generally are not; and (c) that his reasoning can indeed be recast as a deductively valid argument. (2010: 84)[9]

According to Gentleman, ampliative deductions are not stringently deductions because the conclusion is not contained in the premises. In this sense, we have to

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[9] The real name of the author is not indicated but the Lady referred in the title of the article is Annette C. Baier, whose article in the same book is criticized by the Gentleman.

understand that the consequences that Hume is talking about are contained in the premises. Let's suppose they are so and agree that the deduction is a stringent one. The remaining question is: Are these deductions demonstrations too? There is no adequate evidence in the passage which may help us to answer this question. In this sense, we may need additional help here. Gentleman quotes eighteenth-century Johnson's dictionary and defines demonstration in his words as the following: "Thus demonstration is a demonstrative argument or a deduction in the strict sense in which the premises are not only necessary but self-evident" (ibid: 78). Gentleman thinks that demonstration is a special type of deduction. I agree with his understanding. However, in the relevant quote there is no evidence indicating that these deductions are demonstrations. As Gentleman admits, deduction, Hume is referring (The idea of the necessary connection is derived from the impression of heightened expectation), has contingent premises (Every idea is derived from at least one impression; We have the idea of a necessary connection; The only impression that we possibly derive the idea of a necessary connection is the impression of heightened expectation) and thus it is not a demonstration (ibid: 84). So every demonstration is a deduction but not every deduction is a demonstration.

Owen argues that demonstration should not be understood as deduction, if deduction means only argument or inference (1999: 83-112). So he is basically against the view of the Gentleman. Owen argues, "(…) any account of Hume's notion of demonstration that includes the notion of "deductively valid", where that notion is construed formally either in the modern or the syllogistic sense, is equally anachronistic" (ibid: 90). This claim is only about the demonstration and it does not help us much. In terms of the use of deduction, Owen remarks, "He [Hume] is using 'deduction' in its standard eighteenth-century sense of 'argument'" (ibid.)[10]. A similar claim is made by A. C. MacIntyre as well:

> The word 'deduction' and its cognates have no entry in Selby-Bigge's indexes at all, so that its isolated occurrence in this passage at least stands in need of interpretation. The entries under 'deduction' and 'deduce' in the Oxford English Dictionary make it quite clear that in ordinary eighteenth-century use these were likely to be synonyms rather for 'inference' and 'infer' than for 'entailment' and 'entail' (1969: 43)[11].

Owen supports his claim by appealing to Locke's account of reasoning and the logic books of the period. MacIntyre, on the other hand, relies on the eighteenth-century dictionary explanation of deduction. Of course, both ways are acceptable. Even though Gentleman tracks down the use of deduction in a similar way and uses mostly the same

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[10] Owen claims that Hume had followed the tradition from Descartes to Locke that "reject[s] syllogism as a theory of reasoning" (ibid: 3; nt. 5). He also claims that the major logic books (Arnauld and Nicole's, *Logic or the Art of Thinking* (1996) and Gassendi's, *Institutio Logica* (1981)) of the period use ideas (instead of propositions) as the ingredients of logic. Following this, Locke rejects syllogism as the adequate account of reasoning and replaces it with the account, for which inference is the perception of the relation between two ideas by a mediating idea.

[11] For an objection to this, see Atkinson (1969: 51-58).

resources with MacIntyre and Owen, he also refers to some other texts which may support his claim.

For instance, Gentleman refers to Watts' *Logick* (1996) and his understanding of deduction as "the premises, according to the reason of things, do really contain the conclusion that is deduced from them" (Gentleman 2010: 77). Secondly, he mentions Berkeley's (1901: 317) use of *deduce*:

> Fourthly, by a diligent observation of the phenomena within our view, we may discover the general laws of Nature, and from them deduce the other phenomena, I do not say demonstrate; for all deductions of that kind depend on a supposition that the Author of Nature always operates uniformly, and in a constant observance of those rules we take for principles: which we cannot evidently know. (Gentleman 2010: 79)

In Reid's (2002: 31) remarks on the *Treatise,* Gentleman also finds another use of deduce: "Your system appears to me not onely coherent in all parts, but likeways justly deduced from principles commonly received among Philosophers …" (Gentleman 2010: 81). All these evidence show that there was a use of deduction in its technical sense also in Hume's times.

However, none of these evidence show that the use of deduction and demonstration fall into the same category. Secondly, in all of them deduction is meant to occur from general principles. In other words, it seems to me that all of them are about the syllogistic or formal way of reasoning. This shows that Hume may be carefully distinguishing two types of reasoning. On the one hand, he prefers calling demonstrative reasoning, by which he means the relation between ideas. On the other hand, he prefers calling deductive reasoning, by which he means the formal validity of an argument with premises containing the conclusion (or the alternative definitions of deductive validity in the formal sense). Ultimately, it seems to me that both Gentleman and Owen are right but Gentleman is inattentive because he disregards the point about the criticism of formal validity in the period. This makes him conclude that demonstration is a sub-class of deduction. On the other hand, Owen may overestimate the eighteenth-century use of deduction as argument or inference. The evidence that Gentleman is providing clearly indicates that deduction was also meant to be the syllogistic way of reasoning.

There is another alternative to Owen's historical references. Adrian Heathcote (2010: 99) argues that Hume may not have been using Arnould and Nicole's logic, and instead he was applying Ockham's list[12] of negative logical inferences. Heathcote says:

> [H]ume's master argument does not rely on, what could be called, *positive* principles of inference – on what does follow from some set of statements – but rather on *negative* principles of inference, that is what kind of statements *cannot* follow from some set of premises (ibid: 97).

Heathcote's alternative reading suggests that all of Hume's conclusions including the "is-to-ought-change" better be analyzed in terms of Ockham's list. However, the problem with this reading is that he never identifies his way of treating

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[12]   See, Ockham (1990).

Hume's use of *deduction* and *demonstration* as interchangeable. Heathcote may be right to say that Hume's account of demonstration is originated not in the seventeenth-century or eighteenth-century but in the medieval ages. However, the claim that formal validity and certainty of some relations of ideas are different still holds. I think that Heathcote assumed no difference between these two notions.

On this issue about Heathcote's interpretation, Alan Musgrave emphasizes a similar point like the one that I have just made. He says, "It has long been well-known that logical facts are one thing, psychological facts about what we believe another. The Laws of Logic are not, *pace* Boole, Laws of Thought" (Musgrave 2010: 123). Hume has a similar reaction, but he may also think that logicians are going wrong when showing the psychological underpinnings of the logical facts. Hume criticizes the logicians by saying that they define and understand "conception, judgment and reasoning" separately. According to Hume these vulgar logicians define these "acts of understanding" as the following:

> Conception is defin'd to be the simple survey of one or more ideas: Judgment to be the separating or uniting of different ideas: Reasoning to be the separating or uniting of different ideas by the interposition of others, which show the relation they bear to each other (T 1.3.7; ftn. 1).

Hume says that, first, because not all judgments require two separate ideas and, second, the causal reasoning does not require any mediating idea, this division is inaccurate. Hume thinks, "They all resolve themselves into the first, and are nothing but particular ways of conceiving our objects" (ibid.). As Charles Echelbarger interprets this, Hume thinks that the way logicians conceive the "the syllogistic way of reasoning" (the deduction) only covers what Hume labels as "the reasoning" (1987-88: 353) in the above quote. However, Hume thinks that it must cover and get reunited in the name of conception. According to Echelbarger, "The formal nature of valid syllogistic reasoning seems to require something which traditional logicians called universal propositions of the subject-predicate form" (1987-88: 352). Ultimately, "Hume's own view of the nature of mind, together with his rejection of the traditional realistic theories of universals, at once presents obstacles to such an account" (ibid.).

This tension between the formal features of reasoning and the psychological underpinnings is bypassed today by relying only on the formal features of validity. When Gerhard Schurz objects Heathcote's own solution to the Master Argument, he notices this tension: "Modern formal logic, and scientific methodology in general, is exactly the attempt to overcome this subjectivity and unreliability of humans' intuitive reasoning by developing criteria of validity (or reliability). These criteria are based on the logical form of arguments" (2010: 145). Hume seems to be not in an agreement with the modern formal logic as well as the vulgar logicians of the early modern period. Therefore, we must say that for Hume reasoning, if it is going to be equated with syllogism, then it cannot be understood as merely demonstrative. In this sense, when Hume mentions demonstration, he really does not mean deduction. And when he mentions deduction, he means syllogistic and formal arguments.

I conclude that Hume uses deduction for the formal arguments and demonstration for the relations of ideas. In this sense, an argument can be both

deductively and demonstratively valid, but they are not mutually exclusive. As Kail also sees that the deduction-demonstration struggle "is not a blunder on Hume's part but instead a commentator's mistake of trying to assimilate demonstration to deduction" (2007: 40). This point also explains why Hume used "deduction" and its derivatives so infrequently. Hume's project was to introduce the "science of man" and he was more curious of to explain the causal origins of our ideas (the Newtonian project). In this sense, deduction appears to be too abstract and verbal, and this makes him more interested in how our ideas are related to each other. Hence, it is more adequate to conclude that both deduction and demonstration in their stringent sense have application in Hume's philosophy. However, it would fall short of being a point about the "is-ought" passage.

Let us now turn back to the "is-ought" passage. The sentence where *deduction* appears was the following: "(…) how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it" (T 3.1.1). At face value, this use of deduction seems just as the other use that I have already quoted at the beginning of this discussion. However, I will argue that there are some significant differences. First, in the passage from T 1.3.14 Hume was talking about deductions from principles, but in the "is-ought" passage deduction is meant to be between relations rather than principles. In order to claim that both applications of the word "deduction" are just the same, one should convince us that relations and principles are interchangeable. However, this seems to be very difficult. As I have discussed in the previous section, relations are either natural or philosophical. Natural relations are not our deliberate conclusions. In Hume's words they are not "comparisons" (T 1.1.4) and "distinctions of reason" (T 1.1.7). So, when we consider natural relations, it is not reasonable to say that they are principles in the sense that they can be "employed in our reasonings". Secondly, in this passage from T 3.1.1, Hume has already mentioned propositions and the imperceptible change in the ordinary way of reasoning that his rival rationalists attempted. Why did Hume not just say: "How these propositions with the copula *ought* can be a deduction from other propositions with the copula *is*?" This version of Hume's Law reflects a better consistency with the contemporary readings of the "is-ought" passage as a logical thesis. Secondly, if demonstration and deduction are interchangeable, why did Hume not prefer the following version of his question: "How this new relation can be a *demonstration* from others?" After all, it is clear that Hume feels comfortable to use demonstration instead of deduction. Well, we can produce lots of other rhetorical questions as well. For instance, we can ask why Hume never used the word deduction in the exemplifications of algebra and arithmetic, and also in his account of relations of ideas. He would have said mathematical *deduction* instead of mathematical *demonstration* and it should have been just equally fine. However, he never did that. All of these considerations decrease the weight of the interpretations claiming that demonstration and deduction are interchangeable. Clearly, then, Hume differentiates two types of reasoning. In the case of formal reasoning he finds this is-to-ought change imperceptible. Further, and more importantly, he thinks that there cannot be a deduction from *ought* relations to *is* relations.

However, talking about deductions from relations seems as an interpretive deadlock. Again then, we need to be careful. We may quickly react to this claim and say

that a deduction between relations is a bizarre notion. Nonetheless, we may ignore the significance of the term "relation" and read it just, as if it means "proposition" *simpliciter*. After all, relations are expressed in propositions. At this point it is helpful to remind the reader one of the crucial criteria of interpretation. Wade L. Robinson says, "The fundamental principle of interpretation is that we should always strive, in interpreting a text, for consistency for the author" (2010: 68). However, this consistency need not be necessarily achieved within the lines where the problematic phrases occur. It may be achieved from the context of which the argument lies. Robinson adds, "What thus matters in understanding a text is not what an author says in such-and-such a line, but what the author is trying to accomplish in the text as a whole" (ibid: 69). So we cannot just simply assert that proposition and relation function in the same way. This would be an inappropriate solution to the inconsistency.

Here is why. I have already claimed that there is no special care for "proposition" in Hume's philosophy. I have suggested that it is perfectly legitimate to read "proposition" as "sentence". On the contrary, there is a great amount of work on relations in the *Treatise* and Hume has a special account for relations as well. Hence, we cannot just interchange a word with a special meaning with another one, which has no specific importance in the context.

Secondly, at the end of the "is-ought" passage, Hume states his overall claim as, "(…) the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason" (T 3.1.1). This overall claim clearly shows that deduction would not be interchangeable with demonstration. As we know that Hume allows demonstration only for arithmetic and algebra, it cannot be used for proofs concerning relations of objects. However, what Hume claims is that such a "deduction" is not allowed both for contingent matters of facts and necessary relations of ideas. Then, another objection would be raised. One would say that Hume emphasizes only the relations of ideas when he is claiming that such a deduction is inconceivable. Nonetheless, he adds, at the end, the claim that it cannot be found in the relations of objects as well. There can be two possible answers to this objection. First, from the textual evidence, we can say that when Hume exemplifies the premises that rationalists use, he appeals to two types of propositions: one is self-evident (for the rationalists) and eternal truths and one is contingent matters of facts. For the former he mentions "the being of a God" and for the latter he underlines "observations concerning human affairs". This second type, without dispute, contains contingent propositions and they are propositions stating relations of objects. Therefore, in the proposition-talk, Hume was holding the overall claim of the passage. So, when Hume objects to deducing *ought* from *is*, he considers both relations of ideas and matters of facts. Ultimately, the virtue of adequate interpretation forces us to conclude that deduction is not merely demonstration and cannot be merely about formal validity. This claim is perfectly compatible with Owen's claim that "deduction" means "argument" or "inference".

Then, we can turn back to the big question standing in the first place: Why Hume used "deduction" instead of "inference" or "argument"? This is a perfectly legitimate question which causes all of these confusions. Annette C. Baier agrees with Owen and MacIntyre and argues that both for Locke and Hume "deduction" is interchangeable with "inference" with a mere difference that in the case of "inference" the operation is

one step, whereas in the case of "deduction" it is a multi-step operation. (2010: 51) Let's have a quick look at Locke's use of "deduction": "According to reason are propositions whose truth we can discover by examining and tracing ideas that we have from sensation and reflection, and by natural deduction find the proposition to be true or probable" (1975: IV.XVII.23). And here we have Hume making a similar point but instead of using "deduction", he prefers using "inference": "We may draw inferences from the coherence of our perceptions, whether they be true or false; whether they represent nature justly, or be mere illusions of the senses" (T 1.3.5). I found Baier's claim quite consistent in this context. Furthermore, if we run a search for "inference" in the *Treatise*, we may even get tired of counting how many times it appears in the entire text. At this point the last question to answer is: "Why Hume did not use "inference" in the "is-ought" passage?" I think we may find Baier's explanation of deduction in Hume's context prompting:

> My hypothesis is that Hume, like Locke, restricts 'deduction' to the mediate inferences of those who have the ability to verbalize them, and so he uses that term more narrowly than 'inference', but, since not all deductions are 'demonstrations', considerably more widely than logicians do today (Baier 2010: 52).

Baier's criteria of verbalization may not be accepted as plausible[13]. However, there are two crucial points that we have to consider. First, Hume thinks that animals are capable of making inferences. However, they carry these inferences not by reason but by custom alone (EHU 9.5/T 1.3.16)[14]. Secondly, Hume also thinks that ideas are inferences from impressions (T 1.3.7). These types of inferences are silent. By silent, I mean there is no need to deliberate or articulate these reasonings (one-step operations). However, other types of inferences require deliberation and articulation in addition to the mental operation which originates them. In this sense, Baier's distinction between "inference" and "deduction" makes sense and seems perfectly legitimate. Ultimately, we can now see why Hume would not prefer to use "inference" in the "is-ought" passage. "Is-to-ought" changes, for Hume are multi-step operations which require articulation and deliberation. In the context, then the appropriate word to use is "deduction". I think it suffice to say that Hume neither confuses his choosing of words, nor he uses deduction interchangeable with demonstration. When we consider the historical background and the contextual adequacy of the relevant terms, it is plainly accurate to understand "deduction" as the general name for the inferences of the relations of matters of facts and the relations of ideas as a whole.

I believe that I have shown sufficiently enough arguments and interpretations concerning the issue of how to read the "is-ought" passage correctly. I have argued that in the "is-ought" passage Hume specifically attacks to the rationalists. In this way, the

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[13] However, if we remember that in the early modern philosophy starting with Descartes there was an enormous obsession with human's language capacity as the indication of rationality; Baier's interpretation may become a little more plausible. To see Descartes' special treatment of human language capacity; see, Erdenk (2013).

[14] His example is the cause-effect inference. He also claims that children or even vulgar philosophers may fail in such reasonings.

adequate interpretation must take it as not a general reaction to any attempts to deduce ought from is. Secondly, the most crucial term 'deduction' must be read as the generic name of all multi-step inferences. In this case, the contemporary interpretations, which take the use of deduction anachronistically, are implausible.

Conclusion

I have argued that the standard interpretation of Hume's Law depends on an anachronistic misinterpretation of the two crucial terms of the "is-ought" passage. The term "proposition" cannot be interpreted as a logical term and the term "deduction" cannot reflect its contemporary meaning. Proposition and sentence are interchangeable words for Hume. More importantly, "is-ought" problem is not caused by the special character of "propositions" but it stringently depends on Hume's original account of "relations". The contemporary use of "deduction" can be equated with Hume's term "demonstration". However, for Hume "deduction" is more than what "demonstration" means. In this sense, "deduction" is best interpreted as all types of multi-step inferences. Ultimately, the adequate interpretation of these terms makes the standard interpretation inconsistent with what Hume originally wants to argue.

In this paper, I did not propose any genuine interpretation of Hume's Law. Why we cannot deduce ought from is, is not discussed in this paper. Although the interpretation of Hume's Law is a more important task, without this special analysis of the key terms, it cannot be succeeded. By means of this, this paper puts forward the following contributions to the adequate interpretation of Hume's Law. First, Hume's Law is not restricted to the logical and semantic thesis. Secondly, without a careful analysis of Hume's account of relations, we cannot understand the nature of "ought propositions". Thirdly, a substantial look at the *Treatise* 3.1.1 can show us that Hume pays more attention to the psychological underpinnings of morality instead of the formal features of moral propositions. Ultimately, Hume's Law must be evaluated as a psychological thesis instead of a logical or semantic thesis[15].

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[15]   This suggested evaluation is offered in Erdenk (2014).

David Hume'un Hume Yasası'nda "Önerme" ve "Tümdengelim" Terimlerini Kullanımının Bir İncelemesi: "Dir/Dır-Meli/Malı" Probleminin Standart Yorumlamasına Bir İtiraz

Özet

Günümüz felsefecileri Hume Yasası'nı, genellikle, mantıksal ya da anlamsal bir tez olarak yorumlamaktadırlar. Buna göre, herhangi bir geçerli argüman, öncülleri arasında en az bir tane ahlaki içeriğe sahip bir önerme bulundurmuyorsa, sonucunda da ahlaki içeriğe sahip bir önerme bulunduramaz. Bu yorumlama, Hume'un kullandığı "önerme" ve "tümdengelim" kelimelerinin yanlış ele alınmasına dayanmaktadır. "Önerme" ve "tümdengelim" terimlerinin ilgili bağlam çerçevesinde anakronistik bir biçimde ele alınmaması gerektiğini savunacağım. Bu terimlerin doğru yorumlamaları şu şekilde olmalıdır: (1) "önerme" teriminin hiçbir özel (mantıksal) bir anlamı bulunmamaktadır ve (2) "tümdengelim" terimi çok geniş anlamıyla bütün çok-basamaklı çıkarım türlerini kapsamaktadır. Bu açıdan Hume Yasası, mantıksal ve anlamsal tez yorumlamalarının öne sürdüğünden daha geniş bir iddiaya sahiptir. Bu makalede, "önerme" ve "tümdengelim" terimlerinin Hume bağlamında nasıl doğru yorumlanabileceğini tartışacağım. Eğer bu doğru yorumlamaya uyacak olursak, Hume'un tezinin özel olarak ne mantıksal ne de semantik bir iddiası olmadığı görülecektir. Daha ziyade Hume, ahlaki yargılarımızın altında yatan hiçbir psikolojik ideler arası ilişki ya da olgulara dair durumun bulunmadığını tartışmak istemektedir. Bu yorumlamaya göre, "dir/dır-meli/malı" pasajının en can alıcı teriminin "ilişki" kavramı olduğu görülebilecektir.

Hume Yasası, Hume'un, *İnsan Doğası Üzerine Bir İnceleme(İnceleme; T)* adlı eserinin üçüncü kitabının ilk kısmının sonunda bir pasajda yer almaktadır (T 3.1.1). Bu pasaj kelimesi kelimesine okunduğunda, Hume'un dir/dır ile bağlanmış önermelerden meli/malı ile bağlı önermelerin tümdengelimsel olarak çıkarsanamayacı iddiasını öne sürdüğü şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Bu okuma üzerinden de standart yorumlama olarak adlandırdığım Hume Yasası yorumlaması türemektedir. Buna göre, Hume, geçerli argümanlarımızda meli/malı ile bağlı önermelerin sonuçta yer alması halinde en az bir öncülünde bu türden bir önerme olması gerektiğini iddia etmektedir. Fakat bu yorumlamanın dayandığı iki önemli terim olan "önerme" ve "tümdengelim" dikkatli incelendiğinde Hume'un bu terimler ile farklı kavramları kastettiği görülecektir. Bu durumda da standart yorumlama kabul edilebilir bir yorumlama olmaktan çıkacaktır.

İlk olarak "önerme" terimini inceleyecek olursak, bu terimin hem bahsi geçen pasajda hem de *İnceleme*'nin genelinde, bizim bugün anladığımız gibi bir teknik anlam ile kullanılmadığı görülecektir. Teknik bir anlamda kullanılmanın aksine, Hume "önerme" kelimesini her cümle ya da her anlamlı ve doğruluk değeri taşıyabilecek cümle için kullanmaktadır. *İnceleme*'de önerme kelimesini aradığımızda 51 kez kullanıldığını görebiliriz. Fakat cümle kelimesini aradığımızda şaşırtıcı bir şekilde bu kelimenin sadece bir kez kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Bu da göstermektedir ki; Hume, önerme kelimesini cümle anlamında da kullanmaktadır.

İstatistiksel olarak iddiamı destekleyen bu veri aynı zamanda bağlamsal olarak da desteklenmektedir. T 1.3.7'deki pasaj Kail (2007: 38), Cohon (2008: 26) ve Owen'in (1999: 99) de dedikleri gibi Hume için "önerme" kavramının ideler arası ilişkilerin ifadeleri ya da geniş anlamda yargı ve inanç anlamına geldiğini göstermektedir. "Dir/dır-meli/malı" pasajındaki kullanıma baktığımızda soruna dair vurgunun önermelerin önerme yapılarına yönelik olmadığını; önermelerin ifade ettikleri ilişkilerin niteliğine dair olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durumda pasajda önem arz eden terim "önerme" değil "ilişki"dir. Hume'un ilişkiler görüşü bu makalede konu alınmayacaktır. Zira bu bütünüyle ayrı bir çalışma gerektirir. Fakat kısaca şunu söylemeliyim ki ahlaki önermelerin geçerli argümanlarla çıkarsanamayacağı iddiası, Hume'a göre ahlaki önermelere karşılık ilişkiler olmamasından kaynaklanmaktadır.

İkinci olarak, standart yorumlamanın temel aldığı çok daha önemli bir kavram olan "tümdengelim" terimini inceleyeceğim. Standart yorumlamanın aksine, "tümdengelim" teriminin, Hume bağlamında, bugün bizim anladığımız anlamının ötesinde, çok daha geniş bir biçimde çıkarım; -özellikle de, çok basamaklı çıkarımların tümü için kullanıldığını savunacağım. İlk olarak, tekrar, *İnceleme*'deki arama sonuçlarına bakarsak, "tümdengelim" kelimesinin dört kez ve bu kelimenin türevlerinin de sadece bir kez geçtiğini görebiliriz. Bu sonuç iki şekilde yorumlanabilir. Birçok araştırmacının da söylediği gibi, Hume'un tümdengelim kelimesi yerine "kanıta dayalı akıl yürütme" terimini kullandığını ve bu iki terimin aynı anlama geldiğini iddia edebiliriz. Diğer taraftan, görece daha az sayıda araştırmacının söylediği gibi, tümdengelim terimi ile Hume'un "genel olarak argüman" demek istediğini ve "kanıta dayalı akıl yürütme" ile "zorunlu olarak doğru öncüller ve sonuç içeren argüman"ları kastettiğini savunabiliriz. Benim hedefim özellikle "dir/dır-meli/malı" pasajındaki kullanımı anlamak olduğundan; bu yorumlamalardan hangisinin daha doğru olduğundan ziyade hangisinin mevzu bahis pasajdaki kullanımı daha doğru açıkladığını tespit etmek daha fazla önem taşımaktadır.

Bu dört kullanım incelendiğinde, Hume'un "tümdengelim" terimi ile yalnızca kanıta dayalı çıkarımı kastetmediği görülebilir. Kanıta dayalı çıkarım, Hume'a göre, sonucunu öncülleri içerisinde barındırmalıdır. Yani kanıta dayalı çıkarımlarda yeni bir bilgi ortaya konulamaz. Bu anlamıyla kanıta dayalı çıkarım bizim bugün kullandığımız anlamıyla "tümdengelim" kavramıyla benzer anlamlı olarak yorumlanabilir. Ancak, tümdengelimsel çıkarımlar için Hume, "apaçık çıkarımlar" ifadesini kullanırken, örnek olarak kanıta dayalı çıkarımların yanı sıra delile dayalı çıkarımları da örnek olarak göstermektedir. Bu durumda hem ideler arası ilişkiler hem de olgulara dair durumlardan türetilen ideler birer tümdengelim olarak anlaşılmalıdır. Bu durum sözü edilen pasajın son cümlesinde de kendini göstermektedir.

Araştırmacılar, dönemin "tümdengelim" kavramını açıklamak için hem dönemin diğer filozoflarının kullanımlarına hem de dönemin sözlük ve mantık kitaplarındaki ifadelere başvurmaktadır. Ancak, Hume'un bir deneyci olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda dönemin deneycilerinin tümdengelim anlayışı daha belirleyici bir rol oynayacaktır. Deneyciler için tümdengelim tasımsal olmaktan öte psikolojik bir çıkarımdır. İdeler arasında aracı bir ideye gerek duymadan türetilen ideler tümdengelimsel olarak çıkarsanmaktadır. Locke (1975), Gassandi (1981) ve Arnauld ve Nicole (1996) tümdengelimi bu şekilde kullanmışlardır. Tabi ki, bu ipuçları dönemin tümdengelim anlayışını ortaya koymak için yeterli olmasa da, Hume'un kullanımını anlamamız için yeterli kaynağı sağlamaktadır.

İnceleme'deki metinsel ipuçları Hume'un deneyci gelenek ile paralel bir "tümdengelim" kullanımı olduğunu söylemeyi gerektirmektedir.

Tüm bu açıklamalara ek olarak Hume'un bahsi geçen pasajda neden "tümdengelim" terimini kullandığını da açıklamamız gerekmektedir. Hume tümdengelim yerine "çıkarım" ya da "argüman" terimlerini de kullanabilecekken neden ısrarla "tümdengelim" terimini kullanmıştır? Bu hususla ilgili Annette C. Baier (2010) orijinal bir iddia öne sürmektedir. Baier'e göre Hume, aynı Locke gibi, "tümdengelim" terimini sözlü ifade yetisi olan canlıların (örn. insanların) kullanabileceği bir araç olarak görüp, daha genel bir ifade olan "çıkarım" terimini akıl ya da biliş sahibi olan tüm canlıların (örn. hayvanlar) yapabildiği bir operasyon olarak kullanmaktadır (2010: 52). Buna göre, "çıkarım" tek basamaklı (direkt) edinimleri oluştururken, "tümdengelim", çok basamaklı bütün çıkarımları kapsamaktadır. Örnek olarak, görsel duyumlardan edinilen algılar birer "çıkarım" oluştururken, algılar setinden çıkarsanan bütün ideler birer "tümdengelim"dir. Sonuç olarak, bu makalede Hume'un "tümdengelim" terimi ile ideler arası ilişkilere dair çıkarımlarla olgulardan türetilen bütün çıkarımların genel bir adını ifade ettiğini iddia etmekteyim.

Bu makalede Hume Yasası'nın yeni bir yorumlaması yapılmamıştır. "Meli/malı" ifadelerinden "dır/dir" ifadelerinden neden çıkarsanamayacağı hususu bu makalenin ele aldığı bir konu değildir. Bu yorumlama her ne kadar çok daha önemli olsa da, bu makalede ortaya konan terimlerin analizi olmadan Hume Yasası'nın başarılı bir yorumlaması elde edilemez. Bu kapsamda, makale Hume Yasası yorumlamalarına şu katkıları sağlamaktadır. İlk olarak, Hume Yasası mantıksal ya da anlamsal bir tez olarak kısıtlandırılamaz. İkinci olarak, Hume'un ilişkiler görüşünün dikkatli bir incelemesi olmaksızın "meli/malı" önermelerinin doğasını tam olarak anlayamayız. Son olarak, *İnceleme* 3.1.1'e sağlam bir bakış bize, Hume'un ahlaka dair önermelerin psikolojik alt yapısına, onların biçimsel yapılarından daha fazla önem vermiş olduğunu gösterecektir. Bu durumda, Hume Yasası mantıksal ya da anlamsal bir tez olmaktan öte psikolojik bir tez olarak ele alınmalıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Metaetik, Olgu-Değer Ayrımı, Ahlak, Duygusalcılık, Duyguculuk, Ahlak Yargıları, Normatiflik.

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