

Title: The Passions of David Hume

Abstract: Hume famously says that ‘reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions’ (*Treatise* 2.3.3.4) in part because passions are both the source of action and, lacking any ‘representative quality’ do not admit of truth or falsity, the province of reason (T 2.3.3.5). Elsewhere, however, he allows that mere ideas can sometimes motivate (T 1.3.10.3) and he says the passions are ‘blind’ and in need of the ‘direction’ of reason (T 3.2.2.14). I argue that understanding Hume’s views on motivation requires a prior investigation of the nature of passions. They should be understood not as mental objects – as many interpreters understand all Humean perceptions – but rather as mental “actions” that colour our experience of objects.