



Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

2013

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Dadlez, E. M. and Bicknell, Jeanette

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### Suggested citation:

Dadlez, E. M. and Bicknell, Jeanette (2013) Not moderately moral: Why Hume is not a 'moderate moralist'. *Philosophy and Literature*, 37 (2). p. 330. ISSN 0190-0013 Available at <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/1428/>

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E. M. DADLEZ AND JEANETTE BICKNELL

NOT MODERATELY MORAL:  
WHY HUME IS NOT A “MODERATE MORALIST”

**Abstract.** In the debates over the moral content of artworks, the group whose views are known variously as “ethicism,” “moralism,” or “moderate moralism” has claimed Hume as one of its own, and this supposed kinship has gone largely uncontested. We argue, contra Gaut and others, that the “merited response argument” is not to be found in Hume, and that he was not a (moderate) moralist in the current sense. Hume did indeed hold that our moral responses contribute to aesthetic assessment, but this does not amount to the claim that moral flaws in works of art are also aesthetic flaws.

IF PHILOSOPHERS HELD POPULARITY contests, David Hume would be a perennial winner. Witty, a bon vivant, and champion of reason over bigotry and superstition, it is not surprising that many contemporary thinkers want to recruit him as an ally or claim his views as precursors to their own. In the debate over the moral content of artworks and its possible relevance for artistic and aesthetic value, the group whose views are known variously as “ethicism,” “moralism,” or “moderate moralism” has claimed Hume as one of its own.<sup>1</sup>

Very briefly, “moderate moralism” is the view that sometimes the moral content of artworks must be taken into account when assessing artistic or aesthetic value. The moralists’ presumed kinship with Hume has gone largely uncontested, even by those defending other positions in the debate.<sup>2</sup> But how much affinity is there between these contemporary views and those expressed by Hume? Despite the careful reasoning of those espousing the moderate moralist position, and for all its vaunted moderation, these views have not been able completely

to shake, at least in some quarters, association with well-intentioned censorship or even a distinctly un-Humean prissiness in regard to others' artistic tastes. In this paper, we will not enter the debate over the moral import of artworks, largely because we subscribe to opposing views. One of us is in many respects a moderate moralist, whereas one of us is not.<sup>3</sup> But that puts us in a particularly good position to launch an objective assessment. And we agree that Hume was not a moderate moralist in the full sense of that designation, if it is taken to apply to the full range of views variously and recently espoused by Berys Gaut, Noël Carroll, and Matthew Kieran.

Why is the moderate moralist so often tempted to claim an affiliation with Hume? Principally because of a key passage in Hume's essay "Of the Standard of Taste," in which he informs the reader that

where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I never can relish the composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous in the characters drawn by several of the ancient poets... diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances.... We are not interested in the fortunes and sentiments of such rough heroes: We are displeas'd to find the limits of vice and virtue so much confounded: And whatever indulgence we may give to the writer on account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable.... A very violent effort is requisite to change our judgment of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind from long custom has been familiarized. And where a man is confident of the rectitude of that moral standard, by which he judges, he is justly jealous of it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his heart for a moment, in complaisance to any writer whatsoever. (ST, pp. 246–47)

Moral flaws are clearly linked to aesthetic ones in this passage. Art is apparently disfigured by endorsing immoral positions, though this disfigurement appears to consist in the inability of readers to enter into the attitude of approbation that the work invites them to adopt by issuing the endorsement that it does. Twice, Hume speaks of our inability to enter into the *sentiments* the work is intended to elicit. We will argue, then, that Hume's point is more psychological than ethical.

It offers clarification not about what makes works ethical but about what makes works (ethically and otherwise) accessible. This latter point is directly relevant to their aesthetic success or failure. Inaccessibility—or a failure to engage the appreciator emotionally and imaginatively—is the aesthetic flaw for Hume, rather than immorality. The problem is a general failure of uptake for which the work rather than the appreciator is responsible. We will concede that Hume believed our moral (for Hume, sentimental) responses to a work contribute to its aesthetic assessment, and that to this extent he agrees with moderate moralists. But we will maintain at the same time that this does not amount to Hume's holding that ethical flaws (such as a work's endorsement of immoral attitudes) are aesthetic flaws.

Let us consider in greater depth what a position like moderate moralism involves. Moralists situate themselves somewhere between the extremes of aestheticism or autonomism on the one hand, and immoralism on the other. The former is the view that it is never appropriate to bring moral considerations to bear when assessing art. Oscar Wilde, Clive Bell, and Monroe Beardsley have held forth on variations of this theme. Immoralism, on the other hand, is the view that an artwork's immoral content might make it a better work of art.<sup>4</sup> According to a recent survey of views on morality and artistic value, moralists hold that, "where the moral character of a work is relevant to its artistic value, wherever there is a moral flaw the work is of lesser value as art and wherever it is morally virtuous the work's value as art is enhanced."<sup>5</sup> Moralists have a number of strategies to support their views. They point to moral criticism both throughout the history of art evaluation and in everyday nonspecialist discourse about art. They sometimes invoke a cognitive account of artistic value, whereby art can be valued for the way it contributes to understanding, including moral understanding.

Contemporary moralists also appeal to the "merited response argument." It goes like this: Works of art prescribe certain responses on the part of suitably informed audiences. Comedies prescribe laughter; ghost stories prescribe fear. Yet these prescribed responses are not always merited. The comedy may not be funny; the ghost story may not be frightening. The horror film may not, in fact, horrify. In cases where the prescribed response concerns moral activity, whether the response is merited or not will also depend upon moral considerations. So, of course, one way in which a response of approval might not be merited would involve whether an audience considers it ethically inappropriate to imagine the event or action depicted in the work approvingly. It is

simply wrong, for example, to have an erotic response to sexual torture. Hence the sadism manifested in the writings of de Sade constitutes an ethical and thereby an aesthetic failing.<sup>6</sup> We will return later to the merited response argument, as it is sometimes said to be found in Hume.

Hume's writings on art and morality are limited to the few paragraphs at the end of his essay "Of the Standard of Taste," the relevant parts of which were cited at the outset of this paper. Before turning to Hume's brief remarks, however, we need to put them in the context of the essay as a whole. Hume considers the problem that, on the one hand, taste is held to be individual and subjective. On the other hand, there are canons of art, and we have little trouble recognizing those with inferior taste. When someone esteems Ogilby over Milton or Bunyan over Addison (not to say Dan Brown over Dostoevsky or Kenny G over John Coltrane), "we pronounce, without scruple, the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous," as Hume puts it. His "solution" to this dilemma is that the standard of taste is to be found in the joint verdict of ideal critics or true judges. As he so often does elsewhere in his philosophy, Hume provides a social or psychological answer to what has been taken to be a metaphysical problem. The larger part of Hume's essay describes and discusses the qualities of ideal critics. These rare individuals have "strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice" (ST, p. 241). In the last few paragraphs of the essay, Hume offers two reasons why ideal critics might disagree. The first is that they may have "blameless differences in taste." One likes still-life paintings, and another prefers landscapes. One likes string quartets, and another prefers large-scale symphonic works (ST, p. 244).

The second reason why true judges might disagree is at the heart of the moderate moralist reading of Hume. It is worth working through slowly. Even true judges might fail to appreciate a work from an earlier age or a different culture if it is premised on "ideas of morality and decency" that differ significantly from their own (ST, p. 246). Judges ought to make allowances for the continual revolution of manners and customs, though these can often hamper genuine appreciation. To be "shocked" by "innocent peculiarities of manners" is to stand convicted of "false delicacy" (ST, pp. 245–46). But genuine and deep moral differences between ideal critics and writers or artists are much more problematic. These differences are associated in some way with a disfigurement or deformity in the work, rather than a defect in critical apprehension.

So it seems, at least on the face of it, that a moral defect in an artwork is also an artistic defect. But notice that Hume does not make the general claim that *any* moral defect is an artistic defect, or even that any “aesthetically relevant” moral defect is also an artistic defect, a modified and more defensible position taken up by some moderate moralists. He speaks, rather, of “vicious manners,” such as those that manifest a “want of humanity and of decency,” and that are depicted without disapprobation in the ancient poets, up to and including Homer. Indeed, such blameworthy behavior is sometimes even depicted as laudable and heroic and magnificent—written of as if it were admirable rather than despicable. Hume reflects on the kind of emotional and imaginative resistance that we can experience in response to works such as these. We cannot feel approval and admiration toward acts we find contemptible. We cannot “enter into such sentiments” or identify with characters whose values differ so radically from our own. Thus our overall pleasure in the work is correspondingly diminished.

Here, we take Hume to be making two claims. Most of what Hume can be taken to maintain in this passage involves a psychological point about the limitations of critics, even ideal critics. The growing literature on the so-called puzzle of imaginative resistance<sup>7</sup> is rooted in this passage. Even ideal critics, with their considerable sensitivity and experience, who are able in most cases to set prejudices aside, cannot set aside certain deeply held moral convictions and appreciate art that violates them in serious ways. This “limitation” that ideal critics are said to suffer might be a natural cognitive restriction or might simply be a pragmatic limitation. In either case, a failure of uptake inhibits full appreciation of the work. It prevents the audience, in other words, from having the very reaction that the work (or, more properly, its author) endeavors to arouse. That suggests a failure in the work. It seems clear that Hume does not regard this particular inhibition as a failure, because of appreciator ineptitude, narrow-mindedness, or insularity. There is a mistake of sorts, certainly, but it is to be found in the work’s failure to engage us.

Does this add up to something like the merited response argument? Not to the extent that some moderate moralists claim, for the following reasons. For one thing, Hume does not seem to share the *general* account of artworks prescribing certain responses in audiences as a whole; a work’s artistic value hangs on the response of ideal critics or true judges. We take this to be one of the points of the story of the wine tasters, derived from *Don Quixote*: the true judges have powers of discernment and judgment that are not necessarily shared by the population at large, or not shared in their entirety, or not possessed to

the same degree. What if we modify the merited response argument to take into account the response of Humean true judges? This move will get us no farther. Hume's main point is not that immoral works prescribe responses that they do not merit. Rather, it is that we cannot even begin to respond to such works because we cannot engage with them. This is, first, a point about our moral psychology, not the actual moral merit of the works. It is only about how artworks succeed or fail to the extent that they succeed or fail in engaging us. That is, it does not seem principally to be about how artworks can fail to get it right, morally speaking, and how that can make them bad artworks. It seems to be about how artworks are better if they engage us than if they do not.

Here is another way of looking at the issue that takes Hume's psychological approach more to heart. Works do not *prescribe* fear or amusement or moral approval to readers or audiences. Rather, within their fictional worlds, this or that situation or action is dangerous or funny or morally praiseworthy. And (here is where imaginative resistance comes in) it may be the case that we cannot imagine the danger of some situation that we have always regarded as safe, or the humor of some state of affairs we have always regarded as pathetic, or the moral praiseworthiness of an action we have always regarded as cruel. Fictions can change our minds about what counts as dangerous or funny or morally laudable, of course. But when they do not, and we run into a brick wall, imaginatively speaking, it appears to be because we cannot imagine what we cannot conceive.

Put another way, we may have extreme difficulty imagining someone's conduct as dashing or romantic when the text in question describes that conduct as having properties we believe are sufficient for wholesale repulsiveness. We may find the leap difficult even when the narrative endorses that behavior by describing it as romantic, while at the same time offering particulars entirely at odds with any such description. It may likewise prove virtually impossible to imagine a situation fearfully when a narrative describes that situation as instantiating properties that one believes are sufficient for perfect safety. What we can imagine depends to some extent on our epistemic commitments. Imaginative resistance or imaginative disengagement may well be indicators of an inadequate fictional rationale for sharing a work's endorsement.<sup>8</sup> As Hume puts it, sometimes we "cannot enter into such sentiments" (ST, p. 246). And that may just be a story about how our existing conceptual and epistemic commitments can underwrite our emotional and imaginative responses.

To say that we sometimes experience imaginative incapacity rather than mere resistance is not to claim that this is always or even often

the case. We are all occasionally masters at not attending to things that might disturb us and spoil our enjoyment. We frequently ignore portions of a storyline, or provide imaginative amendments and excuses and justifications, that permit us to continue our imaginative engagement unhampered by sticky or distracting moral questions. But to say this still allows that there are occasions when we will simply not be able to imagine that an act depicted in a fiction is morally laudable, even when an omniscient narrator tells us so in no uncertain terms. We concede, in fact, that one sometimes has to turn over rocks to find absolutely unmistakable examples of imaginative disruption in moral contexts.

Andrew Macdonald's sequel to *The Turner Diaries*, called *Hunter*, scuttles out from under just such a rock, however. It gives us a glimpse not only of morally repulsive content but of a morally repulsive perspective on that content, and an endorsement of that perspective as true. This work tells us that its hero "Oscar Yeager... finds that... he is *compelled* to fight the evil which afflicts America in the 1990s; his conscience will not let him ignore it."<sup>9</sup> In the world of *Hunter*, Yeager is a courageous man of conscience who battles evil. He does so by gunning down unarmed interracial couples in supermarket parking lots after dark. The work is replete with endorsements of this conduct—with characterizations of it as right and laudable and brave. But clearly, the conduct so endorsed instantiates characteristics that most regard as deplorable, not laudable. Our conception of what constitutes a laudable act is at odds with the presentation of Yeager's killing of unarmed civilians because of their race as praiseworthy and courageous. And we are certainly inclined to think that we are justified in calling a work like *Hunter* immoral on such grounds.

The point is that we cannot approve of or admire such rough heroes, even though some white supremacists can, just as Hume says we cannot approve of Homer's less offensively rough heroes, even though Homer's contemporaries could. "Whatever indulgence we may give to the writer on account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable" (ST, p. 246). This is probably an occasional psychological fact about our reactions to fiction. But having said that, it still seems clear that there is a way in which such facts about a collision between our ethical conceptions and those endorsed in a work of fiction can affect the assessment of a work. In such cases, a work does not produce the emotional responses that it is intended by its creator to elicit, as Hume makes very clear in the passage we have cited. Now, that does not have to mean that our assessment of whether the work has

it “right,” morally speaking, factors directly into aesthetic assessment. But it does tell us when a work cannot fully engage the sentiments and imagination of Hume’s audience of ideal critics. Recollect that engaging the sentiments and imagination is a crucial function of literature, the breakdown of which would clearly signal an aesthetic flaw.

Obviously, Hume does not expect all people in a given era to have the same imaginative and moral/emotional reaction to the same work. But sociopaths who imaginatively embrace the moral endorsements to be found in *Hunter*, for instance, wouldn’t begin to meet Hume’s requirements for the ideal critic. Hume says that a genuinely refined taste is that which, alike, “enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts”<sup>10</sup> (DTP, p. 6). He also believes that delicacy of taste is favorable to love and friendship, for it confers the ability, sometimes inaccessible to sense alone, to distinguish among characters and to mark “those insensible differences and gradations which make one man preferable to another” (DTP, p. 7). We use the same faculties to understand and appreciate art that we use in life, and Hume clearly takes this to include our moral lives.

Hume’s ideal critics would, given the portability of their capacity for insight and their ability to make fine and astute discriminations, be *more* likely than an average person (and certainly more likely than a white supremacist) to imaginatively disengage from works that get the ethical part of the equation profoundly wrong. Now, if the ideal critic’s response is to be confounded by the work and unable to appreciate it, that means, surely, that the work has failed—failed to elicit the response its creator aspired to produce and therefore failed aesthetically, as Carroll has suggested.<sup>11</sup> But to say this is not necessarily to concede that Hume would support a prescriptivist story about why that is the case.

Hume’s account has not yet been shown to be a full-blown moderate moralism of the prescriptivist flavor. Consider, for instance, that Gaut<sup>12</sup> interprets Hume’s normative claim—the “nor is it proper that I should” claim—as follows: “That ought to be the core claim: the responses must be *merited*, not simply the ones we actually have.”<sup>13</sup> However, it is not our moral assessment of the work, nor is it our having the right reasons for responding as we do, that contributes directly to the aesthetic assessment in Hume. What figures negatively in aesthetic evaluation is our inability to enter imaginatively into the perspective the work invites us to adopt. Moderate moralists will hasten to point out that this is the perspective the work *prescribes*. That is correct as far as it goes, and to that extent Hume has something in common with the moderate moralist. The difference is that Hume does not bring consideration of whether that prescription

is merited (whether the author gets it right, morally speaking) to bear in any direct way on the judgment of whether the work is good or not. All that is brought to bear on that judgment is the question of whether the work successfully engages its audience.

Let us return briefly to the parallel between a work's failure to elicit fear and a work's failure to elicit approval. For a prescribed fear (on behalf of the heroine of a novel, say) to be merited, the depicted circumstances would have to be dangerous. They would not just have to be believed by the reader to be dangerous (and we can imagine all kinds of mismatches between the belief and the actuality, as when an individual believes some disorder to be infectious when it is not). The heroine's depicted situation would have to consist of things that would be genuine threats if they were real. Thus, merited response in the context of prescribed fear operates in terms of a kind of conceptually motivated fact check. Threat to life and limb? Check. Threat to emotional well-being? Check. Perils galore? Check. That is, everything turns on whether the things depicted as being dangers are actually dangerous. The author has committed an egregious offense against art if he gets what can count as dangerous wrong (e.g., fluffy bunnies—except in Monty Python movies).

Notice that this is a question about concepts and categories and the appropriateness of property ascription. It is a question about a kind of technical mistake that authors can make. That is, if an author has described a situation sufficient in every respect for perfect safety but nonetheless endorses the view of it as dangerous (by reporting the heroine's trepidation upon seeing bunnies, in the complete absence of any plot elements involving such things as plague-carrying rabbits), then that author has erred. And the question of whether this particular kind of error has occurred is radically distinct from a question concerning the kind of sentimental engagement Hume is talking about. A technical mistake about what kinds of situations can count as dangerous or what kinds of actions can count as right (for a person up to speed on different varieties of peril, great and small, or for a virtuous person) will undoubtedly factor into a causal explanation of someone's imaginative disengagement from a work, but that doesn't make that imaginative disengagement the *same* as the thing that caused it.

A relation of identity is quite distinct from that which obtains between cause and effect. It is obvious that Hume is principally interested in the question of our imaginative and emotional engagement when it comes to considering one kind of aesthetic flaw a work can have. This is what ultimately distinguishes him from the kind of moderate moralist we

have been discussing. For Hume an ethical flaw, such as the endorsement of a racist worldview, wouldn't be the same as an aesthetic one, such as a consequent failure on the part of an ideal judge to engage with the work. For a moderate moralist the ethical flaw *is* an aesthetic flaw, because it is a technical mistake about what can count as moral.

Let us return to the key passage in Hume for a little further evidence. His first, psychological, claim about the way that most people, or at least ideal critics, will respond to artworks that have gross moral defects may be true or false. To know for sure we would have to test it. His second claim in the passage is normative: It would not be "proper" for ideal critics to set aside their own moral convictions in order to appreciate works that embody an alien moral perspective. Even if ideal critics *could* set aside prejudice in this case, they should refrain from doing so. This is a point about how to engage with art. Again, it does not propose a basis for artistic evaluation. It would seem that the "merited response argument" in its most general form is not to be found in Hume. We will offer some additional reasons for assuming that Hume does not subscribe to the prescriptivist story in its entirety.

One consideration involves several references that Hume makes to a work's inability to engage audiences in successive eras, as manners and customs and moral standards undergo changes. Hume draws our attention to precisely such works in the passage that has been under scrutiny, when he speaks of our inability to engage with Homer's rough heroes. Elsewhere in the same essay, he reflects on the way in which works of literature *can* sometimes stand the test of time, engaging generation after generation in a way that neither philosophy nor science can hope to emulate: "Just expressions of passion and nature are sure, after a little time, to gain public applause, which they maintain for ever. ARISTOTLE, and PLATO, and EPICURUS, and DESCARTES, may successively yield to each other: But TERENCE and VIRGIL maintain an universal, undisputed empire over the minds of men. The abstract philosophy of CICERO has lost its credit: The vehemence of his oratory is still the object of our admiration" (ST, p. 242).

Consider the kind of literary work that cannot even survive its own decade, or that survives that decade only to give rise to general imaginative and sentimental *disengagement*. This tells us exactly when a work has *not* stood the test of time. And a work's capacity to stand the test of time is clearly one way to identify that work's aesthetic superiority, according to Hume. Again, this is more a matter of imaginative and emotional accessibility than it is of specific features that will make the work accessible.

Hume wrote in a time when *no one seriously doubted* that moral considerations were relevant for understanding and assessing art. Aestheticism and autonomism would not be formulated as positions about art for over one hundred years. Hence Hume does not have to craft his position within the context of competing and contrasting views about the role of morality in art criticism. (And even a cursory reading of Hume alerts one to his practice of setting up and expounding the details of contrasting views, where they are to be found.) The situation for contemporary thinkers is different: a variety of well-argued positions are on offer, some of which Hume might never have dreamt. There is also a drive for generality and precision about these questions that seems alien to early modern thinkers. The fact that Hume thought that moral considerations were relevant in understanding and assessing art is not enough to make him a moralist in the contemporary sense. If it were, then anyone from Plotinus through Schiller could be claimed as a precursor of today's moderate moralism.

Hints indicate that Hume's considered views about art and morality may have been more accommodating than the "moralist" reading of him suggests. For one thing, he does not mention any distinctively moral qualifications for true judges. When Hume discusses the overlap between artistic and moral judgment, as in the essay "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion," the causality seems to run in the opposite direction. Delicate passions for art and beauty help us to assess situations and character, but Hume does not emphasize the reverse—that moral acumen would help us assess art. If Hume was convinced that a work's moral value was just one of those properties (like rhetorical brilliance) which, taken together, constituted its artistic value, it seems reasonable to assume that he would have stressed the capacity to discern that particular property in his description of true judges.

Furthermore, in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume evinces some impatience with the "perpetual cant of the Stoics and Cynics concerning virtue."<sup>14</sup> Then there is his somewhat gratuitous putdown of John Bunyan, the Christian allegorist. And remember that, in "Of the Standard of Taste," his first remarks about morality and art are to warn readers *against* "false delicacy" and to caution us not to confuse differences in customs and manners with real substantive moral disagreements. Hume never makes a general argument about any and all moral flaws that might be found in an artwork. Nor does he limit himself, as contemporary moralists do, to discussing artistically or aesthetically "relevant" flaws. Indeed, it should be emphasized that Hume's remarks are

purely *negative*. Very tellingly, he says nothing about the superiority of artworks that convey a positive moral message and how the true judge might respond to them. He does not argue, as do at least a few contemporary moralists, that some morally worthy artworks have enhanced artistic or aesthetic value, in virtue of their being morally worthy. We look to his work in vain for praise of moral uplift, even though such praise was common in the work of close contemporaries. For instance, Kames, in his *Elements of Criticism*, is transfixed by the (literally, according to him) providential capacity of literature to “improve us in virtue,” and to regulate our conduct in a manner that is happily both painless and entertaining.<sup>15</sup> We see precious little of that in Hume.

We want to say, then, that the kind of imaginative resistance or incapacity with which Hume believes we are sometimes afflicted—on account of fictions which endorse perspectives that confound our moral intuitions—can (though it will not always) signal a failure to stand the test of time or a failure to produce a response the author aspired to evoke. These are clear aesthetic failures. So we believe Hume held that our moral responses do contribute to aesthetic assessment. But we do not think this amounts to claiming that moral flaws in works of art are aesthetic flaws.

Debates over the moral qualities of artworks, and about what relevance this has for artistic or aesthetic value, are likely to continue for some time. There is an understandable tendency to interpret thinkers of the past in light of our own concerns, preoccupations, and conceptual frameworks. But we must be careful that, in our attempts to make philosophers of the past current and pertinent, we do not at the same time foist upon them views not congruent with their work.

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA  
TORONTO, CANADA

1. See for example: Noël Carroll, “Moderate Moralism,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 36, no. 3 (1996): 223–38; Berys Gaut, “Art and Ethics,” in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 341–52. No doubt there are interesting and subtle differences between these positions and others that we have not cited. As far as possible, we will limit ourselves to what all such positions share and use the term “moralism” or “moderate moralism” to denote them.

2. For example, Theodore Gracyk, in his online commentary on Hume's Essay, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), pp. 226-49 (hereafter abbreviated ST). See Gracyk: <http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/phil%20of%20art/hume%20annotations.htm>. See also Daniel Jacobson, "In Praise of Immoral Art," *Philosophical Topics* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 155-99.
3. Dadlez acknowledges, under pressure, to being (at least for the moment) a moderate moralist.
4. See Jacobson, "In Praise of Immoral Art."
5. Matthew Kieran, "Art, Morality and Ethics," *Philosophy Compass* 1/2 (2006): 134. His main sources here are Berys Gaut, "The Ethical Criticism of Art," in *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.182-203, and Berys Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), but the view can be fairly said to be more general.
6. We draw here on Gaut, "Art and Ethics," and Kieran, "Art, Morality and Ethics."
7. See first T. S. Gendler, "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance," *The Journal of Philosophy* 97, no. 2 (2007): 55-81; and subsequently (among others) Peter Kung, "Imagining as a Guide to Possibility," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 81, no. 3 (2010): 620-63; Amy Mullin, "Moral Defect, Aesthetic Defects, and the Imagination," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 62, no. 3 (2004): 249-61; Kathleen Stock, "Resisting Imaginative Resistance," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 55, no. 221 (2005): 607-24; Kendall Walton, "On the (So-Called) Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance," in *The Architecture of the Imagination*, ed. Shaun Nichols (Oxford University Press, 2006).
8. See, for instance, E. M. Dadlez, "Knowing Better: The Epistemic Underpinnings of Moral Criticism of Fiction," *Southwest Philosophy Review* 21, no. 1 (2005): 35-44.
9. Andrew Macdonald, *Hunter*, 2nd ed. (Hillsboro: National Vanguard Books, 1998), back cover.
10. David Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion," in *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, pp. 3-8 (hereafter abbreviated DTP).
11. Noël Carroll, "Moderate Moralism," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 36 (1996): 234. See also the discussion in E. M. Dadlez, "The Vicious Habits of Entirely Fictive People: Hume on the Moral Evaluation of Art," *Philosophy and Literature* 26 (2002): 38-51.
12. Allan Hazlitt, "How to Defend Response Moralism," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49 (July 2009): 241-55, suggests a similar reading.
13. Gaut, "Art and Ethics," p. 350.
14. David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, section iv, "Of Qualities Useful to Ourselves," part one.
15. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, ed. Peter Jones, vol. 1, 6th ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), p. 77.