

Question 1.

David Hume is a known exponent of the belief that reason will never be a motive to our will and that mere reasoning cannot oppose our passions to the direction of the will. In fact, he argues that reason is, and will always be, "the servant of the Passions". Hume supports that passions do not refer to other entities, they are not mental representations of them but they are original and independent existences. Undeniably, the philosopher takes our passions to be central to our lives. Our choices and our actions derive from our passions. Hume believes in the significance of our passions in such an extent that he articulated that when we try to prevent ourselves from making a harmful or an immoral decision, the contrary impulse that makes us resist does not come from reason, but from a passion so "calm" that we confuse it with reason!

Something I find really interesting about his theory is the fact that he claims that since reason can never make us be impelled or deterred from an action, and therefore it can never create or obstruct an action, it is completely pointless to try to characterize an action as rational or irrational- it can only be laudable or blamable. Moreover, he rejects moral rationalists' thesis that what is morally good is in accord with reason and what is morally bad is unreasonable. For Hume, virtue is not the same as reasonableness and vice is not opposed to reason.

We can clearly see that Hume's opinions are really transcendental in a world where everyone seems to take reason as a vital clue of our existence- perhaps the most significant one. Another fact that is worth-mentioning is that, according to the philosopher, not all of our actions are equally blamable or laudable. We have to impute the badness of a fleeting action to an enduring agent. In simple terms, when a harmful or a forbidden action is made, we can't hold the agent moral responsible in any case, because not every blamable actions are equally vicious. Those made by accident, for instance, are not. It's only when, and because, that action is made by an enduring passion or a character trait of the agent that we have to take that action into consideration.

However, as interesting as I find Hume's approach as regards with the relation between reason and passion, I do believe in the power of the mind. On my behalf, what people really need to do, in order to have a well-lived life, is to find a way in which both rational activity and sentiments can fit together as a whole. Equilibrium. Schiller, a supporter of this side, argued about that "the development of a man's capacity for passion is the most urgent need of our age" but he claimed that we have to find a way to develop that kind of sentimental capacities without neglecting humans' rational activity- and I couldn't agree more on that. We have to be able to feel and to think at the same time, without underestimating the power of either one of the above. Aristotle once said that we have to be able to understand, on each occasion, which course of action is best supported by our reason and that ethical virtues, that make us generate an action, is a combination of rational, emotional and social skills.

We shouldn't abandon neither the passion nor the reason. Which means that we shouldn't reach to extremities. Historically speaking, when reason is the only one in charge to rule

humans' activities and when passions do not take any part of it, the results can be destructive. How many wars could have been avoided if people were capable of love? How many wars could have been stopped if people had access to their emotions and they weren't neglecting the power of the heart? Brutality and violence could have been replaced by compassion and humanity and perhaps, the barbaric excesses would have been prevented. History may have been developed differently, without so many tragic periods.

But we cannot undermine the power of the mind either. Mental development is the key to the general, social and- why not?- global development. There is nothing more valuable than the power and the ability to be smart and to think properly. It's been proved that with the development of the rational activity, people have managed to do a lot. For example, science wouldn't have been developed to such an extent that people can now find cures to illnesses that were thought that they could never be fixed. In addition, it's understandable that if people lose control of their mind and are completely delivered up to the power of their sentiments, they might make harmful actions. For instance, if someone is based merely on his hatred for someone else, he could be driven into making morally bad decisions. Or, on the other hand, for the sake of love, he might hurt someone else in order to protect someone he cares about. In that case rational activity comes in, and it enables people to control their passions and prevent them from that kind of extremities.

To sum up, it's only when people find a way in which reason and passion can cooperate and complete each other that they reach their highest potentials. Then we will realize that a man's capacity is not limited- he can do extraordinary things that go beyond what he thinks he could possibly do. But the only way to achieve that without any bad consequence, is to recognize that both these powers- reason and passions- matter equally.