

Hume on the Value of Insatiable Curiosity

by

Hatice Zeynep Coşkun

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Hume on the Value of Insatiable Curiosity

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Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

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Hatice Zeynep Coşkunkan

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examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. İlhan İnan (Advisor)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erhan Demircioğlu

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sun Demirli

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ABSTRACT

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Epistemic subjects become curious about what they do not know. However, what they become curious about is sometimes not only unknown but also *unknowable* to them due to their limited mental faculties and cognitive abilities. In this thesis, two kinds of curiosity are distinguished. *Satiable curiosity* is about a knowable object, and it is epistemically possible to satisfy it by the knowledge of that object. On the other hand, *insatiable curiosity* is about an unknowable object, and therefore, it is epistemically impossible to satisfy it. This thesis, which is partly theoretical and partly historical, raises the question of whether insatiable curiosity is valuable and aims to show that we can extract an affirmative answer to this question from David Hume's account of curiosity. In this thesis, I offer a novel interpretation of the section titled "Of curiosity, or the love of truth" in Book II of *A Treatise of Human Nature*. I argue that Hume's explication of the relationship between curiosity and pleasure reflects his view on the value of curiosity. It is generally held that Hume arrives at skeptical conclusions with respect to many different issues, one of which is causation. In this thesis, I take Hume's curiosity about causation as an example of insatiable curiosity and suggest reading the section devoted to curiosity in light of his *own* insatiable curiosity. By appealing to the novel interpretation offered in this thesis, I conclude that, for Hume, insatiable curiosity is instrumentally valuable in virtue of having the capacity to give pleasure to an epistemic subject.

Keywords: Philosophy of curiosity, insatiable curiosity, satiable curiosity, value of curiosity, David Hume

ÖZETÇE

Hume'da Giderilemeyen Merakın Değeri

Hatice Zeynep Coşkunkan

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Epistemik öznel bilmediklerini merak ederler. Ancak onların merak ettikleri bazen yalnızca bilinmeyen değil, aynı zamanda kısıtlı zihinsel yetileri ve bilişsel kapasiteleri nedeniyle onlar için bilinemezdir. Bu tezde iki tür merak arasında ayırım yapılmaktadır. *Giderilebilen merak* bilinebilen nesneler hakkındadır ve söz konusu nesnelerin bilgisiyle tatmin edilmesi epistemik olarak olanaklıdır. *Giderilemeyen merak* ise bilinmeyen nesneler hakkındadır ve bu nedenle tatmin edilmesi epistemik olarak olanaksızdır. Bir yandan teorik bir yandan da tarihsel olan bu tez, giderilemeyen merakın değerli olup olmadığı sorusunu sormakta ve bu soruya ilişkin olumlu bir yanıtı David Hume'un meraka dair açıklamalarından çıkarabileceğimizi göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tezde *İnsan Doğası Üzerine Bir İnceleme*'nin ikinci kitabında yer alan "Merak veya Doğruluk Sevgisi" başlıklı bölümünün yeni bir yorumunu sunuyorum. Hume'un merak ile zevk arasındaki ilişkiye yönelik açıklamalarının onun merakın değerine ilişkin görüşlerini yansıttığını ileri sürüyorum. Hume'un birçok farklı konuya ilişkin şüphecî sonuçlara vardığı genel olarak kabul edilmektedir ve bu konulardan biri de nedenselliklerdir. Bu tezde Hume'un nedensellik hakkındaki merakını giderilemeyen bir merak örneği olarak alıyor ve meraka adanmış bölümü onun *kendi* giderilemeyen merakı ışığında okunmayı öneriyorum. Bu tezde sunulan yeni yoruma dayanarak giderilemeyen merakın Hume için epistemik özneye zevk verme kapasitesinden dolayı araçsal olarak değerli olduğu sonucuna varıyorum.

Anahtar kelimeler: Merak felsefesi, giderilemeyen merak, giderilebilen merak, merakın değeri, David Hume

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ABBREVIATIONS

E	Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary
EHU	An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
T	A Treatise of Human Nature



Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The epistemic subjects endowed with certain rational and cognitive faculties become curious about various things. They become curious about contemporary art, the endemic plants growing in the rain forests, the person standing next to the door, whether coffee in the cup is fresh, what the deadline for an assignment is, how local tribes used to live in South Africa, who made Nazca Lines in Peru, what should be done to survive during an earthquake, how to bake a delicious chocolate cake, what it is like to see the external world from somebody else's eyes.

It appears that curiosity is inextricably connected to the notion of ignorance, and what an epistemic subject is curious about is always something unknown to them. The object of curiosity can be expressed in various forms. It can be a physical entity or an abstract one. For instance, an epistemic subject can be curious about the purpose of life, the value of friendship, or the role of good intention in moral actions. They can also be curious about things that are non-existent. For instance, they can be curious about Loch Ness monster while falsely believing that it exists. They can also be curious about an object while knowing it does not exist. An epistemic subject can be curious about Rodion Raskolnikov, who is a fictional character, when reading Dostoyevsky's marvelous novel, *Crime and Punishment*.

Some scholars point out that curiosity arises not merely when an epistemic subject is ignorant of an object. Instead, it arises when they become aware of their own ignorance about *that* object. For instance, Loewenstein (1994) states that "the curious individual is motivated to obtain the missing information to reduce or eliminate the feeling of deprivation" (p. 87). Similarly, İnan (2012) emphasizes that "even the most uneducated or the least open minded has the capacity to use language to think about things unknown to him and to become aware of his ignorance ... when such an awareness of ignorance is coupled with an interest in the topic, it motivates curiosity" (p. 1).

Given that curiosity can arise only if an epistemic subject is aware of their own ignorance, satisfaction of curiosity requires the attainment of an epistemic achievement that can eliminate the subject's ignorance. Some philosophers propose certain considerations regarding the epistemic achievement that satisfies curiosity. For instance, according to Kvanvig (2003), curiosity aims at perceived truth rather than knowledge

and can be satisfied by perceived truth that might not constitute any knowledge (pp. 145 – 146). In his view, each epistemic subject has their own subjective standards for satisfaction of curiosity (Kvanvig, 2003, pp. 145 – 146). In other words, he understands satisfaction of curiosity as purely an internal state of mind that does not depend on external conditions (İnan, 2012, pp. 140 – 141). Whitcomb (2008), on the other hand, insists that curiosity aims at knowledge and cannot be satisfied merely by perceived truth (pp. 666 – 668). He defends the view that satisfaction of curiosity requires the acquisition of knowledge, and the standards for satisfaction of curiosity are objective in the sense that knowing is not purely an internal state of mind (Whitcomb, 2008, pp. 668 – 669; İnan, 2012, p. 141).

Alternatively, İnan (2012) holds that there can be two senses of satisfaction of curiosity: one is subjective satisfaction and the other is actual satisfaction (p. 141). In his view, an epistemic subject can satisfy their curiosity subjectively when they come to believe that they know about the object of curiosity. Surely, the subject might have false beliefs about their own epistemic status. Yet, subjective satisfaction can be attained even when they do not know about the object of their curiosity. İnan (2012) explains that for an epistemic subject to satisfy their curiosity in the actual sense, they need to attain the knowledge of what they are curious about (p. 141). It means that, for an epistemic subject to attain actual satisfaction, their belief that they know about the object of their curiosity must be true. In addition to this, he distinguishes between two kinds of curiosity pertaining to two kinds of knowledge: propositional curiosity aims at and is satisfied by propositional knowledge, whereas objectual curiosity aims at and is satisfied by objectual knowledge (İnan, 2012).

Yiğit comes up with an alternative account and underlines the experiential aspect of curiosity. In her view, curiosity aims at experience and understanding, and an epistemic subject cannot satisfy their curiosity merely by acquiring theoretical knowledge. As she explains (2018), “a person who is curious about African food will not be satisfied by just learning about it, but will want to try it out, taste it, and smell it” (p. 122).

A detailed analysis regarding satisfaction of curiosity will be provided in Section 2.3. For now, it is worth noting that what is meant by “satisfaction of curiosity” in this thesis is not subjective satisfaction – which I prefer to call psychological satisfaction. Instead, what is taken to be “satisfaction of curiosity” is what İnan calls actual satisfaction – which I prefer to call *epistemic satisfaction*. Thus, following Whitcomb and İnan, I acknowledge that satisfaction of curiosity requires the acquisition of

knowledge of what an epistemic subject is curious about. Moreover, by appealing to Yiğit's account of curiosity, I suggest that the experiential aspect of curiosity can be integrated with the notion of knowledge – especially with İnan's notion of objectual knowledge. Objective knowledge can be taken as encompassing various kinds of non-propositional knowledge that are likely to produce understanding, such as experiential knowledge, practical knowledge, know-how, and the like.

The act of asking a question is considered an integral part of curiosity by several psychologists and philosophers. For instance, Berlyne (1960) mentions that “All specific epistemic behavior must, however, be launched by the equivalent of a question” (Berlyne, 1960, p. 289). Similarly, İnan (2012) writes, “Human curiosity is perhaps the only kind of curiosity that finds its expression in language in the form of a question” (p. 40). He also notes, “if there is curiosity that is not satisfiable and it can be expressed in a question form, then it would follow that there are certain questions that are unanswerable” (İnan, 2012 p. 164). Taking the departure point from İnan's considerations regarding unanswerable questions asked out of curiosity, it can be asserted that epistemic subjects become curious not only about things that are unknown but also *unknowable* to them. They can express their curiosity in the form of an interrogative sentence even if the object of curiosity about is unknowable to them. However, given that curiosity aims at and is satisfied by knowledge, it is impossible for an epistemic subject to satisfy their curiosity when the object of curiosity is unknowable to them. Hence, we can distinguish between two kinds of curiosity with respect to the (un)knowability of the object of curiosity. *Satiable curiosity* is about a knowable object and can be satisfied by the knowledge of the object of curiosity. However, *insatiable curiosity* is about an unknowable object, and it is impossible for an epistemic subject to satisfy this kind of curiosity.

Let us now turn our attention towards the philosophy literature focusing on intellectual virtues, and especially on curiosity. In virtue epistemology, there are numerous influential works that attempt to explain the role of intellectual virtues in our epistemic achievements. No doubt these works provide us with fruitful intuitions regarding the epistemic value of those virtues. Virtue epistemologists generally hold that intellectual virtues are found among an epistemic subject's character traits. Some point out that curiosity, as a character trait, is one of our intellectual virtues and thus has an epistemic value (Schmidtt & Lahroodi, 2008; Yiğit, 2018; Miscevic, 2020). There

are even a few philosophers who take curiosity as a moral virtue and argue for its moral value (Baumgarten, 2001).

Despite the increasing interest in curiosity over the last twenty years, virtue epistemologists seem to overlook the fact that we, the epistemic subjects, can also become curious about things that are unknowable to us. Even though they consider curiosity valuable even if it does not lead to knowledge, they do not seem to be aware that it can be about something unknowable. What is crucial here is to notice that curiosity that does not lead to knowledge cannot be equated to insatiable curiosity. This is because unknowability can *just* be one of the reasons explaining why curiosity does not lead to the knowledge of the object of curiosity. In fact, there can be other reasons explaining why an epistemic subject's curiosity fails to lead them to knowledge. For instance, some perceptive or cognitive capacities of an epistemic subject may be unreliable, or they may have too many false beliefs about the object of their curiosity. Perhaps they may be biased in a way that prevents them from arriving at correct epistemic conclusions. Obviously, these possible reasons that can explain why curiosity does not lead to the knowledge of the object of curiosity are not necessarily related to unknowability.

Furthermore, we can also imagine certain cases in which an epistemic subject's curiosity does not lead them to knowledge even when the object of curiosity being knowable. In his following statement, İnan (2012) appears to be proposing an example of curiosity that does not lead to knowledge but whose object is knowable: "No one is in a position to know the exact population of the people on earth now. One can raise this question or simply be curious about it, although it is practically impossible to satisfy it" (p. 165). Similarly, it is practically impossible for a physicist, who is curious about atomic particles, to come to know about what they are curious about without the required technical equipment. It seems that practical impossibility does not stem from the insufficiency of an epistemic subjects' mental and cognitive faculties. Instead, it stems from practical inconvenience that does not mark the unknowability of the object of curiosity.¹ It can be concluded that the notion of "unknowability" relates to *epistemic impossibility* rather than practical impossibility: An object is considered unknowable to an epistemic subject when they are unable to get in epistemic contact with that object due to their mental and cognitive faculties. Virtue epistemologists who take curiosity as an intellectually virtuous character trait do not take into consideration the possibility

¹ For a similar discussion about *practical impossibility*, see Schlick (1935), pp. 37–38.

that what an epistemic subject is curious about is unknowable to them given their mental and cognitive faculties. Even though they attempt to explain how we can account for the value of curiosity that does not lead to any knowledge, whether insatiable curiosity is valuable, and if so why, is yet a lingering question.

This thesis raises the following question: *Is insatiable curiosity valuable, and if so, to what extent is it possible to argue for its value?* The central aim of this thesis is to show that David Hume's account of curiosity supports an affirmative answer to this question. It might reasonably be asked why one would need to make use of Hume's account of curiosity to explain the value of insatiable curiosity. Let us now elaborate on the significance of Hume's account of curiosity.

Firstly, one can hardly find any philosopher who considered curiosity a genuine subject of philosophy before the 20th century. There are only a handful of people who talked about "wonder" and "curiosity" in the Ancient Times, Middle Ages, and Modern Era. For instance, in Book I of *Metaphysics*, Aristotle allocated a passage, where he characterized *wonder* as the source of philosophical activity: "For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and the stars, and about the genesis of the universe" (*II* 982b11—23). He also added, "For all men begin, as we said, by wondering that the matter is so ... But we must end in the contrary and, according to the proverb, the better state, as is the case in these instances when men learn the cause" (*II* 983a11—18).

In the pre-modern Christian era, philosophers tended to think of curiosity as something that might easily turn out to be malicious. For instance, as Dunnington (2018) notes, "Augustine considered *curiositas* one of the three primary sources of human sin" (p. 79). In a similar vein, Aquinas believed that curiosity turns out to be a virtue when it aims at "truth about God", and a vice when it is directed towards the objects "that take us away from God" (Engel, 2018, p. 275). According to the pre-modern Christian philosophers, *studiositas* is "the well-formed intellectual appetite" (Dunnington, 2018, p. 82). However, *curiositas* is "the deformed intellectual appetite" that goes beyond the powers of human knowing (Dunnington, 2018, p. 89).

In the Modern era, Descartes discussed *admiratio*, which is translated into English as "wonder". In *The Passions of the Soul and Other Late Philosophical Writings*, he asserted that human beings have six primitive passions, one of which is Wonder, and

the other five being Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy and Sadness, and desire. (AT IV 69; 380). According to his characterization, wonder is “a sudden surprise of the soul which makes it tend to consider attentively those objects which seem to it rare and extraordinary” (AT IXX 70). Furthermore, he writes, “When the first encounter with some object surprises us, and we judge it to be new, or very different from what we knew in the past or what we supposed it was going to be, this makes us wonder and be astonished at it. And since this can happen before we know in the least whether this object is suitable to us or not, it seems to me that Wonder is the first of all the passions. It has no opposite, because if the object presented has nothing in it that surprises us, we are not in the least moved by it and regard it without passion” (AT V 53; 373). Despite the fact that Descartes talked about *wonder* in several places in *Passions*, here is the only passage where he mentioned *curiosity*: “It would be more correct to distinguish Desire into as many different species as there are different objects sought after. For Curiosity, for example, which is nothing but a Desire to understand, differs greatly from Desire for glory, and this from Desire for vengeance, and so on” (AT IV 88; 394).

Hobbes can be considered the first philosopher who explicitly praised *curiosity*. In *Leviathan*, there is one passage where he highlighted the importance of *curiosity*: “Desire to know why, and how, curiosity; such as is in no living creature but man: so that man is distinguished, not only by his reason, but also by this singular passion from other animals; in whom the appetite of food, and other pleasures of sense, by predominance, take away the care of knowing causes; which is a lust of the mind, that by a perseverance of delight in the continual and indefatigable generation of knowledge, exceedeth the short vehemence of any carnal pleasure” (p. 35).

Now it is evident that different philosophers shared some intuitions regarding wonder and curiosity. However, almost none of them came up with a solid, systematic, and comprehensive theory of curiosity. David Hume differs from his predecessors and contemporaries in a significant respect, making a move being far ahead of his time: He can be considered the philosopher who, for the first time, treated curiosity as a genuine subject of philosophy and devoted one whole section to it in Book II of his magnum opus, *A Treatise of Human Nature*.

In the beginning of the section titled “Of Curiosity, or the Love of Truth”, Hume (1739) states that curiosity is “the first source of all our enquiries” (T 2.3.10.1; 448). Gelfert (2013) presents an interpretation of Hume’s characterization of curiosity: “At first sight, this characterisation of curiosity – as the motivating factor in that specifically

human activity that is the pursuit of knowledge – may seem unoriginal. However, when Hume speaks of the ‘source of all our enquiries’, he is referring both to the universal human pursuit of knowledge and to his own philosophical project” (p. 711). If Gelfert is right in suggesting this, it would follow that Hume believes that all of his *own* philosophical inquiries are motivated by curiosity.

Having said that, there is an extensive scholarship on Hume in the literature of philosophy. Different commentators offer different interpretations regarding Hume’s views on different issues, and it is widely held that Hume arrives at *skeptical* conclusions with respect to causation. Hume’s skepticism about causation can be put roughly as follows: Although we, human beings, are accustomed to believing that there is causation in nature, the real nature of causation, and even whether it exists or not is unknowable to us. If we accept that all of Hume’s philosophical inquiries are motivated by curiosity, we should also accept that his inquiry into *causation* is motivated by curiosity. Considering that he arrives at skeptical conclusions about causation at the end of his inquiry, his curiosity about causation can be taken as an example of insatiable curiosity.

It is worth emphasizing that the aim of this thesis is *not* to offer a correct reading of Hume’s explication of the idea of causation. Instead, Hume’s skepticism about causation is of concern *only* to the extent that it can provide an example of insatiable curiosity. Any reader might perhaps find it mistaken to consider Hume to arrive at skeptical conclusions about causation and to take his curiosity about causation as an example of insatiable curiosity. Then, in that case, they might apply my analysis to *any* subject matter about which they take Hume to be skeptical.

Hume neither incorporates his skepticism into his discussion of curiosity, nor does he mention that his curiosity about causation is insatiable. Nevertheless, we can read the section devoted to curiosity in light of his *own* insatiable curiosity about causation. Given that Hume concludes at the end of his inquiry that causation is unknowable, does it mean that his curiosity about causation does not have any value? If his curiosity about causation is valuable even after he realizes that causation is unknowable, where does the value of his insatiable curiosity lie in?

Besides this introductory chapter, this thesis has three more chapters. The second chapter presents a review of the recent literature on curiosity. It aims to introduce some important key terms, make the relevant conceptual distinctions, and prepare the readers for the main discussion. In this chapter, by drawing on İnan’s account of curiosity, I

examine the connection between curiosity, ignorance, and knowledge, try to understand how curiosity can be satisfied, and consider carefully under what conditions it cannot be satisfied. Furthermore, in this chapter, I present a review of the literature that focuses on the characterization and value of intellectual virtues, and especially of curiosity taken as an epistemically virtuous character trait.

The third chapter is dedicated to an exegesis of the section titled “Of curiosity, or the love of truth” in Book II of the *Treatise*. In this section, Hume says that his aim is “to bestow a few reflexions on that passion [curiosity] and shew its origin in human nature” (T 2.3.10.1; 448). However, instead of fulfilling this aim, he shifts his attention towards the relationship between curiosity and pleasure. He allocates several passages and analogies that are intended to explain how curiosity promotes pleasure and under what conditions it fails to be pleasurable. I defend the view that Hume’s explanation of how curiosity can give pleasure to an epistemic subject reflects his view on the value of curiosity. Note that one does not have to agree with the view that Hume appears to be suggesting in the section devoted to curiosity.

The fourth chapter, first, focuses on explaining how Hume can be argued to be skeptical about causation. It also shows how his curiosity about causation can be taken as an example of insatiable curiosity. Here, I present a detailed review of the literature on the correct interpretation of Hume’s idea of causation. Secondly, this chapter demonstrates how insatiable curiosity can sufficiently fix an epistemic subject’s attention and exert their genius. By appealing to Hume’s account of curiosity and pleasure, I argue that curiosity can be regarded as valuable *only* to the extent that it promotes pleasure. In other words, insatiable curiosity can be argued to be instrumentally valuable within the Humean framework.

Chapter 2:

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON CURIOSITY

This thesis offers a novel reading of the *Treatise*'s section devoted to curiosity in light of Hume's *own* insatiable curiosity about causation. Furthermore, it shows that we can extract an affirmative answer from Hume's account of curiosity to the question of whether insatiable curiosity is valuable. However, before delving into Hume's account of curiosity, it is important to prepare the readers for the discussion on the value of insatiable curiosity. Hence, this present chapter is dedicated to making some preliminary remarks on curiosity. In this chapter, I introduce the important terms, make some relevant conceptual distinctions, elucidate what we mean by "insatiable curiosity", and provide some intuitions regarding the value of curiosity. In doing so, I benefit from Inan's account of curiosity and several recent discussions in the philosophy literature. What is the relation between curiosity, ignorance, and knowledge? What epistemic end does curiosity aim at? Does it aim at truth, knowledge, understanding, or experience? What are the conditions of satisfaction of curiosity? When is it epistemically impossible to satisfy curiosity? How can we regard curiosity as an epistemically virtuous character as valuable? Can we draw on the intuitions speaking in favor of the view that curiosity as an intellectual virtue is valuable to account for the value of insatiable curiosity?

2.1 What is Curiosity?

Recently curiosity has come to the fore as a genuine subject of philosophy. There are nowadays several important works on curiosity in the philosophy literature. Both psychologists and philosophers have put forward certain suggestions regarding the characterization of curiosity. Is curiosity a natural drive? Is it exploratory behavior? Is it a mental state? If it is a mental state, is it a desire that has an epistemic content, or a mental state distinct from desire? Is it possible to take curiosity as a character trait rather than a mental state? I would like to start this preliminary chapter by allocating a review of different approaches to the characterization of curiosity.

2.1.1 The Psychological Approaches to Curiosity

Behavioristic orientation became predominant among psychologists in the beginning of the 20th century. In his paper *The Psychology of Curiosity: A Review and Reinterpretation*, Loewenstein (1994) mentions that some psychologists, such as Pavlov and Bühler, conducted several experiments and observed non-human animals and babies exhibiting certain behaviors called “exploratory behavior” or “curiosity” (p. 77). Some other researchers, he continues, discovered that both humans and non-human animals search for “environmental variability” associated with curiosity (Loewenstein, 1994, p. 77).

As Loewenstein (1994) points out, Berlyne is a well-known psychologist for his famous experiments and studies on curiosity (pp. 77 – 78). In his paper, *A Theory of Human Curiosity*, Berlyne (1954) takes curiosity as a natural drive and explains that there are two types of curiosity (p. 180). In his view, perceptual curiosity is “a drive which is aroused by novel stimuli and reduced by continued exposure to these stimuli” (p. 180). On the other hand, he continues (1954), epistemic curiosity is “a drive reducible by knowledge-rehearsal”, and arises from “strange, surprising or puzzling situations or questions” (pp. 187 – 189). As he notes, perceptual curiosity can be observed both in humans and non-human animals, whereas epistemic curiosity can be observed only in humans (Berlyne, 1954, p. 189). In his book titled *Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity*, Berlyne (1960) characterizes curiosity as “exploratory behavior” and observes that it can be divided into two kinds, namely specific curiosity and diversive curiosity. He (1960) suggests that specific curiosity is an “exploration that is aimed at stimuli coming from one particular source, providing information about one particular object or event” (p. 80). As he points out, specific curiosity “is characteristic of a human being who sets out to find a piece of lost property or the solution to an intellectual problem” (p. 80). Diversive curiosity, on the other hand, as he (1960) explains, is an “exploration that has no such direction” observed typically in “a person who seeks entertainment, relief from boredom, or new experiences” (p. 80).

One might intuitively ask why Berlyne is willing to attribute a less sophisticated version of curiosity to non-human animals instead of defining only one kind of curiosity to attribute to human beings and explaining exploratory behaviors observed in non-human animals without appealing to the notion of curiosity. One possible answer is that exploratory behaviors associated with curiosity are also exhibited by non-human animals, and Berlyne takes curiosity as identical to exhibition of a set of exploratory behaviors. Here, I do not wish to further discuss whether or not non-human animals can

become curious as it would go far beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I would like to shift the attention towards the question of whether curiosity can reasonably be defined in terms of exhibition of a set of exploratory behaviors.

There is good reason to accept that behaviors associated with a specific mental state considerably helps us understand whether or not one is in that mental state. For instance, when we see a non-human animal lacking advanced communicative and rational capacities exhibiting a set of behaviors associated with pain, we immediately understand that it is in pain, and we try to help. Those behaviors associated with pain, call it pain-behaviors, can certainly be taken as the mark of pain. However, from this, it does not seem to follow that one's exhibiting pain-behaviors is identical to one's pain, where pain is generally considered to be a mental state. In his paper *Brain and Behavior*, Putnam (1963) presents one of his famous thought experiments in order to undermine logical behaviorism. He imagines a community called "Super Spartans" whose members can feel pain and yet "do not wince, scream, flinch, sob, grit their teeth, clench their fists, exhibit beads of sweat, or otherwise act like people in pain or people suppressing the unconditioned responses associated with pain" (p. 49). As his thought experiment illustrates, when those Spartans are asked whether or not they are in pain, they "admit that they feel pain, but always in pleasant well-modulated voices" (p. 49). On the basis of this scenario, however, one might argue that the Spartans' pain-reports count as a form of pain-behavior. To eliminate this possible worry, Putnam (1963) proposes a second thought experiment, according to which there is a community called "X-worlders" whose members can feel and think about pain but "do not even admit to having pains" (p. 50). At the end, he points out that if pain were to depend logically on pain-behaviors, the members of these two communities could not have been said to feel pain. Yet, as Putnam's thought experiments make clear, we can imagine, without any contradiction, that the members of those communities are in pain even if they do not exhibit any pain-behaviors. In sum, Putnam concludes that the exhibition of pain-behaviors cannot be identical to pain itself.

Coming back to our initial question, it can be argued that one's exhibiting a set of exploratory behaviors is the mark of one's curiosity just like one's exhibiting certain pain-behaviors is the mark of one's pain. However, if we accept that curiosity is identical to a set of exploratory behaviors, we should also accept that any subject that does not exhibit those behaviors cannot be said to be curious. Frankly, there is no good reason not to insist that a subject can be in the state of curiosity even if they do not

exhibit any exploratory behavior. Thus, it seems more reasonable to reject the view that curiosity is identical to a set of exploratory behaviors. Furthermore, we may not need to ascribe curiosity to non-human animals to explain they exhibit exploratory behaviors associated with curiosity.

2.1.2 *Curiosity as Desire to Know*

Philosophers standardly tend to define curiosity in terms of a desire that has an epistemic content. For instance, according to Foley (1987), curiosity can be understood as the desire to have true beliefs, and he states that “the vast majority of us are intrinsically curious about the world; we intrinsically want to have true beliefs” (p. 11). Similarly, Goldman (1991) notes that Aristotle was right in saying all human beings, by their nature, desire to know, and continues, “we commonly seek the truth, or a close approximation to the truth” (p. 3). Williamson (2000), on the other hand, takes curiosity as a desire to know rather than a desire to have true beliefs, saying that “for knowing matters; the difference between knowing and not knowing is very important to us. Even unsophisticated curiosity is a desire to know” (p. 31). Furthermore, Miscevic (2020) writes, “I shall try to formulate the claim about the assignation of e-value [epistemic value] by the desire to know and, in doing it, assign the central role to the desire, which I shall simply call ‘curiosity’” (pp. 114–115). Assuming that curiosity is a mental state, is it a kind of desire that has an epistemic content, or is it distinct from desire?

İnan proposes an alternative to the common view and argues that curiosity is a distinct mental state. In his view, if curiosity is to be defined in terms of a desire, be it desire to know, then it would follow that a logical relation holds between curiosity and desire to know. To show that curiosity and desire to know are two logically independent concepts, İnan (2012) gives two examples (pp. 128 – 129). Firstly, according to him, curiosity is an interest-relative term; what one is curious about is always what one is interested in. However, what one desires to know is not necessarily what one is interested in. On İnan’s first example, a college student can have a desire to know about Plato’s theory of justice merely because they want to pass the final exam. In this case, however, the student cannot be said to be curious about the theory since they do not have a genuine interest in it. On his second example, a jealous husband, without desiring to know the truth, can be curious about whether his wife is cheating on him. In this case, the husband is genuinely interested in his wife’s possible affair with another

man but does not want to learn the truth because he thinks he cannot handle this horrible situation.

One might find İnan's argument convincing or prefer to stick to the view that curiosity is a sort of desire that has an epistemic content. Even if curiosity is a distinct mental state from the desire to know, as İnan argues, it is nevertheless the case that curiosity and the desire to know often go hand in hand. In fact, it seems difficult, except on rare occasions, to find examples in which an epistemic subject is curious about an object but does not have the desire to know about that object. It is natural to say that when an epistemic subject grows an interest in and becomes curious about an object, they also want to acquire some knowledge about that object. Furthermore, curiosity is generally conceived of as something that needs to be satisfied – as something that is likely to cause uneasiness when not satisfied. Perhaps, we can also understand satisfaction of curiosity as satisfaction of the desire to know caused by curiosity. In the light of all these observations, it seems possible to suggest that there is a causal rather than logical relation between curiosity and the desire to know. We can argue that whenever an epistemic subject becomes curious about an object, their curiosity immediately gives rise to the desire to know about that object. Even though desire to know might not be the same as curiosity, we can think of it as the mark of curiosity.

2.1.3 *Different Senses of Curiosity*

Some psychologists and philosophers point out that there are different senses of the term *curiosity*. For instance, Loewenstein (1994) mentions that “state curiosity refers to curiosity in a particular situation, whereas trait curiosity refers to a general capacity or propensity to experience curiosity” (p. 78). Similarly, Schmidt and Lahroodi (2008) write, “there are both occurrent and dispositional states of curiosity about a topic. An occurrent state of curiosity, as we understand it, involves attending to the topic at which our curiosity is directed. A dispositional state is a disposition to be occurrently curious about the topic. Both of these states are to be distinguished from the trait of curiosity, which is or involves an inclination to be dispositionally curious about a range of topics” (pp. 126–127).

Let me now start by explaining trait-curiosity. For instance, when we use the term *curious* in the sense of character trait and say that “Jane is a curious person”, we mean that Jane is a person who is eager to learn about what she does not know and often demonstrates inquisitive behaviors. In this case, the term *curious* picks out a feature of

Jane's character, or an aspect of her personality. On the other hand, when we use the term *curious* in the sense of mental state and say that "Jane is curious about whether Sue will come to the party tomorrow", we do not talk about her personality or any feature of her character. Instead, the term *curious* refers to Jane's present mental state that is directed towards a specific unknown object in a given time. Furthermore, the term *curious* may sometimes refer neither to a character trait nor a mental state. As Schmitt and Lahroodi (2008) explain, depending on the context in which one uses, it can also refer to an epistemic subject's disposition, or propensity to be curious about what they do not know. One might perhaps suggest that any sense of curiosity is reducible to another, and the distinction between different senses of curiosity is questionable.² For instance, a person might be said to possess curiosity as a character trait insofar as they are in the mental state of curiosity or dispositioned to be curious about what they do not know.

Having said that, most philosophers, especially virtue epistemologists, tend to treat curiosity as a character trait, such as open-mindedness, boldness, humility, and creativity, rather than a mental state or disposition. In this thesis, I use the term *insatiable curiosity* to describe an occurrent mental state directed towards a specific *unknowable* object in a given time. However, as shall be explained in Section 2.5. in detail, it seems fair to benefit from the virtue epistemologists' considerations regarding the value of curiosity to elaborate on the value of insatiable curiosity.

2.2 *İnan on Curiosity: Awareness of Ignorance and Inostensible Conceptualization*

This section presents a review of İnan's account of curiosity in order to elaborate more on the connection between curiosity and ignorance. İnan, the philosopher who comes up with the first complete theory of curiosity in philosophy, deals with the question of what makes curiosity possible, and proposes that an epistemic subject can become curious only if they are aware of their own ignorance. He writes that "if I were to ask you to give me an example of something that you are curious about now, it would be quite difficult, perhaps even impossible, for you to provide me with such an example while denying that your curiosity is caused by your awareness of ignorance" (İnan, 2016, p. 288). In a similar vein, Loewenstein (1994) acknowledges that curiosity arises

² Thanks to Demircioğlu for raising this point.

“when attention becomes focused on a gap in one’s knowledge” (p. 87). As he notes, “such information gaps produce the feeling of deprivation labeled curiosity” and “the curious individual is motivated to obtain the missing information to reduce or eliminate the feeling of deprivation” (Loewenstein, 1994, p. 87). As these observations indicate, ignorance does not on its own give rise to curiosity, however, this does not mean that an epistemic subject becomes curious about everything that they believe they are ignorant of.

İnan emphasizes that curiosity is an *intentional* mental state, which means that it is always *about* an object that is unknown to an epistemic subject (2012, 2016, 2018, 2020). As he writes, “Holmes is curious *about* who the murderer is, scientists are curious *about* whether there is liquid water on Mars. Such an intentional mental state has representational content, that is the curious mind represents the entity which he or she is curious *about*” (İnan, 2016, pp. 286 – 287). Furthermore, he points out that curiosity is an *intensional* mental state that has representational content. (İnan, 2014, p. 154)³. It means that for an epistemic subject to become curious about an object, they need to mentally represent *that* object as being unknown to them (İnan, 2020, pp. 142 – 143). With this observation in mind, he describes awareness of ignorance as “a very peculiar type of meta-representation” that “requires representing a representation as determining (specifying) an object that is unknown” (İnan, 2020, p. 170).

It is also worth emphasizing that an epistemic subject can mentally represent an object as being unknown to them only if they can distinguish what they know from what they do not know. As we can understand from what İnan suggests, awareness of ignorance is an important metacognitive state in which an epistemic subject can distinguish what they do not know from what they know, thereby attaining second-order knowledge of their own epistemic status (İnan, 2012, pp. 134 – 135). Now suppose that there is an epistemic subject *S*, and suppose further that there is an object of knowledge *x*.⁴ *S* either knows or does not know *x*. If *S* does not know *x*, *S*’s ignorance of *x* is expressed as “*S* does not know *x*”. If *S* knows *x*, *S*’s first-order knowledge of *x* is expressed as “*S* knows *x*”. Let us now consider *S*’s knowledge of their *own* epistemic status. If *S* realizes that they know *x*, *S*’s second-order knowledge of their own epistemic status is expressed as “*S* knows that *S* knows *x*”. If *S* realizes that they do not

³ Similar to İnan, Searle (1983) also mentions that “wondering whether” as a mental state is both intentional and intensional (pp. 4–6, 180).

⁴ Here, I use “*x*” in a very broad sense; it can be substituted with “that *p*”, a noun, pronoun, proper name, or a definite description.

know x , S 's second-order knowledge of their own epistemic status is expressed as “ S knows that S does not know x ”. As this example makes clear, an epistemic subject can attain the knowledge of their own epistemic status about x even if they are still ignorant of x . Given that awareness of ignorance allows the epistemic subject to reflect on their own epistemic status and to know what they do not know, S can be curious about x only if they become aware of their ignorance of x .

Furthermore, İnan emphasizes that curiosity is intimately tied to the act of asking a question, distinguishing between two kinds of asking (İnan, 2020, p. 141). For instance, an epistemic subject can ask a rhetorical question as a speech act to check if a person knows what they should know, and, on the other hand, they can ask a genuine question as a private mental act to express their own ignorance (İnan, 2012, pp. 40 – 41)⁵. As he nicely puts it, an epistemic subject can ask a question as a private mental act “without even consciously bringing before one’s mind any words, let alone a full interrogative sentence” (İnan, 2012, p. 41). Based on the observation that an epistemic subject expresses their ignorance always by asking a question as a private mental act and curiosity is always about what an epistemic subject is ignorant of, he concludes that curiosity arises from asking a question as a private mental act.

İnan (2014) points out that the representational content of curiosity is always captured by an interrogative sentence (p. 154). Given his account of curiosity, when an epistemic subject mentally represents an object as being unknown to them and constructs an inostensible term, they formulate a question that enables them to express their curiosity. Inostensible term is a referring expression; it refers *both* to what the epistemic subject is ignorant of and what they are curious about, and just like an interrogative sentence, it also captures the content of curiosity (İnan, 2018, p. 25). İnan (2012) writes that “the inostensible term that corresponds to a question is either a definite description or simple term whose reference is fixed by a definite description. So even in cases when that term is a proper name or a simple general term, there will have to be a definite description at work. The referent of that description, if there is one, is the object of the question, as well as the object of curiosity” (p. 60). As we can understand from his explanation, the inostensible term referring to what an epistemic subject is ignorant of always stands for the object in question because the content of the inostensible term is always the same as the content of the question asked by the curious subject.

⁵ For a similar distinction between different forms of asking a question, see Floridi (2013), p. 199.

To better make sense of İnan's account of curiosity, let us give an example: Suppose that an epistemic subject, Deniz, asks a question out of curiosity: "What is the capital of Venezuela?". When expressing his curiosity by asking a question, he mentally represents "the capital of Venezuela" as being unknown to him and constructs an inostensible term referring to what he is ignorant of. It is worth noting that Deniz clearly knows what the object is towards which his curiosity is directed. It is clear to him that he is curious about the capital of Venezuela. What he does not know is rather the *referent* of the inostensible term expressed by the definite description "the capital of Venezuela". Now suppose that Deniz comes to know that the capital of Venezuela is Caracas. It means that he comes to know that Caracas is the referent of the inostensible term expressed by the definite description "the capital of Venezuela". Thus, he can no longer mentally represent the capital of Venezuela as being unknown to him and construct an inostensible term expressed by the definite description "the capital of Venezuela": the inostensible term transforms into an ostensible one.

So far, I have tried to explain how, according to İnan's account of curiosity, an epistemic subject can convert an inostensible term into an ostensible one by coming to know the referent of the inostensible term. To make sense of how these considerations are connected to the satisfaction of curiosity, let us take a look at the following quote: "By inquiring into the object or by gaining new experience of that object, either directly or by testimony, the curious person will satisfy his curiosity only when he is able to convert his inostensible term into an ostensible one" (İnan, 2012, p. 136). On the basis of this explanation, Deniz can be said to have satisfied his curiosity about the capital of Venezuela by coming to know the referent of his inostensible term expressed by the definite description "the capital of Venezuela".

What is also important to mention here is that, in our example, we have assumed that Deniz is curious merely about the name of the city. We have assumed that the question of "What is the capital of Venezuela?" is equivalent to the question of "What is the name of the city that is the capital of Venezuela?". In İnan's view, curiosity is an interest-relative and context-sensitive term, and he notes, "each time we paraphrase the question being asked, we get a different inostensible definite description" (İnan, 2012, p. 151). Accordingly, the question of "What is the capital of Venezuela?" can be paraphrased in different ways depending on what exactly Deniz is interested in and the context in which he utters the question. By asking the same question, Deniz can also express his curiosity about, let's say, the significance of the capital of Venezuela in

Latin American history or the impact of the capital of Venezuela on Caribbean culture. If he asks the question of “What is the capital of Venezuela?” to express his curiosity about the impact of the capital of Venezuela on Caribbean culture, obviously, he cannot convert his inostensible term into ostensible merely by coming to know that the name of the city is Caracas. It is because, in this case, the referent of the inostensible term, which is unknown to him, would not be the name of the city, but it would be the facts explaining the impact of Caracas on Caribbean culture.

2.3 *Satisfaction of Curiosity*

In this thesis, our principal aim is to show that we can extract an explanation for the value of insatiable curiosity from Hume’s account of curiosity and pleasure. Obviously, it would not be possible to accomplish this aim without understanding what insatiable curiosity is, and to make sense of this notion, we should first lay out the conditions of satisfaction of curiosity. In this section, I will seek to explain how curiosity is satisfied. There is an intuition that an epistemic subject can satisfy their curiosity by eliminating their ignorance of that object given that curiosity is always about something unknown to them. What epistemic achievement does curiosity aim at? What epistemic achievement does eliminate an epistemic subject’s ignorance and satisfies their curiosity?

2.3.1 *The Subjective versus Actual Satisfaction of Curiosity*

Kvanvig defends the view that curiosity aims at perceived truth rather than knowledge. He writes that “the phenomenon of curiosity and the goal of inquiry are characterized in terms of finding that which is perceived to be true regarding the subject matter in question, not in terms of coming to know the truth about that subject matter” (Kvanvig, 2003, p. 146). Furthermore, he contends that each epistemic subject has their own “subjective standards” for the satisfaction of curiosity, saying that “for the sating of the appetite in question occurs when a perception or conviction of truth arises, and such conviction sometimes will constitute knowledge and sometimes it will not” (Kvanvig, 2003, pp. 145 – 146). As these quotes clearly show, in Kvanvig’s view, an epistemic subject can satisfy their curiosity about whether p merely by perceiving that p to be true, even if that p is, in fact, false. What is important to notice here is that “truth” is a bridge

concept that connects our beliefs to reality.⁶ It means that the truth of our beliefs mostly depends on the conditions that are external to the mind. However, an epistemic subject's perception of that p as being true seems to be an internal state of their mind. Since Kvanvig believes that curiosity aims at and is satisfied by perceived truth that might fail to constitute knowledge, he understands the satisfaction of curiosity as something subjective, internal to the mind, and that does not necessarily depend on reality. (Inan, 2012, pp. 140 – 141).

Whitcomb argues against Kvanvig and suggests that curiosity aims at and is satisfied by knowledge. Here is the passage where he draws an analogy between curiosity and hunger in order to show that satisfaction of curiosity is objective:

For consider hunger. Is your hunger sated whenever you have a perception of being nourished? No, it is not. If you take a pill that manipulates your nervous system so as to give you a perception of being nourished, you merely seem to sate your hunger. To sate hunger is to get what hunger is a desire for, not to seem to get what hunger is a desire for. The pill may bring about the latter state, but it does not bring about the former. Perhaps curiosity is like hunger. Hunger is not always sated when you perceive being nourished; perhaps curiosity is not always sated when you perceive believing the truth. Perhaps perceived truth (or even perceived knowledge) stands to curiosity as perceived nourishment stands to hunger (Whitcomb, 2008, p. 668).

In this passage, we can see that Whitcomb distinguishes the perception of being nourished from being *actually* nourished. As he makes clear, a person may have the perception of being nourished even if they are not actually nourished, if they take a pill that manipulates their hunger. In this case, the person's hunger is not satisfied because the pill does not provide them with actual nourishment. Instead, it causes the person to falsely believe that they are nourished, and their hunger is satisfied. If we accept that a person can satisfy their hunger merely by the perception of being nourished, we have also accepted that the satisfaction of hunger is subjective in the sense that it is purely an internal state of mind. However, the actual nourishment is more than mere perception since it depends on reality that is external to the mind. As Whitcomb explains in the abovementioned passage, satisfaction of curiosity is analogous to satisfaction of hunger: just like satisfaction of hunger is objective in the sense that it requires actual

⁶ It is undeniable that true beliefs express how reality *is*. For instance, according to different correspondence theories of truth, S 's belief that p is true if and only if p corresponds to a fact, and according to Inan's referential theory of truth, S 's belief that p is true if and only if p refers to a state. (Inan, 2022).

nourishment, satisfaction of curiosity is also objective in the sense that it requires acquisition of knowledge rather than mere perception of truth. In other words, for an epistemic subject to satisfy their curiosity, what they perceive to be true must be true and constitute knowledge.

İnan (2012) suggests that we can distinguish between two senses of satisfaction of curiosity instead of taking one's side (p. 141). In his view, an epistemic subject can satisfy their curiosity *subjectively* when they come to believe that they know about the object of their curiosity. In this case, however, the subject's belief that they know about the object of their curiosity might be false. This sense of satisfaction can also be described as psychological satisfaction. On the other hand, İnan (2012) explains, an epistemic subject can satisfy their curiosity *actually* when they indeed know about the object of their curiosity. In this case, the subject's belief that they know about the object of their curiosity is true. This sense of satisfaction can be described as epistemic satisfaction.

There is good reason to accept that an epistemic subject psychologically feels satisfied when they come to believe that they know about the object of their curiosity. However, there is also an intuition that the subject would start feeling uneasiness when they find out that they are wrong in believing to know about the object of their curiosity. On the basis of this intuition, it seems reasonable to conclude that curiosity aims at knowledge rather than perceived truth although it can also be satisfied by perceived truth in the subjective, or psychological sense. In this thesis, insatiable curiosity is characterized as being about an unknowable object. It means that insatiable curiosity cannot be satisfied in the actual, or epistemic sense. Thus, what is meant by "satisfaction of curiosity" in this thesis is epistemic satisfaction of curiosity.

2.3.2 *İnan on Satisfaction of Curiosity*

As explained earlier, İnan maintains that curiosity is always expressed in the form of an interrogative sentence, and whenever an epistemic subject asks a question out of curiosity, they construct an inostensible term referring to what they are ignorant of. According to his account of curiosity, the content of the inostensible term is captured either by a declarative sentence or a term that cannot be expressed in a full sentence, and each way of capturing is in one-and-one relationship with one specific kind of question: When curiosity is expressed by a whether-question, the content of the inostensible term is captured by a declarative sentence, on the other hand, when it is

expressed by a wh-question, the content of the inostensible term is captured by a term that cannot be expressed in a full sentence (İnan, 2012, 2016). With the distinction between two kinds of question in place, İnan proposes that there are also two kinds of curiosity depending on how we capture the content of the inostensible term: one is propositional curiosity expressed by a whether-question, and the other is objectual curiosity expressed by a wh-question (İnan, 2012, 2016). Having made the distinction between two kinds of curiosity, İnan (2012) emphasizes that “the satisfaction of curiosity cannot be accounted for by appealing to propositional knowledge alone” (p. 136). Thus, he distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge, each of which satisfies one kind of curiosity: propositional curiosity is satisfied by propositional knowledge, and objectual curiosity is satisfied by objectual knowledge (İnan, 2012).⁷ As mentioned earlier, given İnan’s account of curiosity, an epistemic subject satisfies their curiosity when they are able to convert their inostensible term into an ostensible one (İnan, 2012, p. 136). When they have propositional curiosity, they can convert the inostensible term into ostensible by coming to know the truth-value of p or the fact that makes p true or false.⁸ For instance, when Ata is curious about whether Meltem was at the party yesterday, he can satisfy their curiosity by coming to know that “Meltem was at the party yesterday” is a true proposition. Having said that, as İnan (2014) explicitly states, “the satisfaction of objectual curiosity requires more than learning that a certain proposition is true. It requires raising the degree of your acquaintance with the object of your curiosity to a certain level” (p. 152). For instance, when an epistemic subject is curious about what kind of city Istanbul is, they cannot satisfy their curiosity merely by coming to know the truth-value of some propositions. Instead, they can satisfy their

⁷ In the paper *Knowing How*, Stanley and Williamson (2001) argue that knowledge-how, which I consider a form of non-propositional knowledge, is reducible to knowledge-that. By appealing to Stanley and Williamson’s considerations, it might be possible to argue that İnan’s distinction between propositional knowledge and objectual knowledge is questionable. However, I agree with the view that there are certain forms of knowledge that cannot be explained in terms of knowledge-that. For instance, it does not seem intuitive to suggest that one can come to know a person merely by acquiring propositional knowledge. Similarly, one cannot come to know how to ride a bike by acquiring theoretical knowledge.

⁸ In his paper *Curiosity and Ignorance*, İnan (2016) distinguishes between two kinds of propositional-ignorance, and in parallel to this, two kinds of propositional curiosity. When an epistemic subject does not know whether p , what they do not know is the truth of that p . İnan describes this kind of propositional ignorance as truth-ignorance. However, even if an epistemic subject knows that p , they may still be ignorant of the fact that makes that p true. He describes this kind of propositional ignorance as fact-ignorance. According to his explanation, when an epistemic subject is curious about the fact that makes that p true, their curiosity would still be considered propositional even if their curiosity is not expressed by a whether-question. In his paper *İnan on Objectual and Propositional Ignorance*, Demircioğlu (2016) challenges the view that there are two kinds of propositional-ignorance. He argues that there is only one kind of propositional-ignorance, which is truth-ignorance. Furthermore, he points out that there are also certain cases in which objectual curiosity can be satisfied by propositional knowledge.

curiosity by visiting the city, especially the palaces, mosques, churches, and neighborhoods, walking around on the streets, tasting the local foods, having spontaneous conversations with local people, using public transportation, and the like, so that they can get acquainted with Istanbul. Upon raising the degree of their acquaintance with the city, the epistemic subject would be able to convert their inostensible term into ostensible.

What is also important to mention about İnan's view on satisfaction of curiosity is that objectual ignorance along with objectual knowledge comes in degrees, which also means that (in)ostensibility comes in degrees (İnan, 2012, p. 151; İnan, 2020, p. 144). When the epistemic connection of an epistemic subject to an unknown object increases, the level of inostensibility decreases. Given that satisfaction of curiosity is attained only when the inostensible term is converted into an ostensible one, it can also be suggested that satisfaction of curiosity also comes in degrees and in proportion to the level of ostensibility. İnan (2020) notes that "it is rarely the case that ignorance can be fully eliminated, no matter how rich your mental file is about a person or an object, there will always be more for you to learn. The only exception to this is when the object of our ignorance is an entity of which we can have complete knowledge, which is rarely or perhaps never the case" (p. 161). As this quote indicates, since an epistemic subject is not able to attain *full* knowledge of an object, except on rare occasions, the inostensible term cannot be converted into a *completely* ostensible term. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that an epistemic subject cannot attain *complete* satisfaction of curiosity.

Furthermore, an epistemic subject cannot convert an inostensible term into an ostensible one *only* by getting highly acquainted with the object of their curiosity. To make this conversation, as İnan (2020) explains, they must also recognize the object they get acquainted with "as being the object that falls under their inostensible concept" (p. 136). To better make sense of his observation, he gives the following example:

If you are curious about the colors of the Jamaican flag, that does not imply that there are certain colors in this flag of which you have a low degree of acquaintance. It is not that you wish to know more about a certain color and raise your degree of acquaintance with it. Rather given that you are already acquainted with the basic colors, you wish to know which ones appear in the Jamaican flag. In fact you may truthfully say 'I am acquainted with the colors of the Jamaican flag', and then you may add 'but I do not know which colors those are'. If you have a particular interest in flags, then

you may be curious about this even if you know that you are acquainted with the object of your curiosity (which is a set of colors in this case) (İnan, 2014, pp. 152 – 153).

As we can understand from the abovementioned passage, an epistemic subject being curious about which colors are used in the Jamaican flag is already highly acquainted with these colors. What they do not know is instead which of these colors fall under the concept of “the colors used in the Jamaican flag”. When the epistemic subject comes to know that green, black, and yellow are those that fall under “the colors used in the Jamaican flag”, they can convert the inostensible term into ostensible. Let us give another example: suppose that an epistemic subject is ignorant of who broke the window yesterday. Suppose further that the person who broke the window yesterday is the curious subject’s cousin. Obviously, the curious epistemic subject is already highly acquainted with their cousin. What the curious subject does not know is rather their cousin falls under the concept of “the person who broke the window yesterday”.

In sum, on the basis of İnan’s considerations regarding the satisfaction of curiosity, it is impossible for an epistemic subject to convert their inostensible term into ostensible and satisfy their curiosity when the referent of the inostensible term is unknowable to them. If the subject has an insatiable curiosity about whether p , it is epistemically impossible for them to come to know the referent of the truth-value of p . If they have an insatiable curiosity about the fact that makes p true (or false), it is epistemically impossible for them to come to know the referent of the inostensible term expressed by “what makes that p true”. If they have objectual curiosity about an object x expressed by a singular or general term, it is epistemically impossible for them to come to know about, or get acquainted with the referent of x .

2.3.3 *Experiential Curiosity*

In her paper *Curiosity as an Intellectual Virtue*, Yiğit (2018) draws attention to the difference between curiosity and inquisitiveness: while curiosity aims “comprehensive and diverse experience and demands direct/experiential knowledge or understanding”, inquisitiveness “is more specific, narrow, intellect-centered, theoretical, and satiable by propositional knowledge” (p. 122). In her view, curiosity has an experiential aspect. As she explains “one could be curious about seeing an artwork or a spectacular view, curious about listening to a different kind of music or hearing the sound of a wild animal in the jungle. One could also become curious about tasting African cuisine. Or to

give an example of kinesthetic curiosity, one could become curious about learning an ethnic dance” (Yiğit, 2018, p. 122). Furthermore, she writes, “a person who is curious about African food will not be satisfied by just learning about it, but will want to try it out, taste it, and smell it.” (Yiğit, 2018, p. 122).

Firstly, Yiğit’s claim that curiosity is satisfied by experience or understanding appears to be compatible with İnan’s observations regarding the satisfaction of curiosity. Given his account of curiosity, when an epistemic subject has objectual curiosity, they can satisfy their curiosity by getting highly acquainted with the object of their curiosity. However, they cannot raise the degree of their acquaintance with the object of their curiosity merely by coming to know the truth-value of certain propositions. Suppose that an epistemic subject is curious about playing tennis. By appealing to İnan’s account of curiosity, we can say that an epistemic subject needs to have an experience of playing tennis in order to get highly acquainted with playing tennis and satisfy their curiosity. Clearly, it does not seem intuitive to suggest that they can get highly acquainted with playing tennis merely by reading about it and acquiring theoretical knowledge. In a similar vein, Yiğit emphasizes that satisfaction of curiosity requires experience or understanding rather than mere propositional or theoretical knowledge. The knowledge about playing tennis, which I take to be objectual rather than propositional, arises considerably out of experience and involves different forms of non-propositional knowledge being apt to constitute understanding.

However, even though curiosity can have an experiential aspect and aim at direct knowledge, experience, and understanding rather than mere propositional and theoretical knowledge, as Yiğit points out, it may not always be the case. It can also be said that some instances of curiosity are propositional and do not aim at experience or understanding. For instance, an epistemic subject can be curious about whether it will rain when deciding whether to take an umbrella before going out. In this case, the subject’s curiosity does not aim at direct knowledge, experience or understanding. Instead, it aims at the truth-value of the proposition “it will rain” and can be satisfied merely by propositional knowledge. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that *not* every instance of curiosity has an experiential aspect, and satisfaction of curiosity does not *always* require diverse experience and comprehensive understanding.

2.4 *Insatiable Curiosity*

So far, we have presented a review of different views on the conditions of the satisfaction of curiosity. In this section, our task is to carefully consider the notion of insatiable curiosity. In this way, we can better make sense of it and pave the way for an investigation of the source of its value.

It seems possible to say that insatiable curiosity was first introduced to literature by medieval philosophers. They propounded that curiosity about things that go beyond human knowing and intellectual powers, which they called *curiositas*, should be considered improper (Dunnington, p. 89, Table 4.1). From this, it can be understood that they considered the possibility that humans can also become curious about unknowable things. Nowadays, it is still not that easy to come across a philosopher who explicitly states the fact that what an epistemic subject is curious about can be unknowable to them. İnan is the first and only philosopher who carefully examines the limits of curiosity with respect to our epistemic abilities and limits. He proposes that there are certain cases in which curiosity cannot be satisfied (İnan, 2012, p. 164). Recall that, on İnan's account, curiosity arises out of asking a question as a private mental act, and interrogative sentences are the linguistic devices uttered to express curiosity. With this observation in place, he suggests that "if there is curiosity that is not satisfiable and it can be expressed in a question form, then it would follow that there are certain questions that are unanswerable" (p. 164), and explains that a question can be unanswerable in two ways. Firstly, a question is unanswerable when it does not have any answer. It means that it falsely presupposes the existence of the object in question. Given his example, an epistemic subject might ask a question out of curiosity about the current king of France (İnan, 2012, p. 164). When they learn that France is not a monarchy and the current king of France is non-existent, they would come to know that the inostensible term fails to refer to an object. İnan (2012) points out that there is a sense in which an epistemic subject can convert the inostensible term into ostensible and satisfy their curiosity by coming to know that the inostensible term is a non-referring term (p. 164). Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that unanswerable questions that falsely presupposes the existence of the object of curiosity do not express insatiable curiosity because there is no object that is unknowable to the epistemic subject.

Secondly, according to İnan's account of curiosity, a question is unanswerable when the referent of the inostensible term is unknowable to the epistemic subject given their cognitive abilities. Here, what is important to notice is that the question asked out of curiosity presupposes the existence of the object in question *correctly*, and the inostensible term constructed by the epistemic subject is, in fact, a referring term. In other words, what the subject is curious about does exist. It appears that *only* the unanswerable questions that have correct existential presuppositions about the object in question, which is also the object of curiosity, can give rise to insatiable curiosity. This is because, in this case, what makes the question unanswerable is the impossibility of getting in an epistemic contact with the referent of the inostensible term. Thus, an epistemic subject can never convert the inostensible term to an ostensible one and satisfy their curiosity.

As explained earlier, given İnan's account of curiosity, when an epistemic subject asks a question (as a private mental act) out of curiosity, they construct an inostensible term referring to the unknown. Taking our departure point from this, we can ask the following question: can an epistemic subject construct an inostensible term referring to an object that is not only unknown but also unknowable? (İnan, 2012, p. 165). Is it the case that an epistemic subject needs to possess some further mental or cognitive capacities in order to construct an inostensible term referring to an unknowable object?

It seems that if an epistemic subject is able to construct an inostensible term referring to the unknown, they would also be able to construct an inostensible term referring to the unknowable. In fact, there does not seem to be a good reason to maintain that constructing an inostensible term referring to the unknown is formally different from constructing an inostensible term referring to the unknowable. Concerning an epistemic subject's constructing an inostensible term that refers to an unknowable object, we can talk about two possible scenarios. On the first scenario, they presuppose that the object of their curiosity is possibly knowable. It means that they are unaware that what the inostensible term refers to is unknowable to them. On the second scenario, they already have a true belief that the object of their curiosity is unknowable. In this case, they mentally represent the object of their curiosity not only as being unknown but *also* as being unknowable to them. In other words, the referent of the inostensible term would be considered *both* as unknown *and* unknowable.

It is worth mentioning that whatever an epistemic subject mentally represents as being unknowable to them is determined by their own judgements about what is

knowable or unknowable. Especially, in the history of philosophy, there is hardly ever any consensus about what is knowable or unknowable. For instance, as will be explained in detail in Section 4.1., it is widely held that Hume arrives at skeptical conclusions with respect to causation: he claims that human beings cannot know about the real nature of causation, and even whether there is causation, given their limited mental faculties and cognitive abilities. On the other hand, Kant contends that we can know that there is causation in nature. In his view, Hume is mistaken about his belief that the existence, or the real nature of causation is unknowable (De Pierris & Friedman, 2018). It appears that this famous disagreement marks the idea that whether an epistemic subject *believes* curiosity about x is satiable or insatiable is relative to their judgements about whether x is knowable or unknowable. Therefore, it is possible to interpret Hume as believing that curiosity about causation is insatiable and Kant as believing that it is satiable. Having said that, an epistemic subject may be mistaken about their judgements about what is knowable or unknowable. It means that they may be mistaken about whether curiosity about an object is satiable or insatiable. Obviously, whether an object is knowable or unknowable to an epistemic subject is determined by the mental faculties and cognitive abilities of that subject. Therefore, whether curiosity about an object *is* satiable or insatiable is not relative to their judgements about what is knowable or unknowable. For instance, if Kant had been an extraterrestrial creature when Hume was an ordinary human, they both could have been correct about their own judgements about the (un)knowability of causation because, in this case, they could have been said to possess mental faculties and cognitive abilities different from each other's. However, since both Hume and Kant are human beings sharing the same mental faculties and cognitive abilities, either must be wrong about his judgement about the (un)knowability of causation. It also means that either must be wrong about his judgement about the (in)satiability of curiosity about causation. In the light of these considerations, we can argue that what is considered to be an example of insatiable curiosity is not necessarily what an epistemic subject believes to be insatiable. Regardless of what an epistemic subject believes to be knowable or unknowable, their curiosity can plausibly be taken as insatiable insofar as it is about an unknowable object.

Let us now elaborate more on Inan's view on the satisfaction of curiosity and the idea of insatiable curiosity. Given his theory, curiosity is an interest-relative term, and here is one of the key passages, where he makes some observations regarding the relationship between curiosity and interest:

Initially Holmes was not interested in Ralph, or to be more precise he was not interested in the truth of the proposition that Ralph is the murderer. After collecting evidence making Ralph a suspect, Holmes then became interested. The issue of how interest and belief relate to one another is a tough one, but at least how interest relates to curiosity should be quite clear: the degree of curiosity is directly proportional to the degree of interest” (İnan, 2014, p. 147).

In this passage, İnan makes clear that the degree of curiosity is directly proportional to the degree of interest. His consideration appears to make room also for an intuition that the degree of interest can sometimes be directly proportional to the degree of knowledge. As the example illustrates, Holmes’s interest in Ralph increases after he collects evidence that makes Ralph a suspect. By appealing to this, we can suggest that the interest of an epistemic subject in an object increases when they come to know more about that object. Since an epistemic subject becomes more curious when their interest increases, we can conclude that the increase in the degree of knowledge can sometimes increase the degree of curiosity.

Let us now consider Yiğit’s example in the light of the abovementioned observations. Suppose that an epistemic subject asks several questions about African foods out of curiosity. Assuming that the degree of interest can sometimes be directly proportional to the degree of knowledge, the subject can get more interested in African foods when they come to know more about them. Accordingly, they become more curious upon getting highly acquainted with them. In following passage, İnan (2012) proposes a similar example:

If someone knows that an electron is a negatively charged particle within the atom, and not much else about it, we may take that to be sufficient for that person to be entitled to claim that he knows it. But we may imagine a physicist who has a lot more experience about electrons working on certain foundational issues in particle physics claiming that *no one knows what an electron is*, and he may be right in saying so given his context. By raising the standards, he may have brought himself to become curious about *what an electron is or even whether it exists*” (p. 155)⁹.

As can be understood from this passage that, according to İnan’s view, each epistemic subject can have their own standards to *claim* to know about an object, and it may get harder for them to claim to know when they get more interested in the object. As illustrated above, the person who claims to know what an electron is does not seem

⁹ Italic emphasis is mine.

to have much interest in an electron. Perhaps they may not even be said to be curious about it. On the other hand, obviously, the physicist is highly interested in an electron and very curious about it. However, since their level of interest and curiosity is extremely high, they may even turn out to be skeptical about electron.

Similarly, when an epistemic subject gets more interested as a result of an increase in the degree of their knowledge, they are likely to ask further questions about African foods out of curiosity: “Which vegetables are used in preparing African foods?”, “Are African foods spicy in general?”, “What is the most popular Moroccan dish?”, “How different are Angolan foods than Gabonese foods?”, “What kind of cooking pot should be used in cooking Tajine?”, “In what ways is African cuisine affected by Mediterranean culture?”, and so on. Obviously, African foods, as one whole object of curiosity, is knowable to human beings. However, if an epistemic subject’s standards for claiming to know are extremely high, they may not consider themselves entitled to claim to know about African foods unless they attain complete knowledge. Yet, it does not seem intuitive to hold that an epistemic subject can attain complete knowledge of African foods. Therefore, due to their unnecessarily high standards for claiming to know, they may conclude that African food is unknowable, and their curiosity is insatiable.

To clarify what we mean by “insatiable curiosity” in this thesis, it would prove useful to distinguish between two senses of insatiable curiosity. In one sense, an epistemic subject can be said to have an insatiable curiosity even when it is about a knowable object. Clearly, this is the case for the physicist being curious about an electron and the epistemic subject being curious about African foods. In another sense, an epistemic subject can be said to have insatiable curiosity when it is epistemically impossible for them to acquire knowledge about the object of their curiosity. No doubt the first sense of “insatiable curiosity” deserves an in-depth philosophical investigation on its own. However, I would like to limit the scope of my thesis to the second sense. In this thesis, the term “insatiable curiosity” is particularly used to describe cases in which an epistemic subject is curious about something unknowable to them.

2.5 *Intellectual Virtues and The Value of Curiosity*

This thesis raises the question of whether insatiable curiosity has any value and attempts to show that we can extract an affirmative answer from Hume’s philosophy.

Considering the *Treatise*'s section devoted to curiosity in light of Hume's own insatiable curiosity about causation, we can draw the following conclusion: insatiable curiosity is valuable insofar as it is pleasurable. However, before offering a reading that scrutinizes Hume's account of curiosity, I would like to present a review of the recent literature focusing on the virtuousness and value of different abilities, character traits, and especially of curiosity.

One of the central purposes of virtue epistemology is to show that some abilities, skills, and character traits play fundamental roles in attaining different epistemic ends and, therefore, are to be considered intellectual virtues. (Turri & Greco, 2021). As we have mentioned earlier, there is a sense in which the term *curiosity* is used to describe a character trait of a person. According to some virtue epistemologists, curiosity, taken as a character trait, can be found among our intellectual virtues, and be regarded as valuable given that it is the primary motivational source for us in the pursuit of truth, knowledge, and understanding. In this thesis, insatiable curiosity is taken as a mental state. Even so, virtue epistemologists' considerations regarding the value of intellectual virtues, especially of curiosity as a character trait, prove helpful when we puzzle over the value of insatiable curiosity as a mental state. Hence, this section aims to bring together and analyze different views on the value of intellectual virtues and of curiosity taken as an intellectually virtuous character trait.

2.5.1 How Do We Attribute Value?

Before moving onto the value of intellectual virtues and of curiosity as an intellectual virtue, I would like to say a few words about how we attribute value to things in general. It is traditionally held by philosophers, and especially by virtue epistemologists, that something can be valuable in two ways: one is to be valuable intrinsically, and the other is to be valuable instrumentally.¹⁰ The traditional distinction between intrinsic value and instrumental value can be put in its simplest form as follows: when something is valuable intrinsically, it is valuable for its own sake, and when something is valuable instrumentally, it is valuable for what it brings about (Bernstein, 2001; Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2015). For instance, it can be suggested that

¹⁰ It is worth noting that something can be valuable both intrinsically and instrumentally. For instance, suppose that art is intrinsically valuable. When an intrinsically valuable artwork is a decorative object intended to create an aesthetic environment, it can be said to have both intrinsic and instrumental value. Accordingly, when we say that something is instrumentally valuable, we do not say that it is not intrinsically valuable. Similarly, when we say that something is intrinsically valuable, we do not say that it is not instrumentally valuable.

morally good intention is valuable for its own sake: it is valuable regardless of their consequences. On the other hand, a knife is said to be valuable instrumentally with respect to certain intended ends: its value depends on how successfully it cuts things, and if it fails to do so, it can no longer be said to have an instrumental value with respect to cutting.

In her paper *Two Distinctions in Goodness*, Korsgaard (1983) seeks to undermine the traditional intrinsic versus instrumental distinction, saying that “intrinsic and instrumental good should not be treated as correlatives, because they belong to two different distinctions” (p. 170). Given her explanation, when we say that an object is instrumentally valuable, we say that it is valuable for what it brings about. However, when we say that an object is intrinsically valuable, we do not actually refer to what that object is valuable for. Instead, as she explains, we refer “to the location or source of the goodness rather than the way we value the thing” and assert that the object is the source of its own value (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 170). Therefore, in her view, it is misleading to say that being intrinsically valuable is to be valuable for its own sake and that the natural opposite of intrinsic value is instrumental value. According to Korsgaard’s view, the natural opposite of intrinsic value is extrinsic value, which is “the value a thing gets from some other source” (p. 170). With all these considerations in mind, she concludes that there are two separate distinctions, one between intrinsic and extrinsic value and the other between final and instrumental value, that should not be equated.

What is also important to mention about Korsgaard’s view on different kinds of value is that she appears to hold that instrumental value is a kind of extrinsic value.¹¹ Later in her paper, she (1983) writes, “when a thing is valued as a means or instrumentally (or is the sort of thing valued as a means) it will always be a conditionally or extrinsically valuable thing, and the goodness of the end to which it is a means will be a condition of its goodness” (p. 181). Based on this quote, it can be said that when an object has an instrumental value with respect to an intended end, its value is also extrinsic in the sense that it is derived from something other than the object itself. Furthermore, in the following passage, Korsgaard (1983) appears to hold that extrinsic value does not imply instrumental value:

¹¹ For a detailed argument for the view that there are different kinds of extrinsic value, and instrumental value is only one kind, see Bradley (1998).

If extrinsic value and instrumental value are equated, you are then forced to say of all such things that they are means or instruments. This way of thinking is part of what is behind the tendency to conclude that the final good must be pleasure or some sort of experience. The argument proceeds as follows: take an activity that we would naturally say is valuable for its own sake – say, looking at a beautiful sunset. Now the question is raised: would you think this activity was a good one even if the person engaged in it found it tedious or painful? If you say “no” then you have admitted that the goodness of this activity is not intrinsic; that it depends, in some way, on the pleasantness of it. But if all extrinsic value is instrumental value, then the only option is that the activity is a means to pleasure. Now if the two distinctions are not equated, there is room for some other sorts of accounts of extrinsic value, and one may not be forced to this conclusion (pp. 172 – 173).

As this passage indicates, the value of a beautiful sunset can be extrinsic in the sense that it is derived from pleasure that the sunset produces. However, this does not necessarily mean that the sunset serves as a *means* to yield pleasure. In this case, the sunset can be said to have a non-instrumental extrinsic value with respect to pleasure.

The idea that an object can have a non-instrumental extrinsic value with respect to an object also seems to apply when explaining the value of intellectual virtues. Here is what Riggs (2003) writes about the connection between our intellectual virtues and understanding:

The connection, on this view, between intellectual virtue and understanding would be instrumental. The virtues would be a means to the end of understanding. But this response is clearly unacceptable, for it would require that the means be reliably successful in reaching the end. A means that rarely achieves its end derives little value thereby. Moreover, the first half of this chapter was directed at showing that such an instrumental relationship cannot be all there is to the connection between intellectual virtue and understanding. There must be some alternative relationship between intellectual virtue and understanding that explains the *consistent* value of those virtues, even when they are unsuccessful at achieving their ends. I suggest that this relationship is a teleological rather than an instrumental one. Any trait that is directed or aimed at some good end derives some goodness teleologically from its end. This value is independent of whether the trait is generally, or even ever, successful at reaching its end (pp. 221 – 222).

By appealing to Riggs’ explanation, it can be suggested that intellectual virtues have extrinsic value but do not have instrumental value with respect to their ends. Firstly, the instrumental value of an object *x* with respect to an intended end *y* seems to imply that *x* is reliably successful in producing *y*. Recall that what makes a knife instrumentally valuable is its capacity to cut things and to bring about certain intended ends, such as the slices of cake. If the knife can no longer function appropriately, it will

cease to be instrumentally valuable with respect to those ends. In the abovementioned passage, Riggs explains that the value of intellectual virtues can be derived from their epistemic ends even if those virtues fail to bring about those ends. In his view, intellectual virtues can be valuable in virtue of *aiming at* their epistemic ends. By appealing to Riggs' suggestion, it seems possible to maintain that the value of intellectual virtues derived from their epistemic ends can be described as extrinsic even if they are not described as instrumental.

The conceptual distinctions between different types of value have certain implications on our current discussion regarding the value of intellectual virtues and of curiosity as an intellectual virtue. More importantly, they also have certain implications on the discussion of the value of insatiable curiosity, where insatiable curiosity is taken to be an intentional mental state. For instance, with the distinction between extrinsic and instrumental value in place, it might perhaps be suggested that insatiable curiosity has an extrinsic value derived from the knowledge of the object of curiosity. Obviously, (insatiable) curiosity about an unknowable object does not have the capacity to produce the knowledge of that object. Thus, it cannot be instrumentally valuable with respect to the knowledge of the object of curiosity. However, one might perhaps wish to say that insatiable curiosity has a non-instrumental extrinsic value in virtue of aiming the knowledge of what it is about. If this thesis aims to show that we can extract an explanation for the value of insatiable curiosity from Hume's account of curiosity and pleasure, it should also explain what kind of value it would be that Hume would attribute to insatiable curiosity. Would he attribute an intrinsic value, an extrinsic value, or an instrumental value? At the end of this thesis, we might perhaps conclude that Hume would say that insatiable curiosity has an instrumental value in virtue of being successful in bringing about pleasure. Perhaps, we might conclude that, for Hume, insatiable curiosity does not have an instrumental value but has an extrinsic value deriving from pleasure. This sort of conclusion would lead us to accept that, in Hume's view, insatiable curiosity is valuable not because it successfully brings about pleasure but simply because it aims at pleasure. Perhaps, in a Humean framework, insatiable curiosity might also be said to have an intrinsic value. For instance, it might be said that insatiable curiosity is not the cause of pleasure, but it is, as one whole experience, an instance of pleasure. Given that pleasure is considered to be intrinsically valuable, insatiable curiosity, as an instance of pleasure, can have an intrinsic value. It appears that there are different possible conclusions to come up with regarding what sort of

value Hume would attribute to insatiable curiosity. For now, I would like to leave this issue aside and concentrate on the characterization and value of intellectual virtues.

2.5.2 *The Instrumental Value of Intellectual Virtues*

Virtue reliabilists and Linda Zagzebski, a prominent defender of virtue responsibilism, share the view that a feature of an epistemic subject is an intellectual virtue only if it is reliably successful in producing true beliefs.¹² In other words, they maintain that truth-conduciveness is an essential feature of intellectual virtues.

Virtue reliabilism defines knowledge as true belief produced by intellectual virtues, where those virtues play an epistemically justificatory role. For instance, Sosa (1985) states that “an intellectual virtue is a subject-grounded ability to tell truth from error infallibly or at least reliably in a correlated field. To be epistemically justified in believing is to believe out of intellectual virtue. To know you need at least epistemic justification” (p. 243). Similarly, Greco (1993) writes, “the central idea of virtue epistemology is that, Gettier problems aside, knowledge is true belief which results from one’s cognitive virtues. A cognitive virtue, in the sense intended, is an ability to arrive at truths in a particular field, and to avoid believing falsehoods in that field, under the relevant conditions” (p. 414). Virtue reliabilists believe that different ranges of abilities such as perception, good memory, deduction, induction, and the like count as intellectual virtues insofar as they operate reliably in a “normal” environment and under “normal” conditions (Sosa, 1991; Riggs, 2003). They maintain that an ability can be an intellectual virtue even if it is not an acquired skill and is found among our natural abilities (Sosa, 1991, p. 278; Greco, 2005, p. 295; Battaly, 2008, p. 646).

Like the defenders of virtue reliabilism, Zagzebski also insists that a feature, an ability, a trait, or a skill counts as an intellectual virtue only if it is truth-conducive. As she writes “So if it turned out that we were wrong about the truth-conduciveness of one of these traits, that trait would cease to be considered an intellectual virtue. What we would not do is to continue to treat it as an intellectual virtue and then go on to declare that intellectual virtues are not necessarily truth-conducive” (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 185). This quote makes clear what she means by “the success component” of an intellectual virtue (Zagzebski, 1996, pp. 176 – 177). However, unlike the defenders of virtue

¹²Among the defenders of virtue reliabilism are Ernest Sosa, John Greco, and Alvin I. Goldman. Note that most of the proponents of virtue responsibilism (e.g., Monmarquet, Dancy) argue against the view that truth-conduciveness is an essential component of intellectual virtues.

reliabilism, she insists that there can be some qualities that are truth-conducive and yet not epistemically virtuous. As she writes, “each virtue can be defined in terms of a combination of a motivation and reliable success in reaching the aim of that motivation” (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 78). It appears that, in her view, an ability, skill, or trait can count as an intellectual virtue only if it motivates the epistemic subject to pursue epistemic achievements. This is what she calls “the motivational component” (p. 166 – 168, p. 178). As her characterization of intellectual virtue indicates, there is an inextricable connection between the success component and the motivational component: the success component is always built into the aim of the motivational component.

Zagzebski contends that if an intellectual virtue is to motivate an epistemic subject to pursue knowledge, it cannot be found among their natural abilities. Now consider that appropriately functioning visual perception, under normal conditions, produces true beliefs about how the world is. Similarly, a good memory generally produces true beliefs about how the past was. In Zagzebski’s view, however, those natural abilities cannot be considered to be intellectual virtues even if they are truth-conducive since they do not have motivational power on the epistemic subjects (p. 102–106). As she explains, *only* the skills and traits “acquired by habituation” and “entrenched in one’s character” can motivate an epistemic subject to pursue knowledge (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 178).

What is also interesting about Zagzebski’s account of intellectual virtues is that it suggests that there are two senses of “truth-conduciveness” (p. 181 – 182). According to one sense, an intellectual virtue is truth-conducive when it reliably produces a high percentage of true beliefs. According to another sense, an intellectual virtue is truth conducive “if it is a necessary condition for advancing knowledge in some area even though it generates very few true beliefs and even if a high percentage of the beliefs formed as a result of this trait or procedure are false” (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 182). Here is one of the key passages, where she explains how some intellectual skills can still be considered truth-conducive even if they might not produce a high percentage of true beliefs:

The virtues of originality, creativity, and inventiveness are truth conducive in the sense just described. Clearly, their truth conduciveness in the sense of producing a high proportion of true beliefs is much lower than that of the ordinary virtues of careful and sober inquiry, but they are truth conducive in the sense that they are necessary for the advancement of human knowledge (p. 182).

Assuming that truth-conduciveness is necessary to count as an intellectual virtue, is it possible to argue that curiosity is an intellectual virtue? Is curiosity truth-conducive? When we accept that curiosity is truth-conducive, do we also accept that it has an instrumental value?

Battaly (2008) explains that, according to virtue reliabilism, what is valuable in itself is the attainment of true beliefs out of intellectual virtues, and those virtues have instrumental value in virtue of being reliably successful in producing true beliefs (p. 647). Hence, if we show that curiosity is reliably successful in producing true beliefs, we can also conclude that curiosity would be regarded as instrumentally valuable by virtue reliabilists. However, it does not seem possible to show that curiosity, either satiable or insatiable, is truth-conducive by appealing to virtue reliabilism. We can conceivably insist that curiosity motivates an epistemic subjects to follow certain cognitive processes that yield true beliefs. However, we cannot reasonably suggest that curiosity plays an epistemically justificatory role in our true beliefs. For instance, as mentioned before, visual perception is generally considered to be a reliable source of epistemic justification producing true beliefs under normal conditions. A person can rightfully claim to know that there is such-and-such in the box based on their visual perception. However, if the same person claims to know that there is such-and-such in the box based on their curiosity, it sounds very odd. How can we meaningfully commit ourselves to the view that curiosity produces true beliefs in the same way as visual perception does? It seems that if we understand truth-conduciveness as virtue reliabilism does, we can neither maintain that curiosity is truth-conducive nor insist that it is an intellectual virtue.

Is it possible to argue that curiosity is an intellectual virtue by appealing to Zagzebski's characterization of intellectual virtue? In her view, a skill or trait must have both the success component and the motivational component in order to count as one of our intellectual virtues. We can plausibly argue that curiosity has both the motivational component and the success component. Firstly, it has the motivational component because curiosity is what principally motivates us to pursue certain epistemic ends. Secondly, it has the success component because it is truth-conducive in the sense that it contributes significantly to the advancement of human knowledge. Perhaps it would not even be possible for us to accomplish intellectual progress and develop in certain fields if we were deprived of the ability to become curious about what we do not know. It

motivates us to follow the cognitive procedures that are reliably successful in producing knowledge. Furthermore, since curiosity has the success component, it can also be said to have an instrumental value in virtue of producing knowledge.

What is also important to mention about the instrumental value of intellectual virtues is that intellectual virtues can also have instrumental value with respect to different kinds of epistemic achievement other than true belief. For instance, Yiğit (2018) writes, “curiosity and many similar traits could gain status as virtues, even though they are not directly truth-conducive, but are perhaps understanding-conducive. I will take up the virtues of curiosity and inquisitiveness in order to explain how curiosity aims at understanding, in contrast to inquisitiveness, and why this is not a shortcoming but a richness of the virtue of curiosity” (pp. 121 – 122). As can be understood from this quote, she holds that, unlike inquisitiveness, curiosity can be best described as understanding-conducive rather than truth conducive. Thus, we can suggest that, in Yiğit’s view, if curiosity is to count as instrumentally valuable, it would be not merely in virtue of yielding true beliefs but in virtue of yielding understanding.

2.5.3 *The Intrinsic Value of Intellectual Virtues*

So far, we have explained that intellectual virtues can be said to have instrumental value with respect to their reliable success in bringing about true beliefs. Furthermore, by appealing to Zagzebski’s account of intellectual virtues and the alternative sense of truth-conduciveness, we have concluded that curiosity can also be an intellectual virtue and have an instrumental value given that it motivates us to follow certain cognitive procedures that generally give rise to true beliefs, thereby contributing to the advancement of human knowledge. It does not seem reasonable to reject that intellectual virtues, including curiosity, are useful when we try to achieve different epistemic ends such as true belief, knowledge, or even understanding. However, this does not mean that they are valuable *only* instrumentally. In fact, several virtue epistemologists, most of which are the proponents of virtue responsibilism, insist that intellectual virtues have intrinsic value. How is it possible to defend the view that intellectual virtues are intrinsically valuable? Assuming that curiosity is an intellectual virtue, does it also have an intrinsic value?

Monmarquet is one of the virtue epistemologists who endorses the view that intellectual virtues are intrinsically valuable. He argues that “truth-conduciveness cannot, as such, be the distinctive mark of the epistemic virtues” (Montmarquet, 1987,

p. 482). In his view, some intellectual virtues can be reliably successful in producing true beliefs; however, an ability, a skill, or trait does not need to be reliably successful in producing true beliefs in order to count as an intellectual virtue. Therefore, we cannot appeal to truth-conduciveness in order to decide whether an ability, a skill, or trait is an intellectual virtue. According to his account of intellectual virtue, the distinctive feature of intellectual virtues is rather their desirability: an ability, a skill, or trait is epistemically virtuous only if an “epistemically conscientious person” wants to have it (Montmarquet, 1987, p. 489). Here is the passage where Montmarquet (1987) elaborates on the characterization of intellectual virtues in terms of their desirability:

We have developed such an account. On the view defended in the last section, the epistemic virtues are distinctively qualities which an epistemically conscientious person would want to have. This, as I have explained, is not the same thing as to say that they are, or must be, truth- conducive. Conceivably, a trait such as openness to others’ ideas might not be so [truth-conducive]. Conceivably, the world might be such that the contrary quality – a relative imperviousness to others’ ideas – is actually truth-conducive. My claim is, and need only be, that an epistemically conscientious person would not want to have such a trait. That is, even were the world such that (contrary to all appearances) imperviousness to others’ ideas is truth- conducive, no truth-desiring person (given these same appearances) would want to have this epistemic character trait (p. 489).

As can be seen in this passage, an epistemically conscientious person would not want to have imperviousness to others’ ideas even in a possible world in which it reliably and successfully produces true beliefs. On the other hand, they would want to have openness to others’ ideas even in a possible world in which it does not reliably and successfully produce any true beliefs. In offering this, Montmarquet does not explain what makes a trait desirable or undesirable for an epistemically conscientious person. However, he appears to hold that (un)desirability of a trait is not relative to external conditions being apt to change; a trait must be desirable, or undesirable in itself.

Montmarquet’s characterization of intellectual virtue in terms of its desirability can also be interpreted as marking his view on the value of intellectual virtue. The subjectivist accounts of value can be outlined roughly as follows: an object *x* is valuable to *S* if and only if *S* desires *x*. Even though Montmarquet does not mention the value of intellectual virtue in the abovementioned passage, it seems possible to make the following conjecture: he believes that when an epistemically conscientious person regards a trait as desirable, they ascribe a value to it. Accordingly, in his view, a trait is valuable to an epistemically conscientious person if and only if they desire to have it.

Furthermore, since intellectual virtues are desirable in themselves for an epistemically conscientious person, it can also be said that those virtues are valuable in themselves to that person.

Coming back to our initial question, can we consider curiosity an intellectual virtue and intrinsically valuable by appealing to Montmarquet's characterization of intellectual virtues? Is it possible to insist that curiosity is desirable in itself for an epistemically conscientious person? An epistemically conscientious person would likely want to have curiosity about certain topics, such as philosophical problems and riddles. However, it is questionable if they would want to have curiosity about things that they would find morally inappropriate to be curious about, such as the private lives of their neighbors. If an epistemically conscientious person does not want to be curious about inappropriate things, then it would not be possible to claim that curiosity is desirable in itself. In this case, we have to conclude that curiosity is desirable or undesirable for an epistemically conscientious person, depending on its object. And since curiosity can turn out to be undesirable for an epistemically conscientious person under certain conditions, we cannot conceivably argue that curiosity is an intellectual virtue and intrinsically valuable by appealing to Montmarquet's account of intellectual virtues.

However, we can also come up with an alternative explanation. Montmarquet (1992) takes epistemic conscientiousness to be an intellectual virtue and describes it as an "underlying desire to believe what is true and to avoid belief in what is false" (p. 336). In his view, unregulated epistemic conscientiousness is likely to cause different forms of epistemic evil, such as over-confidence, intellectual dogmatism, and cowardice, and therefore, should be regulated by other virtues such as "impartiality, sobriety, and intellectual courage" (Montmarquet, 1987, p. 485; Battaly, 2008, p. 648). Since curiosity involves the desire to attain truth and avoid falsehood, we can take it as a form of epistemic conscientiousness and consider it an intellectual virtue. Moreover, we can suggest that curiosity, as a form of epistemic conscientiousness, has the potential to cause some forms of epistemic evil and perhaps even some forms of moral evil, like nosiness. With all these considerations in mind, we can insist that an epistemically conscientious person would want to have curiosity just as they want to have epistemic conscientiousness. In this case, curiosity can be said to fulfill the desirability condition and be an intellectual virtue that should nevertheless be regulated by some other intellectual and maybe even moral virtues.

Similar to Monmarquet, Dancy rejects the view that truth-conduciveness is an essential feature of intellectual virtues, saying that “the status of this characteristic as a virtue is independent of its relation to the promotion of truth; it derives from the consideration of the sort of intellectual being one should be” (Dancy, 1995, p. 198). Later in his paper, he writes:

We might add that the desire to learn classical languages need not, for virtue, derive from the desire to acquire more truths; it might derive from the desire to read Aristotle (or poetry) in the original – and this need not be because one will learn more truths this way. What will it be for? Perhaps the search for truth (and all the features that go with truth) should be subordinated to a greater end, the search for wisdom; perhaps it should not. But even if it were, wisdom is not a result, like truth but somehow lying beyond it. Wisdom is a character trait, and an intellectual virtue itself. So if wisdom is an intellectual end, and that end is a virtue, there is no chance of explaining the intellectual virtues in terms of their common end. The sort of external explanation we are offered by the appeal to the promotion of truth is undermined (Dancy, 1995, p.199).

In this passage, Dancy entertains the possibility that intellectual virtues are not merely the qualities enabling us to attain true beliefs. Instead, they might be the very epistemic ends that can be attained by means of true beliefs. Later in his paper, he notes, “if the virtues are not unified as a package by their relation to the truth, what does unify them? The answer has to be the nature of a virtuous life, or the sort of character that such a life reveals” (Dancy, 1995, p. 200). Considering the abovementioned passage together with this quote, it can be said that a character trait is an intellectual virtue and an epistemic end only if it contributes to a virtuous life. Accordingly, it can also be said that a character trait is an intellectual virtue only if it exemplifies a virtuous life, where this virtuous life is the *ultimate* end. Here, Dancy does not explain what he means by “a virtuous life”, yet seems to presume that a virtuous life, understood as the ultimate end, has an intrinsic value. Taking the departure point from this, intellectual virtues, being the exemplifications of a virtuous life, of what he presumes to be intrinsically valuable, can be said to have intrinsic value. Furthermore, Dancy considers curiosity to be an intellectual virtue (p. 197). Therefore, by appealing to his account of intellectual virtue, it can be concluded that curiosity has an intrinsic value.

Let us now turn our attention to Zagzebski. As pointed out in the previous section, Zagzebski argues that truth-conduciveness is necessary for an ability, a trait, or skill to be an intellectual virtue. In her view, intellectual virtues have instrumental value because what counts as an intellectual virtue is necessarily successful in producing true

beliefs. However, intellectual virtues can also be said to have intrinsic value by appealing to Zagzebski's theory of intellectual virtue. As she explicitly states:

... the goodness of the motivation for knowledge is not derived from its connection with any other good, not even the good of knowledge. Since we have already seen that the motivational components of the various intellectual virtues arise out of the motivation for knowledge and are specifications of it, it follows that the value of the motivational components of the intellectual virtues are also independent of any good outside the agent (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 203).

Recall that, according to Zagzebski's characterization of intellectual virtue, an ability, a skill, or trait cannot gain the status of intellectual virtue if it fails to motivate an epistemic subject to pursue knowledge. In the abovementioned passage, she emphasizes that motivation for knowledge is intrinsically valuable. Since intellectual virtues, by definition, involve the motivation for knowledge, they can be considered the instances of motivation for knowledge, which is what she considers to be intrinsically valuable. Thus, it can be concluded that Zagzebski believes that intellectual virtues also have intrinsic value besides their instrumental value.

2.5.4 *The Value of Curiosity as an Intellectual Virtue*

Recently some virtue epistemologists praise curiosity as an intellectual virtue and propose certain considerations about its value. While acknowledging that it has an instrumental value with respect to our epistemic ends, they also speak in favor of the view that it has an intrinsic value. For instance, Schmitt and Lahroodi (2008) argue that curiosity is instrumentally valuable because it facilitates an efficacious model of education and learning. As they write, "teachers often prefer techniques of instruction that excite curiosity — they juxtapose topics with unexpected connections to elicit surprise, ask students to solve puzzles, present vivid examples or make striking demonstrations to rivet attention on the subject matter, and use the Socratic method of instruction to cultivate an inclination to evocative questions" (p. 125). Having said that, they raise the intuition that curiosity can also have an intrinsic value besides its instrumental value:

Curiosity seems to have not only instrumental value for knowledge but intrinsic value as well. People seek out situations in which their curiosity is elicited. We pursue and enjoy puzzles — riddles, crossword puzzles, Rubix cubes, logical perplexities such as the liar paradox, and so on. Certainly we do not pursue and enjoy these merely for the knowledge we gain by solving them,

which often seems less important than the activity of solving them. We enjoy being curious in a way that we do not enjoy being hungry or thirsty, and we enjoy it even if we do not satisfy our curiosity. One might propose that all that is valuable here, apart from the knowledge gained, is the activity of attempting to solve the puzzle. But curiosity seems to have value over and above both the activity of inquiry and the knowledge gained (p. 125).¹³

Here, Schmitt and Lahroodi emphasize that the value of curiosity may not be derived entirely from inquiry and knowledge. Instead, as they suggest, it can also have an intrinsic value sourced from itself. The abovementioned passage is the only place where they conjecture about the intrinsic value of curiosity, and they do not provide any detailed analysis. Nevertheless, there can be some observations that might explain why Schmitt and Lahroodi tend to regard curiosity as intrinsically valuable. For instance, by appealing to İnan's account of curiosity, one might wish to suggest that asking a question as a mental act has an intrinsic value, and curiosity, as an instance of asking a question as a mental act, also has an intrinsic value. Given that, according to Schmitt and Lahroodi, the intrinsic value of curiosity is not sourced from inquiry and knowledge, it might perhaps be sourced from the act of asking a question. In the similar vein, Yiğit (2018) advocates that curiosity has an intrinsic value derived from the act of asking a question, saying that "curiosity helps us to expand our horizons, and sometimes even a question itself might assist us in looking at the world from a different perspective compared to the outlook we had before the inquiry. It is not always finding the answer, but sometimes the questioning that works quite marvelously to make us better epistemic agents" (pp. 125 – 126). Similarly, Miscevic maintains that curiosity has an intrinsic value besides its instrumental value. As he writes, "Within this epistemic domain we can also distinguish intrinsic curiosity from instrumental curiosity. Compare for instance the following two statements: first, I am curious if the gravitation causes this movement, I am curious about how to measure the air pressure in order to find out the weight of air. The first points to my intrinsic curiosity, the second to curiosity that is instrumental, in service of some other desire to know" (Miscevic, 2020, p. 166). In this passage, Miscevic distinguishes between intrinsic curiosity and instrumental curiosity. In his view, when an epistemic subject is intrinsically curious, they desire to know the object of their curiosity not for any practical use. Instead, they desire to know it for its

¹³ Schmitt & Lahroodi (2008), p. 125, footnote [2].

own sake. Thus, according to Miscevic's account of curiosity, intrinsic curiosity has an intrinsic value.

2.6 *Concluding Remarks*

So far, we have provided a review of the recent literature on curiosity. Given that insatiable curiosity cannot lead an epistemic subject to the knowledge of what they are curious about, to what extent can we argue that it is valuable? Does it have an instrumental value with respect to an epistemic achievement? Does it have a non-instrumental extrinsic value in virtue of aiming at knowledge? What about pleasure? Does insatiable curiosity seek for pleasure? Does it have the capacity to give pleasure to an epistemic subject? If it does, can we argue that it has a non-instrumental extrinsic value in virtue of aiming at pleasure? Can we argue that it has an instrumental value in virtue of being successful in bringing about pleasure? Is it possible to suggest that insatiable curiosity also has an intrinsic value?

Chapter 3:

HUME ON “LOVE OF TRUTH, OR CURIOSITY” IN *TREATISE*

This thesis raises the question of whether insatiable curiosity, curiosity about an unknowable object, is valuable, and if so, to what extent it is possible to argue that it is valuable. David Hume appears to be the first philosopher who treats curiosity as a genuine subject of philosophy before the 20th century, devoting one whole section to it. In this thesis, which is partly theoretical and partly historical, I aim to show that we can extract an affirmative answer to the abovementioned question from Hume’s account of curiosity and pleasure. Furthermore, I maintain that a novel interpretation of Hume’s section devoted to curiosity in light of his *own* insatiable curiosity provides an explanation for the value of insatiable curiosity. For this aim, this third chapter is dedicated to an exegesis of the section titled “Of curiosity, or the love of truth” in Book II of the *Treatise*.

Hume explains that human passions are divided into two kinds, namely direct passions and indirect passions, and includes *love* in the list of indirect passions (T 2.1.1.4; 276–277). He also notes that “the virtue, knowledge, wit, good sense, good humour of any person, produce love and esteem” (T 2.2.1.4; 330). Furthermore, in the beginning of the section devoted to curiosity, he writes, “but methinks we have been not a little inattentive to run over so many different parts of the human mind, and examine so many passions, without taking once into the consideration that love of truth, which was the first source of all our enquiries” (T 2.3.10.1; 448). Similarly, in his essay titled “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, he comments, “but curiosity, or the love of knowledge, has a very limited influence, and requires youth, leisure, education, genius, and example, to make it govern any person” (E 2.14.6, p. 113). As can be seen clearly in these quotes, Hume describes curiosity as a kind of *love* that has an epistemic content, and the textual evidence supports that curiosity as the love of truth, or knowledge, is an indirect passion arising in the soul.¹⁴

¹⁴In his paper titled *A Peculiar Mix: On the Place of Curiosity within Hume’s Treatise*, Watts (2022) presents a detailed analysis of how curiosity fits within Hume’s system of passions. He argues that curiosity has a “peculiar nature as a direct passion” containing both the characteristics of direct passion and indirect passion (pp. 277 – 279). To defend the view that Hume’s section devoted to curiosity reflects his view on the value of curiosity, we do not need to determine whether curiosity is a direct or an indirect passion since, according to Hume, “the passions, both direct and indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure, and that in order to produce an affection of any kind, ’tis only requisite to present some good or evil” (T 2.3.9.1; 438). Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that whether Hume characterizes curiosity as a direct or an indirect passion is a subject of a further discussion.

In the *Treatise*’s section devoted to curiosity, Hume allocates several passages and analogies in the service of explaining how curiosity can give pleasure to an epistemic subject, and under what conditions it fails to be pleasurable. Taking the departure point from the emphasis on the connection between curiosity and pleasure, it can reasonably be suggested that Hume provides an account of the value of curiosity. As he writes:

We love to trace the demonstrations of mathematicians; but shou’d receive small entertainment from a person, who shou’d barely inform us of the proportions of lines and angles, tho’ we repos’d the utmost confidence both in his judgment and veracity. In this case ’tis sufficient to have ears to learn the truth. We never are oblig’d to **fix our attention** or **exert our genius**; which of all other exercises of the mind is the most pleasant and agreeable (T 2.3.10.3, p. 449).¹⁵

In this passage, Hume appears to give two necessary conditions that curiosity needs to fulfill in order to be pleasurable: curiosity can give pleasure to an epistemic subject only if i) it exerts the subject’s genius and ii) fixes their attention. However, it is not as simple as it seems to understand how exactly curiosity exerts the subject’s genius and fixes their attention. Throughout the *Treatise*’s section, Hume seems to overlook the conceptual difference between “curiosity”, “inquiry” and “the epistemic end”, and sometimes uses them interchangeably. This makes it more difficult to understand whether Hume thinks it is curiosity, an inquiry, or the epistemic end that exerts genius and fixes attention. Perhaps one might suggest that Hume believes it is neither curiosity nor inquiry nor the epistemic end alone, but the *sum* of these three components, as one single package, that exerts genius and fixes attention, and thus gives pleasure to an epistemic subject. However, even if these three components can be understood as one single package exerting genius and fixing attention, it is nevertheless the case that curiosity, inquiry and epistemic end are categorically distinct entities: Curiosity, taken as a state-curiosity, is a *mental state* that motivates epistemic subjects to inquire into what they do not know. An inquiry, on the other hand, is a *process* – an intellectual activity that is progressive and has both mental and physical aspects. The epistemic end – be it truth, knowledge, or understanding – is what an epistemic subject intends to attain as a result of a successful inquiry.

Furthermore, Hume does not make a clear distinction between *targeted* epistemic end and *attained* epistemic end. For this reason, it is also not clear whether it is targeted epistemic end or attained epistemic end that contributes to the exercise of genius and

¹⁵Bold emphasis is mine.

fixing the attention. In the face of these literary difficulties, it also seems fair to say that, in the section devoted to curiosity, Hume not only talks about the value of curiosity but also about the value of inquiry, the value of targeted epistemic end, and the value of attained epistemic end. In the next following section, I will examine how curiosity exerts an epistemic subject’s genius and fixes their attention. Moreover, I will evaluate how inquiry, targeted epistemic end, and attained epistemic end contribute to the exercise of genius and fixing the attention.

3.1 *The Exercise of Genius*

Hume considers the exercise of genius as one of the necessary conditions for the pleasure.¹⁶ In the *Treatise*’s section, he writes, “The first and most considerable circumstance requisite to render truth agreeable [pleasurable], is the genius and capacity, which is employ’d in its invention and discovery. What is easy and obvious is never valu’d; and even what is *in itself* difficult, we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded” (T 2.3.10.3; 449). As this quote indicates, Hume believes that an epistemic subject needs to put mental effort in order to get pleasure from curiosity. Later in the section, he characterizes the action of the mind as “the principal foundation of the pleasure”, saying that “pleasure of study consists chiefly in the action of the mind, and the exercise of the genius and understanding in the discovery or comprehension of any truth” (T 2.3.10.7; 451). It is clear that what Hume calls “the action of the mind” is what constitutes the exercise of genius. Thus, according to Hume, curiosity cannot exert an epistemic subject’s genius in the absence of the action of the mind.

What Hume understands from “the exercise of genius” seems open to interpretation. For instance, the exercise of genius can arise when an epistemic subject shows themselves their *own* intelligence. Alternatively, it is possible to suggest that the exercise of genius can arise when an epistemic subject witnesses and appreciates the intelligence of another epistemic subject, given that Hume notes, “we love to trace the demonstrations of *mathematicians*” (T 2.3.10.3; 449). According to this suggestion, when an epistemic subject traces a mathematical demonstration with curiosity and appreciates the genius of the mathematician, *that* curiosity can also exert the epistemic subject’s genius. This is because *only* the people who are sufficiently intelligent can

¹⁶Hume uses the words “exert” (verb) and “exercise” (noun) interchangeably throughout this section.

understand a mathematical demonstration and recognize the genius of the mathematician. Perhaps, in a Humean framework, recognizing and appreciating the intelligence of another subject can be considered an alternative way in which an epistemic subject shows their own intelligence.

Let us now consider whether curiosity can be on its own sufficient to exert an epistemic subject's genius. For Hume, mental effort, or what he calls “the action of the mind” is what principally constitutes the exercise of genius. Is curiosity on its own sufficient to give rise to the action of the mind and exert an epistemic subject's genius? For instance, by appealing to İnan's account of curiosity, it can be said that curiosity, on its own, is an action of the mind. İnan mentions that “to ask a question out of curiosity is a mental act that triggers a thinking process that results in a mental change” (p. 12). Accordingly, one might wish to suggest that asking an intelligent question that nobody has ever asked before can be thought of as an action of the mind.

Having said that, Hume highlights the importance of inquiry in the section devoted to curiosity several times. However, he does not explicitly state that the action of the mind cannot take place without an inquiry. Hence, one might perhaps insist that curiosity can lead to the action of the mind, even if it does not initiate an inquiry. However, Hume's account of passions and curiosity does not seem to support this view. For Hume, it is evident that human passions originate from pleasure and pain in the human soul; they are not products of the operations of the human mind. Since he describes curiosity as a passion, a kind of love that has an epistemic content, it seems more reasonable to maintain that curiosity cannot, on its own, be considered an action of the mind in a Humean framework.

Furthermore, in the section devoted to curiosity, Hume seems to affirm that curiosity requires an inquiry process that extends over time and in which an action of the mind can take place. Recall that Hume characterizes curiosity as “the first source of all our enquiries” (T 2.3.10.1; 448). It means that, for Hume, there cannot be an inquiry that is not initiated by curiosity. Thus, if one accepts that an inquiry is necessary for the action of the mind, one should also admit that the action of the mind is derived from neither curiosity nor inquiry alone, but from their combination. Accordingly, what fulfills one of Hume's conditions by exerting genius is neither curiosity nor inquiry alone, but it is their combination.

Is it possible to argue that Hume not only gives an account of the value of curiosity but also an account of the value of inquiry in the *Treatise's* section devoted to curiosity?

If we accept that the exercise of genius cannot take place in the absence of an inquiry given Hume’s account of curiosity, then we should also accept that what is considered pleasurable and thus valuable *both* curiosity and inquiry are valuable as long as they are pleasurable.

Let us now move onto the role of the epistemic end in the exercise of genius. Another difficulty in examining Hume’s view on the value of curiosity is that he does not make clear whether or not curiosity needs to lead to the knowledge of what they are curious about in order to exert genius. Is it possible for curiosity to exert genius even if an epistemic subject does not attain the knowledge of what they are curious about? In the *Treatise*’s section, Hume writes, “But beside the action of the mind, which is the principal foundation of the pleasure, there is likewise requir’d a degree of success in the attainment of the end, or the discovery of that truth we examine”, and continues, “where the mind pursues any end with passion; tho’ that passion be not deriv’d originally from the end, but merely from the action and pursuit; yet by the natural course of the affections, we acquire a concern for the end itself, and are uneasy under any disappointment we meet with in the pursuit of it” (T 2.3.10.7; 451). Recall that the action of the mind is what principally gives rise to the exercise of genius. In addition to this, the abovementioned quote indicates that an epistemic subject also needs to attain a degree of epistemic success in order to get pleasure from inquiry initiated by curiosity. What does Hume mean by a *degree* of success in the attainment of the epistemic end?”

Perhaps it might be said that curiosity cannot exert genius if the epistemic subject does not achieve the epistemic end *that they have targeted*. In other words, for curiosity to exert genius, an epistemic subject needs to attain *specifically* the knowledge of they are curious about. However, this sort of interpretation poses a serious challenge. If Hume believes that curiosity cannot exert genius without the knowledge of the object of curiosity, then he cannot accept that insatiable curiosity has the capacity to exert genius and give pleasure. This is because it is epistemically impossible for the epistemic subject to come to know about the object of insatiable curiosity. In this case, we cannot argue that insatiable curiosity is pleasurable and come up with a Humean explanation for the value of curiosity.

Alternatively, it also seems possible to defend the view that the knowledge of the object of curiosity is not strictly needed for the exercise of genius. To understand the role of knowledge in the exercise of genius, it is useful to distinguish between two epistemic ends that an epistemic subject can possibly attain: one is the knowledge of the

object of curiosity, and the other is *any* piece of knowledge regarded as important. Accordingly, it can be said that an epistemic achievement is necessary for the exercise of genius, but this epistemic achievement does not have to be the knowledge of the object of curiosity. There is good reason to consider an important piece of knowledge, which is not the knowledge of the object of curiosity, a *degree* of epistemic success. The textual evidence seems to support the view that the exercise of genius can come in degrees, and curiosity can exert genius in proportion to the degree of epistemic success. It also means that the pleasure an epistemic subject gets from curiosity and the value of curiosity can come in degrees: the subject gets a degree of pleasure in proportion to the degree of the exercise of their genius, and in parallel to this, curiosity is valuable in proportion to the degree of pleasure.

It seems more plausible to interpret Hume as maintaining the acquisition of the knowledge of what an epistemic subject is curious about is not necessarily needed for the exercise of genius. This is because Hume is widely held as skeptical about many different issues. If the knowledge of what an epistemic subject is curious about were strictly necessary for the exercise of genius, then Hume’s curiosity about unknowable things would not have the capacity to exert genius. Undoubtedly, Hume, as one of the greatest minds of all time, attained important epistemic achievements and exerted his genius even if he did not acquire the knowledge of what he was curious about.

3.2 *The Fixed Attention*

So far, we have explained how curiosity can exert an epistemic subject’s genius and fulfills one of Hume’s conditions for being pleasurable. In this section, I would like to talk about how curiosity fixes an epistemic subject’s attention. In the section devoted to curiosity, Hume says that “but tho’ the exercise of genius be the principal source of that satisfaction we receive from the sciences, yet I doubt, if it be alone sufficient to give us any considerable enjoyment. The truth we discover must also be of some importance” (T 2.3.10.4; 449). Later in the section, he also notes, “if the importance of the truth be requisite to compleat the pleasure, ’tis not on account of any considerable addition, which of itself it brings to our enjoyment, but only because ’tis, in some measure, requisite to fix our attention” (T 2.3.10.6; 451). From these quotes, we can understand that Hume believes the exercise of genius is not on its own sufficient for pleasure. For him, pleasure derives not only from the exercise of genius alone, but from the combination of the exercise of genius and fixed attention. Furthermore, Hume holds that

the epistemic subject needs to attach importance to the *targeted* epistemic end – be it truth or knowledge – in order to get pleasure from curiosity and inquiry. Note that, according to Hume, the importance attached to the epistemic end is not the principal source of pleasure. Instead, it is required only to fix the attention. However, it is unclear what Hume means by “fixing the attention”. What exactly is it that fixes an epistemic subject’s attention? Is it curiosity, an inquiry, targeted epistemic end, or attained epistemic end?

Surely, there are many things of which we are ignorant. However, we become curious only about some of them. It is worthwhile to mention once again that, according to İnan’s account of curiosity, curiosity is an interest-relative term. For an epistemic subject to become curious about an object, they need to be interested in that object. An epistemic subject can consider an object as important and valuable and thus grow an interest in that object. Sometimes an epistemic subject is interested in an object even when they do not consider it valuable (İnan, 2012, p. 183). For instance, when an epistemic subject is curious about where to eat the best pizza in Napoli, they regard the place as valuable. On the other hand, when police officers are curious about who the murderer is, they do not consider the murderer as valuable, but they attach importance to it. Based on this consideration, it seems reasonable to say that what an epistemic subject is interested in is always what one attaches importance to – after all, nobody grows an interest in an object that they find unimportant.

In the *Treatise*’s section devoted to curiosity, Hume presents two analogies: the first analogy is between hunting and philosophy, and the second is between gaming and philosophy. It appears that Hume presents these analogies mainly to explain how curiosity fixes an epistemic subject’s attention. However, in these analogies, he also explains how fixed attention contributes to the exercise of genius. Let us now analyze the hunting analogy. Here is the passage where Hume draws attention to the similarity between philosophy and hunting:

To illustrate all this by a similar instance, I shall observe, that there cannot be two passions more nearly resembling each other, than those of hunting and philosophy, whatever disproportion may at first sight appear betwixt them. ’Tis evident, that the pleasure of hunting consists in the action of the mind and body; the motion, the attention, the difficulty, and the uncertainty, ’Tis evident likewise, that these actions must be attended with an idea of utility, in order to their having any effect upon us. A man of the greatest fortune, and the farthest remov’d from avarice, tho’ he takes a pleasure in hunting after partridges and pheasants, feels no satisfaction in shooting crows and magpies; and that

because he considers the first as fit for the table, and the other as entirely useless, Here 'tis certain, that the utility or importance of itself causes no real passion, but is only requisite to support the imagination; and the same person, who overlooks a ten times greater profit in any other subject, is pleas'd to bring home half a dozen woodcocks or plovers, after having employ'd several hours in hunting after them. To make the parallel betwixt hunting and philosophy more compleat, we may observe, that tho' in both cases the end of our action may in itself be despis'd, yet in the heat of the action we acquire such an attention to this end, that we are very uneasy under any disappointments, and are sorry when we either miss our game, or fall into any error in our reasoning (T 2.3.10.8; 451 – 452).

In this passage, Hume, first, points out that the pleasure that a hunter gets from hunting arises substantially out of the physical and mental effort. Obviously, hunting is a complex action that requires great physical and mental effort. For a person to hunt, they need to possess certain physical abilities and cognitive faculties. Obviously, they need to be able to move their body appropriately, use their practical reasoning, know how to use certain equipment, and so on. According to Hume, this complex structure of hunting is what gives rise to the action of the mind, where the action of the mind is the primary source of pleasure. However, Hume also emphasizes that the hunter needs to target the birds that they see as important, profitable, and fit for the table in order to get pleasure from hunting. Brand (2009) comments on the usefulness of the targeted birds:

The idea of useful results engages just enough attention to motivate overstrained thought for discovering a prey or a truth. Duck or geese make a good meal but it would be easier to buy one than to hunt for one. Why are we proud of our small catch when we can purchase a large fish at the market? The truths we pursue do not have to be worthwhile, nor should they be useless. They sit somewhere in between. Before we put ourselves through the effort of searching for a truth, our work needs the support that its discovery is worth the trouble although, in a sense, we have already decided to go on with the pursuit come what may (p. 94).

As Brand's passage makes clear, Hume believes that a hunter does not get motivated to chase after birds if they do not see them as important. Surely, a person gets motivated much more easily to put mental and physical effort *for* what they believe is important and profitable. It seems that, for Hume, the importance attached to those birds is what causes curiosity to fix the hunter's attention on these birds. Similarly, the importance attached to an unknown object is what causes curiosity to fix an epistemic subject's attention on *that* object. Since an epistemic subject's attention is fixed on a

specific unknown object viewed as important, they can get easily motivated to proceed with an inquiry and pursue the knowledge of that object.

Let us now examine Hume’s analogy between gaming and philosophy. Here is the passage where he presents his analogy between philosophy and gaming:

If we want another parallel to these affections, we may consider the passion of gaming, which affords a pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy. It has been remark’d, that the pleasure of gaming arises not from interest alone; since many leave a sure gain for this entertainment: Neither is it deriv’d from the game alone; since the same persons have no satisfaction, when they play for nothing: But proceeds from both these causes united, tho’ separately they have no effect. ’Tis here, as in certain chymical preparations, where the mixture of two clear and transparent liquids produces a third, which is opaque and colour’d. The interest, which we have in any game, engages our attention, without which we can have no enjoyment, either in that or in any other action, Our attention being once engag’d, the difficulty, variety, and sudden reverses of fortune, still farther interest us; and ’tis from that concern our satisfaction arises (T 2.3.10.9–10; 452).

First, as can be seen in this analogy, a person can get pleasure from the game only when they are interested in the reward. If that person does not see the reward as important, they do not even get motivated to join in the game. This, however, does not mean that pleasure arises merely from the importance attached to the reward. Instead, Hume advocates the view that pleasure derives neither from the game nor the reward alone, but from their combination. As can be understood easily from the analogy, the game, which is the *process* extending over time and having both mental and physical aspects, is the main source of pleasure. This is because the action of the mind can arise *during* the game. Similarly, curiosity that does not lead to an inquiry cannot give pleasure to an epistemic subject because the action of the mind can arise *during* an inquiry. However, according to Hume, for the game to be pleasurable, the person also needs to consider the reward as important and valuable. As he notes, “when we are careless and inattentive, the same action of the understanding has no effect upon us, nor is able to convey any of that satisfaction [pleasure], which arises from it, when we are in another disposition” (T 2.3.10.6; 450). As Brand (2009) notes, “Although both causes are united, mental activity and an interest in results, Hume remains clear on this throughout. The value of curiosity lies mainly in concentrated, mental activity, the strain of thought that is needed to understand or to discover a truth. Its importance, or potential utility value, although necessary to complete the pleasure of curiosity, is not a

major addition. Its imaginary impact on the world serves only to increase our attention to the project at hand” (p. 93). For an epistemic subject to get pleasure from the action of the mind engendered by the game, this mental action should be intended *for* something to which they attach importance. In sum, both the hunting analogy and the gaming analogy show that the exercise of genius constituted by the action of the mind is not sufficient on its own and needs to be coupled with fixed attention in order to give pleasure and be valuable.

3.3 *Hume on Pleasure*

The previous section has provided a detailed analysis of the relevant passages from the *Treatise*’s section devoted to curiosity. It has attempted to explain how curiosity can give pleasure to an epistemic subject. In Hume’s view, curiosity needs to fulfill two necessary conditions in order to be pleasurable: it needs to exert an epistemic subject’s genius and fix their attention. In this section, I would like to elaborate more on how Hume’s explication of the relationship between curiosity and pleasure reflects his view on the value of curiosity.

Since Hume defines curiosity as the love of truth, as the love of knowledge, let us first take a look at the following passage, where he explains the relation between passions and pleasure: “the passions, both direct and indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure, and that in order to produce an affection of any kind, ’tis only requisite to present some good or evil. Upon the removal of pain and pleasure there immediately follows a removal of love and hatred, pride and humility, desire, and aversion, and of most of our reflective or secondary impressions” (T 2.3.9.1; 438). As can be understood from this passage, curiosity, as the love of truth, or knowledge, is founded on pleasure. Furthermore, he writes, “The chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind is pleasure or pain; and when these sensations are remov’d, both from our thought and feeling, we are, in a great measure, incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition.” (T 3.3.1.2; 574). Given this quote, if human beings were deprived of the sensations of pain and pleasure, they would not be able to become curious.

In the Editor’s Preface of *Enquiry*, Beauchamp allocates a brief summary of Hume’s account of passions, that facilitates us to better understand what Hume actually thinks about the relation between curiosity and pleasure. As he writes, “the passions – which Hume often calls sentiments – are comprised of emotions, feelings, and desires. Hume contends that particular passions are caused in persons by previous impressions

or ideas. For example, we fear, hope, grieve, love, and hate based on some prior experience, such as witnessing a shocking event or having a love affair” (EHU Intro. 3.2; 15). By appealing to Beauchamp’s explanation, we can suggest that, given Hume’s theory of passions, what gives rise to positive passions, such as love, joy, desire, and so on, is the prior experiences of these passions, that have been pleasurable. It also seems possible to assert that Hume believes that positive passions arise in anticipation of new pleasurable experiences. According to this, then, we can maintain that, in Hume’s view, curiosity arises from prior pleasurable experiences of curiosity and in anticipation of a new experience of curiosity, that will be pleasurable.

Some commentators tend to interpret Hume as a hedonist. Having said that, it is also important to bear in mind that there are different versions of hedonism. For instance, psychological hedonism, which is also referred to as motivational hedonism, defends the view that all human actions are motivated by the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. (Sumner, 1996, p. 83; De Bres, 2014, p. 336). It is possible to argue that Hume’s view on pain and pleasure leads to psychological hedonism given that he claims, “there is implanted in the human mind a perception of pain and pleasure, as the chief spring and moving principle of all its actions” (T 1.3.10.2; 118). Another version of hedonism is called axiological hedonism and concentrates specifically on the characterization of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in terms of “pleasure” and “pain” (De Bres, 2014, p. 336; Dorsey, 2015, p. 247). It is also possible to suggest that Hume is an axiological hedonist, given that he notes, “Beside good and evil, *or in other words*, pain and pleasure, the direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable” (T 2.3.9.8; 439).¹⁷ According to Crisp, Hume’s hedonism is best described as evaluative hedonism. As he explains, “Hume’s evaluative theory is ultimately hedonistic. He might speak of the value of virtue, friendship, knowledge, kindness, or beauty, but this is on the understanding that such things are good only insofar as they instantiate or promote pleasure. It is worth noting that this hedonism is just one form of welfarism. For Hume, anything can be valuable only insofar as it promotes the welfare or well-being of individuals” (Crisp, 2023, p. 17). Similarly, Dorsey (2015) maintains that Hume’s hedonism is best described as “a version of qualitative hedonism with ... a clear and compelling rationale for the relative value of higher and lower pleasures” (p. 245). According to qualitative hedonism, he explains, “pleasures that conform to the true standard of taste are more valuable than those that do

¹⁷ Italic emphasis is mine.

not” and “it is possible, for instance, for a short-duration pleasure that conforms to the standard of taste to be better, a more substantial contribution to welfare, than a long duration pleasure that does not” (Dorsey, 2015, p. 257).

Here, I do not wish to engage in a discussion about which version of hedonism best explains Hume’s views on the value of pleasure. This is because it goes way beyond the scope of this thesis. Despite the fact that there are different versions of hedonism that can be attributed to Hume, all these versions can be said to share the following commitment: pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically valuable. It might be difficult to insist that Hume believes pleasure is the *only* thing that is intrinsically valuable. Hedonism might perhaps be an unnecessarily strong position to attribute to him. Nevertheless, given the abovementioned quotes from Hume, it is possible to maintain that he considers pleasure at least one of the things that is intrinsically valuable.

In his essay titled “The Skeptic”, Hume allocates an interesting passage, where he proposes certain considerations regarding the value of things. He writes: “If we can depend upon any principle, which we learn from philosophy, this, I think, may be considered as certain and undoubted, that there is nothing, in itself, valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection” (E 18.8; 162). Moreover, he continues, “The passion alone, arising from the original structure and formation of human nature, bestows a value on the most insignificant object” (E 18.10; 163). In *Treatise*, he also notes, “A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure; and what is more, their goodness is determin’d merely by the pleasure” (T 3.1.2.4; 472). On Hume’s account of pleasure, passions, including curiosity, have the power to render things at which they aim valuable, even if those things are not intrinsically valuable. Based on the textual evidence, it might perhaps be said that Hume believes truth, or knowledge, does not have an intrinsic value but has an extrinsic value in virtue of being aimed by curiosity. One might also react to this by saying that, for Hume, knowledge is valuable *not only* because curiosity aims at it. According to this possible objection, knowledge can also be intrinsically valuable, and curiosity simply adds to the value of knowledge by aiming at it.

So, what about the value of curiosity? What makes curiosity valuable if it ever is? Assuming that curiosity, just like the other (positive) passions, seek for new pleasurable experiences, it might perhaps be argued that curiosity has a non-instrumental extrinsic value in virtue of seeking for pleasure. Let us now take a look at the following passage:

“What is easy and obvious is never valu’d ... even what is *in itself* difficult, if we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded. We love to trace the demonstrations of mathematicians; but shou’d receive small entertainment from a person, who shou’d barely inform us of the proportions of lines and angles, tho’ we repos’d the utmost confidence both in his judgment and veracity. In this case ’tis sufficient to have ears to learn the truth” (T 2.3.10.3; 449). As this passage makes clear, an epistemic must strive for the knowledge of what they are curious about in order to get pleasure. When they are curious about an object but acquire the knowledge of that object *easily*, their curiosity fails to give them pleasure and be valuable. Since the value of curiosity depends *solely* on the external conditions, we cannot argue that it has an intrinsic value. Furthermore, since curiosity cannot be regarded as valuable if it fails to give pleasure, we cannot insist that it has a non-instrumental extrinsic value in virtue of aiming at pleasure. Therefore, based on Hume’s account of the value of curiosity, we can conclude that curiosity can be valuable *only* in virtue of being *successful* in bringing about pleasure. In other words, curiosity can be valuable *only* insofar as it promotes pleasure.

Chapter 4:

INSATIABLE CURIOSITY AS THE SOURCE OF PLEASURE

This thesis suggests a consideration of the *Treatise*'s section devoted to curiosity in light of Hume's *own* philosophical inquiry into causation. In the previous chapter, I have offered a novel interpretation, according to which Hume's explication of the relation between curiosity and pleasure marks his view on the value of curiosity. At the end, I have proposed some considerations regarding what kind of value it is that Hume would attribute to curiosity. Now the aim of this present chapter is two-fold: First, it aims to show that Hume's curiosity about causation can be well taken as insatiable. Second, it aims to elaborate on how insatiable curiosity can fix an epistemic subject's attention and exert their genius. Upon showing that insatiable curiosity has the capacity to fulfill Hume's two conditions for being pleasurable, this chapter proposes a Humean explanation in favor of the view that insatiable curiosity is instrumentally valuable in virtue of bringing about pleasure.

4.1 *Hume's Skeptical Challenge*

In this thesis, I have suggested that an epistemic subject's curiosity is insatiable when the object of their curiosity is unknowable to them. I have also explained that the unknowability of an object stems from epistemic impossibility rather than practical impossibility. It means that an object is unknowable to an epistemic subject when their mental and cognitive faculties do not enable them to get in epistemic contact with that object.

Having said that, there is an extensive scholarship that specifically focuses on Hume's explanation of the idea of causation. Despite the fact that there are different interpretations of Hume's view on causation, they all seem to be sharing the view that Hume arrives at skeptical conclusions with respect to causation.

As mentioned earlier, this thesis is not intended to offer a correct reading of Hume's explanation of the idea of causation. Instead, his skeptical conclusions about causation are of concern only to the extent that they can provide an example of insatiable curiosity. Nonetheless, this present section seeks to rule out this possible worry as much as it can, reinforce the idea that Hume believes causation is an

unknowable object, and demonstrate that his curiosity about causation is an example of insatiable curiosity.

It appears that the Hume scholarship divides roughly into two rival camps. One camp is called “the traditional view”, which is also referred to as “the standard view” or “the positivist view”. The other camp is called “The New Hume” or “the skeptical realism”. In the following two subsections, I attempt to explain in what respect Hume can be argued to be skeptical about causation.

4.1.1 *The Traditional View*

The traditional view argues that Hume believes that causation is nothing but regular succession of events.¹⁸ As Beebe (2007) makes clear, the proponents of the traditional view insist that Hume understands causation as follows: “one event *a* causes another, *b*, just if *a* is prior to and contiguous with *b*, and events similar to *a* are constantly conjoined with events similar to *b*. Causation, on this view, just is regular association: there is no ‘tie’ or connection of any sort between *a* and *b*” (p. 224).

On the traditional reading, Hume never commits himself to the idea that there are necessary causal connections that underlie the observed regular successions, or secret causal powers in “causes” that link them to their “effects”. For instance, let the cause be “the impulse of billiard ball” and the effect be “the motion of another billiard ball”. Under normal conditions, when one observes a billiard ball hitting another billiard ball, one expects to observe the motion of the second billiard ball under normal conditions. Let us call “the impulse of billiard ball” B_1 , and call the “the motion of another billiard ball” B_2 . Here is what Hume writes about the interaction of two billiard balls:

When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the *outward* senses” (EHU 2.7.1.6; 136).

¹⁸ Among the scholars who argue that Hume reduces causation to mere regular succession of events are Kenneth Winkler, David Pears, and Paul Millican.

As can be understood from the abovementioned quote, Hume explains that when one observes a “causal” interaction between B_1 and B_2 , the only impression one gets is the impression of two successive and yet distinct events. One gets neither an impression of a necessary causal connection, as a separate third item, underlying the interaction between B_1 and B_2 nor an impression of a secret causal power in B_1 that brings about B_2 (Demirli, 2005, pp. 218 – 219). The traditional view takes the lack of an impression of necessary causal connection that holds between B_1 and B_2 and the lack of an impression of a secret causal power in B_1 as the basis for their explanation that Hume reduces causation merely to regular succession. It seems that Hume can be interpreted as arriving at skeptical conclusions with respect to causation by appealing the traditional view. So, by appealing to the traditional view, is it possible to claim that Hume is skeptical about causation? One might perhaps say that Hume cannot be said to be skeptical about causation once he reduces causation to regular succession: in Hume’s view, regular succession seems to be something that one can have the impression of.

However, even if Hume takes causation merely as regular succession, it seems possible to claim that he is skeptical about causation. It appears that, on Hume’s view, even if one can have certain *past* and *present* impressions of regular succession of events, one cannot know that there is *regularity* as a general principle operating in nature.

Hume says that “all reasonings concerning matter of fact [inductive reasoning] seem to be founded on the relation of Cause and Effect. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses” (EHU 2.4.1.4; 109). Here is also what Beebee (2006) says about the relation between inductive reasoning and causal inferences: “Causation and induction are often treated, both in twentieth-century analytic philosophy and in discussion of Hume, as distinct topics. But for Hume, causation and inference from the observed to the unobserved are inseparable: we come to believe that *Cs* are causes of *Es* just *because* we instinctively infer *Es* from *Cs*” (p. 7). Given this quote, it can be understood that, on Hume’s account, the idea of causation is founded on our inductive inferences. If one believes Hume reduces causation to regular succession, then it can also be said, the idea of regular succession is founded on our inductive inferences.

However, in Hume’s view, inductive inferences seem to pose a serious problem regarding the justification of our causal judgements. For instance, suppose that the impulse of one billiard ball, B_1 , and the motion of another billiard ball, B_2 , are two

distinct event-types, where B_1 is the “cause” of B_2 , and B_2 is the “effect” of B_1 . Suppose further B_1 has so far brought about B_2 . According to the problem of induction, as Beebe (2006) explains, the fact B_1 has regularly brought about B_2 does not entail that B_1 will bring about B_2 regularly in the future (p. 37). It is possible that B_1 *will* not bring about B_2 . Therefore, it can be suggested that since one cannot rely upon inductive inferences, one is not justified in claiming that there is a regularity between B_1 and B_2 . According to this consideration, it seems that one is justified in claiming only that B_1 and B_2 have been *so far* regularly successive.

It seems that for one to know that there is regular succession, as a general law, between events, one needs to rest upon “the uniformity principle”, according to which “that instances, of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same” (T 1.3.6.4; 89). It seems that, on Hume’s view, what makes one claim to know that there is a regular succession between B_1 and B_2 is one’s presupposition that nature is always uniformly ordered in a way that necessitates the future to resemble the past. In other words, what makes one claim to know that there is a regular succession, as a general law, between B_1 and B_2 is one’s presupposition that B_1 will bring about B_2 . So upon realizing the unobserved future does not necessarily resemble the observed past, one might not reasonably claim to know that there is a regular succession between B_1 and B_2 .

As Hume says, “all reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely, demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and moral [inductive] reasoning, or that concerning matter of fact and existence” (EHU 2.4.2.18; 115). Accordingly, it can be said that while truths of propositions that concern relation of ideas are shown by demonstrative reasoning, truths of propositions that concern matter of facts are shown by moral, or inductive, reasoning. As the editor of the *Enquiry*, Beauchamp shares some considerations and says that “Hume presents us with a dilemma: because all reasoning is either inductive or demonstrative, any reasoning in support of induction must follow one of these two models” (EHU Intro.5.5; 28). So, can one come to know *a priori* that B_1 will bring about B_2 by demonstrative reasoning?

Unfortunately, in Hume’s view, one cannot come to know *a priori* that B_1 will bring about B_2 . For Hume, all truths shown by demonstrative reasoning express necessary truths that cannot turn out to be false and whose negation would lead to a contradiction. However, the proposition that “ B_1 will bring about B_2 ” does not express

necessary truth. As Hume explains, “That there are no demonstrative arguments in the case, seems evident; since it implies no contradiction, that the course of nature may change, and that an object, seemingly like those which we have experienced, may be attended with different or contrary effects” (EHU 2.4.2.18; 115). Since the impulse of a billiard ball might not yield the motion of another billiard ball in the future, the truth of the proposition that “ B_1 will bring about B_2 ” cannot be shown by demonstrative reasoning; that is, one cannot come to know a priori that B_1 will bring about B_2 .

According to Hume, one cannot come to know that B_1 will bring about B_2 by inductive reasoning either. As Beebee (2006) explains: “Suppose, for example, that we say that the inductive inference from past regularity to future regularity is justified because inductive inferences are generally reliable: they do not guarantee the truth of the conclusion, but, by and large, if we are careful, the conclusions of inductive arguments turn out to be true. But what is the justification for holding that inductive inferences are in general reliable? Only that they have been reliable in the past. So the claim that inductive inferences are in general reliable can only be established by appealing to induction – to get us from ‘inductive inferences have been reliable in the past’ to ‘inductive inferences will be reliable in the future’ – and hence our attempted solution to the problem presupposes what it is supposed to show” (p. 37). From this passage, it can be proposed the following consideration: For one to know that B_1 will bring about B_2 , one needs to know that one can reliably infer future regularities (B_1 will bring about B_2) from past regularities (B_1 has been brought about B_2 regularly in the past). For one to reliably infer future regularities from past regularities, one needs to know that the future will resemble the past. However, one cannot know that the future will resemble the past without knowing one can reliably infer future regularities from past regularities. As Hume explains, “To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question (EHU 2.4.2.19; 115). The consideration suggested above also appears to be in line with the traditional reading of Hume’s idea of causation. For instance, Winkler (2016), as one of the defenders of the traditional view, writes the following:

Can reason do better when it has more than a present impression—a triggering object—to go on? Will recollecting past conjunctions [regularity] enable it to see what lies ahead? Here, too, Hume’s answer is negative. If reason determined us, Hume claims, it would have to proceed on the following principle: “instances, of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have

had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same.” But reason cannot arrive at a conclusion of this nature (T 1.3.6.4/88–9). It would have to do so either by demonstrative or probable reasoning. But there can be no demonstrative arguments for the principle, because “we can at least conceive a change in the course of nature; which sufficiently proves, that such a change is not absolutely impossible” (T 1.3.6.5/89). And there can be no probable arguments either, because any probable argument for the principle would, as a probable argument, rest on that very principle, which means that it could not be the source of our commitment to it (p. 205).

As can also be seen in Winkler’s passage, Hume maintains that one cannot come to know that B_1 will bring about B_2 – either by demonstrative reasoning or inductive reasoning. Thus, it follows that Hume believes one cannot know *whether* B_1 will bring about B_2 . Since Hume holds that it is not possible for one to come to know whether B_1 will bring about B_2 , it can be concluded that Hume believes one cannot know *whether* there is a regular succession, as a general law, between B_1 and B_2 . It seems that even if the traditional reading is correct and Hume reduces causation to mere regular succession, he can be argued to be skeptical about causation: in his view, *whether* there is regular succession in nature is unknowable.

4.1.2 The New Hume

The New Hume has emerged to challenge the traditional interpretation.¹⁹ For Hume, it is clear that when one observes two events that are “causally” interacting, one gets no impression but the two distinct events that are successive in a regular fashion. The New Hume holds that, in stating this, Hume neither means to suggest we can reduce causation to mere regular succession, nor does he mean to make a negative ontological claim about the existence of a necessary causal connection, or a secret causal powers. For instance, Blackburn (1993) proposes a clear explanation of the New Hume interpretation in the following passage: “The sceptical realist view denies that Hume offers any such reduction or analysis of the notion of causation. It takes seriously the many passages in which Hume appears to allow that we are talking of some thick notion of dependence of one event on another, going beyond regular succession. It takes it that Hume acknowledges that there is some such thick relation, even if it will be one about whose nature and extent we are doomed to ignorance” (p. 94). Similarly, Demirli (2005) writes, “The new Hume clearly holds that there is a discrepancy between what

¹⁹Among the scholars who defend the New Hume interpretation are Galen Strawson, John Wright and E. Craig.

we know of causation and what causation in itself is; causal relations in so far as we know them can be analyzed in terms of regular successions of causes and effects; but evidently, he [Hume] thinks, causation is more than that; there are ‘necessary connections’ that must be taken into consideration” (p. 217). According to the proponents of the New Hume, Hume believes that there is causation in nature. They argue that he understands *causation* as a necessary connection, or a secret causal power, whose nature is unknowable. Furthermore, in their view, Hume maintains that all we can know about the nature of causation is that it underlies all the regular successions taking place in nature.

For instance, Wright (1983), one of the proponents of the New Hume, says that “it seems to me undeniable that one misses the central aim of Hume’s sceptical philosophy unless one recognizes that he consistently maintained the point of view that there are real powers and forces in nature which are not directly accessible to our senses (p. 129). Similarly, Strawson (1989) contends that Hume commits himself to the existence of a necessary causal connection of which one can never come to know. In the following passage, he presents the summary of his reading of Hume’s the idea of causation:

“Hume is certainly making the negative sceptical epistemological claim that (1) we cannot know anything about the nature of Causation in the objects. He’s certainly not making the non-sceptical, dogmatic, ontological-metaphysical claim that (2) there is no such thing as Causation in the objects, and that Causation does not exist. On the contrary. Although he’s a strictly non-committal sceptic with respect to *knowledge* claims about the ultimate nature of reality, he firmly *believes* that there is an external reality of realist or at least basic-realist objects, and he takes it for granted that (3) Causation does exist in reality, although we are entirely ignorant of its ultimate nature” (Strawson, 1989, p. 201).²⁰

By appealing to the New Hume interpretation, Hume can be argued to be skeptical about causation. According to the defenders of the New Hume reading, Hume does not take causation merely as a regular succession. Instead, he understands it as a necessary connection or a mysterious kind of power that underlies all the regular succession. Moreover, on this reading, Hume has a firm belief that there is causation. Thus, by appealing to the New Hume reading, it does not seem possible to suggest that Hume is skeptical about the existence of causation given that he believes there is a necessary connection or power. However, what he considers to be unknowable is rather the nature

²⁰Italic emphasis is original.

of necessary causal connection. According to the defenders of this view, Hume maintains that all one can ever know about causation is that it can be analyzed in terms of regular succession, but the rest of its nature is completely unknowable. Therefore, based on the New Hume reading, it can be concluded that Hume is not skeptical about *whether* there is causation, but he is skeptical about *what* causation is.

4.2 *Can Insatiable Curiosity Promote Pleasure?*

So far, we have demonstrated that Hume's explanation of the idea of causation can be interpreted as skepticism about causation. In doing so, we have elucidated how his curiosity about causation can be taken as an example of insatiable curiosity. The traditional reading supports the view that Hume is unable to come to know *whether* there is causation. On this reading, it can be argued that what Hume is skeptical about is the existence of causation. The New Hume reading, on the other hand, supports the view that Hume is unable to come to know about the *real nature* of causation. On this reading, since Hume firmly believes that there is "causation" operating in nature, his skepticism can be best described as skepticism about the nature of causation.

Considering the aim of this thesis, however, it does not actually seem to matter whether it is the existence or the real nature of causation that Hume is skeptical about. By appealing to Inan's theory of curiosity, Hume's curiosity about causation can be analyzed as follows: Hume represents "causation" as the unknown entity in his mind, constructs an inostensible term referring to the unknown, and raises several whether-and wh-questions about causation out of curiosity. Perhaps, when he asked these questions, he did not even commit himself to the existence of causation. It might be the case that he simply *presupposed* the existence of causation when inquiring into it. On an alternative scenario, he *indeed* believed that there is causation while anticipating the acquisition of knowledge about its real nature. It seems difficult, and even unnecessary to determine whether Hume was curious about the existence or the real nature of causation. It appears that Hume tackled not only the question of whether there is causation in nature but also some further relevant questions regarding the nature of causation, on the condition that it ever exists. Conceivably, he asked various whether-and wh- questions about causation over the course of his inquiry.

In the previous chapter, I have offered a novel interpretation of the section "Of Curiosity of the Love of Truth" from Book II in *Treatise*. According to this interpretation, Hume maintains that curiosity is valuable insofar as it is pleasurable. In

the section devoted to curiosity, he does not distinguish between satiable and insatiable curiosity. In fact, he does not even seem to consider the possibility that an epistemic subject can become curious about an entity that is unknowable to them. However, his skepticism about different matters must have certain bearings on his thoughts about the value of curiosity. In other words, given that he is skeptical about many different issues, he must be aware that epistemic subjects can become curious about things that are unknowable to them.

According to Hume's value theory, there is a sense in which anything can be said to have value insofar as it promotes pleasure. His value theory appears to be proposing a general answer to how something can be regarded as valuable. Here, what is interesting is to show whether insatiable curiosity can be argued to promote pleasure based on Hume's account of curiosity. Is it really possible to insist that insatiable curiosity has the capacity to give pleasure to an epistemic subject? Hume appears to propose two conditions that any kind of curiosity needs to fulfill in order to be pleasurable. The first precondition is to fix their attention, and the second is to exert the epistemic subject's genius. At first glance, it might be said that insatiable curiosity, which is curiosity about an unknowable object, can fix attention so long as one is interested in the object, however, it cannot exert genius given that it does not lead to the knowledge of what one is curious about. It might also be said that any sort of curiosity would not count as exerting genius unless it leads to the knowledge of what one is curious about. Can insatiable curiosity exert one's genius even if it does not lead to the knowledge of what one is curious about? Can insatiable curiosity fix attention on an object that one believes is unknowable? Is it possible to assert that there are some special ways in which *only* insatiable curiosity can exert genius and fix attention? In this section, I would like to concentrate on how insatiable curiosity exerts genius and fix attention. Upon showing that it can fix attention and exert genius as successfully as satiable curiosity does, we would be entitled to argue that insatiable curiosity can promote pleasure, and thus can be regarded as valuable based on Hume's value theory.

4.2.1 How Can Insatiable Curiosity Fix Attention?

When an epistemic subject has an insatiable curiosity about an unknowable object, there are two possible scenarios. On the first scenario, the epistemic subject does not have any prior opinion about the object of their curiosity as being unknowable. Under normal conditions, when an epistemic subject asks a question out of curiosity, they

presuppose that what they are curious about is knowable, and their question is answerable. However, if the subject is unaware that what they are curious about is, in fact, unknowable, their presupposition would be false. On the second scenario, the epistemic subject has an opinion about the object of their curiosity as being unknowable. It means that they believe correctly that their question is unanswerable, and their curiosity is insatiable.

It is important to realize that it is one thing that an epistemic subject *believes* their curiosity is insatiable, and it is another thing that their curiosity *is* insatiable. Surely, an epistemic subject might be wrong about their judgements about what is knowable, or unknowable. For instance, as mentioned earlier, Hume maintains that the nature of causation, and even whether it exists or not is unknowable, whereas Kant contends that causation is knowable to human beings (De Pierris & Friedman, 2018). In fact, Kant appears to hold that Hume is wrong about his judgment that causation is unknowable. The disagreement between Hume and Kant concerning the (un)knowability of causation shows that whether an epistemic subject *believes* curiosity about an object *x* is satiable (or insatiable) is relative to whether they believe *x* is knowable (or unknowable). However, whether curiosity about *x* *is* satiable or insatiable is not relative to whether an epistemic subject believes *x* is knowable or unknowable. Even if the subject believes that *x* is knowable, and their curiosity about *x* is satiable, their curiosity about *x* would be insatiable as long as *x* is unknowable to them. As explained previously, what determines whether an object is knowable or unknowable to an epistemic subject is the mental and cognitive faculties of that subject. Since both Hume and Kant belong to the same species sharing the same mental and cognitive faculties, causation must be knowable (or unknowable) to *both*, and either must be wrong about his judgement concerning the (un)knowability of causation.

In the section titled *Of Curiosity, or the Love of Truth*, Hume proposes several examples to illustrate how curiosity can fix attention. He appears to hold that curiosity can fix an epistemic subject's attention only if they attach importance to that object. It is no surprise that an epistemic subject can easily attach importance to what they believe is knowable – even if it is actually unknowable. Of course, this does not mean that an epistemic subject attaches importance to *all* that they believe is knowable, nor does it mean that they do not attach importance to anything which they believe is unknowable. Nevertheless, under normal conditions, an epistemic subject is more likely to attach importance to what they believe is knowable because knowledge is generally considered

as practically useful, and having material impact on our lives. Accordingly, it is intuitive to suggest that one is more likely to attach importance to what one believes is practically useful, or has material impact. An epistemic subject may believe that what they are curious about is knowable, and they might attach some degree of importance to the object of their curiosity. They also may discover later that the object of their curiosity is, in fact, unknowable, and their curiosity is insatiable. However, in this case, since curiosity fixes the subject's attention on the object *before* discovering the unknowability of that object, it can be concluded that insatiable curiosity can fix attention just as satiable curiosity does when the epistemic subject is unaware of the unknowability of the object of their curiosity.

The question I would like to tackle is rather this: Does an epistemic subject attach importance to an object that they believe is unknowable? Can insatiable curiosity fix an epistemic subject's attention even when they believe correctly that their curiosity is insatiable? After all, why would a person be interested in an unknowable object? Assuming that curiosity arises from the mental act of asking a question, why would even a person ask a question that they believe is unanswerable? Can an unanswerable question motivate an epistemic subject to inquire into what they are curious about?

As mentioned earlier, when an epistemic subject has an insatiable curiosity about an unknowable object, there are two possible scenarios: either an epistemic subject is unaware that their curiosity is insatiable, or they correctly believe that their curiosity is insatiable. This section focuses on the scenario in which an epistemic subject already believes their curiosity is insatiable. Ultimately, it aims to show that an epistemic subject can attach importance to an object that they believe is unknowable, and insatiable curiosity can fix attention even when they are aware that their curiosity is insatiable.

Recall that, in the section devoted to curiosity, Hume draws an analogy between hunting and philosophy. He explains that a hunter does not target birds that they find unimportant. That is to say, the hunter's attention would get fixed *only* on the birds to which they attach some degree of importance. Now, let us suppose that there is a species of bird called "Angelbird". Suppose further that no human being is able to hunt this bird due to their insufficient physical and mental abilities. In that case, would the hunter attach importance to, or be interested in Angelbird while being aware of the impossibility of a successful hunt? It seems that we can still argue that the hunter can grow an interest in Angelbird and go after it even if they believe it is impossible to hunt:

the hunter can possibly *presuppose* that they can hunt the bird while at the same time believing it is impossible to hunt. What is important to notice here is that the hunter's judgements about what can or cannot be hunted may turn out to be false and need some revision. It seems possible to argue that the hunter can grow an interest in Angelbird upon realizing the fallibility of their own judgements about what can or cannot be hunted. A reconsideration of whether success in hunting is possible on the next try can lead the hunter to attach importance to Angelbird. No doubt success in achieving an end that is generally considered unachievable is a significant triumph. It can be argued that the hunter's keen anticipation for a possible triumph contributes significantly to the importance attached to Angelbird.

Let us now apply this consideration to Hume's insatiable curiosity about causation. Perhaps, at the beginning of his inquiry, Hume was not aware that causation is unknowable, and his curiosity about causation is insatiable. If so, then his insatiable curiosity fixed his attention on causation just as any satiable curiosity about any knowable object would do. What if Hume was already aware that causation is unknowable, and his curiosity is insatiable? It also seems possible to propose that, despite his belief that causation is unknowable, he attached importance to causation, and his curiosity about causation fixed his attention. Similar to the hunter, Hume can be aware of the fallibility and revisability of his own judgements about what is knowable, or unknowable. He can initiate a philosophical inquiry into causation by presupposing that causation is knowable. It also means that he can reconsider whether success in attaining the knowledge of causation is epistemically possible, and consider the success in attaining the knowledge of causation a significant philosophical triumph. In the light of this, we can maintain that Hume's keen anticipation for a possible philosophical triumph significantly contributed to his interest in causation, enabled him to be curious about causation, and motivated him to inquire into causation despite his belief that causation is unknowable.

To sum, when an epistemic subject is aware that their judgements about what is knowable or unknowable are fallible, they can reconsider whether attaining the knowledge of an object they believe is unknowable is epistemically possible. A reconsideration of this possibility can lead them to attach importance to, and be interested in that object. Furthermore, the epistemic subject's keen anticipation for a possible triumph is very likely to contribute to their interest in an object considered unknowable: no doubt success in attaining the knowledge of what is generally

considered unknowable would be a significant philosophical triumph. Therefore, from a Humean standpoint, it seems possible to conclude that insatiable curiosity can fix an epistemic subject's attention even if they correctly believe that what they are curious about is unknowable to them.

Let us now move onto Hume's second analogy. In his second analogy between gaming and philosophy, he explains that for the gamer's attention to get fixed, they need to be interested in the reward and should not know if they win or lose the game. As Hume writes, "the pleasure of gaming arises not from interest [reward] alone; since many leave a sure gain for this entertainment: Neither is it deriv'd from the game alone; since the same persons have no satisfaction [pleasure], when they play for nothing: But proceeds from both these causes united, tho' separately they have no effect ... The interest, which we have in any game, engages our attention, without which we can have no enjoyment, either in that or in any other action" (T 2.3.10.10; 452). As this passage indicates, Hume contends that if the gamer already believes that they will lose the game, their attention cannot get fixed on the reward, and they cannot get any pleasure from the game. Similar to this, one might also argue that insatiable curiosity cannot fix an epistemic subject's attention when they already believe what they are curious about is unknowable. One might argue that the subject's insatiable curiosity cannot promote pleasure because it cannot fix attention. Thus, we might be compelled to conclude that insatiable curiosity cannot be valuable when the subject believes what they are curious about is unknowable. Can't we imagine a case in which the gamer already believes that they will lose the game, and yet their attention is fixed? Similarly, can't we imagine a case in which an epistemic subject believes that an object is unknowable, and yet their insatiable curiosity can fix their attention on *that* object?

Firstly, what an epistemic subject considers to be a "profit" can be manifested in different ways. Perhaps it is possible for an epistemic subject to believe that they can get some profit as a result of a game even if they believe they will lose the game. For instance, a standard chess player would probably have a firm belief that they cannot win any chess game that they would play against Bobby Fischer. Does it mean that the chess player would not be interested in that game? Does it mean that they would not get any profit as a result of that game? Does it mean that they would not get any pleasure from playing against Fischer? It seems that when the standard chess player plays against Fischer while believing they will definitely lose the game, they would not think they play for nothing. Instead, they would think there is *indeed* a "profit" that can be attained

not by winning but by *playing*: the game *itself* turns out to be the ultimate profit in the eyes of the standard chess player. When the standard chess player plays against Fischer, it may appear from the outside as if they are playing to win, but what they actually care about would be the *experience* of playing against Fischer. Furthermore, the player would also care about what playing against Fischer can teach them about chess. This game would surely help the player improve their chess skill. In the light of all these considerations, we can conclude that an epistemic subject can attach importance to an unattainable end even when they believe it is unattainable, if the pursuit of this end promises an alternative end that is attainable and still important. As explained above, in the standard chess player's case, the unattainable end is to win the game played against Fischer, and the alternative attainable end is the experience of playing against Fischer.

It seems possible to apply all these above-mentioned considerations to Hume's curiosity about causation. Conceivably, he can attach importance to causation while believing it is unknowable, if the inquiry into it promises an alternative epistemic achievement that is attainable and still important. Similarly, a philosopher can be curious about, let's say, the nature of a virtuous life. They might believe that the nature of a virtuous life is unknowable given their limited mental faculties and cognitive capacities. However, presupposing that the nature of a virtuous life is knowable, they can initiate an inquiry and conclude that a virtuous life is not a life in which money is the only valuable thing. As can be understood from this example, an epistemic subject can eliminate certain false beliefs about the object that they believe is unknowable. In this case, eliminating false beliefs about the unknowable object can be seen as an attainable but still an important epistemic achievement for that subject. Hence, it seems possible to suggest that an epistemic subject can grow an interest in the object that they believe is unknowable when the inquiry into that object promises an alternative epistemic achievement.

In sum, both from the hunting analogy and the gaming analogy, we can extract an explanation for how an epistemic subject can possibly attach importance to an object that they believe is unknowable to them. It means that both the hunting analogy and the gaming analogy provide us with some intuitions regarding the way in which insatiable curiosity can fix attention on an unknowable object. Showing that insatiable curiosity can fix an epistemic subject's attention on an unknowable object, to which they attach importance, it can be concluded that insatiable curiosity can fulfill one of Hume's conditions for being pleasurable.

4.2.2 How Can Insatiable Curiosity Exert Genius?

As explained in the previous section, there are two possible scenarios when an epistemic subject has an insatiable curiosity: on the first scenario, the subject does not have any prior opinion about the object of their curiosity as being knowable or unknowable, and on the second scenario, they correctly believe that what they are curious about is unknowable, and their curiosity is insatiable.

Let us now start by examining how insatiable curiosity can exert genius when the epistemic subject is not aware that their curiosity is insatiable. According to the relevant passages placed in the *Treatise*'s section, Hume maintains that the exercise of genius is constituted by "the action of the mind" that involves mental effort and encompasses various cognitive processes, such as thinking, reasoning, deliberating, knowing, questioning, understanding, doubting and so on. For instance, in Hume's view, a person can be well said to engage in "the action of the mind" when they elaborate on something, make logical inference, doubt the truth (or falsity) of their beliefs, question the plausibility of a philosophical explanation, try to understand the proof of a mathematical theorem, deliberate what grounds morally good actions, and so on. It appears that, on Hume's account, curiosity cannot exert genius if the epistemic subject is not occupied with certain advanced-level cognitive processes.

One might perhaps wish to say that curiosity can, on its own, be considered as an action of the mind. For instance, Inan's account of curiosity supports the view that curiosity is, on its own, an action of the mind given that, in his view, for an epistemic subject to be in the state of curiosity, they need to become aware of their own ignorance, represent the unknown entity in their mind, and construct an inostensible term referring to the unknown. Surely, it is questionable whether the idea that curiosity, on its own, is an action of the mind fits within Hume's account of curiosity given that he appears to hold that inquiry is an integral part of the action of the mind. Yet, one might perhaps wish to suggest that Hume would consider curiosity *itself* an action of the mind, and if we accept this, we have also accepted that he would consider insatiable curiosity *itself* an action of the mind that constitutes the exercise of genius. In this case, insatiable curiosity can be said to fulfill the two conditions for being pleasurable even without initiating an inquiry or yielding an epistemic achievement.

Alternatively, one might wish to contend that curiosity is not by itself an action of the mind that can constitute the exercise of genius given Hume's account of curiosity. Recall that, in the section devoted to curiosity, Hume emphasizes that pleasure lies

chiefly in the process of hunting and of gaming as they both involve physical and mental action. As we can understand from the two analogies, Hume gives considerable weight to the role of *process* in explaining how an epistemic subject can get pleasure from their curiosity.

It is important to bear in mind that we can imagine certain cases in which curiosity, either satiable or insatiable, for some reason, cannot motivate an epistemic subject to proceed with an inquiry. In the section devoted to curiosity, Hume makes clear that *all* inquiries arise from curiosity, however, he does not mention that *every* instance of curiosity should initiate an inquiry. In addition to this, we can imagine cases in which curiosity, either satiable or insatiable, initiates an inquiry and yet fails to exert genius. For instance, an epistemic subject might not use their rational and cognitive abilities as efficaciously as they are supposed to when inquiring into what they are curious about. In that case, their curiosity would not exert their genius and be pleasurable even if it initiates an inquiry. Nevertheless, in the light of all these considerations, it seems conceivable to interpret Hume as holding that epistemic subjects cannot count as engaging in “the action of the mind” in the absence of an inquiry initiated by curiosity.

If an epistemic subject presupposes that what they are curious about is knowable, they have also presupposed that they can possibly attain knowledge about what they are curious about at the end of an inquiry. It means that their insatiable curiosity can potentially motivate them to inquire into what they are curious about just as satiable curiosity would do. There seems to be no reason to suggest that insatiable curiosity cannot initiate an inquiry.

So far, we have made several observations and conjectures about the role of inquiry in the action of the mind. Let us now move onto the place of epistemic achievement in the exercise of genius when the subject is unaware that their curiosity is insatiable. It is worthwhile to recall that, in the section devoted to, Hume writes, “But beside the action of the mind, which is the principal foundation of the pleasure, there is likewise requir’d a degree of success in the attainment of the [epistemic] end, or the discovery of that truth we examine” (T 2.3.10.7; 451). As this quote indicates, Hume believes that curiosity not only needs to give rise to the action of the mind but also to produce an epistemic achievement in order to exert an epistemic subject’s genius. However, it is not clear what sort of epistemic achievement is needed for the exercise of genius. Does the exercise of genius specifically need the knowledge of what one is curious about? Given that insatiable curiosity is about an unknowable object, is it possible to argue that it can

exert genius? The idea that curiosity can exert an epistemic subject's genius by leading them to the knowledge of what they are curious about is compatible with the abovementioned quote. Alternatively, what Hume means by "a degree of success" can be interpreted as an important piece of knowledge, which is *not* the knowledge of what an epistemic subject is curious about. Suppose that Hume believes that the knowledge of the object of curiosity is strictly necessary for the exercise of genius. In this case, then, he also believes that his curiosity about causation, which is insatiable, has failed to exert his genius. However, considering that Hume is one of the greatest philosophers of all time, it is not reasonable to claim that his curiosity about causation has failed to exert his genius. Additionally, it does not seem intuitive to suggest that Hume believes his curiosity about causation has failed to exert his genius and thinks his inquiry into causation has not been pleasurable. Therefore, based on the textual evidence and several relevant observations, it is possible to maintain that, in Hume's view, the knowledge of what an epistemic subject is curious about, which is the targeted epistemic end, is not necessarily needed for the exercise of genius.

Insatiable curiosity is about an unknowable object. An epistemic subject who has an insatiable curiosity but presupposes that their curiosity is possibly satiable cannot come to know about the object of their curiosity by virtue of their cognitive abilities. However, from this, it does not follow that they cannot attain *any* knowledge. In fact, insatiable curiosity can lead to another kind of knowledge, thereby exerting the subject's genius in an alternative way.

As explained in Section 2.2, İnan realizes that curiosity arises from a peculiar metacognitive state, which he calls "awareness of ignorance". In this metacognitive state, as İnan explains, an epistemic subject distinguishes what they do not know from what they know, and form certain judgements about their *own* epistemic status. Of course, their judgements about what they know and what they do not know are fallible; some of them are true, and some of them turn out to be false. It is nevertheless the case that at least some of them are true, and under normal conditions, they are mostly reliable in knowing what they know and do not know. We can conceivably assert that an epistemic subject attains a kind of second-order knowledge, the knowledge of what they know and do not know, when they become aware of their own ignorance.

Now, I would like to propose that there is also another peculiar metacognitive state, which I shall call *awareness of unknowability*. When an epistemic subject becomes aware that an object is unknowable to them, they distinguish what they cannot know

from what they can know, thereby forming certain judgements about their own *epistemic limits*. It is again important to mention that an epistemic subject might be wrong about their own judgements about what they can or cannot know. Nonetheless, even if some of their judgements are probably false, at least some of them are true. In the light of this, it seems reasonable to suggest that when an epistemic subject becomes aware of the unknowability of an object *x*, they attain a different kind of second-order knowledge: they come to know that they cannot know about *x* given their mental faculties and epistemic limits²¹.

Here is my suggestion about how insatiable curiosity can exert an epistemic subject's genius when the subject is not aware that their curiosity is insatiable: Insatiable curiosity can motivate an epistemic subject to initiate an inquiry into what they are curious about, and as a result of a successful inquiry, they can realize that the object of their curiosity is unknowable. By reflecting on their own cognitive abilities and epistemic limits and realizing the unknowability of the object of their curiosity, an epistemic subject can attain an important piece of knowledge about their own human nature, thereby revealing their intelligence. Note that an epistemic subject, for some reason, may not proceed with a successful inquiry, and may fail to come to know that the object of their curiosity is unknowable. Nevertheless, there is still good reason to maintain that insatiable curiosity can ideally lead an epistemic subject to the knowledge of what is unknowable to them. Note that the exercise of genius via awareness of unknowability is *exclusive* to insatiable curiosity.

It seems reasonable to contend that Hume would agree that insatiable curiosity can exert an epistemic subject's genius by leading them to know that the object of their curiosity is unknowable. Let us now take a look at the following passage in which Hume announces the central aim of the *Treatise*:

'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of Man; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties. 'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and cou'd explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasonings. And

²¹Thanks to Demirli for raising an important point: there can also be certain cases in which it is epistemically impossible to know whether an object is knowable or unknowable.

these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion, as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them; and consequently, we ourselves are not only the beings, that reason, but also one of the objects, concerning which we reason ... Here then is the only expedient, from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious lingering method, which we have hitherto followed, and instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or center of these sciences, to human nature itself; which being once masters of, we may every where else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those, which are the objects of pure curiosity (T Intro., pp. xix – xx).

In the abovementioned passage, Hume emphasizes that human beings should be understood not only as the inquirers but also as the *objects* of inquiry. He contends that we cannot establish a secure ground for our scientific and philosophical investigations without a clear understanding of human nature. What Hume calls “human nature” can be interpreted as involving all the features and abilities shared by all humans. Thus, Hume’s considerations about the importance of studying human nature can support the view that reflecting on our *own* epistemic limits enables us to have a better understanding of our *own* nature. By appealing to the abovementioned passage, we can insist that an epistemic subject comes to know about their *own* nature when they discover that an object is unknowable to them. Furthermore, Hume can be said to be curious not only about causation but also about how much he can come to know about it over the course of an inquiry. Even though his insatiable curiosity about causation does not lead him to know whether there is causation in nature or what the real nature of causation is, it does lead him to know that causation is one of the things that are unknowable to human beings due to their mental faculties and epistemic limits.

So far, we have tried to explain how insatiable curiosity can exert genius when an epistemic subject is not aware that their curiosity is insatiable. Let us now move onto the second scenario in which an epistemic subject has a prior true belief that what they are curious about is unknowable. Obviously, insatiable curiosity cannot exert an epistemic subject’s genius by leading to the awareness of unknowability when an epistemic subject is already aware that the object of their curiosity is unknowable. Nevertheless, it is still possible to insist that Hume would agree that insatiable curiosity can exert genius even when the subject already, and correctly, believes that their curiosity is insatiable.

As mentioned earlier, Inan emphasizes that curiosity arises from the mental act of asking a question and points out that the questions uttered to express curiosity about an unknowable object are always unanswerable. It seems that we can also formulate the question of “Does insatiable curiosity have any value?” in a more general way as follows: Does asking an unanswerable question have any value? Given that Hume himself asked several unanswerable questions to express his curiosity about causation, can we regard his unanswerable questions as valuable? If they are valuable, why are they valuable?

In the section devoted to curiosity, Hume does not mention the connection between curiosity and the act of asking a question. Having said that, several considerations in the recent philosophy literature reveal sufficiently the intimate connection between curiosity and the act of asking a question. Incorporating these considerations into our analysis of Hume’s account of curiosity would help us elaborate on how insatiable curiosity can exert an epistemic subject’s genius.

For instance, one cannot help but wonder why Hume allocates two different analogies illustrating how similar hunting and gaming are to philosophy rather than to curiosity in the section where he claims to reflect on the nature and source of curiosity. There is good reason to think that these analogies reveal Hume’s commitment to the idea that philosophy and curiosity are closely allied and do not differ substantially in their nature. In fact, it is possible to argue, from a Humean standpoint, that curiosity has been the passion that motivates all the great philosophers throughout history to inquire into what they do not know and enables them to come up with extraordinarily sophisticated answers to deep philosophical questions. Thus, it seems fair to suggest that once Hume accepts that curiosity and philosophy always go hand in hand, he would also accept that curiosity and the act of asking a question also go hand in hand, given that the act of asking a question is an inextricable component of the philosophical enterprise. By appealing to these considerations, it can even be suggested that the value that Hume attributes to curiosity is related to the value that he would attribute to philosophy. That he draws the analogies between philosophy and hunting and between philosophy and gaming seems to support the idea that his considerations about pleasure derived from curiosity can also apply to pleasure derived from philosophical activity. Perhaps Hume’s definition of curiosity as “love of truth” or “love of knowledge” is not a coincidence, considering that “philosophy” in Ancient Greek is translated to English as “the love of wisdom”.

Assuming that Hume believes that curiosity is valuable insofar as it is pleasurable, is it possible to interpret him as suggesting implicitly that philosophical activity is valuable insofar as it is pleasurable? More importantly, can we draw on the connection between pleasure sourced from curiosity and pleasure sourced from philosophy to elucidate how insatiable curiosity can exert genius and be pleasurable when an epistemic subject is already aware that their curiosity is insatiable? Let us now take a look at the following passage, where Russell (1912) provides some fruitful intuitions in favor of the view that the philosophical enterprise, by its nature, involves unanswerable questions:

There are many questions – and among them those that are of the profoundest interest to our spiritual life – which, so far as we can see, must remain insoluble to the human intellect unless its powers become of quite a different order from what they are now. Has the universe any unity of plan or purpose, or is it a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Is consciousness a permanent part of the universe, giving hope of indefinite growth in wisdom, or is it a transitory accident on a small planet on which life must ultimately become impossible? Are good and evil of importance to the universe or only to man? Such questions are asked by philosophy, and variously answered by various philosophers. But it would seem that, whether answers be otherwise discoverable or not, the answers suggested by philosophy are none of them demonstrably true. Yet, however slight may be the hope of discovering an answer, it is part of the business of philosophy to continue the consideration of such questions, to make us aware of their importance, to examine all the approaches to them, and to keep alive that speculative interest in the universe which is apt to be killed by confining ourselves to definitely ascertainable knowledge (p. 72).

In this quote, Russell underlines the fact that philosophical questions are mostly unanswerable because philosophers are unable to show the truth of their answers in the way that scientists do. Furthermore, as can be seen in this passage, he, as a philosopher, expresses his awareness of the unknowability of certain things. It is intuitive to ask how all these philosophers, including Russell, get motivated to engage in philosophical activity and inquire into things they believe to be unknowable. It seems that, for them, the chief purpose of the philosophical enterprise is not to propose definite answers but rather to ponder over the importance of philosophical questions and confer about their possible answers diligently, thereby perpetuating the speculative interest.

Taking the departure point from Russell's considerations, here is what I suggest: an epistemic subject can be curious about an unknowable object, and they can also be aware that the object of their curiosity is unknowable to them, but this does not mean

that they cannot contemplate this object, as a philosophical enterprise, with a speculative interest. That is to say, the object of curiosity, which is unknowable, can nevertheless be the object of philosophical inquiry for an epistemic subject. In this case, where the knowledge of the object of curiosity is epistemically impossible, *contemplation* can be the very epistemic achievement contributing to the exercise of genius. Furthermore, philosophical activity, on its own, can be considered one of the greatest forms of the action of the mind. Therefore, based on this consideration, which also fits within Hume's philosophy, it can be suggested that insatiable curiosity can exert genius by leading to *philosophical activity* that is principally founded on speculative interest and contemplation. Accordingly, it can be concluded that insatiable curiosity can be pleasurable for an epistemic subject even when they are aware that their curiosity is insatiable.

Chapter 5:

CONCLUSION

Curiosity has often been considered the primary motivational source that facilitates the pursuit and achievement of different epistemic ends. When taken as an intentional mental state, it is always about a specific unknown object and aims at the knowledge of that object. In this thesis, an important observation has been made: the object of curiosity can sometimes be unknowable to an epistemic subject. Based on this observation, two types of curiosity have been distinguished. *Satiable curiosity* is about an unknown but knowable object, and its satisfaction is epistemically possible. On the other hand, *insatiable curiosity* is about an unknowable object, and its satisfaction is epistemically impossible.

Several virtue epistemologists praise curiosity as an intellectual virtue and regard it as intrinsically valuable even when it does not lead to the knowledge of the object of curiosity. However, what is important to realize here is that insatiable curiosity is a subset of curiosity that does not lead to knowledge. The reasons explaining the value of curiosity that does not lead to knowledge can explain the value of insatiable curiosity. However, some reasons explaining the value of insatiable curiosity may not explain the value of curiosity that does not lead to knowledge. We can imagine different cases in which even curiosity about a knowable object, for some reason, does not lead to knowledge. In light of these considerations, this thesis, which is partly theoretical and partly historical, has raised the question of whether insatiable curiosity is valuable and, if so, for what specific reasons it is valuable.

Insatiable curiosity is about an unknowable object, and to that extent, it is especially noteworthy that David Hume, a great philosopher well-known for his skepticism about different issues, treats curiosity as a genuine subject of philosophy and devotes one entire section to it in Book II of the *Treatise*. In this section, he allocates several passages and analogies demonstrating how curiosity can give pleasure to an epistemic subject. He appears to hold that there are two necessary conditions that curiosity needs to fulfill in order to be pleasurable: it needs to fix the epistemic subject's attention and exert their genius. Having said that, some scholars tend to interpret Hume as a hedonist. The hedonistic commitment can be outlined as follows: pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically valuable, and anything other than pleasure can be valuable only to the extent that it promotes pleasure. Perhaps some may react to this by

saying that there are also other things Hume regards as intrinsically valuable, and hedonism is an unnecessarily strong position to attribute to him. Nevertheless, on the basis of the textual evidence, it is still possible to maintain that Hume believes pleasure has an intrinsic value even if he is not a hedonist. In light of these considerations, I have offered a novel interpretation of the section titled “Of curiosity, or the love of truth” and argued that Hume’s explication of the relationship between curiosity and pleasure reflects his view on the value of curiosity.

Hume describes *curiosity* as “the first source of all our enquiries” (T 448). According to some commentators, he confirms that his own philosophical inquiries are also motivated by curiosity. Hume does not incorporate his skepticism into his discussion of curiosity. However, if all of Hume’s philosophical inquiries are motivated by curiosity, it would follow that his inquiry into causation has also been motivated by curiosity. Since he concludes that causation is unknowable to human beings, his curiosity about causation can be taken as an example of insatiable curiosity. Hence, the aim of this thesis has been to show that we can extract a Humean explanation for the value of insatiable curiosity by scrutinizing the *Treatise*’s section devoted to curiosity in light of Hume’s *own* insatiable curiosity about causation.

Insatiable curiosity needs to fulfill Hume’s two conditions in order to be pleasurable. First, for insatiable curiosity to fix an epistemic subject’s attention, the subject needs to attach importance to an object that is unknowable. An epistemic subject may, or may not be aware that that object is unknowable. However, they are more likely to attach importance to an object they believe is knowable given that knowledge is practically useful and has a practical impact on our lives. The question of how insatiable curiosity can fix attention when an epistemic subject is not aware that the object is unknowable does not seem to be genuinely interesting. Instead, what appears to be more interesting here is the question of how insatiable curiosity can fix attention when the epistemic subject correctly believes that the object is unknowable to them. In this thesis, I have pointed out that an epistemic subject is very likely to reconsider whether attaining the knowledge of what they believe is unknowable is epistemically possible when realizing their judgements about what is knowable, or unknowable are fallible. I have argued that their reconsideration together with the anticipation for an important epistemic triumph can powerfully lead them to grow an interest even in the objects that they believe are unknowable. By showing that insatiable curiosity can fix attention even

when an epistemic subject is aware that the object is unknowable, I have concluded that insatiable curiosity can fulfill one of Hume's conditions for being pleasurable.

Second, for insatiable curiosity to exert an epistemic subject's genius, it also needs to give rise to the action of the mind. When the epistemic subject is not aware that what they are curious about is unknowable, insatiable curiosity can exert their genius by leading them to a peculiar metacognitive state, which has been called awareness of unknowability. When they become aware that the object of their curiosity is unknowable, they attain an important piece of knowledge about their own epistemic limits. Considering the general aim of the *Treatise*, I have argued that awareness of unknowability is an important epistemic achievement that has the capacity to exert genius because it contributes significantly to the study of human nature.

Having said that, when an epistemic subject is already aware that what they are curious about is unknowable, insatiable curiosity cannot exert their genius by leading them to awareness of unknowability. However, what an epistemic subject believes is unknowable can indeed be the object of philosophical inquiry that principally originates from speculative interest and contemplation rather than mere desire to knowledge. I have argued that insatiable curiosity can encourage philosophical enterprise, pave the way for the action of the mind, thereby exerting the genius of the epistemic subject. Consequently, I have concluded that insatiable curiosity can fulfill Hume's two conditions for being pleasurable.

In this thesis, I have explained that there are different types of value that can be attributed to an object. An object has an intrinsic value when it is the source of its own value. When the value of an object is derived from something else, the object has an extrinsic value. Accordingly, instrumental value can be understood as a kind of extrinsic value: when an object is instrumentally valuable, its value is derived from the intended end for which it serves successfully as an instrument. When an object x is extrinsically valuable with respect to another object y , x does not need to be successful in bringing about y . The object x can be extrinsically valuable with respect to y simply in virtue of aiming at y . However, if x is instrumentally valuable with respect to y , it will follow that x is successful in bringing about y .

In the *Treatise*'s section devoted to curiosity, Hume explicitly states that curiosity that fails to give pleasure cannot be valuable. From this, it can be inferred that insatiable curiosity does not have an intrinsic value that is independent of its capacity to give pleasure. Furthermore, it can also be inferred that insatiable curiosity does not have a

non-instrumental extrinsic value in virtue of aiming pleasure because, as Hume explains, *only* curiosity that is *successful* in bringing about pleasure can be regarded as valuable. The fact that curiosity aims at pleasure does not imply that *that* curiosity is successful in bringing about pleasure. With all these considerations in place, from a Humean standpoint, it can reasonably be argued that insatiable curiosity is *instrumentally* value in virtue of being successful in bringing about pleasure. Consequently, it can be concluded that Hume's account of curiosity supports an explanation for the value of insatiable curiosity.



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