

Commanding Passions: Adam Smith on Self-Command

PRIDE	VANITY
"the proud man"	"the vain man"
"If you appear not to respect him as he respects himself, he is more offended than mortified" (255.35).	"When you appear to view him... in his proper colours, he is much more mortified than offended." (255.36).
"he disdains to court your esteem: he affects even to despise it" (255.35).	"Far from despising your esteem, he courts it with the most anxious assiduity." (255–56)
"He seems to wish not so much to excite your esteem for <i>himself</i> as to mortify <i>that</i> for <i>yourself</i>." (255.35) "The proud man...never flatters, and is frequently scarce civil to any body." (257.40) "He is full of indignation at the unjust superiority, as he thinks it, which is given to [other people]." (257.41)	"Far from wishing to mortify your self-estimation, he is happy to cherish it, in hopes that in return you will cherish his own. He flatters in order to be flattered" (256.36).
	"He studies to please, and endeavours to bribe you into a good opinion of him by politeness and complaisance, and sometimes even by real and essential good offices, though often displayed...with unnecessary ostentation." (256.36)
The proud man is "careful to preserve his independency, and...studies to be frugal and attentive in all his expenses" (256.38)	"[H]e often reduces himself to poverty and distress long before the end of [his life]." (256.37)
"The proud man does not always feel himself at his ease in the company of his equals, and still less in that of his superiors." (256.39)	"He courts the company of his superiors as much as the proud man shuns it.... He haunts the courts of kings and the levees of ministers, and gives himself the air of being a candidate for fortune and preferment" (257.40).
"He has recourse to humbler company, for which he has little respect...—that of his inferiors, his flatterers, and dependants" (256.39)	"He is fond of being admitted to the tables of the great, and still more fond of magnifying to other people the familiarity with which he is honoured there: he associates himself as much as he can with fashionable people, with those who are supposed to direct the public opinion—with the witty, with the learned, with the popular; and he shuns the company of his best

	friends, whenever the very uncertain current of public favour happens to run in any respect against them. With the people to whom he wishes to recommend himself... he employs...unnecessary ostentation, groundless pretensions, constant assentation, frequently flattery” (257.40).
“Pride is always a grave, a sullen, and a severe [passion].” (257.41)	“Notwithstanding all its groundless pretensions, however, vanity is almost always a sprightly and a gay, and very often a good-natured passion” (257.41)
“[The lies] of pride, whenever it condescends to falsehood, are” more serious than white lies. (257.41)	“The worst falsehoods of vanity are all what we call white lies” (257.41)
“Where there is this real superiority, pride is frequently attended with many respectable virtues—with truth, with integrity, with a high sense of honour, with cordial and steady friendship, with the most inflexible firmness and resolution” (258.42)	“[V]anity [is frequently attended with] many amiable [virtues]—with humanity, with politeness, with a desire to oblige in all little matters, and sometimes with a real generosity in great ones—a generosity, however, which it often wishes to display in the most splendid colours that it can.”
<u>Often lacks upward vitality:</u> “The proud man is commonly too well contented with himself to think that his character requires any amendment. The man who feels himself all-perfect naturally enough despises all further improvement.” (258.45)	<u>Often has capacity for upward vitality, esp. in youth:</u> “Vanity is very frequently no more than an attempt prematurely to usurp that glory before it is due. Though your son under five-and-twenty years of age should be but a coxcomb, do not upon that account despair of his becoming before he is forty a very wise and worthy man, and a real proficient in all those talents and virtues to which at present he may only be an ostentatious and empty pretender. The great secret of education is to direct vanity to proper objects.” (259.46)
<u>Pride and vanity mixed:</u> “But the proud man is often vain; and the vain man is often proud... Those two vices being frequently blended in the same character, the characteristics of both are necessarily confounded; and we sometimes find the superficial and impertinent ostentation of vanity joined to the most malignant and derisive insolence of pride.” (259.47)	

Two ways of thinking about the commanding of passions

SPIRITUAL	MECHANISTIC
Universally benevolent BEHOLDERISM: “in the course of the day” (262.1)	Materialism
Moral	“Logic,” “intellect,” “behavioral,” <i>as though separate from moral</i>
A capacious sense of “reason” pertains; Imagination	Reason in a flat sense — {fact, syllogism}, rationalistic
Relational => the conscience	Robotic, algorithmic, “artificial intelligence”
“by sympathy with the more moderate sentiments of his companion” (263.3)	Reductionist, automated, mechanical
Communicative	Non-communicative, silent
Emotional (both in the commanding and in the commanded being)	Non-emotional (especially in the commanding entity)
Animate	Inanimate
Recursive; open	Non-recursive; closed
Its rules are aesthetic	Its rules are grammar-like
Its rules are “loose, vague, and indeterminate”	Its rules are “precise and accurate”
Its rules are largely inarticulate, tacit	Its rules are articulate, explicit
Tends toward spiral formulations	Tends toward strong demarcationism
Vitalistic, dynamic, becoming	Static, unbecoming
Amenable to self-awareness	Self-deceived, self-delusional
Conduces to frankness and openness	Does not conduce to frankness and openness
Nonfoundationalist	Foundationalist