

HUME'S NATURALISM

(17)

Hume/was the first modern philosopher to propose a thoroughly naturalistic theory of morality. The main hypotheses of this theory are:

born with

- . All human beings are/an internal sense or feeling of right and wrong: a moral sense on which all moral reasoning is based.
- . Good, right, or virtuous is whatever is useful (in particular pleasurable) to self or others.
- . Besides the general principle, valid for all humans, that commands seeking personal and social utility, there are specific moral and legal rules adapted to societies of different kinds.
- . Whenever there is a conflict between individual and social utility, the latter is to prevail: selfishness is evil because it leads to disorder.

Hume's seems to have been the first attempt to combine psychological considerations with sociological ones in accounting for morality: the roots of the latter are (biological and psychological) human nature, and the desire (and need) to live together, which imposes limits on individual rights.