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COVER IMAGE
Allan Ramsay
David Hume, 1711 - 1776. Historian and philosopher, 1766. Oil on canvas.
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Introduction

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This special issue investigates David Hume's contributions to the studies of political epistemology. As a rising field of research, it facilitates interdisciplinary collaborations in the humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, political theory, sociology, economics and psychology. It has also been producing fruitful findings in political science in response to the challenges to democracy nowadays (Edenberg and Hannon 2021; Hannon and de Ridder 2021). Nevertheless, it is by no means "the rubric of 'democratic theory'"; rather, it has a normative aim to scrutinise "the reliability of our ideas about modern society" (Friedman 2014, p. ix). Its overarching research aim, understood in this way, points to the fact that epistemological issues have become a shared problem for governments around the world. Its causes can be approached from two perspectives: normative political epistemology looks into the relationship between political decision-makers' expertise and their capacity of making reasonable judgement and policies. Empirical political epistemology investigates "the content and sources of real-world political actors' knowledge and interpretations of knowledge" (Ibid., p. i). Overall, both approaches are interested in the process of how the beliefs of political agents (including politicians and ordinary citizens) are translated into their political behaviour. As we shall see in this special issue, the relationship between belief and action is the leitmotiv running through Hume's political theory.

While the discipline and its target are new, Hannon and de Ridder indicate that political epistemology's research questions have old roots dating back to ancient Greece. They take "the fraught relationship between politics and truth" as one of the key questions in a particular tradition of the history of political philosophy that speaks to political epistemology's present concerns (2021, pp. 1–3, 11). Given the historical nature of the research question, it is surprising that intellectual history's contribution to the field has been relatively few. Moreover, although Hume has written extensively about epistemology and politics, his presence in the field remains unexpectedly rare. Studying his works can enhance the historical depth of the field through the historical perspectives on his subject matters and his approach to them. Many of Hume's concerns were prompted by the demagogical politicians and popular movements at the time. The similarity between this context and our world makes his thought more relevant to the interests of political epistemologists.

A comprehensive evaluation of Hume's contribution to the field is beyond the scope of this special issue, but the articles here intend to illuminate two key aspects, namely, public opinion and knowledge production. They are not

only Hume's main interests but also speak to the practical questions that motivate contemporary political epistemologists' research. As Edenberg and Hannon observe, populist rhetoric and disinformation, among all other reasons, have made it "increasingly difficult to discern legitimate sources of evidence"; "disagreement between citizens is not only about moral and political values but also about what information is true and which experts we should trust" (2021, p. 1). This political culture consequently gives rise to a species of scepticism which makes public distrust compromises the efficiency of democratic institutions. In other words, democratic governments now face challenges from both authoritarian regimes abroad and polarised civic societies at home. The more liberal democracies are afflicted by the trust issue, the more fragile public opinion could be when facing the attack of their rivals' political propaganda. Under the circumstances, disagreements among the citizenry would increase ideological polarisation and uncertainties in political decision-making (Peter 2021, p. 68). The uncertainties often hinge on a society's prevailing systems of belief, since undecided opinions on the "decision-relevant normative facts will typically translate to uncertainty about what the right political decision is" (Ibid.). In this scenario, ignorance of political knowledge or justifiable political beliefs would result in more "conflicting judgments about what should be done" (Ibid.). Norms of judgement for the empirical and normative facts in political decision-making are required to curtail their impact.

From Hume's perspective, the public's ignorance and credulity can pose a more profound problem to the legitimacy of the government, considering that its right to rule is established upon the people's belief in its legitimacy and authority. It is on this ground that epistemological issues occupy the centre of our political life, which necessitates a philosophical approach to political studies. The inseparable relation between theory and practice as such also makes Hume recognise that norms of judgement cannot be detached from their societal and historical contexts. Empirical studies of how a society arrives at its present state can make history a useful tool for our judgement. We can find patterns emerging from causal explanations of historical phenomena, which can further generate empirically justified moral and political norms (Bourke and Skinner 2022, p. 3).

Indeed, Ryu Susato, Angela Coventry and Landon Echeverio elucidate this subject in their articles for this special issue by surveying the role of custom and habit in Hume's philosophy. According to their observations, the normativity of custom is reflected in historically justified opinions, which yields general principles' enduring influence on morals and politics in a society. Competing ideas and human passions, however, can destabilise those opinions. Susato argues that such changes do not necessarily lead to negative consequences by juxtaposing Hume's accounts of the rise of modern chivalry and the causes of enthusiasm. Both cases show that irrationally-motivated beliefs can be contagious. Longevity and spontaneity thus cannot justify some extraordinary customs and it is difficult to assess their justifiability impartially. Coventry and Echeverio indicate that while Hume accepts epistemically-stable custom and habit as a useful guide to common life experience and philosophising, he also warns of their potential errors in probability judgements. That said, Hume remains optimistic that custom and habit are capable of correcting themselves alongside the progress of opinion, which makes them more reliable than the metaphysical politics detached from the operation of human nature. The three authors thus agree that Hume acknowledges the need for diversity of opinions, which can lead to moral pluralism when norms are distilled from such a wide range of data.

Hume's explanation of the ways human passions affect belief formation and knowledge production without doubt sheds light on a note-worthy aspect in the studies of political epistemology. That is to say, if we are to understand the effectiveness of political beliefs and knowledge, we need to measure it from how they are perceived and to what extent their supposedly rational effects are compromised by passion-driven irrationality. The irrational effects can reflect on, for instance, voters' psychology or collective behaviour. As Susato points out, passion-driven irrationality caused a serious problem of enthusiasm in Hume's time. The public zeal, if translated into the challenge faced by liberal democracy nowadays, would resonate with the rise of populism. Populist politicians can succeed in gaining public support and fuel factional strife by mobilising seditious rhetoric, making unjustifiable ideologies override the secure norms of judgement. Elizabeth Radcliffe's article discusses Hume's account of the power of rhetoric, which explains the dire con-

sequences of abusing eloquence. As she observes, Hume nevertheless—and perhaps paradoxically—regards eloquence as a political virtue despite its potential to mislead and manipulate the public. Radcliffe addresses the problem through investigating the epistemological and psychological foundations of Hume's conception of effective oratory.

The function of custom and habit, the interaction between belief and action, and the psychology of public persuasion all demonstrate how Hume situated epistemological questions at the heart of his political enquiries. The very fact that he takes opinion as the ground of government manifests the potentiality of political epistemology. It is not merely a study of political agents' beliefs and knowledge. Instead, it shows how a particular mode of knowledge production or belief formation can shape the making of a philosophical tradition or school. In the final two articles in this special issue, this is reflected in the ways twentieth-century thinkers construed and utilised Hume's approach to philosophy and politics. In other words, Hume's theory of belief and science of politics *per se* have hermeneutic merits for contemporary commentators to envisage the disciplines of political philosophy and theory.

Eric Schliesser and Tim Stuart-Buttle present the cases of Hume being mobilised in two opposite—if not entirely rivalry—philosophical traditions. According to the former, Foucault's reading of Hume demonstrates his intellectual progress from the 1960s to the 1970s. Schliesser argues that the implication of Foucault's idiosyncratic reading of Hume in *The Order of Things* (1966) is twofold: Foucault was reacting to Husserlian phenomenology where Hume triggered the debates over transcendental subjectivity; Hume meanwhile was utilized to serve Foucault's preliminary project for *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). Later in the *Birth of Biopolitics* (1979), Hume plays a foundational role in Foucault's conceptualisation of Benthamite radicalism and *homo economicus*. Foucault deliberately interpreted Hume in an anachronistic manner, which made him a forerunner of modern liberalism. However, Stuart-Buttle indicates that Anglophone intellectuals who approached Hume via Hegel and German idealism, such as Michael Oakeshott, tended to situate him in the conservative tradition. This raises the interpretive question of whether Hume can really be affiliated with any schools of thought. Stuart-Buttle's article shows John Dewey's reconstruction of a "Humean tradition" is not simply a question of where Hume stands on the political spectrum. Rather, it has more to do with how political philosophy as a discipline is envisaged by its students and practitioners. Hume's scepticism, in this scenario, makes him both a producer of knowledge and an examiner of knowledge production. For Dewey, Hume's method is sceptical yet revolutionary precisely because it can be a useful tool to challenge the contemporary imagination about the disciplinary, philosophical and ideological boundaries artificially drawn by their commentators. Moreover, Humean philosophy, in this regard, proffers robust support for us to recover from the intellectual revolution that banishes counterproductive modes of enquiry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Opinion, Contagion, and Enthusiasm in Hume's "Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour" and *The History of England*

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Abstract: Recent research on David Hume has highlighted the significance of opinion in his political philosophy. In *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* and *The History of England*, Hume emphasizes the significance of established customs and opinion as guides for appropriate governance, supported by an underlying claim that enthusiasm cannot subsist for a long time. This study revisits these two views with a focus on Hume's unfinished manuscript "Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour" and his descriptions of puritan enthusiasm as contagion and various conspiracies in the *History*. The study demonstrates that Hume fully appreciated three points. First, some extraordinary customs have persisted longer than the dominant interpretation of Hume may suggest. Second, such customs cannot be justified by either their longevity or spontaneity. Third, it is difficult, if not impossible, for those living in extraordinary circumstances to evaluate them appropriately. Examining these three points primarily through the lens of political epistemology, Hume argues that both extraordinary and salutary institutions can arise from the operations and principles of the same human nature and persist for a long time.

Keywords: chivalry, enthusiasm, conspiracy, political epistemology, psychology

INTRODUCTION

Recently, several studies have highlighted the significance of opinion in Hume's political philosophy (Susato 2015; Stuart-Buttle 2019; Sager 2021). In *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* and *The History of England*, he often repeats the significance of established customs and opinion as guides for appropriate governance. In the essay "Of the First Principles of Government," Hume claims that "on opinion only that government is founded" (E 32; see also E 512).[1] In another instance, he endorses that "in the general distribution of power among the several members of a constitution, there can seldom be admitted any other question, than *What is established?*" (H 4: 355). Hume's reasoning is founded on another claim—that enthusiasm cannot subsist for a long time. The essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" reveals the seemingly optimistic view that enthusiasm (or religious frenzy) tends to wither over a short period of time. These two perspectives not only support Hume's image as a conservative but are also premised by another strand of Hume

scholarship that evaluates him as a precursor of coordination theory (Sabl 2012). For example, Schabas and Wennerlind (2020) state that "Hume's discourse is replete with appeals to 'the multitude' that are equivalent to mean-reverting tendencies, as in the case of throwing a weighted die to detect its bias" (p. 71).

This study revisits these two views with a focus on Hume's unfinished manuscript "Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour" and his descriptions of puritans' enthusiasm in *The History of England*. In doing so, it aims to demonstrate that Hume fully appreciated three points. First, some extraordinary customs have continued longer than the dominant interpretation of Hume may suggest. Second, these customs cannot be justified by either their longevity or spontaneity. Third, it is difficult, if not impossible, for those living in extraordinary circumstances to evaluate them appropriately. By examining these three points through the lens of political epistemology, this study argues that, for Hume, both extraordinary and salutary institutions can arise from the operations and principles of the same human nature and persist for a long time. The term "extraordinary" here implies the extent to which the situation was realized because of accidental circumstances, considering the human faculties assumed by Hume.

These considerations lead to a more significant question regarding the compatibility of Hume's alleged defense of established opinions or institutions with his criticism of other long-established but less meritorious counterparts. This study does not aim to provide an unequivocal answer to this question, as it can be argued that no single answer is applicable here. Although public interest may point to a likely answer, Hume refutes this: "though men be much governed by interest; yet even interest itself, and all human affairs, are entirely governed by *opinion*" (E 51; italics original). This indicates that even if a people living in a particular time judge a certain system to be in the public interest, posterity may differ in opinion because of changes in the conditions that define the very notion of public interest. Antiquity or spontaneity may be another possible answer, but, as shown below, there are many spontaneous institutions and customs that Hume criticizes despite, if not because of, their antiquity. The proper examination of these questions would require a book-length investigation.

Our present aim is to focus on the fact that, despite his seeming optimism in "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm," Hume is keenly aware of the potential sustainability of customs or a mental state detracted from nature (such as enthusiasm) over a prolonged period. The mere fact of this recognition by Hume can serve to position him as one of the pioneers of political epistemology. Edenberg and Hannon (2021) define this new subject as a field of study that "includes work on propaganda and misinformation, political disagreement, polarization, conspiracy theories, the epistemology of democracy, voter ignorance and irrationality, skepticism wielded for political purposes, and the epistemic virtues (and vices) of citizens, politicians, and political institutions" (p. 1). Some unexplored aspects of Hume's political philosophy can be best analyzed as a pioneering approach to political epistemology.

This study comprises three sections: the first section presents Hume's argument on enthusiasm and draws a comparison between enthusiasm and chivalry in terms of each psychological mechanism. The second section explores his description in *The History of England* regarding the psychological state of people in conspiracies, either fictitious or factual, which reveals how Hume's favored antidote against enthusiasm, such as conversation in ordinary life (e.g., T 1.4.7.9), loses its curative power. The third and final section discusses the difficulty of distinguishing between what Sabl (2008, pp. 44-46) terms "pseudo-conventions" and the more salutary institutions whose sustenance Hume recommends.

COMPARISON BETWEEN ENTHUSIASM AND CHIVALRY

In the essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm," Hume contrasts two psychological phenomena; superstition inclines toward external ceremonies and has an affinity to the religious orders, whereas enthusiasm refers to "the fancy in the invisible regions or world of spirits, where the soul is at liberty to indulge itself in every imagination, which may best suit its present taste and disposition" (E 74). As early as this essay (published in 1741), Hume points out how enthusiasm defangs human reason and morality, which constitutes the basis

of his opposition to it: "When this frenzy once takes place, which is the summit of enthusiasm, every whimsy is consecrated: Human reason, and even morality are rejected as fallacious guides" (E 75).

However, the tone of his argument is not cynical, because he believes that such *acqua alta* is unsustainable: "*religions, which partake of enthusiasm are, on their first rise, more furious and violent than those which partake of superstition; but in a little time become more gentle and moderate*" (E 76; italics original). He repeats the phrase "in a little time" in the same context on the next page: "its fury is like that of thunder and tempest, which exhaust themselves in a little time" (E 77). Together with his relatively positive evaluation of enthusiasm as "a friend to" or a catalyst for liberty (E 78), Hume's serious concerns about enthusiasm do not come to the fore here, although he continued to investigate its danger in the *History*.

Accordingly, this study focuses on the stamina of enthusiasm. Hume's depiction of the Civil War in the *History* does not illustrate such short-lived periods of enthusiasm. Rather, he often underlines or even criticizes the long duration and wide influence of "unnatural" mental states or customs. Hume uses Christianity as one example, but the same psychological mechanism may exist in chivalry as well. His view on chivalry can be found in the *History*; however, this study focuses on his unpublished manuscript, "Historical Essay upon Chivalry and Modern Honour," which comprises only four leaves, written on both sides. Although the final part (or sheet, probably) of this essay is lost, the general line of argument is clear from the surviving parts. This essay has recently been estimated to have been composed in the early 1730s, although Hume scholars have disputed its precise dating.[2] As the title suggests, this manuscript surveys the collapse of the Roman Empire and the rise of chivalry as an amalgamation of the former culture and that of the Germanic people.

Hume explains the underlying psychological mechanism whereby the Germanic invaders were overwhelmed by the accomplished arts of the conquered Romans. By generalizing this historical process into the operations of human nature, he also illustrates how humans tend to deviate from reason and experience and are easily tempted by wild imagination:

> Tis observable of the Human Mind, that when it is smit with any Idea of Merit or Perfection, beyond what its Faculties can attain, & in the pursuit of which, it uses not Reason & Experience for its Guide, it knows no Mean, but as it gives the Rein & even adds the Spur to every florid Conceit or Fancy, runs in a moment quite wide of Nature (HC 3).

Notably, Hume explains the rise of chivalry through the same mental mechanism that he deploys in accounting for enthusiasm, while acknowledging the long-term influence of chivalry upon modern manners. A detailed analysis of Hume's view of chivalry, therefore, facilitates the reconsideration of his alleged optimism that religious enthusiasm is short-lived.

The quotation HC 3 from the "Historical Essay" sufficiently demonstrates that Hume explains the rise of chivalry through a similar mechanism as that of enthusiasm. Interestingly, Hume compares the state in which chivalry spreads and influences people's minds to a "fairy-ground," or "a perfect new World of its own, inhabited by different Beings, & regulated by different Laws, from this of ours" (HC 3). Certainly, Hume admits that people are always drawn back from this new imaginary world into the real one: "but as Nature is apt still on every Occasion to recall it thither it must undermine it by Art, & retiring altogether from the Commerce of Mankind" (HC 3). In the subordinate clause, Hume displays a mitigated skepticism or naturalism, implying the impossibility of maintaining a Pyrrhonian position on a long-term basis. However, he also describes in the main clause how forceful and dominant the power of artifices is. He mentions that "[t]he same thing is observable in Philosophy, which tho [sic] it cannot produce a different World in which we may wander, makes us act in this as if we were different Beings from the Rest of Mankind" (HC 3).

Nevertheless, Hume also indicates the possibility that people would be able to sustain this imaginary world for a long time by adapting their behavioral patterns to its new standards of value. Here, we find the subversion of values—the more we depart from nature, the more it is esteemed.

> And in this case of an imagin'd Merit, the farther our Chimera's hurry us from Nature, & the Practice of the World, the better pleas'd we are, as valuing ourselves upon the Singularity of our Notions, & thinking we depart from the rest of mankind only by flying above them (HC 3).

In the *History*, Hume details the process of spreading chivalric manners from a more historical angle. According to him, chivalry was introduced in England around the time of the Norman Conquest and was "cultivated and embellished by the poets and romance writers of the age" (H 1: 486). The chivalric mode attained an extreme during the Crusades: "the most signal and most durable monument of human folly, that has yet appeared in any age or nation" (H 1: 234). Hume condemns the Crusades, but not chivalry in general, as it had both negative and positive effects on modern manners. One of the most important features of chivalry is the combination of the ancient priority of martial valor with the modern value of gallantry:

> These ideas of chivalry infected the writings, conversation, and behaviour of men, during some ages; and even after they were, in a great measure, banished by the revival of learning, they left modern *gallantry* and the *point of honour*, which still maintain their influence, and are the genuine offspring of those ancient affectations (H 1: 487; italics original).

He wonders at the strange combination of "the most effeminate superstition" with "the most heroic courage, and with the fiercest barbarity" by exclaiming, "So inconsistent is human nature with itself!" (H 1: 250. Cf. H 2: 532, H 3: 318; Hanley 2007). Tracing its history, Hume investigates the continuous influence of chivalry on the fashion of dueling (H 5: 133; Cf. H 5: 238n) and the sexual licentiousness of gallantry in the Stuart dynasty (H 6: 539). Hume's discussions on chivalry both in the "Historical Essay" and the *History* evince that it spread widely and endured over a prolonged period, despite the odd amalgamation of ideas.

Two points should be heeded on the relationship between Hume's views of chivalry and enthusiasm. First, Hume's utilization of the same psychological explanation for the rise and spread of both chivalry and enthusiasm is exemplified by his use of the expression "infected" in the above quotation (H 1: 487) to explain the spread of chivalry. A similar phrase, "social contagion," is used in describing enthusiasm in the *History* (and the process of spreading habits and customs peculiar to each nation is also called "contagion" in the essay "Of National Characters"(E 202)). Second, for Hume, both enthusiasm and chivalry are examples of unintended consequences—the rise of enthusiasm served to establish liberty in England, whereas chivalric codes formed the basis of politeness in the modern world. Certainly, there are remarkable contrasts between chivalry and enthusiasm: the first had more affinity with monarchy and the court culture (such as dueling and gallantry), whereas religious enthusiasm in its puritanical form was more averse to monarchy. Nevertheless, in both cases, extraordinary manners and ways of thinking were widely accepted and the deviation from common life was accelerated (Susato 2015, p. 129, n20).

Therefore, Hume's views of chivalry and enthusiasm evince very "Humean" characteristics. This is demonstrated in his repetition and development of the same mechanism not only in the essay on enthusiasm and the *History*, but also in the *First* and *Second Enquiries*. In the *First Enquiry*, he criticizes the theory of occasionalism by claiming that "it has carried us quite beyond the reach of our faculties, when it leads to conclusions so extraordinary, and so remote from common life and experience. We are got into fairy land" (EHU 7.24). However, this could be a mere storm in a teacup. He maintains, "Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous" (T 1.4.7.13). Therefore, the more serious consequences would be anticipated from the unnatural and extravagant cultures and customs sustained over longer periods. This situation is mentioned in Hume's argument on "Artificial Lives" in "A Dialogue" of the *Second Enquiry*, as detailed subsequently.

CONSPIRACIES IN HUME'S *HISTORY*

Bearing the relationship between Hume's views of chivalry and enthusiasm in mind, this section explores his descriptions of various conspiracies at a time when religious enthusiasm heavily affected people's mentality. Hume's exposition of conspiracies clarifies the processes of people's deviation from common life through enthusiasm. At the beginning of Chapter 45, Hume describes the religious meetings called "prophesy" among the puritans as follows:

> where alternately, as moved by the spirit, they displayed their zeal in prayers and exhortations, and raised their own enthusiasm, as well as that of their audience, to the highest pitch, from that social contagion, which has so mighty an influence on holy fervours, and from the mutual emulation, which arose in those trials of religious eloquence (H 5: 12-13).

The use of not only "social contagion" but also "the mutual emulation" is noteworthy. This identifies the mechanism through which religious enthusiasm accelerates people's deviation from the normal state. In Chapter 57, through the character description of the Independents, he delineates that, once enthusiasm was widely accepted, it became "the immediate means of distinction and preferment." "Every man, as prompted by the warmth of his temper, excited by emulation, or supported by his habits of hypocrisy, endeavored to *distinguish himself beyond his fellows, and to arrive at a higher pitch of saintship and perfection*" (H 5: 441; italics added). This is a repetition of Hume's description of the psychological mechanism on the rise of chivalry in the "Historical Essay." Once existing values were overturned, people began to reinforce it through mutual competition.

Such a cascading effect, as it were, appears more prominently in conspiracies, which Hume mentions in the Stuart volumes of the *History*. Although the word "conspiracy" frequently appears in the previous volumes, the conspiracies dealt with in the Stuart volumes are those which involved wide sections of society, not only the elite. The most conspicuous example is the Popish Plot, although it belongs to a later period than the other conspiracies:

> The terror of each man became the source of terror to another. And an [sic] universal panic being diffused, reason and argument and common sense and common humanity lost all influence over them. From this disposition of men's minds, we are to account for the progress of the Popish Plot, and the credit given to it; an event, which would otherwise appear prodigious and altogether inexplicable (H 6: 333).

Hume clearly maintains that the Popish Plot cannot be understood without presupposing a certain "disposition of men's minds." It is also noteworthy that once people fall into such a state, it negates the powers of human reason, common sense, and humanity ("humanism" in our parlance) that tend to keep them grounded. He repeatedly makes the same observation throughout his narrative of the Popish Plot (H 6: 341; see also H 6: 347).

Hume admits that there were certainly some who did not lose their senses even in this situation. However, they pretended to follow others because they had neither courage nor interest to resist popular opinion. Even worse, these pretenders behaved as others' oppressors in the vanguard:

> We may even conclude from such impatience of contradiction, that the prosecutors themselves retained a secret suspicion, that the general belief was but ill-grounded. The politicians among them were afraid to let in light, lest it might put an end to so useful a delusion: The weaker and less dishonest party took care, by turning their eyes aside, not to see a truth, so opposite to those furious

passions, by which they were actuated, and in which they were determined obstinately to persevere (H 6: 361-362).

Hume also observes the difficulty inherent in religious people being conscious of their own hypocrisy: "The religious hypocrisy, it may be remarked, is of a peculiar nature; and being generally unknown to the person himself, though more dangerous, it implies less falsehood than any other species of insincerity" (H 6: 142). In this sense, the word "hypocrisy" has a more complex implication for Hume than we tend to imagine—hypocrites could be blind to their own hypocrisy. Pretending oppressors who would have been conscious of their own hypocrisy may have gradually become impervious to it. Elsewhere, Hume casts doubts on some Parliamentarian leaders' awareness of their pretentious enthusiasm (H 5: 527). Nevertheless, he keenly acknowledges the difficulty in maintaining the naïve dichotomy between hypocrisy and honesty or the conscious and unconscious under such circumstances.

In the *History*, Hume examines the "Gunpowder Plot" in Chapter 46 and the "Conspiracy in Ireland" in Chapter 55 of Volume 5. He depicts the first as "one of the most memorable, that history has conveyed to posterity, and containing at once a singular proof both of the strength and weakness of the human mind; *its widest departure from morals,* and most steady attachment to religious prejudices" (H 5: 25; italics added). In the chapter following the Gunpowder Plot (Chapter 47), Hume reiterates the psychological mechanism of "a gloomy and sullen disposition established itself among the people" as expounded in "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm":

> The mind, straining for these extraordinary raptures, reaching them by short glances, sinking again under its own weakness, rejecting all exterior aid of pomp and ceremony, was so occupied in this inward life, that it fled *from every intercourse of society, and from every chearful* [sic] *amusement, which could soften or humanize the character* (H 5: 67; italics added).

Such circumstances were not limited among the puritans in England. In Chapter 55, Hume depicts the Irish Catholics who rose in revolt against the English settlers: "Amidst all these enormities, the sacred name of Religion resounded on every side; not to stop the hands of these murderers, but to enforce their blows, and to steel their hearts *against every movement of human or social sympathy*" (H 5: 343; italics added). Here, Hume depicts the atrocities of the Irish against the English planters who surrendered without further resistance. Although Hume ascribes such inhumanity partially to the national character of the Irish, he also claims that this was triggered and reinforced by the accelerated deviation from normality.

Although these conspiracies and the subsequent revolts were transient in themselves, Hume's narratives of these religious events evince the temperament of the time, which enabled people to behave as such. For example, at the beginning of Chapter 59, in the section describing how the new model army was confronted by the royal army, Hume depicts how "shame, obligation and the feeling of honor," which would have had significant authority in a normal situation, lost their power:

> Among the generality of men, educated in regular, civilized societies, the sentiments of shame, duty, honour, have considerable authority, and serve to counterbalance and direct the motives, derived from private advantage: But, by the predominancy of enthusiasm among the parliamentary forces, these salutary principles lost their credit, and were regarded as mere human inventions, yea moral institutions, fitter for heathens than for christians [sic]. … And, besides the strange corruptions engendered by this spirit, it eluded and loosened all the ties of morality, and gave entire scope, and even sanction, to the selfishness and ambition, which naturally adhere to the human mind (H 5: 493).

It was not only these sound principles that lost their power. In addition, Hume warns, "Learning itself, which tends so much to enlarge the mind, and humanize the temper, rather served on this occasion to ex-

alt that epidemical frenzy which prevailed" (H 5: 348-349). Similar remarks by Hume can be found in the *History* (H 5: 131) and his other works.

Hume's primary concern, the spread of enthusiasm, cannot be ascribed to its rampancy. Once the society is infected by enthusiasm, sympathy, humanity, or learning sometimes serve to normalize the abnormal circumstance, rather than restore normalcy. Hume details the subjugation of the ordinarily deterrent forces such as conversation, sympathy, and learning by the acceleration of mutual emulation to deviate from banality in the same way that he explains the rise and spread of chivalry. He certainly depicts the consequential if not intended effect of enthusiasm in "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" in a more positive light. However, when reading Hume's narrative of the inhumanity and the nonchalant attitude toward it during the Civil War, it is dubious if he justifies these sacrifices in consequentialist terms.

Another significant point is that the times of religious fervor continued for more than half a century, even if the period is limited from the beginning of the seventeenth century up to the Restoration in 1660 (the Popish Plot allegations, however, arose in 1678, after the Restoration). Although the panic triggered by these conspiracies did not persist, "the gloomy enthusiasm" continued much longer than is suggested in "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm."

These occurrences imply that Hume's claims regarding the relatively rapid dissipation of enthusiasm in "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm" should not be deemed as determinate. At least, Hume may be of the opinion that such an exceptional situation could exert a more continuous long-term influence, as in the case of chivalry.

"ARTIFICIAL LIVES" AND "WHAT IS ESTABLISHED"

The aforementioned discussions imply that extraordinary psychological states can occur spontaneously and persist for a long time; therefore, these are not justifiable on account of their spontaneity or antiquity. In addition, once such a psychological state is widely accepted, Hume claims, neither common life nor conversation (nor learning) can restore the normal state. This is attributable to Hume's assumption that people with such mental states do not evaluate the situation's legitimacy or merits appropriately. This challenges the common interpretation that Hume confides in "what is established" rather than "what is best" (H 4: 355; E 513-514). Certainly, Hume presents a similar view as a descriptive statement occasionally (e.g., in the essays "Of Parties in General" or "Of the First Principles of Government"), in which he remarks upon people's behavior as an observable fact. However, he also expresses the same opinion as a normative statement; for example, "there can seldom be admitted any other question, than *What is established?* (H 4: 355). This is despite the focus of some scholars, such as Hardin (2007) and Sabl (2012), on Hume's descriptive analyses, while dismissing his normative statements as peripheral.

This section compares these unnatural but persistent customs and institutions and those that Hume endorsed normatively. In doing so, this study first distinguishes between those that Hume clearly terms "conventions" in Book 3 of *A Treatise* and those deemed salutary in his later works. This distinction is occasionally blurred among the Hume scholars, who tend to consider these two as continuous and seamless.[3] However, according to Hume's own terminology, "conventions" such as justice and language are defined as follows: "an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be said to be natural as any thing that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflection" (T 3.2.1.19). Following Hume's definition, conventions must satisfy both conditions. Thus, no extensive society could exist and sustain itself without any rules of justice or language. This study distinguishes these *proper* and *fundamental* conventions, in the strict sense of the terms, from two other conventions. The first are the variants of these proper conventions, and the second are those that Hume deems to not have proceeded "immediately from original principles," irrespective of their establishment as institutions.

In the first case, Hume himself does not clearly distinguish between proper conventions and their variants in his arguments. While detailing the rules of private property in Book 3 of *A Treatise*, he admits that

the male line of succession is a variant or a particular rule of the more fundamental convention of private property (T 3.2.3.11). Another example that he discusses is the institution of marriage. In the essay "Of Polygamy and Divorce," he maintains that although the established system of marriage is indispensable for the maintenance of human society, the choice between monogamy or polygamy is a matter of variation. In fact, while mentioning the demerits of marriage, Hume states that "it is mere superstition to imagine that marriage can be entirely uniform and will admit only of one mode or form" (E 181–182).

In the second case, the institutions that Hume considers to not have proceeded "immediately from original principles" are the government and religion. He frankly admits that "it is not necessary in all circumstances, nor is it impossible for men to preserve society for some time, without having recourse to such an invention" (T 3.2.8.1). Hume clearly defines religion in the *Natural History of Religion* as follows: "The belief of invisible, intelligent power… has neither perhaps been so universal as to admit of no exception, nor has it been, in any degree, uniform in the ideas, which it has suggested" (NHR 0.1).

Hume considers enthusiasm as a special psychological state of religion, that is, the second case. The same applies for chivalry, which neither affects or pertains to property rules nor alters marital relations directly. Both cases, however, affect language or (especially in the case of enthusiasm) governmental administration. Therefore, it cannot be denied that both partake, though partially, in the first case. This would suffice for the present purpose if it can be confirmed that Hume would consider both enthusiasm and chivalry to be different from conventions such as justice and language and in the same category as other (less fundamental) institutions.

This classification can be clarified by its comparison with that of Andrew Sabl (2012), who provides a threefold classification of Hume's concepts of conventions: ordinary, fundamental, and pseudo-conventions. Ordinary conventions are those that Hume treats in Book 3 of *A Treatise*: "property, promising, justice, allegiance to government, chastity (not virginity but approved sexual behavior), and good manners" (Sabl 2012, p. 42). In addition, he includes money and toleration. Fundamental conventions, according to Sabl, "consist of those ways of living together that provide such basic political and social bonds that any challenge to them is likely to be both fruitless and immoral." Sabl (2012) therefore considers that "the most important kind of fundamental convention is *constitutional*" (p. 44). Finally, Sabl terms religion and political faction as "pseudo-conventions" (on the detailed analysis of factions in Hume's politics, see Herdt 1997; 2013). Sabl (2012) argues that "Hume calls such conventions 'local and temporary' or simply 'prevailing'. [Hume] applies these labels to variants of religious or theological belief in general, and Christianity in particular" (p. 45).

The findings of this study contradict Sabl's (2012) batched categorization of ordinary conventions. The justification of this study is based on the fact that, according to the degree of social scale, Hume distinguishes between the necessity of private property and of government (hence, the allegiance to the government). Although the government is categorized as one of the institutions that do not proceed "immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflection" (T 3.2.1.19), it cannot be considered a "pseudo-convention" like religion. Although Sabl's (2012) conception of "pseudo-conventions" are useful for focusing on enthusiasm and chivalry, a question arises as to who is entitled to judge "pseudo-conventions" as such and when. As Sabl remarks, "The hallmark of pseudo-conventions is that they serve no real purpose, hence the name." However, it cannot be asserted that Christianity has served "no real purpose," because Hume acknowledges that the Catholics' "pomp and splendour of worship … contributed, in some respect, to the encouragement of the fine arts, and began to diffuse a general elegance of taste, by uniting it with religion" (H 3: 137). Puritanical enthusiasm clearly, though unintentionally, contributed to bring about political liberty in England. As the title of the "Historical Essay" suggests, Hume clearly recognizes the contribution of chivalry in the development of modern honor.

More significantly, Hume seems to lack a *single* clear-cut criterion to distinguish between those worth protecting and otherwise. Evidently, his criterion is not *solely* spontaneity, antiquity, or public interest (Rasmussen 2024, pp. 37-44). This is because there are various examples to indicate that Hume does not defend, but rather criticizes the institutions that occurred spontaneously and survived for a long time

(Whelan 2015, pp. 84-147). Although Hume's statements on occasion indicate that the benefits of institutions can be evaluated objectively, he is cautious enough to claim the following: "What may be true, while [man] adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions" (E 256).

Such an example arises in "A Dialogue," which consists of a conversation between "Palamedes" and the narrator "I." Palamedes narrates his experiences in an unknown country, Fourli, whose people have completely different customs and manners from his own. The narrator gradually notices that ancient Greek manners are symbolized as those of the people of Fourli, which Palamedes admits. Thereafter, Palamedes underlines that the difference in manners is considerable enough that the ancient ones are presented as fairy tales. In conclusion, to the narrator's claims of the universality of human nature, Palamedes replies:

> What you insist on … may have some foundation, when you adhere to the maxims of common life and ordinary conduct. …But what say you to *artificial* lives and manners? How do you reconcile the maxims, on which, in different ages and nations, these are founded? (EPM, D. 52; italics original).

The narrator counters:

> When men depart from the maxims of common reason, and affect these *artificial* lives, as you call them, no one can answer to what will please or displease them. They are in a different element from the rest of mankind; and the natural principles of their mind play not with the same regularity, as if left to themselves, free from the illusions of religious superstition or philosophical enthusiasm (EPM, D. 57; italics original).

A similar example is found in the essay "Of Commerce" of the *Political Discourses*. Reiterating the ancient Greek and Roman manners that prioritized public interest over private interest, Hume represents them as contrary to "the general course of things, though they may fail in particular cases" (E 259). Here Hume depicted these antient manners as not natural, no matter how long they lasted. He means the "general course of things" (E 254) as an empirical fact; people almost always pursue their private interest over public interest. Nevertheless, even as he criticizes them for their unnaturalness, Hume admits that these lifestyles can persist.

In addition to ancient manners, there is another example that Hume discusses critically, while allowing for its inveterateness—Christianity. For Hume, religion is an institution that does not immediately proceed from original principles. In "A Dialogue," Palamedes, in mentioning "artificial lives," explains that some ancient philosophers, such as Diogenes, conducted a peculiar life. However, Palamedes continues, after their philosophy lost its influence, "Its place is now supplied by the modern religion, which inspects our whole conduct, and prescribes an [sic] universal rule to our actions, to our words, to our very thoughts and inclinations" (EPM, D. 53). What Palamedes terms "modern religion" is Christianity, that which Hume elsewhere terms "sick men's dream" (NHR 15.6). Hume admits that Christianity, partially associated with chivalry and more fundamentally with puritan enthusiasm, has exerted a longer and wider influence over modern Europe and its mentality and behaviors; he even anticipates its persistence.[4]

The concept of "artificial lives" has attracted Hume scholars' interest because it presents fundamental questions on the standard of judgment in terms of his moral and political theories. It also pertains to Hume's criticism of "monkish virtues" (Lottenbach 1996; Davie 1999). Rasmussen astutely clarifies Hume's seemingly ambiguous and relativistic statements in "A Dialogue." He wrote, "ultimately [Hume] appears to be a moral pluralist without being a complete moral or cultural relativist" (2014, p. 40; see also pp. 30-45 for further discussions). Therefore, Hume's moral and political pluralism undermines his sporadic appeals to antiquity, interest, or spontaneity to judge some institutions positively. His examples refute such a naïve and unique justification.

As Hume repeatedly states, common life and conversation, which he elsewhere deems an antidote to delirium, not only tend to lose their curative power but also have the potential to exacerbate enthusiasm when society is affected by an abnormal psychological state. In this regard, conversation differs from reason and humanity, which might simply be paralyzed in such situations. He reasons that practices wielding widespread influence over time may have already entered people's daily lives and conversations. Moreover, these practices may increasingly accelerate "mutual competition." This strategy does not consolidate but instead moves away from "nature" and the usual sense of duty and moral rules. The former, socially stabilizing effect of sympathy through conversation is captured by Hume's phrase that "the minds of men are mirrors to one another" (T 2.2.5.21; Rasmussen 2014, pp. 236-242), but this intersubjectivity can be an Achilles heel. In the *First Enquiry*, Hume cites the example of "the poorest artificer, who labours alone," imagining that this artificer "expects, that, when he carries his goods to market, and offers them at a reasonable price, he shall find purchasers; and shall be able, by the money he acquires, to engage others to supply him with those commodities, which are requisite for his subsistence" (EHU 8:17). If this artificer lived in a society in which chivalry or enthusiasm were prevalent, people would have corresponding expectations (even if this artificer worked "alone," they would have opportunities to talk with people in market). It is sufficiently possible to assume so from Hume's discussions on social sympathy and contagion.

Our question then is whether or how Hume expects a more objective evaluation of the merits or advantages of a specific institution after a certain period—"in a little time," in his own words. Although history has a didactic utility, as Hume reiterates (H 4: 44; H 6: 142; Sabl 2002), this only implies that posterity can make relatively neutral judgments in the presence of more material to evaluate the past. Hume's consistent interest in enthusiasm and chivalry, and his political epistemology of the same, illustrate the difficulty of objectively understanding the general trends of thought prevailing *within* each period (Herdt 2013, pp. 36-39). He also warns that posterity is unlikely to have any privileges as better judges only because they live in later times. In narrating the Popish Plot, Hume adds that this historical event "is necessary to perpetuate, as well to maintain the truth of history, as to warn, if possible, their posterity and all mankind never again to fall into so shameful, so barbarous a delusion" (H 6: 395). If there were no apprehensions of falling into the same delusion, his caveat would have no meaning.

These considerations also suggest that posterity must have a proper attitude to evaluate the past times. In the "Appendix to the Reign of James I," Hume evaluates James I not as a monarch but as a writer:

> That James was but a middling writer may be allowed: That he was a contemptible one can by no means be admitted. …If he wrote concerning witches and apparitions; who, in that age, did not admit the reality of these fictitious beings? …From the grossness of its superstitions, we may infer the ignorance of an age; but never should pronounce concerning the folly of an individual, from his admitting popular errors, consecrated by the appearance of religion (H 5: 154-155).[5]

If this caveat can be applied in evaluating Hume himself, his historical limits can be expressed in various ways. For example, from a contemporary perspective, it could be claimed that "Hume thus provides… an unsatisfactory underpinning for an attempt to claim universal rational authority for what is in fact the local morality of parts of eighteenth-century Northern Europe" (MacIntyre 1981, pp. 231-232). Hume often presupposes the normality of some institutions and customs by simply using the adjective "natural," such as in the case of primogeniture. It is likely that questioning this does not lie within the scope of his work. From a postmodern perspective, Hume's praise for monogamy and his critical comments on polygamy may be representative of modern Eurocentrism.

A contemporary example is his seemingly stubborn attitude toward the Wilkes and Liberty affair (a riot triggered by the arrest of John Wilkes, a radical journalist and MP, due to his seditious libel in 1763) and its subsequent radical movement in England, which can be found between the late 1760s and the beginning of 1770s in his correspondence. Hume remarks, "I wish that my Indignation at the present Madness, encourag'd by Lyes, Calumnies, Imposture, and every infamous Art usual among popular Leaders, may not

throw me into the opposite Extreme" (L 2: 216; To Gilbert Elliot of Minto; February 21, 1770; see also NL 189; [To Gilbert Elliot of Minto]; February 9, 1770). However, he frankly reveals:

> This Madness about Wilkes excited first Indignation, then Apprehension; but has gone to such a Height, that all other Sentiments with me are bury'd in Ridicule. This exceeds the Absurdity of Titus Oates and the popish Plot; and is so much more disgraceful to the Nation, as the former Folly, being derivd [sic] from Religion, flow'd from a Source, which has, from uniform Prescription, acquired a Right to impose Nonsense on all Nations & all Ages: But the present Extravagance is peculiar to Ourselves, and quite risible (L 2: 196; To Hugh Blair; March 28, 1769).

Notably, Hume uses the example of the Popish Plot, criticizing its atrocity and inhumanity while showing some understanding of its historical context of religious enthusiasm. In contrast, Hume finds no such religious background for the Wilkes and Liberty affair, ascribing it to "Licentiousness, or rather the frenzy of liberty" (L 2: 191: To the Comtesse de Boufflers; December 23, 1768), which he considers to be the national character of the English. As some thinkers are more sympathetic to Wilkes and Liberty or even deem it as an expression of universal human liberty, Hume's view of its parochiality may have been evaluated as obsolete even in his own times (the same can be said about his notorious comments on a particular race in a footnote of the essay "Of National Characters"). However, this study confirms that a "de-centrality" permeates Hume's thinking and warns against focusing on a specific time and region. It is partially revealed in his cyclical view of civilization. More clearly, in the essay "Of Civil Liberty," he remarks, "I am apt, however, to entertain a suspicion, that the world is still too young to fix many general truths in politics, which will remain true to the latest posterity" (E 87).

CONCLUSIONS

The aforementioned considerations highlight the need to revisit the common interpretations of Hume. F. A. Hayek traces the intellectual origin of the theory of spontaneous order to Hume, Smith, and other Scottish Enlightenment thinkers.[6] However, various examples of what Whelan terms "the spontaneous disorders" exist in their writings (Whelan 2015, pp. 84-147). These are not easily explained by the Hayekean dichotomy between *taxis* (a made order, constructed on concrete arrangement and design) and *cosmos* (a spontaneous, unconsciously formed, order) (Hayek 1973). This is especially true for chivalry and puritanical enthusiasm (see Whelan 2015, pp. 99-100; he mentions the religious persecution caused by enthusiasm). Hume details the process of how people become estranged from their common life in the "Historical Essay" and other writings and states that imagination unregulated by reason causes this deviation from nature. However, the same imagination plays a major role in determining the detailed rules of private property in Book 3 of *A Treatise*. Therefore, it is difficult to draw a clear line between chivalry, enthusiasm, and Christianity, and other institutions that Hume recommends be upheld.

However, more significantly, Hume admits that various institutions and customs can deviate from the universality of human nature and remain apart for a long time. From the perspective of political epistemology that focuses on the process of how people recognize (or fail to recognize) political legitimacy, Hume's analyses on the abnormal psychological condition of chivalry and enthusiasm reveal his recognition of the following two points. First, these unusual mental states can persist for prolonged periods, contrary to the impression conveyed by the essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm." Second, as both anomalous and normal states arise from the same principles of human nature, social sympathy and conversation lose their power as antidotes to social anomaly and might even exacerbate the situation through mutual emulation. In addition, Hume warns posterity, who have seemingly surmounted such an anomalous condition, against falling into the same rut. In conclusion, I quote a passage from "A Dialogue" of the *Second Enquiry*:

There are no manners so innocent or reasonable, but may be rendered odious or ridiculous, if measured by a standard, unknown to the persons; especially, if you employ a little art or eloquence, in aggravating some circumstances, and extenuating others, as best suits the purpose of your discourse (EPM, D. 19).

NOTES

1   See the list of abbreviations the end of this article.

2   Stewart (2009) conjectures the year 1731 as the essay's most likely composition date while providing ranges between 1731–34 (pp. 270–276), and Wright (2012) estimates 1732 or 1733, considering the possibility that Mandeville's *Enquiry into the Origin of Modern Honour*, published in 1732, inspired Hume's interest in the topic of chivalry (pp. 187-189). Mossner (1947) proposed 1725–26 (pp. 54–56). For discussion, see also Sakamoto (2020) pp. 116-117, n23. Scholars have discussed over Hume's shift in evaluation of chivalry in both works (see Siebert 1997; Susato 2007; Hanley 2007; Wright 2012), but this is neither separable from the issue over the exact dating of the "Historical Essay," and nor is the subject of my present paper.

3   For example, Wennerlind (2008) takes "property, market, and money" as "the primary conventions of a modern commercial society" (p. 106), whereas Caffentzis (2008) explains that "paper money is not based on collective "natural" conventions (like language) but is an artificial product of the promises of specific institutions: private banks, companies, and governments (p. 165). Sabl (2009) also interprets the religious tolerance that Hume depicted in the *History of England* as the last convention (see also Whelan 2015, pp. 89-90).

4   Adam Smith recorded Hume's jocular remarks on his deathbed: "But I might still urge, 'Have a little patience, good Charon, I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the Public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfal [sic] of some of the prevailing systems of superstition'. But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. 'You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy loitering rogue'." (Smith, *A Letter to William Strahan*, in E xlvi).

5   A similar remark can be found in Hume's mention of Archbishop William Laud. Laud, who attempted to re-introduce "a few primitive institutions" such as "pictures, postures, vestments, buildings; and all the fine arts, which minister to religion" met with fierce opposition from the reformers and was executed. "But this blemish is more to be regarded as a general imputation the whole age, than any particular failing of Laud's; and it is sufficient for his vindication to observe, that his errors were the most excusable of all those, which prevailed during that zealous period" (H 5: 460).

6   Some have criticized Hayek for his ascription of the spontaneous order theory to the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. Petsoulas (2001), for example, points out that the eighteenth-century Scottish authors, such as Hume, Smith, and Ferguson, underlined the significance of reflection in evaluating the advantages of institutions. However, the following is what Hayek (1973) himself admitted, and therefore, Petsoulas's criticism seems to miss the point: "Although undoubtedly an order originally formed itself spontaneously because the individuals followed rules which had not been deliberately made but had arisen spontaneously, people gradually learned to improve those rules: and it is at least conceivable that the formation of a spontaneous order relies entirely on rules that were deliberately made. The Spontaneous character of the resulting order must therefore be distinguished from the spontaneous origin of the rules on which it rests, and it is possible that an order which would still have to be described as spontaneous rest on rules which are entirely the result of deliberate design" (pp. 45-46).

ABBREVIATIONS

E: *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*. Ed. E. F. Miller, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985.

EHU: *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. T. L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000 (Chapter and paragraph numbers are provided).

EPM: *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. Ed. T. L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998 ("D" denotes "A Dialogue," and the following number means the paragraph number).

H: *History of England: from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to The Revolution in 1688.* 6 vols. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983.

HC: An Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour. Transcribed by E. C. Mossner, *Modern Philology* 45: 54-60; transcribed by J. P. Wright, Appendix: Transcription of Hume's 'Essay on Chivalry', to his article, Hume on the Origin of 'Modern Honour': A Study in Hume's Philosophical Development. In: *Philosophy & Religion in Enlightenment*, pp. 204-9. Ed. Ruth Savage. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. (The paragraph number of Wright's transcription is provided).

L: *The Letters of David Hume*. Ed. J. Y. T. Greig. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932.

NHR: Natural History of Religion In: *A Dissertation on the Passions; The Natural History of Religion*. Ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008. (The section and paragraph number is provided).

NL: *The New Letters of David Hume*. Eds. R. Klibansky and E. C. Mossner. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

T: *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. D. F. and M. Norton. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. (Book, Part, section, and paragraph number is provided).

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"The Great Guide of Life": Custom and Habit in Hume's Science of Politics

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Abstract: At the level of the individual, current research suggests that most of our daily actions are done out of habit. At the same time, individuals are part of larger social units, and their behavior gives rise to customs and institutions. Hume recognized the indispensable role of custom and habit in human life in his science of the mind, a science which aims to form the most general principles possible. Custom and habit are singled out by Hume as particularly potent general principles of human nature, describing them as the "great guide of life" and essential to human affairs. The aim of this paper is to explore the role custom and habit play in Hume's work, especially as it concerns his political philosophy and experimental method, while considering intersections with contemporary discussions in political science.

Keywords: Hume, habit, custom, politics, political science

1. INTRODUCTION

At the level of the individual, current research suggests that most of our daily actions are done out of habit (Martin 2008 and Neal et al. 2006). At the same time, individuals are part of larger social units, and their behavior gives rise to customs and institutions. Hume recognized the indispensable role of custom and habit in human life in his science of the mind. Hume's science is experimental, drawn from "from careful and exact experiments," and observational, "the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations" (T Intro.8).[1] The science of the mind aims to form the most general principles possible, "explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes" (T Intro.8). Custom and habit are singled out by Hume as one of these general principles of human nature, "a principle of human nature, which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects" (EHU 5.5). He thought of habit and custom as the "great guide of life" and essential to the survival and "regulation of conduct" in the human species (EHU 5.5; 5.21/T 1.3.16.9). The aim of this paper is to explore the role custom and habit play in Hume's work, especially as it concerns his political philosophy and experimental method, while considering intersections with contemporary discussions in political science.

Our aim is motivated in part by the fact that while Hume is recognized for contributions to political philosophy, such as his account of justice, convention, government and criticisms of social contract theory, he remains somewhat of an outlier with "no school and few disciples" (Coventry and Sager 2013, p. 588). This is perhaps because

a true skeptic, as maintained by McCormick, "cannot adopt what one would normally term a political philosophy of any kind" (2013, p. 96). In place of a totalizing political project, Hume offers an experimental approach to politics. Hume investigates the possibility of a science of politics in the 1741 "That Politics May be Reduced to A Science." In the essay, he examines whether politics admits of "general truths," and looks for "principles of this science, which may seem to deserve that character" (EMPL 18). Dahl and Neubauer claim that Hume may be "seen as a practitioner of the scientific approach to politics" (1968, p. 2). As stated by Susato, Hume's practice of a science of politics must be balanced with "his enduring skepticism" (2015, p. 170). Hume recommends "great caution" when forming "general maxims" in politics, for there will be irregularities (EMPL 366), and emphasizes there are limitations in that "the science of politics affords few rules, which will not admit of some exception, and which may not sometimes be controuled by fortune and accident" (EMPL 477).

We suggest that Hume's skepticism of totalizing political projects is a net positive. His rejection of what Fosl terms "metaphysical politics,"—entertaining "philosophical posits not grounded in experience or common life" (Fosl 2018, p. 378)—and emphasis on the experimental science of human nature he prefers is shared in spirit by the field of political science. While Hume himself did not distinguish between the enterprise of political science and the more normative or evaluative stances familiar in political philosophy, his insights nevertheless help to diagnose contemporary problems within both domains. We do not intend to litigate what aspects of Hume's insights belong to either discipline but rather tease out what elements point to Hume seriously considering a science of politics. In the next two sections of the paper, we cover Hume on custom and habit and its relevance to his political thought. The fourth section deals with the scope and limit of the science of politics Hume entertains while the fifth section detects Hume's presence in some issues of relevance in political science today, with this 'science' in mind.

A note about terminology. Hume tends to use custom and habit interchangeably as was common practice in early modern philosophy (Wright 2011, p. 18; Laursen 1992, p. 155). Hume refers to "custom and habit" (T 1.3.5.6; 1.3.10.1; 3.2.2.5) and the "principle of custom or habit" (T 3.2.2.4/EHU 5.5). Hume also uses the term custom in a social or collective sense to do with social regularities while 'habit or custom' is reserved usually for the individual psychological and behavioral regularities (Fosl 2013: 147n24 and Garfield 2019: 17). For the purposes of this paper, we will interchange between the terms of custom and habit but in doing so we follow the particular usage of the term by Hume in each context with a comment on the meaning of the term if applicable.

2. HUME ON CUSTOM AND HABIT

Custom and habit is a fundamental principle in Hume's system of human nature. Hume thought custom or habit was the "ultimate principle, which we can assign, of all our conclusions about experience" (EHU 5.5, 9.5-6). We cannot go any deeper with our explanation of human nature apart from custom and habit or to give "the cause of this cause" (EHU 5.5). Garfield recently put the point this way, Hume's science treats custom and habit "not as something to explain, but rather as that which explains" (2019, p. 17).

Hume relied on custom and habit to explain a variety of topics. For Hume, the "greatest part of our reasonings with all our actions and passions" depend on "custom and habit" (T 1.3.10.1). Custom and habit explains how general or abstract ideas are formed, the belief that the future will be like the past, the nature of belief, the necessary connection between cause and effect, the external world, the self, justice and government. Moral judgments, the development of our character, aesthetics, history and economics are shaped by custom and habit. Custom and education are cited as the main reasons for differences amongst societies, across "ages and countries" (EHU 8.11). Custom even aids in the achievement of human happiness (EMPL 269).

Custom and habit is triggered by repetition in thought and action. Hume calls "every thing CUSTOM, which proceeds from a past repetition" and that operates immediately in the mind "without any new reasoning or conclusion" (T 1.3.8.10-13). This repetition brings about what Hume calls "facility": an ease that

makes certain associations between thoughts and actions easier to produce, and this provides an automatic impetus towards those same thoughts and actions in the future (T 2.3.5.1; 2.3.4.1). The force of custom may be so strong that it may influence the mind even when the circumstances are not exactly similar (T 1.3.13.8). He also thinks that custom and habit may lead us to hold false beliefs (T 1.3.5.6) or tempt us to a "false comparison of ideas" (T 1.3.9.17-18). Hume allowed education to be founded on custom but noted that "its maxims are frequently contrary to reason, and even to themselves in different times and places" (T 1.3.9.19). Hume also distinguished four kinds of irrational probability judgements that are based on custom and habit (T 1.3.13). Hume thought we could apply rules of reasoning to correct these erroneous judgements (T 1.3.15) and these rules are based on the principle of custom and habit itself (T 1.3.13.8). The mechanism of custom and habit is responsible for the formation of beliefs, including the mistaken ones, and it is a mechanism capable of self-correction—custom and habit allows us to revise our beliefs (T 1.3.13.8-12). In morals, Hume allowed that we can acquire new habits. A person learns virtues by putting them into practice (T 3.2.1.8). Habit he says is a "powerful means of reforming the mind, and implanting in it good dispositions and inclinations" (EPML 170-1). Put simply, bad habits can be replaced with better, more effective ones. The influence of custom and habit on our moral sentiments may be reflective and progressive just like causal reasoning (Fosl 2013, p. 143).

Hume emphasized that custom influences the strengths and weaknesses of our feelings. He thought that "custom and repetition" may convert pleasure into pain and pain into pleasure (T 2.3.5.1). Some actions or thoughts produce, as they become customary, stronger passions and as other actions or thoughts turn customary they may produce weaker passions. This means that custom may diminish the force of those feelings, beliefs and practices to which we might have little commitment to but may also strongly reinforce new feelings, beliefs and practices (Fosl 2013, p. 138). In this context Hume mentioned Butler's distinction between active and passive habits. Butler distinguished passive habits that lose force after repetition and active habits that gain strength by repetition, both of mind and body (1736, p. 138ff). Butler thought that through the power of active habit we can find new ways to act and undergo alterations in our temperament or character (Ibid.). He highlighted the positive influence of moral and religious habits, forces that could generate "a new facility in any kind of Action, and of settled alterations in our temper of character" (Ibid.). Butler believed that habit even provides the possibility of a total character transformation (1736, p. 141).

This distinction between active and passive habits is now often referred to as the "double law of habit." Following Butler, Hume noted that custom "increases all *active* habits and diminishes *passive*" (T 2.3.5.5). What happens in the mind is that the "facility takes off from the force of the passive habits" whereas the active habits give "the tendency of the mind a new force, and bends them more strongly in action (T 2.3.5.5). This distinction between active and passive habits indicates that habit is not simply the result of repeating the same thought or actions but that habit is a powerful source of new thoughts and actions. Custom and habit may lead us to error but may also serve as a constructive force in the effort to improve such things as our reasoning and character on Hume's account. Habit's dual influence then can be seen as a positive blessing ("habit, blessed habit" in the words of Latour 2013, p. 265) that "can turn into a curse" (Bennett 2015, p. 3) or a curse that can be turn into a blessing. James described our lives as nothing "but a mass of habits,—practical, emotional, and intellectual,—systematically organized for our weal or woe" (1900, Ch. VIII). de Biran remarked on the ambivalent nature of habit, that habit can serve as the "general cause of our progress on the one hand, of our blindness on the other" (1929, p. 49).

Laursen suggests that Hume's distinctive contribution was to take Butler's view on habit further (2011, p. 89). Recognizing the central role of custom and habit in daily life, Hume's innovation was to extend the influence of custom and habit to all affairs, including the social and political sphere. In fact, the dual nature of custom and habit as both a forceful and reflective influence on the minds of humans forms a necessary part to explain how life and progress in society is possible.

3. CUSTOM AND HABIT IN HUME'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Hume sees politics, a science that treats humans as "united in society, and dependent on each other," as grounded in the science of mind (T Intro.5). On the Humean view humans are naturally social animals that are "compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit" (EMPL 37). As society advances, the mechanisms of government evolve to enforce justice. Hume thinks that the justice as well as the origin, authority of and beliefs about government are cemented by custom and habit. When it comes to justice, Hume says that "custom and habit" operates early "on the tender minds of the children" and "makes them sensible of the advantages, which they may reap from society" and this increases esteem for justice (T 3.2.2.4; 3.2.2.26). The rules of justice originate as a set of conventions aimed at settling conflicts about property ownership in society. Hume thought it was difficult to keep people "faithfully and unerringly, in the paths of justice," due to the self-interested nature of human beings and their tendency to prefer what is present and near to what is distant and remote (T 3.2.7.1-2/EMPL 38). Given the limits of human nature, we form government with magistrates that have the power to enforce the rules of justice (T 3.2.7.8). Over time, Hume says that "habit soon consolidates what other principles of human nature had imperfectly founded; and men, once accustomed to obedience, never think of departing from that path" (EMPL 39).

Custom explains our submission to the authority of government. Hume observed that custom or "*long possession*" gives "authority to almost all the establish'd governments of the world" (T 3.2.10.4). This takes place over a long period of time, but custom when "operating gradually on the minds of men" eventually "reconciles them to any authority, and makes it seem just and reasonable" (T 3.2.10.4). Human society gradually becomes stable as each generation inherits the institutions and customs already established by previous generations. After noting the strong influence of custom on our passions and imagination, Hume writes that "we have been long accustom'd to obey any set of men, that general instinct or tendency, which we have to suppose a moral obligation attending loyalty, takes easily this direction" (T 3.2.10.4). In the essay 'Of the Original Contract' Hume argued against social contract theorists, starting that no contract can be binding without an uncodified pattern of habits that undergird it. "No compact or agreement," is expressed formally without first being "called forth by the present exigencies" (EMPL 468-9). Such exigencies make government's "interposition. . .become daily more frequent; and their frequency gradually produced a habitual and, if you please to call it so, a voluntary and therefore precarious acquiescence in the people" (EMPL 469). Hume commented that a king who might initially be a usurper to the throne may "settle his family on the throne," and that family may gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public due to the influence of time and custom (T 3.2.10.19).

Hume thought that while time and custom give authority to government now, the mind also traces "back upon its footsteps, transfers to their predecessors and ancestors that right" and makes comparative evaluative judgements about the effectiveness of leadership, for example, "the present king of *France* makes *Hugh Capet* a more lawful prince than *Cromwell*" (T 3.2.10.19). Hume noted that there is much debate over who has the right to rule, that "the accession of the *Prince* of *Orange* to the throne might at first give occasion to many disputes, and his title be contested" (T 3.2.10.19). In "That Politics May be Reduced to A Science," Hume discusses good and bad kinds of government with the aim of forming good principles of government. These sorts of discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of rulers and governments may lead us to review our current opinions, form new beliefs or habits by the use of comparison with other leaders or forms of government throughout history and think of ways to do things better in the future. In the "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," Hume's investigation into the "most perfect" form of government is deemed useful because it is the best way to improve existing governmental systems and constitutions without giving "too great disturbance to society" (EMPL 513-4). It allows us, he says, to consider how to make "some improvements for the public good" without dismantling the entire foundations of the current constitution or government (EMPL 512-3). As Hankins and Thrasher write, Hume was not averse to political reform in principle, but simply aware that "reforms often fail to live up to the aspirations of their architects" (2022, p. 1013). Hume thinks that reformers like Cromwell "must be careful not to displace the tacit knowl-

edge embedded in the practices and customs that support, define, and push back against long-standing institutions." (Hankins and Thrasher 2022, p. 1013). On the skeptical side, Hume thinks the most perfect government still has weaknesses (EMPL 528-9).

Our beliefs or opinions about government also depend on custom and habit. Hume defines "opinion or belief as "an act of the mind arising from custom" (T 1.3.9.13). Hume claims that the foundation of government is not consent or force but opinion. In the essay, "Of the First Principles of Government," Hume wonders how government, that has only opinion at the foundation, has the power to make "men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers" (EMPL 32). There are two kinds of political opinions: opinion of interest, and opinion of right. Opinion of interest is "the sense of general advantage which is reaped from government," that goes together with the belief that the existing government is the most advantageous that could easily be established (EMPL 33). Opinion of right divides into two kinds, concerning power and property. On opinion of right to power, Hume means the opinion, to which custom gives rise, that certain persons or institutions possess the right to rule and that all members of society are under an obligation to obey them. The opinion of right to property is "in all matters of government" (EMPL 33). Hume recognized that right to power and right to property may counteract each other. Nonetheless, he explained how a "Government may endure for ages, though the balance of power, and the balance of property do not coincide" (EMPL 35).

Sabl points out that Hume's political theory allowed that custom may negatively constrain the institutional practices of society (2012, pp. 243-4). One example occurs in chapter thirty of the third volume of the *History of England* regarding the dissolution of Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Hume maintained that the "principles of sound philosophy" prove beyond doubt that the laws and conventions against incest should not have been applied in such a case. However, Hume noted that "Henry had custom and precedent on his side, the principle by which men are almost wholly governed in their actions and opinions" (Sabl 2012, pp. 243-4). On the more positive side, Hume allows that societal customs may change (EMPL 294). Laursen emphasizes that Hume allowed that political habits and beliefs are changeable and assumes that they can be corrected (2019, p. 243). Garfield also underscores that for Hume customs may evolve and change over time and this allows for "a kind of progressiveness as law and morality develop in society" (2019, p. 44). Hume allows for the "great" influence of "laws, and of particular forms of government" on people (EMPL 16), and that government may also guide people to adopt new beliefs, practices and customs (T 3.2.7.8).

4. HUME'S 'SCIENCE' OF POLITICS

As we have seen, Hume held that custom and habit play an essential role in operations of the mind. The role of custom and habit influences a great many things that concern a given polity, such as the formation of political opinions, the emergence and justification for political norms, and even the possibility of political change. Hume's emphasis on habit and custom also helps to elucidate an interplay between our psychological and social lives. For Hume, any study of politics should be undertaken with due attention given to the influence of habit and custom in our political lives. In fact, a reduction of politics to something properly regarded as a science is a purely theoretical and experimental enterprise for Hume. He rejects a metaphysical politics that would place political understanding outside the operations of the mind. According to Forbes, Hume instead wanted to bring the experimental method "to bear on English politics" (1975, p. 136). As Fosl writes, "philosophical posits not grounded in experience or common life that would pretend to legitimate authority and obligation in an *a priori* and summarily universal way," are rejected by Hume (2018, p. 376). Just as Hume is skeptical of any totalizing political project, he is skeptical of political proclamations based in "free-floating philosophical reason," as Fosl describes (2018, p. 377). As Whelan notes, for Hume, the "[a]dvocacy of certain social arrangements and approval of certain courses of conduct rest in part on empirical assessments" (2018, p. 291).

What emerges is an image of Hume as an early practitioner of a scientific approach to politics. Dahl and Neubauer note that his method "places him among the political analysts who have tried to systematize the study of political behavior, institutions, and systems" (1968, p. 2). In the essay "That Politics may be Reduced to a Science" Hume provides a rough sketch of principles of good governance and "tries to show that from a perusal of different systems, both current and in history, one can draw reliable, general conclusions about what contributes to political health" (McCormick 2013, p. 84). In another essay, "The Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth," Hume debates the merits of different forms of government with the aim of, according to McCormick, coming to "a better understanding of the kinds of principles we ought to employ in trying to, for example, balance liberty and authority" (2013, p. 86).

However, others maintain Hume's expressed scientific approach to political analysis is concretely historical. Conniff argues that Hume's real aim in "That Politics may be Reduced to a Science" is not in fact a reduction of politics to a science but rather to rebut those (such as Harrington) who claimed to have built a politics upon science (1976, p. 98). Moreover, Conniff states that the essay it is a plea for moderation in politics animated by Hume's thoroughgoing skepticism. "Since so little can be known for certain," Conniff writes, Hume advises that "a sensible man will be careful and tentative in his judgments and recognize his own fallibility." (Ibid.).

While it is true that Hume does not give a robust breakdown of what may be termed a scientific methodology in "That Politics may be Reduced to a Science," and that his distinct brand of skepticism permeates his work, he does plainly state the animating stance. Because the force of particular types of governments and laws depend so little on the "humours and tempers" of any one individual, "consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us" (EMPL 16). In his essay "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," Hume emphasizes this point more generally, writing that "[w]*hat depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes: What arises from a great number, may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes*" (EMPL 112). As George H. Sabine describes it, causal explanations for the phenomena that interest us are, for Hume, confined to "movements which involve a large number of persons" (1906, p. 21).

This considered, the scope of what may be termed a Humean science of politics are those political phenomena which involve a requisite number of persons or cases, are open to empirical study, and avoid metaphysical posits that stand outside of everyday experience and common life.[2] The challenge for Hume, and the political scientist more generally becomes, as Moore describes, rescuing "generalizations from a world characterized by contingency and radical change" (1977, p. 812). Moreover, generalizations that can be rescued should be understood with a certain skeptical caution, as Hume's empirical method made "even the most durable political maxims" vulnerable to exceptions (Wulf 2000, p. 87).

Importantly for Hume's experimental method, and subsequently our application of custom and habit to contemporary political science, is the principle of uniformity. As Hume expresses perhaps clearest in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ". . .all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities" (EHU 4.21). The inferences we make about human behavior also assume a uniformity. Hume states that there is "great uniformity among the actions of men, … The same motives always produce the same actions" (E 8.7). Hume finds that "the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform, as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature" (EHU 8.16). In applying this principle to human nature, the implication is "if human nature remains the same at all times and in all places," as Moore writes, "then differences in human conduct must be explained in terms of those circumstances in which men differ; and those circumstances were nothing but the artificial or conventional arrangements of social and political life" (1977, p. 813).

The picture that emerges might at first blush appear to sell the central focus of this paper short. That is, in adopting Hume's approach and noticing that custom and habit is a feature of cognition that all humans uniformly share, won't explanations of political phenomena have to be found elsewhere? Simply put,

no, though the question highlights the importance of Hume's use of custom and habit. Recall that Hume's use of custom connotes both a psychological and social dimension. The artificial and conventional arrangements Moore describes exist in the social dimension to be sure, but they are supported by our habits. As Garfield points out, "custom comprises not only social convention, but also biologically determined or otherwise fundamentally cognitive patterns of thought or behavior, as well as acquired habits, including the habits and practices of reinforcing our customs" (2019, p. 33). Of further note is that Hume sets limits on generalizations about human behavior just as there are limits to general principles in politics. Hume warns that we should not get carried away and "expect, that this uniformity of human actions should be carried to such a length, as that all men, in the same circumstances, will always act precisely in the same manner" (EHU 8.10). He reminds us "to allow for the diversity of characters, prejudices, and opinions" (EHU 8.10). In fact, for Hume the greater variety of human action means that we can "form a greater variety of maxims, which still suppose a degree of uniformity and regularity" (EHU 8.10).

5. CONTEMPORARY DIRECTIONS

In the spirit of the preceding section, we suggest that Hume's emphasis on custom and habit factors into many contemporary issues and approaches in political science, as they indicate how differences in the patterns of habituation effect political behavior and institutions and vice versa. As a robust and thorough accounting of the whole academic terrain is beyond the scope of this paper, we will first offer a brief overview of some aspects of the landscape where Hume's influence is detected before probing the topics of civic participation and social change and political legitimacy in some detail.

In seeing the character of institutions as emerging from the normativity expressed in local traditions, beliefs, and behaviors, Hume's characterization of custom has much in common with analyses of *political culture*, an explanatory variable that has generated a great deal of theoretical and empirical interest (Conway 1989, p. 5). Political scientist Daniel Elazar, whose work follows American political culture, argues that the varied values, perspectives, and beliefs traceable to the migration patterns of the early American settlers worked as an aggregate force, expressing itself in the behavior of the polity and subsequently becoming embedded in the original state constitutions (Elazar 1972, pp. 93-98). Employment of Elazar's tripartite topology of American political culture has had much empirical purchase, inspiring hundreds of studies that generally confirm Elazar's typology (Gray, Hanson and Kousser 2017, p. 19; Formisano 2001, p. 398).

Other theorists interested in political culture expand the target of inquiry. Political Scientists Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba widen "the political culture approach into a global framework for the comparative analysis of political change and regime legitimacy" (Dalton and Welzel 2014, p. 2). Verba suggests that a collection of attitudes support a democratic polity: allegiance to the political system and pride and participation in the political process (Ibid.). This *allegiant model* connects quite strikingly with the opinions Hume believed legitimate government.

Though approaches to political culture are varied, they share a general theme in that they emphasize a given polity's differing attitudes to political objects. Recalling that Hume thinks political opinions arise from custom and habit, where political habits differ, opinions differ, and thus customary regularities vary. Moreover, customary regularities are likely to influence what habits form. Though the link between individual psychology and their social dimensions is a tangled web we are unprepared to tackle here, we suggest that the empirical efficacy political culture has enjoyed is likely undergirded by Humean insights concerning the effects custom and habit have on distinct polities. As political cultures become increasingly pronounced, as Fisher (2016) has argued is true of America, Hume's emphasis on custom and habit might help sharpen theory crafting for those interested in getting clearer on the contours of political culture.

Such work may also help shed light on the interplay between habit and political belief, an area Hume was quite sensitive to. A person's set of political beliefs constitute the political belief system from which they navigate and orient themselves in the political sphere. For the political scientist, making sense of belief sys-

tems is crucial in elucidating to what degree an informed citizenry can be said to exist, a research question which has important implications for the health of the polity (Hochschild 2010).

While distinct threads in the literature converge with Hume's more optimistic view that political beliefs are amenable to update, the literature also suggests that political attitudes are resistant to new information, much more in line with them being habitual and self-reinforcing. In reviewing the state of the art of belief systems and political decision making among citizens, Kuklinski and Peyton note a downbeat turn, evidence suggesting that the politically knowledgeable class doubles down on political beliefs despite countervailing evidence. Put cleanly, those who are politically knowledgeable "devote most of their mental energies to maintaining their attitudes, often unreasonably" (2007, pp. 6-7). However, the authors also detect an upbeat strain, noting that "people appear to update their factual beliefs consistently with changed conditions" (2007, p. 10).

While both strains lend some support to Hume's work, they do so in different ways. That people aim to square their political belief systems with reality showcases the influence of custom in one of its most basic forms, our natural tendency to infer effects from causes. That is, if a person updates or takes on a new political belief to better mirror reality, they do so because their understanding of certain causal relations between political objects has changed. "If the economy worsens," to borrow an example from Kuklinski and Peyton, "people say the economy is weakening" (2007, p. 9). The upbeat turn in the study of political belief systems portrays a citizenry "who ground their beliefs and attitudes in reality, implying that people hold true beliefs and attitudes" (Ibid.). Impressively, political choices are congruent with one's set of beliefs or ideological commitments; "citizens use their core values and political ideologies to derive 'the right' policy preferences and choose 'the right' candidates" (2007, p. 10). On the other hand, the downbeat strain showcases how habits can sharply limit the production of potential political beliefs, as habit shapes what we devote our attention to. "People's attention to politics determines whether they receive information," the authors write, "and their ideological predispositions and, more generally, core values shape whether they accept it" (Kuklinski and Peyton 2007, p. 7).

Of course, an important distinction should be made between belief and action. Just as beliefs about the value relevance of political objects will vary among citizens, the same is true of beliefs about the value relevance of potential political action taken with respect to these objects (Dawson 1979, p. 116). Just as habit shapes the attentional landscape with respect to political information and belief formation, it too shapes the likelihood of political action.

Civic Participation and Social Change

In current discussion of habit across disciplines it is generally assumed that habit is repetition that gives rise to associations between thoughts and actions. In more contemporary terms we might say that habitual activity follows from the same repeated behavioral and neurological patterns. There is research suggesting civic participation is one such self-reinforcing act. When people abstain from voting, the likelihood they will engage next time declines (Gerber, Green, and Sachar 2003, p. 540). Conversely, voting in one election increases the likelihood that people will turn out at the next one (Ibid.). Importantly for those turning out for the first time, previous habits fostered outside of the political sphere will push them one way or the other. Condon and Holleque note that "when individuals have little experience in a domain of activity (such as politics), they rely on general psychological attitudes and personality traits developed outside of that domain to determine behavioral choices, in particular on general self-efficacy. . ." (2013, p. 168).

Green and Sachar suggest that the self-reinforcement of political action may transmute into comfort with the political process, engagement thus becoming easier and more enjoyable (2000, p. 571). Relatedly, such engagement can alter the way voters conceive of themselves within the broader polity, internalizing civic participation as the type of thing one ought to do (Ibid.). This suggestion may be underwritten by research on countries in which voting is compulsory. While conventional wisdom suggests compulsory voting is effective to the degree that penalties for abstention are enforceable, data suggests that even in

countries where compulsory voting laws are not enforced turnout is still six percent higher than countries with voluntary systems, suggesting voters turn out for reasons other than avoiding fines. As Engelen writes, "compulsory voting helps solidify some kind of *habit* or *social norm* that erodes only gradually in time" (2007, p. 42, emphasis added).

Of course, civic participation is hardly limited to formal activities like voting but extend to the informal processes that also facilitate political change. Many scholars have paid close attention to the customs and habits that govern human life to understand how genuine social change takes place. Hume on custom and habit may be seen as a precursor to current pragmatic theories of social change in particular. Pedwell (2016) explores the double law of habit to approach the complexities of social change and politics. Pedwell suggests that social change looks at the habits of practice that sustain existing institutions and looks to reform these practices by using habit to open up more practices and possibilities. According to Pedwell, "it is through the creation of habits, not their cessation, that more progressive and enduring forms of social transformation might be achieved" (2017, p. 6).

Pedwell ties her research program to Dewey's pragmatic political philosophy and public policy. Dewey understands the social psychology of the human being as a configuration of habits as detailed in his 1922 book *Human Nature and Social Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology.* According to Kaufman-Osborn, on Dewey's perspective "real social change" will not come about by a "revolutionary upheaval that destroys existing institutions but leaves untouched the habits of practice which sustain them" (1985, p. 835). Instead, social change will come about with "pragmatic public policy, backed by the power of the state," and this approach "must reconstruct the web of interconnection that constitutes the current social environment" (Ibid.). Of note is that Dees understands Hume's overall political theory as "a kind of pragmatism" (2008, p. 404).

Pedwell contrasts this pragmatist project with contemporary 'nudge' theory, advocated by Thaler and Sunstein. Nudge theory explores how policy-makers and corporate leaders, 'choice architects' in their terminology, can intervene in the choice architectures of the marketplace to alter people's behavior, bypassing problematic tendencies (2017. p. 60). Pedwell argues that if new forms of habituation are to be robust and enduring, due appreciation should be given to the necessary role the collective will play in their development (2017, pp. 65-66). Where nudge theory emphasizes harnessing expert psychological and economic knowledge to nudge individuals toward better patterns of behavior, thereby addressing a host of complex social problems, Pedwell notes that "pragmatists highlight the difficulties and pitfalls of assuming that we can know in advance the nature of progressive social or ethical conduct" (2017, p. 66).

Importantly for either project concerns what changes are being proposed. Recalling that for Hume any political artifice must assist nature, policy recommendations must be implemented "by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society" (EMPL 514). Trying out "experiments merely upon the credit of supposed argument" is to neglect the natural sentiments of humans, and while Hume is sympathetic to his own conception of utopia, he at the same time warns against those who take the notion too seriously (EMPL 512). "[I]n order to establish laws for the regulation of property," to take one example, "we must be acquainted with the *nature and situation of man.*" (EPM 3.2.6, emphasis added). In this sense, social reform is successful to the extent it furnishes a political community with (or builds upon previous instantiations of) the types of habits and customs that further our natural sentiments. While both nudge theory and Pedwell's pragmatism could potentially fit a Humean construal of government serving as a guide for the adoption of new beliefs, practices and customs, nudge theory is decidedly more paternalistic and individualistic. Here, expert knowledge is exploited to guide individuals into 'better' habits. The upshot to Pedwell's project, insofar as it is analyzed through a Humean lens, is its skepticism toward the normative inducements of experts, what Pedwell describes as "a top-down technology of behaviour modification" versus an "embodied process emerging from the ground up." (2017, p. 84). Contemplating Hume's own pragmatism, Dees notes that while governments are powerful tools, "the people have the right to insure that the tool remains only in the hands of those that will use it well" (Dees 2008, p. 404). This is especially true if the most powerful institutions seek to modify the polity's behavior.

Of course, even if one favors the ground up approach, difficulties arise in assessing how individuals conceive of and relate to political objects such that there would be agreement as to what habits or customs will be successful in furthering our natural sentiments. This is a central difficulty for politics and likely why Hume's intentions "as a moral and political writer were practical as well as philosophical and scientific," in that he hoped his arguments would, as Whelan writes, "promote such values as social utility, political moderation, legal and constitutional government, free trade and industry, and the civility and refinement of modern society." (2018, p. 291) Of course the promotion of these values seems all but impossible in a political era increasingly marked by distrust of political competitors.

Political Legitimacy and Legitimatory Mechanisms

Hume's second kind of opinion on who has the right to power and who are we obligated to obey connects to debates today about political legitimacy, defined as the "right to rule, where this is understood as correlated with an obligation to obey on the part of those subject to the authority" (Raz 1985, p. 3). Recall that Hume rejected the social contract account of legitimacy on grounds that habit and custom provide a more compelling account of consent. He notes that all the governments of his day were founded on "either on usurpation or conquest or both, without any presence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people" (EMPL 471). His insistence on grounding a study of politics in common life and in separating the study of politics from that of morals (escaping an "ethics-first" approach) suggests Hume may be best placed in the realist tradition with regards to legitimacy.[3] In the *Treatise*, Hume seemingly rejects understanding legitimacy by dint of normative import, noting that an inability to square the allegiance to a given ruler in a way that satisfies any "received system of ethics" does not entail we are exempt from the duty of allegiance (T 3.2.10.7).

This approach tracks with Sleat's realist attempt to legitimate political order from "justificatory resources that are internal to politics," escaping import of "normative values that are external to the political sphere and are taken to have antecedent authority over it." As Sleat suggests, for the realist "[p]olitics has an identity distinct from morality; hence moral, values, considerations and principles are part of politics but they are not constitutive of it," a distinction Hume also explicitly drew. The key take-away is that a construal of political legitimacy that is built on ideal and/or rational normative conditions resists empirical investigation in ways Hume would have found unacceptable. Instead, Hume offers a positive account of legitimacy secured by the opinions that arise from habit and custom. Berry points out that in Hume's politics, "habit and customary ways of behaving not only stabilize but also constrain by circumscribing the range of effective or discernible options" and this applies to individuals as well as institutions (2019, p. 321). Berry supports this with the *History of England* where Hume noted that the "wise magistrate" will be aware that "habits more than reason" are "in everything…the governing principle of mankind" (Ibid.). Since government relies on opinion, and because it serves to "restrain the fury and injustice of the people", it is "dangerous to weaken …the reverence which the multitude owe to authority" (Berry 2019, p. 322).

Landis (2018) brings Hume's work to bear on current debates about the nature of political legitimacy, analyzing Hume's writings to show that the "psychological experience of party informs the opinions by which governments can be considered legitimate" (2018, p. 219). Hume invites us, Landis argues, to reconsider the essential role that parties might play in "securing legitimacy as that ideal is practiced or understood by citizens" (Ibid.). Crucially, this understanding is "independent of the ideal understandings of legitimacy currently being articulated by theorists," highlighting Hume's insistence that it is insufficient to evaluate legitimacy from a justificatory perspective external to politics as practiced in common life (Ibid.). From this perspective, parties are viewed as foundationally valuable because of their ability to shape opinion through habit and custom, especially the opinions concerning the type of allegiance that gets legitimate government off the ground. As Landis writes "parties can either act as a support, or pose a fatal threat to the entire project of society" (2018, p. 220).

Relatedly, the legitimatory mechanisms available for different societies are constantly changing, contingent on the political affordances of specific periods (Sleat 2014, p. 325). Such affordances include not only

what political beliefs are indeed held by the polity but the mechanisms available for generating new beliefs, such as newspapers or universities (Ibid.). Parties and factions can take advantage of these mechanisms to generate and secure new beliefs and habits, ones that attach "our desire for social esteem to whatever narrow sentiments advance the party line" (Landis 2018, p. 228).

One such mechanism is of great interest to contemporary work concerning the legitimacy: social media. Contemporary research suggests that the more social media companies can create and secure daily-use habits, the more financially successful they are (Anderson and Wood 2020, p. 2). In work exploring Facebook's "ideal user," Docherty suggests that users are "technologically 'nudged'," a method discussed previously, "along pathways of active behavior," securing use-habits (Ibid.). Social media also serves as a vehicle to "connect, communicate, mobilize, fundraise, and affect the news agenda" (Kalsnes 2016, p. 1). This is especially true given that the large datasets generated by social media companies allow political actors to target individuals more precisely by analyzing "correlations between their political choices and other attributes" (Tufekci 2014). A study of political sectarianism in *Science* found that social media plays an "influential role in political discourse, intensifying political sectarianism" (Finkel et al. 2020).

Hume noted that such strong disagreement will often fall under "the pretence of public good" (EMPL 27)—the type of "competition among groups in the marketplace of ideas" that is the "hallmark of a healthy democracy" (Finkel et al. 2020). However, if partial interest is engendered solely by enraged passions, parties may be blinded to their interest in "equitable behavior," thus threatening legitimate government (T 3.2.7.7). It has been noted that this type of political polarization is of a strikingly different character, "one focusing less on triumphs of ideas than on dominating the abhorrent supporters of the opposing party," and that social media habits have exacerbated it (Finkel et al. 2020). This polarization has already transmuted into active challenges to the legitimacy of democratic institutions and elections, such as in the U.S. capital riot of 2020. In autocratic regimes, social media has increasingly been coopted and used "as a tool of regime stability" by means of enabling "non-democratic incumbents to safely gather previously hidden or falsified information about public grievances, to increase the transparency of the performance of local officials, to bolster regime legitimacy by shaping public discourse, and to enhance the mobilization of their support base" (Gunitsky 2015).

Getting a better understating of how social media habits are played upon by politicians and parties to influence political behavior, especially in efforts to undermine the political legitimacy of opponents, seems of critical contemporary import. While Hume's emphasis on custom and habit may not provide a straightforward solution, it certainly helps diagnose the problem.

6. CONCLUSION

Custom and habit pervades society, directing interrelations between humans and shaping our broader communities and institutions. Hume recognized the profound impact custom and habit has on political life, a sphere that (along with logic, morals, and criticism) comprised "almost everything of importance in the study of human affairs" (Moore 1977, p. 810). Rejecting a metaphysical politics, Hume sought to ground an understanding of political behavior and institutions in "experience or common life" (Fosl 2018, p. 376). By emphasizing similarities natural and fixed, Hume hoped to lay the groundwork for an empirical investigation into our relationship to politics, especially our differences. We hope to have shown that Hume's thought on the entrenching yet dynamic natural principle of custom and habit as applied to political society may be of relevance to some of the contemporary currents of theorizing about issues in our socio-political climate.[4]

NOTES

1   The following abbreviations are used for Hume: 'T' for *A Treatise of Human Nature*; 'EHU' for *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 'EPM' for *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* and 'EMPL' for *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*. References cite the book, chapter, section, and paragraph for the *Treatise* and the *Enquiries* and a page number is provided for the *Essays*.

2   Here "empirical study" stands for Hume's expressed experimental method in the Introduction to *A Treatise of Human Nature*.

3   The "ethics-first" terminology is found in Raymond Guess's work. See *Philosophy of Real Politics* (2008). For a detailed and compelling account exploring the similarities in realist thought and Hume on political legitimacy, see Östbring (2011).

4   Versions of this paper were presented at the Oxford Hume Forum, March 16th 2022 and the University of Venice meeting of the *International Society for Intellectual History: Histories of Knowledge: Political, Historical and Cultural Epistemologies in Intellectual History*, September 15th 2022. We thank the audience there for discussion. We thank as well Elena Yi-Jia Zeng for her editorial guidance and an anonymous referee for helpful comments.

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Hume on the Psychology of Public Persuasion

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Abstract: Political figures engage rhetoric and exalted speech to excite the imagination, stir up the emotions, and prompt their listeners to embrace and act on an ideological perspective. However, there is more to excellent public oratory than eloquence. Rational persuasion is also a key component, emphasizing facts, evidence, and reasoning. Hume acknowledges that rational persuasion alone is not terribly effective in the public arena. His corpus contains many references to eloquence. Dispassionate delivery of evidence does not have the psychological impact of eloquent delivery. What explains the difference? My aim in this paper is to use Hume's theory of belief and "the feeling of conviction" to explain his analysis of effective oratory. Furthermore, I point to the abuses of eloquence in the political arena. Given these abuses, I ask why Hume considers eloquence a virtue. Although eloquence is immediately agreeable to us (one category of virtue for Hume), it can have detrimental, even deadly, consequences. Does this make it vicious in certain cases, since it has disutility, and given that usefulness to the public is another category of virtue for Hume? I suggest that skilled and elegant oratory is pleasing, but such oratory, when used for inhumane ends, could undermine the pleasure of the oratory experience itself.

Keywords: Hume, eloquence, rhetoric, belief, feeling

Skilled public oratory is crucial to waging successful political movements. Political figures engage rhetoric and exalted speech to excite the imagination, stir up the emotions, and prompt their listeners to embrace and act on an ideological perspective. Hume's corpus contains many references to eloquence. He lists it among the virtues in his *Treatise of Human Nature* and *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. In the *Treatise*, he analyzes its role in influencing the passions and belief. He refers to eloquence as a trait of several historical characters discussed in his *History of England*. And he wonders, in his essay "Of Eloquence," why Modern orators, with their advanced experience and education, lack the level of eloquence and rhetorical accomplishment the Ancients possessed.

There is more to excellent public oratory, however, than eloquence. Rational persuasion is also a key component, and it requires emphasizing facts and evidence, allowing listeners to follow the orator's reasoning and draw the same conclusions for themselves. Hume acknowledges that rational persuasion alone is not terribly effective in the public arena, though. The aim of an orator is to produce shared belief and

action, but dispassionate delivery of evidence and drawing of logical connections does not have the psychological impact of eloquent delivery. Perhaps all of this seems obvious. However, what explains the difference in effects? My aim in this paper is to use Hume's theory of belief formation to explain his analysis of effective oratory. Furthermore, I point to the abuses of eloquence in the political arena. Given these abuses, I ask why Hume considers eloquence a virtue. Although eloquence is immediately agreeable to us (one category of virtue for Hume), it can have detrimental, even deadly, consequences. Does this make it vicious in certain cases, since it has disutility, and given that usefulness to the public is another category of virtue for Hume?

So, in outline: I begin, in section 1, with a discussion of Hume's analysis of belief, which is essentially an idea felt with a certain sentiment. In section 2, I discuss the ways in which persons acquire beliefs on Hume's view, including through experience, education, conditioning, and sympathy, many of which involve association of ideas and passions. Potent rhetoric appeals to both reason and feeling, which I illustrate in section 2. In section 3, I briefly discuss how political persuasion can enlist the Humean principle of sympathy to spread belief. Section 4 treats the effect of rhetoric on action, via its ability to intensify both passion and belief. Finally, in section 5, I raise some questions about the status of eloquence, a key component of fine oratory, as a virtue in Hume's philosophy.

1. BELIEF: CONTENT AND THE FEELING OF CONVICTION

Hume first offers his characterization of belief and its acquisition in Book 1 of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and discusses belief again in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748).[1] Beliefs are ideas, mental representations of the world, and can be accurate or inaccurate, true or false. However, an important feature of belief distinguishes it from the mere having or entertaining of an idea: it has a forceful and lively feeling that unbelieved ideas lack. Hume's definition of belief in the *Treatise* is as ". . . A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION" . . . (T 1.3.7.5). There he writes that "The idea of an object is an essential part of the belief of it, but not the whole. We conceive many things, which we do not believe . . ." (T 1.3.7.1). Since what an unbelieved idea and what a believed idea represent can be the same, the only way a belief can be distinguished from an idea merely imagined is by a phenomenal dimension. On Hume's account, my imagining that the Allies lost World War II and my believing that they did are not different in content; they differ in the way in which the two ideas are present to the mind. Beliefs have a vivacity that imaginings lack.

In his official account of beliefs in matters of fact, Hume describes belief acquisition as a result of our making causal connections between experiences or impressions of objects. (This is his analysis of how we originally adopt beliefs based on our experience of nature, which is not the only source of belief. See below). On this causal account, finding two types of impressions happening consistently in proximity, we form an expectation of the second object upon the experience of the first. The relation to a present impression is integral to belief because beliefs are triggered by experiences or impressions after we have acquired the habit of associating the relevant impressions. In one of Hume's examples, a person who walks to the edge of a deep river stops; without reflection or further experience, she suspects the consequences of stepping into the water. "The idea of sinking is so closely connected with that of water, and the idea of suffocating with that of sinking, that the mind makes the transition without the assistance of the memory" (T 1.3.8.13). The current impressions trigger the belief that walking into deep water blocks air, since the belief itself is the product of causal associations already well ingrained. When Hume defines a belief as a lively idea associated with a present impression, he indicates that, even though experiential beliefs depend on prior conditioning, they can come to mind spontaneously in response to current experience (See Radcliffe 2018, pp. 70-71).

Hume recognizes that we often acquire beliefs by education and based on the testimony of others, which also involves conditioning. Beliefs are impressed upon us by parents, teachers, ministers, politicians, and others in positions of authority. Children learn through verbal reinforcement such as preaching, lecturing, discussion, and repetition. This mode of belief acquisition involves conditioning and habituation as well but is fostered by the (typically) purposeful behavior of others, as in the case in moral education (T

3.2.2.26). This way of acquiring belief is especially relevant to the discussion of rhetoric. We are very susceptible to the views of others, which Hume sees as a weakness, writing "No weakness of human nature is more universal and conspicuous than what we commonly call CREDULITY, or a too easy faith in the testimony of others." We "have a remarkable propensity to believe whatever is reported, even concerning apparitions, enchantments, and prodigies, however contrary to daily experience and observation" (T 1.3.9.12). Moreover, others' beliefs can become our own through sympathy. I say more about these matters in the next section.

The question of what it is to have a belief in Hume's theory is complicated by two factors. One is that Hume, in the Appendix to the *Treatise*, expresses doubts about the account he has given there. The other is that he may offer a somewhat different description of belief in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* when compared to the *Treatise*. These apparent shifts of view have led some commentators (Sandis 2012, pp. 206-8; Stroud 1977, pp. 161-62) to treat Humean belief *as* a sentiment or feeling. The evidence in favor of regarding Humean belief in this way comes from the *Treatise* Appendix discussion. There Hume writes, "Either the belief is some new idea, such as that of reality or existence, which we join to the simple conception of an object, or it is merely a peculiar feeling or sentiment" (T Appendix 2). He eliminates the former possibility, as he earlier did in the text, and then concludes,

> that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment; in something, that depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles, of which we are not masters. When we are convinc'd of any matter of fact, we do nothing but conceive it, along with a certain feeling, different from what attends the mere *reveries* of the imagination. And when we express our incredulity concerning any fact, we mean, that the arguments for the fact produce not that feeling" (T Appendix 2).

Hume, however, clarifies his characterization of belief, indicating that believing an idea is a modification of "the manner" in which ideas are conceived (T Appendix 4-7), rather than a sentiment added to the ideas. When we use causal reasoning to arrive at a belief in a matter of fact, "however those ideas may be vary'd to the feeling, there is nothing ever enters into our *conclusions* but idea" (T Appendix 4). The ideas' "customary connexion with the present impression, varies them and modifies them in a certain manner, but produces no act of the mind, distinct from this peculiarity of conception" (T Appendix 4). Belief, in the *Treatise*, then, is an idea experienced with a phenomenal dimension that other ideas lack. This means that it is a cognition and not a feeling by itself.

Turning to the *Enquiry*, nine years after the *Treatise*, Hume's treatment of belief may indicate a shift from seeing it as a dimension of forcefulness, vivacity, or liveliness that characterizes belief in the *Treatise* (see Bell 2002, pp. 182-85). In the first *Enquiry*, Hume says, "Were we to attempt a *definition* of this sentiment, we should, perhaps, find it a very difficult, if not an impossible task" (EHU 5.12). Yet, he suggests, we are all familiar with the feeling, and are at every moment conscious of the sentiment represented by "belief." Hume thinks we can attempt a description, writing, "belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than what the imagination alone is ever able to attain" (5.12). We just need to agree that, whatever the feeling of belief is, it is "that act of the mind, which renders realities, or what is taken for such, more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination" (5.12). My suggestion is that we should call this sentiment attached to a believed idea the feeling of conviction. Even if belief is not captured in terms of increased force and vivacity—as Hume characterized the difference between impressions, memories, imagination, believed ideas and unbelieved ideas in the *Treatise*—still a belief is a conception or idea with a sentimental dimension. How eloquent speech can function to produce an idea imbued with a feeling of conviction is the topic of the next two sections.

2. PRODUCING THE FEELING OF CONVICTION BY REASON AND BY PASSIONATE APPEAL

Hume's essay "Of Eloquence" was first published in 1742, between the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*. A close reading of Hume's essay reveals two features of oratory achievement: the ability to arouse passion and a proficiency at organized argumentation. The former is clear from Hume's affirmation, "Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions" (El 1).[2] Effective public speech must appeal to these passions to produce political action. Hume implies, however, that successful speech is not simply an aesthetically pleasing choice of words designed to deliver an emotional appeal to listeners. To be an excellent orator, one must also be proficient at argumentation and debate. When discussing the traits essential to good public speaking, Hume writes, "A public speaker must know beforehand the question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections, and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse. If any thing new occur, he may supply it from his invention; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions" (El 20). And in his inquiry into why Modern orators are not as accomplished as the Ancients, he asks whether inflaming the passions is at odds with good sense, which the Moderns, influenced by humanism and reason, claim to possess in a much greater degree than the Ancients. Hume suggests that men of good sense can also be affected by appeal to the passions:

> Does any man pretend to have more good sense than Julius Cæsar? yet that haughty conqueror, we know, was so subdued by the charms of Cicero's eloquence, that he was, in a manner, constrained to change his settled purpose and resolution, and to absolve a criminal, whom, before that orator pleaded, he was determined to condemn (El 14).

Appeals to reason and appeals to passion are not only compatible, but necessary, to good oratory. Hume's theory offers a psychological explanation for the contributions of each to eliciting conviction.

Hume argues that the human mind naturally associates ideas, passing from the thought of one object "to what is resembling, contiguous to, or produc'd by it" (T 2.1.4.2). These principles of association play a large role in his account of the passions as well. For instance, when Hume discusses pride and humility, he notes that any quality of the mind or body can be their subject and "[t]he passions looking farther, comprehend whatever objects are in the least ally'd or related to us. Our country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths; any of these may become a cause either of pride or of humility" (T 2.1.2.5). Impressions (which includes sensations and passions) are subject to the same movement of the mind: "All resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, till the whole circle be compleated" (T 2.1.4.3). Joy turns to love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and so on (T 2.1.4.3). Furthermore, these two kinds of association "assist and forward" one another so that when they are related to the same object, the mental transition from idea to idea and impression to impression happens very easily:

> Thus a man, who, by any injury from another, is very much discompos'd and ruffled in his temper, is apt to find a hundred subjects of discontent, impatience, fear, and other uneasy passions; especially if he can discover these subjects in or near the person, who was the cause of his first passion. Those principles, which forward the transition of ideas, here concur with those, which operate on the passions; and both uniting in one action, bestow on the mind a double impulse. The new passion, therefore, must arise with so much greater violence, and the transition to it must be render'd so much more easy and natural (T 2.1.4.4).

The new passion that arises in this case is a kind of hatred toward the person who perpetrated the injury. It arises with an intensity of feeling provoked by the many associations of a variety of unpleasant passions with this individual's behavior.

The principles of association are instrumental to the efficacy of rhetoric in producing belief, as the case of Cicero's speech concerning Cataline illustrates. Cicero, esteemed by Hume as one of the most accomplished orators in history, speaks of the crimes of Cataline, whom he accuses of plotting to undermine the Roman Senate. He offers the following picture, in question form, to the Senate:

> all your plans are as clear as daylight to us…. Do you remember that I said in the Senate on the 21st of October that Gaius Manlius, your tool and lackey in your wild scheme, would take up arms on a certain day and that the day would be the 27th of October? Was I not right, Catiline, both in the seriousness of the plot, beyond belief in its ferocity though it was, and—a much more remarkable feat—in the date? I also said in the Senate that you had postponed the massacre of leading citizens until the 28th of October even though by that date many of the leading figures in the State had left Rome…. You cannot deny, can you, that, on that very day after the others had departed, my guards and my elaborate precautions had hemmed you in and you could not move against the Republic? And that you said that you were quite content with the slaughter of those of us who had remained behind? …
>
> …I say that on the night before last you came to the street of the scythe-maker…. There you were joined by many of your accomplices in your criminal folly. You do not have the effrontery to deny it, do you? (Cicero 39, 41).

Cicero's offering testimony of Cataline's alleged activities impresses upon the Roman senators' ideas of Cataline and crimes against the government. However, the mere hearing of the charges is not necessarily convincing. Acquisition of belief requires association of an idea with a present impression that elevates the sentimental aspect of the idea. If the senators have a past association of criminal deeds with Cataline, the speech provides the present impressions that boost the idea of Cataline as a criminal to the status of belief. Rational appeal in oratory evokes in listeners' minds ideas that they associate habitually in certain ways based on shared past experiences. So, if Cicero's accusations evoke in the mind of the members of the Senate associations of Cataline with other similar behaviors, the vivacity (to use the *Treatise* account) of the idea that Cataline engaged in a treacherous plot can rise to the level of belief.

However, for those who do not have established associations of Cataline with crime, the ability of the speaker to use repetition and lofty speech to create associations and to arouse passions that become in the listeners' minds connected to Cataline is crucial. The use of terms like "lackey" and "slaughter" provokes images that arouse resentment, horror, and disgust, which infuse the idea of Cataline as vicious with a feeling of conviction. These passions become associated with him in such a way that an intense hatred results and is associated with a desire for his misfortune.

Hume also recognizes that the feelings of surprise, amazement, or astonishment can fortify associated ideas with the vivacious feeling requisite to belief:

> Admiration and surprize have the same effect as the other passions; and accordingly we may observe, that among the vulgar, quacks and projectors meet with a more easy faith upon account of their magnificent pretensions, than if they kept themselves within the bounds of moderation. The first astonishment, which naturally attends their miraculous relations, spreads itself over the whole soul, and so vivifies and enlivens the idea, that it resembles the inferences we draw from experience (T 1.3.10.4).

For instance, a 19th-century snake oil salesman peddling immediate cures for smallpox, plague, scarlet fever, and the like, can make converts in a crowd provoked by astonishing claims made on behalf of the medi-

cines for sale. When persons have not experienced the purported causes of an effect, they can still adopt beliefs about those effects, due, not to constant conjunction, but due to associations of a powerful emotion, like amazement, with an idea. The idea is elevated by the association to the level of belief. So, for instance, one may come to believe in a miracle due to the force of passions like wonder. Such ideas attain the force and vivacity, or conviction, of belief. A skilled orator can use this phenomenon by making unorthodox claims that evoke surprise about their subjects and imbue the associated complex ideas with a vivacity that constitutes the feeling of conviction. This phenomenon is demonstrated by unsubstantiated and provocative claims made by former U.S. President Donald Trump in support of the view that he won the Presidential election in 2020. Trump's appeals worked on like-minded people who experienced heightened anger by the claims without investigating the grounds for them and who were later incited by their forceful feelings to perpetrate violence at the U.S. Capitol Building in January 2021.

3. THE ROLE OF SYMPATHY

Political speech is aimed at creating both unity and faction: unity of purpose against opponents or enemies. Thus, another Humean principle instrumental to the effectiveness of oratory is sympathy. Belief is often transmitted from one person to another with similar dispositions by sympathy, our ability to turn the ideas of another's state of mind into impressions of our own. Hume writes (in the context of his discussion of pride):

> Now nothing is more natural than for us to embrace the opinions of others. . .; both from *sympathy*, which renders all their sentiments intimately present to us; and from *reasoning*, which makes us regard their judgment, as a kind of argument for what they affirm. These two principles of authority and sympathy influence almost all our opinions . . . (T 2.1.11.9).

Later Hume qualifies the extent to which sympathy influences our beliefs:

> So close and intimate is the correspondence of human souls, that no sooner any person approaches me, than he diffuses on me all his opinions, and draws along my judgment in a greater or lesser degree. And tho', on many occasions, my sympathy with him goes not so far as entirely to change my sentiments, and way of thinking; yet it seldom is so weak as not to disturb the easy course of my thought, and give an authority to that opinion…. (T 3.3.2.2).

Hume's points are applicable to the effect of fine oratory, which attempts to convert collections of people to the same viewpoint as that of the speaker and unites them in a cause or a purpose. The words and passions of the speaker can sometimes arouse similar sentiments in the listeners via their sympathies in such a way that an idea is vivified enough to belief for some. As Hume notes, the reasoning that supports a position is also important to the efficacy of the persuasion, and at times, listeners may not undergo a change in sentiments far enough to inculcate a new belief. However, they cannot help but be affected to some degree by the standpoints of others and are prompted to take them into account.

To take a contemporary example, Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain during WWII, was renowned for not only his rhetoric, but also for his ability to create a sense of comradery and sympathetic bonding. His use of "we" in his speeches, identifying with the people to whom he spoke, broke down barriers between himself and common people and between persons, making sympathetic identification easier. In his famous "Finest Hour" speech to the House of Commons amidst the atrocities of the War, he announced:

> Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him all Europe may be free, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands; but

if we fail then the whole world, including the United States, and all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more prolonged, by the lights of a perverted science.

Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasts for a thousand years men will still say, "this was their finest hour" (Churchill, June 18, 1940).

A speaker with the ability to communicate like-minded sentiment and a feeling of unity among the public appeals to the sympathetic aspect of human nature, which Hume recognizes as stronger than environmental commonalities. He writes, "To this principle we ought to ascribe the great uniformity we may observe in the humours and turn of thinking of those of the same nation; and 'tis much more probable, that this resemblance arises from sympathy, than from any influence of the soil and climate...." (T 2.1.11.2). Of course, it is important that Churchill had the force of reason behind him, which is frequently missing from certain attempts to proselytize in the political arena.

4. BELIEF TO ACTION

Potent oration might inculcate belief and arouse passions, but unless these mental states are causally stronger than competing ones, they will not produce action. Hume writes, "We may of ourselves acknowledge, that such an object is valuable, and such another odious; but 'till an orator excites the imagination, and gives force to these ideas, they may have but a feeble influence either on the will or the affections" (T 2.3.6.7). Our affirmations of the value of an object, a public regulation, a way of life, and so on, may not influence our actions, or perhaps even our affections, Hume says, if not infused with force by the excitement of a magnificent speaker. Since the goal of oratory is not only to arouse passions and infuse belief, but also to prompt action, it is important to understand how Hume sees action as an outcome of passion and belief. In this context, I intend to emphasize the role that strength of conviction plays in the process. Commentators often discuss the forcefulness of passions necessary to action, but beliefs are also held with varying degrees of conviction. The degree to which we are convinced of a situation makes a decisive difference to whether we act on the belief.

Indeed, some commentators (for instance, Kail 2007; Cohon 2008) suggest that some beliefs produce actions without passions (in Hume's view). I am not interested in that issue here. Scholars generally agree that passions, on Hume's theory, provide an impetus to action, even if some beliefs without passions also do. So, all are generally agreed that motivation derives from belief and passion, whether in conjunction or separately. The point that I am interested in making here is that both the strength of a passion and the strength of belief (what I call "strength" or "degree" of conviction) are crucial in determining whether the relevant passion and belief will result in action. Rhetorical speech and passionate oratory can increase the strength of both belief and passion and be an effective tool in instigating collective action.

I briefly consider passion first. Hume recognizes a distinction between the strength of a passion and its violence, although he also alleges that there is a correlation between the two. A violent passion is felt with internal upheaval, while a calm one is felt in a gentler way, without inner turmoil (T 2.3.3.8-9). Any passion can be felt calmly or violently, but some, like aesthetic pleasure, are typically calm, while others, like anger, are typically violent. Calmness and violence are phenomenal dimensions. On the other hand, the strength of a passion is the causal force the passion exerts on the person who possesses it (T 2.3.4.1). Since we each experience diverse passions at the same time toward different objects and people, and many of these passions are of a nature to prompt action, we would never act if all were of the same strength. The causal force or strength of a passion is a comparative feature, where the causally strongest passion or combination of passions cause action, other things being equal. Calm passions are frequently the strongest because when acting on a certain passion becomes habitual, it becomes calmed ("a settled principle of action"),

and we don't feel the motive behind habitual actions (T 2.3.4.1), as for instance, when stinginess becomes one's character trait and is expressed routinely. On my interpretation, the distinction between violence and strength allows Hume to account for the fact that we often want something badly, but we don't act for it. "Wanting badly" refers to the phenomenal dimension of the passion, while what we do is caused by the passion with a greater causal force.

When orators whip up the emotions of an audience, they are, in Hume's terms, increasing the violence of a passion. This does not necessarily mean that these violent passions will result in action, but Hume suggests that generally the violent passions have a "more powerful influence on the will" than calm ones (although calm passions can control them at times when affirmed by a strong resolution) (T 2.3.8.13). Nonetheless, he suggests that "when we wou'd govern a man, and push him to any action, 'twill commonly be better policy to work upon the violent than the calm passions" (T 2.3.4.1). Politicians have learned this lesson, so they inflame the sentiments of their audience with potent images and ideas to produce heightened emotions and sentiments that eventually result in collective action on the part of the listeners.

I now want to consider the effects on action of strength of conviction, which fine oration can influence by arousing the imagination. Hume writes,

> a vigorous and strong imagination is of all talents the most proper to procure belief and authority. 'Tis difficult for us to withold our assent from what is painted out to us in all the colours of eloquence; and the vivacity produc'd by the fancy is in many cases greater than that which arises from custom and experience. We are hurry'd away by the lively imagination of our author or companion; and even he himself is often a victim to his own fire and genius (T 1.3.10.8).

Strength of conviction is decisive to action when the agent has competing desires of equal force or one desire with more than one possible means. A General in war torn between two ways of possibly defeating the enemy will surely opt for the route that is likely to be most successful based on knowledge of tactics, terrain, transportation, and so on. Hume's discussion of probability, which follows his discussion of the influence of belief, constitutes a commentary on strength of belief in action. He identifies degrees of evidence and corresponding conviction: knowledge is the result of comparison of ideas (knowledge of necessary truths); proof is causal reasoning that is free of doubt (resulting in beliefs like the sun will rise tomorrow or that all people will die); and probability is evidence "attended with uncertainty" (T 1.3.11.2).

Probability is especially relevant to this discussion, since political oration usually proceeds by attempting to boost the degree of conviction we have about issues of great uncertainty. Hume divides probability into that which is founded on chance and that which arises from consideration of causes (T 1.3.11, T 1.3.12). I do not discuss chance here, but in the case of causal probability, strength of belief is affected in various ways that correlate with the way in which beliefs are acquired—that is, by a constant conjunction of experiences and the mind's relation of the idea of one of those experiences to a present impression of the other. Hume notices, therefore, that probability is affected by a contrariety of events, which interrupts the constancy of the conjunction. "A contrariety of events in the past may give us a kind of hesitating belief for the future after two . . . ways" (T 1.3.12.6). One way lies in producing an "imperfect" habit, which makes the transition to belief less forceful and steady (1.3.12.6). The other lies in our considering the contrary events and weighing the experiments on each side (1.3.12.7).

We reason from an interrupted regularity by drawing "together the divided images presented by experience" to entertain an idea about a single future event. When a greater number of images concur on one side than on the other:

> These agreeing images unite together, and render the idea more strong and lively, not only than a mere fiction of the imagination, but also than any idea, which is supported by a lesser number of experiments. Each new experiment is as a new stroke of the pencil, which bestows an additional vivacity on the colours without either multiplying or enlarging the figure (T 1.3.12.11).

Public oration can reinforce experiments on one side or the other by the speaker's attempts to present new evidence that adds to the accumulation of cases. Animal rights activists cite numerous instances of cruelty and maltreatment of cattle, chickens, and pigs in the food industry to convince listeners that the practices of factory farming are immoral. At the same time, these advocates point to the slim evidence of the need for meat-eating to human nutrition and emphasize the effects on the environment of raising animals for meat. In so doing, the imaged ideas supplied by powerful speech are gathering strength in favor of a conclusion portrayed with deep conviction.

"Unphilosophical probability," a third sort of probability that Hume says is not recognized by philosophers, is crucial to a discussion of strength of conviction, since it has to do with psychological factors that affect the forcefulness of our beliefs (T 1.3.13). These considerations are less quantifiable than those in philosophical probability and are not recognized as normatively legitimate, but they have a dramatic effect on the strength of our convictions. First, when the memory of the resemblance between the past conjoined experiences is diminished by the passage of time, the evidence is diminished in our minds and the degree of belief accordingly: "The argument, which we found on any matter of fact we remember, is more or less convincing according as the fact is recent or remote . . . [T]his circumstance . . . secretly changes the authority of the same argument, according to the different times, in which it is propos'd to us" (T 1.3.13.1). Second, in a similar vein, Hume writes that "our degrees of belief and assurance" are influenced by how recent an experiment relevant to a particular belief took place; we are more forcefully affected by the recent evidence than by an experiment whose results have been obscured by time (T 1.3.13.2). Third, "when an inference is drawn immediately from an object, without any intermediate cause or effect, the conviction is much stronger, and the perswasion more lively, than when the imagination is carry'd thro' a long chain of connected arguments" (T 1.3.13.3). Hume explains this last point by the fact that the vivacity of the original impression upon which a current belief depends decays in proportion to the distance along which the impression must transfer its force. Finally, a fourth source of unphilosophical probability is the use of general rules. Some general rules are formed by the mind's seeing as connected what are accidental circumstances, and so these result in prejudices and rationally unfounded generalizations, such as "An *Irishman* cannot have wit, and a *Frenchman* cannot have solidity . . ." (T 1.3.13.7). At the same time, the "second effect" of the mind's general rules is to "take a review of this act of the mind, and compare it with the more general and authentic operations of the understanding." Then "we find it to be of an irregular nature, and destructive of all the most establish'd principles of reasoning; which is the cause of our rejecting it" (T 1.3.13.12). Hume adds that this second-order effect of general rules does not prevail in all persons; it depends on characters and dispositions. Prejudices do exercise an influence on many persons' convictions.

Orators can exploit Hume's analysis of unphilosophical probability and the effects of proximity on belief by using simple, short lines of reasoning, by providing reminders of past events to elevate the intensity of those ideas and bring them back into public consciousness, and by appealing at times to prejudicial generalizations that resonate with certain types of listeners. The stronger the degree of conviction, the more likely the audience is to act on these heightened states of belief.

5. ELOQUENCE IN HUME'S VIRTUE ETHICS: A PROBLEM?

For Hume, certain traits are meritorious because they are immediately agreeable to the self or to others, while other traits are meritorious because they are useful to the self or to others. Hume discusses these issues in both the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*. Traits immediately agreeable to the self include cheerfulness, tranquility, and benevolence (the last of which is also useful to others) (EPM 7).[3] Features immediately agreeable to others include good manners, wit, ingenuity, and eloquence (EPM 8). Discretion, industry, and frugality are among those useful to the self (EPM 6), while generosity, bravery, and concern for others ("humanity") are some of the traits useful to others (EPM 5).

Pertinent to our topic, he writes, "Eloquence, genius of all kinds, even good sense, and sound reasoning, when it rises to an eminent degree, and is employed upon subjects of any considerable dignity and nice

discernment; all these endowments seem immediately agreeable, and have a merit distinct from their usefulness" (EPM 8.7). While good sense and sound reasoning "employed upon subjects of nice discernment" may be immediately agreeable and so virtues under any circumstances, the same does not seem true of eloquence and genius. (I take it that the reference to the "subjects" of dignity and discernment modifies only "sound reasoning," since Hume uses the singular in his qualification, "when it rises to an eminent degree"). In the former cases, the worthy ends for which the sense and reasoning are used are incorporated into the descriptions, as designated by the modifiers: "good" sense and "sound" reasoning "employed upon subjects of nice discernment." In the cases of eloquence and all sort of genius, ends are not invoked, and the immediate agreeableness comes from the pleasing effects on observers or on the self of the eloquent speech and displays of genius. However, when intelligence or eloquence is used to promote painful and destructive conditions, what are we to say about its moral quality? We might admire the speaking abilities of a Hitler or the genius of an Elizabeth Holmes (who in her early 30's became a multi-billionaire by duping investors and the biotech industry into believing she had invented a revolutionary way to analyze blood). Do we want to say that the articulate expressions of a murderer and the intelligence of a conniver are virtues? Hume's view implies that they are.

In the Introduction to the *Treatise*, Hume writes, "There is nothing which is not the subject of debate, and in which men of learning are not of contrary opinions. The most trivial question escapes not our controversy . . .. Amidst all this bustle 'tis not reason, which carries the prize, but eloquence; and no man needs ever despair of gaining proselytes to the most extravagant hypothesis, who has art enough to represent it in any favourable colours" (T 0.2).

Eloquence can be an instrument of proselytizing for outrageous views. For instance, Adolph Hitler put into practice what he wrote in *Mein Kampf* (1925), "I know that men are won over less by the written than by the spoken word, that every great movement on this earth owes its growth to great orators and not to great writers." He was purported to be an excellent speaker who used powerful rhetoric to win over the people of Germany to support the causes of Nazism and believe in the virtues of his totalitarian regime. However, if rhetoric can be used to promote deleterious and destructive goals, how can it be a virtue?

Richard Dees (1997, pp. 45-46) emphasizes that Hume is attuned to the subtilties and complexities of characters, as illustrated by his sketches in his *History of England*, in which one person, like Charles I, embodies both virtues and vices:

> To consider him in the most favourable light, . . .his dignity was free from pride, his humanity from weakness, his bravery from rashness, his temperance from austerity, his frugality from avarice . . . To speak the most harshly of him, we may affirm, that many of his good qualities were attended with some latent frailty, which, though seemingly inconsiderable, was able, when seconded by the extreme malevolence of his fortune, to disappoint them of all their influence . . . (Hume, *History* v. 5, 542).

But a mixed character differs from a mixed assessment of a character trait. Dees also observes that self-interested traits, useful and immediately agreeable to the self, are often not useful and agreeable to others, with pride being a case in point (1997, pp. 51-53). A proper assessment of our merit and our pride in genuine accomplishments may not be problematic, but a demonstration of pride is sometimes simply disagreeable to others. Moreover, it is difficult to do an accurate self-assessment, and Hume himself suggests that it is better for the agent to err on the side of overestimating her merits, which others can find obnoxious (T 3.3.2.7-9). Dees rightly suggests that one of Hume's solutions to the conflict between self-interested behavior (useful and agreeable to the self) and other-interested behavior (useful and agreeable to others) is solved by appeal to rules, like those of etiquette and justice, which set limits on the expression of self-interest (1997, pp. 52-54).

This solution does not help with the case of eloquence or fine rhetoric, however, since these traits are not just immediately agreeable to the possessor, but to others as well. The conflict is not one generated by a

self-orientation and an other-orientation, but by an apparent agreeableness to all and a disutility in some contexts. Dees suggests that Hume has an ambivalence toward certain traits, like military heroism, for similar reasons as those I have invoked in my discussion of eloquence. Hume writes of such heroism that we admire it, but that it also often the source of misery and chaos: the devastation of provinces and destruction of cities, among other consequences. "But when we fix our view on the person himself, who is the author of all this mischief, there is something so dazzling in his character, the mere contemplation of it so elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it our admiration" (T 3.3.2.15). Likewise of wit and eloquence:

> *wit* and *eloquence* are valu'd, because they are *immediately agreeable* to others. . .. 'Tis evident, that the conversation of a man of wit is very satisfactory; as a chearful good-humour'd companion diffuses a joy over the whole company, from a sympathy with his gaiety. These qualities, therefore, being agreeable, they naturally beget love and esteem, and answer to all the characters of virtue (T 3.3.4.8).

Marc Hanvelt argues that Hume's essay "Of Eloquence" introduces a distinction between "high" and "low" rhetoric, where high rhetoric is composed of three elements: "accurate reasoning, a rhetorical style that appeals to the human compulsion to make judgments and eighteenth-century standards of politeness" (Hanvelt 2010, p. 569). High rhetoric, on Hanvelt's account, is directed toward the public good, and low rhetoric disrespects individuals' reasoning and can be divisive. The politeness of high rhetoric, on the other hand, includes a respect for the listener's reason and judgment. "In Hume's conception of [high] rhetoric, the orator appeals to these faculties in the audience rather than seeking to overpower them" (Ibid.). This interpretation is a development beyond what Hume says explicitly in the text, but perhaps Hanvelt is right about Hume's intentions. If so, then Hume is appealing to a conception of proper ends that his discussion of eloquence as a virtue because of its immediate agreeableness does not seem to countenance.

   One interpretation of Hume's approach that makes his view more plausible is to say that fine rhetoric, genius, keenness, and similar traits are admirable in isolation from the ends they are used to promote. Only when they are used in conjunction with other vicious traits do they produce bad consequences, and in such cases, the other traits are the causes of the bad results. This seems a reasonable reading. When Hume writes of our admiration of natural talents in the *Treatise*, he writes,

> Before I leave this subject of *natural abilities*, I must observe, that, perhaps, one source of the esteem and affection, which attends them, is deriv'd from the *importance* and *weight*, which they bestow on the person possess'd of them. He becomes of greater consequence in life. His resolutions and actions affect a greater number of his fellow-creatures. Both his friendship and enmity are of moment . . . The histories of kingdoms are more interesting than domestic stories: The histories of great empires more than those of small cities and principalities: And the histories of wars and revolutions more than those of peace and order. We sympathize with the persons that suffer, in all the various sentiments which belong to their fortunes. The mind is occupi'd by the multitude of the objects, and by the strong passions, that display themselves. And this occupation or agitation of the mind is commonly agreeable and amusing. The same theory accounts for the esteem and regard we pay to men of extraordinary parts and abilities.... And where any person can excite these sentiments, he soon acquires our esteem; unless other circumstances of his character render him odious and disagreeable (T 3.3.4.14).

We esteem enormous talent and natural abilities because of the importance they bestow on the person who possesses them: the consequences of their actions, whether good or ill, are momentous. And yet, in the last sentence Hume qualifies his observations by noting that other circumstances of such a character can make the person odious. His point is that extraordinary abilities we admire because of the attention they shine

on a person and her actions, even though the person's character overall may not be venerable due to other features.

6. CONCLUSION

I have argued that Hume's psychology of belief well explains the psychological basis of effective oratory on listeners. Belief is an idea one possesses with conviction, and so involves cognition and feeling. The feeling of conviction can be brought on in various ways that fine rhetoric engages: by appealing to reasoning which consists in associations of ideas by experience; by creating associations between an idea and a passion, thus vivifying the connected idea; by making surprise claims that create excitement associated with the idea; and by invoking sympathy to spread beliefs. Public persuasion can be used to spread true claims or false ones, to create beneficial outcomes or deleterious ones. Hume's view of eloquence, however, classifies it consistently as a virtue, admirable for its intrinsic agreeability and the weight it brings to the agent's affairs and actions. Abuses of this virtue are attributable to other features of the agent's character. Dees suggests that the tensions within Hume's view of virtues as traits useful and agreeable to the self or others capture the complexity of human morality (1997, p. 64).

Perhaps they do, but contemporary public thought with its so-called "cancel culture" does not tend to separate immediately agreeable traits from the character of the possessor and the ends that a person seeks. I want to leave the suggestion that skilled and elegant oratory is pleasing, but such oratory, when used for inhumane ends, could undermine for some people the pleasure of the oratory experience itself. Perhaps Hume's moral theory would better reflect human evaluation of oratory by reference to the public effects it produces, rather than by reference to its immediate agreeableness.[4]

NOTES

1   References to Hume's *Treatise* are to "T" followed by Book, Part, section, and paragraph numbers. References to the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* are to "EHU" followed by section and paragraph number.
2   References to "Of Eloquence" are abbreviated as "El" followed by paragraph number.
3   References to Hume's *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* are to "EPM," followed by section and paragraph number.
4   I am grateful to two referees for this journal, one of whom offered extensive comments that has vastly improved this discussion.

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Foucault on Hume: Some Preliminaries

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Abstract: This paper analyzes two episodes of Foucault's reading(s) of Hume's philosophy. In both cases Hume is important to Foucault's overall argument and aims. In particular, in both Foucault takes a fairly conventional philosophical description of Hume—as a 'skeptic' and 'empiricist'—for granted and shows that these disguise a world-historical significance. In section 1, the paper explores Hume's role in Foucault's (1966) *The Order of Things.* The paper argues Hume stands in for the hidden role of similarity in the human sciences of the so-called 'classical period.' The paper examines Hume's account of relations which do not fully support Foucault's claims about Hume. It is proposed that Foucault's reading is motivated by the role Hume plays in Husserl's philosophy. In section 2, Foucault's treatment of Hume on March 28, 1979, during the eleventh lecture of the series known as *Birth of Biopolitics*, is analyzed. There Foucault ascribes to Hume's account of the subject the key building blocks that allowed for the development of Benthamite radicalism and *homo economicus*. The paper situates Foucault's later analysis of Hume in Foucault's larger account of the development of the so-called radical (Benthamite) strain of liberalism that, on Foucault's telling, runs through Chicago economics. While Foucault's account of Hume is anachronistic, this anachronism illuminates the building blocks of modern liberalism.

Keywords: Foucault, David Hume, Husserl, Chicago Economics, Liberalism

INTRODUCTION

In the intellectual character-sketch of Foucault by his close friend, Paul Veyne, Veyne (2010) treats Foucault as a skeptical nominalist in the manner of David Hume (see, especially, pp. 37-53; 66, 113). However, Veyne does not engage with Foucault's writings on Hume. More generally, Foucault's engagement with the Scottish Enlightenment has been relatively sidelined in scholarship on Foucault, who is mostly situated in debates over the French reception and transformation of transcendental philosophy and phenomenology (Han 2002; Hyder 2003). But what scholarship there has been focused on his readings of Ferguson (Ashenden 2015; Heath 2023) and Adam Smith (Williams 2015; Schliesser 2017; Heath 2023).

In this paper I analyze two episodes of Foucault's reading(s) of Hume's philosophy. Relative to his oeuvre, these represent modes engagements by Foucault. However, I show that in both cases Hume is important to Foucault's

overall argument and aims. In addition, because Foucault's readings have had negligible impact on Hume scholarship hitherto, they invite us to take a fresh look at Hume.

In particular, I argue that in both episodes Foucault takes a fairly conventional philosophical description of Hume—as a "skeptic" and "empiricist"—for granted and shows that these disguise a world-historical significance. In section 1, I show that the first episode, in Foucault's (1966) *The Order of Things*, Hume stands in for the hidden role of similarity in the human sciences of the so-called 'classical period.' I argue that Hume's account of relations does not fully support Foucault's claims.

The second episode, which I analyze in section 2, occurred on March 28, 1979, during the eleventh lecture of the series that came to be known as *Birth of Biopolitics* (hereafter: BoB). Foucault (2008) ascribes to Hume's account of the subject the key building blocks that allowed for the development of utilitarianism and *homo economicus*. I situate Foucault's later analysis of Hume in Foucault's larger account of the development of the so-called radical (Benthamite) strain of liberalism that runs through Chicago economics.

The title of this paper and the previous paragraphs may be thought excessively modest. But, Foucault has a tendency to read Beccaria as a kind of Humean. Beccaria is an important interlocuter for Foucault. So, the significance of Hume to Foucault's understanding may be much wider than may be inferred from what follows.

1: HUME, HUSSERL, AND *THE ORDER OF THINGS*

In this section I show that Hume plays a triple role in *The Order of Things*. First, alongside a number of other familiar philosophers Hume's works are treated as illustrations for Foucault's claims about the nature of representation and knowledge in the *episteme* of the so-called Classical period. In such cases Foucault assumes considerable knowledge about Hume among his implied audience. That Foucault can do so is explained by the second role Hume has, that is, of being a familiar steppingstone in a narrative that undergirds the self-understanding of phenomenology (which is treated as the ruling philosophical status quo by Foucault). This narrative is one of Foucault's main targets in the book. However, and this is the third role, in characterizing the distinctive nature of the classical age, Foucault singles out Hume individually. And this is so because he can both assume familiarity with Hume (given the familiarity of Foucault's audience with Hume as a steppingstone in their standard narrative) *as well as* render Hume unfamiliar in virtue of his retelling of the story of early modern philosophy. In exploring the significance of the third role, I show that Foucault's analysis of Hume's account of resemblance cannot withstand close scrutiny. This problem raises serious concerns about the status of his whole project in *The Order of Things*, although it goes beyond my remit to adjudicate the significance of this to Foucault's debate with phenomenology.

One of the main claims of *The Order of Things* is to provide what Foucault calls an "archaeological analysis of knowledge" (Foucault 1966, p. xxiv) in the human sciences that shows how across disciplines and over periods of time one can identify, to simplify, conceptual and argumentative similarities that obey similar underlying conceptual constraints. These constraints are durable for centuries on end, but can get replaced during what Foucault calls a "general hiatus" (Foucault 1966, p. 325) by new underlying conceptual constraints, which then structure what Foucault calls an '*episteme*' or "single network of [conceptual] necessities" (Foucault 1966, p. 63). The period between ca 1600-1800 is called the "Classical period" (Foucault 1966, p. 43).

The first role Hume plays in Foucault's argument is to illustrate the *effects* of these conceptual necessities among a string of thinkers. When it comes to the Classical period, Hume figures repeatedly in such string of names: for example, "Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume, or Condillac" (Foucault 1966, pp. 63; 117, where this list returns, and 65), where Condillac seems to be key figure in the network, and (p. 70), where Hume has equal billing with Condillac). Again with Hume included, Foucault uses a different list to represent the "Classical age"—"Locke and Linnaeus, Buffon and Hume" (Foucault 1966, p. 162). When Foucault offers such examples, Foucault does not refer to particular passages or texts to provide evidence for his claims.

That is, he presupposes considerable familiarity with the authors repeatedly singled out as illustrative member of the 'network of necessities' among his implied audience.[1]

Second, that Hume can play this illustrative role in Foucault's argument is, in turn, the effect of the role Hume plays in the self-understanding of the philosophical status quo, Husserlian phenomenology, that Foucault is explicitly reacting to (p. 248; elsewhere, Foucault registers the significance of Deleuze's work on Hume, and their joint dissatisfaction with the "phenomenological theory of subject" (Foucault 1988, p. 24; on Deleuze's Hume, see Bell 2008). In this phenomenological self-understanding, which Foucault reports, [i] "Hume's critique" is the trigger for the "transcendental motif" of Kant. In this self-understanding this transcendental motif [ii] gets merged with "the Cartesian theme of the cogito," and so [iii] via Kant's incomplete Copernican revolution [iv] produces Husserl's revival of "the deepest vocation of the Western ratio" (Foucault 1988, p. 325; I have added roman numerals to facilitate discussion).[2] Here Hume is a kind of steppingstone, who generates Kant's response which becomes co-constitutive for key features of phenomenology.

I have added [iii] because it is contextually implied: "It may seem that phenomenology has effected a union between the Cartesian theme of the cogito and the transcendental motif that Kant had derived from Hume's critique; according to this view, Husserl has revived the deepest vocation of the Western ratio, bending it back upon itself in a reflection which is a radicalization of pure philosophy and a basis for the possibility of its own history" (Foucault 1988, p. 325; see also 65; Han 2002, p. 36).

A perceptive anonymous referee called my attention to the significance of Husserl's (1927) *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. In particular, if we go to the "historico-critical digression" (Husserl 1969, p. 266) that closes chapter 6 (it's paragraph 100 "Historical-critical remarks on the development of the transcendental philosophy and, in particular, on transcendental inquiry concerning formal logic"), we find what Foucault has in mind. I have added the roman numerals:

> The way leading to the whole inquiry concerning origins, an inquiry that must be taken collaterally, as belonging to pure psychology and transcendental philosophy, and includes in its essential universality, all possible worlds with all their essential regions of real and ideal objectivities and all their world-strata (therefore, in particular, the world of ideal senses, of truths, theories, sciences, the idealities of every culture of every socio-historical world)—that way remained for centuries untrod. This was entirely understandable consequence of naturalistic and sensualistic aberration on the part of all modern psychology based on internal experience. This aberration only drove the transcendental philosophy of English empiricist into that well known development which it end in countersensical fictionalism; [iii] it also arrested the transcendental philosophy of Kant's Copernican revolution short of full effectuation, so that the Kantian philosophy could never force its way through the point where the ultimately necessary aims and methods can be adopted. If the *pure* concrete ego, in whom all the objectivities and worlds accepted by him are subjectively constituted, is [as Hume argued] only a senseless bundle or collection of Data—which come and perish, cast together now in this way and now in that, according to senseless accidental regularity analogous to that of mechanics,—the result is that only surreptitious reasons can explain how even as much as the illusion of a real world could arise. Yet Hume professed to make it *understandable* that, by a blind matter-of-fact regularity, purely in the mind, particular types of fictions having the names "objects with continued existence", "identical persons", and so forth, arise for us. Now illusions, fictions, are produced sense-formations; the constituting of them takes place as intentionality; they are [ii] *cogitata* of *cogitationes*...

> [iv] Hume's greatness (a greatness still unrecognized in this, its most important aspect) lies in the fact that, despite all that, he was the first to grasp the universal *concrete problem* of transcendental philosophy. In the concreteness of purely egological internality, as he saw, everything Objective becomes intended to (and, in favourable cases, perceived), thanks to a subjective genesis. Hume was

the first to see the necessity of investigating the Objective itself as a product of its genesis from that concreteness, in order to make the legitimate being-sense of everything that exists for us intelligible through its ultimate origins. Stated more precisely: The real world and the categories of reality, which are its fundamental forms, became for him a problem in a new fashion. He was the first to [ii] *treat seriously the Cartesian focusing purely on what lies inside* (Husserl 1969, pp. 255-256, emphases in Husserl).

To be sure, Foucault contests the self-understanding of phenomenology (as he presents it). He reinterprets phenomenology as exhibiting the very "great hiatus" that Foucault diagnoses in the "modern episteme at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Foucault 1988, p. 325).

One might claim that [i] is absent in the passage I quoted and that even the cogito is only implied in it. But Husserl goes on to write (after discussing Hume), "as for Kant...with the dependence on Hume implicit in his reaction against that philosopher, Kant took over the constitutional problem, at least so far as it concerns Nature; but without the full sense of even the problem of Nature, as only one component in the universal complex of constitutional problems to which Hume's re-conception of the Cartesian ego-cogito as concrete mental being, had pointed" (Husserl 1969, p. 257). Familiarity with this Husserlian narrative, which supplies the phenomenological tradition self-understanding, is, thus, often presupposed in *The Order of Things*.

It is beyond the scope of the present argument to show the role of and familiarity with Husserl's *Formal and Transcendental Logic* in French philosophy of the period. But Suzanne Bachelard had published her *Study* on it in the preceding decade (1957). Scholars of Foucault have noted, of course, *The Order of Things* is, in part, a critique of Husserl (Han 2002; Elden 2023, pp. 76-79).

In this very context in Husserl, Hume is characterized as falling "into the countersense of a "philosophy of as-if," (Husserl 1969, p. 257). That is, *Husserl* treats Hume as a stalking horse for criticizing Hans Vaihinger's *Die Philosophie des Als Ob*. I suspect the idea stayed with Foucault. For, as I discuss in the next section, when years later, Foucault returned to Hume in BoB, on 28 March 1979, he treats Hume as the fount of Benthamite radicalism *and* Chicago economics. It is, in fact, not silly to treat 'Chicago economics' post Milton Friedman's 1953 essay on the methodology of positive economics as a philosophy of as-if (Khan & Schlee 2020, p. 711). As we shall see, there is a sense in which later Foucault accepts this Husserlian characterization of Hume, but treats it as constitutive of the radical tradition within Liberalism (without criticizing it).

Hume is singled out (Foucault 1966, p. 60) at least in part because Hume plays a role as a steppingstone in the phenomenological self-understanding (see also Husserl's second *Logical Investigation* (Janoušek and Zahavi 2020, p. 623)). This seems to motivate what follows in subsequent pages, where Hume becomes exemplary, for Foucault to show that while similitude/resemblance loses its central significance in its characterization of the nature of a sign, resemblance does not disappear but resides, as Foucault puts it in Humean terms, mutely 'below knowledge' acting as a natural relation behind the scenes, as it were, constraining our mind (Foucault 1966, p 68). So, while *Husserl* treats Hume on similarity as opening the door to an explicit infinite regress (Janoušek & Zahavi 2020, p. 624)), *Foucault* treats Hume as relying on *hidden* foundations. In so far as Husserl is treated as Humean in this respect, Foucault's criticism of Hume strikes at Husserl's project.

Before I offer a critical examination of Foucault's interpretation, I quote the relevant passage from Foucault:

As for similitude, it is now a spent force, outside the realm of knowledge. It is merely empiricism in its most unrefined form; like Hobbes, one can no longer 'regard it as being a part of philosophy', unless it has first been erased in its inexact form of resemblance and transformed by knowledge into a relationship of equality or order. And yet similitude is still an indispensable border of knowledge. For [in classical period] no equality or relation of order can be established between two

things unless their resemblance has at least occasioned their comparison. Hume placed the relation of identity among those 'philosophical' relations that presuppose reflection; whereas, for him, resemblance belonged to natural relations, to those that constrain our minds by means of an inevitable but 'calm force'.

Let the philosopher pride himself on his precision as much as he will... I nevertheless dare defy him to make a single step in his progress without the aid of resemblance. Throw but one glance upon the metaphysical aspect of the sciences, even the least abstract of them, and then tell me whether the general inductions that are derived from particular facts, or rather the kinds themselves, the species and all abstract notions, can be formed otherwise than by means of resemblance (p. 20).

At the border of knowledge, similitude is that barely sketched form, that rudimentary relation which knowledge must overlay to its full extent, but which continues, indefinitely, to reside below knowledge in the manner of a mute and ineffaceable necessity (Foucault 1966, pp. 67-68).

The position attributed to Hume by Foucault in the first quoted paragraph recalls Hume's claim (in the first *Enquiry*) that "it seems evident, that, if all the scenes of nature were continually shifted in such a manner, that no two events bore any resemblance to each other, but every object was entirely new, without any similitude to whatever had been seen before, we should never, in that case, have attained the least idea of necessity, or of a connexion among these objects" (EHU 5.8).[3]

Even so, the view attributed to Hume is awkward as an interpretation of Hume's accounts of natural and philosophical relations (a distinction articulated in the *Treatise*), and the role of resemblance and identity among them. (I am drawing on Schliesser 2007, 2009 and Rocknak 2012; cf. Millican 2017). I highlight three problems.

First, in his own voice, Foucault distinguishes natural and philosophical relations as follows: philosophical relations presuppose reflection. In Hume, reflection is a mechanism of the mind that turns ideas into new impressions. That is, "impressions of reflexion are only antecedent to their correspondent ideas; but posterior to those of sensation, and deriv'd from them" (Treatise 1.1.2.1.). The paradigmatic examples of impressions of reflection are "desire and aversion, hope and fear," (Treatise 1.1.2.1), that is, the passions and emotions. I mention this explicitly because on Foucault's interpretation, the elements or relata or building blocks of philosophical relations are impressions of reflection *or* the ideas derived from them.

For, *Hume* does not explicitly claim that reflection is presupposed in *any* philosophical relation including identity (the one singled out by Foucault). After all Hume claims about philosophical relation, "we extend it to mean *any* particular subject of comparison, *without* a connecting principle" (Treatise 1.1.5.1). So, it is strictly speaking false to suggest, as Foucault claims, that according to Hume philosophical relations *require* the operation of reflection. Perhaps Foucault tacitly attributes to Hume something like the Kantian account of reflection, and then Foucault's mistake may be a natural one.

One may well think this is not the end of the matter. After all, Hume lists seven sources of comparison that can be "considered the sources o*f all* philosophical relations. (Treatise 1.1.5.1, emphasis added). These turn out to be *viz.* "resemblance, identity, relations of time and place, proportion in quantity or number, degrees in any quality, contrariety, and causation" (Treatise 1.3.1.1). If reflection is crucial to these (especially identity) then the spirit of Foucault's account can be saved. But, alas, none of them presuppose reflection. In addition, Hume divides this list "into two classes; [first] into such as depend entirely on the ideas, which we compare together, and [second] such as may be chang'd without any change in the ideas." Crucially, again, reflection is irrelevant to this. So, Foucault misrepresents Hume here on philosophical relations.

I do not mean to deny Foucault's claim that "no equality or relation of order can be established between two things unless their resemblance has at least occasioned their comparison." This is indeed Hume's position, too:

> The first [philosophical relation] is *resemblance:* And this is a relation, without which no philosophical relation can exist; since no objects will admit of comparison, but what have some degree of resemblance (Treatise 1.1.5.3; emphasis in original).

While it is true that for Hume identity is only a philosophical relation, this is not true for resemblance in Hume. For, second**,** *Hume* recognizes two *kinds* or *sites* of resemblance, one is a philosophical relation; and when it functions in a philosophical relation, although resemblance "be necessary to all philosophical relation, it does not follow, that it always produces a connexion or association of ideas" (Treatise 1.1.5.3). According to Hume *only* natural relations generate an association of ideas. According to Hume there are three such natural relations of which resemblance is one (Treatise 1.1.4.1.). This he treats, as Foucault suggests, as a "gentle force" (Treatise 1.1.4.1).

If this indeed exhausted Hume's position then Foucault could have scored a major rhetorical coup: his analysis of the classical age shows that the philosopher of radical doubt quietly must assume the operation of similarity without making its significance to philosophy fully explicit. However, third in Hume's Treatise similitude/resemblance does not just reside mutely 'below knowledge' acting as a natural relation behind the scenes, as it were, constraining our mind, but it is also the *content* of knowledge (and so made explicit). So, here, too, Foucault is misrepresenting Hume's position.

So far I have left undiscussed the material *Foucault* quotes and references with endnote "[20]" in the material I have quoted above. At first glance, it's natural to read Foucault here as quoting Hume as evidence for his position. But Hume scholars may well wonder what the source of the quoted passage is. (It's not Hume, after all.) In fact, the passage quoted by Foucault that starts with "Let the philosopher pride..." is not, first impressions notwithstanding, by Hume, but rather is as endnote [20] indicates, a quote from Merian's (1767) *Reflexions philosophiques sur la ressemblance.*

Merian (1723–1807) is a translator of Hume's first *Enquiry* and an important critic of Hume. While criticizing Hume, Merian coined the term 'phenomenalism' in order to describe Hume in 1793 (see Laursen et al. 1997; sadly, Laursen's paper does not mention the *Reflexions philosophiques*). Merian does not seem to mention Hume or natural & philosophical relations in his *Reflexions*. So, Foucault's reading of Hume is not indebted to this work. (In fact, at the passage that Foucault quotes, Merian merely seems to be capturing Hume's insight of EHU 5.8 — a work he had translated just a few years before—that I quoted above).

We can conclude, then, that here on Hume, Merian is not a source for Foucault, but that Merian is used by Foucault to articulate Hume's position (that Foucault recognizes in Merian's 1767 text). One may well wonder if Foucault is relying primary on the first Enquiry, but that would be curious here because, as noted above, he does directly refer to *Treatise* (1.3.3 and 1.4.4) in a endnote in a later passage.

I do not mean to suggest that the present interpretation of Hume's account of natural and philosophical relations is settled fact. That's notoriously contested terrain. But rather that Foucault gets rather basic features of Hume's position wrong. Given that all the other references to Hume in *The Order of Things* are rather formulaic (and the kind of shorthand one may find in post-Kantian philosophy) one may well wonder how carefully Foucault read Hume. (He never cites Merian again in the book).

This may seem mere scholarly book-keeping. However, the significance of Foucault's misrepresentation of Hume is that it undercuts Foucault's larger claim (which concludes the section which I have discussed) that "from the seventeenth century, resemblance was pushed out of the boundaries of knowledge, toward the humblest and basest of its frontiers" (Foucault 1988, p. 71). On the contrary, I have argued that Hume's account of philosophical relations suggests that there was a felt need to account for resemblance *within* the sciences. (See, for example, the significance to Newton *and* Hume of the same cause/same effect principle). So the failure to attend to details of Hume's position undermines some of Foucault's most important arguments in *The Order of Things*, including, perhaps, his criticism of phenomenology.

2. HUME'S EMPIRICISM OF FREEDOM

In this second section I, first, show how in a relatively brief passage of *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault ascribes to Hume a world-historical significance in the development of the utilitarian/radical strand of liberalism. In particular, key features of Hume's moral psychology anticipate core commitments of features of *homo economicus*. While Foucault's account is anachronistic, it is illuminating.

On March 28, 1979, during the eleventh lecture, reprinted as *Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault ascribes to "English empiricism," a fundamental innovation "in Western philosophy." This innovation is the positing of "a subject who is not so much defined by his freedom… but who appears in the form of a subject of individual choices which are both irreducible and non-transferable" (BoB, pp. 271-272). Foucault treats Locke (in traditional fashion) as the origin of this empiricist tradition. But in order to explain his use of "irreducible," Foucault turns to Hume, who is treated as an intensification of empiricism.

In context, the subject posited by Hume— said to engage in individual choices that are irreducible and non-transferable—is *contrasted* by Foucault to three alternative "definitions" of "the subject:" (i) by the subject's "freedom;" (ii) by the "opposition of soul and body;" (iii) by the "presence of a source or core of concupiscence marked to a greater or lesser degree by the Fall or sin" (BoB, pp. 272-273). I assume Foucault has Descartes in mind under (ii), although certainly the opposition precedes Descartes in Platonism and Christianity. I assume Foucault is thinking of Augustine or Catholic (or, perhaps, also Protestant) social theory with (iii).

But it is worth reflecting on why the position attributed by Foucault to Hume does not fall under (i). For, one may well be inclined—say, if one is in the grip of Hobbes' account of freedom as the absence of external impediments—to treat irreducible, individual choices as an expression, or constitutive, of a subject's freedom. Arguably something close to the Hobbesian view is the intuition that later gets turned into an account of so-called negative freedom or the way that (say) rational choice theorists tend to think of freedom. Since (i) is not supposed to be *that/those*, what is it?

I suspect that with (i) Foucault has in mind the view, associated with philosophical rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz) and then adopted by Rousseau and Kant in different ways, that holds that the subject's acting on/from reason or for the right reasons (or gives a rational law to herself, etc.) is free. I mention this for two reasons: first, because it is worth being alert to the fact that in *Foucault*'s taxonomy the *choices* of the Humean subject are not automatically identified with "freedom." Second, the implied contrast between (i) and Hume's posited subject turns out to anticipate historically a key distinction in Foucault's larger argument about the liberal tradition that he had sketched earlier in BoB.

For, during his second lecture (17 January 1979), Foucault sketches an interpretation of liberalism as the complex working out of two traditions, with each simultaneously enacting particular concepts of freedom and law. This working out takes place within each tradition and their interactions (and distant shadowing).

One tradition he calls "the axiomatic, juridico-deductive approach, which was, up to a point, the path taken by the French Revolution—we could also call it Rousseau's approach" (BoB, p. 41). This tradition is centered on the question(s), "What are my original rights and how can I assert them against any sovereign?" (BoB, p. 40). This approach starts with an attempt to "define the natural or original rights that belong to *every* individual…in *all* circumstances and under *any possible* government or political regime," (BoB, p 39; emphases added). In so far as this is juridical at all, it is at the level of, we might say, constitutional principle not a particular legal practice. In so far as these rights are inalienable, this foreshadows the significance of human rights to more recent liberal thought.

It is 'axiomatic, juridico-deductive' because only after "having…defined the division of rights, the sphere of sovereignty, and the limits of the right of sovereignty, you can then deduce from this only what we can call the bounds of governmental competence…this approach consists in starting from the rights of man in order to arrive at the limitation of governmentality by way of the constitution of the sovereign" (BoB, p. 39). To some cold-war readers of Rousseau it might have seemed incongruous to interpret Rousseau as of-

fering a limitation of governmentality. One may even be tempted to wonder whether Foucault is projecting features of Kant's political philosophy back onto Rousseau here. But Foucault is clearly reading *The Social Contract* in light of *the Third Discourse* (on political economy) (e.g., Foucault 2007, pp. 106-107). The latter contains a very robust defense of property rights.

It is "revolutionary" in virtue of the fact that "this approach consists in starting from the rights of man in order to arrive at the limitation of governmentality by way of the constitution of the sovereign…It is a way of posing right from the start the problem of legitimacy and the inalienability of rights through a sort of ideal or real renewal of society, the state, the sovereign, and government" (BoB, p. 39). That is, the ideal is not a mere ideal, but it demands to be actualized, and so is a revolutionary principle. This revolution is supposed to help constitute a legitimate government that self-limits by respecting individual rights.

Foucault's reading of this tradition is probably prompted by the chapter, "Planning and the Rule of Law" in Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* (repeatedly quoted in the seventh lecture of BoB). For, while Hayek is no great admirer of Rousseau, in it, Hayek defends, even attempts to revive, the Kantian ideal of the *Rechtstaat*, and he approvingly quotes Kant that "Man is free if he needs to obey no person but solely the laws" (Hayek 2001, p. 85; on this strain in Hayek, see Kukathas 1989). What's crucial to Hayek's account of the *Rechtstaat* is not so much the legality of government action, but to what degree these conform to the principles of the Rule of Law, that is, "limited and determined by pre-established rules" (explored in depth in the seventh lecture of BoB; cf. Hayek 2001, pp. 85-86).

If I am right about the significance of the contrast of four ways of distinguishing the subject in the eleventh lecture then Foucault associates this (first) traditional strain of liberalism with 'freedom' founded on acting from or in accord with reason. Because of the importance of Rousseau in Foucault's narrative and the implied contrast with the Hobbesian approach to freedom (and its affinity to negative freedom), it is tempting, post-Rawls, to see in it the tradition of positive freedom that deploys the social contract.

In Foucault's account in the second lecture of BoB, the other, second traditional strain within liberalism, starts from, or is immanent in, "governmental practice itself…and tries to analyze it in terms of the de facto limits that can be set to this governmentality." It originates in technocratic questions: "is [some policy] useful? For what is it useful? Within what limits is it useful? When does it stop being useful? When does it become harmful?" And while it is contrasted with the revolutionary and general nature of the "axiomatic, juridico-deductive" approach, it is thereby not merely status quo preserving or idiosyncratic. Rather, "it is the radical question, the question of English radicalism; the problem of English radicalism is the problem of utility" (BoB, p. 40).

English radicalism so conceived offers an immanent critique of existing practice. Of course, utilitarianism is not always merely ameliorative; Bentham's 'reforming spirit' is more willing to propose more thoroughgoing institutional changes when the status quo is intolerable (see Halévy 1928, whose influence on BoB deserves more attention as was noted by Gordon 1991, p. 21).[4]

On Foucault's construction of the radical/Benthamite tradition it applies a kind of test of practical rationality or internal coherence toward governmental agency in light of a principle of utility. Foucault puts it like this: "it distinguishes those things it would be either contradictory or absurd for government to tamper with. Better still, and more radically, it distinguishes those things that it would be pointless for government to interfere with. Following this approach means that government's sphere of competence will be defined on the basis of what it would or would not be useful for government to do or not do. Government's limit of competence will be bounded by the utility of governmental intervention" (BoB, p. 40; Halévy 1928, pp. 125, 431).

One might expect, at this point, for Foucault to echo Marx's dismissive criticism of Benthamite utilitarianism (Marx 1958, p. 622, where Marx calls Bentham an "arch-philistine" and the "oracle of the ordinary bourgeois intelligence;" the accompanying footnote continues in the same vein), as Foucault seems to anticipate in his Parisian audience. But in the second lecture, Foucault warns the audience explicitly against this move, "Don't think that English political radicalism is no more than the projection of a utilitarian ideology on the level of politics." He then continues,

It is, rather, an attempt to define the sphere of competence of government in terms of utility on the basis of an internal elaboration of governmental practice which is nevertheless fully thought through and always endowed and permeated with philosophical, theoretical, and juridical elements. In this respect utilitarianism appears as something very different from a philosophy or an ideology. Utilitarianism is a technology of government, just as public law was the form of reflection, or, if you like, the juridical technology with which one tried to limit the unlimited tendency of *raison d'État*....for English radicalism, "radical"designates a position which involves continually questioning government, and governmentality in general, as to its utility or non-utility (BoB, pp. 40-1).

Foucault interprets political utilitarianism as a project of open-ended improvement inaugurated by Bentham that aims to delimit and constrain state capacity and orient it toward its proper ends. So, both liberal traditions Foucault identifies have a normative conception of the art of government in common, and for both it is a project of delimitation of the tendencies in the police state (which according to Foucault *and* liberalism is the natural tendency of *raison d'Etat*).

It would be tempting to treat Foucault's contrast as geographically distinct (French vs English liberalism); or as, hinted above, capturing the now familiar Rawlsian contrast between social contract and utilitarianism. Both versions of this temptation are not Foucault's position. On the former, in lecture 1, Foucault tends to treat the social contract as a medieval theory that in "England, more than in France," (BoB, p. 8) gets reappropriated (alongside other medieval innovations) in the seventeenth century as a reaction to *raison d'État* (BoB, p. 9). There is a curiosity here in that Foucault treats the contract as one "between sovereign and subjects" (BoB, p. 8), which indeed echoes the mediaeval approach we can find in, say, Manegold, and not as a compact among equals as Hobbes and Locke suggest. This reappropriation is not treated as distinctly liberal. Here Foucault echoes in uncanny ways the nineteenth century (utilitarian) judgment that Lockean social contract theory was *not* liberal at all and that the social contract is something intellectually primitive (Bell 2014, pp. 695-696). In addition, Foucault's focus on the 'radical' tradition as distinct from 'utilitarian' points to his insight that the latter has an illiberal tendency (something also emphasized in Halévy 1928), while the former does not. However, Foucault draws the contrast of the two traditions in terms of their conceptions of law, and their implied conceptions of freedom:

So, there are two approaches: the revolutionary approach, basically structured around traditional positions of public law, and the radical approach, basically structured around the new economy of government reason. These two approaches imply two conceptions of the law. In the revolutionary, axiomatic approach, the law will be seen as the expression of a will. So there will be a system of will-law…. In the other problematic, the radical utilitarian approach, the law is conceived as the effect of a transaction that separates the sphere of intervention of public authorities from that of the individual's independence. This leads us to another distinction which is also very important. On one side you have a juridical conception of freedom: every individual originally has in his possession a certain freedom, a part of which he will or will not cede. On the other side, freedom is not conceived as the exercise of some basic rights, but simply as the independence of the governed with regard to government. We have therefore two absolutely heterogeneous conceptions of freedom, one based on the rights of man, and the other starting from the independence of the governed (BoB, p. 42).

So, crucially, the two traditions of liberalisms have different conceptions of freedom that originate in two distinct understandings of public law. This is, thus, *not* the familiar contrast between positive and negative freedom. On the axiomatic-juridical side is a rights based account of freedom understood in terms of what we might call 'inalienable' rights that no power may remove and which is enshrined in the founding documents of the American and French revolutions, foreshadowing human rights doctrines. On the other, radi-

cal side is an account of freedom in terms of a kind of sphere of non-interference or protection from state *and* society where we might say with Mill (who understood this as a disagreement with Bentham), 'experiments in living' are possible (Anderson 1991).

We are now in a position to understand the significance of Foucault's analysis of Hume in the eleventh lecture as a source of the radical (Benthamite) strain of liberalism and as a contrast to the axiomatic-juridical rights based account. That a subject's choices are treated as irreducible and non-transferable in Foucault's treatment of Hume is the case because these choices express or ultimately refer back to the subject's pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain cannot be analyzed or decomposed in terms of more fundamental impressions (or ideas) nor shared with others. Crucially, Foucault adds: "This principle of an irreducible, non-transferable, atomistic individual choice which is unconditionally referred to the subject himself is what is called interest" (BoB, p. 272). That Foucault calls it an 'atomistic individual' evokes the criticism of liberalism by communitarian-socialist critics like Karl Polanyi. But Foucault clearly means it in a descriptive not critical sense.

The point of Foucault's analysis is that this subjective feature of interest is treated as distinctively original in Empiricism:

> What…is fundamental in English empiricist philosophy—which I am treating completely superficially—is that it reveals something which absolutely did not exist before. This is the idea of a subject of interest, by which I mean a subject as the source of interest, the starting point of an interest, or the site of a mechanism of interests. For sure, there is a series of discussions on the mechanism of interest itself and what may activate it: is it self-preservation, is it the body or the soul, or is it sympathy? But this is not what is important. What is important is the appearance of interest for the first time as a form of both immediately and absolutely subjective will (BoB, p. 273).

What this makes clear is that what original is not the discovery of the significance of interest as such. Foucault had devoted considerable attention to *raison d'État* the so-called interest of state doctrines in his 1978 and 1979 lectures (see also Hirschman (1977)). But rather, what's found original in Hume's intensification of empiricism is, that *interest* refers back to something subjective, even private and isolatable bedrock(s) within the individual, which in Hume is notoriously *constitutive* of the self. One's interest becomes something another cannot take away from the agent, and it becomes, as the tradition unfolds, a source for the development of doctrines of privacy, consent theories, and certain kind of accounts of individual self-ownership. But as Foucault discerns, presumably influenced by Halévy (1928), Locke inaugurates a development toward utilitarianism via Hume (Brogan 1959). I put it like this because while it is certainly not impossible to read Hume Whiggish-ly (recall "atomistic individual") as a significant path toward Benthamite utilitarianism—Bentham and Sidgwick said as much—it's not necessary to read Hume that way (Rosen 2007).

That Hume is a subjective atomist in the way claimed by Foucault is by no means obvious (a lot hinges on how one understands Hume's account of sympathy), but Foucault buttresses his interpretation with an appeal to "Hume's famous aphorism which says: If I am given the choice between cutting my little finger and the death of someone else, even if I am forced to cut my little finger, nothing can force me to think that cutting my little finger is preferable to the death of someone else" (BoB, p. 272). The editors of Foucault helpfully note that this is a reference to Treatise 2.3.3.6. (Foucault's editors get the page number right, but mistakenly suggest it is in Book III, Part III, section III). It is worth adding—since one may well be tempted to ascribe to Hume's doctrine a kind of base selfishness—that the next example Hume offers of the very same phenomena/doctrine is "'Tis not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an Indian or person wholly unknown to me." That is, on Hume's explicit account, one's interest need not—and this is one way he distinguishes it from Mandeville's position—be selfish.

As the editors of BoB note (see footnote 14), Foucault goes on to paraphrase Appendix 1, "Concerning Moral Sentiment" to *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), also known as the 'Second Enquiry' (or EPM), in order to illustrate his claim about the irreducible nature of the choice: "The painful

or non-painful nature of the thing is in itself a reason for the choice beyond which you cannot go" (BoB, p. 272). Explanation comes at an end when we reach pain and pleasure. In his lecture, Foucault accepts here Hume's own understanding of the situation. The fact that, as it were behind the scenes, there is whole physiological and neural mechanism that might causally account for how pain and pleasure move us to act in one way or another, or might explain why some experiences are felt as pain or pleasure, is screened off from—to be very anachronistic and Kantian—the *space of reasons* or the ground of our interest. (No Kantian would accept that pain and pleasure could play such a role *in* the space of reasons—so I use their terminology strictly for elucidatory purposes).

The non-transferability principle is cashed out by Foucault in terms of the fact that *preferences* are one's own and that another has no access to them. Foucault really uses the modern (somewhat technical) language of 'preference' (BoB, p. 272; Lemke 2019, p. 149). While Hume certainly has "preference" in his vocabulary, it generally means something like *favoring* a particular outcome or state of affairs. It's not treated as motivationally foundational. So, as hinted throughout this section, Foucault is offering an anachronistic rational reconstruction of Hume such that we can see in Hume the origin of the radical/Benthamite tradition within liberalism.

At this point, Foucault shows his cards and links his account of Hume to two issues: first, he treats Hume as a starting point for a kind of natural history or genealogy of *homo economicus* that is developed throughout BoB, which turns out to have six stages: (i) during early empiricism (from Locke through Hume), *homo economicus* is a man of irreducible and non-transferable pleasure and pain; (ii) during the Smithian/eighteen century period he is the man of exchange (BoB, p. 224); during the (iii) period of classical economics starting with Ricardo he is man the consumer in terms of satisfaction/pursuit of needs (BoB, p. 225); (iv) during the neoliberal period, especially in the ordoliberal sense, "he is the man of enterprise and production." (BoB, p. 147). And (v) at Chicago (also neoliberal) he is also "an entrepreneur," but now, especially, "an entrepreneur of himself," who develops and produces/maintains his own human capital as a source of earnings (BoB, p. 226), even a possible earning stream into the future (BoB, p. 230). In fact, just before he gets to Hume, Foucault subtly refines his account of Chicago, especially Becker, who he correctly recognizes (vi) treats *homo economicus* as "any conduct which responds systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment, in other words, any conduct, as Becker says, which "accepts reality, must be susceptible to economic analysis" (BoB, p. 269).

Second, Foucault wishes to deploy Hume's account in light of his interest to question whether "the subject of interest or form of will called interest can be considered as the same type of will as the juridical will or as capable of being connected to the juridical will" (BoB, p. 273). Foucault associates the mingling of the subject of interest with the juridical will/agent with Blackstone's philosophy (although it is clear that it is a recurring move throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), and treats Hume's philosophy as a critique of Blackstone's legal theory. In particular, Foucault treat Blackstone's account of tacit contract as a source of obedience as the implied target of Hume's analysis.

Now, in the larger context of Foucault's argument throughout the 1970s, it is clear that Foucault admires Beccaria (Foucault 2015; see especially p. 237, where Foucault introduces the idea of 'Humean criticism' and clearly has Beccaria in mind.) In addition to Beccaria Foucault appreciates Bentham, and Benthamite radicalism as it flows into, and is revived by, Chicago economics because this tradition has an anthropologically *thin* account of 'the criminal.' According to Foucault, in Becker's and Stigler's writings, the criminal has perhaps a different risk appetite than other subjects (and, perhaps, bad luck that the government deploys significant resources to catch him), but is not different in *nature* (BoB, p. 248ff).

With that in place, I quote Foucault's analysis of the nature of Humean interest:

> This means that it is not because we have contracted that we respect the contract, but because it is in our interest that there is a contract. That is to say, the appearance and the emergence of the contract have not replaced a subject of interest with a subject of right. In a calculation of interest, the subject of interest has constituted a form, an element in which he will continue to have a certain

interest right to the end. And if, moreover, the contract no longer offers an interest, nothing can oblige me to continue to comply with it. So, juridical will does not take over from interest. The subject of right does not find a place for itself in the subject of interest. The subject of interest remains, subsists, and continues up to the time a juridical structure, a contract exists. For as long as the law exists, the subject of interest also continues to exist. The subject of interest constantly overflows the subject of right. He is therefore irreducible to the subject of right. He is not absorbed by him. He overflows him, surrounds him, and is the permanent condition of him functioning. So, interest constitutes something irreducible in relation to the juridical will (BoB, p. 274; cf. Halévy 1928, p. 120ff.).

Foucault recognizes that in Blackstone the social contract changes something fundamental about the agent: we become a juridical subject or a subject of right, or someone who can be held accountable in virtue of his or her promises (as it is in Hobbes and, say, Rousseau [and Christianity as Nietzsche explores in his *Genealogy*]). But Hume, who in Foucault's telling anticipates Beccaria, Benthamite radicalism, and Becker, rejects this.

As the editors note (BoB, p. 288, n. 18), Foucault is engaging with Hume's "Of The Original Contract" 35-37. There in the context of explicitly criticizing both the tacit and explicit versions of social contract theory, Hume draws upon (and subtly rewrites) his account of the origin of justice from the *Treatise*. In the new version, Hume works with a distinction or contrast between primary or original instincts (which are said to be "strong passions") *and* "reflection," which is conducive to "interest." In case one is tempted to treat Humean reflection as a rationalist principle, Hume explicitly notes that reflection is shaped or informed by "experience and observation."(Of The Original Contract, 34). Even a small amount of experience is sufficient to become aware of our "general and obvious" interest in obedience to the law not as something abstract, but as instantiated by the authority of magistrates. So one important feature of Hume's account is that on his view it clearly does not require much intelligence to recognize an interest in obedience to authority.

Hume's claim that both our original and continuing adherence to the law are ground in our interests and not in some promise may seem suspect. For, after all, what if it is not in our general interest to obey authority? Here Hume seems to edge rather close to the Spinozistic position that our obligations dissolve once they (structurally) violate our enduring interests. I use "structural" here to echo Hume's use of "general" and to allow for occasions where particular laws violate some of our (short-term or material) interests. Structural interests are akin to basic or fundamental rights. (To reiterate, Spinoza clothes such a doctrine in the language of social contract, and Hume rejects the social contract). This position is a feature and not a bug of Spinoza's account: rulers cannot count on our allegiance and obedience when they violate our most fundamental interests or basic rights, such violation generates indignation "and the [social] contract is inoperative" (*Political Treatise* 5.6, Curley 2016, p. 528; see also 3.14: the contract "remains firmly established so long as the reason for making the alliance—the fear of loss or hope of profit—continues to motivate" (Curley 2016, p. 523; Schliesser 2021).

While Hume is no fan of revolution (the passage "Of the Original Contract" is about obedience to government, after all), Hume bites this Spinozistic bullet (see also *Treatise* 3.2.9.4). For even if a social contract *were* conceptually possible, as Hume allows for the sake of argument, the *interest* of the contracting agent *subsists* after the contract and are not trumped by a promise.

Foucault goes on to argue "that in the eighteenth century the figure of *homo oeconomicus* and the figure of what we could call *homo juridicus* or *homo legalis* are absolutely heterogeneous and cannot be superimposed on each other...and have essentially a different relationship to political power" (BoB, p. 276). Foucault develop this idea more fully in light of an account of Mandeville, Condorcet, and Smith later in the lecture (and arguably had done so in his earlier writings on Beccaria elsewhere). But it is Foucault's discerning of Hume's recasting of Spinoza's argument that provides the wedge into it.

CONCLUSION

Foucault did not engage much explicitly with Hume. In addition, the philosophical scene had changed sufficiently between 1966 and 1979 that the status of phenomenology was not a main concern to Foucault anymore. However, perhaps alerted by Halévy or because of Foucault's engagement with Beccaria, who is treated, plausibly, as an unorthodox Humean by Foucault, and juridical philosophy throughout the 1970s, this change of philosophical scenery allowed Foucault to return to Hume with fresh eyes and read him more carefully and more creatively as originating the radical tradition within liberalism. While it is clearly anachronistic to treat Hume this way, it may be a fruitful anachronism through which to revisit the Humeanism in Benthamite radicalism and Chicago economics.[5]

NOTES

1   I put it like that because here my point is not to complain about Foucault's citation practices. This is not to deny that the near total absence of citation to (competing) *secondary* literature and possible sources of influence on Foucault is odd. But where needed Foucault does cite *primary* sources in *The Order of Things*.

2   Foucault does not problematize the eurocentrism of this narrative. At the start of section 2, I quote another passage in which Foucault essentializes 'western' philosophy.

3   All my citations of Hume's texts are by paragraph number as found in *Hume Texts Online*, edited by Amyas Merivale and Peter Millican, Hume Texts Online (davidhume.org).

4   There are quite a few annotations extant by Foucault on Halévy's (1901-1904) La formation du radicalisme philosophique, especially volume II:
https://eman-archives.org/Foucault-fiches/items/browse?field=83&val=Hal%C3%A9vy,%20La%20formation%20du%20radicalisme%20philosophique%20(Tome%20II), accessed 2 November, 2022.

5   Some of this material appeared on my blog, https://digressionsnimpressions.typepad.com/. I thank Jeff Bell, John Protevi, Elena Yi-Jia Zeng, and two very helpful anonymous referees for suggestions on earlier drafts.

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John Dewey and the 'sceptical and revolutionary' Humean tradition

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Abstract: John Dewey's philosophy, as Richard Rorty observed, is historicist to the core. From the 1910s onwards, Dewey emphasised the need for a 'reconstruction' in philosophy, which could extract what was most valuable from the Western philosophical tradition and employ it in the attempt to grapple with the most pressing contemporary problems. In his autobiographical reflections, Dewey acknowledged that his early enthusiasm for Hegel's philosophy had left a 'permanent deposit in his thinking', a claim that has recently received considerable scholarly attention. Yet Dewey's intellectual development is marked by an increasing disenchantment with fundamental aspects of Hegelian philosophy, which he considered to be infected with a 'reactionary spirit'. In his mature writings, this essay argues, Dewey turned to a pre-Hegelian (and pre-Kantian) philosopher, David Hume, in order to establish the most important philosophical principles that he initially associated with Hegel on non-metaphysical, non-theological foundations. Hume, on Dewey's reading, was both sceptical and revolutionary; but his call for the transfer of the experimental method to moral subjects had not been heeded. Dewey's philosophical project both explained why, historically, a 'reactionary spirit' had returned to infect post-Humean philosophy, and why the revolution in philosophy for which Hume called was now more urgent than ever.

INTRODUCTION: THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A HUMEAN TRADITION

In reconstructing the intellectual development of a philosopher, it can be illuminating to mark those points at which they appear to position themselves in a new relation to past philosophers and philosophical traditions. As an example, one might consider Derek Parfit. Parfit's moral theory, as articulated in *Reasons and Persons* (1984), acknowledged its debt to Henry Sidgwick's *Outlines of the History of Ethics* (1886) as the best work ever written on that subject, and 'could hardly have been more anti-Kantian' (Darwall 2014, p. 80). By *On What Matters* (2011), conversely, Kant is placed alongside Sidgwick as the greatest of western moral theorists, and as an equally important inspiration for, and interlocutor in, Parfit's enterprise. In such cases, a past philosopher who was once considered irrelevant or even actively hostile to one's method or central lines of argument is newly-recognised to be an ally—as one who is especial-

ly worth listening to, and engaging with. This essay argues that John Dewey's intellectual development is marked by a similar shift in relation to a predecessor who, he came to think (and argue), offered valuable resources that had remained largely untapped by contemporary philosophers (including his earlier self). If Parfit's lifelong admiration for a nineteenth-century philosopher (Sidgwick) was later accompanied (and qualified) by an esteem for an eighteenth-century predecessor (Kant), so in the case of Dewey an initial (and abiding) attraction to G. W. F. Hegel was later supplemented (and qualified) by an appreciation for David Hume's philosophy. Dewey's claim that his early admiration for Hegel left 'a permanent deposit in his thinking' has recently received considerable scholarly attention (J. M. Dewey 1939, pp. 17-8; Good 2006; Levine 2015). The same cannot be said of his turn to Hume or, indeed, of how Dewey's reappraisal was founded upon a strikingly distinctive interpretation of the nature of Hume's contribution to the western philosophical tradition (for a partial exception, see Welchman 1995).

Recent decades have witnessed a notable resurgence of interest among political theorists in Dewey and American pragmatism (Festenstein 2021). Conversely, the contemporary 'dearth of a Humean strand of political philosophy', it has recently been argued, is as conspicuous as it is 'unfortunate': 'Hume has no school and few disciples' (Coventry and Sagar 2013, p. 588). From the early 1920s, however, Dewey identified a distinctive 'Humean strand' in the history of philosophy, and presented his own philosophical project as reconstructing and developing its still-vital elements. Dewey was unusually alive to what Harold Bloom later christened 'the anxiety of influence' (Bloom 1973). If a philosopher 'ignores traditions, his thoughts become thin and empty'; but 'they are something to be *employed*, not just treated with respect or dressed out in a new vocabulary' (Dewey 1928, p. 132; italics added). This essay asks two questions. First, what did Dewey consider to be so distinctive and valuable about Hume's philosophy? Second, why did he think that it could, appropriately reconstructed, be 'employed' productively to grapple with questions—notably, regarding the prospects for radical democracy in large-scale industrial societies—that had *not* confronted Hume in the eighteenth century? This approach enables us both to affirm the broad claim that Hume's 'attitude' to philosophy bears comparison to 'modern pragmatism or "neo-pragmatism"', and to move beyond it by isolating those aspects of Hume's philosophy that Dewey himself considered to be most amenable to his own method and objectives (Blackburn 2008, p. 8; Engström 1997). Meanwhile, Dewey's questions, as Melvin L. Rogers observes, 'were not merely relevant in the 1920s, but seem equally, if not more, relevant in today's political climate' (Rogers 2016, p. 43). If this is true, then Dewey potentially alerts us to where, and why, aspects of Hume's philosophical project might remain stimulating and vital even today.

For Dewey, no less than for Coventry and Sagar (2013), Hume was a powerful ally in the attempt to critique the hegemonic position of Kantian idealism in moral and political theory. On Dewey's reconstruction, Hume proposed an alternative and methodologically superior Copernican revolution in moral philosophy to Kant's, and one which promised to provide infinitely greater benefits to human life (Section I). It is, I suggest, significant that Dewey came to Hume—as, perhaps, only a few philosophers either before or since have done—via Hegel (Section II). On Dewey's interpretation, Hume was better understood as a predecessor of Hegel rather than as the successor of Locke, Berkeley, and the British empiricists. Yet Hume's development of insights more commonly associated with the great German philosopher—historicism, and a commitment to the unification of all branches of thought—was already 'emancipated' from certain 'inherited elements' that, in the judgment of the mature Dewey, blighted Hegel's philosophy (RP, p. 184).[1] Whereas other philosophers who have approached Hume via Hegel have presented Hume's philosophy as (extremely) politically conservative, Dewey's Hume is far more amenable to appropriation and development by those on the left of the political spectrum (Section III).

HUME, KANT, AND THE SCIENCE OF MAN

In a new foreword to the 1930 Modern Library edition of *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, originally published in 1922, Dewey declared that: 'Were it not for one consideration, the volume might be said to be an essay in continuing the tradition of David Hume'. That 'one consideration' was that, 'in the usual interpretation of Hume, he is treated simply as a writer who carried philosophical scepticism to its limit' (HNC, p. 228). Influential in this interpretation of Hume were 'Kant and his successors, among whom should be mentioned in England, Thomas Hill Green' (Dewey 1926a, p. 16). Green and his fellow British idealist, T. H. Grose, had made almost all of Hume's works available to a modern audience (Hume 1874-5); but their commentaries emphasised that the key to Hume's philosophy (and its historical significance) was to be found in Book I of the *Treatise*. By 1930, as Dewey's remarks suggest, this had become the 'usual interpretation' of Hume, and it remained so when Basil Willey summarised its claims in 1964. 'Using the methods of Locke and Berkeley', Willey declared, Hume 'showed that, if rigorously enough applied, they led nowhere'. The *Treatise* could be 'regarded as a turning-point in the history of thought' because, after Hume, 'philosophy had to be rebuilt on new foundations'. Yet Hume 'did not himself *make* the new start, nor point very explicitly in the new direction'. If there were certain constructive 'principles […] implicit' in Hume's work, it was Kant's achievement to tease them out and build upon them, in such a way as to overcome the challenge of Hume's insistently corrosive scepticism (Willey 1964, pp. 248-52).

Whilst Dewey conceded that there is 'sufficient ground in Hume for this way of looking at his work', it was nonetheless 'one-sided'. As the 'introductory remarks with which he prefaced' the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) indicated, Hume's project was animated by 'a constructive aim'. Indeed, Dewey declared in the (unfinished) history of philosophy upon which he was working in his final years that, in those 'introductory remarks', Hume 'sets forth an aim as ambitiously comprehensive as is expressed in the systems of Bacon or Descartes, and this in spite of Hume's well-deserved standing as the leading skeptic of modern philosophy' (UPMP, p. 70). Yet Hume confronted the problem faced by all true revolutionaries in philosophy: he had 'to oppose certain views current and influential in his own day', and this meant that 'his original positive aim got obscured and overlaid as he proceeded' (HNC, p. 228; cp. UPMP, pp. 70, 113). As Hume observed, because his proposed 'compleat system of the sciences' was built upon 'a foundation almost entirely new', so he needed to level the ground before he could build (Hume 1739-40, 'Introduction', p. 4). The excessive preoccupation with the preliminary part of Hume's exercise had, however, precluded philosophers from grasping, and building upon, the 'inexpugnable element of truth' that could be found in his constructive 'teachings' (HNC, p. 229; cp. UPMP, pp. 194-5).

Implicit in Dewey's critique of the 'usual interpretation of Hume' was the suggestion that 'Kant and his successors' had taken a wrong turn. Hume *had* provided a 'positive' contribution to philosophy, one that was very different in character to—and had subsequently been 'obscured and overlaid' by—Kant's, which Dewey dismissed as 'an incoherent scheme' that had regrettably 'remained for a century and more at the very focus of philosophical discussion' (UPMP, pp. 178–9). Hume's 'constructive idea' is that 'knowledge of human nature provides a map or chart of all humane and social subjects, and that with this chart in our possession we can find our way intelligently about through all the complexities of the phenomena of economics, politics, religious beliefs, etc.' Hume's vision of 'morals', like many 'eighteenth-century (*sc.* pre-Kantian) philosophers', was similarly capacious: 'It included all the subjects of distinctively humane import, all of the social disciplines as far as they are intimately connected with the life of man and as they bear upon the interests of humanity' (HNC, p. 228).

Conversely, Dewey held Kant principally responsible for the 'separation' which has 'become current in modern thought' of 'the cognitive or intellectual from the active', of the ideal from the empirical, of values from facts. Kant 'was not satisfied until he had separated, if he possibly could, everything that belonged together'—including morality and politics (Dewey 1935, p. 74). Implausible and unjust though it now appears, Dewey considered 'Kant and his successors' partly culpable for Germany's descent into militaristic nationalism in the early decades of the twentieth century, on account of their categorical separation between

morality and 'the phenomena of economics, politics, religious beliefs, etc.' (Dewey 1915). The 'tradition of David Hume' which Dewey, in 1930, presented his own work as continuing represented a determined (pre-Kantian) effort pre-emptively to dissolve such artificial divisions in human thought.

Dewey's earlier *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920) already indicates a close engagement with what he later identified as the constructive aspects of Hume's philosophy. Morals, Dewey there declares,

> is the most humane of all subjects. It is that which is closest to human nature; it is ineradicably empirical, not theological nor metaphysical nor mathematical. Since it directly concerns human nature, everything that can be known of the human mind and body in physiology, medicine, anthropology, and psychology is pertinent to moral inquiry. […] Moral science is not something with a separate province. It is physical, biological and historic knowledge placed in a human context where it will illuminate and guide the activities of men (RP, pp. 204-5).

Dewey again gestured towards the constructive rather than sceptical aspect of Hume's philosophy in an essay of 1935. There, he offered criticisms of the British empiricist tradition that were regularly rehearsed by other pragmatist philosophers, such as William James (Roth 1993; for Dewey's interpretation of the origins of American pragmatism, see Dewey 1926a). The 'important thing' in the 'empirical movement' of the early modern period 'was its critical, negative side', as in Locke's hands its 'power as a dissolvent of tradition and doctrine was much greater than any impetus it could give to construction'. Yet Dewey expressly 'pass[ed] over' the aspect of Hume's contribution to this tradition that 'is emphasized in all histories': his 'dialectical development of Locke's simple ideas', resulting in 'complete scepticism as to the existence of an external world and a self'. 'The *truly* empirical contribution of Hume', Dewey instead declared, 'lay in his revival of habit and of custom and their importance'. This was the 'positive, constructive' aspect of Hume's project to which Dewey had drawn attention five years earlier (Dewey 1935, p. 81; italics added).

In *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), Dewey distinguished between legitimate and unphilosophical forms of scepticism—a distinction borrowed from James (Dewey 1920b, p. 220)—in ways that bear once more upon his interpretation of Hume:

> A disciplined mind takes delight in the problematic, and cherishes it until a way out is found that approves itself upon examination. The questionable becomes an active questioning, a search; desire for the emotion of certitude gives place to quest for the objects by which the obscure and unsettled may be developed into the stable and clear. The scientific attitude may almost be defined as that which is capable of enjoying the doubtful; scientific method is, in one aspect, a technique for making a productive use of doubt by converting it into operations of definite inquiry. […] Scepticism that is *not* such a search is as much a personal emotional indulgence as is dogmatism.

'Doubt and scepticism attach', in short, 'only to the adequacy of the operations'—that is, the 'method'—used in attempting to 'transform a problematic situation into a settled or resolved one. Instead of being impotent and paralyzing, they are opportunities for bettering concrete methods of inquiry' (QC, p. 182). Dewey's decidedly sceptical evaluation of the Western philosophical tradition—from ancient Greece, via Kant, and into the present day—yielded a 'revolutionary' conclusion, which he advanced in practically all his writings from the later 1910s onwards. The experimental method, applied so fruitfully in natural science since the seventeenth century, had to be introduced (shamefully belatedly) into moral subjects. 'It is', Dewey conceded, 'a hypothesis rather than a settled fact that [the] extension and transfer of [the] experimental method is generally possible. But like other hypotheses it is to be tried in action, and the future history of mankind is at stake in the trial' (QC, p. 155).

Already in 1920, Dewey could scarcely conceal his frustration that this transfer of the experimental method had yet to occur: 'we are only pleading for the adoption in moral reflection of the logic that has proved to make for security, stringency and fertility in passing judgments upon physical phenomena' (RP,

p. 174). Nearly three decades later, in a new introduction to the 1946 edition of *The Public and its Problems* (1927), Dewey suggested that recent events confirmed his long-held conviction that this *intellectual* revolution was the only means of arresting the seemingly interminable *political* crises and revolutions that characterised the modern age:

> We have also held that a considerable part of the remediable evils of present life are due to the state of imbalance of scientific method with respect to its application to physical factors on the one side and to specifically human facts on the other side; and that the most direct and effective way out of these evils is steady and systematic effort to develop that effective intelligence named scientific method in the case of human transactions (PP, pp. 380-81).

Hitherto, such intelligence had been woefully lacking. This explained why it had taken periodic, uncontrolled and irrational eruptions of violence to jolt prevailing social customs and political institutions into alignment with underlying shifts in values and interests that they were otherwise incapable of accommodating or representing:

> We realize how little the progress of man has been the product of intelligent guidance, how largely it has been a by-product of accidental upheavals, even though by an apologetic interest in behalf of some privileged institution we later transmute chance into providence. We have depended upon the clash of war, the stress of revolution, the emergence of heroic individuals, the impact of migrations generated by war and famine, the incoming of barbarians, to change established institutions. Instead of constantly utilizing unused impulse to effect continuous reconstruction, we have waited till an accumulation of stresses suddenly breaks through the dikes of custom (HNC, p. 73).

That 'human aims', as Dewey observed, 'have so far been affected in an accidental rather than an intelligently directed way' revealed that philosophy had failed in its task, because the 'change' it had enabled 'has been technical rather than human and moral, it has been economic rather than adequately social' (RP, p. 103).

Dewey thought that Kant's moral theory had played no small part in humankind's failure to exercise purposive and intelligent agency within the constraints of history, due to the unresolved tension between the *a priori* and the empirical it had bequeathed to modern thought. In a similar vein, Marx's upended Hegelianism proposed to change the world without first bothering to interpret it properly. On Dewey's interpretation, conversely, the 'tradition of David Hume' began with the 'is'—our received traditions of philosophy, our inherited political and social institutions, and our moral practices—as the necessary precondition for exercising judgment and foresight as to how they might intelligently be adapted so as to enable us to live together better in the future.

Hume's call for an intellectual revolution had not been heeded. Dewey made precisely the same call as Hume, but with an even greater sense of urgency. All Dewey's hopes for the future revolved around the single hope that the times were, at long last, propitious for such a revolution:

> Intellectual prophecy is dangerous; but if I read the cultural signs of the times aright, the next synthetic movement in philosophy will emerge when the significance of the social sciences and arts has become an object of reflective attention in the same way that mathematical and physical sciences have been made the objects of thought in the past, and when their full import is grasped. If I read these signs wrongly, nevertheless the statement may stand as a token of a factor significant in my own intellectual development (Dewey 1930, p. 160).

It is to Dewey's intellectual development that we turn next. If, initially, Dewey was convinced that the Hegelian tradition offered the best vehicle for this 'new synthetic movement in philosophy', his mature

writings indicate a decisive shift. It was the 'tradition of David Hume' that allowed for the most important and valuable principles Dewey had first discerned in Hegel to be reconstructed on an 'empirical, not theological nor metaphysical nor mathematical' philosophical foundation (RP, pp. 204-5).

HUME, AFTER KANT AND HEGEL

For Dewey's 'revolution' in philosophy, Hume proposed a 'total alteration'; and for both, this involves (as the subtitle to the *Treatise* declares) *An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*. This 'method' had, both agree, been pioneered in natural science in the seventeenth century by Francis Bacon, with transformative technological and economic consequences that Dewey's generation, unlike Bacon's or Hume's, was now in a position to appreciate and evaluate. For Hume as for Dewey, even as the success of this 'attempt' cannot be gainsaid—for the simple reason that it has barely ever *been* attempted—there are good reasons to 'hope' for success. For both, it promises to deliver unprecedented benefits for human life: 'we may *hope* to establish […] a science, which will not be inferior in certainty, *and will be much superior in utility* to any other of human comprehension' (Hume 1739-40, 'Introduction'; italics added).

I say 'barely' attempted because Dewey remarked in 1920 that, in the eighteenth century, a few philosophers—'those who were avowedly sceptical *and* revolutionary'—were able to 'grasp the full import of the new science' for 'moral and political matters'. There is every reason to think that Dewey has Hume in mind here: Hume was 'revolutionary' precisely *because* he was 'sceptical'. His 'doubts' led him critically to evaluate the philosophical tradition he inherited, and to show why, and where, it had gone astray and needed to be reconstructed afresh. In 1920, Dewey proposes, as had Hume nearly two centuries earlier, fully to develop the insights of a 'science of man' by extending the experimental method to moral subjects. It is, Dewey declares, 'the intellectual task of the twentieth century to take this last step', and thereby to effect a Humean revolution that Kant had smothered in its cradle (RP, p. 123).

One aspect of Hume's philosophy, in particular, is pushed to the fore if we approach it via Dewey. This is Hume's deep, and abiding, interest in the history of philosophy. Whereas Dewey offered to reconstruct the Western philosophical tradition in two works of the 1920s –*Reconstruction in Philosophy* and *The Quest for Certainty*—and, still more comprehensively, in the study on which he was working in his final years (*Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*), Hume's interpretation of that tradition and its development is diffused throughout his writings. We may nonetheless fairly say of Hume what Rorty says of Dewey: his philosophy is 'historicist to the core'. When the striking continuities between Hume's interpretation of that history and its significance and Dewey's later account are taken into consideration, however, there is reason to qualify Rorty's judgment that Dewey's philosophy is 'unique, unclassifiable, [and] original' for its attempt 'to encapsulate the whole sequence' of the history of philosophy, 'set it aside, and offer something new—or at least a hope of something new' in its place (Rorty 1982, p. 46). Dewey, at any rate, considered Hume's philosophy to be 'sceptical and revolutionary' in precisely this respect.

In identifying Hume's historicism as an essential aspect of his philosophical project, it matters very much that Dewey, unlike William James, came to Hume via Hegel rather than the tradition of British empiricism. 'We must not forget here', Dewey cautioned, 'that James was an empiricist before he was a pragmatist, and repeatedly stated that pragmatism is merely empiricism pushed to its legitimate conclusions' (Dewey 1926a, p. 12). Dewey, in contrast, was a Hegelian before he was a pragmatist; and pragmatism was, for him, better understood as Hegelianism pushed to its legitimate conclusions, and emancipated from its 'inherited elements' (RP, p. 184; Randall Jr. 1953, p. 9). As the predecessor to Hegel rather than the continuator of the British empiricist tradition, Dewey presented Hume as a valuable ally in his attempt to do so.

In an autobiographical essay of 1930, Dewey recalled that his encounter with Hegel when a graduate student at Johns Hopkins had 'supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving'. Hegel effected a dissolution of the boundaries between disciplines that Kant drew so firmly, and which the institutionalisation of philosophy in the academy tends to perpetuate. 'Hegel's treatment', Dewey continued, 'of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the […] dissolution of hard-and-fast di-

viding walls', and offered 'an immense release, a liberation' (Dewey 1930, p. 154). Dewey similarly declared that the 'discovery of history' was the nineteenth century's 'great intellectual contribution', and he absorbed and made his own Hegel's insight that philosophy is 'its own time apprehended in thoughts' (Dewey 1935, p. 132; Hegel 1820, p. 11; Rorty 1982, p. xl). Yet Dewey's gradual disillusionment with Hegelian philosophy reflected a repudiation of its form, its metaphysical underpinnings and—crucially—its political implications. Dewey declared that 'the form, the schematism, of his system now seems to be artificial to the last degree' (Dewey 1930, p. 154). Meanwhile one could not hold onto the metaphysics without committing oneself to the 'inert conservatism' in social and political matters which they were intended, by Hegel, to support. Hegel's historicism combined the 'discovery of history' with 'elements drawn from the classic religious and philosophical tradition of Europe so as to effect an intellectual rehabilitation of the latter'. Hegel had not emancipated modern philosophy from its pre-modern baggage, or political practice from the dead weight of inherited custom and tradition. He had instead exalted 'the existing state of institutions as a manifestation of some inner absolute Idea or Spirit engaged in the slow process of evolutionary expression'. Hegelianism was, like the Western philosophical tradition more broadly, 'infected with a reactionary spirit' and 'essentially apologetic'. The German idealists 'contributed their support to acquiescence and impotence rather than to direction and re-creation, because they gave an inherent ideal value to what exists' (Dewey 1928, p. 132).

Further reflecting on his intellectual development in 1939, Dewey described how, having initially (and mistakenly) attempted to adapt Hegel's system and terminology to new uses, he 'came to realize that what [Hegel's] principles actually stood for could be better understood and stated when completely emancipated from the Hegelian garb' (J. M. Dewey 1939, pp. 17-18). The textual evidence has already been adduced for the contention that Dewey considered the most important of those 'principles'—historicism, and the emphasis on the unification of all branches of human thought—to be endorsed, on an empirical and non-metaphysical basis, by Hume. Dewey drew attention to Hume's emphasis on custom and habit. This allowed for an understanding of the importance of 'the structure and operations of our common nature in shaping social life', which Hume had explored in depth; it also indicated 'the reflex influence of the latter upon the shape which a plastic human nature takes because of its social environment', which Hume had failed fully to grasp (HNC, p. 229). The inference Dewey drew was that, by 'continuing the tradition of David Hume' and without Hegelian metaphysical presuppositions, one could dissolve the false dichotomy beloved of modern philosophers since the eighteenth century: between the individual (whether the 'highly particularized creature of sense' of the sensationalist empiricists, or the same such creature infused with 'universal reason' of Kantian lore) and society (which humankind created, but which was a necessary precondition of *their* re-creation as *moral* individuals) (Dewey 1908, p. 44). If, as James A. Harris avers, Hume's 'conception of human nature' and morality was 'intensely, even claustrophobically social', then this was one source of its great appeal to Dewey (Harris 2015, p. 115).

Hume's philosophy, on Dewey's reconstruction, allowed for the meaning of conscience to be returned to its etymological roots, as 'together-knowing'. When it comes to learning to form judgments about the propriety of actions—our own, and others'—from our earliest infancy the individual's thoughts 'are saturated with the ideas that others entertain about them, ideas which have been expressed not only in explicit instruction but still more effectively in reaction to our acts'. Through 'visit[ing]' us 'with approval', or 'bestow[ing] frowns and rebuke' upon us—sanctions of praise and blame the importance of which Hume emphasised in both the *Treatise* and the second *Enquiry*—the members of our community hold us 'accountable' for what we '*have* done', so as to make us more 'responsive' in what we are '*going* to do'. 'Gradually persons learn by dramatic imitation to hold themselves accountable, and liability becomes a voluntary deliberate acknowledgement that deeds are our own, that their consequences come from us'. 'An assembly'—here Dewey channels Adam Smith, as well as Hume—'is formed within our breast which discusses and appraises proposed and performed acts. The community without becomes a forum and tribunal within, a judgment-seat of changes, assessments and exculpations' (HNC, pp. 216-7).

So understood, any clear-cut distinction—still less, opposition—between the individual and the society of which she is a member becomes invidious, without any need to follow Hegel (as had Dewey in 1888) in describing society as a natural organism manifesting the gradual (but reassuring) progress of 'Idea or Spirit'. Moral judgment was predicated upon our capacity for sympathy (in the Humean sense), which is a product of the human imagination and enables us to learn through '*dramatic*' imitation, and by seeing ourselves through others' eyes. Dewey concluded *Human Nature and Conduct* by declaring that:

> These two facts, that moral judgment and moral responsibility are the work wrought in us by the social environment, signify that all morality is social; not because we *ought* to take into account the effect of our acts upon the welfare of others, but because of facts. Others *do* take account of what we do, and they respond accordingly to our acts. Their responses actually *do* affect the meaning of what we do. […] Our conduct *is* socially conditioned, whether we perceive the fact or not (HNC, pp. 216-17).

In Dewey's subsequent reflections on his intellectual development, Hume's presence is, to borrow a phrase from Dewey, 'secreted in the interstices' of the written text (PP, p. 336). 'The metaphysical idea that an absolute mind is manifested in social institutions dropped out' of his philosophy; but 'the idea, *upon an empirical basis*, of the power exercised by [the] cultural environment in shaping the ideas, beliefs, and intellectual attitudes of individuals remained'. This fostered 'my belief that the only possible psychology, as distinct from a biological account of behaviour, is a *social psychology*', just as the only possible conception of morality is a social morality (J. Dewey 1939, pp. 17-18: italics added). These fundamental 'principles', which had initially attracted Dewey to Hegel, now drew him to Hume. In moral subjects Hume offered—as had Bacon in natural philosophy—a method by means of which to *discover* the good not through an appeal to *a priori* reasoning (or, still less, to the Judaeo-Christian scriptures), but rather through the careful observation and manipulation of relations between observable phenomena, with the ultimately practical purpose of contributing to the betterment of humankind.

In applying this method to moral subjects, Dewey argued that the crucial, truly 'revolutionary' step was to banish final causes altogether. There is no *one* good, one *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum*, according to which the legitimacy of the moral, social and political beliefs, practices and institutions of any given society are to be judged. These, including inherited philosophical traditions, are to be evaluated according to their appropriateness and utility: that is, whether they enable the 'problematic situation' which generates unease and hence stimulates the quest for knowledge to be identified accurately and 'transform[ed] into a settled or resolved one' (QC, p. 182). Just as every 'problematic situation' is never entirely like any that had previously been experienced, so too the 'good' that the successful application of critical intelligence secures (i.e. the resolution of the problem in view) will be to some extent *sui generis*. On Dewey's reductive and polemical, but unfailingly invigorating interpretation, the Western philosophical tradition was characterised above all by a 'quest for certainty' that resulted in the claim that there were 'fixed ends' for humanity. The invocation of an unchanging and eternal realm of moral values provided a refuge from the contingency and flux of human life to those who were perturbed by uncertainty. For most philosophers, scepticism had been 'a personal emotional indulgence'; for it to be a genuinely 'productive use of doubt', the philosopher had to be open to the uncertainties and possibilities of a future that remained forever unknown.

This desire for certainty where it could not be had was accompanied by an impulse to justify a society's present (and/or past) ways of organising its collective life over alternative possibilities: that is, by the 'reactionary spirit' and 'apologetic interest' that Dewey discovered in German idealism no less than in ancient Greek philosophy. This, Dewey maintained, explained why progress in philosophy was so hard to divine: a total 'revolution' was required if philosophy were to develop a method with sufficient flexibility to accommodate, and to respond to, the new problems with which every age and society is periodically confronted. 'The theory of fixed ends', Dewey remarked, 'inevitably leads thought into the bog of disputes that cannot be settled. If there is one *summum bonum*, one supreme end, what is it?' (RP, p. 174). Philosophers through-

out history had wasted their time and ingenuity in joining this insoluble 'dispute', rather than turning their attention to the urgent practical problems that confronted their societies, which *were* capable of some kind of resolution. 'Philosophy recovers itself', Dewey pithily remarked, 'when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men' (Dewey 1917, p. 230).

Rorty observed that Dewey 'attempted to tell a great sweeping story about philosophy from Plato to himself', characterised by 'name-dropping' and a 'rapid shifting of context' which later philosophers in a more 'professionalizing period distrusted […] as "unscientific" and "unscholarly"'. This explains why subsequent scholars of Dewey have tended to overlook 'the depth and extent' of his 'commentary on the details of the tradition' (Rorty 1982, pp. 65, 41). Much the same might be said of Hume, whose sweeping dismissal of all moral philosophy after Socrates (who had appreciated the importance of the experimental method, as developed by Thales in natural philosophy, for the moral sciences) appeared absolute (Hume 1739-40, 'Introduction'). It is clear that *Dewey* grasped the importance of Hume's interpretation of the history of Western philosophy for Hume's own, 'constructive' enterprise, which bespoke a determination to banish final causes from moral philosophy. The 'germ' that gave rise to Hume's science of man was a result of his realisation that:

> the moral Philosophy transmitted to us by Antiquity, labor'd under the same Inconvenience that has been found in their natural Philosophy, of being entirely Hypothetical, & depending more upon Invention than Experience. Every one consulted his Fancy in erecting Schemes of Virtue & of Happiness, without regarding human Nature, upon which every moral Conclusion must depend. This therefore [Hume continues] I resolved to make my principal Study, & the Source from which I wou'd derive every Truth in Criticism as well as Morality (Hume 1734, p. 16).

This was why, in the *Treatise*, Hume felt emboldened to declare that 'moral philosophy is in the same condition as natural, with regard to astronomy before the time of *Copernicus*' (Hume 1739-40, p. 185).

Hume's Copernican revolution was, from Dewey's perspective, vastly superior to Kant's, and its 'reconstruction' provided a springboard from which to launch the most searching criticism of neo-Kantianism. Hume recognised that the transfer of the experimental method into moral subjects implied the unequivocal rejection of final causes.

In almost identical terms to those employed by Dewey nearly two centuries later, Hume savaged any moral theory that was 'founded on final Causes', asking rhetorically: 'For pray, what is the End of Man?' (Hume 1739). This question had preoccupied the ancient philosophers; and, thanks not least to the unholy alliance forged between Greek philosophy and Christianity, it had continued to do so in the modern age. (Dewey's withering contempt for 'religious emotions' and institutions as 'not creative but conservative', attached to 'the current view of the world' which they 'consecrate', is as unimpeachably Humean as it is questionable (Dewey 1909, p. 5).) The dispute over man's true end and greatest good was, Hume declared, merely verbal—an 'endless', irresolvable problem conjured into existence by philosophers, taken up by theologians, and of no meaningful consequence for human life and happiness—and he dismissed it, as would Dewey, as 'quite wide of my Purpose' (Hume 1739).

If, as Dewey maintained, 'intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions together with both of the alternatives they assume', then Hume's 'revolution' was one of the few, truly progressive moments in the history of moral philosophy (Dewey 1909, p. 15). Hume's call for the abandonment of *the* question that had most centrally preoccupied, and continued to preoccupy, Western philosophers had, however, not been heeded. In his voluminous writings, which roamed freely across conventional disciplinary divisions, Dewey endeavoured to make it unignorable.

HUME: 'TRUE CONSERVATISM' AND 'PRACTICAL IDEALISM'

Dewey's emphasis on the 'constructive' contribution of Hume's philosophy undercut another element of the 'usual interpretation' established by Green and Grose: that Hume's shift, in the post-*Treatise* years, to focus on the practical problems of his own day in his writings on politics, economics, religion and history represented an abandonment of philosophy. On this interpretation, Hume had shown that the philosophical problems that had animated Western philosophy could not adequately be addressed using the methods it had developed for this purpose. Unfortunately, he offered no means to address them any more adequately, as his self-contradictory comments on personal identity were paradigmatically taken to illustrate. It was simply assumed that Hume *wanted* to address these (timeless) philosophical questions, but was prevented from doing so by a form of scepticism that dissolved everything it touched.

Dewey invited a different judgment. Hume's philosophy was 'revolutionary' because it did away with these supposedly eternal philosophical questions altogether. Books II–III of the *Treatise*, and all of Hume's subsequent writings, represented the consummation, not the abandonment, of his new conception of philosophy, the purpose of which is to address the problems of men, not those of philosophers (Dewey 1917, p. 230).

Dewey's account of justice and the state in *The Public and its Problems* is resoundingly Humean in precisely this respect. Dewey's criticism of social contract theory as founded on the absurd 'idea that men are mere individuals, without any social relations *until* they form a contract' was longstanding, and again initially indebted to Hegel (Dewey 1888, p. 232). In 1927, however, Dewey's emphasis on the 'necessary and persistent modes of association' that lay beneath those 'voluntarily undertaken' was articulated in a Humean, rather than a Hegelian manner (PP, p. 298). Dewey followed Hume in arguing that our natural benevolence, and our sympathetic reaction to others' unnecessary suffering, is sufficient in small-scale communities to enable relatively durable forms of cooperation and harmony. But law, and a mechanism (the state) to enforce it, was required in larger-scale societies; and justice builds upon, and further extends beyond their previous limit, our moral sentiments, so as to encompass even those whom we have never met, and whose sufferings we do not witness first-hand.

Dewey cited Hume explicitly in support, as a philosopher who grasped (unlike social contract theorists) that justice was eminently 'reasonable', but that this was because of the 'function' it served rather than due to its 'causal origin'. Law is necessary to anticipate and prioritise 'remote and long-run consequences' that naturally 'shortsighted' men invariably tend to ignore (PP, p. 271). As for what the state is legitimately authorised to *do*—where the boundary is to be drawn between the public and the private, the state and the individual—this simply cannot be determined *a priori*. It is subject to continual negotiation, and will (and must) depend on the local context. 'There is no antecedent universal proposition which can be laid down because of which the functions of a state should be limited or should be expanded. Their scope is something to be critically and experimentally determined'. Insofar as a state enables 'the transformations of group and personal action' by relieving both 'from the waste of negative struggle and needless conflict', then 'there is no call to be niggardly in acknowledging' such a state to be 'good'. When, conversely, the state actively foments struggle and conflict—by privileging the interests of the few, rather than providing all individuals and groups with 'positive assurance and reinforcement' and creating 'respect for others and for one's self'— then it is '*not* good' (PP, p. 281). In determining political legitimacy, the invocation of inviolable natural rights was, as Hume implied, a hindrance rather than a help.

How successfully the state performed its role at any given time, and how it might perform it better, could be determined only 'experimentally'. As Hume had emphasised, various forms of government had developed historically within particular societies as they attempted (often by flailing about) to find a means by which the (fluctuating) interests of all members might better be represented and secured. The modern representative republic—'political democracy'—had 'emerged as a kind of net consequence of a vast multitude of responsive adjustments to a vast number of situations', as 'an effort to remedy evils experienced in consequence of prior political institutions' (RP, pp. 122–23). Like justice, democracy as a form of government is

reason*able* because of the function it serves, rather than on account of its causal origins—an interpretation of the gradual development of political institutions that, as Dewey evidently grasped, was very close to the one advanced in Hume's political and historical writings. As a form of government, in Western societies representative democracy has, from the nineteenth century, been found preferable to the alternatives not primarily on theoretical grounds, but rather because it has proved more successful at rendering 'the desirable associations' amongst citizens 'solider and more coherent'. In its modern form, democracy has thus made possible 'a life of free and enriching communion' that must ever remain a shared human ideal rather than a concrete human achievement (PP, pp. 281, 351).

If Dewey's 'ideal' of democracy as an 'ethical conception' and a 'form of moral and spiritual association' undoubtedly owed more to Hegel, on Dewey's account Hume's importance lay in his development of a 'method' that enabled critical intelligence to be applied to present problems to generate future improvements. Just as Hume's philosophy was more radical than Hegel's in the degree of its emancipation from 'the classic religious and philosophical tradition of Europe', so too was it freer from the charge of 'reactionary spirit' and 'apologetic interest' that Dewey levelled at that tradition (including German idealism), the tendency of which, he repeated, has always been to give 'an inherent ideal value to what exists' (Dewey 1928, p. 132).

To be sure, Dewey offered no indication that Hume's treatment of the political and economic issues of his own day was particularly radical. He noted, however, that Hume and his contemporaries could afford to place a qualified faith in the logic of market forces under a regime of secure property ownership, having not lived to witness the slums, poverty and widespread misery that attended economic and technological 'progress' from the nineteenth century onwards. Much the same point was made by Raymond Williams, another figure on the left of the political spectrum who questioned the over-easy assumption that Hume's scepticism necessarily issued in what Dewey termed an 'inert' form of political 'conservatism' (Williams 1964; RP, p. 98; cf. Jay 2005, p. 200).

These conclusions differ markedly from those of two other commentators who have approached Hume's philosophy via Hegel and idealist philosophy: Dewey's younger contemporary Michael Oakeshott (1956) and Donald Livingston (1998). For the latter two, a Humean political philosophy will accept the revision—the less, the better—of existing institutions and laws only when the necessity of doing so has become unignorable. For Dewey, conversely, Hume's 'method'—his most vital contribution to modern philosophy—privileges foresight as well as judgment. This allows for political theory to be empirically grounded but nonetheless an imaginative, perhaps even a prophetic exercise of the human intelligence.

CONCLUSION: HUME AND IMAGINATION IN POLITICS

In the *Treatise*, Hume developed 'a method of moral and political diagnosis and prognosis'—the experimental method—which he was then able to apply to the pressing political, economic and social questions of his day (Dewey 1909, p. 14). It was, Dewey maintained, a (common) error to assume that Hume's empirical approach was incapable of yielding normative insights—that to focus on the 'is' was to banish the 'ought'. The experimental approach was *both* 'in the interests of the only true conservatism—that which will conserve and not waste the values wrought out by humanity', *and* in the service of 'a practical idealism', characterised by 'a lively and easily moved faith in possibilities as yet unrealized, in willingness to make sacrifice for their realization' (RP, pp. 89-90; Dewey 1917, p. 232). As Dewey observed:

> It is the first business of mind to be "realistic", to see things "as they are". […] But knowledge of facts does not entail conformity and acquiescence. The contrary is the case. Perceptions of things as they are is but a stage in the process of making them different. They have already begun to be different in being known, for by that fact they enter into a different context, a context of foresight and judgment of better or worse (HNC, p. 206).

On Dewey's reconstruction, the 'tradition of David Hume' allows for the intelligent adaptation of our environment when customary ways of doing and thinking no longer conduce to the realisation of our ends. These ends are, given human nature, both material *and* moral. In Hume's day, it was clear that the improvement of 'the mechanical arts' and the 'industry' they had encouraged in all ranks had been accompanied by 'some refinement in the liberal' arts which were no longer sustained (as in the ancient world) by domestic slavery (Hume 1752). Hume considered recent technological advances and the rapid economic growth to which they gave rise to conduce for the most part to 'progress in sociability, humanity, knowledge, and honour' (Watkins 2019, p. 90), by fostering an environment that shaped an inherently plastic human nature to these ends.

Dewey similarly emphasised the 'influence' of the surrounding 'social environment' on 'the shape which a plastic human nature takes', an insight he explicitly identified with Hume's philosophy. On Dewey's reconstruction, Hume's confidence, however legitimate in his own day, that technological advances, economic growth and the inviolability of private property will tend to facilitate ever-enriching forms of human association had been exposed for what it was: a hypothesis, even a prophecy, to be tested rather than a doctrine to be tenaciously defended in the teeth of evidence to the contrary. Such cautionary evidence, Dewey declared in the 1920s, was now overwhelming. One hundred years later, we can surely find fewer reasons still to dissent from this judgment.

Dewey's 'tradition of David Hume' dissolves the artificial distinctions beloved of philosophers including, one might argue, Oakeshott's distinction between the 'politics of faith' and the 'politics of scepticism' (Oakeshott 1996, pp. 73-80: where Hume is placed firmly in the latter camp). Hume's most valuable bequest to contemporary philosophers, on this account, lies in the (empirical, experimental) 'method' to which he was led by his scepticism; but this nonetheless provides ample grounds for 'faith'—not in a deliverer, whether divine or mortal, but rather 'in the power of intelligence to imagine a future which is the projection of the desirable in the present, and to invent the instrumentalities of its realization' (Dewey 1917, p. 232). To confront the challenges we face, philosophy stands in need of 'recovery'; and Dewey acknowledges Hume as offering powerful assistance in this endeavour, even as he neither confronted nor anticipated the most pressing problems with which we are now required to grapple.

Dewey explicitly extracted from Hume's philosophy—and from the western philosophical tradition more broadly—what *he* held to be most valuable. It is perfectly legitimate to argue that Livingston's or Oakeshott's conservatism—or, indeed, Rorty's neo-pragmatism, which emancipates the Deweyan tradition from 'inherited' metaphysical commitments that Rorty considers to mar its founder's work—is more consistent with fundamental aspects of Hume's vision. All acts of interpretation are partial, and Dewey never pretended otherwise: we bring our own ethical values and political presuppositions to bear on the philosophical traditions that we choose to privilege (or to critique). At the very least, however, Dewey's reconstruction of 'the tradition of David Hume' reminds us that 'any philosophical view is a tool which can be used by many hands', on the 'left' no less than on 'the political right' (Rorty 1999, p. 23; cp. Miller 2014). Dewey furnishes us with good reasons to reflect afresh on the ways in which Hume's philosophy might offer us a 'tool' which, hitherto underemployed, remains of vital service today.[1]

NOTES

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Rethinking Individualism and Individuality: Part 3: Liberalism, Sympathy, and Evolution

GUS DIZEREGA

Abstract: At first, individualist and evolutionary liberalism reinforced one another. Afterwards the social transformations liberalism initiated amplified their differences. Individualist liberal analysis assumed limited, relatively straightforward, relationships between people. Evolutionary liberalism emphasized relationships, which were growing ever stronger and more numerous. Evolutionary liberals' emphasis on individuals' immersion in complex relationships of culture, language, and environment could handle the increased complexity of impersonal human relations. Rooted in Hume, Smith, and Darwin, evolutionary liberalism linked liberal values with evolution, not individuals. While long delayed by Neo-Darwinism emphasizing competition, recent research demonstrated cooperation is more favored by evolution, creating a solid ethical foundation for evolutionary liberal values as well as greater support for its emphasis on relationships rather than individualist concepts of self-interest and rights.

Keywords: Adam Smith, cooperation, Darwin, democracy, ecosystem, Hayek, Hume, individualism, liberalism, morality, rationality, rights, self-interest, social ecology, sustainability, sympathy

I: INDIVIDUALIST AND EVOLUTIONARY LIBERALISM

Individualist liberals argue individuals are society's fundamental moral units, and all are equally so, a belief they share with liberals in general. But they also argue individuals are society's basic units in all other relevant regards. Rooted in insights from the Scottish Enlightenment, evolutionary liberals emphasize both society and those within it are shaped by evolutionary processes outside human control. Evolutionary liberal F. A. Hayek argued human reason itself grew from these processes (Hayek 1973, pp. 17-34). Malte Dold and Paul Lewis argue this evolutionarily and culturally shaped rationality can be described as "ecological rationality" (Dold 2021).

Over the years individualist liberals' foundation' has been challenged by findings that actual individuals embody their culture, times, and language, and do not exist distinct from them. While these challenges are well-grounded, individualist liberalism has remained convincing to many be-

cause we are biological individuals even more fundamentally than we are socially shaped beings. I am not you and you are not me.

Because evolutionary and individualist liberal approaches are both liberal and both friendly to markets, many liberals also assume they are compatible (Boettke 2019; Steele 2014; Vanberg 1986). Their initial impact was complementary, but what about later?

II: LIBERALISM, THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, AND SLAVERY

The United States was the first society that adopted liberal principles as a national ethos. Emphasized in the American Declaration of Independence, a commitment to individual rights helped undermine slavery's legitimacy in the US.

The Lockean language of rights dominated the revolutionaries' moral arguments against the British Crown and in describing the country to take its place. Thomas Jefferson described Locke, Newton, and Sir Francis Bacon as "my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced" (Jefferson 1944, p. 609). John Locke himself could have written the most famous lines in the *Declaration of Independence*. Despite his different philosophical approach, Hume stood solidly on the American side, writing "I am an American in my Principles and wish we would let them alone to govern or misgovern themselves as they think proper" (Case 2022).

Many major Founders were also influenced by Scottish thinkers, and some of the important differences during the Constitutional Convention reflected a person's exposure, or lack thereof, to the Scots. James Madison's arguments reflected Scottish influence (Browning 2022, pp. 275-6). Crucially, he used Hume's argument in favor of larger republics over smaller ones to argue for the viability of a large American republic (Wood 2021, p. 89). James Wilson, another founder influenced by Scottish thought, played a pivotal role persuading the Constitutional Convention to locate sovereignty in the people, and not the states or the proposed national government (Wood 2021 pp. 94-5; Browning 2022, p. 170).

The pre-revolutionary colonies were intensely hierarchical, with much work being done by huge numbers of indentured laborers whose status differed from slavery only in that it was not (usually) life-long and their offspring would be free (Wood 2021, pp. 102-105). Primogeniture and entail ensured the political dominance of powerful families. Women were not allowed to divorce in most colonies (Wood 2021, pp. 163-4). Politically supported religious establishments dominated many states. Arguments for individual rights as well as influence from the Scots questioned all long-established assumptions about the legitimacy of these hierarchies.

Significant liberal reforms followed upon the revolution, decisively changing the society to one so different from what preceded it that Alexis deTocqueville, who had come to study it, was amazed at how different the new nation had become from Europe. The first step towards liberal transformation after the Revolution enlarged equality between white men. However, the principles supporting equality were not racial, sexual, or ethnic, but universal.

The issue of slavery proved the thorniest one for the Founders. At the time, even the South's leaders generally disapproved of slavery for liberal reasons, and most thought it would fade away within a few decades (Wood 2021, p. 110). Thomas Jefferson, a deeply conflicted slave owner, wrote the Declaration of Independence. Every slave state signed on to it. During the Constitutional Convention New York's Gouverneur Morris, who did not own slaves, denounced slavery as bad for everyone except plantation owners (Morris 1787). George Mason, a major slave holder, wrote in Virginia's Declaration of Rights "all men are by nature equally free and have certain inherent rights. . ." (Mason 1776). Mason later refused to sign the constitution, in part because it did not abolish the slave trade (Schwarz 2000). Like many today who realize fossil fuels will devastate society as it currently exists, but do not know how to wean themselves from them, Southern leaders knew they were economically dependent on slavery, and hoped the future would somehow free them from its malign grip.

Regarding abolishing slavery, John Jay described the Revolution's impact as like a "little lump of leaven" that acted to transform the larger body (Jay 1788). It was later amplified by Quakers and early Evangelicals, and strengthened by equally right-friendly Spiritualists (Reynolds 2020). Of the American Revolution's many impacts on slavery in the New World, historian of slavery David Brion Davis wrote: "most important in the long run, was . . . the popularization among black as well as whites of belief in individual freedom and inalienable natural rights" (Davis 2006, p. 156). Before the Civil War a majority of American states had abolished slavery.

However, during this process the impact of liberal principles declined in the slave states. Unlike their fathers, later Southern leaders supported slavery and sought to expand it. The cotton gin generated sufficient wealth enabling most to overcome any respect for their forefathers' views. The Haitian Revolution raised fears in the other direction (although ending slavery in the British Caribbean was peaceful). Chattel slavery was incompatible with the country's founding principles and embracing it required repudiating liberalism. The North Carolina Supreme Court ruled "The power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect" (Arnhart 1998, p. 168). Slavery required supporting despotism. All that mattered was who should be ruled. The next generation of Southern leaders found themselves forced to repudiate the Declaration of Independence's recognition of rights in favor of more Hobbesian and theocratic values (Stephens 1861; Calhoun 2007; McKitrick 1963; Fitzhugh 1960).

Abolishing slavery arguably led to the greatest single social transformation in history, and its strength came from liberal ideas (Wood 2021). More impressive still, excepting only Haiti and the Confederacy, in the West abolition was accomplished peacefully (Davis 2006, pp. 241-4). In this context, the language of rights worked, and worked profoundly well.[1]

America's *Declaration of Independence* and the new nation had extended a constant pressure towards greater inclusion (Jay 1788). Over time women, Blacks, and others used these already accepted principles to expand the realm of identification farther than it had been before. The biggest failing in these reforms in the U.S. (and many other nations) was an endemic racism. Racists could oppose slavery, and many abolitionists were racists. Universal White male suffrage was soon established, but only with ending free Black suffrage because many Whites were concerned there were too many Black voters. (Wood 2021, pp. 123-4). The United States is far from liberal in all important respects, but liberal values now dominate the European cultural world and are increasingly important elsewhere.

III: LIBERALISM AND THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution itself embodied a tension between the liberal concept that only citizens had political rights and the illiberal one that states had them as well, a tension absent in the Declaration but exemplified by the 10th amendment**.**

Initially the tension was invisible. Most early Americans identified more with their states than their more abstract national identity. In addition, the states were in the best position of any institution to push back should the national government become oppressive. But the idea of states rights implies the doctrine of political sovereignty- that power ultimately rests in a governing institution, as rights bearing individuals transferred that ultimate power to government in a social contract. This is Rousseauean reasoning, not Lockean. The Lockean reasoning behind the Constitution itself retained ultimate power with the people and states could have no rights superior to theirs.

Without depending on a doctrine of rights, in the *Federalist,* evolutionary liberal James Madison offered a different take to the same conclusion (Madison *Fed. 45* 1961, p. 289):

We have heard of the impious doctrine in the old world, that the people were made for kings, not kings for the people. Is the same doctrine to be revived in the new, I another shape . . . the public good . . . is the supreme object to be pursued; and that no form of government whatever has any other values than as it may be fitted for attainment of this object . . . as far as the sovereignty of the

> States cannot be reconciled to the happiness of the people, the voice of every good citizen must be,
> Let the former be sacrificed to the latter.

Madison underlines his point in *Federalist 46* (Madison, *Fed 46* 1961, p, 295)*:*

> If . . . the people should in the future become more partial to the federal than to the State govern-
> ments, the change can only result from such manifest and irresistible proofs of a better administra-
> tion as will overcome their antecedent propensities. And in that case the people ought not surely
> to be precluded from giving most of their confidence where they may discover it to be most due . . .

For Madison, promoting happiness, not protecting rights regardless of their practical impact, is the ultimate standard for a good society. Human flourishing is the ultimate standard. In the context of the American Revolution and the decades immediately following, individualist and evolutionary liberalism reinforced one another. But different contexts could lead to different relationships.

Locke's defense of property rights depended almost entirely in rural examples. Revolutionary America was overwhelmingly rural. Links between people were mostly local and persona, as exemplified by Jefferson's praise of small farmers as the ideal foundation for a free society. 'Linkage' is the key concept to understanding liberalism's later fate in the US and other largely liberal societies. When links between people are relatively few, individualist liberalism easily harmonized with evolutionary liberalism.

IV: ARE THESE TWO LIBERAL FOUNDATIONS STILL COMPATIBLE?

By expanding the sphere of independent cooperation, liberal policies transformed societies. Businesses expanded and interwove people's relations together on ever larger scales. Cities grew and, as they did, cultural and economic complexities did as well. Linkages between people and between people and their environment grew more numerous and powerful. What once seemed simple issues between individuals could become far more complex and involve increasingly impersonal relationships.

As the issues liberal societies faced became less straightforward, liberals increasingly differed among themselves over approaches to public problems. Some liberals attempted to address these issues in terms of traditional individualism, others in terms of community flourishing. We see this distinction today between those calling themselves "classical" and those calling themselves "progressive" liberals. But how deep does this tension run? F. A. Hayek's work helps us understand.

Hayek is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in modern free market economics. The Austrian economic tradition, with which he is associated, approaches economic science from a individualist liberal perspective. But Hayek himself came to prefer basing his work within the Scottish evolutionary tradition (diZerega 2021, pp. 2-3). By and large, modern Austrians seek to meld Austrian methodology with Hayek's approach.

Hayek claimed human reason, foundational to methodological individualism, developed out of social life. This claim challenged to reductionist liberal approaches emphasizing individualism as foundational to society and to social science. Seeking to address this challenge, individualist liberal Peter Boettke agrees, with Hayek, that "Social inquiry must begin with a recognition of the social embeddedness of the mind." He then argues "Hayek is mainly talking about the co-evolution of reason and tradition in the epoch when man was *first* [my italics] emerging from his pre-human condition (Boettke 2019, p. 190). Boettke quotes Hayek that cultural evolution "took place not merely after the appearance of Homo sapiens, but also during the much longer earlier existence of the genus Homo and its hominid ancestors. To repeat: *mind and culture developed concurrently and not successively*" (Hayek 1979, p. 156; 1988, p. 22). But to say two developments are "concurrent" can mean either in parallel or recursively. It is here that Boettke and Hayek part ways.

Societies reflect evolutionary processes and, within them, the human mind's social embeddedness exists at two levels. One began well before the first humans emerged, creating a cultural ecology within which

we live that has gradually grown and shaped us. But the converse is true as well, we shape it in turn. The relationship is recursive. At the second level, this entire process is repeated with every birth. Each new generation inherits and is shaped by, what came before them, and in turn shapes what the next generation will inherit. This reflexivity underlies tensions between evolutionary and individualist liberal perspectives.

Describing social science research, F. A. Hayek wrote what we "single out as wholes, or where we draw the 'partition boundary', will be determined by . . . whether we can thus isolate recurrent patterns of coherent structures of a distinct kind which we do in fact encounter in the world. . ." (Hayek 1967, p. 7). Elsewhere he explained "It would be most correct to think of progress as a process of formation and modification of the human intellect, a process of adaptation and learning in which not only the possibilities known to us but also our values and desires continually change" (Hayek 1960, p. 40). For example, entrepreneurs' "very cast of thinking . . . would not exist but for the environment in which they develop their gifts" (Hayek 1979, p. 76; see also Pagel 2012; Deacon 1997). From this perspective patterns have a greater reality than their physical manifestation ar any particular time.

Cultural group selection is an evolutionary process where individuals influence groups and groups influence individuals and, on balance, the most successful groups flourish. Causality goes both ways, and always has. Boettke equates a concurrent *parallel* process with a concurrent *recursive* process that began before there were human beings and continues to the present.

This same dynamic exists in biology. Rationality appears to be a natural emergent product of complex social organisms. Based on discoveries made since he wrote, Hayek's comments on rationality's origins can be modified, but in the direction opposite from Boettke's interpretation. We now know many animals and birds use reason. For example, crows have demonstrated impressive reasoning powers, including making tools. They also show gratitude towards those who have helped them (Feinn 2021; Clerk 2018). Crows are highly social and have cultures they pass on across generations (Owen 2004; Nijhuis 2015; Dold 2021). But the seeds of culture are deeper than this.

With brains the size of a pinhead, bumblebees, learn to distinguish between different sources for rewards, and this knowledge then spreads through the community (Nuwer 2013). Honeybees' famous waggle-dance is not instinctual, but must be taught to inexperienced bees by experienced ones (Nieh 2023). These are both examples of cultural learning. Rationality's roots are more deeply embedded in life than Hayek thought, but he was right that it took culture to develop it.

Unlike even very intelligent animals possessing culture, such as crows, human culture enables us to preserve and build on past discoveries through complex languages, stories, writing, and other media transmitted across generations. Crows can pass on personal experience and what they have learned from other crows, but cannot accumulate and build upon knowledge in this way. Because these intelligent animals cannot preserve and build on knowledge, skills no longer immediately useful would disappear (diZerega 2020, p. 22). By comparison, we can easily find knowledge unknown to us, or anyone we know, through access to libraries or Google. This culturally embedded knowledge exists independently of everyone we have, or ever will, meet. It can survive in untranslated texts awaiting rediscovery by future generations. It can even lie unnoticed within in long scrutinized texts, unimagined even by their authors, but in time sparking a new insight (Radnitzky 1987).

Initially, we experience our cultural environment as being as objective as the natural one, and much of it remains so throughout our life, often invisible to us, tacitly embedded in the 'natural' flow of life within a culture (Polanyi 1962). We can only deliberately question a small part of our culturally rooted knowledge, and always from within the context of the rest. As Alfred North Whitehead observed, "Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking about them" (Hayek 1960, p 22).

An analogy might help concretize this reality. Think of culture as a great tree. Most of what supports it arose much earlier and is now dead wood supporting the whole. Only the inner bark and cambium is alive and growing, but it depends on the support from what came before. In a sense, we are like cells of social cambium supported by the structure created by the cells that came before us. Continuing the analogy, the

leaves of Spring appearing on an old tree are no more advanced than those that grew when it was a seedling, but their environment is different. Today's newborns are not more rational than ones many years ago, but their cultural environment is more conducive to developing a modern mentality.

What makes us individuals is even more paradoxical than this.

V: INDIVIDUALITY VS INDIVIDUALISM

The Lockean individual does not even exist biologically. The long-held view that biological individuals are discrete organisms with clear boundaries between them and others came to an end when Lynn Margulis demonstrated the cells making up multicellular organisms were, themselves, collective entities (Margulis 1995). Since Margulis' demonstration, biologists have increasingly found what were long considered individuals were collective organisms, superorganisms, and even ecosystems (diZerega 2023). Scientific views about biological individuality now vary enough that biologist Charles Goodknight concluded "the concept of 'individuality' is a concept imposed by the observer" (Goodknight 2013, p. 48; see also Haber 2013, p. 201).

Seeking to describe the organisms to which her research had led, Margulis quoted Alan Watts, a teacher of Eastern thought during the 60s and early 70s: "A living body is not a fixed thing but a flowing event, like a flame or a whirlpool. The shape alone is stable. The substance is a stream of energy going in one end and out the other" (Margulis and Sagan 1995, p. 43). More abstractly, she and other biologists described such organisms as persistent focused pools of low entropy, mobilizing and shaping streams of matter into living forms (Margulis and Sagan 1995; Schneider and Sagan 2005). These are examples of what Hayek had called "recurrent patterns of coherent structures of a distinct kind. . ." (Hayek 1967, p. 7).

The presence or absence of particular bacteria influence intelligence in mice, even while remaining distinct from the larger entity (Sullivan 2022). This is also apparently true for human beings where levels of certain bacteria have been linked to varying degrees of intelligence, as determined by scores on mathematical and verbal tests" (Wong 2023, p. 9). Additionally, a parasite shaping one individual's mind might be quite beneficial while shaping the mind of a different individual in deeply injurious ways (Flegr 2013). What is more us than our minds?

Modern biology has shown our "constituent parts" extend down to much simpler biological entities, and emergent individuals reflect this influence as well as culture, history, language, psychology. These biological findings resemble how cultural and linguistic elements also deeply shape human minds. Individuality is real. It is also emergent.

Consider language. In a language the meaning of words are defined relationally rather than as discrete units. The meaning of terms is best understood through "family resemblances" constituting, in Wittgenstein's words, "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing" (quoted by Wallace 2019, p. 58).

Beginning in earliest childhood, thoughts can shape the body and the body can shape thoughts. (Eisler and Fry, pp. 78-89). Social rules, and the systems they shape, in turn shape human agency (Lewis and Lewin 2015, p.7). Repeated actions in accordance with a rule or way of perceiving lead, in Paul Lewis' words, "to the formation of new cognitive (neural) structures and therefore to people having new dispositions to conceptualize and respond to their circumstances in certain ways . . . social rules can become physically embodied in people . . ." (Lewis 2012, p. 375; see also Damasio and Tranel 1993).

Languages depend on practices external to and independent of those who speak them. When comparing Potawatomie with Western languages, Robin Wall Kimmerer describes how a language's proportion of verbs to nouns can powerfully impact how speakers perceive the world (Kimmerer 2013, pp. 48-59). The language we speak can also influence how much weight we assign to the future (Fisher 2023, p. 47). Differences arise when people of different cultures play standardized games designed to evaluate participant's rationality (Dold 2021). George Lakoff observes "Does the way we think shape language? Yes. Does language shape the way we think? Yes" (Lakoff 2009, p. 232; also, Baroditsky 2011, pp. 63-5; Baier et al. 2023).

These images of individual and society are far removed from Locke's image of individual humans as unitary beings which, in various forms, continues to dominate Western thinking. Kathleen Wallace argues whether this description is psychological, from egoism to the social self, or of humans as biological organisms ultimately explained genetically, from these perspectives the body is a "container" of psychological or bodily functions. Instead, the self is "a *network* of interrelated biological, genetic, physical, social, psychosocial, linguistic, semantic, and so on" (Wallace 2019, pp. 8-9). Individuals are dynamic adaptive patterns emerging from networks of relationships rather than being discrete things entering into relationships. Morality emerges from these patterns. It is from these relationships that the foundations of liberal ethics arise.

VII: SYMPATHY AND MORALITY

David Hume and Adam Smith considered "sympathy" morality's foundation. The words sympathy and passion have shifted their meanings since their time, and so I will clarify them here. Even in their time sympathy's meaning was not always clear. Smith wrote "Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps originally the same [as pity or compassion] may now . . . without much impropriety, be used to denote our fellow feeling with any passion whatever". (Smith 1969, p. 5). Importantly, sympathy was not an emotion, or "passion" as Hume would say. Importantly, by "passion," Hume meant feelings able to influence our actions.

Today the term 'empathy' which did not then exist, is similar to sympathy,' and the overlap in their use can be confusing to modern readers (Zuniga 2014, pp. 141-2). Sympathy is the foundation of the passions, and so pre-rational. In his essay on Hume, Henry Aiken explained "*Any* emotion is sympathetic insofar as it is an emotion aroused by the perception or imagination of similar feelings in others." Sympathy "is a *cause* for common attitudes—and an *effect*" (Aiken 1948, pp. xvii-xxiii).

As I read Hume and Smith, sympathy is a virtually automatic response to encountering another being, while what we call empathy requires a more sustained engagement. When I see someone hit his thumb with a hammer, I wince, but my wince is not preceded with the thought "I'm glad that wasn't me." The thought comes later, if it comes at all. Yochai Benkler describes experiments where, when a woman sees their partner receive a shock "these women showed the exact same activation in the exact same emotional areas [of the brain] as when they were shocked." More generally, when we observe others our neurons fire in remarkably similar ways to what they would do if we were doing the act ourselves (Benkler 2011, p. 83).

Adam Smith (1969, p. 10) observed when we are pleased by observing or displeased by not observing in others:

> fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast . . . both the pleasure and the pain are always felt so instantaneously, and often upon such frivolous occasions, that it seems evident that neither of them can be derived from any such self-interested consideration

Gloria Zuniga y Postiga (2014, p. 142) argued we can get a deeper meaning of what Smith is describing via the work of Edith Stein. As Zuniga put it, for Stein:

> We are able not only to distinguish inanimate from animate objects in ordinary acts of perception, we are also able to shift to a particular mode of perception whenever we encounter a sensing living being. Accordingly, our perceptual directedness of that physical being is amplified with an affective quality. But this is not a cognitive process since it does not involve acts of inference or deduction.

Stein called this "empathetic perception." Zuniga calls it "compassion" (2014, p. 145). I like Hume and Smith's term "sympathy." Whatever we call it, it is virtually automatic, its intensity is shaped, in part at least, by the person's real or imagined relationship to us. I like Zuniga's description that "sympathy serves as

the door that allows individuals an entrance to collective experiences with others in different realms (moral, economic, political, and so on) (Zuniga 2014, p. 145).

Perceiving commonality sparks sympathy, which can lead to emotion. *Then* reason enters, followed maybe by action. As Hume famously observed, "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume 1948, p. 25). Our feelings motivate us to act, our reason tells us how. However, for a passion or feeling to matter in the world, as Hume observed, "we must be assisted by relations of resemblance and contiguity in order to feel the sympathy in its full perfection" (Hume 1948, p. 7). Because sympathy precedes reason and emotion, it is potentially open-ended and it is this open-endedness that makes a liberal ethic possible (Hume 1948, p. 192):

> suppose that several distinct societies maintain a kind of intercourse for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of justice still grow larger in proportion to the largeness of men's views and the force of their mutual connections. History, experience, reason sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human sentiments …

Darwin (1874, p. 138) thought similarly. In *Descent of Man* he observed:

> As man advances in civilization, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him. This point being once reached there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to all men of all nations and races.

J. Baird Callicott, who with Larry Arnhart, has perhaps done the most to explore the connection between Hume, Smith, and Darwin, observed (in a very Hayekian fashion) "With the acquisition of power of speech and some capacity for abstraction, our ancestors began to codify the kinds of behavior concordant and discordant with their inherited communal-emotional bonds (Callicott 1999, p. 167).

VIII: SYMPATHY IN ANIMALS AND THE SEEDS OF MORALITY

Years ago, at an environmental conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I heard an economist claim there was something deeply mistaken about environmentalists' concern with the other-than-human world as a good in itself. Environmental concerns were understandable only in terms of self-interest. In response, I pointed out that Aldo Leopold, perhaps our most important environmental thinker, had written while many regret the demise of the passenger pigeon, which none of us has ever seen, no passenger pigeon would have mourned our own passing. Leopold concluded: "For one species to mourn the death of another is a new thing under the sun" (Leopold 1970, p. 117.) I suggested the economic point of view he defended was what one might expect of a raven, not a human.

Subsequent research indicates I might have been unfair to ravens.

Hume (1983, p. 176) observed:

> Tis from the resemblance of the external actions of animals to those we ourselves perform, that we judge their internal likewise to resemble ours; and the same principle of reasoning, carry'd one step further, will make us conclude that since our internal actions resemble each other's, the causes, from which they are deriv'd, must also be resembling.

A common reply to Hume is the old skeptic's argument I cannot know you have a mind, but hiding behind an animal rather than a human. This barrier, Mary Midgley pointed out, already exists between one person

and another: "The barrier does not fall between us and the dog. It falls between you and me" (Midgley1983, p. 13). It was a weak argument before Darwin and a nonsensical one after him.

In a recent experiment, capuchin monkeys learned to do certain tasks for a food reward. Like many humans, myself included, capuchins prefer grapes to cucumbers. When two monkeys situated side by side were rewarded with cucumbers, they were both satisfied. However, when one monkey was rewarded with a cucumber, and the other with a grape, for the same behavior, the one receiving the cucumber ultimately threw the now insulting 'treat' out of its cage (Yerkes 2003). In human terms the offended capuchin reacted angrily when convinced it was being treated unfairly. And a sense of fairness is rooted in sympathy.

A skeptic, (or perhaps an economist), might say this behavior demonstrated purely selfish behavior. Fairness didn't matter, getting less than someone else did. But consider the following experiments.

Two capuchin monkeys had to work together to pull a tray of food to their cages. Before they began pulling, the monkeys had to decide which one would receive a grape and which one would get a less desired apple slice. The monkeys generally alternated roles, so both earned some grapes and some apple slices. In the few cases where the dominant monkey hogged the grapes, the other monkey tended to quit participating, despite the apple slice normally being desirable (Brosnan 2006; 2010). An economically rational capuchin would have continued cooperating because apple slices were better than nothing at all.

Capuchins can also seek rewards for others. Franz DeWaal (2010) writes:

> we place two of them side by side, while one of them barters with us with differently colored tokens. One token is 'selfish,' and the other 'prosocial.' If the bartering monkey selects the selfish token, it receives a small piece of apple for returning it, but its partner gets nothing. The prosocial token, on the other hand, rewards both monkeys. Most monkeys develop an overwhelming preference for the prosocial token, [and] dominant monkeys (who have least to fear) are the most generous.

Bonobos prefer to eat with others, even strangers, rather than eating alone (Hamilton 2021). Bonobos will also voluntarily enable another access to food they could never have had for themselves, no matter what they did (Starr 2017).

Rats act in a similar fashion, freeing trapped others and sharing food with them. They do this when they either know the trapped rat, or are familiar with that strain of rat. In way we find uncomfortably familiar, they will not do this for strangers of different strains of rats. But *once they know the stranger*, they will work to free it as well. Subsequent experiments have significantly enlarged the number of species sharing concerns about fairness and cooperation. (see Preston 2020; also DeWaal 2016, pp. 197-201; Safina 2015; Bekoff 2009).

Nor is such behavior a monopoly of mammals. Ravens and carrion crows react to the capuchin test the same way when cheese is the preferred reward and a grape the booby prize (Wascher 2017). Further, in tests of cooperation to achieve a common reward, once a cheater is exposed, its victims will no longer cooperate with it, though they continue doing so with others (University of Vienna 2015; see also Preston 2020; DeWaal 2016, pp. 197-201; Safina 2015; Bekoff 2009).

According to Darwin, among mammals, affection and sympathy were selected for because they increased reproductive success and the social organizations they made possible further increased this success (1874, p. 145). Birds appear similar. A capacity for sympathy is likely inseparable from social life among complex organisms.

Based on sympathy and reason, human morality, developed qualities already existing among other species (Prum 2017, p. 524). Daniel Kahneman and his colleagues demonstrated, like capuchins, among human beings concerns with fairness override 'rational choice' and individualistic self-interest, even at the cost of personal gain (Kahneman 1986). Peggy Mason, lead researcher for some of these experiments, pointed out: "Our study suggests that we don't have to cognitively decide to help an individual in distress; rather, we just

have to let our animal selves express themselves" (Castro 2011). Elsewhere Mason observed "Humans are mammals and I think that this not only tells us something about rats and other non-human animals but it also tells us about humans" (Mason 2014).

Rebecca Solnit's *A Paradise Built in Hell* describes the spontaneously arising communities of mutual aid that arise during disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Despite dominant cultural myths about aggression arising in apocalyptic circumstances, when the day-to-day routines of society are disastrously disrupted, generosity, kindness, and even sacrifice emerge among strangers (Solnit 2009). Such generous behavior does not last after life "returns to normal." Hume, Smith, and Darwin emphasized sympathy precedes, and is shaped, by rational calculation, and this example supports their view. It may be in normal times that social roles override our natural sympathetic capacities. When these roles are sufficiently disrupted, our more inherent inclinations re-emerge.

IX: LIBERAL TRANSFORMATION

The view that human motives are rooted in self-love was common in Hume and Smith's time as in ours. Hume rejected what he called Hobbes' and Locke's "selfish system of morals" arguing it "is contrary to common feeling and our most unprejudiced notions, [it requires] the highest stretch of philosophy to establish so extraordinary a paradox" (Hume 1948, pp. 271-272). In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* Adam Smith argued basing sentiments on self-love, "seem to me to have arisen from some confused misapprehension of the system of sympathy" (Smith 1969, p. 466).

To act in our self-interest beyond the spur of the moment we need to anticipate our future situation. We need a minimal self-awareness to imaginatively project ourselves into an anticipated future circumstance to choose a course of action superior to immediate gratification. *This future self does not yet exist.* To project our imagination into possible future circumstances requires our sympathetic capabilities (Aiken 1984, p. xxi). In Henry Hazlitt's words, my sympathetic imagination "must carry me out of myself into the feelings of others. . ." (Arnhart 1998, p. 222). Including a future me. Rational self-interest depends on sympathy.

If this argument is accurate, psychopaths will be poor at considering their *own* long-term well-being because a psychopath lacks the capacity to sympathize with others. This appears to be the case. In his analysis of sympathy Larry Arnhart observed psychopaths show "a striking inability to follow any sort of life plan consistently, whether it be one regarded as good or evil." They appear unable to act prudently over the long term (Arnhart 1998, pp. 222-3). The same or similar pattern of inability to value the future has been found with brain damage has injured their emotional capacities (Akitipis 2004, p. 148).

Hume and Smith were well aware our sympathy for strangers across the sea would be less intense than our sympathy for a good friend. It is impossible for human beings to have equal sympathy for every being capable of eliciting it. The more completely we recognize a being as like ourselves, the more easily we can sympathize with it (Smith, 1969, p. 125). As a general rule, sympathy, and the empathy it makes possible, grows outwards to ever less firmly linked parties. No society started off liberal, and its transformation to liberal values takes time. Initially it expands the realm of equal relations among those we perceive as most like us, only then to expand it to others. This may be the secret of liberalism's success: liberalism expands our sympathetic skills without overburdening them.

In 2023, blogger Anne Laurie observed the day after Saint Patrick's Day: "If you told teenaged me, fifty years ago, that the Black Vice-President and her Jewish husband would be hosting Ireland's Indian-ancestry Prime Minister and his husband for St. Paddy's Day, I would have complimented you on your imagination" (Anne Laurie 2023). Consider also, I think for the first time in history, many members of dominant (and liberal) cultures are seeking to make amends for their ancestors' aggression against others.

X: PARADOXES OF RIGHTS

Despite its success abolishing chattel slavery, individualist liberalism did not offer a strong defense against other kinds of slavery and extreme hierarchy. According to Locke, it was legitimate to enslave combatants defeated in a 'just war.' By rebelling, at any time these slaves could choose the death their previous aggression had earned them. But Locke's case for a social contract was that people could not be trusted to be fair judges when they themselves were part of a dispute. What could possibly be more subject to this problem than both sides in a war? Even the Nazis felt morally justified (Koonz 2003). With enough rationalization any war could be said to be 'just,' as Americans should know after the American invasion of Iraq. Had Iraq won, Locke's reasoning would have supported enslaving captured Americans. Locke's reasoning also turned out to be of little practical barrier to the rationales for enslaving Indians and Africans (Hinshelwood 2013).

Locke's defense of legitimate slavery does not stand alone in the individualist liberal tradition. Hundreds of years later, Robert Nozick, a leading classical liberal philosopher, argued people should have the right to sell themselves into slavery because it would be 'voluntary' (2001, pp. 290-2). *Context did not matter.* Nozick's logic justified slavery before he was born, but for Scots, not Africans. In the late 1770s Scottish coal and salt workers sold themselves to a lifetime of slavery, a practice defended by claiming, like Nozick, that voluntary contracts were legal and binding (Davis 1999, pp. 490-1; Barrowman 1897). Nozick's argument could easily legitimize pre-revolutionary America's indentured servitude, which was far more brutal than in England (Wood 2021, pp. 102-3). The despotism of property ownership trumped ending despotism among human beings.

Nozick never explored what circumstances might lead a person to sell themselves into slavery, such as a woman needing money to treat her child's otherwise fatal illness or, as with those Scottish workers, the need for a job to support a family. Nor did he question the impact on the 'owner' of holding such power over another. Nozick would have to reject Lord Acton's observation "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Acton 1887). For the libertarian Nozick, rights trumped human flourishing.

Libertarian Murray Rothbard criticized Nozick's argument from a rights-based approach (Rothbard 2002, pp. 40-1). But, Rothbard's reasoning led him to argue parents' rights would be violated were they forced to feed their children, even if the alternative was their starving to death, or suffering from a lifetime of health problems due to malnutrition (Rothbard 2002, pp. 97-112). Again, people were subordinated to a concept that abstracted context away. Not surprisingly, the Rothbards were childless.

Neither Nozick nor Rothbard could oppose noncompete agreements, employed today to prevent former employees from seeking new jobs in the same field (Westneat 2014a, 2014b). The employer, not the employee, owns their skills, and so essentially *owns a part of the employee's mind*, something not even Southern slave owners had imagined possible. Affecting many millions of private sector American workers, noncompete 'agreements' hold down people's pay because job switching is one of the more reliable ways of securing a raise (Scheiber 2023).

Absolute rights distort human relations all the way down. Do I violate my drunken friend's property rights when I take his car keys, preventing him from driving until he sobers up? Or, by violating his property rights, do I act as a friend, and in so doing perhaps save the lives of peaceful people who might be killed in a collision with a drunk driver, my friend included? Being a friend is incompatible with an absolute doctrine of rights.

XI: THE ABSTRACT TRUMPS THE CONCRETE

In 1882 tuberculosis was proven to spread through respiratory droplets. Seeking to protect the public, in 1896 New York City was the first to ban public spitting. By 1910, 150 U.S. cities had followed suit. Enforcement of the law was divisive, with those opposed claiming these laws attacked a natural impulse, curtailed individual freedoms and gave the government too much power (Ferro 2018; Abrams 2012).

During the covid pandemic 'Anti-vaxxers' also talked of "freedom" and "rights." From their perspective, requiring masks and vaccines made some individuals mere means in service to others, a clear assault on individualist rights theory. The cost in lives was substantial. According to a recent report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, covid vaccines were associated with 670,000-680,000 fewer hospitalizations and 330,000-370,000 fewer deaths among Medicare beneficiaries in 2021 than had they not happened (Samson 2022). For many individualist liberals, saving hundreds of thousands of older people from deaths brought about through no fault of their own could not make up for the loss of "freedom" from requiring masks and vaccinations (Nelson 2022).

This kind of basic tension between the individual and society runs through every variety of individualist liberalism and, as the tuberculosis example demonstrated, has for a long time.

To be sure, some individualist liberals defended banning spitting in public, requiring masks, and getting vaccinated. But their reasoning differed from that of evolutionary liberals, focusing only on personal morality. When Margaret Thatcher observed "There is no such thing as society," many of her critics thought she denied individuals have any obligations to others. Ramesh Ponnuru defended her, explaining "we do not emphasize those [moral] obligations enough, and use the word 'society' in a way that obscures them. Thus, people sometimes act as though some abstract 'society,' rather than individual taxpayers, pays for government benefits, or blame 'society' rather than parents for the abuse and neglect of children" (Ponnuru 2019). Thatcher was emphasizing the importance of individual moral obligation.

Ponnuru's comments illuminated an important distinction between individualist and evolutionary liberals. For individualist liberals moral values had to come from religion or philosophy. This is why so many individualist liberals emphasize Christianity as needed to preserve morality, even if they themselves do not believe. They must find it *somewhere*.

This individualist framing potentially does enormous harm to society, and to liberal principles. Experiments have demonstrated when a rationality game is called the "Wall Street Game" only about 33% cooperate whereas when it is called the "Community Game," about 70% cooperate, *even though the rules are identical* (Benkler 2011, pp. 68-9). The Antivaxxers' and gun absolutists' positions sacrifice the immunocompromised and school children to serve other individuals' far-from-vital interests. The social fabric of relationships, especially with the elderly, weak, and very young, is dissolved. Families are destroyed, hospitals overwhelmed, and "long Covid" threatens to burden Thatcher's non-existent society with long-term care requirements for many (Nelson 2022).

These concerns are of more than theoretical importance. Grafton, NH, a small town of 800, was chosen by many libertarians as a destination to settle, change its laws, and thereby turn it into a showcase for how individualist liberalism could transform a society. They succeeded in dominating the town, and transforming it, but not in a way that encouraged anyone else to do the same thing. It was a failure and individualist liberalism was a major cause (Hongoltz-Hetling 2020; Greene 2022; Blanchfield 2022; Austin 2020).

XII: COOPERATION AND NATURAL LAW

Political Scientist Robert Axelrod held a competition to discover the computer program that could win the iterated prisoner's dilemma game (Axelrod 1984). The game begins when two people are arrested for a crime. They are guilty, but each knows if both are silent they will get a year in prison, because while evidence for a crime exists, there is not enough to demonstrate its severity. The prosecutor knows a more serious crime occurred, but lacks sufficient evidence to convict on it. The prisoners are separated, and each told if they inform on the other, they will get a six-month reduction, while the other will get 4.5 years. However, if each implicates the other, both get 4.5 years. They cannot communicate with one another. What do they do?

In Axelrod's computerized version, the parties involved play this game over and over, with points substituting for years. It turned out cooperative strategies fared better than competitive ones, and the one that

ultimately won was called "Tit for Tat:" Start by cooperating. As soon as the other side fails to cooperate, retaliate once. Return to cooperating when the other side does.

Do not escalate.

Escalating retaliation risked further escalation, depressing both scores. In addition, according to these competing programs there was no advantage in seeking to lower the other's score. The winning strategy focused only on improving its own score. Cooperative strategies like this were labeled "Nice."

Seeking to make the game more like life, Axelrod then created a version where the game's environment consisted of many different strategies, played against one another. Unsuccessful ones were eliminated from play, with the next round pitting the remaining strategies against one another. This weeding out continued until a single best strategy emerged. In his words (1984, p. 52):

> At first, poor programs and good programs are represented in equal proportions. But as time passes, the poorer ones begin to drop out and the good ones thrive. Success breeds more success, provided the success derives from interactions with other successful rules. If, on the other hand, a decision rule's success derives from its ability to exploit other rules, then as these exploited rules die out, the exploiters's base of support becomes eroded and the exploiter suffers a similar fate.

Axelrod reported "The ecological analysis shows that . . . Not being nice may look promising at first, but in the long run it can destroy the very environment it needs for its own success."

Cooperation appears hard wired as superior to competition into the very fabric of reality. The evolutionary dice appear loaded, if lightly. Yochai Benkler quotes scientist Martin Nowak in *Science:* "Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of evolution is its ability to generate cooperation in a competitive world. Thus we might add 'natural cooperation' as a third fundamental principle of evolution beside mutation and natural selection" (Benkler2011, p. 36; Nowak 2006). Nowak's observation is fundamental to evolutionary liberalism's remarkable compatibility with evolutionary theory.

Sympathetic encounters with others, real or imagined, human or not, help create our sense of being connected with or separate from others. By being open to relationships beyond the narrowly instrumental, sympathy precedes and helps build a deeper sense of self in relationship with, other selves. Human beings can take this capacity for sympathy farther than perhaps any other life form, and liberalism's power to transform is based on this.

That cooperation trumps competition both logically and evolutionarily explains liberalism's transformative power whenever its values are given precedence over traditional hierarchical ones. Alexis Tocqueville (1961, p. 271) noted how civil society had been transformed in the new United States:

> in no country in the world has the principle of association been more successfully used, or more unsparingly applied to a multitude of different objects, than in America. Besides the permanent associations which are established by law under the name of townships, cities, and counties, a vast number of others are formed and maintained by the agency of private individuals.

Significantly, Tocqueville found these qualities stronger in the more liberal north than the increasingly illiberal South (1961, p. 78).

Evolutionary liberalism's ethical insights arise from the basic processes of life, not reason. Cooperation among status equals generated societies more prosperous, healthy, and with more kinds of flourishing individuality than others (McCloskey 2016, pp. 124-8). Liberal principles ended fear of famine, and the well-grounded fear that children would often die before their parents. Liberal principles also established liberal democracy, the first political body that has never fought a war with another of the same kind. Such achievements would once have been considered utopian. We know we are far from utopia, but we have also moved far from the curses that plagued humankind for much of its existence.

A powerful case for natural law arises within the very fabric of existence. Liberal morality does not come from divine command or abstract reason. Nor is it a variable that reflects whatever power relations might dominate a society. It emerges from within the very logic of life itself.

XIII: EVOLUTION AND LIBERALISM DERAILED

How, then, did the primacy of competition over cooperation win such great recognition in biology and liberalism alike?

Alfred Russel Wallace who, with Darwin, discovered evolution, developed a completely competitive view of evolution. Darwin did not agree that competitive relations alone could account for the richness of the biological world. In his *Descent of Man,* he argued for sexual selection as well, and also that sympathy, morality's foundation, arose from natural selection (diZerega 2023, pp. 81-4). What is called Neo-Darwinism replaced competitive individuals with competitive genes, but kept Wallace's one-sided emphasis on competition. Darwin would have disagreed. A purely competitive perspective also dominated traditional market economics with its long-time emphasis on 'economic man.' Each reinforced the other, since evolution shed light on human nature and economics saw itself as compatible with evolutionary processes.

Neo-Darwinism's competitive view of evolution obscured finding an ethic compatible with liberal thought *within* the natural world, while contemporary philosophy weakened attempts to base moral principles *outside* the world. Individualist social science increasingly shifted to egoistic models of human action, justifying this move in part by appeals to evolution as purely competitive. Lynn Margulis was correct when she described Neo-Darwinism as a "competitive, cost-benefit interpretation of Darwin" (Margulis 1991).

There was a high cost for this move, for both liberalism and science.

XIV: LIBERALISM AND EUGENICS

The United States had expanded liberal principles farther than most nations but its deeply rooted racism injected a powerful collectivist strain within a largely individualistic society. In biology, evolutionary competition (or cooperation) could be understood in terms of either individuals or species. Races were long considered a kind of subspecies. Woodrow Wilson argued "the men of the sturdy stocks of the north" who had made up our earliest immigration were different from "the more sordid and hopeless elements" of Southern Europe, who possessed "neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence" (Wilson 1902, pp. 212-3). Oliver Wendell Holmes observed "I think that the sacredness of human life is a purely municipal idea and of no validity outside the jurisdiction. I believe that force, mitigated so far as it may be by good manners, is the *ultima* ratio, and between two groups who want to make inconsistent types of world I see no remedy except force" (quoted in Black 2007, p. 120).

Liberal Progressives, such as Jane Addams, who were initially receptive to eugenics, thought of it in terms of improving the lives of individuals rather than improving the national "stock" (Addams 2002, p. 192). However, the logic behind seeing evolution in purely competitive terms led elsewhere, and many Progressives went there. In 1916 Herbert Croly, no liberal, wrote "When the state assumes the duty of giving a fair opportunity for development to every child, it will find unanimous support for a policy of extinction of stocks incapable of profiting from their privileges" (cited by Goldberg 2010). In 1927, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of forced sterilization laws, a view easily harmonized with the illiberal racism of the South. In fact, the Virginia law the Supreme Court upheld was written at the same time the state adopted the "Racial Integrity Act," outlawing marriages between "white" and "colored" Virginians (Hashaw 2006, p. 117).

Progressive Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and the more numerous conservative ones, like William Howard Taft, all endorsed involuntary sterilization of the supposedly mentally defective (Koonz 2003, p. 105). There was only one dissent, Justice Pierce Butler, a Catholic, who wrote no opinion. (I would guess his reason was religious, and so carried no constitutional weight). Between 1903 and 1945, at least 45,127 Americans were forcibly sterilized in the name of a scientific error (Black 2003). Holmes was

clearly powerfully influenced by the dominant evolutionary thought of the time (Black 2003, pp. 119-20). In his study of the relationships between science and religion, Nicholas Spencer explained how eugenics and defenses of aggressive war, both justified by currently prevailing evolutionary theory, were the root cause for the Christian opposition leading to the Scopes Trial. The text William Jennings Bryan attacked and Clarence Darrow defended endorsed eugenics as a means for eliminating the unfit (Spencer 2023, pp. 320-1).

Many individualist liberals have sought to tar Progressivism with the eugenics brush, while completely ignoring the conservative and often racist court majority that supported Holmes. In fact Bryan was a major Progressive leader and a liberal. According to some historians, Bryan did more than anyone to transform the Democratic Party into a vehicle enabling the triumph of Franklin D. Roosevelt's liberalism (Kazin 2007).

The moral crisis brought about by eugenics may be why so many biologists since have emphasized how uniquely different we are from other animals. Qualitative differences prove we are distinct in kind, creating a protective barrier protecting humanity from the implications of applying the same standards to itself that science applied to everything else. And yet, ironically, it is what we *share* with many other beings that provides liberalism's strongest foundational principles.

XV: THE CORE FAILINGS OF INDIVIDUALIST LIBERALISM

Individualist liberalism's extraordinary strengths and profound weaknesses are both explained by the nature of the links between people. Individualism's logic applies best between weakly linked individuals, such as Locke basing property on picking up an unowned acorn or enclosing unowned land, and Jefferson's virtuous farmers. Where links get stronger, as within families, between friends, within tribes, or in cities, this logic is less applicable. It's biggest failing theoretically as well as a guide to policy is that it is based on a model of individuality that does not exist in the world.

Looking at individuals as impenetrable right holders also undermined the most important discovery rooted in the evolutionary tradition: the concept of spontaneous order.

XVI: IMPOVERISHING SPONTANEOUS ORDER THEORY

Building on insights traceable back to Hume and Smith, the idea of spontaneous order was first developed by F. A. Hayek and Michael Polanyi. There were differences between how Hayek and Polanyi initially used the term, as both were struggling to clarify Adam Smith's invisible hand metaphor and contrast it to deliberate planning (Jacobs 1999). However, both agreed the market and science were spontaneous orders and, as spontaneous orders, constitute autonomous emergent social orders shaped by rules promoting mutual adjustment among people pursuing plans of their choosing. Content in the market and science was always changing but the overarching patterns remained, brought about by systemically generated feedback signals recognized by participants (diZerega 2021, p. 9).

There are two dimensions to this impoverishment.

First, their one-sided focus on the market led them to equate the patterns markets created with the collective impact of individual choices. Different orders privilege different systemic values independent of the personal values of those acting within them, creating an extraordinarily complex social ecology. Individualist liberals generally ignore this issue and focus overwhelmingly on the market order (diZerega 1997, 2004, 2020).

Treating the market as reflecting preferences seemed enough (diZerega 2010).

David Andersson observes "system constraints are often loose, and . . . different spontaneous orders feature different types of feedback, which imply different behavioral dispositions." In addition, he observes

that, even within economics, the dominant imperialist model, as we saw above with Gary Becker, treats action as instrumental as well as rational. This model does not work in other spontaneous orders and by no means always strong in economies (Andersson 2022).

Due I think to their overwhelming focus on the market as a spontaneous order, individualist liberals paid little attention to other such orders, leading to misleading statements such as Boettke's that Hayek's approach "extends the spontaneous order approach beyond the realm of economic explanation to all realms of social interaction, including science, law, and history" (Boettke 2019, p. 185). Hayek mentioned science and law, but "history?" History is *not* a spontaneous order. At the same time Boettke omits liberal democracy, a spontaneous order directly linked to liberalism both logically and historically.

Boettke is not alone. In her often excellent study of liberalism, Dierdre McCloskey endorses Robert Higgs' description of government as "a monopoly operating ultimately by threat or actual use of violence, making rules and exacting tribute from the territory it controls" (McCloskey 2016, p. 144). That statement is accurate for undemocratic governments. It is false for democratic ones which, like science and the market, are spontaneous orders (diZerega 2000).

A democracy is a coordination process for discovering, refining, and implementing public values. The more complexly entwined the links between citizens, the more important defining and enforcing public values becomes. Only in cases of crisis obvious to nearly all can it be said to engage in anything like majority rule, *because in such cases there is little to discover beyond organizing a response*. Significantly, it is also at such times that democracies act most undemocratically and illiberally.

Democracies are also distinguished by what is called the "democratic peace," apparently an emergent feature that manifests when a political system shifts from being organized as a state to becoming a spontaneous order. That no liberal democracy has ever fought a war with another is one of the most significant (and ignored) developments in human history (diZerega 1995; Rummel 2002).

Second, many organizations depend on immersion within more than one spontaneous order to flourish. For example, scientific journals are essential to the coherence of science as a whole, and to optimally perform this role need to be readily available to anyone interested in their content. Today most journals are also treated as profit centers by the companies that own them. Their interest is limiting access to those who pay. To the degree they succeed, science is the loser (diZerega 2006). Open-source journals are an effort to minimize the damage market incentives do to scientific communication.

We see a similar disconnect between the political role of a free press informing citizens in a democracy and a profit-oriented press seeking to maximize income (diZerega 2004). The constitution guarantees freedom of the press due to its necessity in serving public values, not private ones. The tension between these two roles has been exposed for all to see in FOX's treatment of the 2020 presidential election, at great cost to the legitimacy of the electoral system. People died as a result.

A competent social science requires much more than market reductionism or rational choice theory. But a complex liberal society needs a system of rights.

XVII: RE-ENVISIONING RIGHTS

This paper has argued a pre-moral perception, sympathy, is a natural outgrowth of evolutionary selection among social species, and ultimately undergirds morality among human beings. The morality arising from extending sympathy's implications to humanity as a whole supports liberalism, which ranks all individuals as morally equal, whatever other inequalities might exist among them. To the degree these values have been realized, the result has been an enormous increase in peaceful cooperation among human beings.

If there is one value that underlies cooperation among equals, it is mutual respect. However, the forms respect takes vary with changing contexts. *From this perspective, liberal rights are the form respect takes among an impersonal community of social and political equals who are relative strangers* (Macedo 1991, p. 56; diZerega 1996). When we do not know the details of a person's situation, or the reasons for it, it is fairer to apply the same standards to all, than apply generalizations based upon less than universal criteria. When

decisions must be made for a community, for respect to exist, all adult citizens must have equal legal standing. Liberal civil and political rights facilitate cooperation among strangers often pursuing mutually unknown ends. This is why rights are necessarily abstract.

Rather than serving as fundamental moral principles, individual rights apply in some contexts and not others. When people are not strangers, the logic of abstract rights becomes less appropriate, and sometimes, as with my inebriated friend discussed earlier, potentially destructive of friendship and even life. In addition, as links proliferate and tighten in impersonal contexts, arguments for *absolute* rights weaken, as my examples of TB and vaccines should make clear.

XVIII: CONCLUSION

Liberalism's core insight, that the individual is society's fundamental moral unit and all are equally so, is rooted in science, not philosophy or theology. Cooperation is more fundamental to life on earth than is competition, which arises out of alternative cooperative possibilities that cannot jointly be realized. We see this truth displayed from the cells comprising our bodies to life's broad patterns manifesting at increasingly complex levels to the social spontaneous orders that make the modern world possible. It is our immersion within our social and linguistic ecosystems that enable us to cooperate together on a scale dwarfing any other vertebrate. But this very richness of relationships leads to vexing problems about how to harmonize them as these relational links grow in intensity and number. Evolutionary liberalism provides the intellectual and ethical insights to facilitate this harmonization, whereas individualist liberalism does not.[2]

NOTES

1   Some belittle this achievement. They are completely wrong. Discussing this issue takes us away from the paper's focus but for a quick dose of historical reality, see Wilentz 2022.

2   I am very grateful to William Ramey, Prof. Emeritus of Microbiology for his careful examination of my biological arguments in particular, helping me avoid at least the worst of the over-simplifications and errors of interpretation threatening people in one field seeking to communicate about another.

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    Psychology of Unselfish Behavior* by Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson. *Review of Austrian Economics* 13: 81-95.

Review

Economic Growth and Inequality: The Economists' Dilemma by Laurent Dobuzinskis

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Laurent Dobuzinskis' *Economic Growth and Inequality* discusses the varied interfaces between inequality and economic growth. It is designed to complement his *Moral Discourse in the History of Economic Thought* (Dobuzinskis 2022), which traces economists' explicit and implicit normative foundations going back to Adam Smith's (1759) *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. However dispassionate our aspirations as social scientists, positive economics often conceals systematic moral and ideological tendencies, if only in the choice of subjects for examination. Surely any part of a more encompassing and valid positive economics calls for making these biases more explicit, the better to understand and criticize them. As Dobuzinskis notes, when it comes to growth and inequality, there are so many perspectives on these two interrelated topics—perspectives as diverse as they are passionately held—that researchers and policy analysts need help disentangling them both to evaluate policy proposals and assess the philosophical perspectives they derive from.

Dobuzinskis highlights the perennial research questions of whether equality and growth are correlated at all, is the correlation positive or negative, when and where, under which historical conditions and institutional arrangements, etc. These are all important empirical questions which need to be answered definitively prior to attempting to design policy to promote growth and address inequality. Then there are deeper and perhaps even more important questions of underlying causality. Is growth caused by equality or inequality, to what extent, and under what circumstances? Does growth cause greater inequality? What are the causal mechanisms, and what other factors come into play? Nevertheless, policy is formulated in real time without waiting on research conclusions, and we have an impressive historical record which has yielded results good, bad, and indifferent. We need to evaluate and implement policy now, without waiting for definitive answers in terms of theory. Furthermore, for many, moral-ideological considerations completely override empirical reality. Politicians find it easier to sell voters on an idealized world that should be rather than the mundane, less attractive world that might actually be attainable.

Some economists and political thinkers prioritize equality, others growth; some believe or assume the causality invariably runs from growth to inequality, or from equality to growth, etc. There are also different kinds of equality, from equality of opportunity, equality of initial resources, to equality of outcomes. As Dobuzinskis notes, some forms of equality or redistribution may be more expensive in terms of the potential growth they cost us. Virtually every-

one has their own understanding of and preferences about potential tradeoffs between growth and equality, from the two extremes of preferring total equality of wealth, income, and/or status even at the cost of zero economic growth, to emphasizing maximum growth regardless of how much that might contribute to inequality, and everything in between.

The apparent ideal would be redistribution that simultaneously promotes more favorable growth. Purportedly growth-promoting redistributive policies might include guaranteed health-care—since a healthier work force would be more productive, education—providing similar benefits, etc. Whether these public goods would in fact enhance growth and under what circumstances is an empirical question, but Dobuzinskis reviews arguments for and against both views, and evaluates their empirical record. One overriding question that trumps the empirical record for many is whether any inequality at all is permissible, and if so, how much? The innovation and entrepreneurial planning that drives economic growth may inevitably lead to higher income for innovators, and some argue this disparity can be justified by entrepreneurs' contribution to improving efficiency, productivity, want satisfaction, etc., all of which benefit others. Some would argue that these positive externalities can justify some level of inequality. Others condemn growth for its environmental impact and the fear that it may enrich Marxian class enemies.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Dobuzinskis announces at the outset that he will evaluate policy proposals according to the criterion of their not impairing prosperity, implying a pragmatic ideal that favors redistribution that promotes, or at least does not impair, economic progress. Redistribution from the unproductive could be more beneficial than from productive, risk-taking entrepreneurs who likely generate positive externalities. Similarly, redistribution should favor those among the poor who are either productive or potentially productive, though society still needs to protect and support those who are less productive through no fault of their own. Ensuring redistribution focuses on the first groups while not penalizing the second should be a task for tax policy, though curiously that is not something Dobuzinskis emphasizes until the conclusion. The introduction discusses why income inequality has been comparatively neglected up to the 2007-2009 Great Recession, and why it has received renewed attention since then. Pareto's contributions to welfare economics are discussed, along with Stiglitz's conjecture that inequality impairs economic growth. Dobuzinsikis acknowledges Robbins' (1935, 1938) critique of interpersonal utility comparisons, but then follows the lead of modern welfare economics by disregarding it without too much concern. Interpersonal comparisons may be logically impossible, but welfare policy is not always subject to strictly logical tests.

CHAPTER 2. EQUALITY OF WELFARE: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter outlines a brief but highly informative history of welfare economics, highlighting the contributions of Pigou, whose general view was that economic growth was always beneficial provided it did not make the worst-off in society objectively even worse off. Welfare economics aims to facilitate collective decision making and inform public policy. Anticipating Rawls, Pigou's view was that redistribution aimed at improving the poor's health, education, nutrition, sanitation, etc., was generally beneficial because it also tended to improve worker productivity and thus expand national income. These redistributive public goods, it is argued, provided positive externalities that benefit the wealthy indirectly. Positivist perspectives of Robbins and Arrow that interpersonal utility comparisons were never capable of being operationalized are contrasted with more subjective normative arguments of Davidson (1986), Drakopoulos (1989), and Sen (1995) that these comparisons can be informative in limited contexts, consistently applied, and necessary to implement public policy.

Perhaps the most important distinction in welfare economics is between positive and negative tradeoffs between efficiency and equity. If greater equity can only be purchased at the expense of efficiency and growth, there will be some optimal tradeoff, though each voter's choice of what tradeoff is optimal will be

subjective. If greater equality leads to higher growth, and higher economic growth promotes greater equality in turn, there is no tradeoff and the economy ceases to be a zero-sum game. This perhaps elusive ideal is what Dobuzinskis advocates.

CHAPTER 3. EQUALITY OF WELFARE: EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

Dobuzinskis reviews practical measures of income inequality, including the Lorenz curve and the Gini coefficient. The lower the Gini coefficient, the more equally income is distributed. For the U.S. the Gini coefficient is about 40, relatively high among industrialized countries. Newly industrializing and less-developed countries typically have higher Gini coefficients, indicating greater income inequality (Table 1).

Table 1.
Gini coefficients, after taxes & transfers,
selected countries

Brazil	0.470
Canada	0.301
Chile	0.460
China	0.514
France	0.301
Germany	0.289
Iceland	0.250
India	0.495
Italy	0.330
Japan	0.334
Mexico	0.418
Russia	0.317
South Africa	0.620
South Korea	0.345
Turkey	0.397
U.S.	0.390
UK	0.366

Source: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=IDD (OECD)

A practical demonstration of two different Lorenz curves with equal Gini coefficients but representing dramatically different income distributions is especially informative in illustrating the limits of applied welfare economics (p. 50, fig. 3.3). A discussion of Piketty's analysis of wealth distribution follows. Piketty estimates time series of the capital/income ratio β, hypothesizing that this β ratio converges to the long-run ratio of saving/real output growth. One problem with Piketty's analysis is that he values the return on capital at current market prices but uses inflation-adjusted measures for economic growth, systematically biasing upward his return to capital time series. A further complication comes from the fact that executive compensation is often given in the form of stock options and other forms of incentive pay, blurring the distinction between wages for labor and capital gains.

Piketty views inequality as such a pernicious problem that he is willing to sacrifice growth to eradicate it. However, what if growth lessens inequality, or if certain kinds of growth do? What if inequality lessens growth and removing it would increase growth? The greater the income inequality in a society, the less able the poor are to invest in education and human capital that enhance productivity and output growth, as well as contribute to social mobility. Piketty's proposal is a wealth tax to reverse historical capital accumulation and prevent it from reemerging. The revenue might be used to fund public investment, education programs, R&D, infrastructure, social programs, etc., though this spending would not be subject to a profit test.

Piketty points to high marginal income tax rates in the U.S. between 1932-1980 as having lowered income inequality but also somehow fueling economic expansion and social programs. As Dobuzinskis notes, in this period corporate executives were able to avoid most of this redistributive tax, with the brunt being borne by artists, entertainers, and professional athletes. Piketty argues that a high tax on capital would incentivize the rich to be more productive. Any tax on capital needs to be universal to avoid capital flight to tax havens. Piketty's critics attack his data, analysis, and policy recommendations. In fact, the empirical case for Piketty's claim that income inequality is rising is far more questionable than Dobuzinskis realized (Magness 2019; Auten and Splinter 2020; Geloso et al. 2022), though he does not uncritically accept Piketty's data (p. 64).

Executive compensation has contributed to U.S. income inequality since at least 1970. However, once adjusted for taxes and government transfers, U.S. income shares have been relatively stable from 1960-2015 (Figure 1). The progressive income tax and some government transfers lower disposable income for the highest-earning and raise it for the lowest-earning. If no adjustment is made for taxes and transfers, the income share for the highest 1% of the population appears to be rising from roughly 1985-2015, but when taxes and transfers are correctly accounted for, the highest 1%'s income share appears not to have increased very much, if at all. Income shares have been relatively stable for most industrialized economies since approximately 1900. The U.S. depends more on a progressive income tax and less on regressive sales taxes. Since the progressive income tax has the most pronounced redistributive effect, the need to adjust income distribution data for taxes and transfers is especially great for the U.S., where failure to make this adjustment introduces the greatest bias.
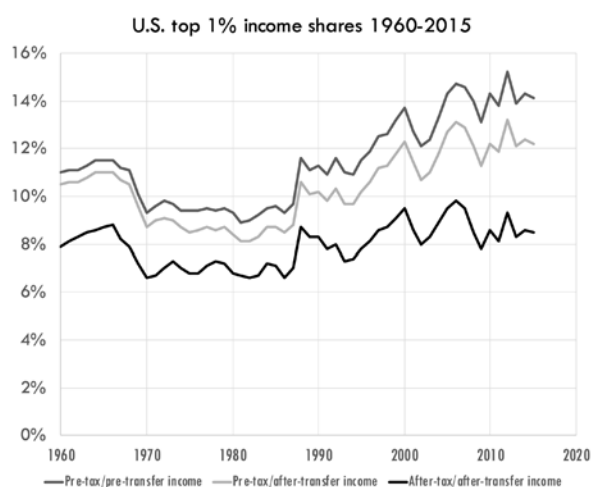
Figure 1. U.S. Top-1% Income Shares 1960-2015
Adjusted for Taxes and Transfer Payments

Source: U.S. Treasury data in the public domain.

http://www.davidsplinter.com/AutenSplinter-TopIncomes-Oxford.pdf

One source of Piketty's overstating wealth accumulation and inequality is that he constructed his capital series based on gross investment without adjusting for depreciation. Piketty's conclusion that inequality is inevitable because the return on capital strictly exceeds national economic growth rates is not well founded. It may be true for some investments but certainly is not globally true, or even true on average. Piketty assumes that the elasticity of substitution between labor and capital is one or greater, meaning any increases in wages contribute to capital appreciation. Recent surveys of gross elasticity suggest it is closer to ½ (Chirinko 2008). Since gross investment is strictly greater than net investment, the net elasticity must be lower than gross.

In the U.S., the 2010 share of non-housing capital was less than in 1950 (p. 65). Housing appreciation has chiefly benefitted the middle class but has also been aggravated by land use regulation which discourages further development and construction, benefitting home owners but making first homes less affordable. Income inequality comes chiefly from labor market conditions, having little to do with Piketty's claim that the return on capital is systematically higher than overall economic growth, measured by his spurious (r – g) difference (Rognlie 2015), regardless of whether Piketty measured these quantities correctly. Subjective welfare depends more on one's relative income and perceived status compared with others, so the focus on redistribution may be misplaced.

Labor markets are segmented because the division of labor results in such an extreme level of specialization in an advanced economy that most workers are not easily substitutable—we cannot substitute neurosurgeons for anesthesiologists, railroad engineers for airline pilots, coding specialists in one language for those in another, plumbers for electricians, etc. The more dependent income is on the specialized technical knowledge or other individual characteristics, the less workers compete with each other, though this particularly applies to the highest compensated executives.

U.S. executive compensation has risen faster than executive productivity, rising almost three times as much as corporate earnings from 1980 to 2004—8.5% annual CEO compensation growth compared with annual corporate earnings growth of only 2.9% (Bebchuk and Grinstein 2005). On the eve of the 2007-2009 Great Recession, S&P 500 CEOs received average annual compensation of $10.5 million, 344 times the pay of the average American workers; however, this ratio had fallen from 2000, when their pay averaged 525 times that of average workers (Bogle 2008).

However, U.S. CEO pay is highly correlated with stock market performance, and American executives provide consistently higher shareholder returns, largely justifying their compensation. CEO performance added $21-25 billion in market capitalization to the largest one thousand U.S. corporations in 2004 but they captured only about $4 billion in higher compensation—accounting for only about 15-20% of shareholder value added (Terviö 2008). This may simply result from the U.S.'s more efficient, transparent, and accessible stock market, but also suggests that for all the concern over executive compensation and income inequality, U.S. CEOs overall are fairly competent, add significant value to their organizations (at least in the short run), and are something of a bargain, because they are either unable to capture significant unearned monopoly rents—or perhaps the best CEOs are public spirited and elect not to do so.

CHAPTER 4. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY I: CLASSICAL LIBERAL PERSPECTIVES

The focus of chapter 4 shifts from outcomes to agency. Workers might acquire or develop numerous skills and capabilities that can enhance their income. Though this might still fall short of a distributional ideal, it is clearly beneficial for society to minimize discriminatory barriers that exclude some from opportunities to optimize their own capabilities, talents, income, and fulfillment—if only from an efficiency perspective, enhancing growth along with equity. The justification for negative rights against discriminatory interference with individual choice, agency, and self-determination is traced from antiquity through Enlightenment thinkers like Locke. Although what Diedre McCloskey calls "bourgeois culture" improved both social welfare and income equality, many progressive leftists still view it as anathema. McCloskey (2006, 2010, 2016)

argues for an explicitly normative perspective but emphasizes equality of opportunity rather than outcomes.

One argument for redistribution is that it is needed to alleviate wealth concentration, which enables and incentivizes the wealthy to lobby for their preferred policies and support their preferred candidates. Allowing the wealthy disproportionate influence impairs democracy as well as equity. Tullock (1980) and Wagner (2016) among others critique rent seeking and crony capitalism which work against equality of opportunity as well as equality of outcomes or income. Piketty's proposal for wealth taxes would incentivize tax loopholes, tax avoidance, and rent seeking. Piketty fails to observe that inequality of consumption expenditures has fallen (p. 98), although the remaining inequality of total income implies amplified inequalities of saving and capital accumulation—an observation that incidentally supports Piketty's proposal for a confiscatory tax on wealth. Fighting inequality would likely disincentivize entrepreneurs and innovators. How can entrepreneurs be incentivized to take risks without at least the possibility of rewards? Some researchers find that redistribution does not impair productivity (Ostry et al. 2019). Not all property rights improve economic efficiency, for example, intellectual property rights.

CHAPTER 5. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY II: EGALITARIAN PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 5 brings in Rawls' (1971) *Theory of Justice*. Rawls' views evolved to emphasize an equal distribution of primary goods, including opportunity and agency, abandoning his original focus on equality of outcomes, but he is still frequently cited to justify redistributive schemes. Rawls insists that individuals should be free to choose their professions (2001), but elsewhere supports redistribution to benefit the lowest paid. How public policy approaches income inequality depends largely on whether it is viewed as a value-neutral empirical observation or a pernicious outcome of social injustice. The first does not call for a public policy response, but the second does.

Furthermore, the appropriate response should not be aimed at alleviating income inequality per se but must also consider whether the causes are unjust, as only these call for correction through policy, regulation, or legislation—otherwise we are treating the symptom rather than the disease. Income inequality arises naturally because talent, entrepreneurial awareness, aesthetic sensibilities, technical knowledge, physical strength, work ethic, etc., vary naturally from one person to the next. Individuals who possess or acquire abilities enabling them to produce greater value for others should be rewarded for it through free exchange. Apart from the moral dimension of respecting individuals' property in their own persons, accepting some inequality helps incentivize the most productive to benefit others through market exchange.

Many arguments against income inequality fail to consider whether it has arisen through rewarding growth-enhancing productive activities which benefit the whole of society, or from unproductive rent-seeking which diminishes worker productivity and economic growth. Rent-seeking is the pursuit of income based on legal-institutional inefficiencies. One form of rent-seeking occurs when an industry lobbies the government for subsidies, favorable tax treatment, restrictive licensing, or regulation which reduces competition. These measures provide the lobbying organizations additional income without their having to produce any value for society. Rent-seeking shields less productive organizations from competition—x-inefficiency—and enables them to extract higher prices from the public. Rent-seeking organizations also use bribery and political contributions to encourage elected officials to maintain a legal-institutional environment that shields them and their product from competition. Rent-seeking may raise incomes within the organization, but this can only be at the expense of others in society—wiping out the positive externalities of entrepreneurial competition and substituting the negative externalities of regulatory capture.

The possibility of capturing significant additional income through such non-productive activities calls for reform of the perverse legal-institutional environment so that rent-seeking is not rewarded. Invariably, however, the proposed solution to any form of income inequality has been an indiscriminate and highly punitive progressive tax on all income and wealth, regardless of source. Unfortunately, such a broad and indiscriminate tax further diverts resources and talent toward unproductive rent-seeking. Note further that the

evidence of income inequality employed to justify such measures generally relies on flawed measures which ignore the impact of taxes and transfer payments. This purported solution of punitive tax policy is always worse than the problem it was designed to solve, imposing greater welfare burdens on the least advantaged.

CHAPTER 6. GROWTH AND (IN)EQUALITY II: WHAT TO DO ABOUT INEQUALITY?

At this point the book's organization becomes somewhat confusing. Chapter 6 is titled Growth and (In)equality II, but there is no chapter or section titled Growth and (In)equality I. The title implies that we are reading the second part of something, but what remains unclear. This section serves as the summary and conclusion.

Education reduces wealth inequality up to a certain point, but after a certain amount of education, further education seems to aggravate inequality. This seems to be because the highest levels of education are primarily acquired only by the already wealthy. There is no discussion of the vast range of returns to higher education by field of study. Graduates with bachelors degrees in accounting, biomedical engineering, nursing, etc., command high salaries and have little difficulty servicing student loans, in contrast with bachelors in journalism, education, psychology, social work, etc.—to some extent these programs are expensive consumption goods, but poor students with these degrees will be saddled with debt they can never repay, and are thereby locked into poverty. It is difficult to argue that these programs contribute to upward social mobility. Another part of the education puzzle is the deemphasis on vocational skills. Society will always need plumbers, electricians, welders, automotive technicians, etc. Education policy is in many ways peripheral to the central topics of the book, but more discussion in this area would add nuance, scope, and relevance to Dobuzinskis' discussion.

This chapter also provides a discussion of tax reform (pp. 172-175). Minimum wage legislation is cited as a viable mechanism raising the incomes of the lowest-paid workers, but workers whose jobs are eliminated and their subsequent unemployment are disregarded. Codetermination, adopted widely in Europe, where worker councils contribute to local management and workers are represented on corporate boards along with shareholders is also discussed. Comparative analysis of corporate governance in different countries is as important as discussions of comparative tax and regulatory policy.

Dobuzinskis' analysis consistently unravels the philosophical and ideological background underlying different positions on growth and inequality. He develops and applies the analytical tools needed to evaluate policy proposals and assess their underlying philosophical bases. The main value of Dobuzinskis' book is its presentation of perennial research questions: are growth and inequality correlated, is the correlation—if any—positive or negative, how does causality run, how consistently, and how can we design effective policy? His discussion of the theoretical background in welfare economics and diverse philosophical perspectives is equally valuable. These questions will remain vitally important whether approached from a positive-empirical perspective or solely based on value preferences.

Dobuzinskis emphasizes potential tradeoffs between growth and equality. He argues for growth-promoting welfare policies that at least potentially could increase national output, in this regard harkening back to Pigou. He reviews pro and con arguments thoroughly and dispassionately, explaining the full range of moral judgements that any policy measure will attract. Dobuzinskis' *Economic Growth and Inequality* presents especially helpful and welcome background, discussion and analysis on topics of continuing importance and relevance, and will prove extremely valuable to researchers and policy analysts.

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Review

Raymond Aron's Liberalism: Two Accounts

A review essay of Nathan Orlando, *Raymond Aron and His Dialogues in the Age of Ideologies*

and

Iain Stewart, *Raymond Aron and Liberal Thought in the Twentieth Century*

CHRISTOPHER ADAIR-TOTEFF

I: INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction to *Raymond Aron and His Dialogues in an Age of Ideologies* Nathan Orlando insists that there are two interrelated crises. There is a crisis in understanding the role that liberalism played in Raymond Aron's political thinking and there is a larger crisis caused by the West's inability or unwillingness to defend liberalism from its many critics. The second crisis is clearly more important and more immediate but will not be discussed. Instead, the focus is on the issue of Raymond Aron's liberalism. Put bluntly, Orlando maintains that other scholars have tended to undervalue Aron's liberalism and he contends that one of the most recent examples of this is Iain Stewart's *Raymond Aron and Liberal Thought in the Twentieth Century.* These two important books confront the issue of Aron's liberalism in different ways—one as dialogue and the other as context. This review essay is concerned with examining the merits of these two accounts of Aron's liberalism and is not intended as a general review of those books.

This review essay progresses in four more stages: 2) Orlando's charge, 3) Orlando's account of Aron's liberalism, 4) Stewart's account of Aron's liberalism, 5) an overall assessment of Orlando's and Stewart's books.

II: ORLANDO'S CHARGE

Orlando makes it clear in the Introduction that he has very little use for theory. He contends that theories are the attempts to provide a general if not universal account and he maintains that the blueprint for such theories is found in natural science. The problem is that political scientists are mistaken to regard politics as a science and they are wrong to think they can provide a universal theory that can predict the future, just like natural scientists do. The two political scientists who Orlando singles out for criticism are Alexander Wendt and Kenneth Waltz. Orlando objects to both because the two believe that they can offer a "new way of viewing the world" that will avoid the mistakes of the past (Orlando 2023, pp. 1-3). Orlando suggests that his complaint is not with theory in general; only in politics. Orlando then turns to Raymond Aron and insists that Aron was not a general theorist and instead provided specific accounts of particular historical problems. In this light, Orlando praises Aron scholars Daniel J. Mahoney and Brian C. Anderson for placing Aron in "the Western canon of political thought" (Orlando 2023, p. 19). But he criticizes the "intellectual historian" Iain Stewart for "missing the mark" in his recent book *Raymond Aron and Liberal*

Thought in the Twentieth Century. While Orlando praises Stewart's book as being "truly impressive in erudition" and he acknowledges that Stewart correctly notes the considerable influence that Max Weber and Carl Schmitt had on Aron, he criticizes Stewart for privileging "certain elements of Aron's life" and more telling for making Aron into a "Cold War Liberal." Orlando maintains that this reduces Aron to someone who had nothing positive to say about liberalism—and that "Aron only ever said 'no' to the ideas of others" (Ibid.). Orlando also criticizes Stewart for ignoring "the essence and significance of Aron's thought" although he grants that Stewart was "right to point towards Aron's unremitting opposition to totalitarianism and its handmaiden ideology" (Orlando 2023, pp. 20-21). Orlando not only faults Stewart for *Raymond Aron and Liberal Thought in the Twentieth Century,* he also complained about Stewart's attribution of "Cold War Liberalism" in "The Origins of the 'End of Ideology?'" (Orlando 2023, pp. 144, 163; Stewart 2015). Orlando believes that in contrast to Stewart, he offers the proper understanding of Aron and he claims that he does so by providing three "dialogues": between Aron and Sartre, between Aron and de Gaulle, and between Aron and Hayek. It is only the two chapters on Aron and Hayek which are relevant here because it is primarily in these two chapters that Orlando takes up the main issue of Aron's liberalism

III: ORLANDO'S ACCOUNT OF ARON'S LIBERALISM

The title "In Defense of the Decadent West: Raymond Aron and Friedrich A. Hayek" tells the reader that Chapter 4 is more about the conversation between Aron and Hayek on the problems of the West than it is on liberalism. Orlando again attacks Stewart for his claim that Aron adopted a "Cold War Liberalism" and he claims that the dialogue with Hayek reveals Aron's "foundations of his political thought" (Orlando 2023, pp. 144-145). But most of the chapter focuses on the shared similarities between Aron and Hayek: "On many fronts, they were allied" (Orlando 2023, pp. 146-155). When Orlando does take up "The Case for Freedom", it is actually about "Themes of Rhetoric" (Orlando 2023, p. 156). Chapter 4 tells us much about the similarities between Aron and Hayek, but there is no account of liberalism per se and no real discussion of liberty. Instead, he promises that he will turn to the discussion of liberalism in the next chapter.

The title of Chapter 5 is more promising: "The Liberal Definition of Freedom" but more than half of the chapter is largely devoted to F. A. Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty.* It is to Orlando's credit that "Constituting Freedom", the first section of Chapter 5 is a rather full and mostly accurate account of Hayek's conception of freedom. He is correct to note that Hayek's notion is largely negative; that is, it is mostly "freedom from"—freedom from intrusions from the state. He is also correct to note that the state is the largest threat because it has the power to coerce and the most important freedom is the freedom from coercion. Finally, Orlando is also mostly correct to note that Hayek's economic background infuses his notion of freedom; that democracy is not an end but a means. But in the entire seven-page section we learn much about Hayek but nothing about Aron: he is mentioned once in connection with Hayek (Orlando 2023, pp. 171-178, 172). The next section "Freedom Unbound" is Orlando's continuation of Aron's critique of Hayek. Hayek's definition of freedom is the absence of coercion; according to Orlando, Aron thought that Hayek's conception of freedom was not wrong but "insufficient." In Orlando's view, "Aron aims to help us understand freedom a bit better" and he does so by distinguishing between freedom *from* and freedom *to.* Rather than explaining what Aron meant by this, Orlando discusses Prometheus, Francis Bacon, Charles Dickens, and Karl Marx. Rather than explain the difference between "real freedom" (economic freedom) and "formal freedom" (political freedom") Orlando returns to his discussion of Hayek (Orlando 2023, pp. 178-185).

The section "A Government of Men" is a further continuation of the exchange between Aron and Hayek; but the focus is on foreign policy and economics; not on Aron's conception of freedom. Orlando complained that Marx reduced freedom to economic freedom and Hayek "conflates all politics with economics." Orlando is certainly right to cite Aron's reply that "Politics is never reducible to economics" but is misleading when he asserted that "Hayek is an economist by training." That claim suggests Hayek thought about human interaction only in economic terms (Orlando 2023, p. 192). But Hayek certainly did think in social-political terms as well. The remainder of the section is on liberalism and not on liberty. Orlando con-

cludes "The Liberal Definition of Freedom" with a brief section in which he discusses Aron and Hayek's "continuing conversation." He notes that Aron resigned from the Mount Pelerin Society in 1961 over the Society's "commitment to laissez-faire economics" but insisted that the two scholars continued their discussions into the 1960s. But as Orlando suggests, these discussions were about liberal democracy and not about freedom (Orlando 2023, pp. 204-205). The main emphasis of the chapter "The Liberal Definition of Freedom" was on liberalism and not on liberty and that it was devoted more to Hayek's conception of liberalism than it was to that of Aron.

IV: STEWART'S ACCOUNT OF ARON'S LIBERALISM

Iain Stewart does not write much about freedom because his stated interest is in liberal thought. But it is important to examine the notion of "Cold War Liberalism" because Orlando regarded it as something negative. Such a defense of Stewart is beyond the scope of this review essay but a few words need to be said for clarification. Stewart's main thesis appears to be that prior to the Second World War, Aron was a socialist and it was only after the War that his interest in liberalism replaced his earlier socialist tendencies. Whether this is correct is a matter for dispute; what is beyond contention is the fact that Aron saw the Soviet Union as a political threat and a danger to world peace and that he did become a "Cold War liberal" (Stewart 2021, pp. 79, 96, 112). Stewart wants us to rethink Aron and liberalism by pointing out that while Aron regarded himself as part of French political thinking, he was more of a product of Tocqueville than Durkheim. And that Aron was heavily influenced by Max Weber's "ethics of responsibility" (Stewart 2021, pp. 200-201, 241-244). Stewart is definitely correct in his observation that "Aron's significance in the history of liberal thought appears differently depending on the angle from which it is observed." (Stewart 2021, p. 235). One may not always agree with what Stewart observed but one must agree that he was a most observant observer. That is something that Tocqueville, Weber, and Aron would have greatly appreciated.

V: OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Before turning to a general evaluation of the two books, I want to offer a few remarks about the account of liberalism in each of them. Although the titles of both books promise explorations of Aron's liberalism, neither one actually delivers on that promise. Instead, they approach the issue of liberalism quite differently; Orlando writes about it mainly in relation to what other people thought of it and Aron's responses. Stewart places liberalism in an historical context and argues that it was after the Second World War that Aron began to defend liberalism. It is in this sense that Stewart identified Aron as a "Cold War liberal" and this was a positive change rather than the negative connotation that Orlando suggested. Although both Orlando and Stewart are sympathetic to Aron's political philosophy, Stewart captures Aron's nuanced understanding of the meaning of liberalism better than Orlando. Both are generally rewarding to read but each suffers some interpretive flaws.

Stewart's book most serious flaw is his misunderstanding of certain thinkers, including his misinterpretation of Dilthey's conception of history and Karl Jaspers' notion of the individual (Stewart 2021, pp. 56, 59). Vilfredo Pareto was never a "neo-Machiavellian" and Aron had a far more nuanced reception to Leo Strauss' philosophy (Stewart 2021, pp. 159, 191). But Stewart errs in particular with his comments especially regarding Carl Schmitt and even more so about Max Weber. While there is no question that Schmitt was an anti-liberal thinker, the question about Weber is far more complicated than Stewart's assertion (Stewart 2021, pp. 16, 159). More importantly, Weber did not have a "relativist epistemology" nor did he embrace a "nominalist sociological epistemology." Weber believed that facts could be objectively established (Stewart 2021, pp. 190, 177, 67, 196). Nor did Weber have "relativist and nihilist tendencies" (Stewart 2021, p. 199). Values are subjective but that does not mean that they are relative. In fact, Weber insisted that values were among the most important parts of being human.

Orlando's book also has a number of questionable assertions: to offer three. First, Orlando's title emphasizes ideology, but he fails to provide a definition, and does not offer a history; he does not even mention Karl Mannheim and his book on ideology and utopia. Second, Orlando claimed that Aron and Sartre "received a superior education from some of the greatest neo-Kantian and neo-Hegelian scholars of their time" (Orlando 2023, p. 13), but neither of them studied under such great neo-Kantians as Heinrich Rickert or Ernst Cassirer. Third, Orlando referred to Ludwig von Mises as the "godfather of what came to be known as the Austrian School of economics" (Orlando 2023, p. 146). This ignores the fact that it was started by Carl Menger in the 1880s in his conflict with Gustav Schmoller of the German Historical School, and was continued in the next four decades by Menger and then by Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk and Friedrich von Wieser. It might be more accurate to say that von Mises and Hayek were grandsons of the original Austrian School of economics. What Orlando wrote is not exactly wrong; but it is highly misleading. It seems that Orlando is more concerned with dialogue and conversation and less by inquiry and investigation—more style than substance; more rhetoric than philosophy. Instead, he proves what he set out to disprove—contrary to what Orlando contends, Aron was not an Aristotelian promoter of prudence. Rather, he was a Socratic critic always asking questions. In his conclusion, Orlando regrets that Aron had no "school." and that is because as Orlando admits, Aron asks questions, he examines flaws, he confronts dogma, he disrupts beliefs, he challenges convictions, he disrupts and debunks (Orlando 2023, pp. 309-313). Earlier, he listed almost a half dozen of ideas that Aron challenged. As Orlando succinctly put it: "He [Aron] stood against." (Orlando 2023, p. 143). However, Orlando was wrong about Aron and the lesson that he learned from the French minister. Rather than being "embarrassed about his response to the minister's question "What would you do?" Aron proudly made that a guiding principle (Orlando 2023, pp. 14, 16, 39, 144, 321; Adair-Toteff 2019). One may admire Orlando for his passion for Aron's thinking and one can applaud him for providing a perspective into Aron's political thought (Orlando 2023, p. 143).[1] Similarly, one may admire Stewart's extensive knowledge about the age in which Aron wrote and one can praise him for providing a vivid picture of Aron's thinking. Orlando offers a good intellectual debate and Stewart provides an excellent intellectual biography, but if one is seeking a compelling account of Aron's liberalism, then one needs to look elsewhere.

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1   Sylvie Masure quoted from *Le Marxisme de Marx* and provided a translation: "quasi-religious respect can sometimes go too far, even in science (Masure 2015, p. 223). Max Weber would suggest less "Leidenschaft" (hot passion) and more "Augenmaß" (cool distance) See "Politik als Beruf."

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