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Kenneth P. Winkler
Wellesley College

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This essay is about three great, dead philosophers—John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume—who, about a hundred years ago, were collected together and canonized as "the British empiricists."[2] British empiricism is something with which philosophy students are still familiar. Philosophy majors in North America are required to take a course in "History of Modern Philosophy"—a survey of epistemology and metaphysics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—in which Locke, Berkeley, and Hume are almost always considered. I still remember the first meeting of my own course in modern philosophy. One of the students held up his copy of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*—all six hundred pages of it—and asked whether we were going to have to read the whole thing. The teacher looked at him and said, "Formidable, isn't it?" I sat there wondering why the student hadn't held up his copy of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and asked if we would have to read all of *that*.

Most of my readers, then, will be familiar with British empiricism. But the aspects of British empiricism—or of the British empiricists—that I intend to discuss will, I expect, be unfamiliar ones. This is because I want to connect British empiricism to something that seems, at first, impossibly distant from it—to some of the many issues (personal, philosophical, pedagogical, and political) that we group nowadays under the heading of multiculturalism. What we now call multiculturalism was an issue in the lives and politics of the British empiricists, and, even if it wasn't something they often faced head on in their philosophical work (though as I'll try to show, it was at times), their writings have useful things to say about it. Bringing some of these things to the surface will raise, and perhaps help to answer, questions about the value of learning and teaching about Locke, Berkeley, and Hume hundreds of years after they lived and wrote, in a cultural setting in which one can't help but wonder about the privileged place they still occupy.

The plan. My essay will be divided into two main parts, each corresponding to a different understanding of multiculturalism. In its widest sense, multiculturalism is simply the phenomenon of diverse cultures sharing a common space or coming into contact, and in the first main part I will consider Berkeley and Hume in relation to multiculturalism so understood. They will emerge, I hope, as figures marked by multiculturalism in this wide sense, in both their private and their public lives. In the second main part I'll be addressing a narrower, value-laden understanding of multiculturalism. In this narrower sense (as defined, for example, by Martha Nussbaum in her book *Cultivating Humanity*) multiculturalism is an "appropriate" response to multiculturalism in the first sense. I'll be presenting Locke, Berkeley, and Hume not as heroes of multiculturalism in this narrower sense—their responses to cultural diversity are often "inappropriate," and that's putting it mildly—but as writers who can help to provide us with some of the tools we need to craft an appropriate

response to multiculturalism in the first sense.

I begin with a fuller account of what I mean by "multiculturalism."

Multiculturalism. As I've already suggested, in one, admittedly very broad sense of the word, "multiculturalism" simply designates the fact of diverse cultures sharing a space or coming into contact. This is the sense of the expression people have in mind when they write that "societies are becoming increasingly multicultural" (Charles Taylor) or that "the present-day world is inescapably multicultural" (Nussbaum), when they describe the "vast majority of modern states" as "multicultural" (K. Anthony Appiah), or predict that "the European Community"—because it encourages "regionalism," and allows for easy movement from member-nation to member-nation—"seems likely to bring to all its members the advantages and strains of multiculturalism" (Michael Walzer), or when they contemplate, after inspecting range of books on the children's shelves in a local library, "the degree to which our community is multicultural" (Susan Wolf). [3] Multiculturalism in this sense is not a political program or a deliberate human response but a phenomenon. To acknowledge multiculturalism in this sense is simply to record a fact. It is not to make a value judgment.[4]

Even in this broad sense, "multiculturalism" probably conveys more than my definition makes explicit. Those who apply the expression are generally sensitive to conditions the definition doesn't mention. For example, the word is usually applied only when the diverse cultures recognize and publicly avow their diversity, typically because those affiliated with the cultures recognize and publicly avow individual identities of which their diverse cultural identities are importantly constitutive. And the word is usually applied only when such recognition or avowal will not be met (at least not immediately, or characteristically) with violence.[5] I will not, however, revise my definition; I think its simplicity will be useful, though the points I've made about the term's usual application shouldn't be forgotten. Nor should it be forgotten that multiculturalism in this sense is a matter of degree, as Appiah and Wolf both acknowledge: there can be more or less of it, and in the opinion of most of those who apply the term, "we" now have quite a lot—more than we had in the United States when (say) SUNY Brockport was founded.

In a second, narrower, and more politically charged sense, "multiculturalism" designates a response to multiculturalism in the first sense. According to Martha Nussbaum, whose definition I propose to accept for the sake of this discussion (though she doesn't explicitly distinguish, as I do, between two senses of "multiculturalism"), multiculturalism is "the appropriate recognition of human diversity and cultural complexity" (*Cultivating Humanity*, p. 110).[6] A lot depends, of course, on what "appropriate recognition" comes to, a point Amy Gutmann makes when she puts something very close to Nussbaum's definition in the form of a question: "how," she asks in her introduction to *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (p. 3), should "public institutions ... better recognize the identities of cultural and disadvantaged minorities?" Here there is a lot of room for argument, and I don't intend to

enter into that argument now;[7] the important point for my present purpose is that any instance of multiculturalism in the second sense incorporates a value judgment. Instances of multiculturalism in the second sense are not mere statements of fact.

Gutmann's understanding of multiculturalism in the narrow sense, at least in the question I've quoted, is not exactly the same as Nussbaum's. Gutmann implies—she all but asserts—that our public institutions are *not* giving fully appropriate recognition to multiculturalism in the first sense. Nussbaum's definition leaves open the possibility that they are; in her book (which is on multiculturalism in higher education), she in fact argues that some colleges and universities *are* responding appropriately, though she emphasizes that there is plenty of room for improvement, a reminder that multiculturalism in the second sense is, like multiculturalism in the first sense, a matter of degree. A second difference is that Nussbaum speaks of "appropriate recognition" without specifying who or what is supposed to be doing the recognizing. Gutmann channels our attention not just to the need for making recognition "better" or (in Nussbaum's language) more appropriate, but to the need for more appropriate recognition by "public institutions" in particular. The response of public institutions is, of course, of great—perhaps even paramount—importance, but the responses of individuals, or of private institutions (or of non-"institutionalized" groups, of which cultures are, I suppose, one obvious example) are also of great importance, and it is very doubtful that the appropriateness of these responses will, in the end, be nothing over and above their contributions to the response of the public institutions Gutmann has in mind.

It will be helpful to have labels for the two senses of multiculturalism I have identified: I propose to speak of *multiculturalism as phenomenon* (that's multiculturalism in the first, wider sense) and *multiculturalism as* (sometimes *of*) *response* (without meaning to suggest that the response couldn't be a self-satisfied "maintain the status quo"). *Multiculturalism as response* could be specified more narrowly: one might speak, for example, of the appropriate recognition of minority cultures, or of cultures disadvantaged by another. But I see no benefit in this, as far as definition goes: greater recognition of minority or disadvantaged cultures could be defended as an aspect of the appropriate recognition of human diversity and cultural complexity. It could even be defended as an aspect of the *appropriate* recognition of the dominant culture (which, it could be argued, has received a disproportionate or *inappropriate* share of attention and valorization).

I can now use the vocabulary I've introduced to state some of the claims I hope to defend. The first is that the world of the British empiricists was more multicultural (in the first sense) than most of us now acknowledge, particularly in our courses in the history of philosophy. This first claim links me with some views recently expressed by Cornel West. "The crude Eurocentrists," he writes, "want to argue that Europe is some monolithic and homogeneous entity, with a tradition over time and space that demands unequivocal and uncritical acceptance. The crude multiculturalists want to argue that Europe is monolithic

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and homogeneous in the negative sense, and this position is just as sophomoric. Both positions perpetuate the ideological, fictive, mythic construct of 'Europe,' imposing a unity that never existed."[8] I will be suggesting that monolithic "British empiricism" is a construct like "Europe" as analyzed by West, but to make my point about British empiricism I'm not going to concentrate on the easy part (that's the empiricism part—it's not hard to show that no interesting philosophical "school" is really a school). I'm going to concentrate at least for a time on the harder, or at least more surprising part—the "British" part, which ignores the national differences separating Locke (who was English) from Hume (who was a Scot) and Berkeley (who was Irish).

The first large claim I'll defend, then, is that the lives of the British empiricists were marked—strongly marked—by multiculturalism as phenomenon. The second is that the British empiricists worked to respond appropriately to cultural difference: that the appropriate recognition of cultural difference was an important theme in their work, and that the empiricism they developed is something we can use as we work to improve on their response. The British empiricists provide us with tools for advancing multiculturalism as response—tools that are part and parcel of an empiricism we ourselves should take seriously.

Part one. In this first main part of the essay—on multiculturalism as phenomenon in the lives of the British empiricists—I'm going to put Locke to one side, not because Locke's life wasn't strongly marked by multiculturalism as phenomenon (it certainly was), but because I can discuss only so much, and relevant aspects of Locke's life and writings—in particular, his involvement with New World slavery—are matters of complex scholarly controversy. (That Locke was involved in New World slavery—that he profited from investment in a slave-trading company, for example—is not controversial. What's controversial is the relationship between this involvement and his philosophical views.)[9]

So I'll begin with Berkeley, who, as a student and junior fellow of Trinity College Dublin, saw himself as an outsider. He saw himself as an outsider partly because of his youthful discovery of a new metaphysical principle that would, he thought, overturn much of the philosophical tradition: the principle that *to be* is *to be perceived*, according to which objects such as houses, mountains, and rivers have no existence apart from being perceived or known by the mind.

From the beginning, opponents of Berkeley's "immaterialism" (as his philosophy is now known, because it denies the existence of mind-independent substance or "matter") portrayed him as a wild visionary, but in the private notebooks he kept as a young man—and in the books he published before he turned thirty—Berkeley steadily portrays himself as a down-to-earth defender of common sense. He has, he thinks, no ally among the metaphysicians; his only real friend is the common man. As he reminded himself in his private notebooks:[10]

> 751 Mem: To be eternally banishing Metaphisics &c & return-
> ing   Men to Common Sense

In his books he makes the same point repeatedly. His principles, he writes in the preface to the *Three Dialogues*, "carry with them a great opposition to the prejudices of philosophers, which have so far prevailed against the common sense and natural notions of mankind" (*Works* 2, p. 168).

In his private notebooks, Berkeley gives makes his common sense or humanity vividly concrete. He mentions his youth and his character ("I am young, I am upstart," he writes in one entry), but in an even more striking series of entries he represents himself not just as a man but as an *Irishman*.

> 392   There are men [these are the modern philosophers] who say there are insensible extensions, there are others who say the Wall is not White, the fire is not hot &c We Irish men can-
> not   attain to these truths

> 393   The Mathematicians think there are insensible lines, about these they harangue, these [they] cut in a point, at all angles these are divisible ad infinitum. We Irish men can conceive
> no   such lines

> 394   The Mathematicians talk of wt they call a point, this they
> say   is not altogether nothing nor is it downright somthing,
> now we   Irish men are apt to think something [so un-
> derstood] &   nothing are next neighbours

"I Publish not this so much for anything else as to know whether other men have the same Ideas as we Irishmen" (398). In these entries (as in others) Berkeley may be rehearsing lines for publication (the parallel construction certainly suggests that), but in his books, his Irish identity is almost entirely suppressed. It comes out clearly, though, in the first edition of his first defense of immaterialism, which was published in Dublin in 1710. There he describes Isaac Newton as "a philosopher of a neighbouring nation, whom all the world admire" (*Principles* 110).

Berkeley was, in 1710, an Irishman publishing in Ireland, but he was desperate for recognition in England. He wrote anxious letters about his book's reception to a friend, John Percival, who was then living in London. An honest Percival had to disappoint him; he had given Berkeley's book to Samuel Clarke and William Whiston (largely forgotten now except by scholars, but close associates of Newton who were famous in their own day), and although they professed admiration for Berkeley's genius, they voiced the hope that he would turn that genius in a new direction. They refused Percival's implicit invitation to open a correspondence with Berkeley. Berkeley was disappointed but not defeated. He decided to move to London in order to publish a second, improved defense of immaterialism. Percival was by that time back in Ireland. "I hear your new book is printed though not yet published, and that

your opinion has gained ground among the learned." Note the "not yet pub-
lished." Berkeley's soon-to-be-published opinion had gained ground because
his behind-the-scenes politicking had paved the way. "This is great progress
for so short a time," Percival wrote, "and will I fear make you think England a
more kindly soil for such productions than the country of your birth"(14 May
1713, in *Works* 8, p. 66). Berkeley reassured Percival in a reply dated 7 August
of the same year. He intends to return to Ireland, "more in love with my own
country than I was before" (*Works* 8, p. 70, one reason being that the English
weather was not, as he had hoped, better than the Irish).

   The story of an Irishman—particularly an Anglican Irishman—seeking
literary fame in London will not strike most of my readers as an example of a
life marked by multiculturalism in my first sense. But we shouldn't allow our
measure of cultural distance (supposing we have a common measure, which
I doubt) to blind us to cultural distance as perceived by Berkeley. I have, in
any case, a second example of the way in which Berkeley's life was marked by
multiculturalism in the first sense—one involving cultural distance that is wide
by any standard. But in this example Berkeley's role is not a sympathetic one.

   The consuming concern of Berkeley's middle life was not philosophy—after
turning thirty Berkeley, for at least a decade, pretty much abandoned philos-
ophy—but his plan to create a college on Bermuda island. In forwarding his
plan, Berkeley was a self-conscious agent of empire:[11]

> Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way;
> The four first Acts already passed,
> A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day;
> Time's noblest Offspring is the last.
> (*Works* 7, p. 373)

Berkeley's college would have two kinds of students: the sons of settlers and
small number of Indians, supported by scholarships in the expectation that they
would return to their people as missionaries. As he explained to Percival, "in
the same seminary a number of young American savages may be also educated
till they have taken their degree of Master of Arts" (4 March 1723, *Works*
8, p. 127). "They may become the fittest missionaries for spreading religion,
morality, and civil life, among their countrymen" (p. 127).

   Percival's friend William Byrd, the well-known colonial diarist, was among
many who dismissed Berkeley's Bermuda project as "romantic" or "poetical":[12]

> When this college is built, where will the Dean find Indians to
> be converted? There are no Indians at Bermudas, nor within two
> hundred leagues of it upon the continent, and it will need the gift
> of miracles to persuade them to leave their country and venture
> themselves upon the great ocean, on the temptation of being con-
> verted. I know but one way in the world to procure Indians for this
> purpose: the Dean [Berkeley, who was then Dean of Derry parish

> in Ireland] must have the command of half a dozen regiments, with which he or one of his professors in the quality of Lieutenant General must make a descent upon the coast of Florida, and take as many prisoners as he can.

Byrd's very realistic worries had already occurred, without the amusement, to Berkeley himself. In his *Proposal for the better supplying of Churches in our foreign Plantations*, the public announcement of his Bermuda project, Berkeley wrote that

> the young *Americans* necessary for this Purpose, may in the Beginning be procured [at around the age of ten, he thought], either by peaceable Methods from those savage nations, which border on our Colonies, and are in Friendship with us, or by taking captive the Children of our Enemies. (*Works* 7, p. 347)

Berkeley doesn't say what would justify the kidnapping. Perhaps he thought it would be justified because these enemy nations had (in his view) violated what were then called "the laws of nature," fundamental moral principles that any human being could discern by means of reason, unassisted by (culturally specific) revelation. A letter to Berkeley from James Oglethorpe, founder of the Georgia colony, dated May 1731, suggests how sensitive Oglethorpe was (or professed to be) to some of the moral questions raised by the kind of plans he and Berkeley had in mind for the Indians (see *Berkeley and Percival*, p. 275-9; the letter was addressed to Berkeley in Rhode Island, who, after his return to England, met Oglethorpe in Percival's home). Oglethorpe seems to assume that obedience to the laws of nature is something that the colonizers owe to the Indians. Perhaps Berkeley assumed that the Indians owed the same obedience to the colonizers, and that the colonizers had a right to enforce this obedience by violent means. In the passage from the *Proposal* that I quoted a moment ago, Berkeley suggests that Indians perhaps have a right to religious liberty, but only (he implies) if they abide by the law of nature. And Berkeley was persuaded that they did not abide by it. He writes elsewhere in the *Proposal* that the "chief Employment and Delight" of the Americans consisted in "Cruelty and Revenges, their Lives ... most opposite, as well to the Light of Nature [that is, the moral law insofar as it can be known by reason], as to the Spirit of Gospel" (*Works* 7, p. 359).

　　I turn now to Hume, whose life was also marked by multiculturalism as phenomenon, and in much the same way. Even more than Berkeley, Hume was painfully conscious of his status as a writer seeking literary success in another country—and in Hume's case, even in a foreign language. Hume was obsessed with the task of freeing his writing (and that of his fellow Scots) from what he called its "Scottisms." He was concerned enough to compile and distribute a long list of the offending expressions. (My favorite example is "expiscate," which means to *fish out*.) In a letter to John Wilkes, Hume speaks of English almost as a foreign tongue.[13]

> Notwithstanding all the Pains, which I have taken in the Study of
> the English Language, I am still jealous of my Pen. As to my Tongue,
> you have seen, that I regard it as totally desperate and irreclaimable.
> (16 October 1754)

In another letter he contrasts "Scotch" words with those used by "the English."
In a third he seeks literary advice from David Mallett, a friend he describes as "a
Scotsman, who, by Care & Attention, has corrected all the Vices of Expression,
incident to his Country" (8 November 1762, p. 369 in volume 1). (Hume did
seem to recognize that his scrupulous countrymen could sometimes go over-
board; to the distinguished Scottish historian William Robertson he writes,

> But what a fancy is this you have taken of saying always *an hand, an
> heart, an head*? Have you *an ear*? (November or December 1768,
> volume 2, p. 194).)

In a letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto (from Paris on 22 September 1764)
Hume speaks of his national identity and its consequences in broader terms:

> Some hate me because I am not a Tory, some because I am not a
> Whig, some because I am not a Christian, and all because I am a
> Scotsman. Can you seriously talk of my continuing an English-
> man? Am I, or are you, an Englishman? Will they allow us to be
> so? (volume 1, p. 470)

He goes on to proclaim himself "a Citizen of the World" (and then says that if
he were forced to adopt a country, it would be France). To Benjamin Franklin
he complains that "the Scotch likewise cannot be much my friend, as no man
is a prophet in his own country" (7 February 1772, volume 2, p. 258).[14] He had
already told Adam Smith many years before that Scotland was "too narrow a
Place" for him (28 July 1759, volume 1, p. 169). "I fancy I must have recourse
to America for justice," he tells Franklin.

Hume was no less anxious than Berkeley had been about the London recep-
tion of his work. He wrote a desperate letter to a friend asking for a judgment
of his performance in his first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, which Hume
published, in London, in his late twenties. "Have you found it sufficiently
intelligible? Does it appear true to you? Do the Style & Language seem
tolerable? These three Questions comprehend every thing: & I beg of you to
answer them with the utmost Freedom & Sincerity." But as he wrote in his
brief autobiography, "Never literary Attempt was more unfortunate. . . . *It fell
dead-born from the Press*." The most favorable notice he received appeared in
a French-language periodical published in Amsterdam, in a section of "Liter-
ary News from London." "A Gentleman, named Mr. *Hume*, has published *A
Treatise of Human Nature*. …Those who demand the new will find satisfaction

here. The author reasons on his own grounds; he goes to the bottom of things and traces out new routes. He is very original." Restrained as it is, this was the most friendly comment the *Treatise* received on its publication, apart from an anonymous pamphlet advertising itself as an impartial abstract of the book—one discovered in the twentieth century to be by Hume himself.[15]

Hume resembles Berkeley, then, in having sought literary success in a foreign cultural capital, and on terms he took that foreign capital to lay down. (Late in life, Hume represented himself, I assume comically, as resenting both that capital and the empire it represented. "Notwithstanding my age," he told William Strahan in October of 1769, "I hope to see public Bankruptcy, the total revolt of America, the expulsion of the English from the East Indies, the Diminution of London to less than half" [volume 2, p. 210].) Hume's engagement with multiculturalism also resembles Berkeley's in having a dark side. The following footnote, which I am quoting only in part, appeared in the 1753-4 edition of his essay "Of National Characters."[16]

> I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. . . . Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession.

This passage is another indication of a life marked by multiculturalism in my first sense. It is also a sign of personal failure, and, I will soon be arguing, of failure to apply the very empiricist lessons that Hume is elsewhere concerned to teach. (I should point that Hume was, despite this footnote, strongly and publicly opposed to slavery.) These lessons had to be applied to Hume's footnote by his Scottish critic James Beattie, in his 1770 *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*. Beattie first points out that the evidence of experience goes against Hume's claims. "We know," Beattie writes, that "these assertions are not true."

> The empires of Peru and Mexico could not have been governed, nor the metropolis of the latter built after so singular a manner, in the middle of a lake, without men eminent both for action and speculation. Every body has heard of the magnificence, good government, and ingenuity, of the ancient Peruvians. The Africans and Americans are known to have many ingenious manufactures and arts among them, which even Europeans would find it no easy matter to imitate. Sciences indeed they have none, because they

> have no letters, but in oratory, some of them, particularly the Indi-
> ans *of the Five Nations*, are said to be greatly our superiors. It will
> be readily allowed that the condition of a slave is not favourable to
> genius of any kind; and yet, the negro-slaves dispersed over Europe,
> have often discovered symptoms of ingenuity, notwithstanding
> their unhappy circumstances. .... To suppose [a slave] of an inferior
> species, because he does not ... distinguish himself, is just as rational
> as to suppose any private European of an inferior species, because
> he has not raised himself to the condition of royalty.

Beattie then performs some experiments in imaginative substitution. He
imagines what Europeans would be like without the inventions of writing
and working in iron—advantages their ancestors had once lived without, and
which were probably hit upon either by accident or by the efforts of a lucky
few, whose capacity, even supposing it superior, would do nothing to establish
the superiority of Europeans as a "species." "Had the Europeans been desti-
tute of the arts of writing and working in iron," he writes, "they might have
remained ... barbarous" to this day. Beattie also imagines what Africans or
Americans would report if they arrived in Europe to study the life and manners
of the Europeans.

> If a Lucian or a Voltaire from the coast of Guinea, or from *the Five
> Nations*, were to pay us a visit, what a picture of European manners
> he would present to his countrymen at his return! Nor would cari-
> cature, or exaggeration be necessary to render it hideous. A plain
> historical account of some of our most fashionable duellists, gam-
> blers, and adulterers (to name no more), would exhibit specimens
> of brute barbarity, and sottish infatuation such as might vie with
> any that ever appeared.[17]

Unlike Hume in the footnote, Beattie is open to empirical evidence, and
willing to consider what Europeans, Africans, or Americans would be like
if they were placed in certain imagined circumstances, their development
subject (as in fact he thinks it would be) to certain natural principles known
by experience to shape the development of all human beings. Now that I've
discussed some of the ways in which the lives of the British empiricists were
marked by multiculturalism as phenomenon, I want to show that Beattie's
methods of criticism are among the methods the British empiricists have to
offer us as we try to develop an adequate multiculturalism as response, despite
Hume's failure to apply those methods to himself.

Part two. My aim in this second main part of the essay is to identify the
tools—the techniques or methods—that classical empiricism has to offer those
of us who are trying to respond appropriately to multiculturalism as phenom-
enon. I propose to concentrate on Locke and Hume. I'm going to begin,
though, not with techniques or methods but with metaphor: the metaphor of

philosophy (or, more generally, of inquiry) as travel—particularly travel into strange or distant lands, or travel by new or little-used routes. I will also discuss some *reports* of travel that figure in the literature of empiricism—not first-hand reports by Locke and Hume themselves, but reports of the travels of others that Locke and Hume cite or rely on. I want to suggest that these reports of travel have, in view of the metaphor, an important role to play in empiricist philosophy. The tools for responding to multiculturalism as phenomenon to which I'll be drawing attention—the tools for constructing a view able to qualify as multicultural in my second sense—will often prove to be related to reports of travel, to actual examples that are imported into empiricist texts, and to imagined substitutions of self for other (and other for self) that the actual examples invite.

It's no surprise that philosophers would be drawn to metaphors of travel. Philosophy (or inquiry of any other kind) is a search after truth, and any search is very similar to a quest or journey. For Locke, for example, travel was a metaphor for childhood, or for childhood insofar as it is an educative process. Children, Locke wrote, are "travellers newly arrived in a strange Country, of which they know nothing" (*Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, § 120).[18] If we're tempted to slight the questions they put to us, he advised, we should imagine what it would be like for us suddenly to be set down in, say, Japan. (This is, by the way, another example of imaginative substitution. We'll see more developed examples, in both Locke and Hume, later on.) "We should," Locke writes, "no doubt . . . ask a thousand Questions, which to a supercilious or inconsiderate Japaner, would seem very idle and impertinent"—as idle and impertinent as a child's questions seem to a supercilious or inconsiderate parent.

Travel is more than a natural metaphor for philosophy, inquiry, or education. Travel was an actual part—usually the finishing part—of the education of well-placed young men in early modern Britain; each of the British empiricists had such finishing themselves, or chaperoned other young men as they received it. Travel to the European continent became, in fact, a substitute for college, at least according to Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. "In England," he wrote, "it becomes every day more and more the custom to send young people to travel in foreign countries immediately upon their leaving school, and without sending them to any university." Smith, a university professor, was unimpressed with the results. The young men generally acquire some knowledge of one or two foreign languages, he reports, but seldom enough to speak or write them "with propriety," and "in other respects," the student "commonly returns home more conceited, more unprincipled, more dissipated, and more incapable of any serious application either to study or to business, than he could . . . have become in so short a time, had he lived at home." Nothing but the poor success of universities "could ever have brought into repute so very absurd a practice as that of travelling at this early period of life." Smith ends by acknowledging that foreign travel has one advantage: "by sending his son abroad," he wrote, "a father delivers himself, at least for some time, from so disagreeable an object as that of a son unemployed, neglected,

and going to ruin before his eyes."[19]

Smith's analysis is strikingly similar to one that Locke had already provided in *Some Thoughts concerning Education*. Travel has advantages, Locke says, but they are pretty much wasted on the years from "Sixteen to One and Twenty." "What is it," he asks, "but to expose them to all the greatest Dangers of their whole Life, when they have the least Fence and Guard against them?" "This is the Season of all his Life, that most requires the Eye and Authority of his Parents, and Friends to govern it" (§212)."Going abroad is to little purpose, if travel does not somewhat open his Eyes, make him cautious and wary, and accustom him to look beyond the out-side"—accustom him, that is, to look within (§215).

It isn't surprising, then, that early modern British philosophers should associate philosophy (or inquiry, or education) with travel. But a close look at the way they develop the association will, I hope, reveal something distinctive.

I begin with Locke. His most familiar appeal to the metaphor of travel comes in the "Epistle to the Reader" of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, where he describes himself as an "*Under-Labourer*" removing "*some of the rubbish*" that lies "*in the way to Knowledge*," so that "*Masters*" such as Newton won't be checked in their progress.[20] I want to call attention to a different and more muted appeal to the metaphor, one that is linked to Locke's praise of the epistemic virtue he calls "indifference."[21] (By an "epistemic virtue," I mean a trait of character or mind that promotes the search for truth or understanding.)

"Indifference" was Locke's label for what we now call impartiality. In his *Conduct of the Understanding*, a treatise on method originally planned as an addition to the *Essay*, but published, as a separate volume, only after his death, Locke strongly recommends indifference in the search after truth. In the Essay itself, he says that the study of ethics deserves "the same Indifferency"—the same impartiality, or freedom from vested interest—as the study of mathematics (IV iii 18). The virtue of indifference had been promoted earlier in the century by William Chillingworth, whose *Religion of Protestants* was praised by Locke for providing, more by example than by precept, better lessons in logic than any textbook. There Chillingworth cites with approval a requirement (which he attributes to the ancient philosopher Epictetus) of a "travellers indifference ... in all that would find the truth."[22] When Locke calls in Book I of the *Essay* for indifference in considering the opinions of mankind, Chillingworth's image of the indifferent or impartial traveller is recalled:

> He that will carefully peruse the history of mankind, and look abroad into the several tribes of men, and with indifference survey their actions, will be able to satisfy himself, that there is scarce that principle of morality to be named, or rule of virtue to be thought on (those only excepted that are absolutely necessary to hold society together, which commonly, too, are neglected betwixt distinct societies) which is not, somewhere or other, slighted and condemned by the general fashion of whole societies of men, governed by practical

opinions and rules of living, quite opposite to others. (*Essay* I iii 10)

Locke was an avid reader and collector of travel writing.[23] In the passage just quoted, Locke calls for an indifferent survey of this writing (and of historical writing) as a way of subverting *nativism*—the doctrine of innate ideas. According to the doctrine, there are ideas or propositions inscribed in the mind by the hand of God. An examination of Locke's case against the doctrine will take us from the metaphor of travel to one of the techniques or methods I want to emphasize.

Why does Locke attack the doctrine of innate ideas? There are two reasons. The first is that he takes the doctrine to be a way of denying that the presence of ideas can always be explained naturalistically. In Books II, III, and IV of the *Essay*, Locke will attempt a natural history of the human understanding. He will show how, by natural means, the mind is stocked with ideas. In Book I, Locke is clearing the ground for this naturalist project. If an idea's presence cannot be explained by appealing to experience, he thinks, it cannot be explained naturalistically. And if it is not explained naturalistically, he is persuaded, then it is not explained.

Locke's second reason for attacking the doctrine is that in the stated or implied opinion of its defenders, innate propositions need no defense. According to nativism as Locke understands it, these propositions are stopping points, or ways of ending debate. As Locke says, one of the principles held by defenders of innate ideas is the principle "That Principles ought not to be questioned" (*Essay* I iii 25). Later he calls this "the Principle of *Principles*" (*Essay* I iv 24). Its effect is to discourage us "from the use of ... Reason and Judgment." We are thereby encouraged to believe "upon trust, without farther examination: In which posture of blind Credulity, [we] might be more easily governed by, and made useful to some sort of Men, who had the skill and office to principle and guide [us]." Innate ideas become idols to be worshipped (*Essay* I iii 26). We mistake monsters lodged in our brains for images of the deity.

Locke's two reasons for attacking the doctrine are closely linked. If innate propositions are inscribed by God it seems that they need no defense. And if ideas are not derived from experience, no amount of "empirical criticism"—criticism aimed at showing that experience cannot render them intelligible—could possibly impugn them.

How does Locke argue against nativism? He takes us on a quick tour of people with fundamentally different ideas and beliefs. This tour is the "indifferent" survey mentioned in the passage from *Essay* I iii 10 that I quoted earlier. The survey reveals "the variety of opposite Principles, held, and contended for, by all sorts and degrees of Men" (*Essay* I iii 27). Locke's official reason for the tour is to support the following argument. If ideas or propositions are innate, then they must be universal. But they are not universal. Therefore they are not innate. One example of an innate idea exploded by these means is the idea of the Biblical God. "Hath not Navigation discovered, in these latter Ages, whole Nations, at the Bay of *Soldania*, in *Brasil*, in *Boranday*, and the *Caribee*

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Islands, *etc.*, amongst whom there was to be found no Notion of a God?" (*Essay*
I iv 8). But the tour works in another, unofficial way: it takes on nativism, or
the complacency it encourages, more directly. We learn that there are people
who are as attached to their beliefs as we are to our own. Had we been placed
in their circumstances, it seems we would believe what they believe. This is,
of course, exactly what the nativist denies: if God has inscribed these ideas or
propositions in our minds, moving to another culture won't erase them. Locke's
foreign tour certainly doesn't dispose of this answer altogether, but it makes
it much harder to believe. If we were differently placed, it seems, we would
have radically different ideas. We can say that our cultural affiliation would
then obscure ideas that would otherwise shine brightly. But how plausible is
that? The effect of such a question is to distance us from our own selves: ideas
or propositions with which we're tempted to identify—ideas or propositions
we're inclined to treat as part of the very structure of our minds (or to "nat-
uralize," to use a piece of present-day vocabulary revealingly reminiscent of
Locke's own)—begin to look as if they are ideas or propositions that are "ours"
only because of the circumstances in which we happen to find ourselves. In a
seventeenth-century context, it is appropriate to speak *literally* of our identifi-
cation with allegedly innate ideas. In the seventeenth century the notions of
the "innate" and the "essential" were closely linked: for an idea to be innate
to the mind is for the idea to belong to the mind by its very nature. (In much
the same way, to say in a seventeenth-century context that force is innate to
matter is to say that the force belongs to matter by its very nature.)

I'd now like to extract from Locke's attack on nativism some tools or prin-
ciples that can be of use to us as we develop a multiculturalism of response.
It's tempting to offer as one such principle the precept that we should study
foreign conceptions and beliefs, but although Locke certainly does that, and
emphasizes, at the same time, the importance of doing so impartially, he is not
(at least in his attack on nativism) interested in foreign conceptions and beliefs
for their own sake. He may urge us to *consider* them disinterestedly, but we're
considering them at all only because we are interested in better understanding
our own. The nativist makes the bold claim that the idea of God is innate and
therefore universal; Locke surveys foreign conceptions to prove that the idea
of God is not universal, and that it is therefore not innate *to us*. The point is
to make *us* receptive to Locke's suggestion that even our idea of God is derived
somehow from experience. But Locke's attentiveness to foreign conceptions
and beliefs does raise the question of how diversity in conception and belief can
best be explained. And to this important question Locke offers a still-useful
answer: the diversity can best be explained by appealing to universal principles
of what we would now call cognitive development, principles (and this is the
most important point) that in no way privilege the conceptions and beliefs
that *we* happen to have.

I've been saying all along that the empiricists have something useful to offer
us; I didn't mean to imply that what they have to offer isn't controversial. The
principle I've just stated—that we should explain the diversity of conception
and belief by means of universal principles that in no way privilege the beliefs

and conceptions we happen to have—may seem self-defeating, due to the presence of the word "universal." If the principles are supposed to be universal, and if they are also *ours* (as it seems they must be, if *we're* the ones who are deploying them), how can we *fail* to privilege our own beliefs and conceptions? This is a big question, one I can't answer here, but I can make a few comments that will, I hope, create some room for thinking that illegitimate privileging isn't an inevitability.

I'd like to distinguish two broad ways of explaining a belief. Some explanations are what I will call *justification-conferring*; others are not. Nativism is perhaps the clearest example of a justification-conferring explanation of belief. If I owe my belief in an immortal soul to an impeccable source—the inscribing hand of an omniscient and benevolent God—then the belief must, it seems, be justified. Empiricism is a good example of a non-justification-conferring explanation of belief. When I learn that I owe a belief to experience, I do not *thereby* learn that it is justified. I don't, of course, thereby learn that it is *not* justified. No tracing of a belief to its source can *show* the belief is unjustified (to suppose it can is to commit what philosophers call "the genetic fallacy"), but it can justifiably raise suspicions, and it can justifiably cause discomfort to those who think their beliefs "track the truth" in some special way, instead of reflecting (say) the bias of their class.

Locke's principle proposes that we account for conceptions and beliefs—our own and those of others—in a non-justification-conferring fashion. So long as the conceptions and beliefs we're explaining, when our own, do not figure in the apparatus of explanation, it seems that we can keep ourselves from privileging them. But the conceptions and beliefs that figure in the apparatus of explanation are a real problem. How can we help but privilege *those* conceptions and beliefs? (I realize that it may not be easy to separate the conceptions and beliefs that figure in the apparatus of explanation from those that don't, in which case the problem will spread.) This is the heart of the big question I raised a moment ago, and I won't, as I said, try to answer it. But I will observe that despite the present-day vocabulary I've used in raising it, it is a question that arises *directly* in the literature of British empiricism, in the work of Hume. Hume is a naturalist—one who, like Locke, seeks to explain conception and belief by means of universal natural principles—but he is also a skeptic, and his skeptical arguments are aimed *directly* at some of the conceptions and beliefs that figure in his own apparatus of explanation—in particular, the conception of a *cause*, the belief that every event must have a cause, and the belief that observed cause-and-effect relations are reliable guides to the unobserved. I 'll discuss Hume's reaction to skepticism shortly, but in view of the skeptical questions I've raised I think I should try to state the principle I propose to extract from Locke in as modest a way as possible. Here it is: we should be wary of justification-conferring explanations of conception and belief, particularly when we provide justification-conferring explanations of our own beliefs (as the nativists did), and non-justification-conferring explanations of the beliefs of others.

The modest principle I've stated is a strategy for putting the self on more of a par with the other. Before leaving Locke I would like to discuss another such strategy, one that plays an important role in his *Letter concerning Toleration*. It is a strategy already at work, I think, in his attack on innate ideas, because the attack invites us to perform an imaginative substitution: if we, as we are by nature, had been raised in a different cultural environment, we would have very different conceptions and beliefs. We would be as attached to them as we are to the conceptions and beliefs we now deem innate, and therefore beyond criticism. In the *Letter concerning Toleration* Locke invites us—the "us" being the Anglican majority in England—to substitute ourselves for religious others. (We've already seen Beattie perform a similar substitution in his criticism of Hume's racism, and Locke perform a very simple one in urging parents to be patient with the persistent questioning of their children.) "What Power can be given to the Magistrate for the suppression of an Idolatrous Church," Locke asks, "which may not, in time and place, be made use of to the ruine of an Orthodox one? For it must be remembered that the Civil Power is the same every where and the Religion of every Prince is Orthodox to himself."[24] He then tells the following story, a story of travel to a new and distant land. It is meant to show that "not even *Americans*, subjected unto a Christian Prince, are to be punished either in Body or Goods, for not imbracing our Faith and Worship."

> An inconsiderable and weak number of Christians, destitute of every thing, arrive in a Pagan Country: These Foreigners beseech the Inhabitants, by the bowels of Humanity, that they would succour them with the necessaries of life: Those necessaries are given them; Habitations are granted; and they all joyn together, and grow up into one Body of People. The Christian Religion by this means takes root in that Countrey, and spreads it self; but does not suddenly grow the strongest. While things are in this condition, Peace, Friendship, Faith and equal Justice, are preserved among them. At length the Magistrate becomes a Christian, and by that means their Party becomes the most powerful. Then immediately all Compacts are to be broken, all Civil Rights to be violated, that Idolatry may be extirpated: And unless these innocent Pagans, strict Observers of the Rules of Equity and the Laws of Nature, and no ways offending against the Laws of the Society, I say unless they will forsake their ancient Religion, and embrace a new and strange one, they are to be turned out of the Lands and Possessions of their Forefathers, and perhaps deprived of Life it self. Then at last it appears what Zeal for the Church, joyned with the desire of Dominion, is capable to Produce; and how easily the pretence of Religion, and of the care of Souls, serves for a Cloak to Covetousness, Rapine, and Ambition.

Anyone who "maintains that Idolatry is to be rooted out of any place by Laws,

Punishments, Fire, and Sword," Locke writes, "may apply this Story to himself" (p. 43). The device of imaginative substitution is a second tool that the empiricists have to offer us.

Hume extends and complicates the principles and strategies I've found in Locke, but I'm going to begin not with them but with the metaphor of travel. And in order to understand the use made of the metaphor by Hume, I'd like to say a few words about the use made of it by Berkeley.

For Berkeley, travel, when a metaphor for philosophy, is an ordeal. He is happy with travel only when it is joined to homecoming. Consider, for example, the introduction to his first defense of immaterialism. Because philosophy is the study of wisdom and truth, he writes there, those who have spent most time and pains in it "should enjoy a greater calm and serenity of mind, a greater clearness and evidence of knowledge, and be less disturbed with doubts and difficulties than other men." Yet "so it is we see the illiterate bulk of mankind that walk the high-road of plain, common sense, and are governed by the dictates of nature, for the most part easy and undisturbed." A high-road is a main road—what we would now call a highway. Philosophers, Berkeley says, "follow the light of a superior principle"—a light that lures them away from the road traveled by others—but in the end, "having wandered through many intricate mazes," they find themselves "just where [they] were." They have no choice but to "sit down in a forlorn skepticism" (Introduction to the *Principles*, 1). In the book that follows this introduction, Berkeley sets out to remedy this—to defend common sense against the philosophical tradition. "Upon the whole," he writes later in the introduction, "I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to ourselves. That we have first raised a dust"—one raised, it seems, by the movements mentioned earlier —"and then complain, we cannot see" (*Principles* 3).

In the preface to his second defense of immaterialism, Berkeley describes his philosophizing as a return home.

> Although it may, perhaps, seem an uneasy reflection to some, that when they have taken a circuit through so many refined and unvulgar notions, they should at last come to think like other men; yet, methinks, this return to the simple dictates of nature, after having wandered through the wild mazes of philosophy, is not unpleasant. It is like coming home from a long voyage: a man reflects with pleasure on the many difficulties and perplexities he has passed through, sets his heart at ease, and enjoys himself with more satisfaction for the future. (*Works* 2, p. 168)

Berkeley's interest is in achieving a peaceful or undisturbed occupation of home. Hence the hero of *Alciphron*, a book Berkeley wrote while living in Rhode Island, waiting for the endowment he had been promised for his college by Parliament and the King (an endowment that never arrived), is a man who

returned home to the country directly after attending the university, to live as a farmer.

Berkeley's use of the metaphor of travel is a useful background for Hume's. The concluding section of Book I of Hume's *Treatise* develops an elaborate metaphor of philosophy as a dangerous voyage into the unknown:[25]

> Before I launch out into those immense depths of philosophy, which lie before me [here he's contemplating the subject matter of Books II and III, on passions and on morals] , I find myself inclin'd to stop a moment in my present station, and to ponder that voyage, which I have undertaken, and which undoubtedly requires the utmost art and industry to be brought to a happy conclusion. Methinks [after the skeptical arguments of Book I] I am like a man, who having struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escap'd ship-wreck in passing a small frith, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances. (1.4.7.1; SBN 263-4)

He reports that his apprehensions have increased his awareness of the "wretched condition, weakness, and disorder" of his faculties (1.4.7.1; SBN 264). The impossibility of correcting them

> reduces me almost to despair, and makes me resolve to perish on the barren rock, on which I am at present, rather than venture myself upon that boundless ocean, which runs out into immensity. This sudden view of my danger strikes me with melancholy. (1.4.7.1; SBN 264)

He then describes one possible result of travel: becoming a stranger in one's own land.[26] The passage recalls the letter to Franklin where Hume observes that no one is a prophet in his own country:

> I am first affrighted and confounded with that forelorn solitude, in which I am plac'd in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster, who not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expell'd all human commerce, and left utterly abandon'd and disconsolate. Fain wou'd I run into the crowd for shelter and warmth; but cannot prevail with myself to mix with such deformity. I call upon others to join me, in order to make a company apart; but no one will hearken to me. Every one keeps at a distance, and dreads that storm, which beats upon me from every side. I have expos'd myself to the enmity of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians; and can I wonder at the insults I must suffer? (1.4.7.2; SBN 264)

He looks "abroad"—and here we can't help but hear the travel metaphor reasserted (it is in fact carefully preserved throughout the passage), though "abroad" probably means no more here than "around"—and he sees, on every side, "dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny, and detraction." "All the world" conspires to "oppose and contradict" him, and "when unsupported by the approbation of others," his opinions threaten to "loosen and fall of themselves." "Every step I take is with hesitation" (1.4.7.2; SBN 264). Hume is becoming a monster, though it is, interestingly, *others* who strike *him* as deformed. "Can I be sure," he asks, "that in leaving all establish'd opinions I am following truth; and by what criterion shall I distinguish her, even if fortune shou'd at last guide me on her foot-steps?" (1.4.7.3; SBN 264)

Hume is describing the effects of skepticism, effects he explicitly associates (particularly in the closing section of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*) with Berkeley. Berkeley returned home from his journey into the wild; Hume may not be able to. The travel described by Berkeley and Hume is not quite the same as Locke's imaginary travel to definite foreign locations, but it can have the same effect, of making one's own beliefs alien. It was an ancient skeptical strategy to set contending opinions one against the other. The point was to prompt the suspension of belief. Early modern skeptics (such as Montaigne, Voltaire, and as we'll see in a moment, Hume) took contemporary reports of travel and cultural diversity and put them to this long-standing skeptical use. Whether he is presenting abstract skeptical arguments or surveying radically diverse opinions, Hume is working to achieve the same effect: a distancing of the self from even its most defining commitments.

In, for example, his *Natural History of Religion*, Hume gives an account of polytheistic religious belief. His explanation, roughly put, turns on the human fear of an unknown world and the urge to understand and master it. The polytheists assume that the natural objects on which their welfare depends change for the same reasons they themselves do: natural objects are animated by spirits motivated by desire. Just as we see faces in the clouds, the polytheists find passions in natural objects, or in the spirits they imagine to inhabit them.

In the *Natural History*, the monotheistic Christianity that Hume represents as his own is pointedly left unexplained. The belief, he suggests, is a product of reason, so it doesn't require the same kind of explanation as polytheistic belief. "Our" belief, in other words, receives a justification-conferring explanation; their belief does not. Hume writes, "What a noble privilege is it of human reason to attain the knowledge of the supreme Being; and, from the visible works of nature, be enabled to infer so sublime a principle as its supreme Creator?"[27] But Hume's real intention is not to celebrate our privilege, but to suggest it is unfounded, because the principles at work in the *Natural History* are (though he doesn't dare say so) universal. He continues by inviting us to "turn the reverse of the medal."

> Survey most nations and most ages. Examine the religious principles, which have, in fact, prevailed in the world. You will scarcely

be persuaded, that they are any thing but sick men's dreams: Or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkies in human shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being, who dignifies himself with the name of rational. (p. 75)

Here we see a pattern fairly common in Hume, and in some other skeptical writers of the period: the corrective use of prejudice.[28] The human beings whose religious convictions have been surveyed in the *Natural History* have been made into monkeys—into beasts, the kinds of subjects appropriate for non-justification-conferring natural-historical understanding. They retain "human shape," but they are not really human, as Hume suggests by reminding us of the traditional definition of the human being as a rational animal. They are (not visibly but nonetheless radically) deformed. (Perhaps it is in this sense that those Hume considers joining are deformed: they are not reasonable, not as much in the grip of curiosity or the love of truth, as Hume is himself—and as human beings in some sense ought to be.) Our beliefs can be explained in a justification-conferring way, by directing attention to their reasonable grounds.[29]

In the *Natural History* Hume's skepticism about monotheism is never made explicit. It comes nearest the surface in the concluding paragraph of the book, where it is not entirely clear that our own beliefs are not among the "species of superstition" that are set in opposition:

The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny, concerning this subject. But such is the frailty of human reason, and such the irresistible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could scarcely be upheld; did we not enlarge our view, and opposing one species of superstition to another, set them a quarrelling: while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape into the calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy. (p. 76)

Here the "obscure" region of philosophy—a region where skepticism prevails—is a calm refuge, rather than a dangerous wilderness. But that's because the beliefs the *Natural History* calls into question are less fundamental than the beliefs called into question in Book I of the *Treatise*. They can therefore be more safely suspended.

According to the modest version of the principle we found in Locke, we should be wary of justification-conferring explanations of conception and belief, particularly when we're providing justification-conferring explanations of our own beliefs, and non-justification-conferring explanations of the beliefs of others. Hume's *Natural History* is an application of that principle, one that resembles Locke's in inviting us to perform an imaginative substitution—to replace the beliefs of the other with our own. A second, perhaps even more striking example is his attack on the reasonableness of belief in miracles. Hume

argues that it is unreasonable to believe in miracles, because a miracle is, by definition, a violation of the laws of nature, and there will always be greater evidence in favor of the law than in favor of the event that allegedly violates it. The whole argument is carefully constructed to make it look as if Catholics are most directly under attack. Hume devotes a lot of skeptical attention to modern miracles reported in Catholic France (this is another example of what I earlier called the corrective use of prejudice); he says nothing directly about the central Christian miracle—the resurrection of Jesus—though he invents an imaginary case (meant, it seems clear, to allow him to discuss the resurrection without mentioning it) about the death and return to life of Queen Elizabeth. Hume is also careful to say very little, directly, about the reasonableness of belief in a miracle witnessed by one's own self. (This is precisely because he is most concerned about the resurrection of Jesus. When it comes to this, early modern Christians must rely on the testimony of witnesses, transmitted to them in the Bible.) But the attitude Hume wants us to have towards a miracle we witness is quite clear: he wants us to step back from the experience itself, and to ask whether we would find it reasonable to believe another who reported it. He asks us, in other words, to make the self into an other, to respond to the experience "objectively" rather than "subjectively."

None of this is said directly. In fact the argument ends with another ironic invocation of the distinction between justification-conferring and non-justification-conferring explanations.[30]

> What we have said of miracles may be applied, without any variation, to prophecies; and indeed, all prophecies are real miracles, and as such only, can be admitted as proofs of any revelation. If it did not exceed the capacity of human nature to foretell future events, it would be absurd to employ any prophecy as an argument for a divine mission or authority from heaven. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the *Christian Religion* not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity: And whoever is moved by *Faith* to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience.

What Hume implies here is, perhaps, more challenging than anything in Locke. He is suggesting that there is nothing uniquely justification-conferring about the first-person point of view, or, if that's an over-reading, that the first-person viewpoint (the viewpoint of the self) has no privilege over the third-person viewpoint (the viewpoint of the other). To put it in the form of a principle: we should assess even our own observation and experience as if someone else were reporting it to us.

The passage just quoted returns us to the very difficult question raised by Locke: can we avoid privileging the conceptions and beliefs that figure in our apparatus of explanation? In the book that contains his essay on miracles, Hume gives a general account of conception- and belief-formation, based on universal "principles of [the] understanding." In the passage quoted he seems to acknowledge exceptions to these principles, but I've suggested that this acknowledgement is insincere. His real view is expressed in the following passage, from an earlier part of the same book, in which human difference and cultural diversity are addressed directly:

> It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions: The same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit: these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed throughout society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises, which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper of the French and English: You cannot be much mistaken in tranferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history [or, one might add, early modern ethnography] informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. (*Enquiry* 8.7; SBN, p. 83)

In his book on *European Encounters with the New World*, the historian Anthony Pagden describes "the possibility, and for many the impossibility, of cultural commensurability" as "the most daunting of the many problems which the 'discovery' of America posed for Europe."[31] How can Hume justify dismissing it, almost without a care? The answer is that he can't, or can't easily. Ethnographic description (of the sort Pagden discusses) may undermine his confidence. And the lesson of Hume's own engagement with skepticism seems to be that principles such as "the same motives always produce the same actions" cannot be justified by reason. Hume's response to the apparent conflict between his naturalism and his skepticism is another big topic that I can't take up here. But in passages I won't be able to discuss in this essay, Hume makes two suggestions about the conflict that I can mention, suggestions that may help with our earlier question about the inevitability of privileging our apparatus of explanation. The first suggestion Hume makes is that certain conceptions or commitments may be inevitable for human beings, whether or not they can be justified. The second is that this inevitability may, in the end, be a justification of sorts, for if there are principles on which we cannot help but rely, how can we impugn them, so long as we accept explanation or understanding as an aim? These suggestions of course give rise to further questions. One is

whether the set of humanly inevitable principles (supposing that it's not an empty set) is large and diverse enough to fund a full apparatus of explanation. (Hume thought so, but his explanations are, by his own admission, superficial, and on the whole too simple to carry conviction now.) Another is whether the deepest lesson of the material I've been discussing is that we should be wary of calling anything inevitable, especially when it is our own belief, and when calling it inevitable confers a justification—even a "justification-of-sorts."

I'd like to summarize the main principles I've identified in this part of my essay:

(i) We should be wary of justification-conferring explanations of conception and belief, especially when we provide justification-conferring explanations of our own beliefs, and non-justification-conferring explanations of the beliefs of others.

(ii) We should be receptive to experiments in imaginative substitution—substitution of the self for the other, and of the other for the self. (This is the kind of substitution performed by Beattie in his criticism of Hume, by Locke in the *Letter concerning Toleration*, and by Hume, by implication, in the *Natural History of Religion*. Imaginative substitution is also a crucial technique in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, another classic of empiricism that I haven't discussed here.)

(iii) We should assess even our own observation and experience as if someone else were reporting it to us.

Conclusion. I'd like to close by giving voice to a worry. Throughout this paper I've emphasized the negative, critical, or corrosive power of empiricism—its power to alienate us from our most cherished commitments. I've said a bit about the constructive project of accounting for diverse conceptions and beliefs by means of universal, natural principles, but you may now be feeling that this project, common to Locke and Hume, is more problematic than promising.

That's the worry from the side of empiricism. But the same worry can also be expressed from the side of multiculturalism. Following Martha Nussbaum, I've defined multiculturalism in my second sense as the appropriate recognition of cultural diversity. Many think that appropriate recognition calls for the *affirmation* of diverse cultures, particularly cultures that have been disadvantaged or neglected by more dominant ones. Does empiricism help to create space for affirmation? The question has been raised by Michael Walzer (though he was thinking less of empiricism than of critical tendencies closely allied to it). Walzer writes that

it is tempting to imagine democratic education as a training in critical thought, so that the students can undertake an independent,

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> preferably skeptical, evaluation of all established belief systems and cultural practices: for aren't critics the best citizens? Maybe so; in any case we need more of them. And yet they may not be the most tolerant fellow citizens; they may not be resigned or indifferent to the parochial loyalties of their fellows—or even stoically accepting of them. Democracies need critics who possess the virtue of tolerance, which probably means critics who have loyalties of their own and some sense of the value of associational life. .... For ... [we] should ... have a second aim, which is entirely compatible with the first: to produce hyphenated citizens, men and women who will defend toleration within their different communities while still valuing and reproducing (and rethinking and revising) the differences. (*On Toleration*, p. 110)

The study of philosophy often does more to provoke criticism than it does to inspire loyalty. It hasn't of course been my aim to show that empiricism by itself provides a full foundation for an adequate multiculturalism of response. But I do think that empiricism may be able to address the value of loyalty and associational life. Empiricism can, for example, call attention to the experience of associational life, though if, as Walzer suggests, some people have no "sense" by which they can apprehend its value, that value must—at least if we accept the Humean principle that the first-person viewpoint cannot be privileged over the third-person—somehow be brought to their attention.

I hope my discussion has convinced you that some of the great, dead philosophers, both in their lives and in their philosophical concerns, are not so different from us as they are often made to seem. The questioning of deep cultural norms has been an important part of philosophy at least since the time of Socrates, and Socratic self-examination—and the characteristically empiricist form of it that I've been discussing—hasn't yet outlived its usefulness.

Wellesley College

Notes

[1] This is a revised and expanded version of a lecture presented at SUNY Brockport in October, 2003. I have tried to preserve the conversational character of the original. An earlier version of the same material was delivered as the Blanchard Means Lecture at Trinity College in April, 1998. I am grateful to both audiences, and to my colleagues at Wellesley, for helpful suggestions and stimulating questions, only some of which are answered in the present version.

[2] The history of this canonization is actually quite complicated, and I haven't looked all that deeply into it. It begins in the very late eighteenth century with Kant's follower Karl Reinhold, who (though he was following Kant's lead) was the first to suggest that Kant synthesized what was of lasting value in a continental

tradition of less-than-properly-cautious metaphysics and a British tradition of empiricism which, left to itself, terminates in skepticism.

3   For Taylor see Taylor and others, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 63; for Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 8; for Appiah, *Multiculturalism*, ed. Gutmann, p. 157; for Walzer, *On Toleration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 51; and for Wolf, *Multiculturalism*, ed. Gutmann, p. 81.

4   The distinction between multiculturalism as fact and multiculturalism as a response to that fact—between what he aptly describes as "descriptive" and "prescriptive" uses of the word—is a central theme in Brian Barry's recent critique of some forms of that response, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). See in particular pp. 22-23

5   This is part of why it sounds strange to describe the seventeenth-century world as multicultural (though I'm going to do so anyway). Diverse cultures were coming into contact, but the kind of space that now exists for negotiation of difference or diversity did not exist then—or if it did, it was smaller, or less readily available for occupation. For a vivid account of some early seventeenth-century responses to what we now call "diversity," by one of the philosophers under discussion here, see David Hume, *A History of England*, volume 5 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983).

6   Nathan Glazer provides pretty much the same definition: "Multiculturalism is just the latest in [a] sequence of terms describing how American society, particularly American education, should respond to its diversity" (*We Are All Multiculturalists Now* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997], p. 8). He also recognizes the need for two senses of the word, one descriptive and one evaluative:

> Multiculturalism is far from a neutral descriptive term, though it is possible to describe the reality of minority and ethnic diversity in this country neutrally. Multiculturalism covers a variety of ways of responding to this reality, some so mild that they would probably be acceptable to those who see themselves as the fiercest critics of multiculturalism. But for most of those who advocate multiculturalism, it is a position-taking stance on the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States. It is a position that rejects assimilation and the "melting pot" image as an imposition of the dominant culture, and instead prefers such metaphors as the "salad bowl" or the "glorious mosaic," in which each ethnic and racial element in the population maintains its distinctiveness. The maintenance of distinctiveness is seen as a proper task of the school, rather than relegated to the family or the ethnic school or neighborhood, as those who defend assimilation would advocate. (p. 10)

What Glazer calls a "position" is what I call a "program." Diana Eck makes

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precisely my distinction in her book *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras* (Boston: Beacon, 1993), though she uses a different vocabulary. She uses the word "pluralism" for what she deems an appropriate response to "diversity." "Diversity," she writes,

> is simply a fact, but what will we make of that fact, individually and as a culture? Will it arouse new forms of ethnic and religious chauvinism and isolation? Or might it lead to a genuine pluralism, a positive and interactive interpretation of plurality? These are critical questions for the future, as people decide whether they value a sense of identity that isolates and sets them apart from one another or whether they value a broader identity that brings them into real relationship with one another. (p. 43; see also pp. 169 and 190, where pluralism is described as "*active engagement with* [the sheer fact of] *plurality*" or diversity.)

7   According to some, the appropriate response means creating the conditions each of the diverse cultures (or each member of some favored subset of those cultures) needs to survive; "appropriate response" may therefore require us to protect minority or disadvantaged cultures from the encroachments of the more dominant. Such "protectionist" multiculturalism sometimes leads to the following complaint, voiced recently by Richard Rorty, on behalf of a Whitmanesque "romance of endless diversity." Rorty writes that multiculturalism can suggest

> a morality of live-and-let-live, a politics of side-by-side development in which members of distinct cultures preserve and protect their own culture against the incursions of other cultures. Whitman, like Hegel, had no interest in preservation or protection. He wanted competition and argument between alternative forms of human life—a poetic agon, in which jarring dialectical discords would be resolved in previously unheard harmonies. .... This new culture will be better because it will contain more variety in unity—it will be a tapestry in which more strands have been woven together. But this tapestry, too, will eventually have to be torn to shreds in order that a larger one may be woven, in order that the past may not obstruct the future. (*Achieving Our Country* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998], pp. 24-5.)

For Gutmann's own response to the question she raises see her *Identity in Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

8   *Prophetic Reflections: Notes on Race and Power in America*, volume 2 of his *Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993), p. 125.

9   With his patron Shaftesbury, Locke made very profitable investments in a slave-trading company, and invested as well in slave-dependent New World plantations. Both early and late in his career, he served as a private administrator or government overseer of slave-holding colonies. In the former role, he

contributed—in what ways we can't be sure—to the constitution of the Carolina colony, which endorsed the "absolute power and authority" of the colony's free men over their "negro slaves." For details see James Farr, "'So Vile and Miserable an Estate: The Problem of Slavery in Locke's Political Thought," *Political Theory* 14 (1986), pp. 263-89, especially pp. 265-9; Wayne Glausser, "Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990), pp. 199-216, especially pp. 200-3; and Jennifer Welchman, "Locke on Slavery and Inalienable Rights," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 25 (1995), pp. 67-81, especially pp. 71-4. Glausser helpfully surveys three ways of responding to the apparent conflict between Locke's involvement in the slave trade and his theory of natural rights: according to the first, the silence of Locke the writer on the slave trade is an "immoral evasion" (John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], p. 175, n. 4) or "deviation from his theory" (Glausser, p. 199); according to the second, some "tortured logic" carried Locke from elements of his theory (including perhaps his "just war" defense of one form of non-heritable slavery) to the approval of the New World institution (Glausser, p. 199); and according to the third, the approval of New World institution was an organic outgrowth of views deeply held. Farr, developing Dunn's conclusion, responds in the first way. Welchman is the most recent writer to respond in the third way (pp. 78-81), but her argument seems to me to call on principles that Locke does not accept. More recently, in *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke's Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 197-206, Jeremy Waldron has defended a fourth reaction: although Locke's involvement with African slavery in the Americas fits "uncomfortably" with his "very limited theory of legitimate enslavement" (p. 206)–a theory that applies only to those "conquered as unjust aggressors by those who are defending themselves or their property in a just war" (p. 200), which means it cannot be extended to American slavery as it was (p. 206)–it would be unwise to attempt to resolve a "contradiction" between them (p. 206). Indeed, Waldron claims, such a contradiction exists "only by virtue of our own late twentieth- or early twenty-first-century ideas about the poltical integrity of an intellectual life" (p. 206). I too suspect that we cannot reasonably hope to resolve the contradiction, and I think Waldron is right to warn against "infer[ing] anything about the personal politics let alone the political philosophy of the transcribing secretary from the fact that he failed to persuade the Lord Proprietors of the [Carolina] colony to take the slavery clause out [of its constitution] (and abolish the institution)" (p. 205). But if the contradiction lies only in the eyes of present-day beholders, why not say the same of the uncomfortable fit that even Waldron seems to acknowledge? I think Locke presents us with a genuine puzzle–one that is not an artifact of our own preoccupations–even if we should, as Waldron recommends, guard against reasoning "from something [Locke] did to something he 'must have' thought" (p. 205).

¹⁰ Quotations from Berkeley's writings are taken from *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 9 vols. (London: Nelson, 1948-57). Berkeley's notebooks, now known as the *Philosophical Commentaries*, appear in volume 1, and are referred to here by entry number. His *Treatise concerning the Principles of Human* Knowledge and *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* both appear in volume 2; the *Principles* is referred to by section number, the *Three*

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Dialogues by page number.

[11] The full text of Berkeley's poem appears in volume 7 of the *Works*, p. 373. In *Lords of All the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Anthony Pagden makes some interesting comments on the English association between colony and plantation (p. 79). Berkeley's poem is, according to its title, on the "planting" of arts and learning in America.

[12] In a letter to Percival of June 10, 1729. See Benjamin Rand's *Berkeley and Percival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), pp. 244-5.

[13] *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), volume 1, p. 205.

[14] This letter is also included in *New Letters of David Hume*, ed. Raymond Klibansky and E. C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 197.

[15] Hume's letter (to his friend Pierre Desmaizeaux) and the notice from "Literary News from London" (which may actually have been written by Desmaizeaux) are quoted from E. C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954), pp. 119, 118. Hume's own comment on the *Treatise* can be found in "My Own Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. David Fate Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 352.

[16] As found in Eugene Miller's edition, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), pp. 629-30.

[17] Beattie, *Essay*, ed. James Feiser (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2000), pp. 229, 230. Hume later revised the note, but only slightly.

> I am apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. (*Essays*, p. 208)

[18] In *The Works of John Locke*, ninth edition (London: T. Longman, 1794), volume 8. Reference to *Some Thoughts* is by section.

[19] (Edinburgh: Adam Black and William Tait, 1827), volume 3, pp. 285-6 (Book 5, chaper 1, part 3, article 3).

[20] Quotations from Locke's *Essay* are taken from the edition prepared by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). The passage quoted appears on p. 10. Other passages are cited by book, chapter, and section number: thus "IV iii 18" refers to Book 4, chapter eight, section 18.

[21] On indifference as an epistemic virtue see James Tully, "Governing Conduct," pp. 12-71 in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Edmund Leites

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially pp. 16-33.)

22   On the second unnumbered page in the edition published in Oxford by Leonard Lichfield in 1638.

23   For an account of Locke's reading in travel writing see Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 21-44.

24   *A Letter concerning Toleration*, ed. James H. Tully (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), p. 42.

25   Quotations from Hume's *Treatise* are taken from the edition prepared by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), and are cited by book, part, section, and paragraph, followed by page number in the second edition prepared by L. A. Selby-Bigge and revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), which I refer to as "SBN".

26   Descartes warns against this danger in the *Discourse on the Method*: "one who spends too much time travelling eventually becomes a stranger in his own country" (p. 114 in volume 1 of John Cottingham and others, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985]). Descartes's remarks on travel deserve more attention than I can give them here. He speaks, for example, of the great benefit of learning about a diversity of customs. "I learned not to believe too firmly anything of which I had been persuaded only by example and custom" (p. 116). But he did *not* learn to be suspicious of what he calls the "natural light;" he learned only that example and custom can obscure it. This is a crucial difference between Descartes (who willingly accepts innate principles) and Locke (who discards them).

27   *The Natural History of Religion*, ed. H. E. Root (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 75.

28   I suspect it is sometimes unconscious, as it is here, and sometimes conscious or deliberate, as in Hume's attack on the reasonableness of belief in miracles, where prejudice against Catholics is used to motivate doubt about the beliefs of Protestants who pride themselves on avoiding the enthusiasm of Catholics. A model for this, perhaps, was Shaftesbury's remarks, in his *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, on the priests of the Jews—a safe way of delivering what was probably intended as an attack on priesthood in general.

29   The distancing technique can also be observed in "A Dialogue," where it is achieved by a substitution of names. In fact the dialogue opens with a reference to foreign travel:

> My friend, Palamedes, who is as great a rambler in his principles as in his person, and who has run over, by study and travel, almost every region of the intellectual and material world, surprised me

lately with an account of a nation, with whom, he told me, he has passed a considerable part of his life, and whom, he found, in the main, a people extremely civilized and intelligent. (Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp [Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 185]

What follows is an account of "barbarous and savage manners" not merely "incompatible with a civilized, intelligent people, such as you said these were," but "scarcely compatible with human nature. They exceed all we ever read of, among the Mingrelians, and Topinamboues." But it is then revealed that it's the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, that have been under discussion all along, disguised by "bizarre names" (p. 188). We are again given the comparison of the French to the Greeks and the English to the Romans (p. 191-2). But the basic principles are all the same. "The RHINE flows north, the RHONE south; yet both spring from the *same* mountain, and are also actuated, in their opposite directions, by the *same* principle of gravity" (p. 192). Note how carefully Hume deploys the analogy between study and travel. When we were first told that Palamedes has "passed a considerable part of his life" with the people he described, we suppose he traveled to live with them. But in fact he studied them, a possibility we were prepared for, and then invited to ignore.

30   *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), section 10, paragraph 41, pp. 130-1 in the third edition prepared by L. A. Selby-Bigge and revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Subsequent references to the *Enquiry* are to section and paragraph, followed by page number in the Selby-Bigge/Nidditch edition ("SBN").

31   (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 2.

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