THE EMERGENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY IN 18TH CENTURY SCOTLAND

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ABSTRACT

The Scottish Enlightenment in the eighteenth century came about because of the intensity of debate and discussion in the clubs and societies in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen in the early part of the century. In a highly disciplined and regulated club atmosphere, they posed questions and prepared papers which were thoroughly discussed and criticised. It is argued in this thesis that this intellectual activity amounted to philosophical inquiry as conducted today in the Centre of Philosophical Inquiry at Glasgow University by Dr. C. McCall.

Briefly, philosophical inquiry consists of philosophising conducted in a group structure. Specific questions are inquired into by members of the group who state their agreements and disagreements with each other. In so doing, they form a community of inquiry to arrive at a deeper understanding of the questions posed but without necessarily reaching conclusive agreement about anything at the end of the inquiry.

It is argued in this thesis:

(1) That philosophical inquiry, in the broad sense of dialogue and debate within groups of individuals, was conducted in the clubs and societies of early 18th century Scotland.

(2) That the period 1710 to 1740 saw an increasing intensity of dialogue and debate among educated young people in clubs and societies in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, and this intensity brought about a change from a literary to a philosophical preoccupation in the most influential of the clubs and societies: for example, the Rankenian Club, the Glasgow Literary Society, and the Aberdeen Philosophical Society.

(3) That this change to a philosophical preoccupation was enough to lay the foundations for the later philosophical, scientific, and literary achievements of the Scottish Enlightenment.

(4) That the Enlightenment movement began to lose its momentum towards the end of the century because philosophical inquiry ceased to be a motive power when individualism and solitary literary pursuits gradually replaced the camaraderie of the early clubs and societies.

Thus, the subject matter of this thesis examines the conditions which are necessary and sufficient for the production of works of genius such as the men of the Scottish Enlightenment produced later in the 18th century: men such as Lord Kames, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson, Robert Burns, James Hutton (the founder of modern geology), and all the Scottish doctors, writers, artists, architects, engineers etc., who achieved world-wide eminence for their work at the time.

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INTRODUCTION

> A single specimen of the civilised human being may exist, I suppose, rather drearily alone, sufficient unto himself, and in himself valuable. But only when a number of civilised human beings come together does the civilised man become civilising. It is a group of civilised human beings that is the nucleus of civilisation.
>
> Clive Bell.[1]

1. THE NATURE AND CONTENTS OF THIS THESIS.

This thesis highlights hitherto unrecognised aspects concerning the origins of the Scottish Enlightenment. It draws attention to individuals, clubs, societies, pamphlets and books that have been either overlooked or not given the attention they deserve in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment. The following are examples of the original sources which have been consulted and brought to light in this thesis:

- Attention is drawn in Chapter Two to the writings of Robert Hepburn of Bearford whose influence on the Edinburgh *literati* in the 1710s has been entirely neglected by recent scholars studying the origins of the Scottish Enlightenment.

- The minutes of Allan Ramsay's Easy Club were published for the first time as recently as 1972 but have been generally overlooked by scholars even of Scottish literature.[2] They have been the subject of only two academic papers, both of which involve Alexander Law as author or co-author, and he was himself the co-author of the volume of Ramsay's works in which the minutes were published. The Easy Club is discussed in Chapters Two and Three and its membership is analysed in Appendix C.

- Prior to the researches for this thesis, John Fergus, the secretary of the Easy Club and author of its remarkable minutes, was known only as a 'merchant' in Edinburgh. Enough information has now been gathered to compile a brief life of him, to be found in Appendix D.

- A volume of poems entitled the *Edinburgh Miscellany* published in 1720 has been similarly overlooked in spite of the fact that the authors contributing to it cast

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[1] Clive Bell, *Civilisation*, (1928 - London: Penguin 1938), p.164. This book influenced Kenneth Clarke in his pioneering BBC television series, *Civilisation*, in 1969.

[2] This fact has been confirmed in an e-mail communication from Dr. Christopher Wood of the Department of Scottish Literature at Glasgow University.

light on the nexus of social interactions among young people in Edinburgh and Glasgow during the 1710s. It contains early poems of James Thomson (author of *Rule Britannia*) and of Henry Home (Lord Kames). It is discussed in Chapter Two and its authorship and contents are analysed in Appendix G (as there is no list of contents in the book itself).

- The Rankenian Club which was founded in 1717[3] has been extensively referred to in the literature and this is reflected in Chapter Four which deals with that subject. However, no great attempt has been made to reconstruct the probable subjects which were discussed and debated in this Club. This has been attempted in Chapter Four.

- In Chapter Five, an important correspondence between Lord Kames and Andrew Baxter in 1723 is discussed, and its contents are summarised for the first time in Appendix J. This correspondence is important because of its probable effect on David Hume, and this effect is also discussed there. A complete transcript of this 20,000 word correspondence is now available for the first time (though too long to be included as an appendix to this thesis).

- Also in Chapter Five, various neglected pamphlets, some of which were unknown or unattributed, are brought together, ordered, and tabulated. These show that a series of pamphlet debates took place in the early 1730s involving Robert Wallace, Andrew Baxter, and William Dudgeon. The influence of these debates on David Hume and his works is also discussed.

- Researches for this thesis have uncovered some previously unknown documents relating to the life of the philosopher, Andrew Baxter. These are reproduced in Appendix K and their relevance is discussed in Chapter Five. Also, sufficient new information about the little known figure of William Dudgeon has been amassed to compile a brief life of him in Appendix L below.

- The importance of Thomas Reid's 'Minutes of a Philosophical Club 1736' is drawn attention to in Chapter Two, and its contents are transcribed in Appendix M, as this document has lain neglected and unpublished among Reid's papers at Aberdeen University. It shows that Reid already had some of his dominant ideas three years

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[3] See Appendix H for a discussion of the foundation date of the Rankenian Club. Professor M.A. Stewart, the leading authority in this field, has read this appendix and states in a letter that he agrees with its 'line of argument'.

before the publication of Hume's *Treatise*, so that his thinking was not quite as formed and dominated by that event as had been previously supposed.

These and many other items of original research are used in this thesis to reconstruct the events and circumstances that led to the emergence and consolidation of philosophical inquiry in 18th century Scotland. This reconstruction reveals how the intensity of dialogue and debate in the clubs and societies created a move from a purely literary preoccupation to an increasingly inquiring and questioning attitude of mind. And this in turn made philosophy increasingly fashionable among young people and eventually led to a quest for practical solutions to the problems facing Scotland. In short, this method of investigating what was actually happening in Scotland during the period of 1710 to 1740 shows how important philosophical inquiry was in creating the conditions required for the occurrence of the Scottish Enlightenment.

This thesis therefore has limited aims in accounting for how philosophical inquiry emerged during this period. It does not have the all-encompassing aim of investigating all the causes leading to this emergence of philosophical inquiry. The search for all the causes is a limitless and unprofitable task since there is no end to the theories, descriptions, and viewpoints that may be devised in exploring every aspect of this development. A definitive account of all the causes of this emergence is no more practical than one giving all the causes of the Scottish Enlightenment as a whole. In both cases, one would be offering an infinite series of theories and descriptions radiating in all directions and arriving at no definite or reliable conclusions whatsoever. Such an account would stray into, for example, psychological matters, sociological trends, economic constraints, and educational influences, and there would be no end to the task.

Nor does this thesis attempt a theoretical analysis of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as is to be found in Berry's recent book, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment.* Berry's conclusions are that the Scottish Enlightenment may be 'read' in various ways. It may be 'explained', (1) through the medium of ideologies such as that of Marx, (2) in cultural terms such as the effects of the Union of the Parliaments and of 'the religious/theological context', (3) as an intellectual movement involving, for instance, civic humanism, jurisprudential theorising and, especially, rationality in which thought and argument are important.[4] The Scottish Enlightenment

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[4] Christopher J. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh

may also be 'read' in terms of what it 'signifies' in laying the foundations of sociology and liberalism: Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith being the key players, if not the 'fathers' of each of these respectively.[5] In this theoretical format laid down by Berry, this thesis is a contribution to understanding item number three, that is to say, the Enlightenment as an intellectual movement especially as involving thought and argument. Furthermore, the kind of argument being examined here is that of philosophical inquiry, as defined and examined herein. What is explored here are many of the conditions and contributory factors which clarify the role of philosophical inquiry in making possible this intellectual movement called the Scottish Enlightenment. And the importance of this role is now discussed.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT.

It is argued in this thesis:

(1) That philosophical inquiry, in the broad sense of dialogue and debate within groups of individuals, was conducted in the clubs and societies of early 18th century Scotland.

(2) That the period 1710 to 1740 saw an increasing intensity of dialogue and debate among educated young people in clubs and societies in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, and this intensity brought about a change from a literary to a philosophical preoccupation in the most influential of the clubs and societies: for example, the Rankenian Club, the Glasgow Literary Society, and the Aberdeen Philosophical Society.

(3) That this change to a philosophical preoccupation was enough to lay the foundations for the later achievements of the Scottish Enlightenment, that is to say, the philosophical, scientific, and literary achievements of men such as Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Robertson, Black, Watt, and Hutton.

(4) That the Enlightenment movement began to lose its momentum towards the end of the century because philosophical inquiry ceased to be a motive power when individualism and solitary literary pursuits gradually replaced the camaraderie of the early clubs and societies.

University Press, 1997, pp.185-194.

[5] *Op. cit.*, pp.194-198.

This thesis examines the events and circumstances leading to the movement known as the Scottish Enlightenment and within a framework of thought based on philosophical inquiry. What constitutes philosophical inquiry in this context, is outlined in Appendix A below. Briefly, it consists of philosophising conducted in a group structure. Specific questions are inquired into by members of the group who state their agreements and disagreements with each other. In so doing, they form a community of philosophical inquiry (COPI) to arrive at a deeper understanding of the questions posed but without necessarily reaching conclusive agreement about anything at the end of the inquiry. The philosophical inquiry session is also deftly controlled by a facilitator whose task is to nominate speakers, prevent the discussion from petering out, and generally to moderate the discussion.

Philosophical inquiry (P I) involves inquiring, questioning, or investigating any topic which is put before a community of philosophical inquiry. It therefore involves philosophy in the broadest sense and has a much broader remit than modern professional philosophy. P I is personalised philosophy carried on within the capabilities and interests of the individual participants whereas professional philosophy is largely depersonalised philosophy which attempts to exclude the personal element in examining philosophical problems in so far as that is humanly possible. The examination of the essence of being or of the nature of the mind/body distinction are examples of the subjects which may be discussed at a personal level in P I but which are the object of specialised, analytical study by professional philosophers. Thus, in some respects, P I is the antithesis of professional philosophy in eschewing the narrow specialisation of interests and the elimination of personal bias or inclination.

These broad, personalised, unspecialised aspects of P I mean that it has a great deal in common with the eighteenth century way of philosophising because, in both cases, no subject or topic is excluded from possible discussion by a COPI, except on grounds of personal taste or interest. The extent to which the philosophical clubs of eighteenth century Scotland were in fact conducting philosophical inquiry, and not philosophy in its modern, specialised sense, is made clearer in Chapter Four.

This thesis is therefore confined to showing how philosophical inquiry emerged in 18th century Scotland to make possible the movement known as the Scottish Enlightenment. It is no doubt arguable that P I was an enduring feature of periods of philosophical and intellectual ferment besides that which occurred in eighteenth

century Scotland. People living in Renaissance Europe and in the Athens of the fifth century B.C. seem also to have experienced the intensity of intercommunication that is necessary for P I to flourish as a social factor. Leonardo da Vinci and Copernicus, for instance, were products of a time of intense and unbridled social intercourse which was fueled by the discussions and debates about the new learning which Greek scholars brought to the West following the fall of Constantinople. Pericles and Socrates were equally the products of a craze for philosophical discussion and debate in which itinerant teachers known as 'sophists' functioned as popstars of their time. Though parallels may well made between what was happening in these earlier periods of history and what happened in early 18th century Scotland, this thesis examines only the events in the latter period of history.

Nevertheless, the findings of this thesis suggest that the form of P I remains the same though the method of its application varies in relation to time and place. Its form includes such features as disciplined, sustained group inquiry (COPI), toleration of agreements and disagreements, and the presence of a facilitator directing the inquiry from a dispassionate and uninvolved point of view. This form is applied differently according to the times and circumstances of the participants. In other words, the method used in the 18th century was more rigid and disciplined than that required today because people are now generally more disciplined and less emotional as individuals. This is particularly the case with the Easy Club, as is argued in Chapters Two and Three.

The method used in applying P I may vary not only from one period to the next but also in the hands of individual facilitators. That is to say, it varies in relation to the context in which it is used though its form may be looked at from a context-free perspective. Thus, the theoretical study of P I comes into play when it is examined and thought about in terms of its content and its effects, but from a context-free point of view. Such theoretical research does not involve laying down the once-and-for-all structure and content of P I, it only clarifies the role and function of P I, regardless of how and where it is used.

However, the form of P I has been overlooked until recently because the activity of P I was treated entirely transparent way as being little more than conversation or 'idle talk' (to use Plato's words - see next section). P I was simply what people did anyway whenever they gathered into conversational groups especially in

club-like surroundings. It was regarded as being nothing special in itself because it was experienced entirely in its context and not as something distinct that may be examined independently of that context. This was the case in eighteenth century Scotland because there was no distinction made at all between what was happening in the clubs and societies and **the way** in which this was happening. As a result, the continuance of the club culture in Edinburgh and elsewhere into the nineteenth century did not mean the continuance of the intellectual ferment of the Enlightenment period because the vital ingredient of P I was lacking. It is only now that we can look at this period and pinpoint the vital role which P I was playing in making the difference between passionate, shared thinking and ossified forms of procedure (which characterised the later Royal Society of Edinburgh, for instance).

Philosophical inquiry is in fact happening in conversational groupings when their inquiries became disciplined and directed so that a community of philosophical inquiry emerges. In the eighteenth century philosophical clubs, the participants were much too involved with the content of their conversations to see that something extraordinary was happening within the group which unified them into a COPI. (The latter indeed amounts to a research engine or think-tank[6]). The fact that forming a club is not sufficient to create the conditions for philosophical inquiry did not occur to them. For it requires a philosophical leap of the imagination to see that the form of P I is potentially distinct from any context in which it is used.

The importance of P I as the form in which innovative and engaging philosophical debate and discussion must take place to be fruitful, was first recognised by Dr. Catherine McCall in her Stevenson Lectures on Citizenship given at Glasgow University in 1991.[7] Dr. McCall has brought the whole subject into public discourse so that it may take its place as a valuable part of our culture. Otherwise, it may be lost and forgotten, and philosophy itself lose its interest and cease to be creative, as it did in the later Roman Empire and in nineteenth century Scotland. It is therefore important to

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6 Cf. Aristophanes's use of the term 'phronisterion' (φροντιστηριον) or 'thinkery' in referring to the activities of Socrates and his disciples in his play, *The Clouds.* See Penguin edition, *The Acharnians, The Clouds, Lysistrata,* translated by A.H. Sommerstein, 1973, p.116f.

7 Dr. Catherine C. McCall, *The Stevenson Lectures in Citizenship*, (Glasgow University: 1991), pp.1-44.

examine this phenomenon systematically to keep it alive and open to further development in the future as culture itself changes.

The systematic study of P I, which is undertaken in the Centre for Philosophical Inquiry at Glasgow University, involves studying the form of P I and the effects of applying different methods of P I These methods emerge in certain social climates that are favourable to it. Neither fifth century Greeks or eighteenth century Scots had a definite theory of P I which they were consciously applying. They considered themselves to be simply conversing about philosophy, poetry and other literary topics. It therefore constitutes a definitive advance in human thinking to realise that this area is susceptible of systematic study, and that philosophers in past were blindly using P I without seeing it as anything extraordinary in itself.

The variability of the methods of applying of P I means that no one can anticipate, let alone dictate, the way it is actually applied in particular P I sessions. Indeed, the constancy of this variability is the only constant to be relied upon, and this is what is meant by the form of philosophical inquiry - a constantly varying method of inquiring and questioning in stable group sessions assembled for that specific purpose. In other words, they engage in dialogue and debate within a formal and exclusive setting which is sufficient to give rise to a community of philosophical inquiry.

3. THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE AND DEBATE IN THE EARLY CLUBS AND SOCIETIES.

This thesis describes the activities of the clubs and societies in Scotland during the period 1710 to 1740, and discusses the parallels between these activities and the activity of philosophical inquiry in general. The parallels in terms of dialogue and debate are of particular importance. In understanding what was happening during this period, an important distinction is to be made between these terms in the context of this thesis.

Dialogue is a formal kind of conversation in which the participants are putting each other to the test by questioning and criticising each other's beliefs and opinions. It involves an amicable exchange of ideas and opinions in a co-operative setting which encourages the individual to give of their best without undermining their self-confidence in the process. In other words, dialogue is only successful when it achieves a balance between constructive criticism on the one hand and encouraging

individual self-expression on the other hand. Failure to maintain such a balance may lead to acrimony, disaffection, or other negative feelings which might bring the club to an end.

Debate includes dialogue but may also involve a more developed stage of conversation in which written notes, discourses, and essays are presented in the same formal setting for questioning and criticising by other members. By such debate the club members gradually hone their literary skills, in the hope of eventually producing publishable material in the form of articles, letters, books etc. Debate therefore formalises dialogue and in so doing played an important part in the proceedings of clubs and societies. Such a formalisation helps to maintain the above-mentioned balance by using rules, chairmen and other means of diffusing negative feelings, as is described later in this section.

Dialogue and debate amount to philosophical inquiry only when one or both of them are conducted within the context of a community of philosophical inquiry. This occurs when dialogue and debate are sustained over a significant period of time by a stable group of participants, disciplined by means of generally agreed rules and procedures, and involve inquiring into, criticising, and questioning the subject-matter of dialogue and debate. All these features are to be found in the mature philosophical clubs and societies of the mid-eighteenth century onwards, as is argued in Chapter Four. Indeed, it is interesting that one of the earliest uses of the phrase 'philosophical inquiry' occurs in a description of the Select Society in Edinburgh:

> The *Select Society* owed its rise to the ingenious Allan Ramsay, (son of the poet of that name) and was intended for Philosophical Inquiry, and the improvement of the Members in the Art of Speaking. They met for the first time in the Advocates' Library, in May 1754, and consisted only of fifteen, who had been nominated and called together by Mr. Ramsay and two or three of his friends.[8]

By 1759, the Select Society membership reached more that 130 and it became a debating society (which is possibly the reason why it only lasted till 1763) in which P I became difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. A debate will not normally amount to philosophical inquiry where it occurs in large assemblies of, say, thirty or more people

[8] Information given to Dugald Stewart by Alexander Carlyle and recorded in Stewart's 'Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson', *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart*, (ed. by Sir W. Hamilton - Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1854), Vol. X, Note A, p. 203.

or in societies devoted exclusively to the art of debating. A community of philosophical inquiry generally requires a small and cohesive group which allows everyone to make their respective contributions to the common subject of inquiry. A large assembly will usually be dominated by a few people who are concerned about making their points and not with exchanging of views or with agreeing and disagreeing with other participants. Similarly a debating society (of which there were many formed in Edinburgh and Glasgow from the 1750s onwards) has the aim of making debating points to win the approval of their audience. There is limited opportunity to have a continual exchange of views to ensure that the inquiry becomes an end in itself. The aim is achieve excellence and reputation in debating and not to conduct inquiry for its own sake. Therefore, when debating becomes the chief and sole aim of a club or society then it ceases to be a community of philosophical inquiry because the members want to be good at debating and not at inquiring into things for its own. sake.

In the context of the early 18th century in Scotland, it will be seen that dialogue and debate were not necessarily confined to the clubs and societies. Apart the informal contacts brought about by the ethos of self-improvement mentioned in Chapter One below, there were debates conducted through the medium of pamphlets and books. It will be seen in Chapter Five that what is there called 'the Borders Nexus' conducted such a club-free debate.

But this thesis will also examine the relationship of the structure of the clubs and societies to the achievements of their members in producing the interest and involvement generated by a productive club or, alternatively, the malaise and hostility in an unproductive one. It was important that people in these clubs remained on friendly terms and that there was no clash of personalities. It also important that the strong personalities were not allowed to dominate to the point of stifling the aspirations and abilities of the other members. The manner in which the formal structure of the clubs played a significant role in ensuring this, is now described.

The form of the dialogue conducted in clubs and conversational groups is extremely important in ensuring that all the participants give of their best in conversation. The aim is not to outargue the other participants or wear them down by force of words or weight of argument. Other people's opinions are to be given their proper weight and significance. To ensure that the contributions of all the participants are given equal treatment, certain rules and forms of behaviour have to be laid down.

Thus, the rules and the formal setting of the clubs were important in providing the discipline needed to make the dialogue and exchange of views effective. This use of rules and formal discipline ensured that everyone got a fair and courteous hearing.

The formal setting of the clubs also ensured that conversation involved not just talking but also listening to and understanding what people said rather than who was saying it. What was said was always more important than who was saying it. This concentration on the subject matter of the conversation was possible because the participants directed their remarks to the *præses* or president. In this way, *ad hominen* arguments were ruled out of order. The rules ensured that participants confined their comments and criticisms to the letter of what people were saying. They were deterred from engaging in personal attacks to undermine the authority of the person speaking. The emphasis was on the authority of the arguments being put forward.

The formal structure of the inquiry conducted in these societies compelled the members learnt to 'watch their words', as the saying goes. They learnt to speak with care and precision so that their meaning might be made as clear as possible. Their religious upbringing meant that they were probably aware of the scriptural admonition to avoid careless talk:

> I tell you that every careless word spoken by men will be accounted for on the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified; by your words you will be condemned.[9]

Even if they happened not to be religious-minded, they were conscious of being judged by their words on a day-to-day basis and were aware that there was no need to wait for the great day of judgment for the reckoning to be made. As they sought fame and fortune, or at least a good reputation in their chosen profession, it was in this world that they wished themselves to judged. Thus, the members learnt not only to speak to the point but also to say those things that would not provoke ridicule on the one hand, or anger and offence on the other hand.

The disciplined form of dialogue in the clubs was necessary to provide a stable and dependable background in which free and easy conversation could be pursued. In order to talk freely and without inhibition, it was necessary for the members to feel secure and at ease with each other. When this ambience of dependability was established, what Plato called idle talk (αδολεσχια) and high-flown speculation

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[9] *The New Testament*, Matthew ch. 12, v.36-37.

(μετεορολογια) came into play.[10] When they were confident enough in their ability to contribute meaningfully to the dialogues and debates of the club, they could speak their minds freely and cultivate their eloquence accordingly. In wishing to improve their powers of speech and conversation, the Scots had much more in common with the Greek tradition in philosophy than, for instance, with anything happening at the time in England. And what was occurring in Scottish clubs and societies was more evidently philosophical inquiry than what took place in English clubs during the same period. The way in which the English clubs differed from those of the Scots is discussed in chapter one below.

Dialogue and debate may be idly and aimlessly pursued, and may be ends in themselves, but they still amount to worthwhile philosophical inquiry. For P I counts for little or nothing apart from what the individuals are actually getting out of it. What it does for the participants is more important in the last analysis than its contents or its aims or the lack of both of these. This is because P I is the ultimate human activity which encompasses what is most human about us, namely, our ability to communicate with each other and to gain both pleasure and profit from such communication.

The roles that people play in participating in dialogue and debate are crucial in ensuring they get something out of P I which is gainful to themselves and the other participants. If nothing is put into P I, nothing will be gained from it. And the best way to put something into it, is by each participant adopting a role commensurate with their own personalities. Two of the most important roles that they can choose to play in that respect are those of either instigator or moderator, as is now discussed.

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[10] Plato believed that Pericles acquired his eloquence and perfected his accomplishments by means of these pursuits, and he wrote in his dialogue, *Phaedrus*:

> Πασαι οσαι μεγαλαι των τεχνιον προσδεονται αδολεσχιας και μετεωπολογιας φυσεως περι: το γαρ υψηλονουν τουτο και παντη τελεσιουργον εοικεν εντευθεν ποθεν εισιεναι.
>
> All great arts require idle talk and high-flown speculation about nature; for highmindedness and all-round abilities come from these pursuits. (*Phaedrus* 269e 54)

In the dialogue, *Parmenides*, Plato has the ageing sage, Parmenides, advising the young Socrates that truth itself will escape him unless he trains himself while he is still young 'in an art which seems useless and is called by most people "idle talk"' (αδολεσχια – *Parmenides*, 135d). This is a measure of the extent to which the Scots in the eighteenth century were reviving the Greek tradition in philosophy.

4. THE ROLE OF INSTIGATORS AND MODERATORS.

The success of the clubs and societies in stimulating dialogue and debate depended largely on the talent and motivation of the individuals participating in them.The roles that individuals played in the philosophical clubs were important in maintaining the quality of debate on the one hand and the harmony and co-operation of the participants on the other hand. Two distinct types of individual seemed to prevail: (1) active and dominant types who may be termed 'instigators'; and (2) passive, easy-going types who may be termed 'moderators'. The instigator appealed to the passions and pre-occupations of the individual. He aroused what has been called the 'rational passions'[11] of the participants by possessing an attitude of mind which involved:

> A love of truth and a contempt for lying, a concern for accuracy in observation and inference, and a corresponding repugnance of error in logic or fact. It demands revulsion at distortion, disgust at evasion, admiration of theoretical achievement, respect for the considered argument of others.
>
> A passionate drive for *clarity*, accuracy, and fair-mindedness, a fervor for getting to the bottom of things . . . for listening sympathetically to opposition points of view, a compelling drive to seek out evidence, an intense aversion to contradiction, sloppy thinking, inconsistent application of standards, a devotion to truth as against self-interest - [which are] essential components of the rational person.[12]

The instigator was needed to provoke these rational passions because they do not come naturally to individuals. The instigator could only succeed in this mission because of his own sincerity and self-evident commitment to applying these passions in his own life-style. He had daily to show his own passionate involvement in developing his own views. By arousing people from lethargy or indifference, he provoked them into developing their views more fully and carefully than otherwise.

In contrast, the moderator played a neutral role of keeping the debate going without taking sides or allowing disruptive factions to emerge. He thus moderated the intensity of the conflicts which might otherwise threaten the harmonious continuity of debate. Nevertheless, underlying the passivity of his placid exterior, the moderator was also self-evidently committed to the rational passions. The difference is that his passions were more directly focused on his writings than on his relationships with

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[11] Cf. Harvey Siegel, *Educating Reason*, (New York: Routledge, 1988), p.40.

[12] As quoted by Siegel from two different authors, *ibid.*

others. The result was that on the whole moderators were more successful writers and philosophers than the instigators. Hence, the success of, for instance, David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Adam Ferguson and James Hutton.

In the early part of the period, the clubs were motivated by instigators such as Allan Ramsay, Joseph Mitchell, William Wishart, Thomas Ruddiman, and Lord Kames. They played a key role in inspiriting their respective clubs and in ensuring that the strict rules were adhered to at a time when the passionate nature of the people made adherence to rules difficult for them even when they willingly aquiesced in their implementation.

The moderators in these early clubs, such as John Fergus in the Easy Club, played a less crucial role. In the later period, say after the Forty Five rebellion, moderators such as David Hume, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid came to the fore. They did not take the lead but they supplied a certain moral presence and charisma simply by being present during their respective clubs' proceedings.

Thus, instigators played an essential part in getting the ethos of the Enlightenment underway. But the moderators became more important in the later stages when the Enlightenment was losing its momentum as a result of increasing disagreement, acrimony, jealousy, and distrust among the *literati* of the time. As is argued in Chapter Five below, the increasing emphasis on written and published work brought the member's egos to the fore so that the co-operative aspect of the societies was overcome by a competitive spirit.

People fulfilled their instigating or moderating roles in different ways, according to their personalities, predilections, and interests. Thus, for example, we shall see in Chapter Five that Lord Kames, Andrew Baxter, and William Dudgeon were instigators in sharply differing manners. Kames instigated in a positive and encouraging way and Baxter in an antagonistic and challenging way. On the other hand, Dudgeon played the role of instigator, not so much in respect of people as in his direct challenges to the established authority of the Kirk. For these challenges were later taken up by David Hume and fueled his attacks on religion.

The role of being either an instigator or a moderator is not however a hard-and-fast one. Some individuals played both roles at different times or in different places. For instance, Hume was undoubtedly an instigator on account of the provocative nature of his writings. But he uniformly played the role of moderator in

the various clubs in which he participated, as is mentioned above in Chapter Five. These terms are therefore useful in revealing the influences that were essential in getting the Enlightenment underway and in sustaining thereafter.

In the context of philosophical inquiry, both instigators and moderators often performed the role of facilitators in initiating and sustaining the discussions and debates within communities of philosophical inquiry. Facilitators are the formal or informal conductors of philosophical inquiry who may not themselves contribute to the discussions and debates but who rather give direction, unity and continuity to the proceedings by overseeing them. Where necessary, facilitators will attempt to motivate and encourage the community of inquiry in its concerted quest for truth and understanding. And it is here that acts of instigating and moderating will play a positive role in maintaining and sustaining a coherent community of philosophical inquiry.

In the club environment, the importance of the role of facilitators in instigating or moderating philosophical inquiry may be entirely unrecognised. For it is a feature of the transparency of philosophical inquiry, particularly in the eighteenth century setting, that people did not see the mechanisms at work in making their philosophical inquiry work. They failed to observe the extent to which the presence of particular individuals was essential to the smooth and continuous running of the club's activities. Thus, it may be no coincidence that the highly influential Select Society in Edinburgh finally came to an end in 1763,[13] the same year that Hume departed for France,[14] not to return to Edinburgh till 1769.[15] Similarly, the Aberdeen Philosophical Society did not long survive the departure of Thomas Reid for Glasgow, nor the Glasgow Literary Society his later death.[16] In short, the people attending these eighteenth century clubs did not realise that they were following a distinct method of philosophising which requires facilitating in order to maintain the momentum and unity of the COPI.

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[13] E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, (Oxford: 1980), p.283.

[14] *Op. cit.*, p.440.

[15] *Op. cit.*, p.556.

[16] Reid went to Glasgow College in 1764 and Aberdeen Philosophical Society survived till 1773. (*The Minutes of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society 1758-1773*, ed. by H. Lewis Ulman, [Aberdeen University Press, 1990], p.186.) He died in 1796 and the Glasgow Literary Society minutes end in 1800. ('Minutes of the Glasgow Literary Society', Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, MS Gen 4 & MS Murray 505.)

But important though the roles of instigators and moderators are in motivating their fellow inquirers, equally important is what motivates the motivators. They did not arise from nowhere and for no reason. They came to apply their respective talents to their club's proceedings because they felt the need and urge to do so. And the overall motivator in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment was the common desire of each participating individual for self-improvement.

5. THE MOTIVATING POWER OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

The motivating power underlying the clubbing activity of the Scots was the desire for self-improvement. Their desire for self-improvement as individuals was sufficient to bring them together in clubs and societies and looser associations. They did not associate just for conviviality or companionship, for they had the ulterior motive of achieving literary fame or making themselves better as professional people and as citizens in the community. The ubiquity of this desire for self-improvement among young Scots from 1710 onwards is discussed further in Chapter One below.

The importance of self-improvement in laying the foundation for the Scottish Enlightenment has been insufficiently appreciated by modern scholars who tend to concentrate on the post-1740 period. There is recognition among historians that the eighteenth century constituted an 'Age of Improvement' as far as Scotland is concerned. But no account is given of what 'improvement' in relation to self-improvement on the one hand and the ideas of progress and modernisation on the other hand.[17] It is simply taken for granted that what was being done during that century amounted to improvement, usually in respect of cultural, literary and economic conditions. Consequently, the importance of the role of **self**-improvement in bringing about improvement in general has hitherto been overlooked.

Without this motivating power of self-improvement, it is arguable the Scots would not have developed philosophical inquiry in their club proceedings. And their

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[17] See, for example, D.D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement*, (Washington State University Press, 1969), and N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1970). John Dwyer in his book, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1987), p.1, states that these books 'view the second half of the 18th century as an "age of improvement"'. In fact, they invariably treat the whole century as being the age of improvement, as is clear from page one of each of these two books.

respective communities of philosophical inquiry would not have begun discussing practical measures to improve the society and economy in which they lived if that did not form part of the motive for self-improvement. For improving ourselves inevitably leads us to improve the environment in which we live and belong. To that extent, the society and economy in which we function are extensions of ourselves, and the better we think of ourselves the more we want to see our surroundings conform to that improved image of ourselves.

The process may be understood as follows:

Firstly, in seeking to better themselves, the club members' initial aim was to improve their speaking and writing abilities. In so doing their arguing and thinking powers improved because they argued with each other and attempted to find common ground and, if possible, achieve unanimity. Inevitably this quest for general agreement among all members led them to inquire more deeply into religious, political, philosophical and metaphysical questions because they wished to understand each other's use of terms in the same way. In this way, purely literary clubs gradually gave way to clubs in which philosophical inquiry was the predominant aim and method of their proceedings. This process is dealt with in more detail in Chapters Three and Four below.

Secondly, it was important also that it was **young** people in their teens and early twenties who, during this period, were clamouring most of all for ways of bettering themselves. For their enthusiasm for self-improvement was unqualified and unreserved. They made an early start in their search for literary success which carried them through to the end of their lives. The Scottish Enlightenment was an overwhelming success only because an entire generation of young people in the first half of the eighteenth century made self-improvement their chief aim and study.

Also, the desire of these young people for self-improvement was such that, as they grew older, they took their respective places in the community and acquired social standing. They became equally passionate about improving society and the economic conditions of the community and everyone in it. All the mature philosophical societies, such as the Select Society in Edinburgh, the Glasgow Literary Society, and the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, discussed papers and questions relating to such matters as the improvement of trade, commerce, manufacturing, and fishing. This process reached its apogee in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when

the Royal Society of Edinburgh was constituted as a largely scientific research organisation in its interests and pre-occupations, and the Glasgow Philosophical Society was founded to improve technology, engineering, public works and other purely practical matters. Thus, it is arguable (though not pursued in any detail in this thesis) that P I was as much responsible for the Industrial Revolution in this country as for the Scottish Enlightenment. To that extent, the quest for self-improvement was an important precondition for the emergence of philosophical inquiry, without which the Scottish Enlightenment could not have occurred in the way that it did.

6. WHAT MADE THE EMERGENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY POSSIBLE.

Though it is not feasible to give a complete causal account of the emergence of philosophical inquiry and of its role in the movement now known to us as the Scottish Enlightenment, many of the conditions discussed here are those which made that emergence possible and which clarify its role in the Enlightenment. In so doing, this thesis gives an account of the events occurring in Scotland during the period 1710 to 1740 and of the people involved in making these events happen as a result of their activities and friendships. It also examines in some depth the meaning of these events and the nature of the relationships which made this movement possible. Such an account and examination enables us to establish parallels between the form of philosophical inquiry conducted then and the form conducted now. This is made particularly evident in Chapter Four below.

However, no single event, such as the setting up of the Easy Club or of the Rankenian Club, accounts for the emergence of philosophical inquiry and the subsequent Enlightenment movement. That movement would not have been impaired if neither of these events had occurred. And the taking place of one of these events is not enough in itself to have brought about that movement (though later members of the Rankenian Club liked to think that its influence was indispensible). It is the combination and concatenation of events such as these that brought about the explosion of intellectual activity in Scotland at that time.

One factor which was of particular importance was the ethos of self-improvement which spread throughout Scotland. The fact that this ethos was particularly widespread in Scotland was no doubt due to the tradition of Calvinism and

humanism which placed such emphasis on individual conscience and on the responsibilities of the individual. The 'virtue' and 'learning' that underlayed that ethos no doubt originated in that tradition.[18]

Without this ethos, the clubs and societies would have lacked the motivation required to keep their members together for long enough for their activities to bear fruit in the shape of publications etc. It also ensured that philosophical inquiry became the dominant activity in the clubs and societies that made the Enlightenment movement possible. This ethos influenced that movement because of its widespread nature and because it provided the correct ambience for the clubs and societies to flourish within. The manner in which this ethos spread throughout Scotland is described in chapter two below. And the way in which the desire for self-improvement manifested itself in the Easy Club is described in Chapter Three.

Thus, the increasing pre-occupation with inquiring into an ever-increasing range of questions, which characterised the Scottish clubs and societies from the Rankenian Club onwards, was also an important factor. Had the members of these clubs not elevated their thinking towards inquiring philosophically and constructively into all matters of interest to them, then the Scottish Enlightenment could never have taken place in the way it did. There might still have been literary and other achievements, but the economic, medical and scientific contributions depended on the elevation of thought, especially in the direction of civic and community concerns, which philosophical inquiry made possible. The importance of P I in that respect is particularly argued for in Chapter Four below.

Intuitively, one might think that the much vaunted Scottish education, with its system of parish schools, was an important factor but in fact most of the people involved in the early clubs and societies were either self-educated or educated by tutors and governors. The 'lads o' pairts' who were products of local parish schools were not prominent unless other influences brought them to the fore, as in the case of Allan Ramsay the poet and Thomas Ruddiman. Both these men came to Edinburgh and achieved prominence because of the friendships they made and their personal endeavours and not because of their educational background.

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[18] Cf., David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment,* (Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p.31.

It is also argued here that the participation of influential individuals such as Allan Ramsay, Lord Kames, Thomas Ruddiman, David Hume, was also an important factor in bringing these events about. Without their efforts, talents and genius there could have been no Enlightenment. And without their participation in the ethos of self-improvement as instigators and moderators of the whole process, it equally well might not have taken place. But they were not enough in themselves to make this possible since in their absence other individuals would have been inspired by the ethos of self-improvement and by the discipline of P I to take their place and to make similar, though not necessarily identical, contributions to the Enlightenment movement. The direction and content of the Enlightenment movement was certainly influenced by the pre-occupations and pecularities of the individuals involved. With other individuals it would still have occurred but would have progressed in other directions and acquired different contributions from them.

Philosophical inquiry was therefore important in providing the training, background and the additional motivation that enabled them to exert themselves and make the best possible use of their talents and genius. The absence of the goading and criticism of P I and its associated communities of inquiry, would have sapped their motivation which depends so much on the support and encouragement of their fellow self-improvers. The practice of P I also gave them direction and discipline in their quest for self-improvement so that without it their talents and genius might have come to nothing. More details on how P I achieved this are given in Chapters Four and Five. And in the latter chapter it is pointed out that the tailing off of the Scottish Enlightenment from the late eighteenth century onwards was doubtless due to a reduction of the intensity with which questioning and inquiring was pursued because organised philosophical inquiry and sustained communities of inquiry were decreasingly evident in the clubs and societies from the 1780s onwards. Thus, the early period of 1710 to 1740 was crucial in laying the foundations for what happened later. Though the Enlightenment could not have happened without it, this period has not received the attention from current scholars that it deserves, as it now argued.

7. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERIOD 1710 TO 1740.

The prevailing view of the early part of the 18th century in Scotland was that 'from 1690 to about 1725 there was a dreary stagnation of all intellectual life and

destitution of scholarship in Scotland'.[19] Indeed, some recent accounts of the Scottish Enlightenment, have tended either to overlook the significance of the period 1710 to 1740 or to confound it with the rest of the century as if it need not be usefully distinguished in its own right. An example of the former is as follows:

> In the years between 1707 and 1746, those lowland Scots who attempted to improve Scottish life within the context of the Act of Union sometimes were checked by the political insecurity caused by recurrent Jacobite ambitions and by the religious hostilities raised by controversies within and secessions from the legally established Presbyterian Church of Scotland.[20]

In portraying this important period as being chaotic and unproductive compared with the period of the Enlightenment proper, this account underestimates these very factors which fueled the quest of improvement rather than quenched it. It is arguable that the uncertainties brought about by Scotland's loss of parliament, political insecurity and religious controversies were factors which stimulated the desire for self-improvement and ultimately the resolution of uncertainty through philosophical inquiry.

> What is Scotland? A nation, a province, a lost kingdom; a culture, a history, a body of tradition; a bundle of sentiments, a state of mind; North Britain or Caledonia? Such are the questions which Scots have been asking themselves, implicitly or openly, ever since 1707.[21]

The paradoxical nature of Scotland's position during this period has been noted by David Daiches in his book, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth-Century Experience*, especially in regard to the character of Allan Ramsay the poet. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, section two. It is argued in this thesis that the resolution of this paradoxical situation lay in philosophical inquiry. By engaging in P I and forming communities of philosophical inquiry the Scots resolved their existential *angst* by sorting out philosophical confusions and by making sense of their problems in philosophical terms. Examining this early period of 1710 to

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19 H.G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: A. & C. Black, 1909, p.449.

20 Philip Flynn, *Enlightened Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1992), General Introduction, p.xii.

21 Janet Adam Smith, 'Some Eighteenth-Century Ideas of Scotland', *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, (Edinburgh University Press, 1970), p.107.

1740 is the key to understanding how this process of entering into philosophical inquiry occurred and how it contributed to resolving these conflicts.

Those scholars who confound this early period with the later one and make no distinction between them, do so because they wish to concentrate on the famous individuals, as in this extreme example from Smout's popular and respected work, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560 -1830*, in which he makes the following remarkable statement:

> The seventeenth century was blank; the eighteenth century got off to a fair start with Hutcheson, experienced Hume like a blazing comet, and then had a number of concerned and competent native philosophers to take something from Hume and to carry on a sensible and informed discussion among themselves.[22]

The origin of this treatment of the eighteenth century as a rise and fall of famous men is probably H.T. Buckle's 'An Examination of the Scotch Intellect during the Eighteenth Century'.[23] Without giving any convincing evidence or argument, Buckle proclaims that 'The beginning of the great secular philosophy of Scotland is undoubtedly due to Francis Hutcheson'.[24] He then moves on to Adam Smith, David Hume and Thomas Reid, dealing with those aspects of their respective philosophies which suit his general argument, namely, that the 'Scotch Intellect' underwent a kind of Darwinian evolution from theological 'deductivism' in the 17th century to a science-oriented 'inductivism' in the 18th century.[25] It is argued in this thesis that Francis Hutcheson was as much the product of the ethos of self-improvement as was David Hume and the others and that none of them were the isolated geniuses that they are so often assumed to be. There is more on this theme in chapter one, section three below.

A more realistic assessment of the importance of this period is to be found in this passage from Richard Sher:

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22 Christopher Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560 -1830*, (Glasgow: W. Collins, 1975), p.452.

23 In vol. III of his work, *History of Civilisation in England*, (1861 - London: Henry Frowde, 1906), ch. V, pp.280-486.

24 *Op. cit.*, p.291.

25 Cf. John Clive, 'The Social Background to the Scottish Renaissance', *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, (Edinburgh University Press, 1970), p.225.

> Scotland in 1720 stood at the threshold of a new age. In the past lay the upheavals and insecurity of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when political instability, economic impoverishment, religious animosity, and an ambiguous, frustrating relationship with England has fostered a reputation for strife, confusion, and backwardness. The Revolution Settlement of 1688-1690, the Union of the Scottish and English Parliaments in 1707, and the Hanoverian Succession in 1714 had paved the way for a new era of stability and progress.[26]

This at least encapsulates the spirit of opportunity that was really at the forefront of men's mind during this early period. The Newtonian revolution in people's thinking plus the infusion of liberal, literary influences from England during the 1710s opened young people's minds in Scotland to opportunities that were previously repressed by the cold hand of Calvinism.[27] The manner in which the reaction to Newton's works operated to open up the religious thinking of the Scots is touched upon in Chapter Four section 2b and in various places in Chapter Five. And the effect of English literary influences is dealt with in Chapters Two and Three.

8. AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS THESIS.

In Chapter One, the existence of an general ethos of self-improvement in the 1710s in Scotland is discussed. It is argued that this ethos created an intensity of intercommunication and made possible the emergence of philosophical inquiry. Evidence is provided for its existence, and it is also argued that this ethos is important as the cultural background from which outstanding individuals emerge. Because the cultural background in Scotland was dominated by this ethos, it differed from that in England and evidence is given to indicate the extent to which the English clubs and societies differed from their Scottish counterparts in not making self-improvement their chief desire and aim.

Chapter Two discusses the detailed spread of self-improvement through the medium of clubs and societies. It first of all contains a general description of what we know about the clubs in Edinburgh in the early part of this period. This includes the

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26 Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1985), p.23.

27 Buckle was of the opinion that 'the Scotch Kirk' at the height of its power in the seventeenth century was second only to the Spanish Inquisition in its intolerance, bigotry and cruelty (cf. H.T. Buckle, *History of Civilisation in England, op.cit.*, Vol. III, ch. IV, 'An Examination of the Scotch Intellect during the Seventeenth Century', p.278).

Easy Club, the Rankenian Club and Ruddiman's Club, all of which were greatly influential in making literary improvement fashionable in Edinburgh. The Easy Club began this process and the Rankenian Club, as already stated, was responsible for introducing more philosophical concerns into their discussions and hence for making the pursuit of philosophy fashionable in Edinburgh in the 1720s and 30s. The effects of the ethos of self-improvement on Glasgow are then discussed. And the chapter concludes with a reference to Thomas Reid's unpublished manuscript entitled 'Minutes of Philosophical Club 1736' which presages the Aberdeen Philosophical Society and which shows the extent to which philosophical debate was already advanced in Aberdeen, even before the publication of Hume's *Treatise* in 1739.

Chapters Three and Four contain accounts of the activities of the Easy Club and Rankenian Club respectively. A comparison between these clubs is instructive as it marks the boundary between a purely literary club - the Easy Club - and a more philosophical and inquiring club - the Rankenian Club. The main difference between these clubs was that the latter introduced structured debate in which there was agreement and disagreement on specific questions put by the members. In the Easy Club, there was literary debate but it clearly did not involve structured inquiry, criticism, or questioning in its activities, as we may assume took place in the Rankenian Club. A clear progression from a strictly literary club to one using a form of philosophical inquiry in its proceedings is therefore exemplified in the differences between these two clubs.

Chapter Five deals with some examples of philosophical inquiry conducted largely through people's writings. These examples are products of what is here called 'the Borders Nexus' which is a loose association of gentlemen located mainly in Berwickshire, and centred on David Hume's home, Ninewells House, largely during the period of his preparatory studying and writing that led eventually to his published books. The exchange of views within this nexus is described by reference to their correspondence and pamphlet debates. And it is argued that this nexus formed a community of philosophical inquiry in which there was profitable agreement and disagreement between its participants, and constructive inquiry into specific philosophical topics, such as freewill and determinism. Thus, it is argued that even in a remote area such as the Borders, a form of philosophical inquiry was possible which produced vigorous philosophical debate and discussion, principally through written and

published works. Without philosophical inquiry of this sort, even Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* would never have been written.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ETHOS OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT

> If we wish to seek for the beginnings of Scottish literature, we shall find it in the clubs of gentlemen that met in dingy taverns, in dark wynds of Edinburgh. There they had their gatherings over ale and claret, where they would discuss politics, books, and ballads; and after a prolonged sitting, and ample regaling, they would go argumentatively home, as the city guard's drum at ten o'clock gave warning for all citizens to return decently to their families and to sleep.
>
> H.G. Graham, *Scottish Men of Letters in the 18th Century.*[1]

1. THE WIDESPREAD NATURE OF THIS ETHOS.

The evocative picture above of the origins of Scottish literature resting solely in the taverns of Edinburgh is an oversimplification. The Scottish Enlightenment originated in a more general *ethos* of self-improvement and social interaction which pervaded the whole of Scotland and was not simply confined to what was happening in Edinburgh. This ethos, or *ambience* within which people lived and worked and breathed, followed Scotland's loss of parliament and its subsequent attempt to catch up with the literary, economic and social achievements of England. The overwhelming desire for self-improvement involved an intensification of dialogue and social interaction in which young men gathered to discuss ideas of whatever shape or form. Whether or not they met in taverns to do so is an irrelevance. Many clubs meeting in taverns did not reach any level of intellectual prowess. What was important was that they formed intimate 'communities of philosophical inquiry' by which they developed their opinions, their powers of articulation, as well as their literary and philosophical skills.

This thesis deals with how an ethos of self-improvement brought about an intensification of intercommunication among young people and led to the pre-eminence of philosophical debate and discussion in 18th century Scotland. This process began during the period 1710 to 1740 and it arose out of a desire for literary self-improvement which preceded an increasing interest in philosophy and in making a

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1 H.G. Graham, *Scottish Men of Letters in the 18th Century*, (London: A & C Black, 1901), p.7.

meaningful contribution to the philosophical debate which resulted. This lust began in the universities and seemingly involved educated young people of the middle and upper classes throughout lowland Scotland, including the Borders and the Aberdeen area.

The Easy Club, the Rankenian Club, and all other clubs in Scotland in the early 18th century were not isolated urban phenomena since they reflected what was happening all over these lowland areas of Scotland at that time. Their members included sons of landed gentry whose lands were located in these rural areas. Thus, Lord Kames for example never lost his links with his roots in Berwickshire, and when he inherited his estate, he was as enthusiastic about improving it as he was earlier about improving his own literary abilities.[2]

As this thesis is concerned about the effects of this ethos of self-improvement on the subsequent development of philosophical inquiry, it will not enter into problem of ascertaining the detailed historical causes of this ethos or of the Scottish Enlightenment in general. Suffice to say, such causes as the loss of nationhood, the moderation of religious attitudes, and the task of catching up with the more prosperous South, were apparently enough to create a Renaissance-type atmosphere which manifested itself in this overwhelming desire for self-improvement.[3]

The main point is that in Scotland during the 1710s and 20s, educated young people in their late teens and early twenties developed something of a craze for literary pursuits. It was the 'rock 'n' roll' of that period, in that the same fashionable obsession which youngsters of the 1950s and 60s had with pop music and musicians, was directed at the writings and writers of their own period. In emulation of them, they developed a consuming passion for reading and writing literature and poetry of the highest standard. Like their twentieth century counterparts, they were also reacting against the religious and political restrictions to which their parents were subjected. For example, in 1724-5 three of the Rankenian members intervened in Glasgow's

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[2] When Kames gained control of his wife's estate in Blair Drummond in Perthshire (now a safari park) he leased marshland to Highland tenants and encouraged them to drain the mosses, thus creating tenancies for forty-two settlers before his death and achieving the reverse of the Highland clearances that occurred later in the 18th and 19th centuries. (Cf. Ian Ross, *Lord Kames and the Scotland of his Day*, [Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1972], pp.362-363.)

[3] The detailed causes of this ethos have been dealt with, as yet inconclusively, in the considerable literature on the subject of the Scottish Enlightenment: cf., for example, ~~Anthony~~ Richard Sher's bibliography in the book *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1985), pp.343-376.

church and student affairs because, as Robert Wodrow, a Glasgow minister, put it: they 'wer of opinion that we're in a way of too narrou thinking in this country'.[4]

This enthusiasm for self-improvement followed the campaign for the improvement of manners and conversation begun in London periodicals such as *the Tatler* and *the Spectator*. In Scotland, however, the desire for literary improvement was more intense than in England because the Scots were all too conscious of their inferiority in using the English language, both in speech and writing. The intensity of this desire brought about an overcompensation for this perceived inferiority which was reflected in a thirst for literary fame as well as literary improvement.

Moreover, this ethos of self-improvement spread organically throughout Scotland. The clubs and gatherings of young gentlemen were analogous to mushrooming protuberances that overlaid the tentacle-like network of personal interrelationships which made the Enlightenment possible. They were fruit-bearing bodies and even individuals, such as David Hume, who appeared isolated and unconnected were in fact heavily involved in the nexus of interrelationships which the ethos of self-improvement created. Such individuals thrived on this intensity of this ethos and benefited from the training and encouragement which it offered through philosophical dialogue and debate. Thus, communities of inquiry could flourish outside the framework of a club atmosphere, as happened in the Borders area where Hume resided during the late 1720s and early 1730s.

The development of Hume's philosophy appears not to have been influenced by the activities of the Rankenian Club. Indeed, his closest Rankenian friends, viz. Sir Alexander Dick and Sir Andrew Mitchell, were not philosophers and could hardly be said to have helped him in formulating his philosophical views.[5] Yet Hume did not compose his *Treatise of Human Nature* as an isolated individual. The formation of the ideas that led to this work were the fruit of philosophical dialogues in which Hume

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4 Robert Wodrow, *Analecta*, (Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1843), Vol. III, p.175.

5 Andrew Mitchell was 'a classmate of Hume's at Edinburgh' College, and Dick was a fellow-frequenter of the Rainbow Coffeehouse, apparently a gathering place of purely literary characters. (E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, [Oxford, 1980], pp.108 & 110.) The possibility that the Rankenian Club may have influenced Hume in the development of his philosophy is only hinted at by George Davie in his writings: e.g. in footnote 2 to his paper 'Berkeley's Impact on Scottish Philosophy' now published in *A Passion for Ideas: Essays on the Scottish Enlightenment* Vol. II, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1994). p.38.

engaged while living in apparent isolation in Berwickshire. In Chapter Five below, it is argued that Hume was influenced by the literary accomplishments of a 'Borders Nexus' of four individuals: Lord Kames, Andrew Baxter, William Dudgeon and himself. And the debates between them, by letter, published writings, and perhaps personal contact, posed Hume with the philosophical problems which he aimed to resolve in his *Treatise.*

The ethos that gave rise to the Scottish Enlightenment was generally an encouraging and demanding one which expected the best of those who showed any talent at all. While gregarious individuals met in clubs, talented introverts were not neglected but were stimulated by correspondence, literary gatherings etc. In this hot-house atmosphere, young men of the same class and standard of education talked to each other and were interested in each other's welfare and intellectual progress. They apparently behaved as nearly brothers to each other as was humanly possible. But such filial affection was only possible because of the Calvinistic atmosphere which demanded the highest moral standards of those who aspired to be respectable and honourable scholars and gentlemen.[6] Such is the ethos that brought the best out of young men.

The desire for self-improvement which accompanied this groundswell of intercommunication later intensified into a concern for the economic and material welfare of the community at large.[7] The food for this progressive intensification of the spirit was the pursuit of literature and philosophy. As already indicated, the full story of how the Scottish Enlightenment developed in this respect still remains to be told, and we are here primarily concerned with the emergence of philosophical dialogue and debate in Scotland in the period 1710 to 1740. We begin with some of the evidence for the ubiquity of this ethos of self-improvement at the beginning of this period.

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[6] As mentioned in the Introduction, David Allan in his book, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment,* (Edinburgh University Press, 1994), shows the influence of Calvinism and humanism creating the ethos of the Scottish Enlightenment.

[7] This concern has been characterised as 'civic humanism' by J.G.A. Pocock and John Robertson in articles in the book, *Wealth and Virtue*, (ed. I.Hont & M.Ignatief; [Cambridge: CUP, 1983] pp.137-178; 235-253). However, the Scottish experience seems to be peculiar in that it began with the literary and philosophical pre-occupations of the landed gentry and professional classes, and had no political or commercial motivations at least until after the founding of 'The Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture' in 1723.

2. THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS ETHOS.

There is evidence that a general desire for self-improvement pervaded the whole of lowland Scotland in the early 18th century. We find an indication of this, for instance, in one of the earliest letters of Colin Maclaurin (1698 - 1746), later a celebrated Newtonian mathematician as well as Rankenian Club member. Maclaurin, aged 18, wrote in the following terms to his pupil, James Spreull, whom he was teaching mathematics, from his uncle's house in Kilfinnan overlooking the shores of Loch Fyne. At this stage, he has apparently never travelled further from Argyllshire than Glasgow:

> I think there are four things that cannot fail to make as much a Scholar as will be for your own Pleasure, Use, and Ornament; I mean, reading chosen Books, Conversing with as well chosen Acquaintances about what you have read, Solitary & retired thought, & sometimes writing, or making Discourses on chosen subjects. . . All are necessary to make one perfect in any kind of Study, and together, they cannot fail of it. . . Reading is the foundation; by Converse it becomes plesant & Ornamental; by Solitary Thought, we find the Use of it, and apply it for Wisdom & Virtue. And Writing is the last perfection of all.[8]

The four elements mentioned here: (1) Reading, (2) Conversing, (3) Solitary Thought, (4) Writing, constitute a programme of self-improvement which was generally adopted by educated young people of Maclaurin's generation throughout the lowlands of Scotland including the Borders and the Aberdeen area. To fulfil the second element, these people became enthusiastic about clubbing together with 'well chosen Acquaintances' to improve their eloquence and conversational abilities.

This programme of self-improvement, as outlined by Maclaurin, was followed by all the early clubs. It is echoed in the Easy Club's 'great design' of achieving 'mutual improvement of minds by conversation'[9] and in the Rankenian Club's 'object' of encouraging 'mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational inquiry',

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[8] Letter dated Dec. 16, 1716 in Glasgow University Library Special Collections MS Gen 1378/1, pp.3-4. Also reproduced by S. Mills (ed.) in *The Collected Letters of Colin Maclaurin*, (Nantwich: Shiva Publishing Ltd.; 1982), Letter 1, p.3 (in which James Spreull is mistakenly named 'I. Spreull'). Maclaurin, in a later letter to James Spreull (March 30, 1719, Mills, *op. cit.*, p.8), preaches the virtues of self-restraint and discipline, and the fact that the pursuit of learning keeps a young man on the straight and narrow.

[9] 'Journal of the Easy Club', published in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. 5, (ed. A.M. Kinghorn & A. Law: The Scottish Text Society - Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1972) p.31.

according to the *Scot Magazine*'s 1771 account of it.[10] Both these clubs also encouraged contributions of written material as well as intelligent debate about books they had read.

Maclaurin was clearly one of the individuals who was directly influenced by the ethos of self-improvement and who in his turn influenced others in his role of instigator (in the sense mentioned in the Introduction above). His influence through the early Enlightenment period was paramount. For instance, he was one of the prime movers in remodelling the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh in 1737. It later became the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Maclaurin's attendance at Glasgow College from 1709 to 1714 was sufficient to set him on the right path towards self-improvement, especially as Francis Hutcheson (1694 - 1746) was a student there from 1710 till 1716. They had a measure of friendship while at College since Maclaurin wrote to Hutcheson in 1728 expressing the surprise he felt when he realised that his 'old acquaintance' had written the anonymously published *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.*[11]

But the fact that Hutcheson's activities were contemporaneous with this ethos of self-improvement means that he cannot be regarded as 'Father of the Scottish Enlightenment', as has been recently contended.[12] He was merely one of many young men infected with this ethos at that time. Not only were some of the Rankenian Club members older than Hutcheson, but all the original members were also intellectually active more than a decade before he returned to Scotland in 1730.

In fact, if any one individual deserved that title of 'Father' it was surely Lord Kames (*alias* Henry Home - 1696-1782). As will be seen in the next chapter, he was closely connected with the Rankenian Club, though not a member. He also knew and influenced practically everyone who contributed to the Enlightenment throughout Scotland. And he had much greater and earlier influence on David Hume than

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[10] *Scots Magazine*, vol. xxxiii, May 1771, p.340. This article was probably not written by George Wallace, son of Robert Wallace, but the writer no doubt obtained his information from him. While Robert Wallace was a founder member of the Rankenian Club, his son, George, was one of the last members. See Appendix I below.

[11] *The Collected Letters of Colin Maclaurin, op. cit.*, Letter 13, Oct. 22, 1728, p.25.

[12] Cf. T.D. Campbell, 'Francis Hutcheson: "Father" of the Scottish Enlightenment', in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (ed. R.H. Campbell & A.S. Skinner - Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1982), p.167.

Hutcheson could have commanded. Hume had no personal contact with Hutcheson till after the publication of the *Treatise* in 1739. Hutcheson wrote to Kames in April 1739 acknowledging receipt of 'your Friends Book upon human Nature' and saying 'I should be glad to know where the Author could be met with'.[13] Hume's relationship with Kames and with Hutcheson is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five below.

That this Enlightenment ethos had reached Aberdeen before the Rankenian Club started up in 1717, has been shown by Paul Wood. He has championed the cause of Aberdeen in showing the extent to which its advances were independent of what was happening in Edinburgh.[14] And Aberdeen's 1736 Philosophical Club is the first of the philosophical clubs of which we have written records of their proceedings - see Chapter Two, section three.

What was happening in the universities also contributed to the ethos that was spreading throughout Scotland, well before the Rankenian Club got underway. Roger Emerson in a paper, 'Science and Moral Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment'[15] refers to the changes in the universities at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century as the writings of Newton, Locke and Boyle began to have their effect. It is even suggested, though perhaps implausibly, that Newtonian philosophy was accepted even in the conservative-minded Glasgow College by 1712.[16] As a result, 'divines' were gradually replaced by 'philosophers', so that the gradual relaxation of religious restrictions had its origin in the universities, as well as in the 'theological controversy' which challenged religious orthodoxy in the universities.[17]

It is therefore a mistake to identify the Scottish Enlightenment too closely with Edinburgh and its clubs. When Nicholas Phillipson says that 'there is an important

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[13] Ian Ross, 'Hutcheson on Hume's "Treatise": An Unnoticed Letter', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* Vol. IV, 1966, pp.71-72.

[14] Cf., for instance, P. Wood, 'Science and the Aberdeen Enlightenment' in *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (ed. by Peter Jones - Edinburgh: J. Donald Publishers Ltd., 1988) p.39; and his *The Aberdeen Enlightenment*, (Aberdeen University Press, 1993), p.38.

[15] R.L. Emerson, 'Science and Moral Philosophy in the Scottish Enlightenment', in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M.A. Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.16.

[16] C.M. Shepherd, 'Newtonianism in Scottish Universities in the 17th Century' in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p.76.

[17] Cf. J.K. Cameron, 'Theological Controversy: a Factor in the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment', in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, *op.cit.*, pp.116-130.

sense in which the history of the Scottish Enlightenment *is* the history of Edinburgh',[18] this is only true in so far as Edinburgh was an important focal point for intellectual activity and often a catalyst for cultural change throughout Scotland. There was an interaction between what was occurring in Edinburgh and the attitudes of people throughout Scotland. Edinburgh thus reflected what was happening in Scotland just as much as it influenced these happenings.

There are also important exceptions to the assertion that the Scottish Enlightenment 'was primarily an urban cultural form'.[19] It would be more accurate to say that it was a class phenomenon confined to the educated *literati* and the landed gentry. The effect of the ethos on the latter helps to explain the rise of comparatively isolated individuals, such as David Hume, Andrew Baxter, James Oswald, and Thomas Reid (at least before he was offered a post at King's College, Aberdeen). It will be shown, especially in Chapter Five below, that the isolation of such individuals, especially David Hume, is more apparent than real, in view of the intensity of social interactions even in remote rural areas such as the Merse and the Mearns.

Furthermore, the apparent isolation of individuals is often the effect of anachronistic accounts of the achievements of such individuals. Such accounts concentrate on the uniqueness of their contributions and overlook the extent to which they are children of the time in which they live. Thus, their cultural background of considerable importance in understanding how they became the outstanding individuals they undoubtedly were.

3. THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND TO THE IMPORTANT SCOTTISH PHILOSOPHERS.

> Early-eighteenth century Scotland was relatively economically backward. The Act of Union (1707) dissolved the independent Scottish Parliament. The failure of Jacobitism further divided and weakened the nation. Great Scottish thinkers such as David Hume and Adam Smith responded not by wringing their hands, reflecting upon former glories, or engaging in visionary utopian schemes for independence. They recognised rather that Scotland's future would depend

[18] N. Phillipson, 'Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment' in *City and Society in the 18th Century*, (ed. P. Fritz & D. Williams - Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), p.125.

[19] P. Wood, 'Science and the Aberdeen Enlightenment', in *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment*, op. cit.p.59, footnote 3.

upon rapid social modernisation and the industrialisation of the economy. Their pioneering analyses of the social preconditions of capitalism and of the laws of a commercial economy constitute the great achievement of the practical genius of the Scottish Enlightenment.[20]

This oversimplified account of the way that the Scottish Enlightenment developed is typical of accounts which exaggerate the role of individual 'geniuses' in bringing about situations of which they are in fact a product. Such accounts are often to be found in popular histories of philosophy. For instance, in Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*, Hume's philosophy is described in terms of its relation to his predecessors, Descartes, Locke and Berkeley, and to his successors such as Kant and Hegel.[21] His relationships to his Scottish environment and his compatriots are ignored completely.

It is argued in this thesis that it was the ethos of self-improvement which gave rise to the concern for practical achievement that individuals such as David Hume and Adam Smith reflected and built upon in their writings. These individuals did not decide, on their own, to refrain from wringing their hands and to find practical and theoretical ways of improving social and economic conditions in Scotland. It was in fact a whole generation of influential Scots who preceded them and who adopted that view. Hume, Smith and other individuals simply carried this viewpoint to its logical conclusion in their respective writings.

Accounts, such as that above, reflect a simplified view of the history of philosophy as being composed of a succession of brilliant individuals whose isolated achievements built on the work of previous philosophers or contradicted it in fundamental ways. But the fact is that these individuals were never as isolated and individualistic as this simplified view would have us believe. Their activities formed the apex of a pyramid composed of a plethora of philosophical inquiry which was engaged in by many less well-known individuals. The famous philosophers have been determined by posterity to be the 'stars', though they were not necessarily lionised by their contemporaries to the same extent.that James Beattie, a member of Reid's Aberdeen Philosophical Society, was treated as a star when he went down to

20 Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment*, (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp.55-56.

21 Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, (1946 - London: Allen & Unwin, 1961), pp.634-647.

London.[22] David Hume was not even regarded as such in Edinburgh, not at least to the extent that he was when he went to Paris in 1764[23] though this was probably because his reputation as an unbeliever gained him the disrespect of his religious-minded compatriots.

The eminence of the great philosophers is clear enough in retrospect but it is invariably the case that their prowess was made possible because of the backing and assistance of individuals who were often philosophically well-regarded in their day, though less well known now. Just as Hollywood stardom depends on a complex 'studio' organisation, so the stardom of the eminent philosophers had its source in the organised culture out of which their respective philosophies emerged. Thus, we shall see, for instance, that Hume would not have become as a great a philosopher without the example given him by Lord Kames, Andrew Baxter and William Dudgeon. These near neighbours showed Hume what it was to be a philosopher by the ardour of their studies and the tenacity of their commitment to getting it all down in writing with pen and paper.

Thus, an examination of the background to Scottish Enlightenment is indispensible to understanding how it happened at all. It is necessary above all to show the extent to which the work of individual philosophers was linked up with other philosophical activity occurring at the same time. This may enable us to judge the extent to which that work was derived from, or inspired by, that philosophical activity. We must then ask what was the nature of the organised activity which helped to ensure that the works of the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers were so outstanding. It is argued in this thesis that philosophical inquiry constituted that activity which was required to ensure the emergence of highly regarded works of philosophy.

The general ethos of the culture which produced these outstanding philosophers is an important factor. It appears, for instance, that an excitement about life and its possibilities leads people to seek out talented individuals and to encourage and promote their work. They do so because it pleases and interests them to do so. They see their own desire for self-improvement being mirrored in the aspirations and efforts of others. They take pleasure in the results of their encouraging the efforts of others because they see the need for the resultant improvements. And this need is

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22 E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, (Oxford, 1980), pp.578-579.
23 *Op. cit.*, p.441.

perceived because they have arrived at ideals which they wish themselves and others to adopt and aspire to. This implies that an influential sector of the community is in a heightened philosophical state of mind which enables them to appreciate the talents of gifted individuals. This applies also to the talents of artists, engineers, architects and many other gifted people, who are encouraged by this collective desire of the community to see self-improvement in others besides themselves.

But an ethos of self-improvement has to be disciplined, channelled, and focused for a significant period of time so that a concerted movement of intellectual vitality can gather pace and produce results of literary importance. In this respect, the role of philosophical inquiry is indispensible in giving sense and direction to what is essentially an emotional and passionate attitude of mind which is shared by a significant number of people. It is necessary for them to come together and form coherent and stable communities of philosophical inquiry within which their ideas are formed and criticised over a period of time, which may amount to years rather than months. Indeed, the most successful of the mature philosophical clubs lasted decades, and therefore served to cover the working years of their young founders.

Thus, in clarifying of how these philosophical clubs and societies functioned, the factors are uncovered which gave rise to periods of great intellectual ferment, such as that of the Scottish Enlightenment. If it is possible to clarify the way in which philosophical inquiry works in bringing these events about then the conditions required for continuous human progress may be established. Periods of intellectual stagnation and decline would be a thing of the past because we would know what to do to ensure that they are not repeated. This seems possible at least in principle. It may fail in practice because of defects in our understanding of the factors involved. These include variable or random factors which are not reproducible according to any theory or formula e.g. the nature of creativity and individuality which gives rise to the ingenuity and originality of 'geniuses' such as David Hume. However, it is important to show the extent to which these individuals influence the course of philosophical inquiry, give it new directions, and hence the sense of purpose it requires to keep it moving forward. This task is at least begun in this thesis.

The ethos of self-improvement in its cultural context also explains the difference between what was happening in England and what was happening in Scotland at the same time. For, as already noted several times, this ethos did not take

root in England to the same extent as in Scotland. This factor accounts for the fact that Scotland, with a much smaller population than England, was able to produce so many outstanding individuals within a limited period of the middle and late eighteenth century. For this ethos was adopted as a primary aim by the Scottish clubs and societies of the early part of the century in a way it was not adopted by any of the English clubs and societies of the same period.

4. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH CLUBS.

The ethos of self-improvement, which pervaded lowland Scotland during the early 18th century, was a principal source of difference between Scotland and England. This ethos did not manifest itself in the same way in England as in Scotland, and it was certainly not expressed through the English clubs and societies of that period. For the clubs and societies in Scotland invariably made self-improvement their chief aim, while those in England had either mixed aims or specific political or business aims.

However, the period called the Enlightenment really began in England in the late 17th and early 18th centuries with the works of philosophers and writers such as Newton, Hobbes, Locke, Addison, Steele, Swift, Clarke, Butler, Shaftesbury and Berkeley.[24] The Scottish, French, German, American, and every other 'Enlightenment' built on the achievements of the English and made their unique contributions to cultural progress.

The clubs in early 18th century Scotland began as part of a programme of emulating the English achievements and of using them to improve the behavioural, literary, and economic standards of the nation. The Scottish Enlightenment was unique in that these clubs fostered self-improvement and eventually the philosophical inquiry which led to desire to improve every aspect of Scottish society. By the seventeen twenties onwards, they sought to improve every area of Scottish life through philosophical discussion of the most wide ranging sort. In contrast, the clubs of London, for instance, were more specialised in their interests and pre-occupations, and hence much less philosophical.

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[24] Cf. A.M. Wilson in the article 'Enlightenment came first to England' in *England's Rise to Greatness: 1660 - 1765*, ed. S.B. Baxter, (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1983), pp.1-28.

This specialisation of club activity in London resulted from a much earlier specialisation of taverns which catered for different classes, trades, and sectors of the population. This was reflected in a poem written in 1608 by Thomas Heywood:

> The Gentry to the King's Head,
> The Nobles to the Crown,
> The Knights unto the Golden Fleece,
> And to the Plough the Clown,
> The churchman to the Mitre,
> The shepherd to the Star,
> The gardener hies him to the Rose,
> To the Drum the man of war; [etc.][25]

The Scottish clubs were only superficially similar to the English clubs in taverns and coffee shops. Whereas the English clubs were relatively specialised from the beginning, those in Scotland became increasingly generalised in terms of their content and their aims. In England, there were political clubs such as the Kit Kat club,[26] trading clubs such as Lloyds, literary clubs, and clubs centred on one eminent individual such as Mandeville of 'The Fable of the Bees' fame.[27] But few if any of them became as philosophical, scientific, and wide-ranging in their interests as the Scottish clubs from 1717 onwards. The exception was of course the Royal Society which none of the English clubs sought to emulate but which most of later Scottish ones did in fact do so.

The London literary circle of the 18th century also formed an exclusive monopoly of learning which did not always encourage upcoming talent, who were often regarded as a threat to their current standing. Thus, literary figures competed with each other rather than co-operated towards common ends. In contrast, the

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[25] John Timbs, *Club Life of London, with Anecdotes of the Clubs, Coffee Houses, and Taverns of the Metropolis During the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries*, (London: R. Bentley, 1866), Vol. II, p.116.

[26] Taking its name apparently from 'a mutton-pieman' called Christopher Katt (Cat or Catling) at whose premises in Shire Lane this club originally gathered. Cf. Timbs, *op.cit.*, p.5, and also Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London*, p.36.

[27] Cf. Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, (New York: Airmont Publishing Co., 1965) ch. III p.49. In 1725, Franklin was taken by a Mr. Lyons to the Horns, an alehouse in Cheapside, London and was introduced 'to Dr. Mandeville, author of the *Fable of the Bees*, who had a club there, of which he was the soul, being a most facetious, entertaining companion. Lyons, too, introduced me to Dr. Pemberton, at Batson's Coffeehouse, who promised to give me an opportunity, some time or other, of seeing Sir Isaac Newton, of which I was extremely desirous; but this never happened.' (Newton was 85 when he died in 1727.)

Scottish *literati* formed a ~~classless~~ meritocracy that welcomed new talent since this consolidated their standing and contributed to their aims of improvement. They also conceived of themselves as a part of Scottish society as a whole, rather than totally distinct from it. Hence, Henry Mackenzie's view of the London scene was as follows:

> The literary circle of London was a sort of sect, a *caste* separate from the ordinary professions and habits of common life. They were traders in talent and learning, and brought, like other traders, samples of their goods into company, with a jealousy of competition which prevented their enjoying, as much as otherwise they might, any excellence in their competitors.[28]

The English clubs of the late 17th and early 18th centuries also tended to be toasting, singing, and socialising assemblies rather than forums for formal debates and discussions which the best and most productive of the Scottish clubs became. The former were presided over by a President, as were the Scottish clubs, and his function was to rule the meetings and to keep order. But the typical scene in the political 'Mughouse Clubs' of London was as follows:

> The President was treated with great ceremony and respect: he was conducted to his chair every evening at about seven o'clock, by members carrying candles before and behind him, and accompanied with music. Having taken a seat, he appointed a Vice-president, and drank the health of the company assembled, a compliment which the company returned. The evening was then passed in drinking successively loyal and other healths, and in singing songs. Soon after ten they broke up, the President naming his successor for the next evening; and before he left his chair, a collection was made for the musicians.[29]

This scene differs considerably from that in the literary and philosophical clubs of Scotland. They often included drinking and eating as part of their proceedings but they were more strictly regulated and devoted to literary improvement, public speaking, the discussion of questions raised by members, criticism of books, pamphlets, as well as of discourses written by members. This pattern of regulated activity was laid down by the very first of these clubs of which we possess a full record, that is to say: 'the Easy Club', as described in chapters two and three below.

The English clubs had their rules and regulations but they were concerned with regulating the conduct of their members. They did not use the rules to define their aims

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[28] Henry Mackenzie, *An Account of the Life and Writings of John Home, Esq.*, (Edinburgh: 1822) p.22.

[29] John Timbs, op. cit., vol. I, p.48.

and intentions in the manner of the Easy Club onwards. Their rules were usually modelled on Ben Jonson's famous *Leges Conviviales* which were hung up in the Apollo Club's room in the Devil Tavern near Temple Bar.[30] These were exclusively concerned with promoting good and convivial behaviour among their members. For example, rules 12 to 14 were liberally translated from the concise Latin as follows:

> Let the contests be rather of books than of wine.
> Let the company be neither noisy nor mute.
> Let none of things serious, much less of divine,
> When belly and head's full, profanely dispute.[31]

The Scottish clubs of the 1710s indeed found their origin in the fashionable creation of clubs dedicated to improving the manners and behaviour of the members. This fashion was influenced by such periodicals as *the Tatler* and *the Spectator* and apparently spread throughout the country. However, the Scottish clubs were distinctive in making literary improvement their specific aim to the extent of encouraging the publication of worthwhile works of literature. How the Scottish clubs carried out this aim is discussed in more detail in Chapters Two to Four.

Around the time of the Tatler and the Spectator, the English political clubs were particularly prominent, and Jonathan Swift and other literati were very active in them. For instance, in 1710, the October Club was set up (named after 'October ale', large quantities of which were drunk by the members). This was composed of 150 Tory squires who wished to pursue extreme measures in dealing with Whigs, namely, impeach them for treason, for instance.[32] Its published broadsheet, 'Character and Declaration', is interesting in that it shows the gulf between the English and Scottish attitudes to clubbing at their most extreme. Its first two paragraphs are as follows:

> The *Members* of this *Noble* and *Honourable Society*, are *Gentlemen* of the best *Families*, the best *Estates*, and the best *Characters* of the *British Nation*; *Gentlemen*, that derive their *Principles* from their *Ancestors*, and are more affected for the *Constitution*, in *Church* and *State*, for the Sake of *Posterity*, than *Themselves*.
>
> They have no *Mean, Mercenary,* or *Ambitious Aims,* and refuse all *Posts* and *Places* of *Trust* and *Profit*, upon the most *important Motives* and *deliberate*

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30 Cf. R. Miles, *Ben Jonson: his Life and Work*, (London: RKP, 1986), p.207.

31 *The Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by William Gifford, (London: John Camden Hotten, 1871), vol. III, p.

32 *Op.cit.*, pp.17-18.

> *Resolutions*: They are indeed what every true *Englishman* is, and every one ought to be, especially *Ministers of State*, and *Members of the House of Commons, Great* without *Pomp, Brave* without *Revenge, Loyal* without *Design*, and *always the Same*. [33]

The aristocratic tone of these paragraphs (implying: 'we are best!') suggests they have already arrived at their acme and are in no further need of improvement. Indeed, they conceive it to be a virtue that they are 'always the same'. This contrasts markedly with the constitutions of Scottish clubs such as the Easy Club which placed great emphasis on the need for self-improvement and the need to dissatisfied with one's present condition. The Scots wished to become better, whereas the English already thought they were 'the best'.

Even 'The Scriblerus Club', which was ostensibly a literary club founded by Swift and his cronies in 1714, was soon disbanded because of 'the violence of political faction' among 'this little band of literary brethren' (which included the poet, Alexander Pope).[34] The contrast between this and the extent to which the Scots went to prevent political controversy from disrupting their literary clubs, could hardly be greater.

The political clubs were important to the London *literati* because of their need to cultivate political patronage. As R.J. Allen puts it:

> During the reign of Queen Anne, the writer without independent means almost necessarily allied himself with a political party. His bread was not buttered on the side of nonpartizanship. His livelihood came most often from positions in the gift of Whig or Tory leaders. Before he was considered worthy of patronage he had to make a reputation for himself by producing some work of genuine literary merit, for which he was generally paid little. When his mark was made, he had often to defend his party with his pen in order to insure the assistance which would allow him the leisure to compose further masterpieces. The least he could do was keep on the best possible terms with influential gentlemen of this political opinions. In most cases little sacrifice of principle was involved. The company in which the writer moved was of the best, and the game itself was exciting. [35]

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[33] Anonymous, *The Character and Declaration of the October-Club*, National Library of Scotland, pamphlet 1.10 (77), p.1. This could be a very rare document as it is not mentioned by Timbs or R.J. Allen in their discussions on the October Club.

[34] John Timbs, *op. cit.*, p.24.

[35] Robert J. Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London*, (Harvard: 1933 - Archon Books, 1967), pp.230-231.

In Scotland, there is little evidence of any writers living on political patronage after 1707. The lack of a parliament in Edinburgh reduced the opportunities in that regard. Those who sought literary fame provided for themselves, for example, by entering the professions (ministers, doctors or lawyers), becoming merchants (as in the case of John Fergus), shopkeepers (as in the case of Allan Ramsay), or farmers (as in the case of William Dudgeon). Also, there appear not to have been organised political clubs in Scotland during this period but only the meetings of cliques and cabals in the taverns and coffee houses of Edinburgh. Such a meeting of aristocrats is recorded by the Earl of Morton in a letter to Henry Home (later Lord Kames) in July 1733:

> Severall of our Angry peoples are come to town; The Duke of Hamilton visit[ed] Lord Stairs, . . and yesterday his Grace, the Marquiss of Tweedale, Earls of Aberdeen and Stair mett together at Mrs Thoms Tavern, where they dined and Continued for several hours, and resolved not to give any opposition to the Duke of Athols Electione, and the Marquiss of Tweedale and Aberdeen are both to vote for him.[36]

The clubs of the Scottish *literati* took the older Continental models of the club as an educational symposium, which dates back to Plato's *Laws*, where moderate drinking is proposed as part of the educational process.[37] The French Academies of the 16th century were also a possible model. The plot of Shakespeare's 'Love's Labour's Lost' seems to have been inspired by a translation of de la Primaudaye's book, *The French Academie*, published in 1589. This book is called by the translator a 'French Treatise of Morall Philosophie' (and its structure is reminiscent of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which it may have influenced). The book comprises '18 daies worke' discoursing 'in a Platonicall garden or orchard, otherwise called an ACADEMIE, ' . . with certain Gentlemen of Anjou . . of the institution in good manners, and of the means how all the estates and conditions [of society] may live well and happily.'[38] These aims accord

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36 Letter to Henry Home from the Earl of Morton - Edinburgh 28th July 1733. Scottish Record Office. Abercairney Muniments, GD24/1/496, p.591.

37 Plato, *Laws*, 637 - 652.

38 Pierre de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie*, (translated by Thomas Bowes - London: 1589), Dedication (unpaginated). Its dedication to Henry III of France is dated February 1577 so that de la Primaudaye may have inspired or been inspired by Henry III's 'Palace Academy' which lasted from February 1576 to September 1579 and was devoted to 'eloquence and philosophy'. (Cf. R.J. Knecht, *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France 1483 to 1610*. London: Fontana, 1996, p.495.)

well with those of the Scottish clubs, especially when they became firmly based on rigorous philosophical inquiry and on benefiting the community generally.

The Scottish clubs seem also to have been influenced by the Royal Society, as described by Thomas Sprat in his *A History of the Royal Society* (1667),[39] as regards the structure and aims of their clubs. The width of the member's interests, and the comprehensive range of questions raised and discourses given before clubs, has more in common with the activities of the early Royal Society than with what was going in the English taverns and coffee shops. Furthermore, Sprat's book was well-known to the Scots as it featured in the Advocate's Library,[40] and copies were in the libraries of such later notables as Adam Smith[41] and Dugald Stewart.[42]

In conclusion, therefore, the main difference between the English and Scottish attitudes to clubbing at this early period consisted in the great emphasis of the Scots on self-improvement and in their use of clubs for that end in particular. This view is confirmed by the way the ethos for self-improvement spread by means of the clubs and societies set up from the 1710s onwards, as is described in the next chapter.

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39 Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, (1667 - facsimile reprint: St. Louis-Washington University, 1959).

40 Cf. *Bibliothecae Facultatis Juridicae Catalogus*, (A Catalogue of the Faculty of Advocates - Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas Walter, and Thomas Ruddiman), Part the First, p.560. (Scottish National Library, Edinburgh.)

41 Cf. H. Mizuta, *Adam Smith's Library*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), p.56.

42 Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections, Dugald Stewart Collection: D.S. e 2.6.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPREAD OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT

> Human society may be compared to a heap of embers, which when placed asunder, can retain neither their light nor heat, amidst the surrounding elements; but, when brought together, they mutually give heat and light to each other; the flame breaks forth, and not only defends itself, but subdues everything around it.
>
> Thomas Reid.[1]

1. THE EMERGENCE OF LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL CLUBS IN EDINBURGH DURING THE PERIOD 1710 TO 1740.

The ethos of self-improvement spread throughout Scotland by means of the intimate clubs and societies which sprang up in the university cities during this period. But the flames generated by the intensity of their members' interactions diffused throughout the land during this period. It is inaccurate to pinpoint the universities 'as being the centres of that intellectual fomentation we now refer to as the Scottish Enlightenment', as D.D. McElroy says.[2] The universities certainly reflected this 'fomentation' but it was really the clubs and societies on which the fomentation became centred because of the motivating power of self-improvement (a conclusion which the rest of McElroy's book amply confirms). For instance, the young ladies of the Fair Intellectual Club were as much a part of this foment as the young men at the university and this suggests that the centre lay more in social gatherings than in the university as such. However, McElroy accurately accounts for the peculiar emphasis which the clubs and their members put on the cultivation of their debating and conversational skills.

> These organisations also reflect certain peculiarities of Scottish professional life. At some time or other debating societies have been organised among students everywhere in the Western world, but young Scots took to debating with an unusual keenness and zest. Scots' relish for argumentation aside, there were several very practical reasons for this enthusiasm: in the two

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1 *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind*, as in *The Works of Thomas Reid, D.D.*, ed. by Sir William Hamilton, (8th Edition, 1895 - Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1983), Essay III, Part II, ch. IV, p.566a.

2 D.D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement*, (Washington State University Press, 1969), p.104.

leading professions in Scotland, the Church and the Law, an ability to speak well in public was a prime essential.[3]

Even more remarkable was the fact that these professionals got together with other literary improvers to improve their writing skills just as much as their conversational ones. The lawyers, ministers and other professionals in these clubs were just as ardent in their pursuit of literary fame as the unalloyed poets and essayists. What this section shows is the sheer complexity of the interactions between young people in Edinburgh during this period because they were so intent on coming together to improve themselves and hence each other.

The 1710s were an important watershed as far as the ethos of self-improvement is concerned because the influence of the English writers reached its apogee during this decade. This strength of this influence brought to a decisive end the dominance of the classical tradition in Scottish literature. In particular, the decision of the Edinburgh literati to adopt the best English style in their writings resulted in the abandonment of Latin as principal vehicle for scholarship. In that respect, they purposefully exchanged one foreign language for another.

Thus, Edinburgh, in the second decade of the 18th century, had its own version of Swift's 'Battle of the Books'[4] in which backward-looking classicists were superseded by forward-looking thinkers who had the confidence to think things out anew without feeling themselves hidebound by the achievements of the past.

The classicists were however formidable Renaissance men who set the highest standards of hardworking scholarship for the succeeding generation to live up to. The most notable of them in Edinburgh at this time were Dr. Archibald Pitcairn (1652 - 1713) and Thomas Ruddiman (1674 - 1757).

Dr. Pitcairn was not only an active and eminent physician who did much to lay the foundations for Edinburgh's future reputation as a centre for medical research and teaching, he was also a classical scholar who published volumes of Latin poetry. He received his medical education in France and helped to found the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh in 1681. In 1688, he published a medical book called *Solutio Problematis de Inventoribus*:

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3 *Ibid.*

4 Jonathan Swift, *A Full and True Account of the Battle fought last Friday between the Ancient and the Modern Books in St. James's Library*, (1704 - London: J.M. Dent, 1970) p.143.

> In this treatise, he zealously asserted the right of Harvey to the discovery of the circulation of the blood, who thereby laid the foundation for the mechanic principles of physic, which, in this country, Pitcairn first brought into vogue.[5]

Pitcairn also tried to obtain permission from the Town Council to use the bodies of poor people for dissection, promising to rebury them at his own expense. This permission was not granted till 1694 and this is said to have 'laid the foundation stone of the great school of physic, in that city,'[6] (not to mention its more unsavoury reputation for body-snatching).

His great scepticism of organised religion also helped to moderate religious feelings in Edinburgh. He regularly met with his friends on Sundays to read the Bible but only to ridicule it. He also wrote a 'coarse and scurrilous play *The Assembly*' in which he lampooned the fanatical clergy.[7]

But perhaps his most important legacy lay in his espousal of Newtonian principles. In 1696, he published his *Dissertatio de Legibus Historiae Naturalis* in which he established scientific principles for the writing of natural history. 'He advances four axioms: the writer must rely on sound mathematical principles; he must describe only what he himself has seen; he must be qualified to describe things accurately; and he must not generalise on the basis of incomplete evidence.'[8] The application of such principles was to play an important part in the scientific and medical advances achieved in Edinburgh later in the eighteenth century.

Pitcairn was also responsible for bringing Thomas Ruddiman to Edinburgh. The latter had been an obscure schoolteacher in Laurencekirk in the Mearns, when Pitcairn made his acquaintance. Being charmed with his conversation and impressed by his erudition, Pitcairn invited Ruddiman to Edinburgh and offered him his patronage. As is discussed below, the establishment of Ruddiman's club in 1719 was, in spite of its bias towards classicism, an important contribution to the intellectual activity of the time.

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5 George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman*, (Edinburgh and London: 1794), p.28.

6 *Op. cit.*, p.31 footnote.

7 H.G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, (2nd edition, London: A.C. Black, 1901), p.93 fn 2.

8 Douglas Duncan, 'Scholarship and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth Century', *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol. 2, (ed. by Andrew Hook - Aberdeen University Press, 1987), ch. 3, p.55.

The process of English-influenced literary self-improvement in Scotland began as early as 1711 with the publication by Robert Hepburn of Bearford (1690-1716) of a periodical called *The Tatler by Duncan Macstaff of the North.*[9] It was published twice weekly on Saturdays and Wednesdays for forty issues during 1711 and was modelled loosely on Richard Steele's *Tatler*, the last issue of which was on Tuesday, 2nd January, 1711. The chronology of the events relating to this development may be tabulated thus:

Event		Date
Last issue of Richard Steele's *Tatler*	-	Tuesday, 2nd January 1711
First issue of Robert Hepburn's *Tatler*	-	Saturday, 13th January 1711
First issue of Addison's & Steele's *Spectator*	-	Thursday, 1st March 1711
Last issue of Robert Hepburn's *Tatler*	-	Saturday, 26th May 1711
Foundation date of Allan Ramsay's Easy Club	-	12th May 1712

Table 1: Salient dates concerning Steele's periodicals and Hepburn's *Tatler* during 1711-12

Hepburn set out to reform the manners and behaviour of the Scots as successfully as Steele had apparently done. According to John Gay in a pamphlet, *Present State of Wit*, published in May 1711, Steele's writings 'have set all our Wits and Men of Letters on a new way of thinking', and:

> 'Tis incredible to conceive the effects his Writings have had on the Town; How many Thousand follies they have either quite banish'd, or given a very great check to; how much Countenance they have added to Vertue and Religion; how many People they have render'd happy, by shewing them it was their own fault if they were not so; and lastly, how intirely they have convinc'd our Fops, and young Fellows, of the value and advantages of Learning.[10]

Such hyperbole at least reflects the popularity and influence of the London periodicals of this period. Hepburn himself saw philosophy and humanism as being necessary to achieve this reformation of manners, as he wrote in issue no. 11:

> The main Scope and Design of Learning and Philosophy, in all Ages and Nations of the World, has been to enable us so to regulate our Manners, and

[9] Robert Hepburn, *The Tatler by Duncan Macstaff of the North*, Edinburgh: 1711. Issue no. 1, Saturday, 13th January,1711 - Issue no. 40, Saturday, 26th May, 1711. Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Ms Df.2.47. Also, National Library of Scotland, pamphlets: APS.4.88.4 and 1.9.114.

[10] As quoted in D.F. Bond's Introduction to his edition of Steele's *The Tatler*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987] p.xi. It was not known at the time that at least 42 of the Tatler issues were written by Addison.

conquer the unruly Passions of our Minds, that in the Conduct of our Lives, we might prove agreeable, happy, and great. Now this cannot possibly be done, unless those who pretend to shew us the Way to Felicity adapt their Precepts to the Nature of Man; and take Care to render them so easy and familiar, that they may at once be understood and practis'd with Pleasure and Advantage.[11]

However, Hepburn lacked the subtility, circumspection, and delicacy of touch in his writings to emulate the achievements of Steele and Addison. His satirical sallies were too explicit and were easily attributed to particular individuals. By issue no. 32, he realised that something was seriously wrong with the way his periodical was being received by the Edinburgh public:

> There is a certain ill-natur'd tendency, which, at present, very much obtains among us, of applying all the Names and Characters I make use of in my Tatlers. This is the inconveniency of Writing in so small and narrow a Place. Every Picture of Vice or Folly which I draw, is either presently known or misapplied. By this means I find some of my best Friends are frequently Injur'd, and innocent Persons wounded by their malicious Enemies. If this insufferable Humour continues, I shall certainly be oblig'd to lay down my Paper. [12]

He stopped publication a few weeks later because his satire upset the gentlefolks of Edinburgh. They took personal offence at his 'sarcastic turn of mind' as Woodhouselee later pointed out in his biography of Kames.[13] Woodhouselee was doubtless recording the resentment that the generation previous to his, had felt against Hepburn's periodical. His own generation remembered Hepburn unfavourably as 'a youth *ingenii præcocis et præfervidi*' (having an ardent and precocious talent).[14] Perhaps as a result of Woodhouselee's unsympathetic observations, the importance of Hepburn has been largely overlooked by recent scholars, especially in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment.

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[11] Hepburn, *The Tatler by Duncan Macstaff of the North*, *op. cit.*, Issue no. 11, Wednesday, 14th February to Saturday, 17th February 1711. The use of the word 'easy' in this quotation is noteworthy in view of the fact that the Easy Club had similar connotations in mind in choosing this word for the title of their club - see chapter three, section five below.

[12] *Op.cit.*, Issue no. 32, Saturday, 28th April to Wednesday, 1st May 1711.

[13] A.F. Tytler (Lord Woodhouselee), *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames*, (Edinburgh: W. Creech etc., 1807), Vol. ~~One~~, p.165, footnote.

[14] *Ibid.* This saying is attributed by Woodhouselee to Lord Hailes who was himself born ten years **after** Hepburn died.

Doubtless, remarks such as the following would have offended, for instance, the stern divines of Edinburgh and the serious scholars at the University:

> I could not but Smile in my *Elbow-Chair*, at the awkward Behaviour of some *Philosophical* gentlemen, whose severe and haughty Looks did extremely savour of Reading and *Pedantry*. I command them, for the future, to stay at Home; or else, when they come to a *Consort*, to take Care to leave their *contemplative* Faces behind them.[15]

This passage, as well as the previous ones, suggests at least that Hepburn himself was a smiling, gregarious person who had no time for Calvinistic attitudes. He was undoubtedly an important instigator (in the sense mentioned in the Introduction above) in creating the social contacts and cohesion necessary for the formation of clubs and societies. He influenced people into giving of their best by expecting the best of himself.

Hepburn's efforts undoubtedly fueled enthusiasm of young people in Edinburgh for the periodicals of Steele and Addison. He died in 1716 but was seemingly a seminal figure in initiating the passion for literary self-improvement in Edinburgh. He had connections with the Athenian Society (see below) and he may have had something to do with the setting up of the Easy Club by a group of young men in Edinburgh on 12th May 1712, but his relationship to it is unknown. Certainly the Easy Club members had the same fever of enthusiasm for the London periodicals which Hepburn shows in his version of the *Tatler*. The members also formed their club because they wished to emulate the literary and conversational accomplishments of the London writers.[16]

We are fortunate in having the Journal of the Easy Club, containing the minutes of the Club. These are so extraordinary that their genuineness may scarcely be doubted (see Appendix B which forestalls any such doubts). The surviving minutes last till early

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[15] *The Tatler, op. cit.*, Issue no. 15, Wednesday, 28th February to Saturday, 3rd March 1711.

[16] It is however going too far to say that they formed their club 'on the model of the Spectator Club described by Addison and Steele', as F.W. Freeman and Alexander Law say in their article, 'Allan Ramsay's first published poem: the poem to the memory of Dr. Archibald Pitcairne', (*The Bibliotheck*, Vol. 9, no. 5, 1979, p.156). *The Spectator* issues give little or no information about the structure and proceedings of their club. The Easy Club's letter to *The Spectator* states that 'the 1st thing that induced us to join a Society was the Readings of your Spectators.' But the main purpose of forming the Society is stated in the minutes to be 'a Mutual improvement in Conversation'. See the next chapter for more detail on the importance of self-improvement in motivating the activities of the Easy Club.

1715, but it continued in some form beyond the Rebellion of the same year. We don't know how long the club survived but, as mentioned below, it was still in existence at the beginning of 1717, as is evidenced by a periodical of that period.

The real names are known of only a few of the members as they used pseudonyms during their club proceedings. At least two were lawyers, James Stewart and John Edgar, the latter of whom went to Leyden University and became an advocate. John Fergus, (George Buchanan) the Secretary and writer of the Easy Club minutes, is known to be a 'merchant' which may mean that he kept a shop, as did Allan Ramsay (Isaac Bickerstaff/Gawin Douglas) who was an established wig-maker. Fergus was appointed as tax collector for Edinburgh while he was still secretary and compiling the minutes of the Club.[17] The remaining members have yet to be firmly identified. An analysis of the attendance of the members according to the surviving minutes of the club is given in Appendix C below.

Having the specific aim of improving both the behaviour and the literary accomplishments of its members, it was called The Easy Club 'designing thereby that their denomination should be a Check to all unruly and disturbing behaviour among their Members.'[18] It was formed originally by three young men and the numbers quickly rose to eight: 'all of us within some months of either side of twenty-one [and] unmarried', as is stated in a letter to the *Spectator* authors in which their indebtedness to that periodical was acknowledged.[19]

The most prominent founder member was Allan Ramsay, the poet, (not to be confused with his son, Allan Ramsay, the artist) though he was in fact aged 25 at the time. It was under the patronage of the Easy Club that Ramsay published his first poems.[20]

The members began by adopting the names of prominent Englishmen: Allan Ramsay was 'Isaac Bickerstaff', using the pseudonym of Steele in the *Tatler*. But in

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17 See Appendix E below for 'A Brief Life of John Fergus' containing previously unknown facts about him.

18 'Journal of the Easy Club', published in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. 5, (ed. A.M. Kinghorn & A. Law: The Scottish Text Society - Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1972), p.3.

19 Letter by John Fergus, Edinburgh, 15th August 1712. 'Journal of the Easy Club' *op. cit.*, pp.7-8. Also quoted by Rev. C. Rogers in *Social Life in Scotland: From Early to Recent Times*, (Edinburgh: W. Paterson, 1884), Vol. 2, p. 357f.

20 Burns Martin, *Allan Ramsay: A Study of his Life and Works*, (Harvard University Press, 1931), p.27.

November 1713, they dropped these English names in favour of Scottish ones: Allan Ramsay becoming 'Gawin Douglas'. James Stewart's names were 'Lord Rochester' and 'Lord Napier' and John Edgar's, 'Sir Roger L'Estrange' and 'Michael Scot'. John Fergus's name was 'George Buchanan' throughout. This change was apparently due to a combination of factors such as a sudden consciousness of their Scottishness, a disenchantment with the Union which at first gave the Scots more problems than it solved, and also the Jacobite sympathies of some members, including Ramsay.

But the club itself was never a Jacobite club as such. A minute dated 9th February 1715, states: 'it was Enacted that the Club shall never be actors or intermedlers in politicks as a Society.'[21] And a letter was sent to George I which affirms their loyalty to the King though it also asks for the rescinding of the Union, which they considered to be the ruination of Scotland.[22] Before 1715, many Scots still thought that the Act of Union should be revoked. Heavier taxes, trading restrictions, competition from England, and the loss of trade with France, were the immediate legacy of the Union.[23] The benefits only came later when the Scots had 'improved' sufficiently to compete on equal terms with the English.

The main purpose of the Easy Club was therefore to enhance the literary accomplishments of its members as well as to improve their behaviour and speaking abilities. It was also influential in that it made use of many of the procedures which became the standard in the better organised clubs that followed it. For instance, it followed the English practice of electing a president, also known by the Latin term *praeses* or *preses*, at each meeting to preside over it. (He was later called 'Mister Easy' by members of the Easy Club.)

However, the actual running of the club was not easy-going by present-day standards. The Laws of the Club laid down in 1713 imposed a system of fines and punishments for swearing, absence, immorality, or other 'misdemeanours'. Persistent absence meant that the offender was 'declared Deserter' and was ejected from the club. The *praeses* apparently functioned as a dictator whose word was law. The crucial point is that the power lay in the office and not in the individual who was changed from one meeting to the next. By this means the Club set out to achieve its ends

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21 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.49.

22 *Op. cit.*, pp.51-53.

23 Cf. H.G. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp.513-4.

through imposing a military-style discipline. Thus, the *praeses* did not function as a facilitator in controlling the content of the club's proceedings. His role was confined to enforcing discipline, resolving disputes, deciding questions of procedure, and other functions which today a chairman of a formal meeting subject to standing orders would perform.

They subjected themselves to rigorous 'laws' to regulate their behaviour and to ensure that rowdiness and indiscipline did not disrupt their proceedings. It is indeed arguable that this improvement of minds cannot get underway except in a disciplined setting in which everyone is given a fair opportunity to have their say without interruption, fear of offending others or being ridiculed, sneered at or whatever. (See Appendix C for a complete list of the Easy Club laws.)

In promoting literary improvement, the Easy Club aimed to produce 'gentlemen', and one of its last acts in May 1715 was to record that Ramsay and another member 'were declar'd Gentlemen having behaved Themselves three years [as] honest fellows and good members of this Club.'[24] The minutes of the Easy Club make clear that 'their great design' was to achieve 'a mutual improvement of minds by conversation' in various ways which are dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter.

The year 1717 was particularly noteworthy for the intellectual development in Edinburgh. The Rankenian Club was founded during that year.[25] As already noted, the Easy Club was still in existence. The Fair Intellectual Club was founded by a group of young ladies in that year. Also Sir Richard Steele visited Edinburgh for the first time in November 1717. He was obliged to visit in his capacity as one of the Commissioners for Forfeitures in Scotland i.e. the forfeiture of lands owed by participants in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. He stayed at least from the 5th to the 9th November.[26] And on his way back to London, he wrote to his wife:

> You cannot imagine the Civilities and Honours I had done Me there and never lay better ate or drank better, or conversed with men of better sense than there.[27]

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[24] 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.58.

[25] See Appendix F below for discussion on foundation date of the Club. It was named after Thomas Ranken in whose tavern it convened - situated at the head of Kennedy's Close - on the west side of Hunter Square in today's Edinburgh.

[26] Rae Blanchard (ed.), *The Corresponence of Sir Richard Steele*, (OUP, 1941), pp.537-8.

[27] *Op. cit.* Nov 15, 1715 - letter 598 - p.384.

Doubtless members of the Easy Club were foremost in this lionising of Steele, considering how important the Spectator and Tatler papers were to their proceedings. A more cynical reason has been given by Willard Connely in his biography of Steele: 'most of the men appointed by the Commission to gather the money proved to be either relations or friends of the persons forfeiting.'[28] But it was clearly literary lionising to which Steele was subjected, probably by Ramsay, Ruddiman, Kames and other *literati*, who had little or no interest in the forfeiture proceedings which were aimed mainly at the errant landed gentry.

The Easy Club was seemingly still thriving in the year 1717 and may have lasted into the 1720s.[29] In a periodical of 1717 called *The Mercury or the Northern Reformer* by Duncan Tatler Esq.,[30] the Easy Club is referred to as being still in existence. A group of young ladies forming a 'tea-club' called 'Scargavinet' sent in a letter in which they begged acquaintance with the members of the Easy Club:

> We hear of a curious Knot of Fellows in Town, the Easy-Club: We are Fond to be acquainted with them, and if they be Batchelours, to join Societies. If they will send us some of their Thoughts in your Paper, we are willing to settle a Correspondence, which may help in Time to bring our Design to Perfection of propogating [sic] both Houses to Futurity, with a Race descended from the original Founders.

The Editor (whom one suspects of having written the letter himself) comments as follows:

> I hope the Gentlemen of the Easy-Club will have very much regard to my Desire and Appointment, and therefore I order them to read the foresaid Letter at their first Meeting, and send me an Account of their Resolutions with respect to the Proposals of Scargavinet.

Unfortunately no more numbers of this periodical are available after no. 7, so that the outcome of this possible attempt to make fun of the Easy Club members is not known. Since most of the members would be over the age of 25 by this time and were

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28 Willard Connely, *Sir Richard Steele,* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934), p.325.

29 Alexander Law points out that Ramsay's references to the Easy Club in his 1721 volume of poetry suggest 'that it was still in existence then, though perhaps desultorily.' ('Allan Ramsay and the Easy Club, *Scottish Literary Journal*, Vol. 16, no. 2, Nov. 1989, p.39.)

30 *The Mercury or the Northern Reformer* by Duncan Tatler Esq., (Edinburgh: printed by William Brown and John Mosman, 1717), no. 7, dated 5th to 12th February 1717, p.63.

probably already married (as Ramsay was), this attempt was probably doomed to failure in any case.

The Easy Club is only the first of the literary clubs of this type in Edinburgh of which there is definite knowledge. Possibly after its establishment, an Athenian Society (in imitation of John Dunton's fictitious Athenian Society in London) was very active, though it is not known when it was set up. Robert Hepburn of Bearford evidently had connections with this Society: firstly, because two poems by 'Mr. Hepburn' appear in the *Edinburgh Miscellany* (see Appendix G); and, secondly, because he published one of the poems which was later published in that book. He refers to the writer of the poem, Thomas Boyd, as being his friend.[31] Boyd was a member of the Athenian Society, and Hepburn himself was probably involved with its members in some way, if not a founder member himself. This society, like the Easy Club, had purely literary interests which did not extend as far as being philosophical.

The Athenian society is known of mainly from secondary sources though it was said to have published at least one volume of poetry. This volume was the *Edinburgh Miscellany* (1720)[32] which contained early poems by James Thomson (1700-48, writer of 'Rule Britannia')[33] and Henry Home (later Lord Kames). There is no indication that they were also members of the Athenian Society, but Thomson at least was a student of Edinburgh University where a 'Grotesque Club' functioned, of which little is known, but which was reputedly the source of many of the poems attributed to 'university students' in the above book.[34] David Mallet (1700 - 1765) supplied the following information about the book:

> The *Edinburgh Miscellany* was undertaken by an *Athenian Society* here who received the poems, and published all they thought worthy of seeing the

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31 *A Discourse concerning the Character of a Man of Genius by Mr Hepburn - with a Poem on the Young-Company of Archers, by Mr Boyd*, (Edinburgh: Printed by J.W. for William Dickie, at Sir Richard Steele's Head, in the Parliament-Close, 1715), pp.14-18.

32 *The Edinburgh Miscellany*: consisting of Original Poems, Translations, Etc. By Various Hands. Volume I, the Second Edition. (Edinburgh: Printed by J. M'Ewan and Co., 1720).

33 James Thomson's involvement in this volume has at least ensured that it is mentioned by scholars of literature: cf. Mary J. Scott, 'James Thomson and the Anglo-Scots', *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol. 2, (ed. by Andrew Hook - Aberdeen University Press, 1987), ch. 5, p.81.

34 Cf. D.D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement*, (Washington State University Press, 1969), p.21.

> light. The gentleman to whom I inscribed my *Pastoral* is one of their number. His name is Mr. Joseph Mitchel, author of the *Lugubres Cantus*, a poem to the memory of Mr. Ford. Mr. Callender, who is written C————r, is an ingenious young gentleman, and is the author of the second part of the *Lugubres Cantus*. Who the ladies are, scarce any one knows. The gentleman in the University whose productions are marked with an *S*, is one Mr. Symmers, a boy of fifteen, and very sprightly.[35]

The *Edinburgh Miscellany* is important in that it was the first publication of the budding *literati* in Edinburgh. It precedes even Allan Ramsay's book of poetry which was first published in 1721. There are 91 poems in the *Edinburgh Miscellany*, most of which were written by 27 individuals who are named or give their initials at the end. Only 19 of the poems are anonymous. There are 68 poems by students, mainly said to be Edinburgh students, some of whom are stated to be fifteen years; five poems by fifteen year old David Mallet (originally 'Malloch') who achieved some fame as a poet in later years; and one poem by a fourteen year old boy. A more detailed analysis of the contents of this book is to be found in Appendix E.

Glasgow students also contributed to this volume: three of the poems feature Glasgow in their titles, ('A Walk on Glasgow Green', 'Prologue to Cato, Spoke in Glasgow, May 28th, 1719, and 'Epilogue to Cato, *ditto*'). Also, James Arbuckle is credited with ten poems, all of them tolerable verse translations of some of Horace's Odes. He is the Irish student who later featured in the student unrest in 1720-22 at Glasgow College (see section three in this chapter).

Arbuckle was extremely prominent in his time. He was crippled, possibly with a club foot, and Jonathan Swift, 'who nicknamed all his friends, called him "Wit-upon-Crutches"'.[36] When Arbuckle returned to Dublin from Glasgow in 1724, he made friends with Francis Hutcheson and Lord Molesworth who had formed a group of enthusiasts for Shaftesbury's philosophy. Arbuckle participated in this club whose discussions and dialogues helped Hutcheson in preparing his first book, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, published in 1725.[37] He was

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35 A.F. Tytler, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p.70.

36 Scott, William Robert, *Francis Hutcheson: his Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy*, (Cambridge University Press: 1900), p.33.

37 Cf. R. S. Downie, in his Introduction to Hutcheson's *Philosophical Writings* (ed. R.S. Downie, London: Everyman, 1994), pp.x, xvii.

therefore an important instigator in propagating the ethos of self improvement and in contributing to communities of philosophical inquiry in Ireland as well as Scotland.

'The Athenian Society' was the name of Joseph Mitchell's club which is mentioned by Ramsay of Ochtertyre[38] in connection with the poetry which he says was being published in Edinburgh in 1719 (probably as pamphlets). Its named members nearly all contributed poems to the *Edinburgh Miscellany* and are said to include Callender of Craigforth, Robert Symmon, Robert Duncan,[39] and possibly a Mr. Stewart, Mr. Boyd (doubtless Thomas Boyd whose poem appears in the *Edinburgh Miscellany* and was published by Hepburn), and Mr. Cunningham. The latter is probably 'C. C. . . . m' who is credited with persuading the ladies of the Fair Intellectual-Club to publish their account of the club.[40] Thus, the extent of the connections between the Athenian Society, the Fair Intellectual-Club and the Grotesque Club indicate something of the intensity of social relationships between these young *literati* at this time.

The *Edinburgh Miscellany* also contained poems by at least two of the members of Fair Intellectual-Club, which was founded in 1717 by a group of young ladies (aged between 15 and 20 years of age). As a pamphlet survives of the rules and rationale of this club, more is known of its structure than of the early male societies, apart from the Easy Club. It is however the only female society known of in any detail at this time. Part of the pamphlet is 'A letter to the Honourable Member of the Athenian Society' which states the following:

> In the month of May 1717, three young ladies happened to divert our selves by walking in *Heriot's Gardens*, where one of us took Occasion to propose

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38 John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century*, ed. A. Allardyce, (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1888), Vol. I, p.22 fn.

39 Robert Duncan, (1699-1729), was a talented theologian whose views seem to chime with those of the Rankenian ministers. It is possible he was an early member of the Rankenian Club, overlooked by the later members because of his untimely death. One of his surviving books is the posthumously published, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Edinburgh: 1731). At 486 pages, it is an exhaustive and well-written argument for the canonical nature of this epistle. He also holds the progressive view of the Rankenians that the gospels were written by men though 'dictated by the unerring spirit of God' (p.2). The book also contains a sympathetic biography which stresses the power of his intellect and the strength of his vocation to be a minister.

40 *An Account of the Fair Intellectual-Club in Edinburgh*: In a Letter to a Honourable Member of an Athenian Society there, By a young Lady, the Secretary of the Club. (Edinburgh: Printed by J. M'Euen & Co., 1720), p.[i].

that we should enter into a Society, for Improvement of one another in the Study and Practice of such Things, as might contribute most effectually to our Accomplishment. This Overture she enforc'd with a great deal of Reasoning, that dispos'd the other two cheerfully to comply with it. The Honour of our Sex in general, as well as our particular Interest, was intended, when we made that Agreement. We thought it a great Pity, that Women, who excell a great many others in *Birth* and *Fortune*, should not also be more eminent in Virtue and good Sense, which we might attain unto, if we were as industrious to cultivate our Minds, as we are to adorn our Bodies.[41]

We shall see in chapter four that the available information about the Fair Intellectual Club helps us to postulate the rules and procedures of the Rankenian Club which was also established in 1717. The 'Rules and Constitutions' of the Fair Intellectual-Club are reproduced in Appendix D below.

No more is heard of ladies' clubs after the publication of the Fair Intellectual-Club's pamphlet in 1720. This is apparently because of a political backlash against giving too much liberty to the fair sex. Thus, Aaron Hill, writing in the London periodical, *The Plain Dealer,* in 1724 had that pamphlet before him when he wrote the following:

I shall say more, on a future Occasion, of the Honour done to the whole Sex, by the dangerous Ambition of these Ladies: And of the Political Necessity, which, I conceive, there will soon be, of putting a Stop to the Progress of such unlimited Improvement of a Power, already too exorbitant. [42]

Hill never did fulfil his promise of justifying this censorship which seems to be late addition to a passage in which he is giving unqualified praise to the achievements of the Club. He is no doubt reflecting the political mood of the times rather than his personal sentiments on the matter. Whether that is the reason or not, there is no further mention of female clubs in the records available to us. No doubt this only means that their literary activities were driven underground and remained as 'exorbitant' as ever.

The extent of the interactions between all these distinct clubs (i.e. the Athenian Society, the Grotesque, and Fair Intellectual Clubs) and their members is therefore quite extraordinary. They all co-operated to produce the book, the *Edinburgh Miscellany*, and to achieve literary fame and accomplishment by that means. While self-improvement was the chief end of their forming such clubs and societies, they had

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41 *Op. cit.*, Preface.

42 *The Plain Dealer*, no. 46, Friday, August 28, 1724, p.396.

no desire to get to the bottom of things. They were seemingly not curious and inquiring people. Only when the Rankenian Club came into being in 1717 was the next stage reached of making philosophical inquiry their primary aim in clubbing together.

The Rankenian Club was not content, like the Easy Club and these other clubs and societies, with refining the literary accomplishments of its members. Its members wished also to improve their knowledge and plumb the philosophical depths. This club therefore adopted a formal policy of debating, questioning and inquiring in a wide range of matters, and in so doing it formed a community of philosophical inquiry in the complete sense. It expected its members to inquire into matters to the best of respective abilities and to publish their findings if possible. That it was successful, may be measured by the number of publications with which the more active members are credited. These members comprised:

> Sir Alexander Dick, Boswell's great friend; Colin Maclaurin whose genius was second only to Sir Isaac Newton's; his son, John Maclaurin; Isaac Madox, afterwards Bishop of Worcester; Sir John Pringle, the medical authority; and George and William Wishart. These men produced well over one hundred publications, including thirty books, two edited works, three translations, thirty-five sermons, eleven pamphlets, five dissertations, a score of papers read before learned societies, two books of poetry, and a play.[43]

In chapter four, the importance of the Rankenian Club is discussed in more detail. Its members' surviving writings, both published and unpublished, are examined in an attempt to show the extent to which they have been influenced in their writings by their membership of the club.

Brilliant though Rankenian Club was, it appears to have been a fairly exclusive affair. It contained much the same members for forty years, after which it was decided to admit sons of members as their numbers were diminishing. It ceased to meet after 1774. Its membership was confined mainly to students and graduates of Edinburgh and Leyden Universities. In contrast, Henry Home (Lord Kames) was not a member,[44] possibly because he had no links with Edinburgh College and was largely self-educated, or because he was disliked by one or more of the members. Only one

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43 D.D. McElroy, *op. cit.* pp.22-3.

44 'Whatever was the reason, he was not a member of the Rankenian Club' is the authoritative statement of John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century*, op. cit.Vol. I, p.196, footnote 2. As Ramsay knew Kames and all the *literati*, and was an acute observer of the scene, his word is scarcely to be doubted.

member objecting to his membership would have been sufficient to block it (as was the policy of the Easy Club laid down in its second 'Law').

Perhaps because of this exclusivity, Ruddiman's Club was founded in 1718. It had Lord Kames as a member and also some of the Rankenians, namely, Archibald Murray and George Wishart.[45] As a result, the relationship between Ruddiman's club and the Rankenians is puzzling. One theory is that it also met at Ranken's tavern.[46] This would account for Kames's mistaken reminiscence that he had been a member of the Rankenian club, as he was definitely a member of Ruddiman's club, according to his own remembrance and that of Sir Alexander Dick. As Thomas Ruddiman (1674-1757) was also not a college man it is possible that he got together with other non-college men such as Kames to form a rival club which purposely met at the same place as the college men. This would give them the right to think of themselves as 'Rankenians' also.

Sir Alexander Dick also seems to have completely confused the two clubs in his later remembrance of them. He sent 'Anecdotes . . relative to Lord Kames' to James Boswell in 1780 in which he clearly begins by referring to Ruddiman's Club - 'The Father of the Club was the very learned old Mr. Thomas Ruddiman'.[47] Then he says 'I think this was called the Rankinian [sic] Club, if my memory does not fail me'. Thereafter he seems to be referring to the Rankenian Club exclusively since he mentions some of the members such Alexander Boswell, father of James, who joined the Rankenian Club later (1727 at the earliest) and who is not known to have been a member of Ruddiman's Club.

The latter club was not thought by later commentators[48] to be as important as the Rankenian club; It was a literary club concerned with 'the cultivation of the literature of Rome, and of Greece',[49] though according to Kames it also debated religious questions. Kames also told James Boswell that he and his friends attended it

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45 George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman*, (Edinburgh and London: 1794), p.84.

46 As suggested by D.D. McElroy, *op. cit.*, p.67, fn.1.

47 James Boswell, *Private Papers from Malahide Castle*, (ed. by G. Scott & F.A. Pottle, and privately printed in 1932), Vol. 15, page 314f.

48 'Of these two societies, the Rankenian Club was doubtless the most important.' - according to an article, 'Literary and Philosophical Societies of Edinburgh during the 18th Century', anonymously published in *Hogg's Instructor*, Vol. VIII, 1852, p.44.

49 *Ibid.*

'to puzzle and make mischief, and they succeeded but too well with many, making them Deists'.[50] It may therefore have engaged in debating and arguing but not to the extent of forming a cohesive community of inquiry like the Rankenian Club.

Thomas Ruddiman came to Edinburgh in 1700 under the patronage of the celebrated Latinist, Dr. Archibald Pitcairn. He quickly established his reputation as a Latin scholar and became a librarian of the Advocate's Library in 1702. He retained this position till he retired in 1752; only David Hume was considered worthy enough to take his place as librarian thereafter. He was an eminent Latin scholar and published in 1714 a standard text for the teaching of Latin: *The Rudiments of the Latin Tongue* (known as 'Ruddiman's Rudiments'). And 'Ruddiman's reputation was now so high, as a Latinist, that any translation was to be made of public papers, he was usually employed.'[51]

But it was probably as a publisher and printer of books that Ruddiman did most to encourage the learning which made the Scottish Enlightenment possible. Despite the élitist nature of classical scholarship, Ruddiman had distinctly democratic aims in his work:

> He did not print splendid editions of books for the public good. He did not publish volumes for the perusal of the few. But, he chiefly employed his press, in supplying Scotland with books, which, from their daily use, had a general sale. And he was, by this motive, induced to furnish country shop-keepers, and parochial schoolmasters, with school-books, at the lowest rate.[52]

In 1715, he edited the works of George Buchanan. The controversial nature of his commentary on these works prompted the formation of a club in 1717 of 'Associated Critics' who had the specific aim of discrediting Ruddiman.This is an example of an anti-club which had entirely negative aims. Perhaps because of that negativity it never achieved its aims or published anything of note, though its squabbling seems to have lasted 40 years till Ruddiman's death. According to his biographer:

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50 J. Boswell, *op. cit.*, Vol. 15, p.284.

51 H.G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, (2nd edition, London: A.C. Black, 1901), p.139.

52 *Op. cit.*, p.141.

During forty years, they kept up a *bush-firing* against Ruddiman, who did not yield to the repeated attacks of the enemy, even after he had been weakened by age, and was at length disabled by blindness.[53]

Such spitefulness was entirely contrary to the spirit of the times. It was apparently a product of a conservative attitude that looked to the past glories of Scottish history for solutions instead of looking forward to the opportunities made possible by contemporary circumstances. As McElroy puts it:

> Their greatest failure, however, is implicit in the exclusively Scottish interests which they attempted to cultivate. When all eyes and all interests were fixed on the English example of economic prosperity and literary elegance, there were precious few in Scotland who had the time or the patience to spare for the ill-contrived, ill-writ, and ill-mannered diatribes of a society of literary diehards.[54]

The 1720s and 30s seem to have been a period of consolidation during which an element of specialisation entered into the establishment of clubs. During these decades, clubs began to be founded for specific purposes. Thus, the 'movement for national improvement' continued in 1723 with the founding of 'an agricultural association which bore the title of The Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland. This association, which was suggested by 'the Duke of Athole and other persons of great distinction', held its first meeting on the 13th July 1723, and very soon its membership of 300 included 'some of the more eminent Scotsmen of the time. . . The baronage, knightage, and gentry of the country were largely represented.'[55]

According to McElroy, this society 'has been described as the first agricultural association ever to be organised in Great Britain.'[56] And it led to a spate of such societies being set up in various parts of Scotland during the 18th century. In 1737 a Society for the Improvement and Promoting of Agriculture and Manufactures was founded at Ormiston in East Lothian, and in 1748 a similar one in Ayrshire.

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53 George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman*, (Edinburgh and London: 1794), p.78.

54 D.D. McElroy, 'The Literary Clubs and Societies of 18th Century Scotland', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation - University of Edinburgh, 1952), p.77.

55 Robert Maxwell of Arkland in a pamphlet entitled *Select Transactions of the Honourable the Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland; Together with an Account of the Society's Endeavours to Promote our Manufactures*, (Edinburgh: printed by Sands, Brymer etc., 1743).

56 McElroy, *op. cit.*, p.20. He fails to give his reference for this comment.

Ruddiman's Club lasted till 1731 when it was succeeded by a society 'for the improvement of medical knowledge'.[57] This was generally known as the Medical Society, and its importance lay in the publications to which it gave rise:

> The success of the publications of the Medical Society brought great credit to the medical school of the University of Edinburgh, and, as a result, 'many foreigners repaired to Edinburgh; and the British subjects, instead of going abroad, gave preference to the schools of their native country.'[58]

The generalist spirit of the philosophical clubs re-asserted itself once again in 1737 when Colin Maclaurin and others reconstituted the Medical Society. It became The Philosophical Society, and ultimately The Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1783. What made this reconstitution possible was the formation of a Medical Society by students at Edinburgh University in 1734. This was firmly established as the Medical Society of Edinburgh in 1737, and it eventually became the Royal Medical Society in 1778. Thus, the Royal Society of Edinburgh has a continuous history dating back to the foundation of Ruddiman's Club in 1718.

The older Medical Society had lost its impetus and this reconstitution was welcomed since the new Society gave its members the opportunity to make a fresh start. At first the Society was known as the 'Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge' or the 'Society for Improving Arts and Sciences'. It continued, however, to produce volumes of *Medical Essays and Observations* until the fifth and final volume in 1744. Thus, the original medical members of the Society continued to be associated with it until that time.

The Rebellion of 1745 terminated all club and society activity in Scotland until 1752 at the earliest. This disruption effectively brought an end to the initial impetus of the Scottish Enlightenment. Thereafter the ethos was more one of sober consolidation and development in place of the exuberant genius and originality that characterised the first half of the 18th century in Scotland.

The history of the development of the later societies mentioned above shows how the intensity of philosophical inquiry in the earliest clubs situated in taverns and

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[57] George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman*, (Edinburgh and London: 1794), p.84. Also, Alexander Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: A. Smellie, 1817), Vol. II, p.337.

[58] A.F. Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames*, *op. cit.*,Vol. I, p.184.

involving small numbers of men generated enough momentum to carry through to the stately academic societies with which the eighteenth century ended. It required intellectual energy, camaraderie and a common sense of purpose to make these developments possible and only philosophical inquiry with the formation of coherent and long-lasting communities of philosophical inquiry seem sufficient to explain how these elements arose at this time. Without such communities the early clubs would not have created the motivation and esprit de corps needed to sustain such intellectual ferment over the remaining decades of the century.

Thus, the tremendous burst of intellectual activity that occurred in Edinburgh during the period 1710 to 1740 laid the foundations for the Scottish Enlightenment, and this took place because the ethos of self-improvement was consolidated in the clubs and societies. The activities of the latter coalesced further into disciplined communities of philosophical activity. And the young men who took part in these activities were responsible for laying down the intellectual standards which ensured that such talented individuals as David Hume, Adam Smith, Adam Fergusson, Robert Burns, James Hutton, Robert Adam came to the fore later in the century. The manner in which this came about is described in more detail in Chapters Three and Four below.

2. THE EMERGENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY IN GLASGOW DURING THE PERIOD 1720 to 1740.

All the Scottish universities had their students' clubs which assembled in taverns in their respective towns probably since the time the universities were first established. But these were generally convivial and carousing clubs that conformed more to the English model than to that of the literary and philosophical clubs in Scotland. Moreover the early students' clubs were often frowned upon and discouraged by the college authorities on religious and moral grounds. Nowhere was this more so than in Glasgow in the first two decades of the 18th century. Such was the extent of the oppression that the students appealed to the public and resorted to pampheteering to defend their case against the authorities.

Religious zeal was particularly acute in Glasgow. As H.G. Graham put it: 'The city had a reputation for sanctity to keep up. The convenanting spirit had ever been keenest in the West country; . .'[59] Episcopalian meeting-houses and their ministers were

[59] H.G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the 18th Century*, (2nd edition,

constant targets of bigoted mobs. And theatrical performances were also the subject of 'popular indignation', as the students found to their dismay.

In 1720, the students of Glasgow College attempted to produce two plays, *Cato* and *Tamerlane*. Permission was at first granted by the College authorities to perform the plays within the College. But later, no doubt under pressure from public opinion, they withdrew their permission. In the event, only *Tamerlane* was eventually performed on 30th December 1720 in the Grammar School.[60] A repeat of such diversions was not attempted apparently for decades afterwards.

The whole sad episode, plus an account of the oppression of student assemblies by the College authorities, was recorded by the refractory Irish student, James Arbuckle. He reports the following state of paranoia:

> The P____l [Principal, Stirling?] and P______r of D. [Professor of Divinity, John Simson] now found themselves so far sunk in the Opinions of the Students, that they could not imagine how half a dozen of them could meet together without talking ill of them. They thought it would not only prevent that ill Consequence, but likewise hinder the Students, who they found still continued pretty uneasie under the Loss of their Privileges, from propagating the Spirit of Liberty, to break any Clubs or friendly Societies they might have among them: . . .[61]

It appears however that the chief objection of the authorities to these clubs was the fact that they met in public houses and they were assumed to be corrupt and immoral as a result. Arbuckle points out that, by the same reasoning, the Masters as well as the Scholars should have been prevented from entering taverns.

More trouble erupted in 1722 when the dispute over the students' statutory right to elect the Rector came to a head. This dispute began in 1717 when Principal Stirling refused to recognise the students' right and the masters combined against the Principal in favour of that right. In 1718, the Commission for the Visitation of the College found the masters 'guilty of great disorder in the election of the Rector' and curtailed their powers of election according- ly.[62] When a student was expelled in 1722

London: A. & C. Black, 1901), p.136.

[60] Cf. the pamphlet: '*The Prologue and Epilogue to Tamerlane*: Acted in the Grammar School in Glasgow, December 30th, 1720: By the Students of the University.' (Glasgow: Printed by William Duncan, 1721).

[61] 'A Short Account of the Late Treatment of the Students of the University of G______w.' by (James Arbuckle). (Dublin: Printed in the Year, 1722).

[62] Cf. James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy*, (London: 1875 - Hildesheim:

for kindling a bonfire to celebrate Lord Molesworth's election to Parliament, Arbuckle wrote to the latter (who retired to Dublin instead of taking up his seat) asking him whether the students should petition Parliament to regain their rights. Two members of the Rankenian Club, George Turnbull and William Wishart, also corresponded with Molesworth on this matter.[63] And the upshot was that, in 1726-7, a Royal Commission was appointed to visit Glasgow College to clear up the matter of students' rights and the constitution of the universities. As a result of this stand, students in the older Scottish universities still have the right to elect their own rector to represent them in the university councils.

During this period, however, the students' clubs continued to flourish and, in 1724 and 1725, amidst complaints about much 'looseness' among Glasgow students, we hear of several clubs being set up: the Trinampherian (or 'Triumpherian'), Sophacardian, Eleutherian, and Anticapadocian Clubs.[64] The Sophacardian Club was named in honour of William Wishart *secondus*, an early form of whose name was 'Wiseheart'. Thus, in 1724, Robert Wodrow, the conservative-minded minister of Eastwood in Glasgow, wrote the following:

> I find it is suspected that ther was a designe at the last Commission at Glasgou in getting a peculiar set of helpers, that there has been a club at Edinburgh for some years, Mr [William] Wishart, Mr. [Charles] Telfer, Mr. [Robert] Wallace, wer all members of it, who wer of opinion that we're in a way of too narou thinking in this country; and that some of the younger students inclined to have some greater freedom of thoughts; and a tryall was to be made hou notions of liberty and searching [into theological questions] would go down. But Mr. Telfer failed, and only Mr. Wallace came. What is in this, time must discover.[65]

In January 1725, Wodrow reported as follows:

> At Glasgou the debates among the Students continou, and make no little noise. There seems to be a humor getting in among them of opposing

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Georg Olms, 1966), p.38.

[63] The involvement of Turnbull, Wishart and Molesworth is fully chronicled by Peter Jones in the paper, 'The Scottish Professoriate and the Polite Academy, 1720-46', *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of the Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, (ed. I. Hont and M. Ignatieff - Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp.93-98.

[64] Rev. Robert Wodrow, *Analecta: or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences Mostly Relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, (Printed for the Maitland Club, 1842), Vol. III, p.183, (year 1725).

[65] R. Wodrow, *op. cit.* p.175 (year 1724).

> Confessions, and exalting reason, under pretence of search after truth. The Triumpherian Club, they say, is reneued with new vigor there, and they talk Mr Harvey is writing in defence of Mr Wallace's Sermon upon Reason. They say Mr Wishart meets with that Club; which, if true, is a strange step, and he is ill-advised.[66]

The coming of Francis Hutcheson to Glasgow College in 1730 (he was elected professor on 19th December 1729[67]) continued the process of moderating the climate of religious extremism. For his teachings concerning beauty and virtue were sufficiently remote from the subject matter of religious controversy to take men's minds off such weighty matters.

> By [1730] Professor Hutcheson in Glasgow was in his class of Moral Philosophy forming a school of liberal men. He disputed no dogma, and taught no heresy as he discussed the beauty of moral virtue, descanted on the 'harmony of the passions' and the dignity of human nature; all this not in dull, obscure Latin like his colleagues, but in eloquent English, albeit with Irish brogue, as he walked up and down his class-room platform. As he spoke on these themes Calvinistic dogmas seemed to lose all their meaning; the orthodox doctrines of the Kirk of the total corruption of human nature, of reprobation, of salvation by faith alone, became to his audience strangely unreal.[68]

Nevertheless, even by 1743 the manners and accomplishments of the students had still not caught up with those of Edinburgh people, according to Alexander Carlyle. He became a student at Glasgow College in that year 'and soon felt the superiority of an education in the College of Edinburgh.'[69] Carlyle mentions two students clubs of this time:

> I was admitted a member of two clubs, one entirely literary, which was held in the porter's lodge at the College, and where we criticised books and wrote abridgements of them, with critical essays; and to this society we submitted the discourses which we were to deliver in the Divinity Hall in our turns, when we were appointed by the professor. The other club met in Mr. Dugald's tavern near the Cross, weekly, and admitted a mixture of gentlemen, who were not intended for the study of theology. . . . Here we drank a little

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66 R. Wodrow, *op. cit.* p.178 (year 1725).

67 James Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: J. Maclehose & Sons, 1909), p.218.

68 H.G. Graham, *op. cit.* p.352. The text says '1726' not '1730'; this is an obvious error: too many other sources confirm 1730 date.

69 A. Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle*, (3rd Edition, Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1861), p.74.

punch after our beefsteaks and pancakes, and the expense never exceeded 1s. 6d., seldom 1s. Our conversation was almost entirely literary; and we were of such good fame, that some ministers of the neighbourhood, when occasionally in Glasgow, frequented our club.[70]

Carlyle also mentioned a weekly merchants' club founded by Provost Cochrane, 'in which their express design was to inquire into the nature and principles of trade in all its branches.'[71] Little is known about the proceedings of this club, but Adam Smith became a member in 1752 and he is said to have obtained information from the merchants there which was used in composing his *Wealth of Nations*. It has been called the first ever 'Political Economy Club'[72] though it may only have been a club associated with the Merchant's Guild of Glasgow. However, it did stimulate interest in theoretical economics to such an extent that Robert Foulis, Glasgow's celebrated printer, 'found it worth his while to reprint such works in Economics as those of Mun, of Law, and of Gee on *Trade and Navigation*, Sir William Petty's *Political Arithmetic*, and Sir Joshua Child on *Trade*.'[73]

Indeed, the foundations of Glasgow's immense growth as an industrial city during the nineteenth century were laid in the increasing applied and practical emphasis of philosophical inquiry conducted in that city. In 1802, the Glasgow Philosophical Society was founded (and still survives as the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow). At its inception, it comprised a technological research organisation which provided essays, discourses, illustrations and models concerning pumps, roofing, heating systems, chimneys, bridges, supplying water to Glasgow, and the like.[74] This Society had no direct connection with the Glasgow Literary Society which ended in 1800.[75] The latter met in the College and was composed mainly of professors whereas former met in the Prince of Wales Tavern and was composed of professional men, merchants, tradesmen etc. (One familiar name among the members is that of George

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70 *Op. cit.*, pp.76-77.

71 *Op. cit.* p.73.

72 John Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, (London: Macmillan & Co., 1895), p.91.

73 David Murray, *Robert and Andrew Foulis and the Glasgow Press,* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1913) p.34; also his *Some Letters of Robert Foulis* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1917).

74 Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow: Transcript of minute book from November 1802 to August 1820. Glasgow University Archives, DC 118/2/1.

75 Ms. *Minutes of the Literary Society in Glasgow College.* Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, MS Murray 505 & MS Gen 4.

Birkbeck who later founded Birkbeck College in London.) This practical use of philosophical inquiry undoubtedly led to the foundation of technical colleges and made Glasgow into the great industrial city it later became.

3. A 1736 PRECURSOR OF THE ABERDEEN PHILOSOPHICAL CLUB.

Early in 1736, a philosophical club met in Aberdeen, the minutes of which have survived among Thomas Reid's unpublished manuscripts.[76] The manuscript is in Reid's handwriting and seems to consist of notes he made of his own contributions to the meetings and perhaps of the discussions occurring therein. It met on January 12th, 19th, 26th and February 4th and 9th of that year. It may well have included some of Reid's friends who later joined him in forming the Aberdeen Philosophical Society: such as John Gregory, David Skene, and George Campbell. It is certainly the first of the philosophical clubs in Scotland for which there is definite information concerning its proceedings. As the minutes have not been published in full,[77] they are reproduced in Appendix K below.

This club was however quite a short lived affair; Reid apparently resigned his position as librarian at Marischal College and in March departed with one of his friends, Mr. Stewart, for a visit to London. In May 1737, he was ordained Minister at Newmachar, north of Aberdeen. The Aberdeen Philosophical Society itself was only formed in 1758.[78]

These minutes show that philosophical discussion was already advanced and intensive in Aberdeen at this stage. They begin with religious themes: 'What things in the Course of Nature we may reasonably ascribe to the continual influence & operation of God or other active powerful and Invisible beings under him.' and 'Concerning Divine Government'. But the rest of the minutes are concerned with philosophical matters which are outlined and treated superficially. Other headings include the

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[76] Thomas Reid, *Minutes of a Philosophical Club 1736*, Aberdeen University Library
Ms 2131/6/I/17.

[77] The minutes cited and quoted in brief in Paul Wood's Introduction to *Thomas Reid on the Animate Creation: Papers relating to the Life Sciences*, ed. by P. Wood, (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp.10 & 20, but they are otherwise unpublished.

[78] Cf. *The Minutes of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society 1758-1773*, ed. by H. Lewis Ulman, (Aberdeen University Press, 1990), p.81 etc.

following: 'Of Truth Sincerity'; 'Duration, Eternity, Succession of Ideas &c'; 'Concerning the Several Principles of human nature'; 'Of Liberty'; 'Self love & Benevolence'; and 'Of the Principles of Action'.

It is also clear that Reid was already pre-occupied with themes which he was to develop in his discourses to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society and publish much later in his books. He had clearly formulated some of his dominant ideas well before the publication of Hume's *Treatise* in 1739. He has, by this time, formulated a philosophy of mind which owes little to Berkeley and nothing to Hume. For instance, he here adopts a distinctly psychological approach to understanding the workings of the mind. Thus, the term 'habit' has already assumed importance in his thinking:

> The Same Man at Different times has Ebbings & Flowings in his Character or Complexion which are the different States or Habits of his Mind. So then That Temperament of the perceptions Desires & powers of the Soul which is ordinary to a Man I call Complexion Character or Constitution of Mind. That which is occasional I call State or Habit of the mind.[79]

There is also a remarkable contribution to the nature/nurture controversy in which he uses term 'seed' in what we would now call a genetic theory:

> Does not every Man bring into the World with him the seeds of all these ingredients but some seeds stronger & more vigorous than others? Which Stronger Seeds where there is no Culture thrive after the weaker without Culture ly dead or are overstept by the Stronger. And thus a pure Natural Character is formed of which there may be great variety.
>
> May not Culture improve the weaker Seeds & weaken the Stronger so as to form a Character not onely different from but the reverse of the pure Natural one?
>
> Are not the Seeds of Nature much improved or weakened by habit of body, Education, Example, Instruction, Practice, Reflexion & many other ways, some whereof are in our Power & others not?[80]

Something of this view is carried forward and appears in Reid's first discourse to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society in 1758 where he refers to 'powers of which nature hath only planted the seeds in our minds, but left the rearing of them to human culture.'[81] In his later discourses, more than two years later, he abandons the use of

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79 *Minutes of Philosophical Club 1736*, p.2. Cf. the chapters in Essay III of his *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind* where he deals with 'instinct', 'habit', 'desires', etc.

80 *Ibid.*

81 Aberdeen University Library Special Collections, Ms. 3107/1/1, p.17, dated

this term and says only that the faculties 'unfold themselves by degrees'.[82] Reid may have been influenced by criticisms at the 'Wise Club' meetings to play down the use of the term 'seed', presumably because it was regarded as inaccurate or inappropriate in a strict scientific sense. This is perhaps an example of the negative effect which the criticisms of fellow club members may sometimes have in obfuscating people's views instead of helping to clarify them, as they usually do.

In the last paragraph of the Minutes, Reid proclaims the merits of philosophical discussion in the following terms:

> I find particularly that discoursing for some time on a Subject or on different Subjects with Men of parts, debating points freely, especially if at the Same time I am in Good health & good humor & have a brisk Circulation in my Blood, does very much quicken My Intellectual powers and Stirrs my Ideas So that they rise more easily in my Mind for some time after. I believe one that would be a pleader should dispute or plead almost every day.[83]

This quotation confirms that this club was engaged in philosophical inquiry of the kind that involves forming a cohesive community of philosophical inquiry. It was concerned not just with philosophical questions but also with inquiring into them for the sake of inquiry itself, and not for the purposes of confirming or denying preconceived opinions or attitudes.

Having now described in outline how widespread the ethos of self-improvement was throughout lowland Scotland and beyond, it is now necessary to show in more detail how this ethos developed in the earliest clubs, particularly the Easy Club, and led to their adoption of philosophical inquiry with distinct communities of inquiry which brought the members together to pool their thoughts and opinions to achieve insights that cannot be gained in solitary contemplation.

June 14th, 1758. See also: *An Inquiry in the Human Mind*, (ed. Sir W. Hamilton), Introduction, p.98b.

[82] *Ibid.* Ms. 3107/1/6: 'Of the Sense of Touch', p.35a, dated September 23rd, 1760. See also: *Inquiry, op. cit.*, p.130b; cf. the above-mentioned chapters in the *Essays on the Active Powers*, which come from his much later lectures at Glasgow College.

[83] *Minutes of Philosophical Club 1736, op. cit.*, p.7.

CHAPTER THREE

'A MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT OF MINDS BY CONVERSATION'

> The Design of ye Society being a Mutuall improvement of minds by Conversation it is Enacted that there be no gaming in ye club or forcing One another to drink Both being diverting from our great design and of times provoking to an undue exercise of ye passions which is contrary to and inconsistent with our Commendable Easiness.
>
> Eighth Law of the Easy Club.[1]

1.THE EASY CLUB'S 'GREAT DESIGN'.

The Easy Club is an example of a club which was dedicated to meaningful and disciplined dialogue but which was defective and underdeveloped in respect of its debates. There was a notable intensity of dialogue between the members but the level of debate never rose above literary criticism and the composition of poetry and witty ripostes. However, the club was organised enough in its debates and dialogues to stimulate successful literary activity. The members were also dedicated to improving their manners and behaviour after the model set by Addison and Steele in their literary journals such as *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. In the latter respect, the club was probably similar to many of those clubs set up in taverns and coffee shops throughout the United Kingdom with that aim in mind. Indeed, Addison explicitly hoped that his writings would take philosophy out of the academic sphere and into the community at large:

> I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables and in Coffee-Houses.[2]

Addison's ambition was only achieved to a significant extent in Scotland with the establishment of the Rankenian Club and the later clubs and societies in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. And this occurred because self-improvement was made the

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1 'Journal of the Easy Club', published in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. 5, (ed. A.M. Kinghorn & A. Law: The Scottish Text Society - Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1972) p.31.

2 *The Spectator*, no. 10, Monday, March 12, 1711, (London, J.M. Dent, 1909), Vol. I, p.39.

specific aim of the Easy Club, and all subsequent Scottish literary and philosophical clubs and societies, with a view to improving eloquence and producing publishable works. This is a phenomenon specific to Scotland in comparison with England where, as pointed out in Chapter One, section four, the clubs tended to be either convivial drinking clubs centred round dominant individuals or had specialised aims which were political, commercial, or at least more specific than the general aim of literary improvement. As suggested at the beginning of the chapter one, the difference was probably due to the 1707 Union of Parliaments which brought about a deep awareness of the extent to which Scotland lagged behind England in respect of literary accomplishments as well as economic development.

The Easy Club was only one of the literary clubs which seemingly proliferated in the taverns of Edinburgh in the 1710s and 20s. More is known about it than any of the other clubs because of the survival of its journal containing the minutes of the club. Most of the other clubs seem not to have kept minutes, or if they did, few have survived: the pamphlet of the Fair Intellectual Club being the only other known instance of minutes being preserved.

The Easy Club minutes show us the ardour and intensity with which its members pursued literary improvement. But they also show us the extent to which that club was not philosophical, either in its procedures or its aims. It aimed to improve the conversational and literary abilities of its members but it did not engage in concerted debate or argument about more profound matters in religion and philosophy. The members undoubtedly discussed literary matters and argued about the respective merits of the latest literary publications. But they did not engage in the kind of structured debate in which members agreed and disagreed with each other about philosophical and theological matters. Such a community of philosophical inquiry only came with the Rankenian Club as is argued in the next chapter.

The 'great design' of the Easy Club was to achieve 'a mutual improvement of minds by conversation'. This was laid down in the Eighth Law of the Club as quoted at the head of this chapter. The minutes of the Easy Club make clear that they aimed to achieve their 'great design' in various ways which may be outlined as follows:

(1) Their primary, though unstated, aim was to improve their use of the English language for written, if not spoken, purposes. This meant avoiding the use of the Scottish dialect, except for limited poetical purposes.

(2) They committed themselves to obey the laws enforced by the *praeses* because they needed the discipline of these restrictions to achieve their 'great design'. The implication is that they were inclined towards unruly, drunken, and pugnacious behaviour if they were not restrained and restricted by the enforcement of these laws.

(3) The improvement of minds to be achieved concerned their ability not only to read good literature and to write English to the best standard, they also wished to improve their eloquence by means of conversation. This was especially important to those members who were training to be lawyers.

(4) However, the kind of conversation encouraged by the Easy Club was not particularly philosophical, to judge from the contents of the minutes. The ambitions of the members were limited to what now would be called literary as opposed to philosophical pursuits. While it was a model literary club in terms of the strictness of its devotion to literary ends, its activities are not sufficient to explain the astonishing upsurge of philosophical productions which occurred later in the century.

However well-intentioned the aims of the Club were, there is little doubt that its success and its cohesiveness owed much to the personality and perseverance of Allan Ramsay, which is now to be examined.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF ALLAN RAMSAY.

Allan Ramsay is an early example of an 'instigator' (as defined in the Introduction) whose strength of personality greatly influenced the ethos of self-improvement in Edinburgh. His extraverted,[3] larger-than-life personality contributed much to the enthusiasm for literature which emerged in early 18th century Edinburgh. He was evidently a restless, energetic person given to fits of raucous laughter. To the sober citizens of Edinburgh he seemed no more than a 'convivial buffoon' which is how.one of his contemporaries characterised him.[2] These traits, together with his trade as periwig maker and seller, no doubt made him 'a weel-kent' figure among the gentry who patronised his shop. His contacts with the gentry probably provided an opportunity for him to ply them with printed copies of his early

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[3] This spelling of 'extravert' is Jung's own (and he invented the term), whereas the spelling 'extrovert' is simply to bring it into line with 'introvert', though both are acknowledged in dictionaries. Cf. *The Collected Works of Carl G. Jung*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, (Princeton University Press), Vol. 6, Part II, 'General Descriptions of the Types', paras. 556f.

poems (and some copies of these formed part of the Easy Club manuscripts together with the journal or minutes). In this way, Ramsay's fame as a poet spread and grew until he was able to compile a considerable list of subscribers to his published book of poems in 1721. His poetry was also popular among the women of Edinburgh who 'were wont to send out their children with a penny to buy "Ramsay's last piece".'[4]

It is apparent that Ramsay had 'a guid conceit o' himsel', that is to say, a high opinion of his own abilities. He brought this self-confidence into the Easy Club and one can well imagine them toasting themselves in the 'here's to us, wha's like us' fashion that characterised the Scottish Enlightenment at its most exuberant.

However, the same sociable traits that made possible Ramsay's fame and success in his own lifetime, ensured that his poetry has not withstood the test of time. His prolific output of poetry is impressive by any standards but its quality suffered as a result. On the whole, his poetry was as slap-dash and shallow as it was unrevised and uncritical. One searches in vain for a modicum of philosophical reasoning in the substantial poetical works of Allan Ramsay. His philosophy of life perhaps consisted in living for the present moment; a philosophy justified by his scepticism of human powers as exemplified in the following poem:

> What lofty Thoughts do sometimes push a Man
> Beyond the Verge of his own native Span!
> Keep low thy Thoughts, frail Clay, nor boast thy Pow'r;
> Fate will be Fate: And since there's nothing sure,
> Vex not thy Self too much, but catch th' auspicious Hour.[5]

Moreover, David Daiches has pointed out that Ramsay was 'a mixed and confused character' having two sides to him:

> Isaac Bickerstaff and Gavin Douglas; a gentleman of the Augustan Age and an ardent Scottish patriot; an admirer of Pope and Gay and Matthew Prior and a devoted champion of the older Scottish makars and of the use of vernacular Scots by contemporary Scottish poets; a seeker after polish and good breeding and a vulgar little gossip whose schoolboy snigger spoils many of his poems; . . .The dualism in Ramsay's life and character was deep-seated and corresponded to a dualism in the Scottish culture of his day.[6]

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[4] George Chalmers 'The Life of Allan Ramsay' in *The Poetical Works of Allan Ramsay*, (London, Edinburgh: A. Fullarton & Co., 1853), Vol. I, p.xii.

[5] From 'The Morning Interview' in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. I, p.3.

[6] David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth-Century*

This dualism in Ramsay's character never did find any resolution, and his poetry remained uncritically hasty and ill-considered to the end of his life. This failure of Ramsay to further develop and improve his literary abilities and to resolve the paradoxes endemic in his character, may be attributed to his inability to inquire, question and criticise himself, his literary output, and the environment in which he found himself. His convivial bent was such that he was unable or unwilling to take himself or his work too seriously. He might have echoed the sentiments of Dr. Johnson's fellow-collegian who said: 'I have tried too in my time to be a philosopher; but, I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in'.[7] It is therefore arguable that Ramsay failed to make more of himself and his talents specifically because he was never inducted into the philosophical inquiry which did so much to help his fellow Scots in the Rankenian Club and its successor clubs to resolve their conflicts and develop their critical faculties.

The extensive literary and convivial influence which Ramsay had on Edinburgh society was not the only one of its kind. One of the cultural conditions which led to the Scottish Enlightenment was the dominance in Edinburgh during the first half of the eighteenth century of a succession of extraverted, convivial, cultured men, namely: Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, Allan Ramsay the poet, and Henry Home (Lord Kames).

These writers flourished in the disciplined, restrained and often bigoted society which at least ensured that their immense energies were channelled towards literary accomplishments rather than towards subversive or amoral activities. However, as we have seen in the last chapter, the influence of Dr. Pitcairn was a backward-looking one which referred to the classical tradition as being an inspiration for literary achievement. He wrote a great deal of Latin poetry and was a patron of Thomas Ruddiman who was also a dedicated Latinist scholar. With Allan Ramsay and his fellow Easy Club members, we see something of a sea-change in that they were concerned with emulating the accomplishments of contemporary writers in London. This profoundly influenced the kind of 'improvement of minds' which the Easy Club aspired to, as will now be examined.

Experience, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.27-28.

[7] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, (1791 - London: J.M. Dent, 1949), Vol. Two, p.218. The fellow-collegian was Mr. Edwards.

3. THE NATURE OF THE IMPROVEMENT SOUGHT BY THE EASY CLUB MEMBERS.

Being the dominant personality in the Easy Club, Allan Ramsay contributed more poetry and witticisms than anyone else, and was elected *praeses* nine times; three or four times more than anyone else (see Appendix B for more details). There is also a notable hiatus in the records of the Club from August 1712 till November 1713. Ramsay's courting of Christian Ross whom he married on 14th December may have been a contributory factor, as well as the fact that several members moved from Edinburgh about that time.[8]

But while Ramsay was the life and soul of the Club, the importance of his contribution to it lay through his poetry. The opinion of the Club was that he composed his thoughts better in poetry than in prose (see the poem 'On Wit' quoted in section 6). John Fergus, the secretary, was the prose writer of the Club, to the extent of being its philosopher and thinker.[9] He wrote the Journal, and he probably coined the phrase 'a mutual improvement of minds by conversation'; it appears not only in the Eighth Law, but also in the introductory paragraph of the Journal as 'a Mutual improvement in Conversation'.[10] He was certainly the author of the elaborate justification of the word 'Easy'[11] which is discussed further in the section four below. Considerable thought was put into the composition both of the introductory paragraph and of the paper in which the 'easiness' of the Club is clarified; doubtless more thought than Ramsay himself was able and willing to exercise.

Fergus therefore set out to clarify the extent to which the Club was dedicated to improving the minds of its members. The contents of the Journal show that this improvement was to be striven for within the context of the Club's activities. The poetical and witty contributions of the members were presented to the Club and, in some instances, were requested by the Club through the dictates of the *praeses*. The latter performed the function of facilitator in controlling the Club proceedings and in ensuring that the aims and purposes of their meetings were adhered to.

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8 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.27.

9 His brief life, containing previously unpublished details about him, is to be found in Appendix D below.

10 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.5.

11 *Op. cit.*, pp.46-47.

The individuality of each member was developed in relation to the Club and not in isolation from it. In so far as the members' efforts were solitary, they were to be devoted to those writings that would contribute meaningfully to the Club's activities, retain the interest of the other members, and hopefully gain their approval and encouragement.

The possibility that a member could achieve literary improvement while labouring in complete solitude would not have occurred to them. Each member needed the Club to bring out the best in themselves. The development of each member's capacities depended on his success in contributing to the Club and in gaining both the criticism and the plaudits bestowed on him by other members. Thus, the mind of the individual was something intimately related to the affairs of the Club and not something entirely peculiar to himself. Improving the mind meant improving the individual's ability to contribute to the literary achievements of the Club.

In eighteenth century Scotland it was difficult, if not impossible, for people to think of themselves as individuals who are totally distinct from and independent of the social structure into which they were born. They were brought up to be members of their family and to take their place in the community to a much greater extent than is nowadays the case. Thus, in the *Scots Magazine* of 1771, we find the following response to Roussellian notions concerning the nobility of the savage:

> In the rude state of society, say our opposers, men are detached and independent. I deny it not, Sir; but I am incapable to feel the charms of this independence. What is an independent man? He is a monster in the scale of being; – a mere blank in creation; – a solitary wretch; – concentrated in his own little existence, – and cursed with independence. It is the glory of the state I am defending, that it excludes all independence. – It unites the interests of all men together. It makes them cease in a manner to have a separate existence. – It knits them into one great body, whose members are many, but which possesses one heart and one soul.[12]

The Scots in the eighteenth century therefore had the same attitude as the ancient Greeks towards 'idiots' in the original sense of the word, that is to say, towards people who were 'idiosyncratic' enough not to participate in society as 'political animals' in Aristotle's sense of that phrase. Their clubs and societies gave them

12 *The Scots Magazine*, Vol XXXIII, June 1771, pp.291-2; Debate in the Ec-t-c Society, Glasgow, 10th June: 'Whether the rude or civilised state is most to be preferred?'

opportunity to avoid such 'idiocy' by their contributions to their proceeded. The clubs and societies thereby acted as an antidote against eccentric individualism and gave their members equal opportunities so that they were essentially democratic in their treatment of members.[13] This is doubtless the origin of what George Davie has called 'The Democratic Intellect' which has characterised the Scottish outlook ever since.[14] This outlook inevitably conflicts with the individualism of liberal capitalism which it considered to be 'idiotic' compared with its own which 'combined metaphysical intellectualism of an anti-empirical sort with a certain measure of democratic sympathies.'[15]

Thus, the discipline and commitment which the Easy Club imposed on its members had the aim of training its members to take their place in a society in which their individuality was submerged to a greater or lesser extent. They were being trained to channel that individuality into spheres of activity which were socially acceptable. To that purpose, each member was in effect required to lay open the contents of their minds to the inspection of other members. For progress in improving the mind required the individual to be painfully aware of his shortcomings as well as of his strong points.

The members did not think of their 'minds' as being distinct from their 'bodies' in any Cartesian fashion. Their mental activity was intimately related to the collective 'mind' of the Club. Whatever the Club decided that they must do, by command of the *praeses*, they minded (in the Scottish sense) to do what they were told without question.

Thus, for example, on 25th July 1712, a critical poem and letter from two outsiders was presented to the Club. 'Lord Rochester' was appointed to answer the poem with another poem and 'Mr. George Buchanan' (John Fergus) to answer the letter. Both these answers were given to the Club on 28th July.[16] Failure to produce these would not have incurred any fines or punishments but would have meant some loss of face and prestige in the eyes of their fellow members.

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13 Cf. Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of a Democratic Community*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989, pp.1.

14 George Davie, *The Democratic Intellect*, Edinburgh University Press, 1981, p.75.

15 Davie, *op. cit.*, p.xiv and cf. Berry, *op. cit.*, p.15.

16 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, pp.20-26.

On being accepted by the Club, the replies of 'Rochester' and 'Buchanan' became replies of the Club rather than of the individuals. They ceased to be the products of the minds of the individuals and became part of the collective mind of the Club. Thus, the mental activity involved in producing these replies also belonged to the Club until the latter were accepted and applauded by the other members. Their contributions then became the property of the Club and a part of the collective 'mind' of the club rather than an idiosyncratic production of an individual's mind. The Club thus became a distinct 'community' even though it did not adopt philosophical inquiry as part of its proceedings.

The minds of the members were thus to be improved by being involved in that community of literary conversation (such a community being, as it were, one stage below that of a community of philosophical inquiry). That the member's minds were to be improved in relation to the communal activities of the Club is also reinforced by the fact that the improvement was to be achieved 'by conversation'. What the Easy Club members meant by that was not a structured debate directed on specific subjects to the exclusion of all others. What they meant was only an exchange of views, or perhaps a challenging and clashing of minds by which egos are bolstered or deflated, as the case may be. It might involve attempting to win the argument, or a demonstration of wit and ingenuity.

Ideally, they wished, in their conversation, to elevate their minds above the commonplace and thus approach divine perfection and attain virtuous behaviour. But in practice their conversation seems to have been unstructured and rather whimsical. They do not appear have entered into any serious minded debates in which members took different sides on some topic of mutual interest. Rather their disagreements were liable to lapse into squabbling which the *praeses* had to use his authority to check and keep under control.

Nevertheless, they were motivated by the ideal of improving their minds 'through conversation' by which the members wished to improve themselves in at least three areas: literary, moral, and social. The literary improvement involved emulating the English writers of the time and writing and speaking in English of the highest literary standards. The moral and social improvement was to be brought about by imposing discipline on the members through the laws and the 'commendable easiness' to which they were required to conform. This is discussed further in section five of this

chapter. The improvement of minds was also to be achieved through the adoption of pseudonyms: a practice now to be discussed.

4. WHY THE MEMBERS USED PSEUDONYMS IN THEIR MEETINGS.

Alexander Law in his article, 'Allan Ramsay and the Easy Club', states that 'it was common practice in some Edinburgh clubs to use pseudonyms in this way'. But the examples he gives are all of later clubs:

> The custom, which still exists in at least one Edinburgh club, while adding to the fun of the proceedings, makes also for a kind of democratic familiarity.[17]

However, the idea of using pseudonyms appears to have originated with the Easy Club and it may have been suggested by John Fergus's use of the pseudonym, 'George Buchanan', in his poem about Mary Queen of Scots published as a pamphlet in 1711.[18] This poem, in the style of Alexander Pope, suggests Jacobite, or at least pro-French, sympathies, since it ends thus:

> Grant me, ye destinies, to live so long
> Till France and Scotland's Union be my song
> An Union which may Time and Death defy
> And with the Stars have Co-eternity.

The Easy Club members had more serious reasons for using pseudonyms in their meetings than that of promoting fun and familiarity, as Law suggests. The rationale for doing so is given in the introductory remarks of the Journal as follows:

> . . each of them are stil'd with a particular name taken from some eminent person whose Character tho they are Sensible of their own insufficiency fully to Maintain yet everyone knowing something of his patrons history have him before them as an example which as the wise say is more prevalent in Reformation than precept And each member being always call'd by his Patrons

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17 Alexander Law, 'Allan Ramsay and the Easy Club', *Scottish Literary Journal*, Vol. 16, no. 2, November 1989, p.21.

18 [George Buchanan], *Epithalamium upon the Marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the Dauphin of France*, National Library of Scotland, pamphlet 1/98 H14. The attribution to 'George Buchanan' is in an ink-written note of some antiquity. This pamphlet has hitherto been completely overlooked by scholars.

> Name at the meeting makes it impossible he should forget to Copy which is Laudable in him and what is not so to Reject.[19]

The members thought that by taking on the identity of some admired, but dead, person, they would each have an example to live up to, even though their talents might be more limited than those of their patrons. Being so named in the meetings, they would follow what was praiseworthy about their patrons but reject what was not so. They would thus forget themselves and to some extent lose their own identities in favour of those of their patrons.

Thus, the members' identities were submerged in the activities of the Club not only because they were of 'one mind' but also because of the anonymity which they sought by adopting the names of dead 'patrons'. The fact that their respective patrons were dead meant that they were in a sense reviving the memory of the person. The aim was obviously to recapture the spirit of the dead person and thereby bring themselves up to the latter's literary standards. It was thus part of the improving process.

They saw themselves as 'perpetuating the memory of the first founders of the Club' (13th April 1715[20]). John Fergus wrote the following lines to justify this practice:

> Stretching to the end of time, a publick care
> was provident that each should have one heir
> To Represent him and to bear his Name
> and to Remotest ages Sing his fame.

The phrases 'publick care' and 'remotest ages' are of particular interest here because it implies that they had a duty to the public and to posterity to bring their 'patrons' to the attention of the latter. By chosing the names of famous men of old, the members signified their wish to be as renowned or heroic as their patrons. Thus, at the very least, the members wanted to make themselves useful to society, even if they lacked the talents and abilities to achieve the fame of their patrons.

The use of pseudonyms also helped to preserve the anonymity of the members as far as outsiders were concerned. This was important at a time when gatherings of any kind could be regarded with suspicion by the authorities, both secular and ecclesiatical. Thus, the Fair Intellectual Club made it one of their rules 'never directly nor indirectly reveal or make known, without the Consent of the whole Club asked and

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19 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.* p.3.

20 *Op. cit.* p.56.

given, the Names of the Members, of Nature of the Club'.[21] So successful were they that we have no idea who any of the members were, even though they have left us a considerable amount of information about the circumstances of the Club's formation and its rules.

5. THE 'EASINESS' OF THE EASY CLUB.

The general aim in calling the Club 'Easy' was to ensure that the name itself would act as 'a Check to all unruly and disrupting behaviour about their Members'.[22] Further reasons for calling it 'easy' were given in a paper presented to the Club on Jan 12, 1715, by 'Mr. George Buchanan' (John Fergus) in which he gave the following explanation of the 'easiness' of the club:

> Easy as it belongs to Us is not to be understood as Stupidity or dullness of Intellect, a Scottish indolence or a Stoicall [Mingling?] of the Naturall impression of things on our Minds or bodies But as it is ours it imports a Composure, Contentment and Ease of mind maintain'd by a just apprehension of things and Declares our Resolution not to eradicate or imprison the passions But to endeavour the improvement of them to all the Noble ends of their implantation in us By Reducing them into order and harmony under the Conduct of Reason Their Naturall Sovereign Believing with the Wisest of Men that the greatest pleasure happiest peace and Sweetest ease in short the only true enjoyment of life is under the Government of Wisdom it Being our Principle and Opinion That a Strict adherence to Virtue under the Laws of Religion and Reason is the only way to Maintain the dignity of our Spirits and improve us into what every man who is Conscious of his Being aspires to.
>
> Easy as apply'd to each Member of ye Club in particular signifies a Tractable and gentle Manly Temper not to be discompos'd by every triviall accident From a just knowledge of our Selves allowing for ye Weaknesses and failures of our Neighbour - a generosity of mind frankly owning ye Excellancies of another tho interfeering with our own pretensions.
>
> Easy as it is ye Appellation of our Society Denominates Us a Consort of Blyth Merry tempers free of all Sullen and Unsociable Caprice or Corporation of ye good humour despising these Trifles and gaudies So much Valued by the

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21 *An Account of the Fair Intellectual-Club in Edinburgh*: In a Letter to a Honourable Member of an Athenian Society there, By a young Lady, the Secretary of the Club. (Edinburgh: Printed by J. M'Euen & Co., 1720). See Appendix F for the club's 'Rules and Constitutions'.

22 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.* p.3.

> Crowd and Easy under such events as Elate and Shagrine the foppish and Unthinking part of Mankind.[23]

This remarkable piece of sustained and condensed reasoning is worth paraphrasing in the hope of clarifying its content somewhat.

Firstly, Fergus is saying that an 'ease of mind' is required to maintain 'a just apprehension of things'. This moderate and balanced way of thinking belied a determination not to confine or lose touch with the 'passions' but to improve and perhaps sublimate them by bringing them into 'harmony and order' under the rule of reason which is 'their natural sovereign'. Wise men had agreed that 'the only true enjoyment of life' consisted in 'a strict adherence to virtue under the laws of religion and reason'. This was considered the only way to maintain their dignity and to improve themselves by being conscious of what they were really capable of as human beings.

Secondly, in their view, being 'easy' meant keeping 'a tractable and manly temper' which was not upset by trivial incidents. It involved possessing enough self-knowledge to allow for 'the weaknesses and failures' of other people. They had enough 'generosity of mind' to acknowledge the excellencies of other people even though these may diminish one's own 'pretensions'.

Thirdly, their 'easiness' enabled them to form a fellowship which was as free of sullenness and unsociability as it was full of 'good humour'. They despised the trifling gaudy things 'so much valued by the crowd'. They therefore maintained a moderate easiness in response to events which drive thoughtless and careless people to the extremes either of elation or of despondency.

It is therefore clear that the 'easiness' of the Easy Club did not mean that it was 'tranquil', 'relaxed', 'yielding', or 'not strict', as the word 'easy' is usually defined, even at that time. It did not mean taking things easy and showing a 'Scottish indolence'. For the use of the word was very much bound up with the disciplined nature of the Club. Its use was meant to help diffuse the aggressive, strident, intolerant, and competitive tendencies of its exuberant members.

In short, the easiness of the members amounted to a stoicism which has recently been noted by John Dwyer as being under the influence of Addison's works and of 'Mr. Spectator's Stoicism' in particular: 'One of Joseph Addison's intentions was to teach mankind how to achieve an "easy" and "virtuous" existence despite the

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[23] *Op. cit.* pp.46-7.

accidents of fortune or the "confused"and "phantastical" nature of modern social life.'[24] The adoption of such a stoical attitude may be seen a necessary preliminary to becoming philosophical in a more general sense of the word. Thus, in this way at least, the Easy Club, even though it failed to be become truly philosophical in its aims and intentions, paved the way for the later pre-occupation of the Edinburgh *literati* with philosophy which began with the Rankenian Club in 1717.

Furthermore, the combination of regulated discipline and studied 'easiness' had the purpose of channelling the members' energies towards improving their literary abilities and their ability to converse elegantly and eloquently. The extent to which the Club achieved that purpose is shown in the literary and poetical contributions to the Journal and ultimately in the literary productivity of Allan Ramsay himself.

The members needed the rigorous discipline of the Laws and the dictates of the *praeses* because they were typically exuberant and passionate young men of the 18th century. We can see from novels such as Smollett's *Roderick Random* that people were generally much more emotional and impulsive than they are nowadays. They reacted to insults very readily, and this made the emphasis on 'easiness' all the more important. 'Take it easy' is now a cliche which at that time had a very definite meaning.

Also, the Easy Club throughout its existence had problems in ensuring the attendance of its members, apart from the more dedicated ones such as Allan Ramsay and John Fergus. The analysis of membership attendance in Appendix B shows the latter were in fact the only regular and reliable members who attended nearly every meeting. Even after December 1714, when the meetings were regularly held on Wednesdays, the Club had difficulty assembling a quorum of four members to make its meetings viable. Thus, the imposition of fines to punish non-attendance was not the draconian or authoritarian measure which it might be branded as such nowadays. For the members themselves recognised their own indiscipline and unreliability, and they therefore welcomed the external interference to help them improve their behaviour in those respects.

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[24] John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1987), p.47. In the endnotes, the author reports Stoicism in *Spectator* nos. 501, 574, 575, mentions Steele as 'a follower of the Stoics' in no. 387, and records references to Seneca in no. 237, Epictetus in no. 219, and Cicero in no. 256. Yet in the early papers, only Steele seems to show any signs of Stoicism in, for instance, no. 6 (governing the passions), no. 20 (against envy), no. 114 (living within one's means), nos. 138, 139 (Cicero) etc.

During April 1715, the Club moved into its 'Dome' or club premises. This also contributed to their 'easiness' and the improvement of their behaviour. For in a letter to John Edgar, dated 29th June 1715, (but not included in the Journal) John Fergus writes the following:

> Our Correspondence and friendship is so settled and secured that we now meet in a hall or Dome of our own where we enjoy ourselves at large free from tavern noise and the Slavish obligations of drinking contrary to our inclinations. Here we are in no fear of being overheard By such who are Ready to misconstruct our innocent Mirth But have all the advantage of a private Retreat. Our Conversation is as free of party as ever. But upon all other subjects we express ourselves with a great deal of freedom.[25]

As Fergus states that their conversation is 'free of party', this rules out the possibility that they were engaged in a Jacobite conspiracy, which many previous writers assumed. In his book, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, Andrew Gibson was able to use the Journal to refute these assumptions. For the Journal makes clear that their interests were literary rather than political, and the loyal letter which they wrote to George I in February 1715 serves to confirm this.[26]

6. THE WITTINESS OF THE EASY CLUB.

Following the example of the English wits, the members aimed to be witty, entertaining and diverting in their conversation.[27] This is made manifest in many of the contributions to the minutes of the Club. They emulated the essayists of *The Spectator* by replying to letters, whether written written by themselves or by outsiders, thereby sharpen their wits. They composed witty queries which were given equally witty answers. Thus, it was asked 'Whether Maggie Johnstoun's death or Elegy be the more Lamentable accident.'[28] This is a reference to one of Ramsay's earliest poems in which

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[25] *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. VI, *op. cit.*, p.196.

[26] 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, pp.51-3.

[27] The comprehensiveness of the term 'wit' in the 18th century can be seen in Addison's series of papers on the subject: *Spectator*, nos. 58 to 62, Monday May 7 to Friday May 11, 1711.

[28] *Op. cit.*, p.14. This poem was almost certainly Allan Ramsay's first published poem and not his poem to Pitcairn, as claimed by F.W. Freeman and Alexander Law in their article, 'Allan Ramsay's first published poem: the poem to the memory of Dr. Archibald Pitcairne', *The Bibliotheck*, Vol. 9, no. 5, 1979, pp.156. Ramsay is subjected to much teasing by other members on account of the Maggie Johnston poem which suggests that it was already popular and well-known. Besides Alexander Law admits

he laments the death of a celebrated ale-brewer: 'Hast thou left to Bairns of thine/ The pauky Knack/ Of brewing Ale amaist like Wine?'[29] Ramsay's reply to his anonymous critic was as follows:

> Maggie's Elegy doubtless gave more occasion of Lamentation than her death because Many that Read it Lamented they were not so happy in their thoughts as to be master of such a performance.[30]

Such displays of wittiness exemplify the relative superfluity of the Easy Club's proceedings. Consideration of the deeper issues is not recorded in the Journal. In his poem, 'On Wit', Ramsay treats wit as virtually synonymous with the Scottish 'couthiness' or with self-expression and originality in speech, dress etc.

> My easy Friends, since ye think fit
> This Night to lucubrate on Wit;
> And since ye judge that I compose
> My Thoughts in Rhime better than Prose
> I'll give my Judgment in a Sang,
> And here it comes be't right or wrang.
>
> ....
>
> Bright Wit appears in mony a Shape,
> Which some invent and others ape.
> Some shaw their Wit in wearing Claiths,
> And some in coining of new Aiths;
> There's crambo Wit in making Rhime,
> And dancing Wit in beating Time:
> There's metl'd Wit in Story-telling,
> In writing Grammar, and right spelling:
> Wit shines in Knowledge of Politicks,
> And wow! what Wit's amang the Criticks.[31]

This free, poetic use of the word 'wit' exemplifies how poetry widens the application of words compared with philosophy which in defining words often narrows their field of application. Ramsay no longer means 'humour' or 'ingenuity in word or action' when he uses the word 'wit', for he is now referring to people's abilities, skills,

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as much in his later article on 'Allan Ramsay and the Easy Club' on page 24, where he says it 'was probably available in the Edinburgh streets in broadside form at the time'.

29 *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p.12.
30 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.* p.15.
31 *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p.202.

intelligence etc., in achieving some form of self-expression. In other words, he is emphasising metaphorical similarities to expand the use of the word. In contrast, the philosopher tends to find distinctions by which the use of the word is narrowed in defining it.

The poetical bias of the Easy Club perhaps prevented it from becoming a philosophical club. Poetry and philosophy are uneasy bedfellows. Whereas the poet plays with words, the philosopher is often trying to get to the bottom of them. Poetry was more suited to the playful, humorous bent of Allan Ramsay, and the serious business of philosophical discussion might not have appealed to him at all. Yet as we shall now see in section nine, this did not prevent the Easy Club members from being interested in scientific matters which, at that time, were regarded as philosophical. It was however a club dedicated to encouraging conversation, and in that respect it was typical of all these early clubs.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVERSATION IN THE EARLY CLUBS.

In forming such clubs for promoting self-improvement as are exemplified by the Easy Club, the young people conversed with each other to improve their verbal expression and their communicative skills generally. Their aim was not just to achieve agreement about the things they talked about but mainly to find the best form of words by which express their own feelings, beliefs and opinions. They wished to become more eloquent and quick-witted in their responses to what other people said to them. In this way, they hoped to become more self-confident in their interactions with other people. They would be better able to hold their own when their opinions and beliefs were challenged by others.

When their views were uncertain, they used conversation in the hope of establishing what they themselves thought. Conversation helped them to clarify their own thinking in a way that solitary study and meditation does not always do. In conversing, they were compelled to direct their thinking into hitherto untapped areas of their minds and to dredge up thoughts which otherwise would have lain undisturbed and unknown to them. By means of the mutual stimulation of thought by conversation, they found themselves saying things that they would never have thought of saying if left to themselves in solitude.

In the course of this vigorous intercommunication, a large measure of agreement as to views and opinions was achieved. This is because in hearing different and opposing opinions, they inevitably modified their own opinions, to a greater or lesser degree, to take account of these opinions. Thus, there was a tendency for a common ground to be developed among the participants of these conversations. As this common ground developed, they were able to find greater enjoyment in their conversations because the latter became increasingly 'agreeable' and free of contention and dispute. In this way, their habit of attending club meetings was reinforced since it was associated with the pleasure of engaging in mutually profitable conversation.

This kind of agreeableness was a feature of the conversations conducted in the clubs and societies of the period. But when the form of intercommunication became one of debate through written discourses and published pamphlets, the scope for agreement between participants became narrowed. As debates were increasingly divorced from the intimate interchange of conversation, the potential for disagreement and misunderstanding increased. As the person was no longer present to them to be responded to as in conversation, the respect for apparently discordant opinions was diminished.

Thus, there were two opposing trends in the Scottish Enlightenment which fueled the energy and commitment of individuals and motivated them to write innumerable books and pamphlets to express their views. Firstly, there was the agreeableness and mutual regard fostered by conversation and companionship in the clubs and societies. Secondly, there was the disagreeableness and mutual disregard which remoteness and absence of conversational interchange brought about. Insiders benefited from the first trend, and outsiders who were alienated from one or other of these clubs and societies made use of the second trend; this is similar to the contrast between intra-tribal co-operation and extra-tribal competition. The first trend encouraged people to write and publish their views and the second trend challenged them to do so. The Rankenian Club is an example of the encouraging trend in the Enlightenment, and the Borders Nexus is an example of the challenging trend. These trends are dealt with in more detail below in chapters three and four respectively.

Another important aspect of conversation is that it is not enough for two or more people to exchange disconnected comments and talk about only what each has in their minds regardless of what the others are saying (what is sometimes known

nowadays as 'psychobabble'). They are then talking to each other without really listening to what each is actually saying to the other. They may be talking either for their own pleasure or to achieve dominance over the other person. Thus, meaningful conversation requires the participants to be paying particular attention to what is being **said** in conversation. The process of conversation then achieves a measure of objectivity and acquires to some extent a life of its own. As Gadamer has put it:

> Conversation is a process of coming to an understanding. Thus, it belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not the particular individual but what he says. [32]

The conditions which facilitate this opening of the individual to, and his transposition into, the viewpoint of other people are those that are aimed for in a community of philosophical inquiry. For such a community aims specifically to concentrate on what people are saying rather than on who is speaking or the context in which they are speaking.

8. THE FORMATION OF COMMUNITIES OF INQUIRY.

The intensity of conversation and dialogue was made possible when the clubs and societies formed what is here called 'communities of philosophical inquiry' which fostered **structured** conversation and dialogue. These communities were ends in themselves in that the inquiry had no specific aims apart from those of helping participants to improve their conversational and literary abilities and their social skills.

The Easy Club members certainly inquired into literature and poetry, and they criticised books, pamphlets and each other's works. And they formed what might be called a community of literary conversation. They objectified their conversation to some extent but not to the point of criticising and analysing what each other was saying. Also, they did not inquire or criticise in a structured way in which specific questions or subjects were debated and discussed for a significant length of time, say, half-an-hour or an hour. They would move on swiftly to other interesting topics before boredom or puzzlement set in. They would take delight in being witty and dazzling in

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[32] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (1989 - trans. J. Weinheimer & D.G. Marshall - London: Sheer and Ward, 1993), p.385.

their choice of words rather than put forward considered arguments, as is indicated in section six above.

Nor were the Easy Club members agreeing and disagreeing with each other in an attempt to clarify their opinions or perhaps reach collective conclusions. Their inquiring and criticising were ancillary to their purposes which were to improve their manners, eloquence, and literary skills. They did not form a community whose purpose was to inquire into things for their own sake. That development came with the philosophical inquiry in which the philosophical clubs engaged after the example of the Rankenian Club.

A community of inquiry at its most basic requires no more than a group of people sitting around voicing their opinions in a conversational way. But when enough inquiry is undertaken by the same group over a period of time, they form 'a community' which has a life of its own. It is impossible to predict what will happen or where the arguments will lead. Furthermore, each participant will have a different view of what has or has not been accomplished in the inquiry. Because the community concentrates on what is being said, it means that conflicting, and perhaps irreconcilable, aims of the participants are irrelevant to the community as long as these aims contribute to the progress of the inquiry rather than impede that progress. It is therefore important that each participant achieves what they want out of participation in the community, even though their needs may be entirely peculiar to themselves.

A community of inquiry demands a long-term commitment to inquiry for its own sake on the part of all its participants. Without such a commitment the community loses its coherence and ceases to inquire productively; that is to say, the members no longer get what they want from the course of inquiry because it is disrupted, for example, by the coming and going of members. Thus, stable relationships have to be laid down over a period of time before the conversational group becomes a productive community of inquiry in which each of the members feels they are not only contributing to the community but also achieving self-improvement, greater eloquence, increasing insights, or whatever else they believe themselves to be getting out of their participation in the community.

In their quest for self-improvement, the educated young men in Scotland went beyond a quest for literary improvement to form highly productive communities of inquiry which were centred in the clubs and societies from the Rankenian Club

onwards. But like all communities of inquiry they depended on continuity of membership and on self-discipline on the part of their members in order to be effective in ensuring that they did indeed improve their literary and conversational skills. These communities required a stable background and the strict application of rules of conduct and procedure to make them work. These two aspects ensured that participants paid attention to what was being said rather than dwelt on the personality of the individual making the utterances. The viewpoint of the individual is more important to the development of the community than the personality holding it.

As is indicated in the above account of the Easy Club, the 18th century philosophical societies in Scotland applied a rigorous system of rules in their proceedings to make sure that members attended regularly. This ensured that the community of philosophical inquiry retained its coherence and persistence over time, as the continuity of the membership and the regularity of their meetings was essential to the productivity of the community of philosophical inquiry. Thus, the disciplined literary club, as exemplified by the Easy Club, was a necessary precursor to clubs which comprised fully developed communities of philosophical inquiry.

A philosophical emphasis arises in a community of inquiry when the participants express their views in abstract concepts which become the subject of inquiry by the whole community. As Dr. McCall has put it:

> The Community of Philosophical Inquiry involves more than just the use of philosophical reasoning to pursue philosophical questions. It is created by participants engaging in philosophical dialogue in order to pursue a *joint* inquiry. Individuals within [it], do not compete with each other, but rather contribute to the inquiry being undertaken by the group. It is through the dynamic created by the dialogue that the argument or line of inquiry is furthered. And the dynamic is dependent upon the fact that there is a resource of different people with different ideas to draw upon. Within the Community, conditions are created which encourage synthesis between ideas and transcendence of any individual idea or argument.[33]

While the community of philosophical inquiry is at its most intense and dynamic within the club framework, it is interesting to see how the development of philosophical inquiry in Scotland led to an exchange of views by written matter i.e. by

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[33] Dr. Catherine C. McCall, *The Stevenson Lectures in Citizenship*, (Glasgow University: 1991), p.19.

letter, pamphlet, and even by book. We shall see, in chapter five, that such exchanges amounted to communities of philosophical inquiry in which there was agreement and disagreement between the participants within the disciplined framework of the printed word. But the lack of personal contact can turn disagreements into misunderstandings which multiply to the point of personal acrimony because they cannot be cleared up face-to-face. In these early clubs and societies there was little chance of this happening because of the participants' studied bonhomie and camaraderie, starting with the Easy Club.

9. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE EASY CLUB WAS NOT PHILOSOPHICAL.

Though the Easy Club did comprise an effective literary discussion group, there was little sign of its forming a community of inquiry, or in any way a philosophical club, even in the last year of its recorded activities. It certainly became better organised and more serious-minded when it restarted at the end of 1714 (after nearly a year's break). It now met regularly every Wednesday and the attendance of each member was recorded. Some more serious topics were discussed in 1715, and on 5th January, Fergus presented his paper on the easiness of the Club (as discussed in section five). On 13th April, Ramsay presented his poem 'On Great Eclipse of the Sun' which was to occur on the 22nd.[34] And on the 20th April, 'Dr. Pitcairn' presented a lecture on natural philosophy, the subject of which is not recorded.[35] But no account is given of what was said on these subjects by the club members.

Moreover, no discussions of specifically philosophical questions are recorded in the Journal. This is probably because Allan Ramsay was not himself interested in discussing philosophical points, even though other members such as John Fergus may have been so inclined. Ramsay liked to talk about everything and anything but, as already argued in section two, he had no desire to get to the bottom of things. One can imagine that as soon as a discussion became too deep and abstract for him he would steer the conversation onto lighter and more cheerful topics.

Thus, the Easy Club was a literary rather than a philosophical club because it was insufficiently critical, inquiring, and questioning in its activities. Literary

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34 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.* pp.54-56.
35 *Op. cit.* p.56.

conversation becomes increasingly philosophical only with the introduction of questioning, inquiring and the compulsory production of written discourses. We see only the beginnings of this in the last year of the Easy Club's recorded activities. But the tone of the meetings were still one of high spirits and fun-making. For example, much was made in the minutes of members reading 'with Spectakles', as this provoked much laughter and levity. On May 4th 1715, 'John Barclay' laughed thrice and was found guilty of three misdismeandours by the *praeses* and fined one shilling and sixpence (a large sum in those days). But some members protested at the injustice of this and he was pardoned.[36] This suggests that Easy Club was not quite as serious-minded as the later clubs. For such serious-mindedness seems to have begun with the Rankenian Club whose role and activities are now examined in so far as the evidence available allows.

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36 *Op. cit.* p.57.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RANKENIAN CLUB

> It is well known, that the RANKENIANS were highly instrumental in disseminating through Scotland freedom of thought, boldness of disquisition, liberality of sentiment, accuracy of reasoning, correctness of taste, and attention to composition; and that the exalted rank which Scotsmen hold at present in the republic of letters, is greatly owing to the manner and spirit begun by that Society. *The Scots Magazine*, 1771.[1]

1. PUTTING IT IN ITS PLACE.

The above quotation was written in 1771 while the Rankenian Club, founded in 1717,[2] was still functioning. It suggests that the members considered their Club to be one of the primary agents in bringing about the intellectual movement which we now call 'the Scottish Enlightenment'. It is argued in this chapter that this club was indeed important in laying the foundations for the type of disciplined philosophical inquiry which was to bring Scotland's philosophers to the forefront of European thought in the later 18th century. But the claims of the above writer have nevertheless to be put into perspective and qualified.

Moreover, so little is known in any detail about the activities of the Rankenian Club that one is apparently faced with taking one of two diametrically opposed views of its real influence on the Enlightenment. On the one hand, the club can be said to be more important for the quality of the individuals associated with it than for anything that occurred in its proceedings which probably comprised little more than convivial drinking sessions in a tavern. On the other hand, it may have been a well-organised philosophical society which not only helped to train its members and bring their writings up to publishable standards but also enabled its members to raise literary

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1 *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. XXXIII, May 1771, pp.340-1. This quotation is from an obituary of Robert Wallace, and if the writer was not himself Wallace's son, George, he doubtless received his information from the latter.

2 See Appendix H for discussion on foundation date of the Club. It was named after Thomas Ranken in whose tavern it convened - situated at the head of Kennedy's Close - on the west side of Hunter Square in today's Edinburgh.

standards in Scotland and to have an enormous influence on the intellectual life of eighteenth century Britain.

The former view was held by those who interpreted the Enlightenment period as comprising a succession of talented individuals and who were more interested in the place of these individuals in history of philosophy, literature or whatever, than in the circumstances which gave rise to them. Those who were particularly interested in circumstances giving rise to these individuals tended to magnify the contribution of the Club in making these individuals into the outstanding figures they undoubtedly were. It is basically an individualistic versus a kind of communitarian view of the role of the Club.

After a period during which scholarly opinion favoured the latter view, it has recently swung towards adopting a more critical view of the Club (but without going to the extreme of denying its promotion of orderly discussion and writing). It is now thought to have been based on 'legends' in respect of its alleged Berkeleian connection,[3] or to have 'a legendary aura about it.'[4] Alexander Broadie in his introduction to *The Scottish Enlightenment: An Anthology*, sees these clubs as merely 'providing the context for discussions and debates between philosophers, theologians, lawyers and scientists' in which they could 'try out' their views.[5] Thus, the influence of the clubs on the development of these thinkers and their views is downplayed.

Recent scholarship allows us to form a more balanced view of the real influence of this club on the course of the Scottish Enlightenment, in which it is not regarded as 'legendary', especially in the context of everything else that was occurring in Scotland at the time. The writer of the *Scots Magazine* passage quoted above exaggerated the influence of the Rankenian Club in raising the literary standards throughout Scotland.[6] The influences were already at work which made this possible. It was not responsible for spreading the desire for literary accomplishment; this was already in place. But the

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3 M.A. Stewart, 'Berkeley and the Rankenian Club', *Hermathena*, No. CXXXIX, Winter 1985, p.25.

4 D.D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement*, (Washington State University Press, 1969), p.22.

5 Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: An Anthology*, (Edinburgh: Canongate Press, 1997), p.17.

6 No doubt the exaggeration is the result of George Wallace overstating the reputation of the Rankenian Club because he was one of the last of its members.

Club did make a contribution (1) in creating a fashion for philosophy and (2) in developing a disciplined format which was copied by subsequent clubs, as we shall see.

Firstly, the importance of the Rankenian Club lay not only in its being one of the clubs that reflected the ethos of the times. It was also important in being the first club to reflect the increasingly philosophical pre-occupations of the Scottish *literati*, quite apart from anything else that was occurring in the universities. It made the study of philosophy extremely fashionable among the educated élite of Edinburgh in the second quarter of the 18th century. According to John Ramsay of Ochtertyre:

> It is well known that between 1723 and 1740, nothing was in more request with the Edinburgh *literati*, clerical and laical, than metaphysical disquisitions. These they regarded as more pleasant themes than either theological or political controversies, of which, by that time, people were surfeited. The writings of Locke and Clarke, of Butler and Berkeley, presented a wide and interesting field of inquiry, in which they could exercise their intellectual powers without endangering their own quiet and safety.[7]

This suggests that the lack of freedom to discuss either politics or religion was the principal reason why the *literati* turned to philosophy. But this is not in itself sufficient to explain why they chose to grapple with thorny philosophical problems instead of pursuing literary fame through through 'easier' channels such as poetry, essays, plays and novels. The intensity of debate and discussion within the Rankenian Club perhaps explains this. The members of this club sought mutual self-improvement so intently that their intellectual energies were channelled into philosophical subjects because the discussion of specific political and religious topics was ostensibly forbidden to them. In other words, the latter topics were introduced obliquely by discussing them at the most abstract level which transcended party and sectarian divisions. Through philosophical discussion they could approach political or religious questions without seeming to question the specific views of those in authority. Thus, the writings of Locke, Clarke etc. were attractive because the Rankenians could discuss them as passionately and volubly as they pleased without falling foul of church or state.

However, as far as we know, no minutes of the Rankenian Club transactions were kept and there is no direct evidence of what was really discussed during the Club

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[7] John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century*, (ed. A. Allardyce - Edinburgh: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1888), Vol. I, pp.195-6.

meetings. We can only surmise what took place by examining the published and unpublished writings of the Rankenians. The extent to which Berkeley figured in their writings is discussed at length by M.A. Stewart in the paper 'Berkeley and the Rankenian Club'.[8] Whether there was a correspondence between Berkeley and the Rankenians has never been firmly established. But as Kames corresponded with Samuel Clarke and Joseph Butler,[9] and is said to have visited Berkeley in London,[10] it is probable that the busy Rankenians also corresponded with these writers. They perhaps deserve the benefit of the doubt.

It appears, however, that the alleged Berkeleian association was built up on hearsay evidence only. For example, the appearance of John Smibert, the painter, on George Wallace's list of members (see Appendix I) raises some suspicion. He is such an anomalous figure, lacking all connections with the universities and the professions, that one suspects that he was he was co-opted retrospectively, as part of the Berkeleian myth. He was a close friend of Berkeley's and he accompanied him to America where he settled and established a successful studio in Boston. It was probably noted by the later members that he was also in Edinburgh around the starting date of the club. Therefore they put one and one together to make three, and assumed he must have made contact with Berkeley because of his connection with the club. In fact, he seems to have met Berkeley by accident when both were in Italy. This spurious connection then fed on itself and added yet more fuel to the legend, *post hoc, ergo proper hoc.*

Alexander Bower in his *History of the University of Edinburgh* (1817) may be drawing on anecdotal evidence when he described the activities of the Rankenian Club as follows:

> The gentlemen who composed it spent their hours of meeting in literary conversation, making critical remarks of any new works of merit that were

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8 M.A. Stewart, 'Berkeley and the Rankenian Club', *op. cit.*, pp. 28-42.

9 Lord Woodhouselee (A.F. Tytler), *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames*, (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1807), Vol. I, p.26 & p.87.

10 Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p.196, footnote 1. The anecdote concerning Kames is as follows:

> It was generally believed that once, when Kames was in London on business, he went, without previous introduction, to the lodgings of Dr. Berkeley, who received him with great courtesy. Without preamble his visitor fell a-discussing certain knotty points. The Doctor, who was a well-bred man, tried to divert the discourse, but finding that could not be done, sat silent.

published; or on the style, sentiment, or manner of authors of established reputation. One of their number was appointed to deliver an essay upon some prescribed subject at each meeting; concerning the merits of which, every member was requested to give his opinion.[11]

This is a general account that may be applied indifferently to all the philosophical clubs in Scotland. D. D. McElroy remarks that 'the practice of hearing "an essay upon some prescribed subject at each meeting" was adopted by nearly every literary society which was organised after the Rankenian.'[12] Nevertheless, it suggests that the Rankenian Club was generally known at the end of the 18th century to have begun this practice of delivering essays on prescribed subjects and that the later clubs followed the Rankenian Club's lead in doing this.

Secondly, we can be reasonably certain that the Rankenian Club was more than just a convivial club of talented people. What made the Rankenians successful was not the fact that they met as a convivial club of close friends. It was the way its internal affairs were conducted. They would be subjected to harsh and relentless criticism which, at the same time, was not impolite or unfriendly. The club's proceedings were organised so that no one was offended, mortified or victimised to the extent of being alienated or incurring their emnity. In other words, the criticism was directed at the arguments or the contents of the papers presented and not at the person. It was constructive criticism which aimed to help the individual in improving their arguments and their writing and expository skills.

Also, the club was clearly just as dedicated to the literary training and the mutual self-improvement of its members as the Easy Club had been. And the clubs which followed it in Edinburgh, such as the Philosophical Society and the Select Society, were no less well-organised and purposeful in those respects. Indeed, the Rankenian Club seems to have been responsible for important innovations which were not a feature of the Easy Club's activities.

We may use our knowledge of the Easy Club's organisation and activities to expolate the nature of the Rankenian Club's organisation and activities. The Easy Club set a precedent in being a small and exclusive club comprising no more than 12 young

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11 Alexander Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh: A. Smellie, 1817), Vol. II, p.313.

12 D.D. McElroy, 'The Literary Clubs and Societies of 18th Century Scotland', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation - University of Edinburgh, 1952), p.68.

men mostly in their early twenties. Its second 'Law' stipulated that 'none shall be admitted [as a] member without ye consent of the whole club.'[13] The Rankenian Club was similarly exclusive, and confined mainly to students and graduates of Edinburgh and Leyden Universities, as already mentioned in chapter two.

As in the case of the Rankenian Club, the meetings of the Easy Club were in a tavern, at least until early 1715 when they acquired a 'Dome' or meeting place in which to convene. This was partly for security since anything said casually in those days could have serious consequences. One could be thrown into prison for any kind of political or religious dissension. For that reason also, they undertook to discuss no politics in their meetings.[14] It is known that Ruddiman's Club also restricted its discussions in that way: 'without meddling with the affairs of Church or State'.[15] As already indicated above, political and religious discussion was probably unavoidable at the abstract level, but it was not allowed to reach the point of express dissension from or criticism of the established Kirk and State. The Rankenian Club probably followed the same policy.

As mentioned in the last chapter, the Easy Club Journal contains remarkably strict 'Laws' to which the members subjected themselves with fines, reprimands, and expulsion as punishments. Such discipline was necessary, not only to maintain the 'easiness' of the Club and to prevent drunkenness and unruliness, but also to ensure an adequate attendance. The minutes show that they often had difficulty reaching a quorum of four and there were long intervals during that three year period when the Club failed to meet at all. But after the Laws were rewritten in 1714, the Club met regularly every Wednesday. The Rankenian Club may also have met every Wednesday.[16]

The Easy Club set an example followed by all the Edinburgh literary clubs in electing a *praeses* (or President) for each meeting. (This was also the practice in the

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[13] 'Journal of the Easy Club', published in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. 5, (ed. A.M. Kinghorn & A. Law: The Scottish Text Society - Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1972) p.30. This Allan Ramsay (1685-1758), the poet, is to be distinguished from his son, Allan Ramsay (1713-84), the painter.

[14] 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.49.

[15] George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman*, (London: 1794), p.83.

[16] It is uncertain as to whether Sir Alexander Dick's recollections of the Club meeting every Wednesday at 6 o'clock refer to the Rankenian Club or Ruddiman's Club. Cf. Boswell, *The Malahide Papers*, Vol. 15, p.284.

English convivial clubs, though the use of the Latin term may stem from its use in the Scottish Courts of Law.) Each member had an opportunity to be *praeses*, which meant that their word was law while the Club was in session.[17] Ramsay was *praeses* more often than any other member - nine times to an average of four or five times for the other members - a reflection of his regular attendance as much as of his dominance of the club. Thus, the draconian powers of the *praeses* were tempered by the strictly democratic way in which he was elected. The Select Society later followed an even more democratic procedure in appointing the *praeses* in rota from an alphabetic list of members.[18]

Though the Easy Club was very strictly regulated by means of its laws and the powers of the *praeses*, it was less well ordered in its subjects for discussion and in its literary requirements from members, as has been noted in the last chapter. *Spectator* articles were read out and discussed. A member might submit a poem, book, or question for discussion. But it was left to the members to contribute to the club's activities in the ways they felt moved to do so. Thus, as observed in the last chapter, the members' contributions were whimsical and witty rather than sober and constructive. Philosophical discussion did not figure in their proceedings as Allan Ramsay, the dominant personality, was not philosophically inclined. His talents were entirely confined to the production of popular poems ranging from pawky humour to sickly sentimentality and uniformly bereft of constructive thought.

The rules of the Fair Intellectual-Club, founded in 1717, also give us an indication of the kind of rules that the Rankenian Club may have had. The former club composed of seven young women at its outset had rules intermediary between those of the Easy Club and the Rankenian Club. Its rules differ from those of the Easy Club in that there is a stipulated requirement for written work which does not feature in the rules of the latter club. Rule no. 8 states: 'THAT every Person at her first admission into the CLUB, shall entertain the CLUB with a written Harangue, and deliver the Sum of Ten Shillings *Sterling*, for the Use of the Poor, as we shall direct.' And Rule no. 10 states: 'THAT *Mistress Speaker* shall entertain the CLUB with a written Speech

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17 According to the Club's fifth Law: 'the *praeses* shall be absolute Judge of all Misdemeandour and shall have full power to punish y^{e} Same By pecuniary Mulcts or otherwise as he shall think fit.' - 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.30.

18 *MS. Minute Book of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh*, meeting of 13th Nov. 1754.

of her own Composure, immediately before the Election of one to succeed her in the Chair.'[19] As already noted in Chapter Two, the Fair Intellectual-Club was purely a literary club which contributed poems to the Athenian Club's book, *The Edinburgh Miscellany*. Nevertheless, its stipulation of written work was probably paralleled by a similar stipulation in the rules of the Rankenian Club. Its rules are reproduced in full in Appendix F.

As mentioned in Chapter Two above, Ruddiman's Club was also a literary club which may have required written work from its members. But it was as unphilosophical as were the Easy and Fair Intellectual-Clubs. For Thomas Ruddiman, according to Lord Kames, 'was no reasoner'.[20] In contrast, the Rankenians indulged in orderly debates about philosophical matters. They pursued philosophical inquiry in a systematic and critical fashion by developing the more orderly and disciplined format which was later adopted by the Philosophical Society, the Select Society, the Glasgow Literary Society and the Aberdeen Philosophical Society. This format was the requirement (1) that specific questions should be proposed in advance for discussion, and/or (2) that a member should be required to compose a discourse to be read out and discussed at the following meeting.

2. THE POSSIBLE CONTENT OF THE CLUB'S PROCEEDINGS.

a. The Alleged Berkeley Connection.

Philosophical questions and discourses were discussed in the later clubs and societies of the Scottish Enlightenment as well as a multifarious variety of other topics in science, politics, commerce, agriculture, and in literary subjects. Thus, discussion of the works of Berkeley and other philosophers would have formed a part of the Rankenian Club's proceedings but not necessarily a large part. Contrary to what Dugald Stewart assumed, the Club was not formed 'for the express purpose of soliciting from the author [Berkeley] an explanation of some parts of his theory'.[21] Only the more active and philosophically inclined of the members would have had any

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19 *An Account of the Fair Intellectual-Club in Edinburgh*: In a Letter to a Honourable Member of an Athenian Society there, By a young Lady, the Secretary of the Club. (Edinburgh: Printed by J. M'Euen & Co., 1720), pp.6-10.

20 Quoted by Boswell in *The Malahide Papers*, Vol. 15, p.284.

21 Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works*, (ed. Sir W. Hamilton - Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1854), Vol. I, 'Dissertation' Part II, sect. IV, pp.350-1.

lasting interest in Berkeley's writings. As already indicated, the purpose of the Club was clearly the improvement of its members' literary accomplishments.

P.J. Diamond has pointed out that Berkeley did not figure greatly in the publications of the Rankenians:

> There is little evidence to suggest that any of the Rankenians other than Turnbull and Stevenson, both of whom would become professional philosophers, were devoted Berkeleyans.
>
> . . . with the exception of Turnbull and Stevenson and, later, Maclaurin (and then negatively) the Rankenians do not appear to have considered Berkeley's thought very deeply. Berkeley's philosophy is not taken up in the writings of William or George Wishart, Robert Wallace or Charles Mackie, for example.[22]

Diamond has overlooked the generality of the questions raised and discussed in the Club. Particular discourses on philosophical matters would have been discussed together with an immense range of other literary and scientific pre-occupations. What was published doesn't necessarily provide an accurate picture of what was discussed in the Club. Thus, for all we know, the Wisharts and Robert Wallace, for example, may have discussed Berkeley along with the other members whenever discourses and questions relating to him were raised.

However, no specific philosophical views have been traced to the activities of the Club itself. As regards the early influence of Berkeley on the Rankenians, M.A. Stewart thinks that they 'derived some quite general themes from the theory of vision and Berkeley's overall cosmology - about the character of natural laws, the law-governed nature of perception, and the dependence of the observable world upon a sustaining deity.'[23] But these conclusions are based on the later published writings of some of the Rankenians. There is no way of knowing whether Berkeley was discussed in these terms in the Club.

Even the well-known volume of prize essays collected by John Stevenson, an original member of the Club, cannot give us an accurate indication of the early philosophical views of the Rankenians. It belongs to a much later period (1737-50)

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[22] P.J. Diamond, *The Ideology of Improvement: Thomas Reid and the Political Thought of the Scottish Enlightenment*, (Ph.D. Dissertation - John Hopkins University,Baltimore, Maryland - 1986), p.105 and p.148 fn 41 respectively.

[23] M.A. Stewart, 'Berkeley and the Rankenian Club', *op. cit.*, p.42.

when the views of Andrew Baxter and David Hume were becoming available. The students were clearly making use of such views in their treatment of Berkeley.[24]

Though there is no indication of any dominant philosophical theme in the writings of the Rankenians, an emphasis on the importance of common sense can be found in the early writings of George Turnbull, for example, in a 'letter' dating from 1726 (but published in 1731):

> Common sense is certainly sufficient to teach those who think of the matter with tolerable seriousness and attention, all the duties and offices of human life; all our obligations to GOD; and our fellow creatures, all that is morally fit and binding. And there is no need of works, to prove that to be morally fit and obligatory, which common sense and reason clearly shows to be so. Nor can any works on the other hand prove that to be morally fit, and becoming, which common sense and reason proves to be the reverse. The moral fitness or unfitness of actions can only be deduced from the nature of the actions and agents; their constitution, situation, and relations.[25]

As Turnbull later had Thomas Reid as one of his students at Marischal College, Aberdeen, his view expressed here may be the origin of the pre-occupation with common sense in the Aberdeen Philosophical Society. But there is no indication in the writings of other Rankenian members of a similar pre-occupation. In any case, the origin of the common sense view, which transcends the κοινη αισθησις of Aristotle and the *sensus communis* of the medieval philosophers, appears to lie in Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711) where, for the first time, the notion is extended to moral intuition:

> In the main, 'tis best to stick to common sense and go no farther. Men's first thoughts in this matter are generally better than their second: their natural notions better than those refined by study or consultation with casuists.[26]

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24 Cf., *op. cit.*, pp.39-40.

25 G. Turnbull, *A Philosophical Enquiry Concerning the Connexion betwixt the Doctrines and Miracles of Jesus Christ* in a letter to a friend, (London: R.Willock, 1731).

26 Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* (1711 - ed. J.M. Robertson - New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), p.88. The fact that Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* was read by the Edinburgh *literati* in 1720 is attested by *The Edinburgh Miscellany* (op. cit., p.i) where he is referred to as 'that charitable and courteous Author who . . . introduc'd the ingenious Way of *Miscellaneous* writing!'

It cannot even be said the Scottish interest in 'mental philosophy', which pre-occupied philosophy professors in the 19th century (and led to 'Departments of Mental Philosophy'), stems from the activities of the Rankenian Club. This interest begins with Hume's psychological analysis of the workings of the human mind in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, for example, in terms of impressions, ideas and association of ideas, and was reinforced by perceptual studies of Thomas Reid in his *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense.* Also, their works, as well as those of Andrew Baxter, suggest that their interest in turn originated in the English empiricism of Hobbes, Newton, Locke and Clarke, and led them to apply Newtonian principles to the mind (or 'soul' in the case of Baxter).

b. The Possible Religious Questions Raised.

A clue as to the religious pre-occupations of the Rankenians is to be found in a little-known notebook of Sir Andrew Mitchell dated 1725.[27] This is among some papers of Colin Maclaurin for whom Mitchell acted as an executor of his will (with two other persons).[28] It may however have been given to Maclaurin at a time when both were Rankenian Club members. Whatever the history of the notebook, it draws attention to religious books which interested a seventeen year old who did not enter the ministry. It seems a reasonable assumption that he summarised these books because they were the subject of discussion by students and by Rankenian Club members in the 1720s. It contains brief summaries of the contents of books on the subject of 'The Theory of the Earth' as follows:

Thomas Burnet, (1635? - 1715), *Telluris Theoria Sacra,* London: 1681-89. (Later translated into English as, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth.*)

William Whiston, (1667 -1752), *A New Theory of the Earth, wherein the Creation of the World in six Days, the Universal Deluge, and the General Conflagration, as laid down in the Holy Scripture, are shewn to be perfectly agreeable to Reason and Philosophy,* Cambridge: 1696. He was Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge in succession to Newton.

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27 'Notebook of Andrew Mitchell, Edinburgh, 1725', Glasgow University Library Special Collections, MS Gen 1378/6. He was aged 17 when he wrote this notebook and was possibly not yet a member of the Rankenian Club, as he was considerably younger than the founder members (see Appendix I).

28 Patrick Murdoch, 'An Account of the Life and Writings of the Author', in *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries* by Colin Maclaurin, (published by Patrick Murdoch, London: 1748), p.xvii.

John Keill, (1671 - 1721), *An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, together with some Remarks on Mr. Whiston's New Theory of the Earth.* Oxford: 1698. Keill, as befits a Newtonian scholar, sticks firmly to the physical facts in his examination but without directly challenging the Biblical account.[29]

These writers attempted to reconcile the Biblical account of creation with Newtonian physics and the physical facts known at the time, and they paralleled the attempts of thinkers such as Samuel Clarke and Andrew Baxter to reconcile the Christian view of God with Newtonian physics. In the words of the title of Whiston's book, they showed that the Creation story 'to be perfectly agreeable to reason and philosophy', at least according to their own standards of *a priori* argument.

If these proto-geological books were discussed by the members, as seems not unlikely, then they would have allowed the Rankenians to discuss religious matters in a radical way. For these authors inevitably questioned passages of the Bible which didn't quite fit in with their particular theories of creation. Thus, Burnet, for instance, questioned whether the story of the Flood could have happened in the way it is described in the Book of Genesis. Mitchell summarises that part of Burnet's argument as follows:

> That the Antedeluvian Earth, or earth that rose first from the Chaos was different from the form of the present earth which he proves 1 By showing that it woud take a quantity of water equal to 8 oceans to occasion one universal deluge supposing the [depth] to be about ¼ of a mile everywhere, and the Mountains a Mile high which he says All the forty days rain and breaking open of the great Abyss, or even the super Celestial (if any such) woud not be sufficient to afford such a quantity of water.[30]

This questions the veracity of the Bible's contents by appealing to measurable physical facts and is highly significant since it undermines the ultimate authority of the Bible. In this way, the rational, as opposed to the literal, interpretation of the Bible, could enter into the debates of the Rankenians through their discussion of such books. Also, this interest in the origins of the Earth on the part of Rankenian Club members

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[29] Another relevant book not mentioned by Mitchell, possibly because it is dismissed brusquely by Keill, is Eramus Warren's *Geologia: or a Discourse concerning the Earth before the Deluge,* London: 1690. This is worth mentioning because, according to the Oxford Dictionary, this the first time the word 'geology' was used in the English language to refer to the structure of the Earth rather than the Earth generally.

[30] 'Notebook of Andrew Mitchell, Edinburgh, 1724', *op. cit.*, page one.

probably encouraged James Hutton in his investigations which led to his breakthrough in the scientific development of geology, begun in his book, *The Theory of the Earth* (1795). For Hutton was the first to visualise clearly the immense æons of time required to wear down continents to sea level.[31]

Whatever the actual content of its debates and discussions, the Rankenian Club was effective in providing its members with the training and confidence to produce publishable works. Their aim in doing so was, as Peter Jones has put it, 'to put Scotland in the van of intellectual developments.'[32] Its ultimate success may be measured in the scale of their literary output, and in the probability that they laid the foundations for the structure of criticising written discourses and laying down questions to be debated during the Club proceedings.

3. THE PROBABLE INFLUENCE OF THE RANKENIAN CLUB ON THE LATER PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES IN 18th CENTURY SCOTLAND.

As argued above, it is likely that the Rankenian Club achieved its reputation by introducing a system of debating pre-selected questions and of discussing papers presented by each of the members. This system was certainly applied in the societies of the 1750s onwards, of which we possess much fuller information. The system was such that it did not lead to a narrow specialisation of philosophical interests. It led to the opposite phenomenon of an increasingly broad and diverse range of interests.

That the Rankenians were the first to stress the importance of questions in the proceedings of their Club was noted by Sir Alexander Dick in his written account given to James Boswell in 1780.

> These Gentlemen . . . were the first who received Questions that were laid before them, which they discuss'd with great Warmth after having chosen a Preses.[33]

Though the Rankenian Club lasted till 1771, other clubs sprang up in Edinburgh to soak up the energies of the *literari.* For example, Colin Maclaurin was

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[31] James Hutton, *Theory of the Earth, with Proofs and Illustrations, in four Parts,* (Edinburgh: 1795), Vol. I, p.15.

[32] P. Jones, 'The Scottish Professoriate and the Polite Academy' in *Wealth and Virtue, op. cit.*, (f.n. 9 above), p.99.

[33] *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle*, (ed. Scott and Pottle, privately printed, 1932) Vol. 15, p.315.

one of the prime movers in founding the Philosophical Society in 1737[34] which eventually became the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1783 and is the sole survivor of the 18th century philosophical clubs in Scotland (though it now functions as an academic debating society). We know little about the proceedings of this society in its early stages except that its interests were centred on science and medicine. It also published volumes of medical essays which helped to establish Edinburgh as a leading centre of medical research in Europe.

We know much more about the Select Society which was founded in Edinburgh in 1754 and included David Hume and Adam Smith among its founder members. Its full title was 'The Select Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures and Agriculture'. According to Alexander Carlyle, it 'was intended for Philosophical Inquiry, and the improvement of the Members in the Art of Speaking.'[35] But in fact it performed a much more important function in the community as will now be shown.

In scale the Select Society greatly exceeded the scope of the early philosophical clubs which had relatively small memberships. The Select Society began with 14 members and after a year reached 83. At its peak in 1759 it had 130 members and was therefore a debating society. However, it became so influential that it functioned almost like a parliament in that its recommendations were sometimes enforced throughout Scotland. This applied for instance to the practice of giving 'vails' or drink money to servants. The ending of this practice began with a debate in the Select Society on the question: 'What is the best and most equal way of hiring and conducting servants? and, what is the most proper method to abolish the practice of giving of vails?' As this practice contributed directly to drunkenness among servants, its abolition was thought to be a considerable social advance at the time.

The Select Society was dedicated not only to the improvement of the minds of its members but also to the material and economic improvement of Scotland as a whole. For that purpose its members formed 'The Edinburgh Select Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture'. This functioned as

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34 Patrick Murdoch, 'An Account of the Life and Writings of the Author', in *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries* by Colin Maclaurin, (published by Patrick Murdoch, London: 1748), p.vii.

35 'Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson D.D.' *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart,* Vol. X, Note A, p.203.

a kind of sub-committee of the Select Society which discussed all kinds of agricultural and economic questions including the question of the 'vails' mentioned above. It was no mere talking shop as it prepared, for instance, a 'Plan for repairing the Highways', by which roads in Scotland were brought up to the highest standard of the times. Its approach was the following:

> To encourage genius, to reward industry, to cultivate the arts of peace, are objects deserving the attention of public-spirited persons.
>
> That the inhabitants of Scotland may become diligent in labour, and excellent in arts, is the concern of all who indeed love their country.[36]

The Select Society itself continued to discuss the kind of general philosophical questions which were pursued by all the philosophical clubs and societies of eighteenth century. Among the considerable list of questions recorded are the following which are as debatable now as they were then:

> Whether Lotteries ought to be encouraged?
>
> Whether whiskie ought not to be laid under such restraints, as to render the use of it less frequent?
>
> Whether Printing has been of advantage to Society?
>
> Whether the Liberty of the Press ought not to be restrained?[37]

The size of the membership of the Select Society meant that the time for speaking had to be limited so that everyone had a fair opportunity of speaking. Accordingly, Rule Ten of its Constitution stipulated: 'That every person may speak three times in a debate, and no oftener; the first time fifteen minutes and ten minutes each of the other times; addressing himself to the person presiding.' As already noted in the Introduction, it is doubtful whether the Select Society could have formed a community of philosophical inquiry in such circumstances. However, the point is that the rules and proceedings would have favoured the formation of a COPI if only the numbers of those attending were low enough to enable such a community to emerge.

The Select Society rules still had restrictions concerning the discussion of religion and politics. Rule nine stated: 'That very Member may propose any subject of debate, except such as regard Revealed Religion, or which may give occasion to vent

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[36] Pamphlet entitled *Rules and Orders of the Edinburgh Society for Encouragement of Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, and Agriculture*, Introduction, p.3.

[37] From the Ms. *Minutes of the St. Giles or Select Society of Edinburgh.*

any Principles of Jacobitism.'[38] This alone suggests a direct link with the earlier clubs i.e. the Rankenian and Ruddiman's.

Compared with the Select Society, the Glasgow Literary Society, founded in 1752 with Adam Smith as a founder member, was not so widely influential as it remained centred on Glasgow College and its professors. Its early meetings were unrecorded, but in 1764 Thomas Reid came to Glasgow as Professor and joined the club, and from then on regular minutes were kept of the proceedings at their meetings. The numbers of those attending generally did not exceed fifteen so that the formation of a community of philosophical inquiry was possible. The range of questions discussed certainly suggests that a lively and productive COPI was often achieved. Thus, in April and May 1766, we get the following sequence of questions discussed:

April 18th 1766. Mr. Cumin [Prof. of Hebrew]. In what respects is Man a free or necessary Agent?

April 25th 1766. Dr. Williamson [Prof. of Mathematics]. Whether persons of landed property should be permitted to entail their Estates?

May 2nd 1766. Dr. Wight [Prof. of Church History]. Are there any certain Principles upon which we can judge of the productions of Poetry and of the finer Arts or is there any Criterion of Taste?

May 9th 1766. Dr. Reid [Prof. of Moral Philosophy]. Whether moral Character in Man consists in affections which are involuntary or in fixed determinations of Will.[39]

These questions are remarkable in that they show the breadth of interest of the professors whose concerns were not confined to one sphere of academic interest. Only Thomas Reid adheres to his profession in the type of question which he puts before the Society.

By far the most productive of the later and more mature philosophical societies was the Aberdeen Philosophical Society founded in 1758 (and nicknamed 'the Wise Club'). It surpassed all the others in the number of books it inspired and in the influence that its publications had on European culture in the 18th century.[40] Yet they

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[38] *Op. cit.* Meeting of 13th November, 1754.

[39] Ms. *Minutes of the Literary Society in Glasgow College,* Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, MS Murray 505, p.18.

[40] Apart from the better known works of Thomas Reid and James Beattie, the works of other members are as follows:

George Campbell: *Essay on Miracles*; translation of *The Four Gospels*; *Philosophy of Rhetoric*.

John Gregory: *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man, with those of the Animal World; Lectures in the Duties and Offices of a Physician; A Father's Legacy* [to his Daughters].

not only put forward written papers to be discussed and criticised, they also followed the pattern of debating questions which were proposed by the President of the meeting 'to be discussed at some future meeting'.[41] The rules of the society also made clear the extent which its proceedings were to be 'philosophical'. Article 17 states the following:

> The Subject of the Discourses and Questions shall be Philosophical, all Grammatical Historical and Philological Discussions being conceived to be forreign to the Design of this Society. And Philosophical Matters are understood to comprehend, Every Principle of Science which may be deduced by Just and Lawfull Induction from the Phænomena either of the human Mind or of the material World; All Observations & Experiments that may furnish Materials for such Induction; the Examination of False Schemes of Philosophy & false Methods of Philosophizing; The Subserviency of Philosophy to Arts, the Principles they borrow from it and the Means of carrying them to their Perfection.[42]

The intimacy of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society is testified by the fact that only fifteen men were members at various times during its existence.[43] Most of these members attended the Society's meetings regularly until the late 1760s so that there can be little doubt that the Society formed a stable and coherent community of philosophical inquiry which was eminently successful in terms of its output. It also followed the same pattern outlined above of discussing pre-determined questions and criticising each other's written 'discourses'. Typical of the kind of questions examined by this Society are the following which were discussed in 1765 (Reid had apparently tabled his question before leaving Aberdeen for Glasgow in 1764):

70. Dr. Gregory. What are the distinguishing characteristics of wit & humour?

71. Dr. David Skene. Whether brutes had souls; & if they have, wherein do they differ from the human?

72. Dr. Campbell. Whether the manner of living of parents affects the genius or intellectual abilities of the children?

73. Mr. Stuart. Whether the idea of an infinitely perfect being be a good argument for his existence?

Alexander Gerard: *An Essay on Taste; Dissertation on the Genius and Evidences of Christianity; A Essay on Genius;* and two volumes of sermons.

John Farquhar: Two volumes of sermons, published after his death.

41 *The Minutes of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society 1758-1773*, (ed. H.L. Ulman - Aberdeen University Press, 1990), p.77.

42 *Op. cit.*, p.78.

43 *Op. cit.*, p.66, where a table is given showing the extent of each members' time with the Society.

74. Dr. Reid. Wherein does the nature of a promise consist, & whence does its obligation arise?[44]

Similar questions to these might emerge in philosophical inquiry sessions today. They differ only in the archaic language used above. Thus, the questions about jokes, whether animals have minds, the influence of environment on children, what is a promise etc., have all arisen. This suggests that many questions in philosophical inquiry could be perennial and may be expected to be brought up in any age and culture.

The productive nature of philosophical inquiry depends (among other things) on posing questions and giving clear and adequate answers to them. Any restrictions on the range of this questioning impedes free inquiry and inhibits open discussion. Thus, the breadth of questions tackled by the philosophical societies of 18th century Scotland ensured that their interests remained universal and that they embraced, in their concerns, the plight of Scotland and their civil responsibility to do something about it. An unimpeded universality of questioning ensures that philosophical inquiry remains down-to-earth and relevant to human needs as a whole, and not just an ivory tower activity which is increasingly specialised and divorced from the feelings and aspirations of ordinary people.

4. THE USE OF QUESTIONS IN STIMULATING DIALOGUE AND DEBATE.

It is therefore clear that questioning played an important part of the dialogue and debate in the clubs and societies of early 18th century Scotland. The act of conversing in the formal setting of the clubs involved each member putting his views to the test in uttering them. His views were constantly open to be tested and critically examined by being **questioned**. In being asked questions, each member was compelled to elaborate on their previous utterances and to develop their thinking further than they had previously considered necessary to make their views clearer to others. This procedure is essential to the formation of a viable and productive community of philosophical inquiry.

The posing of questions as part of the **formal** setting of clubs and societies was also important. As we have seen in the last section, specific questions concerning science, literature, philosophy, economics etc., were posed before each meeting and

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44 *Op. cit.*, p.194.

members attempted to give detailed answers to the best of their abilities and experience of the subject concerned. The answering of these questions thus formed an important part of the structured debates in the club setting.

The formal part played by questioning in the clubs and societies ensured that the conversations differed markedly from those private discussions which are dominated by the personal aims of the participants. Attempts to 'win' the argument or humiliate their opponents might be admissible in such private discussions but are potentially disruptive in a high-powered club atmosphere in which self-improvement is the dominant passion. In proper conversation, one has a duty not take advantage of flaws and fallacies in one's opponent's arguments but to correct them in an effort to help him to improve his powers of argument and verbal expression.[45] In this way, opponents in an argument will blame their confusions on themselves and not on each other. Undoubtedly, these clubs were following that policy as their purpose was to formalise conversation in such a way that the embitterment and emnity of naked debate is assuaged and their proceedings rendered polite and civilised. The way in which they chose to improve their conversation was by formalising the questioning of each other's contributions and by addressing their questions to the chair rather than to the individual. In this way, the questions were directed formally to the meeting as a whole and not personally towards the individual whose contributions were being questioned.

There was however a limit to the range of philosophical questions which the Scottish club members could discuss. They did not ask pointed and simple questions such as 'what is time?' or 'what is life?' Such questions demanded specific study which led to the production of discourses and papers. The kinds of questions they asked were those that would provoke prolonged discussions, and not those to be puzzled over in private. The latter might give rise to questions which they only put forward later in the club setting because they had already puzzled over them in private with the result that they now had something they wanted to say in public about them. They would look foolish in the eyes of the other members if they were to put forward questions about

[45] In his dialogue, *Theaetetus*, Plato draws attention to a distinction, attributed to Protagoras, between 'discussion' (διατριβη) and 'conversation' (διαλεγομενος). The argument is that it is 'unfair' (αδικειν) not to make a distinction between these, as in discussion one may jest and trip up one's opponent as much as one pleases. Cf. *Theaetetus*, 167e 4.

which they had little to say. It would then appear that they expected the other members to have the answers and that they were using the other members to get them. Their reputation among the other members depended on their making their own mark and pulling their own weight by showing that they could speak authoritatively and interestingly in answer to questions which they themselves had raised.

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONING IN PROMOTING A PHILOSOPHICAL STATE OF MIND.

This policy of formally questioning each other which was adopted by the philosophical societies of Scotland induced a philosophical state of mind. In this instance, 'a philosophical state of mind' means having a highly developed, critical mind which is actively exploring possibilities so as to contribute something to the furtherance of life in the future. This state of mind is perhaps a common factor to be found in those cultures who have contributed most to civilisation *e.g.* fifth century Athens, the Renaissance in Italy, and late seventeenth century England. But it has been known too generally and vaguely as 'humanism', 'the humanist tradition', 'liberalism', or 'democracy'. It might be more precisely referred to and better understood as being 'philosophical inquiry' since this provides a systematic way of producing and sustaining this questioning and inquiring state of mind. Furthermore, it requires no political system to impose or inculcate this, but only the general seeding of communities of philosophical inquiry in key areas of society. In the case of eighteenth century Scotland, these key areas comprised the university cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

The philosophical state of mind is a product of our language-using skills. Indeed, the very development of our language depends on our knowing how to pose questions and how to answer them, however inadequately. The honing of these skills of questioning and answering was early seen as essential to the philosophical state of mind.[46] For these skills enable the language-user to make distinctions between things and to give names to these distinctions appropriate to their essential nature. For

[46] Plato in his dialogue *Cratylus* noted that the the provision of new words and concepts in language development depends on knowing how to pose questions and how to answer them. It is the task of what he called the 'dialectician' to develop this ability to ask and answer questions so that 'names are rightly given'. Cf. *Cratylus,* 390c-d.

example, in distinguishing one berry from another, such questions 'what is it?' and 'what kind of berry is it' must occur implicitly or explicitly to the individual attending to the object before their eyes. The act of distinguishing implies some ability to question things. Not to be questioning the things around us in this way, is tantamount to cerebral ossification and is doubtless an essential ingredient of dogmatism, bigotry and authoritarianism. The latter signify a fundamental failure in the mental flexibility which a questioning and inquiring state of mind promotes.

A philosophical state of mind in this context is more than just a psychological attitude or disposition located in someone's mind or brain. It arises because of insatiable **curiosity** about things. This curiosity is a psychological attitude which becomes philosophical because of the formal use of questioning and answering during the club proceedings. The individual is taken out of himself psychologically and he or she merges philosophically with the explorations and examinations of the club as a whole. This is the effect of the club forming a viable and productive community of inquiry.

This state of mind thus has social and cultural dimensions that link the individual to the social groupings in which he participates. Being in this state of mind means that the individual is to a significant degree indivisible from the social context around which his thoughts and feelings revolve. In the context of philosophical societies, the individual blended into the convivial club surroundings within which he had a sense of belonging and of contributing something of his own.

In the 18th century context, this state of mind served both to differentiate the individual as a unique person and to identify him with the social group within which that uniqueness gains recognition and appreciation. As well as achieving self-fulfilment, his sense of belonging enables him to think altruistically about his involvement with the group so that he takes pleasure in conforming to the requirements laid down by it. In this way any tendency towards eccentricity and idiosyncrasy is moderated without inhibiting the free expression of the person's talents and abilities.

This state of mind is also a *philosophical* one because it depends on the ideas and conceptions which the individual has in common with the social group. These ideas and conceptions revolve round the aims and aspirations of the group as a whole, and they emerge in the course of questioning and answering during the dialogues and debates of the club. It is not enough that all members of the group have ideas and

conceptions which they are enthusiastically exploring on their own account. These ideas and conceptions must flow from the aims and aspirations which the group as a whole have in common. Everyone in the group has to be enthusiastically exploring roughly the same channels of thought with exactly the same aims and aspirations in mind. Without the latter factors in common, the group, sooner or later, falls into dissension, disunity and, ultimately, dissolution.

But it is not a *philosophical* state of mind if the aims and aspirations of the group are not themselves philosophical. A mere literary club may aim to improve the literary abilities of its members but nevertheless lack philosophical aspirations. Such clubs tended to be less well organised and rigorous in their procedures because of their narrower and more modest aims. In contrast, the members of philosophical societies had specific philosophical views which they were collectively interested in working out because the clarification of these views was thought to be important in advancing philosophy as something worthwhile to humankind, its welfare and its future.

It is the argument of this thesis that the philosophical state of mind of the individual reaches its peak of personal achievement and involvement during times of high cultural advance when all educated participants in the culture feel moved to participate, to a greater or lesser extent, in the philosophical dialogues and debates. The account here being given of the clubs and societies of eighteenth century Scotland exemplifies the way this occurs.

6. HOW PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY BECAME INCREASINGLY DOWN-TO-EARTH.

The propensity of the Scottish philosophical societies to question everything, was an important factor in ensuring that their members' views remained as broad and down-to-earth as possible. They refused to narrow philosophical inquiry down to a limited range of activities. In fact, they were prepared to discuss anything which interested them enough to question and wonder about it. The effect of this was that interests of these clubs broadened rather than narrowed. Instead of specialising in one or two questions which were of particular interest to the members, they inquired into every questionable aspect of human knowledge. This meant that, instead of retreating into themselves and their own narrow concerns, they strode out into the society around

them and maintained an intense interest, for instance, in economic, industrial and commercial matters which were important for developing the economy of Scotland.

When the intensity of discourse reaches philosophical heights then a process of **parabolic recession** takes place in which the person's thinking returns from its abstract heights to be applied to everyday matters. His or her thoughts may soar to the sky but the gravitational attraction of practical realities invariably draws them down. Instead of remaining locked in abstract thought, a more down-to-earth frame of mind ensues. The nature of the philosophical dialogue and debate in these clubs and societies prevented the members from dwelling on particular abstractions to the exclusion of their concrete ramifications. They were compelled by the discipline of philosophical inquiry to think of the wider implications and consequences of their thinking.

This parabolic recession occurred because the broad questioning and criticising of all assumptions never ceased so that the stagnation of dialogue and debate was avoided. They thereby arrived at a universal viewpoint in which abstractions were viewed not *sub specie æternitatis* (Hegel, for instance) but from the widest, most all-embracing, holistic point of view. That is to say, they attempted to take account of all factors relevant to the topic in hand. This meant being relentlessly self-critical of their writings and uniformly sensitive to the actual and possible criticisms averred by others.

Thus, the effect of philosophical inquiry conducted in the clubs was that the members became more realistic and down-to-earth, for instance, in their attitudes and opinions on political and economic matters. Rational habits of thought were adopted that promote a more realistic view of things. As the century progressed, the philosophers became more pre-occupied with practical questions than with purely metaphysical, moral and theological ones. The discipline of philosophical inquiry had ensured that they no longer remained pre-occupied with abstractions since it was made plain to them that such a pre-occupation was eccentric, selfish and ultimately 'idiotic' in the sense referred to in Chapter Three, section.three. They concluded that the interests of the civic community were, in the last analysis, identical with their own.

7. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOUGHT AND ACTION.

On the face of it, it seems paradoxical that increasing thoughtfulness should lead to a concern for practical action in the real world. A withdrawal from worldly

concerns seems a more logical consequence of being more thoughtful. But the Scottish philosophers were not isolated or solitary thinkers. Their thinking revolved round the concerns of their clubs, societies, and other looser associations (such as the Borders Nexus, as we shall see).

Their thinking concerned what really is the case and this led them to be interested not in narrow sectarian concerns but in everything that was going on around them in society. Their thinking was therefore outwardly rather than inwardly directed. The club members were open to outside influences and took an interest in what was happening in their communities. They were not a closed, isolated debating society like the St. Kilda 'parliament'. Until the early 20th century the men on the remote Scottish island of St. Kilda (far to the west of the Outer Hebrides) met each morning in the main street to discuss their work for the day (whether they did any or not). This highly conservative and inverted debating society talked out of existence the most practical and commonsensical of suggestions simply because they were innovations. For example, when one man wanted to make his house more comfortable by flooring one end with wood, other speakers opposed him 'with most peculiar arguments leading him to understand the folly of his plan'.[47] In this way, the talkers were allowed to prevail over those who wanted to introduce improvements and make things better for themselves.

Thus, an outwardly thinking club is concerned more with discussing what can be done than with looking for reasons why sensible things cannot be done. It may be highly speculative in its thinking but its participants are always bearing the possibility of practical application before their minds. They are not just thinking of themselves as an isolated group but of the relationship of their group to the community to which they belong. That relationship consisted in working out what can best be done for the benefit of the community at large.

The *vita activa* was not considered by them to be inferior to the *vita contemplativa*. It might be said that the outward and forward-looking attitude of the Scottish philosophical societies adopted the *vita activa* in which knowledge is acquired more by doing things, by experiment and observation, than by merely contemplating them. Their application of this scientific mode of thought to the economic concerns of poverty-stricken Scotland is what made the Industrial Revolution possible. They

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47 Tom Steele, *The Life and Death of St. Kilda*, (Glasgow: Fontana, 1988), p.49.

therefore exemplify the view of Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* in which the *vita activa* is seen as indicative of 'the modern age', marking off that age from the ancient one. It is equally a rediscovery of the 'unquiet' (ασχολια) of the classical world which both Plato and Aristotle reacted against in bringing the *vita contemplativa* to the fore. In this respect, the Scots were returning to the pre-Platonic concern for fitting into the community in place of the post-Platonic concern for distancing themselves from their community. By coming together in their clubs and societies, the Scots achieved far greater power to get things done than if they attempted to do so as isolated individuals. As Arendt puts it:

> Whoever, for whatever reasons, isolates himself and does not partake in such being together, forfeits power and becomes impotent, no matter how great his strength and how valid his reasons.[48]

[48] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p.201.

CHAPTER FIVE

DAVID HUME AND THE BORDERS NEXUS

> Though a philosopher may live remote from business, the genius of philosophy, if carefully cultivated by several, must gradually diffuse itself throughout the whole society and bestow a similar correctness on every art or calling.
>
> David Hume.[1]

1. THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE BORDERS NEXUS.

What is here called 'the Borders Nexus' was an important outcrop of the ethos which spread throughout lowland Scotland at the beginning of the 18th century. This Nexus was not an established club; it comprised only a loose association of men who lived in or came from the Borders area and between whom there was some correspondence, if not personal contact in the 1720s and 1730s. They were David Hume (1711-76), Lord Kames (1696-1782), Andrew Baxter (1686-1750), and William Dudgeon (1706-43),[2] (whom McCosh in his *Scottish Philosophy* mistakenly calls 'David Dudgeon'[3]). These individuals undoubtedly knew of each other even if they had little or no social contact with each other. There are definite, provable links between Kames and Hume; Kames and Baxter; and Baxter and Dudgeon. Other links between them remain only probable at this time.

Apart from the perhaps later friendship between Hume and Lord Kames, there is no evidence that these men formed lasting personal friendships or that they met in an club-like atmosphere. But such was their mutual interest in philosophical inquiry that they made use of their acquaintanceship to participate in written exchanges of their views and opinions. Although the relationship between them seems to have been distant and often confrontational, they nevertheless formed viable communities of

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1 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (1777 - ed. Nidditch - Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1975), p.10.

2 Cf. Paul Russell's article on William Dudgeon in the forthcoming *Dictionary of Eighteenth Century British Philosophers*, ed. by J.W. Yolton and J.V. Price, (Bristol: Thoemmes), where Russell refers to Dudgeon as 'one of a group of thinkers active in the Borders' i.e. the four men comprising the Borders Nexus.

3 James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy*, (London: 1875 - Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), pp.111-3. It appears that in consciously associating Dudgeon with Hume, McCosh has unconsciously rechristened Dudgeon.

philosophical inquiry in respect of these written exchanges. Their interactions thus sparked each other off through criticism and antagonism. So far from actively encouraging each other, as in the early clubs in Edinburgh, they tended to tear down each other's pretensions to have discovered the ultimate truth of things.

The competitive element therefore seems to have predominated over the co-operative one, as far as the Borders Nexus was concerned. Generally speaking, the bonds that bound them together into this 'nexus' were not those of friendly feelings but those of selfish needs. They used each other in an impersonal way to bring out their best qualities in their mutual strivings for literary fame and fortune though, as will become clear, this could also bring out their negative qualities. Even the friendship between Hume and Kames did not stand in the way of philosophical rivalry when Kames realised where the arguments of Hume's *Treatise* were leading.

They all acted as instigators in their various ways (as referred to in the Introduction) in their general influence on the Enlightenment movement and in their particular influence on David Hume. Kames was a positive and encouraging kind of instigator who adopted the role of Socratic midwife in bringing forth the best in young men. It is likely he played this kind of role with the young Hume, though it is uncertain how early their relationship began. Baxter instigated and goaded people by making them angry because of his somewhat dogmatic and schoolmasterly attitude. He was too sure of his own judgment and was too apt to assume ignorance and error on the part of his opponents, as will be seen in respect of his correspondence with Kames.

It is almost certain that Baxter had early contact with the young Hume whom he seems to have humilated into being an even more ardent scribbler than he was himself. Dudgeon's instigation was centred on his challenge to the accepted doctrines and institutions of the established Christian Church. He paved the way for Hume's more radical dismissal of the tenets of Christianity. And Hume himself functioned as an instigator in provoking both Kames and the common sense school at Aberdeen into reacting against his sceptical approach to knowledge and understanding.

The interactions between these men remained at the written level of communication, but nevertheless constituted philosophical inquiry in which they stated their agreements and disagreements with each other. They formed limited and temporary communities of inquiry each time they engaged in written and published

debates. They attempted thereby to clarify particular areas of inquiry, mainly in respect of metaphysical, religious and moral matters.

During the 1720s and 30s, these four men comprising the Nexus lived within a radius of ten miles around Duns in Berwickshire.[4] Kames was a 'cousin' or near relative of David Hume, and correspondence between them from 1737 still survives.[5] Kames exchanged letters with Baxter in 1723.[6] Also, Baxter and Dudgeon had a debate in 1732-4 in published pamphlets on the subject of liberty and necessity.[7] Both these exchanges influenced Hume in formulating his views on liberty, causation and necessary connections. And it is further argued here that the philosophical inquiry conducted between Hume and the other three was the principal reason why the *Treatise of Human Nature* was written at all.

On the periphery of this Nexus were two Rankenian club members, Robert Wallace, who was Minister of Moffat from 1723 to 1733, and Charles Telfer, who was Minister of Hawick from 1723 till his death in 1731. The extent of their connection with the Nexus is not fully known but Robert Wallace engaged in a pamphlet debate with William Dudgeon in the early 1730s. Hume's views on religion were doubtless influenced by the content of that debate, and the Kirk's reaction to Dudgeon's writings helps to explain Hume's extreme caution in putting these views before the public. More tangible evidence of a connection between the Nexus and the Rankenian Club lies in the fact that Dudgeon used Archibald Murray, a Rankenian Club member, as his advocate in his legal dispute with the Kirk (see section three of this chapter). This suggests that the Rankenian Club not only took a direct interest in Dudgeon's conflict with the Kirk but also gave him moral support in his fight. This incident is also detailed at length in Appendix L.

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4 Ninewells House, Hume's family home, is about 5 miles (8 km) from Duns Castle, where Baxter was tutor, 10 miles (17 km) from Kames, and from Lennelhill, where Dudgeon was tenant farmer. And Dudgeon was a similar distance (10 miles) from Baxter.

5 J.Y.T. Greig, *The Letters of David Hume*, (Oxford: 1932) Vol. I.

6 Cf. Lord Woodhouselee (A.F. Tytler) , *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames*, (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1807), vol. I, pp.23-26.

7 Two of Dudgeon's pamphlets: *The State of the Moral World Considered*, and *A Letter to the Author of the State of the Moral World Considered*, were published posthumously in the book, *The Philosophical Works of Mr. William Dudgeon*, (Edinburgh: 1765), pp.5-159. This book was reproduced by Thoemmes Press in 1994, together with the complete correspondence of Dudgeon with the Rev. John Jackson.

In arguing that these four men comprising the Borders Nexus formed a loose association in which they instigated each other's writings, we can begin to make sense of what was happening in the Borders in the 1720s and 30s. And it seems certain that the inspiration and motivation that led David Hume to produce his *Treatise* are to be found here, and not in Edinburgh or in any contact with Francis Hutcheson which came much later.

While the development of Hume's thinking was also influenced by his wide reading, this is not sufficient in itself to explain why he was suddenly able to produce a work of genius. We need an extra ingredient to explain his mental development and this may have consisted in his contact with these three men and his consequent reading of their correspondence and pamphlet debates. He was of course influenced in his reading of the works of established philosophers such as Hutcheson, but this was *not* the reason why he wrote the *Treatise*. To establish what motivated Hume to write such a work of genius, we need to know more than just his reading list. Such a reading list may have been followed by any young man of the period without his necessarily producing a work of genius. Therefore, it is here argued that the extra events needed to explain this occurrence are to be found in the activities of the Borders Nexus.

Hume regarded Kames as 'the best Friend, in every Respect, I ever possest.'[8] It is not known exactly when their friendship began. But living within 10 miles of each other and being distant relatives, suggests that their friendship may have begun in Hume's boyhood. If not then, it could date from Hume's days of reading law in the late 1720s, when he would have met Kames in Edinburgh. It is known that about this period, Hume joined Kames and his cronies in their convivial binges when they visited, presumably in their legal capacity, towns such as Cupar in Fife.[9]

It is highly probable that Hume visited his neighbours at Duns Castle during the 1720s or 30s since the landed gentry habitually kept in close touch with their immediate neighbours. He may therefore have known of Kames's correspondence with Baxter at first hand. He could also have maintained contact with Kames who visited his country estate as often as he could, and especially in the summertime as he was an

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8 *New Letters of David Hume*, (ed. R. Klibansky and E.C. Mossner - Oxford: 1954), p.17.

9 E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, (Oxford: 1980), p.59.

enthusiastic farmer.[10] Kames also encouraged writers all his life and David Hume may have been one of his first 'élèves', as Ramsay of Ochtertyre called them.[11]

The Border Nexus was therefore an important competitive association in which there was little or no co-operation. It represents the reverse of the co-operative clubs and societies which did so much to lay the foundation to the Scottish Enlightenment. That competitive aspect is important in understanding the influences which led David Hume to write his *Treatise of Human Nature.* For example, the correspondence between Kames and Baxter may have influenced Hume in the two following ways:

Firstly, it is arguable that Hume's emphasis on passion being behind all our reasonings and his sceptical account of the limits and powers of human reason find their original in his witnessing the venomous *a priori* exchanges between Kames and Baxter, and between Baxter and Dudgeon. He saw that these antagonists had an emotional commitment to their respective positions which transcended their reasonable justification.

Secondly, Kames's correspondence with Baxter was dominated by his concern to show the role of 'active power' in the material world. He believed that life, as opposed to non-life, is active in the world, whereas material things are overwhelmingly passive rather than active. As he failed to make this notion philosophically coherent, Hume perhaps felt justified in adopting the opposing view that we are passive recipients of impressions and ideas rather than active beings in the world. Hume interprets human nature largely from a passive point of view in which we are at the mercy not only of impressions and ideas impinging on us but also of our passions which govern our reasoning processes. The other side of the coin, that we are able to act mentally in controlling our thoughts and emotions, and to act physically and purposely in the real world, is left out of his account almost entirely.

Thus, this correspondence was important in reinforcing Hume's predilection towards scepticism and in giving him good reasons to believe in the limitations of human reasoning powers. But the effects of this apparently abortive piece of philosophical inquiry were even more far reaching, as we shall now see.

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[10] John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century*, (ed. A. Allardyce - Edinburgh: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1888), Vol. I, p.207.

[11] *Op. cit.*, p.205.

2. THE NINE LETTER CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KAMES AND BAXTER.

The philosophical inquiry conducted by the Nexus begins with the correspondence between Kames (while he was still plain 'Henry Home') and Andrew Baxter from May to July 1723. The correspondence has survived among Kames's papers (part of the Abercairney Muniments) held in the Scottish Record Office. The arguments contained in this 20,000 word correspondence are summarised in Appendix J. The letters are as follows:[12]

	Henry Home to Baxter	Items	Baxter to Henry Home	Items
1st Letter	28th May 1723	18	31st May 1723	17
2nd Letter	7th June -	15-16	13th June -	13-14
3rd Letter	17th June -	11-12	24th June -	3-4
4th Letter	3rd July -	5-8	8th July -	9-10

Table 2: Letters exchanged between Lord Kames and Andrew Baxter in 1723

This correspondence is important in the context of the Borders Nexus for two reasons:

Firstly, it led to an irreconcilable antipathy between the two men which typifies how the remoteness of writing can lead to misunderstanding and mutual animosities. The general effects on the relationships among the *literati* of using their writings to conduct philosophical inquiry is discussed in greater depth in section nine of this chapter.

Secondly, the correspondence focussed on a topic which was to dominate both men's thinking till the end of their lives. It gave rise to Baxter's life-long obsession with proving, by *a priori* reasoning, the immateriality of forces on inert matter. And, on Kames's part, it reinforced a life-long prejudice against the *vis inertiæ* enunciated in Newton's first law of motion. As is argued in the summary of this correspondence in Appendix J, Baxter was really to blame for reinforcing this prejudice because of his failure to criticise Kames's mistaken views in a painstaking and dispassionate manner.

[12] Scottish Record Office: Abercairney Muniments, GD24/1/547. The letters have been mounted carelessly in book form in an imperfect and confused order with the writing on many pages obscured by the binding.

Instead of directing his criticism solely at the views expressed by Kames, Baxter reacted emotionally to Kames's refusal to accede to his clearly stated views.

Their correspondence demonstrates how a compounding of misunderstandings results with each succeeding letter when each of them attempt, with diminishing success, to keep their tempers in the face of apparent provocation. Baxter begins the abuse in his second letter to Kames when he accuses him of 'Bamboozling and jesting me.' In his reply in his third letter, Kames immediately homes in on this accusation and takes offence at it: 'I must tell you with some warmth, that I'm excessively surprised how you could indulge such a thought, that I was bamboozling & jesting.' At the end of an even longer reply, Baxter continues making derogatory comments without backing them up with specific examples. He asks Kames not to 'triffle [*sic*] with me' and in a postscript says 'you slurr over difficulties'. Kames begins his fourth and last letter by again taking offence: 'You're very hot Good S^{r}: You accuse me of trifling, slurring over difficulties and God knows what.'

Each blames the other for making upsetting remarks. Thus, Kames says towards the end of his last letter: 'You have tempted me to be a little angry in this letter - I cannot think but that you have given me some reason - Perhaps you'll say I'm to blame - Why let it be so, if you'll have it. Let us then forgive on the other, and let us keep to our arguments without personal reflections, which of all things I hate.'

But Baxter could not refrain from having 'personal reflections' i.e. making personal remarks, and did not believe he was doing so. Thus, his last remarks scribbled on the back of the envelope of his last letter state: 'So you have your self to blame, and I have you more to blame, and this without being guilty of ill manners to you, for you know well enough that in Disputs [*sic*] we are all jack fellow well met.' He thinks Kames is to blame because of Kames's inconsistencies of argument and not because he can't really understand Kames's point of view.

In the body of his last letter, Baxter proposes that they exchange letters and 'We will burn them and our philosophical Heats together.' Thankfully, Kames did not return Baxter's letters but kept them together with his returned by Baxter. Presumably he had the intention of using the arguments at a later date, which he did in fact do.

Kames's biographers, such as Lord Woodhouselee and, more recently, Ian Ross,[13] have assumed that Kames was entirely in the wrong and that Baxter was

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13 Ian Ross, *Lord Kames and the Scotland of his Day*, (Oxford: the Clarendon

patiently tackling Kames's blindspot as regards the *vis inertiæ*. However, it is clear from his first letter that Kames is perfectly aware of the *vis inertiæ*, and he consequently reacts angrily when Baxter not only adopts a long-winded schoolmasterish tone in teaching him the error of his ways, but also uses offensive language instead of sticking to the letter of the arguments. The dispute floundered as much on Baxter's blindspot in failing to appreciate metaphysical subtleties as on Kames's failure to make clear the nature of his objection to Newton's First Law of Motion.

Kames thought that moving objects must have intermediary causes which keep them in motion. He asked himself: how can an object continue to move unless it has acquired some property of motion within it to keep it moving in one direction? However, this kind of subtle objection is a metaphysical rather than than a physical one. All that Newton claimed was that no further force is required to set something in motion other than the initial impulse. He did not attempt to analyse the nature of motion any further.

It wasn't till nearly the end of Kames's life that Thomas Reid's more thoughtful correspondence with him made clear the metaphysical nature of his arguments. Thus, in a letter to Kames in 1782 (a few months before the latter's death), Reid wrote: 'I am apt to think that your Lordship, as well as another Lord [Lord Monboddo] who has laboured in the same Field, has mixed too much Metaphysicks with Physicks.'[14] In a letter of 1780, Reid had also given him an account of Zeno's paradoxes[15] and this suggests that neither Kames nor Baxter knew of these paradoxes which might have served to clarify some of their arguments by taking them consciously into metaphysics instead of remaining confusedly in physics.

From a metaphysical point of view, motion is a much more puzzling affair than the physicists of the day were prepared to admit. Ironically, physicists nowadays are more unclear as to the ultimate nature of motion than in Newton's day. Following the discoveries of quantum mechanics, the forces underlying all motion now prove to be increasingly elusive and unfathomable the more they are traced down to their

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Press, 1972), p.66, for instance.

14 Reid's letter to Kames - October 1782 - in 'Unpublished Letters of Thomas Reid to Lord Kames, 1762-1782', edited by Ian Ross, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. VII, 1965, p.60.

15 Reid's letter dated 23rd April 1780, in *op. cit.*, pp.43-46.

sub-atomic origins i.e. at the level of quantum theory. For instance, it is a puzzle as whether motion is ultimately composed of particles or waves. Thus, Kames was more correct that he knew when he questioned the received wisdom on the matter.

Undoubtedly Kames wrote his letters to Baxter in a hurry and with insufficient thought and care. He contradicts himself in successive letters as a result. But he freely begs to be excused of any deficiencies in his arguments as a result. But Baxter ignores this and accuses him of seeing difficulties where there are none. Baxter is almost neurotically over-eager to win the argument. He thinks that Kames has misunderstood the import of the 'new philosophy' and it never occurs to him that Kames might be looking beyond it to pinpoint its metaphysical deficiencies.

Reid's subsequent correspondence with Kames is a model of how to argue philosophy with deference and circumspection, in comparison with Baxter's letters which are as insensitive and overbearing as Kames's are impatient and dismissive. The correspondence is an example of how heated arguments are never settled by letter and may lead to life-long emnity between the correspondents. The Freud-Jung correspondence is evidence of this as well as the less well-known rupture of a brief friendship between Bertrand Russell and D.H. Lawrence in 1915.[16]

The acrimonious nature of their correspondence brought about a permanent rift between Kames and Baxter. In fact, Kames may have displaced his loathing for Baxter onto the whole Hay family at Duns Castle. He represented the townspeople of Duns in two of the legal cases against the Hay family in the period 1729 to 1732. In 1729, when an agent of the Hays disputed the right of skinners in Duns town to use a mill dam to soak their skins, Kames took the side of the skinners as their advocate in the subsequent legal proceedings. In another case, Feuars of Duns versus Hay 1731-32, Kames defended (unsuccessfully) the feuars' attempt to claim common land for the town. This latter case was recorded by Kames in his book, *Remarkable Decisions of the Court of Session.* But there is no mention in this book of his involvement in this case.[17]

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[16] Cf. Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, (London: Unwin, 1975), pp.244-246.

[17] Lord Kames, *Remarkable Decisions of the Court of Session, from the year 1730 to the year 1732*, (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1766), pp.6-11. Documents naming Kames (i.e. Henry Home) in respect of these cases, and some containing his signature are to be found (1) among in Court of Session papers at West Register House in Edinburgh, and (2) among the Hay Family archives at Duns Castle. The

Kames told Boswell in 1780 that he gave up metaphysics in a fit of disgust after his failed correspondence with Baxter, Clarke and Butler. But, as we shall see in the last section of this chapter, this is not the whole truth of the matter. Hume's *Treatise* awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers and he resumed the development of his idiosyncratic ideas till the end of his life. As is pointed out above, many of Thomas Reid's last letters to Kames (from 1780-82) were devoted to pointing out the flaws in the latter's thinking on this matter, but apparently without success.

3. THE PAMPHLET DEBATE BETWEEN WILLIAM DUDGEON AND ROBERT WALLACE.

(1) 1731 — ROBERT WALLACE — The Regard due to Divine Revelation and to Pretences to it, considered, A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD OF DUMFREIS [sic], at their meeting in October 1729.

(2) 1731 — WILLIAM DUDGEON — The Necessity of Some of the Positive Institutions of Ch.....ty Considered in a Letter to the Minister of Moffat.

(3) 1732 — ROBERT WALLACE — A Reply to a Letter directed to the Minister of Moffat Concerning the Positive Institutions of Christianity in which the Arguments in Mr. Wallace's Sermon before the Synod of Dumfries, October 1729, and the Remarks prefix'd to it, are illustrated and defended.

Table 3: Pamphlets published by William Dudgeon and Robert Wallace in their debate, 1731-32

Chronologically speaking, the next written (and indeed published) debate involving the Borders Nexus was between Robert Wallace and William Dudgeon. The content of this debate shows the intensity with which religious controversy was conducted at this time. Being a member of the Rankenian Club, Wallace was himself in the vanguard of progressive religious thought but he believed that Dudgeon was going too far when he threatened the foundations of Kirk to which he (Wallace) was already professionally committed. No doubt, Dudgeon's views were useful to the Rankenian ministers in marking out the *terminus ad quem* beyond which they were not prepared to go in their reforming zeal.

What is known of the life of William Dudgeon is recorded in Appendix L since even recent scholars are ignorant of the extent of our knowledge of him.[18] He first

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discovery of Kames's participation in these cases is original research which will not be found in any of his biographies.

[18] Cf. David Berman's Introduction to the publication by Thoemmes Press in 1994

appears on the public scene in 1731 with the publication of a pamphlet in which he attacked Robert Wallace's published sermon of 1729.[19] This pamphlet, *The Necessity of Some of the Positive Institutions of Ch.....ty Considered in a Letter to the Minister of Moffat,*[20] was previously attributed to either Charles Telfer or William Dudgeon, but is undoubtedly Dudgeon's work.

While Wallace was Minster at Moffat, his friend and fellow Rankenian, Charles Telfer,[21] was Minister of Hawick. Wallace's son, George Wallace, assumed the pamphlet to be by the latter. However, the text was clearly not written by a Minister of the Gospel; there are references to 'your brethren' and to 'Divines, especially of your communion'.[22] It also expresses Dudgeon's stress on the necessity of the links between the Deity and his creatures. This leads him to argue that God must punish his creatures for their own good since everything that happens to a person is necessarily the will of God.[23] He also attacks Christianity in no uncertain terms:

> The great Stress which it lays upon mere Belief, and Orthodoxy, will appear to be pretty singular in its Constitution: From this Source have flow'd all that bitter and implacable Hatred, Persecution, and Blood-shed, with which the differing Parties of Ch....ns, inflamed with mad Zeal, for their several Opinions, have raged against each other.[24]

Wallace replies indignantly to Dudgeon's aspersions as follows:

> I take it to be one of the boldest Assertions that ever I saw, when you affirm, p. 6, and 7. "That the face of things has been visibly alter'd to the worse in all these Countries where this Religion (meaning Christianity) has obtain'd,

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of the 1765 edition of Dudgeon's philosophical works. Berman states that 'Dudgeon has remained an obscure figure, even by the standards of shadowy philosophical writers of the eighteenth century'.

19 Robert Wallace, *The Regard due to Divine Revelation and to Pretences to it, considered, A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD OF DUMFREIS* [sic], *at their meeting in October 1729.* (London: Printed for A. Millar, MDCCXXX1).

20 William. Dudgeon, *The Necessity of Some of the Positive Institutions of Ch.....ty Considered in a Letter to the Minister of Moffat* (London: Printed in the year MDCCXXX1).

21 The fact that Telfer (sometimes spelt 'Telford') was a member of the Rankenian Club is known because Wodrow mentions him as belonging to the same Club as Wishart and Wallace. (see Rev. Robert Wodrow, *Analecta: or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences Mostly Relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians,* [Printed for the Maitland Club, 1842], Vol. III, p.183, [year 1725]).

22 Cf. Dudgeon, *The Necessity* etc., pp.3, 21, & 28 (for latter quote).

23 *Op. cit.* p.19.

24 *Op. cit.* p.7.

from the time that it prevail'd in them." This is an Assertion that I deny, nor can any man in the world make it good. It is especially inexcusable in a *Briton*; if it had dropt from an *Italian*, or a poor slavish Inhabitant of the *Lesser Asia*, greater allowances might have been made: but its scarce pardonable in a *British* Subject, whose Country has flourish'd so much, and where the face of things hath been visibly alter'd for the better, since the introduction of Christianity.[25]

Dudgeon particularly attacks Christian reliance on revelation rather than reason. He states 'that we need no other Assurance, nor can receive any greater than what Reason affords us.'[26] He thinks this because he believes that one can argue from the inherent goodness of the deity to a belief in his benevolence and goodwill, and in his ultimate willingness to forgive of all our sins. The development of this view in his later pamphlet, *The State of the Moral World Consider'd*, attracted the unwelcome attention of the Kirk authorities, since he was accused of destroying 'all Distinction and Difference between Moral Good and Evil' (see Appendix L for more details on this). He thought that 'nothing is Evil on the Whole' because it ultimately all emanates from God's infinite perfection.[27]

As against Dudgeon's attack on revelation, Wallace argues that reason can only take us so far and leaves us in conjecture and uncertainty. Thereafter, according to him, we must rely on revelation to support our belief in such positive institutions of Christianity as belief in our immortality through Christ.

The utmost length to which the Light of Nature can pretend to go, is to assure us, that we are not to perish wholly at death: but that the Soul shall survive the Ruins of the Body, and enter into an immortal State, in which we shall be placed in such Circumstances as shall bear a proportion and be suitable to our Behaviour and Attainments in this World. If Reason can discover all these Truths, which is not universally acknowledged, I am certain that it cannot pretend to any more: and if we want to go further in our Enquiry into the Nature of the future State; if we want to determine the Proportion, or calculate how far superior the future State shall be to the present, whether the Happiness of it may

25 Robert Wallace, *A Reply to a Letter directed to the Minister of Moffat Concerning the Positive Institutions of Christianity in which the Arguments in Mr. Wallace's Sermon before the Synod of Dumfries, October 1729, and the Remarks prefix'd to it, are illustrated and defended*, (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1732), pp.15-16.

26 Dudgeon, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

27 William Dudgeon, *The State of the Moral World Consider'd*, (Edinburgh: 1732), p.6.

be said to be complete, or whether we may not be expos'd to many Inconveniences in it, as we are frequently in this Life; Reason leaves us at a loss, and can furnish us nothing but Guesses and Conjectures. It's only by a Revelation that we are assured, that virtuous Men shall be deliver'd from all Pains and Inconveniences whatsoever, and that their Happiness shall be perfect and complete. It's only JESUS CHRIST who hath reveal'd the pure Joys of the other World, and brought such amazing Glories to light.[28]

Dudgeon's pamphlet attacking Robert Wallace seems to have been ignored by the authorities because of its anonymity (also the lack of a printer's name). But his next pamphlet, *The State of the Moral World Consider'd*, published the next year in Edinburgh, had 'by W.D.' in the title page and, as a result, it was the occasion of his being arraigned before firstly the Kirk Session of Coldstream and then the Presbytery of Chirnside in 1732. This incident is recorded in full in the relevant minute books and the events show the ineptness of the Kirk authorities and the adroitness of Dudgeon in his stonewalling them to a standstill.

The Presbytery of Chirnside usually met at Chirnside (except at Ayton on one occasion) so that its proceedings mainly occurred a mere mile away from Ninewells House where David Hume was still immersed in the studies which led to the publication of his *Treatise*. Moreover, the Presbytery included Hume's uncle, George Home, the minister of Chirnside, in its number. At one point in the proceedings, Home is sent out with another minister to remonstrate with Dudgeon. But he seems to have played no significant role in bringing charges against Dudgeon; the Presbytery as whole seems responsible. Dudgeon had asked John Pow, the minister of Coldstream, to read his manuscript before publication, and inevitably the Presbytery heard of its contents and took action, possibly against Pow's wishes. It is possible that they meant only to replenish the coffers of the Kirk Treasurer (which were used to give to the poor) by fining and censuring Dudgeon but they obviously didn't know who they were dealing with. Dudgeon literally stonewalled the proceedings until they petered out to nothing in the end. After he appealed to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, nothing further happened as the Assembly already had enough trouble with its refractory clergy and professors of divinity to waste their time with a mere layman's apostasy.

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28 Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp.37-38.

It is significant that when the proceedings against Dudgeon reached the Synod of the Merse and Teviotdale in Kelso, he brought his lawyer along with him. This was the Edinburgh advocate, Archibald Murray, whose membership of the Rankenian Club was no coincidence since the members clearly opposed all efforts to stifle free and open debate in religious matters (see previous chapter). A full account of the proceedings and of how effectively Dudgeon stood up to the full might of the Kirk is given in Appendix L.

It is also noteworthy that the name of David Hume was also cited before the Presbytery of Chirnside in 1734, for allegedly having fathered an illegitimate child. On March 5th, 'one Agnes Galbraith, presented herself before the Reverend George Home (Hume's uncle - the minister of Chirnside) and confessed that she was with child.'[29] It has been thought that Hume's departure for England late in February 1734 may have been undertaken to escape the consequent opprobrium. And Mossner in his *Life of David Hume* makes no great effort to dispute this account.[30] However, it is clear from the minutes of the Presbytery that the woman's accusations were dismissed because she made a habit of accusing men known to be 'out of the country' whenever she was pregnant. Nevertheless, Hume's later caution in his attack on Christianity and religion in general is understandable in view of these activities on the part of the local Kirk.

Dudgeon's published controversy with Robert Wallace shows that a clear connection between the Border Nexus and the Rankenian Club existed at this time. Both Edinburgh and the Borders were involved in this religious controversy which was begun by some Rankenian Club members who were themselves ministers of the gospel. In 1724-25, Wishart, Wallace, and Telfer were attacking entrenched views in the Kirk, especially in Glasgow. Their contention was that there should be more freedom of thought and discussion about theological matters.[31] The extremes to which Dudgeon was able to take his arguments was only possible because the Rankenians themselves began the process of pushing such controversy to the limits that the authorities would stomach.

The two men are likely to have known each other personally. Wallace certainly replies respectfully to Dudgeon's criticisms and at one point states: '. . . this needs not

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29 *Minutes of the Presbyterie of Chyrnside (1713 - 1734)*, Scottish Record Office, CH2/516/3, pp.349 & 359.

30 E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, (Oxford, 1980), pp.82-83.

31 Wodrow, *op.cit.* p.175.

be made plainer to a Gentleman of your capacity.'[32] This suggests that Wallace may have had personal knowledge of Dudgeon's 'capacity'.

The motivation behind Dudgeon's necessarian views only becomes fully apparent in a pamphlet entitled *A Discourse Concerning the Immediate and Necessary Dependence of All Things upon the Deity.*[33] This extremely rare pamphlet (of which there seems to be only one extant copy) was not included in his posthumously published *Philosophical Works* (1765). Its arguments suggest that Dudgeon wished to dispense with organised religion and replace it with a direct connection between the Deity and human beings. The implication is that because men are necessarily dependent upon the Deity in respect of all their actions, they need no 'ministers of the gospel' or theological writings to mediate between them and the Deity. He had shown the tenor of his thinking in his attack on Christianity in the previous pamphlet and in his criticisms of 'divines' in general. Now at the end of this pamphlet, he states that he does not mean to contradict scripture:

> However, I cannot but *ever* wish, That Men would rather place their **RELIGION** in *Love, Graditude, Submission* to, and *Trust* in the **DEITY**, and in a *kind Heart* and *honest Behaviour* towards their Neighbours, and *Study* of their greatest *Good*; than in *speculative Points* or *Matters of mere Belief*, which to visibly tend to destroy all *Charity* and *mutual Forbearance*, and consequently the Life and Essence of **CHRISTIANITY** itself.[34]

Where Dudgeon led, Hume followed, but took one step further in getting rid of the Deity altogether (see the next section). Dudgeon's necessarianism is paralleled in Hume's moral views which may have been influenced by him. For he states 'that Men are, at all Times, determined by Motives in Pursuit of their *Happiness*.'[35] Hume

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[32] Robert Wallace, *A Reply to a Letter directed to the Minister of Moffat Concerning the Positive Institutions of Christianity in which the Arguments in Mr. Wallace's Sermon before the Synod of Dumfries, October 1729, and the Remarks prefix'd to it, are illustrated and defended*, (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1732), p.19.

[33] W. Dudgeon, *A Discourse Concerning the Immediate and Necessary Dependence of All Things upon the Deity, wherein the Principal Objections to His present Government are considered.* (London: Printed in the Year M. DCC. XXXI) 52 pages. This is wrongly dated 1731 and probably came out in 1733 onwards since it refers in a footnote to 'The State of Moral Considered' which was only published in 1732 and since it mentions Baxter's *Some Reflections* of 1732 — see section four in this chapter.

[34] *Op. cit.*, pp.51-52.

[35] *Op. cit.*, p.11.

developed this view still further in saying that 'Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them'.[36]

Dudgeon seems also to have influenced Hume in stressing the importance of self-interest. He made use of Mandeville's 'private vices, public benefits' view in *The Fable of the Bees*[37] to argue that selfishness is as necessary for our 'good' as for our 'evil' ones. The same selfish motivations lead us to do good as to do evil:

> It is a greater degree of the same passion, that prompts one to join himself to a wife in lawful wedlock, which makes him commit adultery. The same that makes him industrious to provide for his family in a lawful way, which makes him steal his neighbour's money, or rob him of it. To make this plainer still, we shall instance in one of the passions that perhaps looks the likest direct malice of any. Envy is a passion that makes us grudge and repine at the happiness of another. The reason of this is, self-love makes us more sensible of our own worth than others are, and value ourselves more than others do, and perhaps more than we ought to do.[38]

Essentially, Hume is working out the implications of this view of Dudgeon's in Book II 'Of the Passions' in his *Treatise.* He attempts to show that the interplay between passions of pride and humility, and of love and hatred, explains all facets of our behaviour. We are necessarily motivated by such passions and not by the reasons which we devise in retrospect to justify these motivations. But the view that we are essentially selfish creatures who are not free of our motives was passionately opposed by Andrew Baxter, as is now argued.

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[36] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (ed. Nidditch - Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1978), book II, part III, sect. III, p.415.

[37] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, (1724 - London: Penguin, 1970). For example, in 'An Enquiry in the Origin of Moral Virtue', p.90, is the following:

> So that the most insatiable Thirst after Fame that ever Heroe was inspired with, was never more than an ungovernable Greediness to engross the Esteem and Admiration of others in future Ages as well as his own.

[38] W. Dudgeon, 'A Letter to the Author of the State of the Moral World Considered: Wherein some satisfying account is attempted to be given of the nature of Virtue and Vice, the origin of Moral Evil, and the end and duration of Future Punishment' in his *Philosophical Works*, p.54.

4. THE PAMPHLET DEBATE BETWEEN WILLIAM DUDGEON AND ANDREW BAXTER.

(1) 1732 — WILLIAM DUDGEON — The State of the Moral World Considered: or a Vindication of Providence in the Government of the Moral World.
(2) 1732 — ANDREW BAXTER — Some Reflections on a late Pamphlet called the State of the Moral considered.
(3) 1734— WILLIAM DUDGEON — A Letter to the Author of the State of the Moral World Considered: Wherein some satisfying account is attempted to be given of the nature of Virtue and Vice, the origin of Moral Evil, and the end and duration of Future Punishment.
(4) c.1734 — ANDREW BAXTER — A Vindication of the Principles of Human Liberty as contained in the Reflections on a late Pamphlet entitled the State of the Moral World considered. [An unpublished manuscript in which he refers to and quotes from both Dudgeon's pamphlets mentioned above as well as his own 'Some Reflections'.]
(5) 1733 or 34 — WILLIAM DUDGEON — A Discourse Concerning the Immediate and Necessary Dependence of All Things upon the Deity, wherein the Principal Objections to His present Government are considered. [Baxter's 'Some Reflections' is mentioned several times in this pamphlet.]

Table 4: Pamphlets & discourses by William Dudgeon and Andrew Baxter in their debate, 1732-34

There is little doubt that the works of Baxter and Dudgeon, and perhaps even their personal conversation, had more influence on the development of Hume's thought than, for instance, those of Francis Hutcheson. Hume may have met and conversed with Baxter and Dudgeon at any time up to his departure for England in 1734. But he was not known to Hutcheson at all till after the publication of the *Treatise* in 1739. We know this because Hutcheson wrote to Kames in that year, saying that he was 'surprised with a great acuteness of thought and reasoning in a mind wholly disengaged from the prejudices of the Learned as well as those of the Vulgar.' Hutcheson asked 'to know where the Author could be met with'.[39] Only then did a correspondence ensue between Hume and Hutcheson which may have helped Hume in his revision of the last book of his *Treatise* published the following year.

The extent of Hume's pre-occupation with the problems of causation and necessary connection has never been satisfactorily explained by referring to the works

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39 Ian Ross, 'Hutcheson on Hume's "Treatise": An Unnoticed Letter', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. IV, 1966, pp.69-72.

of Hutcheson, Newton and Locke, as Kemp Smith has done[40] (see section eight for more on this). The latter assumes Hutcheson to be the primary influence on the development of Hume's views, but the above-mentioned pre-occupation is not so readily explained. Clearly the source of this pre-occupation lies in what is here called 'the Borders Nexus'.

Hume doubtless read the pamphlets published by Baxter and Dudgeon, and he took account of their views in the *Treatise*, as we shall see. In this pamphlet debate between Baxter and Dudgeon in 1732-4, the former attempts to reduce Dudgeon's arguments to absurdity without doing any justice to his point of view. As a result, Dudgeon in his reply to the criticisms merely reiterates his views more abstractly and coherently without addressing himself to the letter of Baxter's criticisms. When in 1736 Dudgeon engaged in another published debate, this time with Rev. John Jackson, the latter summarises Dudgeon's views in the ninth and last letter, and shows them to be virtually unchanged from those attacked by Baxter.[41] As we have seen, his views were also challenged by the Kirk authorities from 1732 onwards as being in 'error'.

Dudgeon's fate shows that no matter how determined and motivated a person is, he still needs the support and criticism of a sustained and intimate community of philosophical inquiry to develop his views and prevent them from ossifying into repetitious declamations. It is interesting to compare his fate with that of Thomas Reid who was similarly isolated in the countryside until he was reluctantly persuaded to accept a post at King's College, Aberdeen.[42] It is arguable that Reid also would have suffered the 'shallows and miseries' of missed opportunities, if he had not been able to use the Aberdeen Philosophical Society to develop his views critically instead of reiterating them fruitlessly in the wilderness as Dudgeon was 'determined' to do.

Hume was almost certainly acquainted with Baxter and Dudgeon while they were formulating their views and he was living at Ninewells. In his biographical letter of 1732, he states that he rode nearly everyday, except in winter, sometimes as much

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40 N. Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, (London: Macmillan, 1941), pp.41-76.

41 *Several Letters to the Rev^d. Mr. Jackson, from William Dudgeon, a Gentleman in Berwickshire, with Mr. Jackson's Answers to them*, (London: 1737). Dudgeon's letters were reprinted in his *Philosophical Works*, p.229f, but without Jackson's replies (though with his replies in the recent Thoemmes reproduction of that book).

42 Cf. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century*, p.472.

as '8 or 10 Scotch miles'[43] (a Scotch mile being more than 200 yards or metres longer than an English one). This would have given him ample opportunity to visit his neighbours, as was customary among the landed gentry of that time. Also, Scott's 18th century novel, *Guy Mannering*, features a young man riding a seven mile return journey to have a three hour session with his 'dominie' every day.[44]

The fact that Hume was probably influenced by Dudgeon's writings, if not by personal contact with him, was recognised last century by James McCosh in his book *The Scottish Philosophy* where he states the following:

> There are points in which Dudgeon anticipated Hume. Thus, Dudgeon maintains that all knowledge is about ideas, the essence of which is that they are perceived. He says that the words "just, unjust, desert, &c., are necessarily relative to society;" and that if we allow that there is not justice in the government of this world, we cannot argue that there is justice in the world to come. Dudgeon, too, is a stern necessarian. But in all these points Dudgeon had himself been anticipated by others. In other respects the two widely differ. Dudgeon assumes throughout a much higher moral tone than Hume ever did. Dudgeon had evidently abandoned a belief in Christianity, but he stood up resolutely for a rational demonstration of the existence of God as the cause of the ideas which come under our experience; and he has a whole system of natural religion: whereas Hume undermines all religion, natural as well as revealed. Dudgeon had superior philosophic abilities; and in other circumstances might have had a chance of becoming the head of a new philosophic heresy. But there was a young man in his own neighborhood being trained to supersede and eclipse him in his own line. and to go beyond deism to atheism. It is thus that error advances till it corrects itself.[45]

This superficial account scarcely does justice to Dudgeon's work, let alone Hume's. The importance of the former's work was not reduced by his being 'anticipated by others' since it lay in his contribution to the philosophical inquiry into religious and moral matters which were obviously raging in the Borders at that time. It was this contribution which helped to give Hume the training he required to bring his work up to publishable standards.

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43 Greig, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp.14-5.

44 Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, (1815 - Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1932), ch. 15, p.98.

45 J. McCosh, *op. cit.*, pp.112-113.

Contextually at least, it is clear that Hume was in sympathy with the determinist views of William Dudgeon, but the debate between Dudgeon and Baxter made him think very hard about them. Thus, Hume has Baxter's libertarian views in mind in his sections on liberty and necessity in the *Treatise*, where he refers to these views as 'this fantastical system of liberty'.[46]

Dudgeon had argued that we are *necessarily* imperfect beings who are not accountable for these imperfections because they are caused by motives which we have no power to change. Baxter took exception to this view because it seemed to rule out freedom of choice and moral responsibility. He argued that there is *spontaneity* of thought and this frees us from the rigid determinism of our 'moral motives', as he calls them.[47]

In reply to this, Hume wrote that 'liberty, by removing necessity removes also causes, and is the very same thing with chance.' He then distinguishes between 'liberty of spontaneity' and 'liberty of indifference',[48] thus implying that Baxter had failed to make that distinction. For there is no 'spontaneity' as such but only a 'looseness' or indifference to causes which makes us overlook these causes of our motives. But we can always determine these causes by thinking about our actions and finding a reason for them.

Hume concludes that all relations of cause and effect are merely 'customary conjunctions' which we habitually apply to external events as well as to our motives. And it is noteworthy that in the first section, 'of Liberty and Necessity', cause and effect are discussed as if for the first time and as if they had not been dealt with in depth in the first book. Thus, the first book of the *Treatise* may have been written to clarify the conclusions he had already reached in these two sections in the second

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[46] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (1739 - ed. Nidditch - Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1978), book II, part III, sect. I, p.404.

[47] Andrew Baxter, *Some Reflections of a Late Pamphlet called the State of the Moral World Considered* (Edinburgh: Gavin Hamilton: 1732), p.24f. Though the author is not named in this pamphlet, it is stated to be by him in Dudgeon's *Philosophical Works*, p.45. Also, in the unpublished manuscript of Baxter's 'A Vindication of the Principles of Human Liberty', which is the draft of a reply to Dudgeon's response to Baxter's pamphlet, Baxter refers to the pamphlet as being his own in no uncertain terms e.g. 'all that was said in the *Reflections*, where I insisted on these consequences' etc.

[48] Hume, *op. cit.*, sect. II, p.407.

book. It is arguable that this development formed part of the 'new Scene of Thought',[49] which led Hume to devote himself to single-mindedly to philosophy.

Thus, Baxter's attack on determinism and Dudgeon's defence of it, together with Kames's worries about the power of the human mind (see section seven in this chapter), were the catalysts which induced Hume to explore the topics of causation and necessary connection. For the dominant concern of the first volume of the *Treatise* is to deal with the problem of causation and to explain the role of necessary connections in the workings of the human mind. Baxter's attempted *reductio ad absurdum* of Dudgeon's underdeveloped views in *The State of the Moral World Considered*, even when qualified by his later spirited retort to Baxter, suggested to Hume the need to clarify the nature of causation and necessary connection to support the necessarian point of view.

In Dudgeon's reply to Baxter in *A Letter to the Author of the State of the Moral World* (written to himself, and presumably covering his tracks, as it were), he accused Baxter of 'not distinguishing sufficiently between a moral and natural necessity. . . . the actions of the mind, perceiving, willing, inclining, desiring, etc., let them be never so strong or intense, have no resemblance or relation to a natural necessity, such as of one stone's impelling another.'[50]

But Hume sees the dangers of this point of view. It leads to a dualism in which the two necessities may not be reduced to one another, and it allows Baxter to find freedom in moral necessity because it is distinct from natural necessity. Hume saves the determinist view by reducing natural necessity to moral necessity by means of his view of causation as being a 'customary conjunction' which we impose on events and things. He makes this major clarification in the second section on 'Liberty and Necessity' as follows:

> Let no one, therefore, put an invidious construction on my words, by saying simply, that I assert the necessity of human actions, and place them on on the same footing with the operations of senseless matter. I do not ascribe to the will that unintelligible necessity, which is supposed to lie in matter. But I ascribe to matter that intelligible quality, call it necessity or not, which the most rigorous orthodoxy does or must allow to belong to the will. I change, therefore,

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[49] Greig, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p.13.

[50] W. Dudgeon, 'A Letter to the Author of the State of the Moral World Considered:' *op. cit.*, pp.66-67.

> nothing in the received systems, with regard to the will, but only with regard to material objects.[51]

Thus, Hume's 'new Scene of Thought' may not have been one single insight but a composite system that involved an application of the 'experimental' method to moral philosophy to show that human nature necessarily makes us moral and useful citizens. And no outside supernatural agency, such as God, is required to explain our propensities in that direction. His belated exchange of letters with Hutcheson after the publication of the *Treatise*, led Hume to take more account of Hutcheson's views in the third volume of the *Treatise* published thereafter. Thus, aspects of Hutcheson's views influenced Hume in the development of his moral views only secondarily to the influence of the necessaritarian views that were debated by Baxter and Dudgeon.

Hume was undoubtedly encouraged in his stand against the religious views of his day by the example of Dudgeon in his attack on Calvinist Christianity. Indeed, it appears that Hume was influenced to the extent of taking up Dudgeon's challenge to provide 'a *Religion* or *Philosophy*, that teaches us *true and good Opinions* of GOD and MANKIND'. This Hume attempted to do in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.*[52] Dudgeon made his challenge in the following passage in which utilitarian views are also prominent:

> And to these Ends or Purposes a *Religion* or *Philosophy*, that teaches us *true and good Opinions* of GOD and MANKIND, and the true tendency of benevolent publick-spirited Actions to *promote our greatest Happiness*, while mean, unkind, selfish Actions *draw upon us* the Ill-will and Hatred of all Men, and involve us in a Train of Misery. To these Ends, I say, the *teaching* of such a Religion, or Philosophy, must be *exceeding useful*; which also must tend to promote mutual *Trust* and *Charity* among Men, and spread Happiness over all the Earth. But Men had better indeed be left to the *Dictates of common sense* and the *Impulses of Humanity*, than to the *teaching* of those who represent all Mankind as *naturally* ill, malicious and wicked, which necessarily tends to raise Emnity among Mankind, and which Opinion, was it *true*, necessarily *lands* upon the *Author* of NATURE himself. Impious Thought![53]

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[51] Hume, *op. cit.*, sect. II, p.410.

[52] Cf. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, (1779 - London: Penguin, 1990), p.38.

[53] W. Dudgeon, *A Discourse Concerning the Immediate and Necessary Dependence of All Things upon the Deity, wherein the Principal Objections to His present Government are considered*, *op. cit.*, pp.41-2.

Baxter no doubt welcomed the publication of Dudgeon's pamphlet, since he prepared his own reply which was published *in the same year* and, at 51 pages, is at least twice the size of the pamphlet it is attacking. The debate was therefore consciously set up by both men as a way of exercising their philosophical talents and of getting their views across to the public.

5. ANDREW BAXTER 'S LATER WORK.

(1) ***An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul,*** *wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is evinced from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy,* 1st edition 1733, 2nd edition 1737, 3rd edition 1745.

(2) ***Matho, or the Cosmotheoria Puerilis.*** *A Dialogue in which the first Principles of Philosophy and Astronomy are accommodated to the Capacity of young Persons, or such as have yet no Tincture of these Sciences.* First published in Latin. 1st English edition 1740, 2nd 1745, 3rd 1765.

(3) ***An Appendix to the First Part of the Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul,*** *Wherein the Principles laid down there, are cleared from some Objections; and the Government of the Deity in the material World is vindicated, or shewn not to be carried on by* Mechanism *and* second Causes. (pp.280) Published in 1750 and written to counter the objections of Colin Maclaurin

4) ***The Evidence of Reason in Proof of the Immortality of the Soul*** *independent on the more abstruse Inquiry into the Nature of Matter and Spirit.* (pp.459). Published posthumously in 1779.

(5) ***Histor, A Dialogue,*** *in which the Experiments brought by Foreign Philosophers against the English {method of computing} the Forces of moving Bodies, are shewn to agree exactly with, and very much to confirm that {method of} estimation.* Unpublished manuscript - 128 pages with 52 pages of notes.

Table 5: Andrew Baxter's other works (non-pamphlet), published and unpublished.

In his day, Baxter was considered a better philosopher than Berkeley, especially among by the clergy.[54] This is in spite of the fact that he is basically developing the ideas of his mentor, Dr. Samuel Clarke. In his book, *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul,* Baxter attempted to use Newton's Laws of Motion and Gravitation to prove the existence of immaterial beings. He saw God as being a cohesive unity which reflected itself in all the forces and activity of the universe. Mere material objects have

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[54] A contemporary, Bishop Warburton declared Baxter's book to be 'one of the most finished of the kind, in my humble opinion, that the present times, greatly advanced in true philosophy, have produced.' Quoted by Andrew Kippis in *Biographia Britannica,* (2nd edition, London: 1780), p.25.

no capacity for movement and indeed, in his view, resisted through inertia all forces which moved them. As all forces tend to draw things together, especially gravity, they must manifest the cohesive tendencies of God.

Baxter's system of thought might be summarised as follows. He argued that matter has a natural resistance to any change in its present state, whether of rest or motion. The importance of this assumption was obviously impressed on Baxter's mind as result of his correspondence with Kames (see section two of this chapter). This resistance to change is inconsistent with matter possessing any active power. The natural powers of matter such as gravity, attraction, elasticity, repulsion, are not implanted or inherent in matter. They are impulses or forces impressed on matter *ab extra*. Because matter has no active power of its own, all those effects commonly ascribed to its active powers, are really produced by an immaterial being.

From this reasoning, there arises the necessity for the agency of a constant and universal Providence in the material world, and this is God. We must also admit the necessity of an immaterial mover in all spontaneous motions in the world, and this is the Soul. In other words, the regularity of physical forces requires the agency of God, and the irregularity of spontaneous motions requires the agency of Soul. That which can arbitrarily effect a change in the present state of matter, cannot be matter itself, since it resists all change in its present state. Such changes by means of spontaneous motions are effected by willing, and that which wills in us is not matter, but an immaterial substance. From these premises, Baxter deduces the immortality of the Soul which is seen as being a simple, uncompounded substance, incapable of decay, and capable of existing, and of being conscious, when separated from the body. Much of the latter part of his system is a working out of the programme laid down by Samuel Clarke in his works.

Despite being in favour of natural philosophy and Newtonian physics in particular, Baxter followed his mentor, Samuel Clarke, in using *a priori* reasoning to win his arguments in a dogmatic fashion, as he attempted to do in his correspondence with Kames. The experimental side of physics was overlooked by these abstract reasoners whose interest in natural philosophy consisted solely in using it, in the case of Clarke, to prove by a series of apodeictic propositions (Spinoza-fashion) that it is logically absurd not to believe in the existence of God; by propositions such as 'That

the Self-Existent Being, must of Necessity be Infinite and Omnipresent', and so on.[55] The necessity of moral obligations also got the same treatment to demonstrate that they all stemmed directly from 'the positive Will or Command of God'.[56]

It is hardly surprising that Hume reacted violently against such dogmatism and attempted in the *Treatise* to show the limitations of such reasoning. And the failure of Lord Kames to adopt a more experimental approach to understanding the Laws of Motion was undoubtedly due to his correspondence with Baxter which led him to rely exclusively on *a priori* reasoning instead of finding out how things really are.

Andrew Baxter's book was extremely well received in its day. The list of subscribers, who committed themselves to buying the book before it was even printed, amounted to 475 individuals, representing all walks of life throughout Great Britain. The book was well thought of because it started from the strictly physical and mathematical basis of Newton's *vis inertiæ* (i.e. his First Law of Motion) and it attempted to show that the immateriality of the Soul and the existence of God followed deductively from that starting point. This attempt was welcomed particularly by the clergy because it obviated the materialist tendencies of Newton's natural philosophy.

Countering Baxter's arguments in favour of immaterialism provided Hume with yet more motivation to develop his views on causation in the first book of the *Treatise*. For Baxter argued that the inertia of gravitating bodies was not caused by any physical forces but required immaterial intervention to keep the bodies moving. Matter, being inert, cannot be the cause of the movement of objects; that cause must be due to the power of an immaterial being. As the physical object must resist the influence of any external cause of its movement, the cause of the latter is therefore *ab extra* to it. Against that argument, Hume contended that causes are independent of immaterial intervention but require physical acts of doing things, whether these acts belong to agents or are purely physical in origin.

Nowadays, Baxter's works are of little interest except to scholars studying either the period or the responses to Newtonian physics. Thus, in the case of the latter,

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[55] Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and their followers,* (London: 1706), Prop. VI.

[56] Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*, in *The Works of Samuel Clarke*, (London: 1738), Vol. Two, p.608. Prop. I.

his arguments for the immateriality of the Soul are now studied in the context of Newtonian ether theory. Ether was seen as material and inert in contrast with physiological processes which originate within the body and therefore reflected the immaterial action of the Soul. Baxter thus used physiological evidence to establish this immateriality and hence the existence of God.[57]

6. THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF ANDREW BAXTER ON DAVID HUME.

Baxter was governor (that is to say, tutor) to the sons of William Hay at Duns Castle at least during the years 1719 to 1723.[58] Also, he was still resident at Duns Castle in 1740[59] and there is no reason or evidence to cast doubt on the supposition that he was there during the intervening period. It is possible that, before going to university, Hume and his brother went to Duns Castle, a mere 5 miles away, to participate in the lessons given by Baxter. It was customary at this period for neighbouring landed gentry to share the same tutor.[60] But the evidence of such a relationship between Baxter and Hume remains circumstantial at this time. There are however signs of early habits which Hume may have picked up from Baxter, for example:

a. A volume of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, dated 1726, is signed by Hume: 'Da: Home'.[61] This is reminiscent of Baxter's signature: 'And: Baxter'. Also, Baxter

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[57] Cf. Roger K. French, 'Ether and Physiology', in *Conceptions of Ether: Studies in the History of Ether Theories, 1740 -1900*, ed. G.N. Cantor and M.J.S. Hodge, (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), p.121.

[58] It seems reasonable to assume that Baxter remained as governor to the sons of William Hay at Duns Castle throughout this period 1719 to 1723. This conclusion is evidenced, firstly, by a receipt (or 'discharge') for salary received, which is to be found in Bundle 36 of the Hay Family Papers at Duns Castle. This is dated March 1721 and refers to the sum of £20 sterling being paid for period November 1719 to November 1720. See Appendix K for a transcription of this document. Secondly, Baxter was at Duns Castle during his correspondence with Kames in 1723, as mentioned above.

[59] As is attested by Baxter's letter to Bishop Warburton addressed from Duns Castle and dated May 16th, 1740. This was discovered and published by Heiner F. Klemme in 'Anmerkungen zur schottischen Aufklärung in Aberdeen' in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* vol. 74, 1992 pp.256-7. This letter is also reproduced in Appendix K below.

[60] *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle,* ed. G. Scott & F.A. Pottle (privately printed, 1932) Vol. 15: 'Materials for Writing the Life of Lord Kames', p.268. 'Some of the neighbouring Gentleman's sons were educated at Kames.'

[61] E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, (Oxford, 1980), p.31.

may have influenced Hume into changing the spelling of his name from Home to Hume. It was spelt 'Hume' on at least one occasion while he was at university.[62] In his correspondence with Kames, Baxter consistently called him 'Mr Hume' in spite of Kames's explicit preference for 'Home', when in his third letter to Baxter he asks him to address his letters 'To Henry Home Advocate'.[63]

b. Hume habitually apostrophed the 'e' in the past participle 'ed', e.g. 'examin'd'. In his early memoranda dating from 1729, he also spelt 'could' and 'would' thus 'cou'd' and 'wou'd',[64] as did Baxter in his letters to Kames, as well as in his other writings. Such spellings as 'Bodys', 'dutys' and 'commentarys'[65] also parallel Baxter's. It is noteworthy that Kames did not follow these practices in his letters to Baxter. This supports the view that Baxter may have had an even earlier influence on Hume than Kames.

c. The 'tripartite division of human reason into knowledge, proofs and probabilities' is to be found in Baxter's *Enquiry*. This resemblance is pointed out by Mossner in his *Life of Hume*.[66]

This evidence is suggestive rather than conclusive, at this time. Other explanations are possible for these coincidences. Confirmation must await more direct and conclusive evidence. As they were such close neighbours, within six miles of each other, we may however assume that there was at some time contact between Hume and Baxter, in the course of which Hume became well acquainted with Baxter's views and the extent to which he differed from them.

Hume's antipathy towards natural philosophy may find its source in an unhappy contact with Baxter. The latter may well have been intolerant of Hume's slowness in appreciating the finer details and mathematical subtleties of Newtonian physics, for example. An early biographer of Baxter suggests that he ignored Hume's works because 'it is probable that Mr. Baxter did not think Mr. Hume to be enough of a natural philosopher to merit particular notice.'[67] Baxter was undoubtedly a dedicated

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62 *Op. cit.*, p.40.

63 Scottish Record Office, GD24/1/547, item 12, p.4.

64 'Hume's Early Memoranda, 1729-1740: The Complete Text', edited by E.C. Mossner, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. IX, pp. 492-518. Thus, 'cou'd' is to be found on op.cit. pp. 501, 502, 504, 511, 516; and 'shou'd on p.516.

65 *Op. cit.*, pp.499, 503, and 509 respectively.

66 E.C. Mossner, *op. cit.*, p.625.

67 Andrew Kippis, *Biographia Britannica*, (London: 1780) p.25.

teacher of natural philosophy and this is evidenced by his published work called, *Matho*, published in both Latin and English. This comprises dialogues by which the rudiments of science, as known at the time, are taught to a pupil.[68] Hume's antipathy to natural philosophy was expressed in an early note in his 'Memoranda', possibly written as early as 1729: 'A Proof that natural Philosophy has no Truth in it, is, that it has only succeeded in things remote, as the heavenly Bodys, or minute as Light.'[69] Hume may have felt slighted by Baxter (1) because of his inability or unwillingness to appreciate the importance of natural philosophy; (2) because of his atheistic inclinations and disparagement of the views of Clarke and Butler. In reaction to his humiliation at the hands of Baxter, Hume ceased to be plump, lazy and indifferent, and became the intellectual powerhouse which he required to be to produce his best philosophical work.

Even if there was little contact between Baxter and Hume before the latter went to university from 1723 onwards, Baxter appears to have remained at Duns Castle continuously until 1741 when he went abroad with Mr.Hay of Duns. There is a recently discovered letter of his to Bishop Warburton addressed from Duns Castle in 1740 (see Appendix K). Hume was at Ninewells House during the late 1720s and early 1730s. Thus, there may well have been contact between Baxter and Hume while the latter was conducting his studies which led to the publication of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Unfortunately, there is as yet no direct evidence to support such conjectures, beyond the facts, namely, (1) that Hume had developed prodigious writing skills by the early 1730s, and (2) Andrew Baxter, William Dudgeon, and Lord Kames had already possessed these skills. That he learned these skills through the example of these men seems not at all unlikely.

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[68] Andrew Baxter, *Matho, or the Cosmotheoria Puerilis,* (Translated into English by the Author - London: 1745). In this dialogue, 'Philon' is Baxter himself, and 'Matho' is seemingly his pupil, Mr. Hay. In a later much larger and unpublished dialogue, *Histor,* a written note states that 'Matho is Mr. Hay, Philon Mr Baxter, and Histor Mr Wilkes'. The latter dialogue takes place in Holland where John Wilkes (later a notorious politician and Lord Mayor of London) adopted Baxter as his tutor. (Cf. Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography*, [London & Edinburgh: 1910), pp.177-178.)

[69] 'Hume's Early Memoranda', *op. cit.*, p.499.

7. LORD KAMES AND DAVID HUME.

> The influence of Mr. Home's [Lord Kames's] conversation upon his friends and companions who had a turn for letters, was, from all I have been able to collect, great and powerful. We, who only know him in the evening of his life, may easily figure how brilliant and persuasive must have been his wit and eloquence in the ardour of youth, when he wished to impress young men, ambitious of treading in his steps, with a passion for Polite Literature, or what he considered as *Divine Philosophy.* No man in his time did more to disseminate the seeds of science among his countrymen, even at the time when he was immersed in business and professional studies.
>
> John Ramsay of Ochtertyre (in a letter to Lord Woodhouselee)[70]

As Kames took a dislike to Baxter because of their acrimonious correspondence, he probably encouraged Hume in his revolt against Baxter's views, though he was later to regret what he considered to be the sceptical outcome of Hume's arguments. We may therefore argue that David Hume wrote *The Treatise of Human Nature* partly because of the antipathy which existed between him and Andrew Baxter and partly because he thought he could answer the philosophical difficulties in the matters of causation, determinism and liberty which preoccupied the Borders Nexus as whole.

According to what Kames told Boswell in later life when the latter was compiling materials for Kames's biography, Hume was extremely anxious for Kames to read and understand his newly published *Treatise*:

> He [Kames] laid aside Metaphysicks altogether for many years, and applied close to law. But when David Hume returned home from his travels, he had two volumes of his *Treatise of Human Nature* printed and published. He brought them to Lord Kames, and begged he would read them. My Lord told him he was quite out of the train of Metaphysicks, in which he found that he never got more light, and declined reading them. About a Month after, David came back and begged he would read them to oblige him. Said My Lord: "I'll do any thing to oblige you. But you must sit by and try to beat your Book into my head." He did so. Yet My Lord had no more than a glimmering of what was his meaning. Some time after this, My Lord, who had a farm in the country and had

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[70] Quoted in Lord Woodhouselee's (A.F. Tytler's), *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames*, (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1807), Vol. One p.58.

> got up at six in a May morning when there was nothing to do in the fields, took up David's book, and as a proof that thoughts ripen in the Mind imperceptibly, he read it, to his astonishment, with the clearest understanding. And he sat down and wrote Observations upon it. David, who used to come frequently to him, came soon after. "Well, David, I'll tell you News. I understand your book quite well." He shewed him his Objections, and David, who was not very ready to yield, acknowledged he was right in every one of them. He said he nev[er] did think as David [do]es in that Treatise.[71]

Why then was Hume so anxious for Kames to master his book? A likely answer is that Hume had written the book with Kames's pre-occupations and worries about causation, freedom and necessity in mind. For Kames also told Boswell that the chapter on Power in Locke's *Essay* 'crucified him'.[72] Hume therefore thought that he had answered Kames's worries that had set him (Hume) on the trail to seek answers several years before. Kames may therefore have directed Hume's studies in this regard, and so gave him his correspondence with Baxter to read and drew Hume's attention to Baxter's pamphlet debate with William Dudgeon.

Hume thought that he had helped Kames by clearing up the subject of causation, but in fact he only succeeded in stimulating Kames to resume his philosophical writings. This resulted in Kames's publication, firstly, in 1751 of his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, which contains the first attack on Hume's *Treatise* in the name of common sense, and, secondly, in 1754 of the paper 'Of the Laws of Motion', mentioned above. There is thus a direct link between the activities of the Border Nexus and the subsequent Common Sense movement in Scotland. For Kames was instrumental in promoting the career of Thomas Reid by supporting his appointments both at King College, Aberdeen in 1754 and at Glasgow University in 1764. He had done so not only because he recognised the extent of Reid's talents but also because he found the latter's views in attacking Hume's *Treatise* to be compatible with and agreeable with his own.

8. THE REAL INFLUENCE OF FRANCIS HUTCHESON ON HUME.

It is fairly conclusive that the activities of the Borders Nexus had more influence on the early development of Hume's thinking than the works of Francis

71 *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle, op. cit.*, pp.273-4.
72 *Op. cit.*, p.273.

Hutcheson. Hutcheson's works may indeed have influenced Hume's writings in the matter of the 'moral sense', as has been argued by Kemp Smith in his book *The Philosophy of David Hume.* But this aspect was not more important than any of the other influences on the detailed development of Hume's system of thought. It was merely one among many. And it was not crucial enough to motivate the writing of the *Treatise*, as has been argued in section four.

Kemp Smith had difficulty in finding evidence to support his contention concerning the major influence of Hutcheson on Hume. There are little or no direct references to Hutcheson in Hume's works. And one presumed reference in fact suggests that Hume was less well acquainted with Hutcheson than Kemp Smith supposes.

In Hume's 'Introduction' to the *Treatise*, he refers to 'some late philosophers in England, who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing.'[73] And in a footnote, he lists these philosophers as 'Mr. Locke, my Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Mandeville, Mr. Hutchinson, Dr. Butler, &c.' Kemp Smith, together with most other commentators and editors of Hume's works, have assumed that Hume meant 'Hutcheson' and not 'Hutchinson'. Indeed, Kemp Smith goes so far as to alter the word to 'Hutcheson' when he quotes this sentence in his book .[74]

None of the biographers and commentators have thought to ask, at least in print, why Hume spelt Hutcheson's name in this way. The assumption has been that it was simply an alternative spelling which had no significance in itself. But in fact the spelling of Hutcheson's name is remarkably uniform, from the time he matriculated and graduated at Glasgow University till his name at last appears in his later published works.

It has to be asked whether it is likely that Hume would both (1) misspell Hutcheson's name and (2) refer to him a philosopher 'in England' considering that Hutcheson's book was written and published in Ireland in 1725 and that he resided in Glasgow from 1730 till his death in 1746. It may be argued that Hume meant 'Britain' when he said 'England' but even conceding that point, the spelling anomaly has still to be explained. We know that Hume was extremely meticulous when it came to revision

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[73] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature, op. cit.* p.xvii.

[74] Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, (London: Macmillan, 1949), p.18.

and the elimination of errors in his works. This quality made him an invaluable editor of other people's works in later life. We must conclude that Hume did not think he had mistaken the spelling of the name at the time he prepared the *Treatise* for publication in 1738.[75] So why did he misspell Hutcheson's name? How could he not have known the correct spelling of the name and the fact that Hutcheson was an Irishman teaching in Scotland?

The uniformity of the spelling of Hutcheson's name is remarkable in that it is correctly spelt in every printed source except one. His first two books were published anonymously. His name first appears in print in 1728 after the publication of his second book in that year. This was in a letter by an anonymous proponent to *The London Journal:* no. 468 for Saturday, July 20, 1728:

> Mr. Hutcheson has no where said, that I remember, that Truth has nothing to do with Morals, or that it is useless in the Practice of Virtue, as you would charge upon him.[76]

His name was also correctly spelt in an exchange of pamphlets which occurred in 1738. He was attacked for his 'errors' in religion in the pamphlet: *Shaftesbury's Ghost Conjur'd: or, a Letter to Mr. Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral*

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[75] The spelling of the name suggests that Hume may have been referring to the theologian, John Hutchinson (died 1737), who wrote the work, *Moses' Principia*, published in 1724. His complete works amount in all to 12 volumes, so he was no mean writer. His work was important enough in its day for Thomas Reid to be still referring his students to it in 1780:

> In speaking of Natural Religion I shall adopt the plan which has been followed by Mr. Hutchinson in a tract which he has published and which I shall take this opportunity of recommending to your attention and careful perusal. (*Thomas Reid's Lectures on Natural Theology (1780)*, [transcribed & edited by E.H. Duncan - Washington D.C., University Press of America, 1981], p.2.)

However, John Hutchinson's works are devoted to proving that Newtonian science and all rational philosophy can be derived from the bible. He seems to revert to presocratic thinking by using references to air, fire, water and earth to prove that the bible anticipates the principle of gravity and other features of Newtonian physics. A typical passage is as follows:

> It signifies that Motion of Atoms or Grains, where each one successively impels that before it in a Line, express'd by the Word *irradiates*; and 'tis applicable to [Hebrew symbols], Grains of Air, or Spirit, when moving towards the Fire, or *Etc.* as well as to Atoms or Light moving from the Fire, or *Etc.* as Job, x 22. [Hebrew symbols] Irradiates as [Hebrew symbols] Grains of Air, or Spirit, as the Grains move inward in Lines from the Circumference to the Center or Orb of the Sun. (*The Philosophical and Theological Works of John Hutchinson Esq.*, [3rd Ed., London: 1748-9], Vol. II, 'Moses's Principia', Part II, p. 403.)

It hardly seems likely that Hume would really include such a writer in a list of philosophers who 'put the science of man on a new footing'.

[76] *The London Journal:* no. 468 for Saturday, July 20, 1728:

Philosophy in the University of Glasgow.[77] This document was speedily replied to in the same year by the pamphlet: *A Vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the Calumnious Aspersions of a later Pamphlet - By Several of his Scholars.*[78]

In fact, Hutcheson's name seems only to have been misspelt by Gilbert Burnet (the second son of Bishop Burnet) when he prepared for publication his correspondence with Hutcheson which was first published in *The London Journal* in 1725. It was eventually published in 1735 after Burnet's death as *Letters between the Late Mr. Gilbert Burnet and Mr. Hutchinson.*[79]

The truth is that Hume didn't know that Hutcheson was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow at the time he wrote the first two volumes of the *Treatise.* He only knew of Hutcheson through his first two anonymous books and the 1735 pamphlet containing his exchange of letters with Gilbert Burnet. The latter instigated publication and was presumably responsible for the 'Mr. Hutchinson' in the title. As shown above, Hutcheson's name is uniformly spelt correctly in all the early sources consulted, including matriculation and graduation records at Glasgow. Thus, Hume's spelling of the name and the reference to England, indicate that he had no idea who Hutcheson was, perhaps not until the latter wrote to him in 1739 after getting Hume's name and address from Lord Kames (saying 'I should be glad to know where the Author could be met with' - see section four in this chapter).

Kemp Smith didn't know about Hutcheson's letter to Kames at the time he wrote his book; it was only published by Ian Ross in 1966. He assumed that the original contact between them must have been much earlier. He also failed to detect the extent to which Hume was influenced by classical writers in developing his views on morality. Recent scholarship has now shown that Hutcheson was very far from being the source of Hume's moral philosophy. Thus, James Moore in a recent article, 'Hume and Hutcheson' argues persuasively that Hume based his moral philosophy on

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77 Anonymous, *Shaftesbury's Ghost Conjur'd: or, a Letter to Mr. Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow. Wherein several gross and dangerous Errors, vented by him in the Course of his Teaching, are brought to light, and refuted.* 1738.

78 Anonymous, *A Vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the Calumnious Aspersions of a later Pamphlet - By Several of his Scholars.* 1738.

79 Gilbert Burnet, *Letters between the Late Mr. Gilbert Burnet and Mr. Hutchinson concerning the true Foundation of Virtue or Moral Goodness. Formerly published in the London Journal. To which is added, a Preface and a Postscript. Wrote by Mr. Burnet some time before his Death.* 1735.

classical authors such as Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch, and in response to the writings of Hobbes, Bayle and Mandeville:

> Hume's moral philosophy was not at all Hutchesonian in origin or inspiration: it derived rather from a tradition of moral philosophy, the substantive Epicurean tradition adopted by Bayle and other modern sceptics, which was opposed by Hutcheson in all the separate expressions of his moral philosophy.[80]

After making contact with Hutcheson in 1739, Hume revised book three of his *Treatise* to take account of Hutcheson's views. But this attempt failed as Hutcheson disapproved of Hume's views and subsequently opposed the latter's attempt to become professor at Edinburgh in 1745.[81]

The relationship between Hume and Hutcheson suggests that the *literati* in Scotland had by the 1740s ceased to have the cohesion and intimacy that characterised the interactions between the young people referred to in the previous chapters. The *literati* had succeeded only too well in developing their writing skills so that achieving literary fame was already becoming more important than conducting mutually beneficial communities of inquiry which had previously been ends in themselves rather than directly for the purposes of self-promotion, pure and simple.

9. THE EFFECTS OF WRITING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEBATES.

The increasing emphasis on presenting written discourses before the later philosophical societies in Scotland had its benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, this emphasis ensured that the participants achieved the literary fame or the professional acclaim and respectability which they sought as individuals. On the other hand, this ensured that the competitive trend in these societies overcame the co-operative and intercommunicative ethos. A stage was reached where the egos of the members became large enough to ruin the spirit of co-operation which was essential to make the societies work for the members. They were liable to fall apart in mutual contempt and recrimination when their members became self-assertive to the

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80 James Moore, 'Hume and Hutcheson', in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, (ed. by M.A. Stewart and J.P. Wright - Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp.53-54, and p.26 for the classic authors read by Hume.

81 Mossner, *op. cit.*, p.157.

point of losing their ability to be modest and self-deprecating in the face of relentless scrutiny and criticism. When these members became conceited enough to think they were definitely in the right in all their opinions they lost their tolerance of contradiction and contrary opinions.

It is thus arguable that what brought an end to the ethos of Enlightenment was the increasing isolation of individuals because of the emphasis on **written** words as opposed to **spoken** ones. As Jacques Derrida has pointed out in various of his works, there is a tradition in philosophy from Plato onwards which disparages the written word because of its remoteness from the spoken word. Plato chose to put forward his published views in dialogue form as this preserves the immediacy of speech as much as possible. Rousseau went so far as to say that, as compared with conversational dialogue, writing a 'dangerous supplement' (*dangereux supplément*) to debates:

> Languages are made to be spoken, writing serves only as a supplement to speech. . . . Speech represents thought by conventional signs, and writing represents the same with regard to speech. Thus the art of writing is nothing but a mediated representation of thought.[82]

Derrida does not share this suspicion of writing and seeks to eliminate the 'dangerous supplements' in writing by deconstructing texts. That is to say, we are to look beyond the literal meanings of sentences and seek the metaphorical which is hidden in the 'margins' of the text. We go beyond the text's principal arguments, which are based on logical definitions, to find what has been omitted or distorted in these arguments. Such an 'edifying' scrutiny of texts overlooks the purposes for which writing is used. And the Scottish philosophers did not just write for writing's sake i.e. for edification. They wrote to achieve some goal in their writings. This was important for their need to reconcile thought with action. They wanted to be seen to be doing something with their thinking, and not just thinking for thought's sake, à la *vita contemplativa.*

The current pre-occupation of philosophers with texts and their relation to the author stems from continental philosophers who stand in the shadow of Hegel's egocentric spirit-history. Kierkegaard began this anti-Hegelian standpoint with his downgrading of his own role as author. In reaction to Hegel's extravagant claims, he

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[82] As quoted by Derrida in his book, *Of Grammatology*, (trans. G.C. Spivak - Baltimore: John Hopkins U. P., 1976), p.144. It is not clear in the text from which of Rousseau's works this quotation is taken.

acted only as 'a humorist' and not as 'a speculative philosopher' with anything of great importance to write about.[83] But it would have been anathema to the 18th century Scottish writers to revoke the books that they had just written. They would disagree with Kierkegaard who said that 'to write a book which does not claim importance for anybody is something else than leaving it unwritten'.[84] For the Scots, the very purpose of writing a book is to communicate our thoughts to a wider public whom we are endeavouring to educate or inform in specific ways. And if the public are not interested in reading it, then it is not worth writing it in the first place. Thus Hume said in the *Treatise of Human Nature*:

> I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition; and shou'd I endeavour to banish them, I *feel* I shou'd be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.[85]

The Enlightenment writers would have been scornful of being mere Kierkegaardian humorists or Nietzschean ironists in the current fashionable way of doing philosophy. This leads only to unconstructive scepticism which opposes all positive statements as being metaphoric, dogmatic, potentially oppressive, or unnecessarily restrictive of people's individual freedoms. The 'solidarity' of all concerted action is threatened, and it is impossible for the human race to be in control of its own destiny.[86] This is the very converse of what the Scottish philosophers wished to do with philosophy.

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83 S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Scientific Postscript*, (1843 - Princeton University Press, 1974), Appendix, p.545.

84 *Op.cit.*, p.548.

85 Hume, *op. cit.*,Book I, Part IV, Sect. VII, (ed. Nidditch) p.271.

86 This at any rate appears to be the implication of Richard Rorty's arguments in the book, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989) where his 'liberal ironism' serves only to revive the ancient dispute between the sceptics and dogmatists as chronicled by Diogenes Laertius. Anyone who opposes his liberal ironism is *ipso facto* a literalist/dogmatist and **there is no middle way**, in his way of thinking, between 'poeticising' and 'scientising'. (*Op.cit.* p.53). In contrast, the Scottish philosophers realised that Newtonian philosophy suggested that middle way without necessarily quantifying or rationalising everything, and they applied this view as far they could to moral and mental philosophy, e.g. Hume and Reid. It is up to us to take that work further and not lapse into a self-indulgent (i.e. 'edifying') scepticism, which is just finding reasons for doing nothing at all.

They had no qualms about their egos intruding into their works since they strove to serve the public by eliminating egocentricity in the viewpoints which they elicited in their writings. As argued in the last chapter, the intensity of their dialogues and debates amongst themselves enabled them to reach a more universalist viewpoint in which they transcended their egos to think in terms and arguments that benefited the common good of humanity.

Their goal in philosophising in the first instance might consist in simply straightening out their thinking on some matter so that they could converse more confidently about it. Thus, Lord Kames was wont to say that when he wished to find out about something, he would write a book about it. But they usually had more elaborate goals to achieve in writing on philosophical matters. Though their conversational use of philosophy was as aimless and unstructured as, for instance, Plato thought it should be, their written use of philosophy invariably fulfilled some purpose beyond itself. Two of these uses were the following:

Firstly, the approach of the Scottish philosophers to philosophy had nothing in common with the currently fashionable postmodern 'lit. crit.' approach. For they used philosophy to get to the bottom of things through a metaphysical approach. And this approach prevailed from the early period of the clubs till the mid-century during which they were pre-occupied with questions of theology, morality, and of freewill and determinism. In their writings, they used the *a priori* method which meant that they appealed to logical argument and sought to avoid contradiction while attempting to reduce to absurdity the arguments of their opponents. Examples of writings which followed this method are (a) the religious writings of Rankenian Club members such as George Turnbull and Robert Wallace, and (b) Andrew Baxter's first book *An Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul* (1733).

Secondly, when philosophy was brought down-to-earth, it was used to improve conditions in society by contributing to our knowledge and understanding in a practical way. In their writings, philosophers in this later period used inductive as well as deductive arguments in applying the Newtonian method of observation and experiment to social, economic and political matters as well as to what we now call 'science'. They thus went beyond the merely literal and logical in their writings as they sought knowledge which actually works instead of that which convinces people through the power of logic and rhetoric. Hume began this approach with his *Treatise*, and his later

Essays and, in the latter part of the century, we had, for example, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, James Hutton's *A Theory of the Earth* (which laid down the science of geology as we know it today), and Joseph Black's chemistry researches into latent heat (which made Watt's steam engine possible).

There was however a cost to be paid for the increasing international acclaim achieved by the Scots for their writings. The increasing emphasis on writing at the expense of dialogue and conversation had a detrimental effect on the clubs and societies as the century proceeded. As writing becomes remote from speech, its supplementary effects come to the fore. It appends elements to arguments which leaves them open to misunderstanding, unsympathetic treatment, or to be seen in the poorest possible light. In contrast, the conversational dialogue is more direct, and the presence of the individual ensures that there is less cause for misunderstanding as to what they mean.

Thus, for example, the afore-mentioned correspondence between Lord Kames and Andrew Baxter ended in acrimony and mutual recrimination because they lacked each other's presence to clear up misunderstandings, to ensure that dismissive remarks were not taken as being insults, and to reassure each other of the sincerity of their opinions.

As far as the clubs and societies were concerned, the emphasis on writing increased the isolation of the members. Behind the doors of their respective libraries or study rooms, they were more apt to cherish and nurture their views rather than welcome the ruthless examination and criticism to which the societies inevitably subjected them. They went along to the meetings of the societies full of the importance of their own findings, and very confident of their ability to convince fellow members of the rightness of their conclusions. When this did not happen, and they found themselves subjected to more criticism than their egos could tolerate, then the scene was set for bitter quarrels between members and personal attacks on each other. Hence the importance of the 'moderators' in the later stages of the Scottish Enlightenment. They were needed to prolong the spirit of Enlightenment and they succeeded in sustaining it longer than otherwise.

Thus, Thomas Reid, Adam Smith, and David Hume in later life played the roles of moderators in the later societies. Their benign presence, rather than anything they

said (for they usually said very little), had a mollifying effect on the proceedings. And the general trend of the later clubs and societies in Scotland was either to become well-attended debating societies or purely convivial clubs which lacked the rigour and single-minded aim of achieving self-improvement which the early and middle period clubs and societies possessed. Above all, the lust of self-improvement among young people went gradually out of fashion and by the early nineteenth century was no more than a distant memory recounted by old people belonging to a by-gone age. Thus, philosophical inquiry itself went out of fashion because the conditions in the clubs and societies were no longer favourable to the formation of communities of philosophical inquiry.

10. THE SUBSEQUENT INFLUENCE OF LORD KAMES ON THE COURSE OF THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT.

As stated in the Introduction, Lord Kames was one of the key instigators of the Scottish Enlightenment. Without him, the course of that Enlightenment might have been radically different. He was also responsible for laying down the programme of common sense philosophy which was taken up by the Aberdeen Philosophical Society and Thomas Reid in particular. In Kames's book, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, there is the following passage:

> It is observed above, that, from the touch, we have the impressions of body, solidity, and external existence; and we have, from the same sense, the impressions of softness and hardness, smoothness and roughness. Now, when I lay my hand upon this table, I have an impression, not only of smoothness, hardness, figure and extension, but also of a thing I call a *body*, of which the above are perceived as *qualities*. Smoothness, hardness, extension and figure are felt, not as separate and unconnected existences, but as inhering in and belonging to something I call *body*, which is really existing, and which has an independent and permanent existence. And it is this body, with its several qualities, which I express by the word *table*.[87]

This passage anticipates Reid's much more cogent analysis of what is involved in feeling the hardness of the surface of a table which is to be found in the chapter 'Of Touch' in his *Inquiry in the Human Mind*,[88] and published some thirteen years later.

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[87] Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, (Edinburgh, 1751) Part II, Essay II, 'Of the Authority of our Senses', pp.245-6.

[88] *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, in *The*

Clearly Kames acted as a 'guru' for the common sense school of philosophers in that where he led they followed. Undoubtedly, his followers in Aberdeen, such as Reid, were more competent philosophers than Kames was himself. Nevertheless, it is not as a philosopher, or as a writer, that he is to be remembered in respect of his contribution to the Scottish Enlightenment. He is to be remembered as an important instigator of events and persons without which that movement could not have taken place in the way that it did. It might be said that he personally facilitated philosophical inquiry from the Borders up to Aberdeen. He was the *éminence grise* behind Hume, Thomas Reid, and nearly all the philosophical clubs and societies which brought about the Enlightenment from the mid-century onwards.

In so doing, he and his friends gave Scotland the intellectual leadership of Europe, so that by the 1780s, it was generally known on the continent that Scotland was where things were really happening, more so than in England.

> Whenever the English mention *Scotchmen* to me in that contemptuous tone they sometimes affect, I advise them to go to Edinburgh to learn how to live, and how to be men. Your learned men, Robertson, Black, and Hume are looked upon here as geniuses of the first rank. Only two days ago, I saw Comte de Buffon, who named them all to me at his finger's tip, just as you might name Newton and Locke.
>
> Tieman ('a literary Hungarian writing from Paris' in 1781)[89]

11. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The message of this thesis is that no civilisation can face the future with assurance unless its brightest young people engage in philosophical inquiry to make sense of the world in the hope of leaving it in a better state than they found it. Such an involvement in philosophical inquiry of some kind ensures that the wellbeing of civilisation interests them personally and means something to them, instead of being alien and incomprehensible to them. For the continuity of civilisation depends very much on retaining the interest and participation of young people in their teens and

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Works of Thomas Reid, (ed. Sir W. Hamilton) section V, p.125a onwards).

[89] Quoted in French by H.W. Thomson in the book, *A Scottish Man of Feeling,* (Oxford: OUP, 1931), p.184. The quotation (which is not sourced) ends thus: 'Pour les Sciences exactes Edimbourg vaut mieux qu' Oxford et Cambridge ensemble.' The English translation is by E.C. Mossner in his book, *The Forgotten Hume: le bon David,* (New York: 1948), p.202.

twenties. Unless the majority of young people find interest and involvement in manifestly civilised activities, then they may react against civilised values and adopt attitudes which threaten the future of civilisation. In the absence of a better way of thinking, they will easily find reasons to denigrate civilisation and behave accordingly. In response to this, philosophical inquiry may be used to help young people to think more deeply about civilised values and consequently to seek rational interests that contribute to the continuance and development of civilisation instead of to its possible downfall. Philosophical inquiry performed exactly this function in early eighteenth century so successfully that an ideal of civic duty and responsibility was absorbed and applied by a whole generation of young people. As a result, both the Scottish Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution followed this process of concerted self-improvement.

APPENDIX A

THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

Philosophical Inquiry is a method of conducting philosophy in groups of people who form 'communities of inquiry'. As developed by Dr. Catherine McCall, it takes the form of discussions about specific questions which are formulated by members of group following a joint reading session. These questions are based on what was suggested to the group members by the reading matter. During the ensuing discussions the members state whether they agree or disagree with what has been said and then give their reasons for so agreeing or disagreeing.

The resultant discussions are as philosophically deep as the participants are able or willing to engage in. They are required to voice their own opinions and not cite the written or spoken opinions of other people. As a result, no books, philosophies or philosophers are to be mentioned. Any technical terms introduced have to be defined in everyday terms. These rules ensure that everyone has a level playing field in the discussions, and no one with expert knowledge or training is allowed to monopolise or dominate the discussion on account of their superior knowledge of the literature on the subject under discussion. The effect is that highly trained individuals are compelled to make themselves understood in straightforward terms to ensure that everyone else in the group understands what is said even though their understanding of these terms may not always coincide with that of the speaker.

The conduct of the community of inquiry depends greatly on the role of the non-participating facilitator who initiates the discussions by choosing between the questions offered by the group members for discussion. The facilitator does not participate in the discussions but supervises them (1) by intervening to enforce the rules, (2) by choosing between those wishing to respond to a previous speaker, (3) by asking individuals to clarify their statements when technical terms, for example, are used, (4) by encouraging silent people to speak, and so on. Thus, philosophical inquiry sessions are highly structured but the rules are not as strict and draconian as those enforced in the clubs and societies of 18th century Scotland.

Philosophical inquiry is much broader in scope than philosophy as practiced at present by professional philosophers in university departments of philosophy. For it involves inquiring, questioning and investigating whatever questions are chosen by the facilitator for discussion by the community of philosophical inquiry.

APPENDIX B

THE GENUINENESS OF THE EASY CLUB'S JOURNAL

The text of the Journal of the Easy Club is 'a transcript of a transcript', as the editors put it.[1] It is a transcription by Andrew Gibson's granddaughter, Mrs. Massie, of Gibson's own transcription. This fact might be used by some to cast doubt on the authenticity of this text. However, the original handwritten document might have gone astray, but the genuineness of the manuscript is scarcely to be doubted.

In the first place, Gibson was a careful and scrupulous scholar, as is evidenced by his patient and painstaking refutation of misconceptions about Ramsay and the Club in his book introducing the manuscript, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*.[2] The transcription, as now published, is doubtless extremely accurate (though not entirely without error as is shown below).

In the second place, there can be no doubt that this manuscript did exist and was a genuine product of the Easy Club. Gibson gives a careful account of its provenance in his book.[3] The title page of the manuscript appears in facsimile in his book and can be compared with John Fergus's handwriting which features in a letter in Laing Collection of Edinburgh University Library. Also, George Chalmers in his 'Life of Allan Ramsay' quotes from what he calls 'the MS transactions of the "Easy Club"'[4] and these quotations clearly show that he is referring to the same documents that later came in Gibson's possession and were transcribed by him.

However, there are obvious errors which are due to these successive transcriptions. Some of these are noted by the editors of the Scottish Text Society edition in the text; for example, 'Barbarous' is suggested instead of 'Barburnis'.[5] Furthermore, it appears that the editors have failed to compare the transcription with the passages actually published by Gibson in the above-mentioned book. Or if they

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1 'Journal of the Easy Club', published in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. 5, (ed. A.M. Kinghorn & A. Law: The Scottish Text Society - Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1972) 'Introductory Note' p.3.

2 A. Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, (Edinburgh: W. Brown, 1927).

3 Cf. *op. cit.*, p.46.

4 G. Chalmers, 'The Life of Allan Ramsay' in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, (London, Edinburgh: A. Fullarton & Co., 1853), Vol 1, p.xiii.

5 Cf. 'Journal of the Easy Club', *op. cit.*, p.10.

have done so, they have not made it apparent in the text. Thus, the phrase, 'After an hours easy Diversion with politics', appears in Gibson's book as, 'After 2 hours easy Diversion with politics'.[1] The latter seems the more probable state of affairs. Such textual differences are generally trivial and though they sometimes render the precise meaning unclear,[2] they do not at all detract from the genuineness of the original manuscript. Indeed, this document is so remarkable and original that it is surely beyond the powers of any forger - even one having immense literary genius - to produce anything like it.

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1 Cf. *op. cit.*, p.49.

2 For instance, on *op. cit.* p.13 (mid-page) 'your Society of ye Lord Praeses' s/b 'your Society if ye Lord Praeses'. *Op. cit.* p.16 (6th line) 'fort he' s/b 'for the'. More crucially, *op. cit.* p.29 (7th line) 'by force or Reason' s/b 'by force of Reason' (cf. p.31, 11th line).

APPENDIX C

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EASY CLUB

	Starting Date	No. of times as *Praeses*	No. of Attendances
1. **George Buchanan** (***John Fergus***)	27 June 1712	6	44
2. **Isaac Bickerstaff** (***Allan Ramsay***) later **Gawin Douglas**	12 May 1712	9	50
3. **Lord Rochester** (***James Stewart***) later **Lord Napier**	12 May 1712	4	44
4. **Tom Brown** (***Andrew ____***) later **Samuell Colvill**	12 May 1712	5	37
5. **Sir Richard Blackmore** later **Blind Harry**	12 June 1712	4	44
6. **Sir Thomas Heywood,** later **Sir Thomas Killigrew,** later **Robert Colinson,** later **Tippermaloch** finally **Dr. Pitcairn**	16 May 1712	4	25
7. **Zachary Boyd**	16 Nov 1713	2	20
8. **Sir William Wallace**	16 Nov 1713	3	23
9. **Lord Beilhaven**	16 Nov 1713	2	25
10. **Sir David Lindsay**	12 Nov 1713	-	24
11. **Hector Boece**	12 Nov 1713	2	26
12. **John Barclay**	12 Nov 1713	3	26
13. **Sir Roger L'Estrange** (***James Edgar***) later **Michael Scot** (Left 30 April 1713)	16 May 1712	3	15

14. **Sir Isaac Newton**	16 May 1712 (Left 5 Nov 1713)	1	15
		48 + 3 unrecorded	

NOTES

a. The members are listed as they appear the Scottish Text Society edition of *The Works of Allan Ramsay, op. cit.*, Vol. V, p.2.

b. As the record of attendances by members is incomplete, the figures given are the maximum number of attendances for each member. In the case of the less dedicated members (i.e. not Allan Ramsay nor John Fergus), the figure is overstated.

c. The praeses is unrecorded or unclear in the case of three meetings including one at which a quorum was not reached. Thus, the total number of meetings recorded in the Journal is 51.

d. Though the minutes recorded in the Journal end on 11th May 1715, it is known for certain that the Club continued to meet on Wednesdays until 29th June 1715 (see note 8 in *The Works of Allan Ramsay, op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp.195-6). Andrew Gibson also states that '"George Buchanan" (John Fergus) presented to it [the Club] his translation manuscript on the 20th July 1715.' (Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay op.cit.*, p.62). Ramsay also wrote a poetical dialogue between 'Gawin Douglas' and 'George Buchanan' called 'The Lamentation' and dated '9 Nov. 1715'. It voices Ramsay's concern about the folly of civil war and Fergus's advocacy of philosophical patience. This was three days before the rebel army's surrender at Preston. It suggests a continued literary association between these members at least. Presumably the Club continued to meet on the same basis at least till 1717, when it is mentioned in a periodical as still being in existence (see Chapter Two of the thesis for details of this).

APPENDIX D

A BRIEF LIFE OF JOHN FERGUS, SECRETARY OF THE EASY CLUB

For the evidence that John Fergus was indeed the Secretary of the Easy Club we must rely on the word of Andrew Gibson who informs us of this fact in his book, *New Light on Allan Ramsay.*[1] The evidence which Gibson had in his possession was 'a stitched manuscript' in which the names of 'George Buchannan' and 'John Fergus' are linked using the same handwriting as in the Journal of the Easy Club. This manuscript has apparently been lost along with the original Journal of the Easy Club. However, we have no reason at all to question Gibson's word on this. Indeed, there is some contextual support for Fergus being the Secretary in the letter of 'George Buchannan' to King George which refers to 'the great Fergus who first founded the Scots Monarchy'.[2] This is Fergus Mor, the first King of Scots at Dalriada, c.500 A.D.,[3] from whom Fergus no doubt fancied himself to be directly descended.

Prior to the researches for this thesis, all that was known about Fergus was that he was a 'merchant' in Edinburgh,[4] as he is described as such in the list of subscribers to Ramsay's 1721 book of poems. However, surviving records provide us with much more information. He appears to have been born in 1690, if not 1689.[5] Gibson states that 'he was probably about twenty-five years of age' when he completed the Journal in

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1 Andrew Gibson, *New Light on Allan Ramsay*, (Edinburgh: W. Brown, 1927), p.53.

2 'Journal of the Easy Club', published in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, Vol. 5, (ed. A.M. Kinghorn & A. Law: The Scottish Text Society - Edinburgh & London: W. Blackwood, 1972) p.52.

3 Cf., for example, J.D. Mackie, *A History of Scotland*, (London: Penguin, 1964), p.28.

4 Cf. Alexander Law, 'Allan Ramsay and the Easy Club', *Scottish Literary Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2, November 1989, p.21.

5 The records at New Registry House in Edinburgh refer to the birth of a John Fergus in the parish of Ballingry in Fife on 20th April 1689. His father is recorded as 'Robert Fergus'. This could be our man as the name of Fergus is relatively rare in the records. But his parents were married on 14th April 1689 and there is an absence of any facts to link these events, e.g. the knowledge that his mother left to have her child away from the prying eyes of Edinburgh folk. Hence the hesitancy about accepting this birthdate as fact.

1715 (unfortunately he doesn't tell us why he thinks this).[1] This makes him aged 22 when the Easy Club was founded in 1712.

His father, Robert Fergus is recorded in the *Register of Edinburgh Apprentices* as being made apprentice to James Fergus, merchant, on 2nd June 1680. He was 'son to John Fergus, portioner of Nether Maines' (portioner = 'one of the heirs of portions of a property').[2] His marriage features in the *Register of Marriages* for the date 14th April 1689 - 'Fergus, Robert, merchant; Mary Gillespie'.[3] The name of 'Robert Fergus, Merchant in Edinburgh' appears the Register of Testaments at the date of 19th September 1707, suggesting that he died in September 1707.[4]

The next known fact about Fergus is that, on 5th September 1709, he translated into English an obscure French book, *Discourse of George Castriot, King of Albany (by the turks called Scanderbeg) to his Captains*, by Mr. De Scudery. This was the 'stitched manuscript' which Gibson referred to as proving the connection between John Fergus and 'George Buchannan'.[5]

In 1711, Fergus appears to have published, under the name of George Buchanan, a poem entitled *Epithalamium upon the Marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the Dauphin of France*.[6] This is referred to and quoted in chapter three above.

In 1713, John Fergus was appointed tax and rent collector by Edinburgh burgh council. The record of this is as follows:

> 2nd September 1713 - As the office of the collector of the ground annuals, kirk and college rents and feu duties payable to the town, is vacant through the resignation of Richard Lothian, the Council nominate John Fergus, merchant burgess, in his place, allowing him 600 merks Scots yearly.'[7]

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1 Gibson, *ibid.*

2 *Register of Edinburgh Apprentices, 1666-1700*, edited by C.B. Boog Watson, (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1929), p.32.

3 *TheRegister of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh, 1595-1700*, edited by Henry Paton, (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1905), p.226.

4 *The Commissariot Record of Edinburgh. Register of Testaments*, Part III, Volumes 81 to 131, 1701-1800, ed. by F.J. Grant, (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1899), p.90.

5 Gibson, *ibid.*

6 [George Buchanan], *Epithalamium upon the Marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to the Dauphin of France*, National Library of Scotland, pamphlet 1/98 H14.

7 *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1701 to 1718*, (ed. H. Armet - Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1967), p.253.

However, Fergus was only officially recorded as 'burgess and guildbrother' on 3rd Nov. 1714, according to the Roll.[1] The next entry mentioning his name in the Council records is dated '7th September 1715' and states that 'The Council approved of the auditors' report and discharged the said John Fergus of his two years' accounts.'[2] He was tax collector at least until 1721, according to the unpublished records of the Council.

At some point, Fergus was became a partner and cashier of Paul's Work Manufactory. This was a linen factory (situated roughly where the main building of Waverley Station is now) founded in 1683 and had 'nyne looms and twenty-nyne boys' running them. They worked part-time and received at least daily education and food for their work. It was probably regarded as a benevolent institution in its time. The Council Records refer to one visit of inspection by the committee supervising it:

> The Preses inquired at the boys if they had any Complaints against their Dyet or Education. They all answered in the Negative. Thereafter the preses Exhorted them to the observance of the Lord's Day, their working carefully, and attending the hours of their education.[3]

Fergus became a rich man as result of his association with this factory. An Impost Book of the Council for 1732 records a payment of £2,649:2:8 sterling to him, an enormous sum for this period:

> Sept. 11, 1732:- Paid to John Fergus, Merchant, as Partner and Cashier to the Company undertakers of Pauls Work Manufactory. One Years Interest to Lammas Last 1732 of £2.649:2:8 5/6 Sterling - his discharge of this date.[4]

As yet it is not known when John Fergus died.

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1 *Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild-Brethren, 1701-1760*, edited by C.B.Boog Watson (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1930), p.68. The full entry is as follows:

> Fergus, John, mt., B. and G., be r. of fr. Robert Fergus, mt., B. and G., gratis, by act of C. of 25 Aug. 3 Nov. 1714.

(Where mt = merchant, B = burgess, G = guildbrother, r = right, fr = father.)

2 *Extracts from the Records, op. cit.*, p.297.

3 Edinburgh City Archives: Council Records, SL7/1/47, 3rd June to 25 Sept. 1719, p.50.

4 Edinburgh City Archives: Receipts and Payments book, 1732-40, p.8

APPENDIX E

THE 'LAWS' OF THE EASY CLUB - 1713

THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF THE FAMOUS MODERN SOCIETY CALLED THE EASY CLUB

Established in Ed^{r} May 12 1712

Lex 1mo

It is Resolved Statute and Enacted that the Name and designation of ye Society shall be the Easy club as most expressive of the humour of the members and Design of the Establishment. As Also That each member shall choose some Eminent Scots Author or Heroe (who is dead) for his patron by whose Name he shall be called in ye club.

Lex 2do

To prevent disorder and Confusion the Common Bane of too Numerous Assemblies and preserve ye Unanimity of the Club It is Statute and Enacted that the Number of Members shall having their determin'd abode in ye city of Edinburgh and that none shall be admitted (a) member without ye consent of the whole club and every Member before he be Chosen praeses or have a vote.

Lex 3mo

It is Resolved and enacted that ye first thing to be done at the Meeting of ye Club or a quorum thereof (which is to consist of 4 members) shall be ye choice of a praeses which shall be by the Majority of Voices (ye last praeses calling ye votes) called and No otherways when spoke to: and the better to Maintain an equality no member shall be praeses in two meetings Successively.

Lex 4to

It is Enacted that ye praeses and he only shall be address'd to when ye affairs of ye Club are discours'd of and in all such Matters he shall have a Casting Vote.

Lex 5to

Full encouragement is given to every thing that is innocently merry and Diverting but nothing that is immoral or uncivill to be allowed or tolerate(d) for ye Better order herein it is statute and Enacted that the praeses shall be absolute Judge of all Misdeanour and shall have full power to punish ye Same By pecuniary Mulcts or otherwise as he shall think fit the offender being hereby prohibite to vindicate himself after sentence neither shall the praeses have power to dispense with or alter ye Same.

Lex 6to

To prevent dispute and grudge about ye quota of Mulcts it is Statute and Enacted that if any Member shall be absent a whole meeting he shall pay one shilling Scots, or for being Sero Six pennies and if any Curse or Swear he shall pay six pennies ilk time he so offends and for lesser Misdemeanours the fine shall be six pennies and for greater

One Shilling Scots The Money so forefaulted to be Collected by any Member ye Club Shall appoint to be dispos'd of as ye plurality of Members shall agree.

Lex 7to

For maintaining ye peace of ye Club it is Enacted that when any dispute or debate arise in and proves unneasy, upon ye Complaint of any one Member the Praeses shall state ye Controversy and call a Vote of Decision, Or Order the Disputants to delay their debate, or immediately Remove and decide it between themselves by force of Reason, the offenders insisting after Sentence to be declar'd impugners of the Law.

Lex 8to

The Design of ye Society being a Mutual improvement of minds by Conversation it is enacted that there be no gaming in ye club or forcing One another to drink Both being diverting from our greate design and of times provoking to an undue exercise of ye passions which is contrary to and inconsistent with our Commendable Easiness.

Lex 9mo

It is Statute and Enacted That if any Member shall be frequently or long wilfully absent from the Meetings of ye Club he shall be declared Deserter and the Same being intimate to him if he do not attend ye 1st meeting after ye said intimation and Make a Satisfying excuse the Club shall proceed to pass an Act of ejectment against him and declare his Seat in ye Club vacant. As also if any Member shall be obstinately Unneasy and Continue so, after frequent Rebukes from Master Easy any two members may bring in a bill of ejectment against him Upon which ye Club shall proceed as in ye case of ye Deserter.

Lex 10^{t}

It is Statute and Enacted that no member shall bring in a stranger to a meeting of ye Club and any so doing or contemning and impugning these laws is hereby declar'd guilty of high Crimes and Misdemeanours for which he is lyable to the Censure of the Club to be punished as they shall agree.

APPENDIX F

THE 'RULES' OF THE FAIR INTELLECTUAL CLUB - 1717

'THE RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FAIR INTELLECTUAL-CLUB IN EDINBURGH'

'We, whose Names are underwritten, being sensible of the Disadvantages that our Sex in General and we in particular labour under, for want of an established Order and Method in our Conversation; And being ambitious to imitate the laudable Example of some of our Brethren, that make the greatest Figure in the learn'd polite World, in so far as we are capable and may reasonably be allowed, by entring into a mutual Compact and Agreement, to act for the Interest and Improvement of one another, in our Meetings; have resolved to establish a Club called, The FAIR-INTELLECTUAL-CLUB; and hereby declare our Assent, and Purpose to observe, (whilst we are alive and unmarried) The RULES and CONSTITUTIONS, which follow;'

I. THAT we shall maintain a sincere and constant mutual Friendship, while we live; and never directly nor indirectly reveal or make known, without the Consent of the whole CLUB asked and given, the Names of the Members, of Nature of the CLUB.

II. THAT none shall be invited or admitted into the CLUB before her Name be proposed in it, and her Merits impartially considered, and Allowance given by all the Members to have her introduced.

III. THAT none shall be declared a Member of our CLUB, before she hath, in our Presence, subscribed her Name to the RULES and CONSTITUTIONS thereof.

IV. THAT we shall never admit more than Nine into our CLUB, whereof Five shall be counted a *Quorum* sufficient to act in Absence of the rest, as if the Number was compleat.

V. THAT none shall be invited or admitted into our CLUB before she be fifteen Years of Age, nor after her twentieth Year is expired.

VI. THAT altho' different Principles and Politicks shall be no Hindrance to the Admission of Members into our CLUB, being Protestants: Yet none shall presume to urge these directly or indirectly in our Meetings on Pain of Censure.

VII. THAT altho' we may, on proper Occasions, make Excursions in Commendation of the Genius and Conduct of other People; yet none shall be guilty of practising the silly Arts of Censure and Ridicule, on Pain of Censure.

VIII. THAT every Person at her first admission into the CLUB, shall entertain the CLUB with a written Harangue, and deliver the Sum of Ten Shillings *Sterling*, for the Use of the Poor, as we shall direct.

IX. THAT one shall be chosen at the Beginning of each Quarter of the Year, in our Meetings, to whom we shall address our selves when we speak, by the Name of *Mistress Speaker*, and pay all the due Respect to her that becometh us to owe, whom we impow'r to determine Differences, silence Debates, censure Transgressors, state Votes; and in a Word, to perform all the Offices that one in the Character of PRESES may reasonably be allowed to do.

X. THAT *Mistress Speaker* shall entertain the CLUB with a written Speech of her own Composure, immediately before the Election of one to succeed her in the Chair.

XI. THAT we shall elect a Secretary to the CLUB, at the Beginning of each Quarter, immediately after the Choice of Mrs. Speaker; and that she shall record in a Book, and have the Custody of the Minutes of our Management, as of all other Papers presented to the CLUB.

XII. THAT Mrs. *Secretary* shall read over the Minutes of all that pass'd in the Club during her Quarter, immediately before the Election of one to succeed her.

XIII. THAT we shall punctually attend on all the Meetings of our Club, which for ordinary are to be once a Week; and that Absents shall be censured, unless their Excuses be found to be good.

XIV. THAT whosoever refuses to submit to the Command and Rebukes of the Club pronounced by Mrs *Speaker*, shall be expelled from it, if sober Reasoning can't prevail.

XV. THAT when Death, Marriage, or other important Occurences shall in the Course of Providence, remove any Member from our Club, Care shall be taken to make a speedy Supply of her Room, lest the Club suffer, or go to nothing.

XVI. THAT we shall not be limited by our Subscriptions from making new Regulations, Additions or Alterations, for our greater Good and Improvement, from Time to Time, as we shall see Cause.

'These Articles abovementioned were subscrib'd by us three, that compos'd them, before any were invited to join us. Two Weeks pass'd ere we cou'd agree in the Choice of one to be a Member: We thought we cou'd not be too cautious of admitting others into our Club, which we designed for such noble Purposes. We were ambitious of a rational and select Conversation, compos'd of Persons who have the Talent of pleasing with Delicacy of Sentiments flowing from habitual Chastity of Thought; We were eager to keep out Pretenders to Mirth and Gallantry, and all such who with constrain'd, obscene and painful Witticisms, pester People in mix'd Companies. At length we unanimously pitch'd on Three, whose Genius and Conduct were most agreeable. These we endeavoured by several honest Means to gain. The six met,

according to a Paction, in my Chamber, where I, in Name of my Sisters, inform'd them of the Nature of our Club, and read over the Rules and Constitutions of it in their Hearing, to which they cheerfully subscribed.'

Initials of Members:	M.H.	-	Speaker	'H' in Edin. Misc. ?
	M.C.	-	Secretary	'C' in Edin. Misc. ?
	B.B.)	-	Writers of	
	M.D.)		Preface.	
	M.B.	-	New Member	
	W.C.	-	Writer of Preface of Edin. Misc. ?	

APPENDIX G

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE *EDINBURGH MISCELLANY*

THE TABLE [OF CONTENTS]

	Page No.	Author
1. On the King of Fairy	1	[Anonymous]
2. On the Queen of Fairy	3	[Anonymous]
3. Celia's Country House and Closet	4	Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh Advocate to K. Charles II and K. James VIII
4. The Character of a Beau, by a young Lady, in a letter to her intimate Friend	24	C. [Fair Intellectual-Club member]
5. A Walk on Glasgow Green	27	[Anonymous]
6. Horace's Ode XI. Book II. Imitated in a Letter to a Friend	29	L.
7. In Praise of Women, by Montrose	32	'Montrose' [?]
8. An Epistle to a certain Person, Occasion'd by his Pride upon sudden Advancement	33	O.
9. On Mr. Addison's Campaign	36	B. [Robert Blair]
10. A POEM upon the Young-Company of Archers	39	Thomas Boyd
11. To Chloris	41	L.
12. The Jolly Poor Poet.	45	I.
13. A Trip to Bar-le-Duc	48	[Anonymous]
14. Horace's Ode XI. Book III.	57	Mr. James Arbuckle
15. Horace's Ode XXII. Book I.	60	Mr. James Arbuckle
16. A Song, by a young Lady.	61	[Anonymous]
17. Seven small Poems, by Montrose.	62	"Montrose" [?]
18. Lucifer's Speech, out of . . Tasso's Jerusalem.	72	R.
19. An Epistle from a Lady in Edinburgh.	77	C. [F. I. - C. Member]
20. Prologue to Cato, Spoke at Glasgow.	79	A.
21. Epilogue to Cato, Spoke at Glasgow.	81	[A].
22. Epilogue intended for Cato.	82	A.
23. Catullus *de passere mortuo* Lesbiae, imitated	84	A.
24. Str----'s Farewell to the Hermitage.	86	Str---- [?]
25. The Holy Ode, by the same Hand.	91	Str---- [?]
26. The POETS Petition for Wine.	94	D.
27. To a very Poring and Speculative Gentleman	102	Mr. Hume [Henry Home]
28. On a certain dull BEAU at the Play-House.	103	Mr. Hume [Henry Home]
29. ODE xxiii of Anacreon, Englished.	104	Mr. Hume [Henry Home]
30. A SONG, by the same Hand.	105	Mr. Hume [Henry Home]
31. The Poor Client's Complaint.	106	[Anonymous]
32. The Hawk and Nightingale.	110	[J.C.] [John Callender?]
33. A Pastoral Song.	112	[J.C.]

No.	Title	Page	Author
34.	Verses sent to his Friend.	114	[J.C.]
35.	An Epistle to Mr. M______l. by the same Hand.	116	[J.C.]
36.	A Song. By the same Hand.	119	[J.C.]
37.	An Address to the Masters in the University of Edinburgh	120	J.C.
38.	An Epistle to Mr. Pope, By Mr. Hepburn.	123	Mr. Hepburn [Robert Hepburn of Bearford?]
39.	Of Love to his Country. By the same Hand.	128	Mr. Hepburn
40.	Of the Glory of God and Heaven.	129	[Robert Blair]
41.	On the X. Chapter of Joshua. By the same Hand.	132	B. [ditto]
42.	On the XI Chapter of Joshua. By the same Hand.	133.	B. [ditto]
43.	VERSES Occasion'd by the Dancing of two young Ladies	134	D.
44.	The XIV Chapter of Isaiah's Prophecy, from Verse 4.	135	[Anonymous]
45.	The Penitent Prude, Written . . . . by a Boy of fourteen.	140	S. [Symmers]
46.	Panthea Lamentation. By the same Hand.	144	S. [ditto]
47.	The Shepherd's Recovery. By the same Hand.	147	S. [ditto]
48.	The Fable of the Fox and Grapes. By the same Hand.	151	S. [ditto]
49.	Horace's Ode XVI. Book III.	153	Mr.James Arbuckle
50.	Horace's Ode VI. Book III.	155	Mr.James Arbuckle
51.	EPITHALAMIUM on the Marriage of My Lord_____	158	H. [F.I.C. member]
52.	A SONG. By the same Hand.	160	H. [ditto]
53.	Prologue to Love at first Sight. By Mr. Crawford.	162	Mr. Crawford
54.	EPILOGUE. By the same Hand.	163	Mr. Crawford
55.	ON LOVE.	164	[Anonymous]
56.	On a Woman's Inconstancy.	166	[Anonymous]
57.	The Answer [to the preceeding (sic)].	167	[Anonymous]
58.	THE PARALLEL.	169	[Anonymous]
59.	A Paraphrastical Translation of Ovid's X. Elegy, lib. iii	171	[Anonymous]
60.	The Indifferent Lover.	174	[Anonymous]
61.	The Constant Lover.	176	[Anonymous]
62.	A Diswasive from Women.	177	[Anonymous]
63.	An Answer [to the preceeding Poem].	179	[Anonymous]
64.	On the Lady Cast____n.	180	[Anonymous]
65.	Inconstancy Reproved.	181	[Anonymous]
66.	A Pastoral Elegy.	183	H. [F.I.C. member]
67.	To the Countess of______ .	187	C. [F.I.C. member]
68.	A Hymn to Phoebus, on New-Year's-Day, 1718	189	[Anonymous student]
69.	Of a Country Life.	193	T. [James Thomson]
70.	Upon Happiness.	197	T. [James Thomson]
71.	Verses on receiving a Flower from his Mistress.	203	T. [James Thomson]
72.	Horace, Book I. Ode XIII.	204	Mr. James Arbuckle
73.	Horace, Book I. Ode XXVII	206	Mr. James Arbuckle
74.	Horace, Book II. Ode IV.	207	Mr. James Arbuckle
75.	Horace, Book III. Ode XXIX.	209	Mr. James Arbuckle
76.	Horace, Book IV. Ode XI.	213	Mr. James Arbuckle
77.	Horace, Epode XVII.	216	Mr. James Arbuckle
78.	PHILANDER. A Pastoral.	218	[D.M.][David Mallet]
79.	Hobbinol and Thenot. A Pastoral.	223	[D.M.][David Mallet]
80.	Chapter II of Solomon's Song. By the same Hand.	229	[D.M.][David Mallet]
81.	The Grove or Interview. By the same Hand.	232	D.M. [David Mallet]

82. Of A Swallow's Nest. By a Lady. 234 P.
83. Ovid's Fable of Pyramus and Thisbe Translated. 237 B. [Robert Blair]
84. An Allusion to the Fifth Ode of Horace Book I. 243 Mr. C__m__t __n.
85. A Translation of Horace's Fourth Ode, Book I. 245 Mr. C__m__t __n.
86. A Pastoral Elergy. By a young Gentleman in the University. 246 S. [Symmers]
87. The Day Chang'd. A Poem in Blank Verse. 252 W.
88. A Pastoral Elegy to the Memory of Mr. Foord. By a Lady. 254 F.
89. EPITHALAMIUM on the Marriage of a Friend. 259 D.M. [David Mallet]
90. On Sleep, in Imitation of the E___ of R______Stile. 264 J.B.
91. THE ELEVATION by Mr. C________r. 269 r. C____r [Callender]

	Analysis of Poems
10 Named individuals	27
17 Initialed individuals	45
Anonymous ladies	4
Anonymous students	1
Other Anonymous	14
	91

No. of poems by students of Edinburgh University - approx. 18.

APPENDIX H

THE FOUNDATION DATE OF THE RANKENIAN CLUB

The primary source documents for our information about the Rankenian Club are the *Scots Magazine* article of 1771 and Woodhouselee's *Life of Henry Home, Lord Kames*, published in 1807. All subsequent sources seem to be based one or both of these documents. Both of them are based on accounts given by George Wallace, the last surviving member, though the former gives the founding date as 1717 and the latter as being 'as early as 1716'. However, it appears that the later date of 1717 is the more probable for the following reasons:[1]

1. The earlier date seems to be the more reliable as Wallace was giving Woodhouselee information much later in his life when his memory may have been less clear on details.

2. It is certain that Ruddiman's Club was founded in 1718 as the biographer of Ruddiman found this date clearly stated in a published work of Ruddiman's - now lost (G. Chalmers *op. cit.*, p.83). This date of 1718 is mentioned by Woodhouselee (*op. cit.* p.175 footnote). However, a secondary source of information, *Hogg's Instructor*, of 1852 (Vol. VIII, p.43) has taken Woodhouselee's date of 1716 for the founding of the Rankenian Club and then states that Ruddiman's Club was established 'in the year subsequent to the institution of the Rankenian Club'. This would give the date for Ruddiman's Club as 1717. The author has clearly taken his information from Woodhouselee, but has realised the discrepancy with Chalmer's date for the foundation of Ruddiman's club and therefore has not mentioned any date for its foundation. This suggests that it was common knowledge that Ruddiman's Club was founded a year after the Rankenian Club, possibly as a rival to it. Thus, the year 1717 seems more probable on this reasoning.

3. Besides, the year 1716 is perhaps a little early for canny Scots gentlemen to be setting up clubs in taverns, considering that 1715 rebellion rumbled on into early 1716.

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[1] Professor M.A. Stewart, the leading authority in this field, has read this appendix and states in a letter that he agrees with the 'line of argument' in this appendix.

APPENDIX I

THE MEMBERS OF THE RANKENIAN CLUB

'A List of Members of the Rankenian Club, furnished by George Wallace, Esq.; Advocate, one of the last surviving members' (Woodhouselee, *Life and Writings of Henry Home of Kames, op. cit.*, Vol. I, Appendix VIII, pp.50-2.)

This list is not exhaustive. It excludes, for instance, the Rev. Charles Telfer (1693-1731 - graduated from Edinburgh, 1712) who was also a possible founder member (cf. Robert Wodrow, *Analecta*, [Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1843], Vol. III, p.175). Additional information is bracketed.

(I. POSSIBLE FOUNDER MEMBERS)

(Information as supplied by George Wallace.)	(1.Dates of Birth & Death) (2.Date of Graduation etc)
1. Rev. William Wishart, D.D., one of the Ministers of Edinburgh, and Principal of the University.	(c.1692-1753) (Graduated 1709)
2. Archibald Murray of Murrayfield, Esq; Advocate.	(1695-1773) (Admitted Faculty of Advocates, 1718)
3. Rev. Robert Wallace, D.D., Minister of New North Church of Edinburgh, author of *An Estimate of the Numbers of Mankind*, and *Characteristics of the Present* *Political State of Great Britain*.	(1696-1771) (Matriculated Edinburgh University in 1711; did not graduate)
6. Mr. John Stevenson, Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh.	(1695-1775) (Professor from 1730)
7. Rev. George Turnbull, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Marischal College, Aberdeen, Author of *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, and other works.	(1698-1748) (Graduated from Edinburgh, 1721)
9. George Young, M.D., Physician in Edinburgh.	(c.1692-1757) (Entered College of Surgeons, 1719)
10. John Smibert, a painter of reputation.	(1688-1751)

12. Rev. William Hepburn,
Minister of Inverkeilor,in Angus

(1694-1756)
(Graduated Edinburgh, 1714)

(II. LATER MEMBERS)

4. The Right Rev, Isaac Madox,
Lord Bishop of Worchester.

(1685-1732)
(Graduated Edinburgh, 1723)

5. The Rev. John Horseley,
Rector of St. Martin's
in the Fields, Westminster.

(1699-1777)
(Graduated Edinburgh, 1723)

8. Colin Maclaurin, A.M.,
Professor of Mathematics in
the University of Edinburgh,
author of *A System of Fluxions,*
An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy,
and various other works.

(1698-1748)
(Came to Edinburgh in 1725)

11. Mr. Charles Mackie,
Advocate, Professor of
Civil History in the
University of Edinburgh.

(1688-1770)
(Graduated Edinburgh, 1705)
(At Leyden till 1719)

13. Nichol Graham of Gartmore, Esq:
Advocate.

(? -1775)
(Admitted Faculty of Advocates,
1724)

14. Rev. George Wishart, D.D.,
Minister of the Tron Church,
Edinburgh, Principal Clerk to
the Church of Scotland.

(1702-85)
(Graduated Edinburgh, 1719)

15. Sir Alexander Dick,
of Prestonfield, Baronet.

(1703-85)
(Graduated Leyden, 1725)

16. Sir John Pringle, Baronet, M.D.,
Professor of Moral Philosophy
in the University of Edinburgh,
Physician to their Majesties,
and President of the Royal Society of London.

(1707-82)
(Graduated Leyden, 1730)

17. Charles Maitland of Pitrichie,
Esq: Advocate, Member of
Parliament.

(? -1751)
(Admitted Faculty of Advocates,
1727)

18. Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck,
one of the Lords of Session.

(1706-82) (James Boswell's father
(Graduated Leyden, 1727)

19. Sir Andrew Mitchell of Thainston, (1708-71)
Advocate, K.B., afterwards (Admitted Faculty of Advocates,
Plenipotentiary at the Court of Berlin. 1736)

(III. LAST MEMBERS TO BE ADMITTED)

'After the Club had subsisted above forty years, and its attending members were much diminished by death and accidental separation, it was resolved, that the sons of the original members should be invited to become associates. In consequence of this resolution, the following gentlemen were added to its number:' [Ibid.]

20. Thomas Young, M.D., (1725-83)
Professor of Midwifery in (Entered Royal College of
the University of Edinburgh. Surgeons, 1751)

21. George Wallace, Esq: (1727-1805)
Advocate, author of (Admitted Faculty of
A System of the Principles of the Law of Scotland; Advocates,1754)
Nature and Descent of Ancient Peerages;
Origin of Feudal Tenures, Etc.

22. John Maclaurin of Dreghorn, (1734-96)
one of the Lords of Session, (Admitted Faculty of Advocates,
author of a *Collection of Criminal Trials*; 1756)
Observations on some Points of Law, Etc.

23. Alexander Murray of Henderland, (1736-95)
one of the Lords of Session. (Admitted Faculty of Advocates,
1758)

'In the Winter of 1771, a few months after the death of Dr. Wallace, the Rankenian Club resolved to discontinue their regular weekly meetings; and a few occasional meetings were afterwards held, down to the year 1774, from which time it ceased altogether.' [Ibid.]

APPENDIX J

LETTERS BETWEEN HENRY HOME (LORD KAMES) AND ANDREW BAXTER

MAY - JULY 1723

Scottish Record Office: Abercairney Muniments GD24/1/547

A SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENTS THEREIN

	Henry Home to Baxter	Items	Baxter to Henry Home	Items
1st Letter	28th May 1723	18	31st May 1723	17
2nd Letter	7th June -	15-16	13th June -	13-14
3rd Letter	17th June -	11-12	24th June -	3-4
4th Letter	3rd July -	5-8	8th July -	9-10

Kames's First Letter - 28th May 1723

In the first surviving letter to Baxter, Kames is replying to a previous letter from Baxter and he also refers to 'that Manuscript of yours' though it is unclear whether Baxter is the author of it or not. Kames asks either for 'ane acquaintance with the Author, or a sight of the Manuscript'. As he is already acquainted with Baxter, the author appears not to be him. Though the context is their common interest in the writings of Dr. Samuel Clarke, we can't sure whether it is a manuscript about Clarke's philosophy or anything else.

However, there is no doubt that the correspondence begins with their common interest in Clarke's philosophy. And the '*vis inertiæ*' controversy, which subsequently loomed very large in the writings of both of them, begins with this first surviving letter. 'To begin a new subject', Kames says. He seems to have kept this and all succeeding letters because he was passionately concerned with justifying his own position on the inertia issue and he attempted to do so in his later writings. There was at least one previous letter from Baxter and at least one from him to Baxter in which he mentioned 'the Law of Equity'. These presumably became toilet paper, as Ramsay of Ochtertyre claimed happened to most of his letters.[1]

At this stage, Kames wishes to talk to Baxter but he is obliged to leave Kames House for Edinburgh and his remaining letters are from there. Unfortunately, the ensuing correspondence did not endear the men to each other and it appears to have brought the friendship to a resounding conclusion before it really began. It shows that friendship is not made or kept in conducting a fierce and partisan philosophical debate by letter.

In his first letter to Baxter, Kames briefly criticises Samuel Clarke, with whom he was to correspond in August of the same year, for distinguishing 'the Law of Nature into the Law of Equity and the Law of Love'. For 'the Law of Love is not properly a

[1] John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century*, (ed. A. Allardyce - Edinburgh: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1888), Vol. I, p.210 footnote 2. He euphemistically says that they were 'sent to the temple of Cloacina'.

Law of Nature' since that implies a legal sanction every time we fail to love or fail to be loved. He then moves casually on to the subject which was to occupy completely the rest of their correspondence.

> To begin a new Subject, Keill in his *Physicks* Lect: ii discoursing upon the first law of nature endeavours to account for the *communication of Motion*, but very unsatisfactorily in my humble opinion. He considers Motion as ane Accident or Modification, which like a certain Colour or a certain figure being once impressed, must perpetually remain or continue without a new cause to induce an alteration - but this is very weak, for if you will name motion a modification of substance or matter, you must allow it not one certain modification but a constant and continuall change of modification; In a word, theres no arguing from a constant action such as Motion, to a constant passion such as colour, figure, rest &c. Now 'tis plain, that Motion being a constant action or constant change of place, this constant effect will require as constant a Cause - Divide the space run through into an infinite number of particles, the motion in each of these is a new Effect, for every one of which there must necessarily be cause, Now it cannot be the hand that put the piece of matter first in Motion, for that now is at rest, and has no manner of influence upon the piece of matter; and yet that is still in motion and would so continue were it not for the resistance of the air. Therefor you must assign some other cause for this continuation of Motion than the Hand which indeed first begun the Motion, but has no Power with respect to the continuance of the motion, more than the other hand that never touched the piece of matter.[1]

The particular passage from Keill's book mentioned by Kames, is as follows in the English translation of the original Latin:

> But as no Mode, or Accident, can of its own accord or by itself be destroyed, and as all Effects produced by transient Causes do remain always, unless there be some new and extraneous Cause that destroys them; so likewise Motion once commenced will be continued always, unless it is hindered by some external Cause: nor is it more in the power of a Body once moved, to lay aside its Motion or Energy to move, and return of itself to Rest, than it can put off the Figure that it has been once formed into, and acquire a new one, without some extrinsick Cause.[2]

Kames is puzzled by this comparison of the *vis inertiæ* with such modes of an object as the figure and colour. He sees that the motion of an object is radically different from any of its intrinsic modes or qualities. He then wonders what motion really is and how it can be said to continue indefinitely. Unfortunately, neither Kames nor Baxter are familiar, at this stage, with Zeno's paradoxes. One suspects that there would have been much greater understanding of each other's positions, had they been aware of these subtle arguments against the possibility of motion. But Kames apparently knew nothing about Zeno's paradoxes until 1780 when Reid gave him an account of them in one of his letters.[3] And Baxter seems to have remained blissfully unaware of these paradoxes till the end of his life. Moreover he was a hard-headed natural philosopher who had little or no patience for the metaphysical subtleties that perplexed Kames.

It is also possible that a reading of Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* led Kames to distrust the treatment of motion in abstraction from the ideas of colour

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1 Scottish Record Office, GD24/1/547, item 18, p.2.

2 John Keill, *An Introduction to Natural Philosophy*, (first published in Latin, 1700 - 3rd English edition, London: 1733), Lecture XI, p.134.

3 Letter dated 23rd April 1780, in 'Unpublished Letters of Thomas Reid to Lord Kames, 1762 - 1782', edited by Ian Ross, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. VII, 1965, pp.43-46.

and extension pertaining to an object. This is dealt Sections VII to X where Berkeley concludes that 'it is equally impossible for me to to form the abstract idea of motion distinct from the body moving, and which is neither swift nor slow, curvilinear nor rectilinear.'[1] The crux of Kames's line of thought is that he sees motion as a property of an object whereas Newton laid down the law that inertia, or being at rest, is the essential property of matter. Motion is something *done* to matter rather than belonging to it.

But Kames's worries about the causal effects of motion mainly stem from a confused passage in Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding.* This is section 72 of the chapter on Power which Kames constantly refers to in his letters to Baxter. Here Locke attempts to distinguish the 'active power' of living creatures from the passivity of mere physical activity. Thus, active power gives rise to actions as opposed to 'passions'. He claims that, firstly, our active power consists in the ability 'to bring into view *Ideas* out of sight, at one's own choice, and to compare which of them one thinks fit.' Secondly, we are said to be active in perceiving things but passive in receiving 'the *Ideas* of light, roundness and heat.' Thirdly, we are active in turning our eyes another way or removing our bodies 'out of the sunlight'. In these three cases, we put ourselves in motion through our own volition.[2]

However, Locke has just said that: 'Sometimes the Substance, or Agent, puts it self into *Action* by its own Power, and this is properly *Active Power.*' This puzzled Kames because, on the one hand, many physical substances may be said to have active power, for example, catalytic chemicals that bring about reactions apparently spontaneously; and, on the other hand, we do many things automatically, without choice or thought, and even when we choose to eat, for example, we are determined by hunger to do so. So Kames was still left wondering what our freewill really consists in, since physical causes may be found ultimately to be behind all our choices and motivations. This is why Kames was later to tell Boswell that this chapter on Power 'crucified' him (see Chapter Five, section seven of this thesis for more on this).

A further confusion in this section from Locke's chapter on Power lies in his saying that there are 'two sorts of *Action*, viz. *Motion* and *Thinking*'. That 'motion' is a kind of 'action' was taken up by Kames in support of his arguments against Keill's account which is as follows:

> Nor is motion continued any other way, than that whereby is preserved the Figure, the Colour, and any other the like Affections of Body, which always remain the same, unless they are altered by any external Force.[3]

As against this, Kames argues that colour, figure, rest etc. are constant 'passions' whereas motion is 'a constant action or constant change of place'. Thus, the difference between them in Kames's mind is that the latter 'constant action' must be composed of an infinite number of parts, and each one of these must be moved by a cause. There are therefore further causes, over and above the initial cause, which keep the object in motion. But at no point in his correspondence did he provide evidence for the existence of these additional causes.

The fact is that Kames was unable to treat material objects objectively, like a physicist, so that it never occurred to him to conduct experiments to verify his point of view. He treated matter anthropomorphically, as if it were imbued with internal

[1] George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, (1710 - London: Everyman edition) Introduction, sect. X, p.98.

[2] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* (1690 - ed. P.H. Nidditch - Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), Book II, ch. XXXI, §72, p.286.

[3] Keill, *op. cit.*, pp. 136/7.

motives to action like people. Thus, he equated motion with action. Physical objects *do* things in the way people do things. He developed this point of view much more coherently, and at great length, in a paper which comprised the first 'article' in *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary*, published by the Edinburgh Philosophical Society in 1754 (and edited by David Hume). This paper was entitled 'Of the Laws of Motions' and it was followed by a paper of equal length by John Stewart, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University. The latter paper demolished Kames's view from a Newtonian point of view. For instance, Stewart states succinctly that 'Motion is not action, but the effect of an action.'[1]

In his first letter, Kames is basically making the point that the movement or non-movement of a physical object is an entirely different thing from its passive attributes such as colour, shape, texture etc. What Keill is doing is using Aristotelian categories to clarify what Newton's First Law of Motion entails. The movement of an object can hardly be said to belong to the object in the same way that its colour does. However, Baxter proceeds to defend Keill in this matter.

Baxter's First Letter - 31st May 1723

In his first surviving letter to Kames, Baxter begins with a facetious remark that might be interpreted by a reader as being somewhat sarcastic. 'You are certainly very nimble; from the first Law of Morality to the First Law of Nature is a Large Stride, and may do very well for long legs . .' Without commenting on Kames's first point, Baxter refers to Keil's lecture 11 and argues that no material body is in a state of absolute rest relative to other bodies. Thus, motion can be considered an attribute of bodies since they are always moving in the some respect, even though they are at rest in other respects. He also says that both 'modus' and 'accidens' are not essential as regards material bodies but are 'accidental or fortuitous'. Thus, colour and figure as well as motion are open to continual change or modification.

Baxter then criticises Kames's contrast between 'a constant action' and 'a constant passion'. He says that matter is really equally passive in its motion as in its rest, colour or figure. Moving matter has no 'need of any new impulse' to keep it moving, nor is a new effect required in respect of 'each indefinitely small part of space' which it runs over.

Kames's Second Letter - 7th June 1723

Kames apologises for any mistakes in his last letter caused by 'haste or inadvertency'. He claims not to be abusing terms and he still insists on calling motion a 'modification of matter' which he says sometimes coincides with being 'a mode or accident' of matter. But overall he still maintains that motion constantly changes matter rather than belongs to it.

He re-affirms his view that each area of space through which an object moves requires a new effect to maintain it. He says 'it never entered my head that any body could doubt of it'. The movement of a body along each successive 20 yards involves 'an effect produced'. It is the same when a new figure is impressed on a body; this is a new effect produced.

Motion is not a single effect which 'once produced, must still continue'. It is an infinite number of effects. Thus, when a hand sets something in motion, the effect produced by the hand continues only through the position A, whereas the object

[1] *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary,* (Edinburgh: 1754) Volume I, Article II, p.85.

continues moving through positions B, C, etc., which are 'different effects from the effect through A'.

At this point Kames's arguments become confused and difficult to follow. He says that motion is the action of an active being and not an effect produced by that being. Thus, the body 'is acted upon by the hand' and 'the effect produced is change of place', which is position B as opposed to position A. But to be consistent, Kames should have said that the effect produced was position A since position B requires a different 'effect produced'.

It is clear that Kames's is beginning to lose the thread of his argument here and he fails to make clear what the additional 'effects produced' are which make possible positions B, C, D, etc. Instead, he mentally leaps on to a criticism he has of the above-mentioned section from Locke's chapter on Power. He disputes whether any being can be said to put itself into action in the way described by Locke when the latter says: 'Sometimes the Substance, or Agent, puts it self into *Action* by its own Power, and this is properly *Active Power*.'[1] Kames argues that this means taking the being to be an agent in respect of its motion within itself and to be a patient 'because this power of motion is exerted upon itself'. This is wrong because beings can't be both active and passive at the same time in 'respect of the same effect produced'. He thinks that the same error (or 'sophism') arises as regards the continued motion of a body but he doesn't expand on this resemblance.

He ends by saying that 'it still remains to know what is the cause of the motions continuing even after the hand ceases to act'. We never get to know for sure what Kames has in mind but Baxter has a shrewd suspicion that the Almighty has a hand in it somewhere.

Baxter's Second Letter - 13th June 1723

Baxter begins this letter politely enough by saying: 'I protest sincerely, if I mistook your meaning, it was out of ignorance and not wilfully or designedly'. He then reiterates his support of Keil's account as opposed to that of Kames. He thinks that the crux of their dispute is verbal as it lies in distinguishing motion as an action from other modes which are passive. Baxter agrees that motion is an action but not of matter since motion in matter is passive. Matter, however, is passive in the figure, size and situation of its parts, rather than the latter being *passions* of matter. He confesses that he is unable to make any sense of Kames's statement: 'For motion is action and an attribute of the active being, by no means an effect produced by the being'. He thinks that an action must be 'an effect produced by the being beginning it'.

The problem now is, not that Baxter is in the wrong, but that he fails to show just what is wrong with Kames's arguments here. He lacks the patience to set out, dispassionately and objectively, just where the mistakes arise; just as Kames himself lacks the patience to stop himself and think things through with a measure of self-criticism. Baxter merely reiterates his own position and sees no possible reason why Kames should not agree with him. Therefore, he concludes that the best construction he can put on the situation is that Kames is 'bamboozling and jesting him'. This switch to an *ad hominen* approach to attacking one's opponents is not only unbecoming of a philosopher, it also suggests that he is losing the argument by default. He does not help the cause of rational argument by further saying: 'What could you mean here but to triffle (sic) with me as if I were an infant?'

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[1] Locke, *op.cit.*, p.285.

Kames's Third Letter - 17th June 1723

Not surprisingly, Kames is offended by the imputation that he was intentionally 'bamboozling and jesting' Baxter. Quite rightly, he says: 'I would much sooner have you attack my judgment than my sincerity.' He then reaffirms his arguments about motion being 'a mode or modification or affection of the active being, and about motion being a species of action. He cites Locke's chapter on Power, sect. 72 as his authority for the latter. He then puts aside all these arguments saying that he wouldn't have brought them up if he had known the difficulties that they would introduce. He expresses doubt whether action 'can be considered as an effect produced by the agent or not.' He then gets 'to the point' in saying that he denies 'that every mode once impressed upon matter, will eternally so continue without some new cause to work a change.' He grandiosely challenges Keill or Baxter to prove this. In defence of his view, he gives the spurious example of a pain which does not continue indefinitely once it is experienced, and says that it is the same with motion. Although colour, figure etc. continue indefinitely without any new effect being produced to ensure that continuance, it is otherwise with pain and motion. New effects required through BC, CD etc. therefore 'there must be new causes'.

He next deals with the difference between calling figure and magniture 'passions of matter' and treating matter as passive in respect of these. He points out that a thrown stone 'is passive with respect to the motion' produced by his hand in throwing it, but that motion is not 'a passion of matter'. Figure and colour are passions because they only require a single effect. He says he has 'Mr Locke's authority' for this, though this is not easy to establish.

Lastly, he confuses the active/passive distinction altogether by saying that a man who kills himself is both active and passive at the same time, though he also says that two actions are involved here. The first action is of the dagger (poynard) into the breast, and the second is the soul leaving the body 'which we call death'. The soul is active in the first case and passive in the second. He finishes the letter by saying that it cost him far less trouble to convince three or four men 'of good sense' that Keill's arguments are wrong than to write this letter.

Baxter's Third Letter - 24th June 1723

Baxter begins this letter coldly but politely stating that he will ' offer you reasons why I cannot close with your objections against M^r K's account of motion'. He thinks Kames is 'in the wrong in maintaining that the same being cannot be both active and passive in the same action'. In whatever we do, we also 'suffer' for doing it. In other words, in moving a finger, one is passively aware of doing so. There is always a passive reaction or experience which accompanies every action or act of volition. They accompany each other 'like shadow and body, or like willing and nilling (to use that term)'. Each act has the effect of making the person passive.

As regards motion requiring new effects to continue its progress, Baxter asks Kames what absurdity he is accusing Mr. Keill of, since this is the only way to prove his case *a priori.* Baxter denies that 'a sum of actions' is involved in motion. He further denies 'that the action begun by the hand continue after the hand is removed', just as heat will remain in an iron object after the fire creating the heat is extinguished with water. Kames's only way of countering such denials, according to Baxter, is 'to bring in an absurdity from such denial', or to prove the non-continuance of motion by additional arguments. Kames is leaving his 'adversary at liberty to deny' without reducing him to absurdity in the Euclidean manner.

Having taught Kames 'the rules of argumenting' he goes on to restate his whole argument in support of Keil. He says that it is 'a natural prejudice in us all' to think that matter has a greater tendency to be at rest than in motion. The effect of gravity is irrelevant to this natural tendency to rest because it is 'a principle superadded to matter' without which the universe cannot subsist.

Next, Baxter imagines the universe to contain a ball of 'impenetrable extended substance' and nothing else in 'the vast boundless space'. It therefore is not subject to gravity, attraction or attrition of any kind. When set in motion this ball cannot be said to change its position in respect of other bodies since there are none. Yet it can move and be found in successively different parts of space. This example deprives Kames of his 'successive change of place'. There is just continual motion without changes in position relative to anything else. In such circumstances, the only thing stopping the ball continuing in a straight line to infinity, would be a deficiency in the initial impulsion which set it in motion. If the ball is the only thing in the universe, there can be no resistance to its continued motion. Its 'natural tendency to rest' might be thought to consume the energy that feeds its motion. but this natural tendency or *vis inertiæ* was overcome by the initial impulsion. And matter is indifferent as to its being at rest or in motion, therefore it must continue indefinitely in motion.

The 'resistance to inactivity' (*vis inertiæ*) means that 'a body of ten parts will not be moved by a force able to move one or two parts only'. It will only be moved by a force capable of moving all ten parts. Equally, it will only be stopped by a resistance capable of stopping all ten parts.

Baxter then reminds Kames that the resistance of change from rest to motion or from motion to rest is only detected 'by observation and experiment'. Mr. Keill, Baxter tells us, 'has fairly and strongly represented them'.

An example of the resistance of matter from motion to rest is given in which a person relaxing on a boat is suddenly propelled into the water when the boat strikes rocks. Though the boat stopped suddenly, the body of the person continued in the same direction and at the same velocity. Only the weight of the body, the resistance of the air, and, presumably, (though B. doesn't mention it) the blankening effect of the water, slowed the impelled body to a stop.

Baxter now thinks that he has effectually proved what Kames challenged him to do in his last letter. He asks Kames not to 'triffle' with him by writing the first thing that comes into his mind. However, he then spoils a relatively inoffensive letter by adding a nasty postscript on the same page as the address. He declares himself 'being disobliged at your two last letters especially in your last under a pretence of giving up niceties you slur over difficulties in the former'.

Kames's Fourth Letter - 3rd July 1723

Kames ignores the arguments in the body of Baxter's letter and immediately picks up on the snide remarks saying:

> You're very hot, good Sir: you accuse me of trifling, slurring over difficulties and God knows what; and in this very letter where you're so hot against your adversary, if you are not guilty of notorious trifling . . I shall never pretend hereafter to the least spark of reason.

He then protests that he never denied what 'never a man did yet doubt of viz. That motion once begun will continue, in a parcel of matter, without a new force to stop it'. On the face of it, Kames now appears to be contradicting himself completely and acknowledging the truth of what he had previously disputed. But it is the metaphysical nature of motion that puzzles him. He has no need to dispute anything in

Newton's accounts of it. And he is also attacking Keill's clumsy attempts to reconcile Newton with Aristotelian categories, however ineptly he does so.

But so far from extricating himself from his metaphysical muddles, Kames proceeds to enter into yet another one. He now distinguishes motion that flows from the nature of the thing from motion that is due to 'the arbitrary appointment of Providence'. Newton did not make Keill's mistake of attributing motion to the nature of thing, so Kames thinks. He says: 'You see plainly if Keill be right twas needless to feign such as Power as this' (i.e. the *vis inertiæ*).

He disputes that matter can be entirely passive, for then matter would have no tendency to move at all. The tendency to move is bestowed on matter either by 'Almighty God' or 'some external Agent'. He agrees that the motion is such that it requires 'resistance or reaction' to counter it so that he agrees with Newton's *vis inertiæ*. He protests that he 'endeavoured to show that it is inconsistent with Mr. Keill's doctrine'.

He goes on to contend with the example that 'a body of ten parts will not by moved by a force able to move one or two parts only'. He says that this is against our 'constant experience' which tells us 'that the sum of the moments is the same before and after contact'. What Kames appears to be referring to here is the fact that in a vacuum and free of gravity, the same force will move an object of any parts or weight whatsoever. Thus, the resistance to the force will be greater in the larger body and lesser in the smaller body, so that these proportions balance each other out, and both bodies will move at the same velocity.

Kames maintains that Baxter has still missed his point, namely, that even though bodies continue indefinitely until they meet resistance or opposition, yet to continue that motion they still require the operation of 'continual new effects produced'. All that Baxter does is 'to deny the multiplicity of the effect, without assigning the least reason'. All his 'multitude of examples' do not prove 'that in motion the effect is only single and not many'.

He denies slurring over difficulties which he says is a 'pretty harsh' accusation. He may have 'waved some points' into which he fell unawares, but these, he thought at the time, did not influence the main argument.

He points out that Baxter's examples of something being active and passive at the same time, are all double effects. They are active and passive with regard to different things. Nevertheless, he maintains that self motion is possible even though the being can't be both active and passive at the same time. The being acts but it is not acted on; it moves but nothing is moved. There is no movement from one point of space to another, even though it has moved.

He concludes by saying: 'You have tempted me to be a little angry in this letter'. But he asks that they each forgive one another and that 'let's keep to our arguments without personal reflections, which of all things I hate.' The trouble is that Baxter will not refrain from introducing 'personal reflections' into his letters.

Baxter's Fourth Letter - 8th July 1723

Firstly, Baxter asks Kames to state 'in terms' whether 'a natural tendency to motion' is not enough 'to continue motion without bringing in new causes' after the initial impulse. He clearly wants Kames to see that the initial cause is alone **sufficient** to ensure the indefinite continuance of the motion, but he is still not making this point in the context of Kames's own arguments.

Secondly, he asks whether 'the arbitrary appointment of providence' does not entail a miraculous event which for a time suspends the laws of nature. For if it continues on a regular basis then it becomes a law of nature and nothing miraculous.

Thirdly, Baxter argues that if something continues eternally, then it cannot be otherwise, therefore it must be in the nature of the thing to so continue. He asks 'what is it that follows in fact and from the present constitution of things?' Again, he is trying obliquely to persuade Kames that the initial impulse alone is sufficient to ensure the continuance of motion.

Fourthly, he asks 'what distinction does Mr. Hume make betwixt the present constitution of things and the nature of things?' He asks what Kames is proving here. On his part, he is proving that the *vis inertiæ* is all that is necessary to ensure the continuance of motion and he ask whether it is not enough.

He accuses Kames of bringing 'impossible conditions' that were not at first understood and agreed upon. And Kames eludes 'the strength of the proof because these impossible conditions are not proved.' 'O Mr. Hume this is pityfully unfair!' he exclaims. In other words, Baxter has no time or patience for illogical metaphysical presuppositions.

He then resumes his personal attacks on Kames by referring to 'your ill timed undeserved banter'. And in response to Kames's protest that he never denied the *vis inertiæ*, saying 'have you my authority from my letters? Sure I am you have not', Baxter calls this 'bullying insulting treatment'.

Having vented his spleen, Baxter resumes his criticisms and asks whether it is consistent to say that successive causes 'are necessary to the continuation of motion, and yet that motion once begun will eternally so continue unless a force stop it?' This is a correct defence of the physical explanation, but it overlooks the metaphysical puzzle concerning how continued motion is possible at all and in what it really consists.

However, Baxter does approach this metaphysical view in wondering whether Kames is referring to an additional necessary cause 'which will also make the body necessarily move on eternally till the force stop it'. But he claims not to see this 'in any of your letters, which I have read over carefully again and again'. Besides, he believes that a contradiction is involved even in this approach since a natural tendency to motion means the eternal movement of a body once it is set in motion.

Baxter regards Kames's 'challenge' to him and Keill (in K's third letter) as being 'very peremptory and remarkable'. He charges Kames, firstly, with pretending to ridicule him and his demonstration, and, secondly, with insulting him by accusing him of being 'vain on't'. He also says it was 'very unfair' of Kames to assume that a comparison between motion and the other modes of figure and colour (by saying 'just like figure and colour') was 'the sole condition of the proof'.

Baxter then questions what Kames means by Newton's 'feigning such a power as' the *vis inertiæ*. He thinks it can't be a fiction of Newton's since he proves it through observation and experiment. If matter has a tendency to continue its motion, there is no 'feigning' involved. How can 'a fictitious hypothetical tendency' produce a real effect? But what Kames probably meant to say was that Newton was saving the appearances of things with his *vis inertiæ,* and he was not getting to the root of what motion is really all about.

Baxter quotes from the Latin edition of Keill's book to drive home his points. He asks Kames to take Keill's advice and to 'leave off inquiring into the Cause of the Continuation of Motion; for there is no other besides that first Cause, which does not only preserve Motion but everything else in its Being', to quote the English edition of

the same book. Baxter admits that the latter part of this sentence from Keill seems to imply the *vis inertiæ* ensures the continuance of figure and colour as well motion. But Kames has admitted rest to continue indefinitely as well as motion, so why not figure and colour also? Besides, this does not affect the debate between himself and Kames, says Baxter. That concerns the necessity of 'a new successive continual cause'. But what about rest then, he asks? How could it be an action of the body while its figure and colour are passive?

Kames is being too hard on his 'explication of the *vis inertiæ*' (Baxter thinks) in saying that matter cannot be entirely passive. Baxter only meant that the passivity is 'a tendency of inactivity', which makes it indifferent as to being in motion or at rest. He quotes Keill in support of this. He answers the criticism of the body of 10 parts not being moved by a force sufficient for 5 parts by saying he should have added the words 'with an assigned velocity'. But this hardly answers the criticism which seems to refer to the fact that the gravity or the weight of an object is what makes the need for greater forces to move larger bodies.

He then offers a long account of how a body preserves its state of rest like a sentry guarding a door and not doing anything to the door 'till some Body offers to intrude'. He says that the *vis inertiæ* 'is never exerted 'till some thing offer to destroy the motion then it resists'. He adds that an *a priori* or *a posteriori* demonstration is still needed to prove that a continual cause exists, otherwise it is mere supposition.

Baxter says that he doesn't understand how Kames can say that his (Baxter's) arguments support 'a continually producing cause' when he (Baxter) hadn't even mentioned his doing so in his letters. He still doesn't see the metaphysical possibilities in his own arguments. Just because he hadn't mentioned it, doesn't mean that it can't be seen by those who have eyes for such niceties.

For Baxter, it is in the nature of things that continuation of motion follows from an initial impulse. Therefore, Kames is contradicting himself in, firstly, accepting the nature of things and, secondly, denying what physical theory says about their behaviour. There is consequently a confusion of logical deduction with inductive reasoning throughout his works. And Hume's exposition of the problem of causation may be said to be, in part, a response to this confusion, and ultimately his answer to Baxter's confused reasonings on such matters in the book, *The Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul,* for instance, (see section five of Chapter Five for more details on that book).

Baxter ends this letter by saying he could go on but he is 'fatigu'd to death with this'; small wonder considering that this is by far the longest letter of the correspondence.

Baxter's Fifth Letter - 13th July 1723

This was written before any reply from Kames because Baxter missed the postman of this day with his fourth letter, so he decided to add another letter in which he completes the points started in the last one.

Having reread Kames's letters, he has now concluded that Kames 'shifted sides plainly' from his position in his first letter (28th May) to his position in the last one (3rd July). Baxter picks up on a phrase in the last letter in which Kames says (page 2 of his letter) that the power of *vis inertiæ* 'by its operation continues the Motion once begun'. Baxter thinks that Kames must be here 'deserting a producing cause different from the *vis inertiæ*'.

Baxter now proceeds to reduce Kames's 'supposition' to absurdity by saying it implies 'That motion impress'd is destroy'd ev'ry indivisible minute of time, and immediately reproduc'd by the operation of the inertia'. This means that a state of inertia which by definition does nothing, is nevertheless able to accomplish a reproduction of motion after it has been destroyed. He says that Kames's *vis inertiæ* is more properly a *vis efficaciæ* since it depends on efficient causes to keep the motion going. Rather it is the case that 'inertia preserves only the Quantity of Motion impress'd'. It does not successively renew motion like a cause.

He reiterates his contention that 'a certain Passiveness is included in the nature of ev'ry Action which is the very result and consequence of the Action itself'. He points out that Kames has failed to reply to this argument in his last letter. Baxter thinks this is an important point in relation to the 'sophism' which Kames mentioned. He himself doesn't see where the alleged sophism lies but he does see a passivity being ascribed to an action, where Kames refers to the power of motion being exerted on the thing itself as a patient. Thus, Kames must allow 'the agent to be both active and passive at the same time and with respect to the same effect.' It is 'weak to pity' to call this absurd as Kames does. Kames is also saying that self-motion is not an inconsistent notion but 'yet a self-motive power [is] absurd'.

He closes the main body of the letter with the proposal that they return their letters to each other and 'we shall burn them and our philosophical heats together'. In fact Kames preserved both his and Baxter's letters, presumably for his own purposes of taking the argument further in the future, as mentioned above.

Even after finishing this letter, Baxter's mind is still churning over aspects of this controversy, and he adds a postscript to the back of the address sheet of paper. He virtually repeats his conviction that no further causes are required to explain the continuance of motion. Kames is indulging in conjecture since there is 'nothing in Experiment' to back up his claims. The real tendency is that of inertia which is 'founded on Experiment'. Baxter says optimistically that a quarter of what he had written would have been enough to make his points if Kames had frankly said that he had changed his opinion from one of his own to that of Newton's inertia. So right to the bitter end, Baxter does not see Kames's metaphysical viewpoint. He concludes his note by saying that Kames is more to blame for this dispute than himself, and the 'in disputes we are all jack fellow well met'.

APPENDIX K

RECENTLY DISCOVERED LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING ANDREW BAXTER

(A)
PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS AT DUNS CASTLE CONCERNING ANDREW BAXTER

Baxter's 'Discharge' for Salary Received - 1721
[Hay of Duns Castle Papers - Bundle 36]

Andrew Baxter was at Duns Castle during the period 1719 to 1723 is evidenced, firstly, by a receipt (or 'discharge') for salary received, which is to be found in Bundle 36 of the Hay Family Archives at Duns Castle. Secondly, Baxter was at Duns Castle during his correspondence with Kames in 1723, as mentioned above. The receipt states the following:

'**Discharge** Mr Andrew Baxter to Mr William Hay of Drummellier - 1721:

'I Mr Andrew Baxter Governour to Mr William Hay of Drummellier his Sons grant me to have Receiv'd from the said Mr William Hay the sum of Twenty pound Sterling and that as a Years Salary from Martinmass one thousand seven hundred & nineteen to Martinmas one thousand seven hundred & twenty years of the which and all preceeding years I grant this my Discharge in Witnes whereof I have writen and subscribed their puts [?] at Edr this Sixteenth Day of March one thousand Seven hundred and twenty one years.'

'REGT COMMISSION BY ALEXR. HAY OF DRUMMELZIER TO MR ANDREW BAXTER AND ROBERT SETON 1747'
[Hay of Duns Castle Papers - Bundle 79]

[1] **Att Edinburgh** the Seventh day of October one thousand Seven hundred and fourty Seven years In presence of the Lords of Councill & Session Compressed Mr Thomas Hay Advocate as Juror [?] for Alexander Hay after Designed & Gave in the Commission Underwritten Desireing the same might be agreed in their Lordships' Books to the effect upon Specified which Desire the said Lords found reasonable and ordain the same to be done. Accordingly whereof the Tenor Follows **Be it Known** to

all men by these presents **Mr Alexander Hay** of Drummelzier Esqr. **Whereas** It is necessary for me to be absent out of Scotland for Some time upon Account of my health **and** It being **Therefore** proper to put my Estates and affairs under the Care & Inspection of some proper persons during my Absence **and** Being fully Satisfied of the Experience and Dilligence of the persons afternamed and of their Inclinations to do me and my family all the Services & good offices in their power. **Therefore witt ye me** to have Nominated and Appointed as I by these presents Nominate & Appoint Mr Andrew Baxter Governour to William Hay My Eldest Son & Robert Seton Writer in law or Scrivener of them to be my Commissioners and Trustees for Management of my Affairs and Estate in my Absence and Untill I recall these presents by a Writ under my hand **Giving Granting and Committing** to them or Survivors of them full & ample power to call the Tailors upon my Estate present or to come to accompt for the rents profites feu duties and others payable furth and for my Lands and Estate properly & Superiority and to Direct the applications of the said Named [?] farms profits duties & feu Duties & all Casualities in such Way & Manner as they shall judge most beneficiall to me & my family **and** to enter and receive vassal heirs or Singular Successors holding Lands houses & others of me qua Superior and for that Effect to receive Resignations and to Grant Charters of Resignation, **[2]** or Confirmation precepts of Clare Constat and all other writs Usuall and Necessary in such Cases and to Direct and Determine the quotas of of Composition to be paid by Vassalls entering as heirs or Singular Successors **and** if they shall see it proper in my absence to remove any of my Factors and to Constitute and appoint others in their Room and place **as also** to Insist in and Carry on Any Actions or Causes already intented & depending at my Instance and to raise and intent any other Actions at my Instance which they shall think Necessary and to defend in all Actions & Causes already moved or that shall be moved against me either before Supreme or Inferior Courts and for that purpose to Constitute and Appoint Lawyers writters and Agents **as also** to Sett Tacks of any part of my Estate long or Short out putt & Inputt Tennants therein and precepts of Warning to Grant and the same in with the Decreets of Removeing and others to be obtained thereupon to due and lawfull Execution cause be put and Generally to do every other thing which I could do my Self in Mannageing my Estate and affairs **Declaring** my said Commissioners Lyable only for their respective actuall Intromissions but no way for Ommissions or in Solidum **and Lastly** I hereby revock and Recall all former Commissions granted by me Consenting to the Registration hereof in the Books of Councill and Session or others Competent therein to Remain for preservation and to that Effect I Constitute Mr **[3]** Thomas Hay Advocate My Peors [?] &c. In Witness whereof I have subscribed these presents consisting of this and the preceding page written upon Stampt paper by William Grieg Servant to the said Robert Seton Att Edinburgh the thirtieth day of July One thousand Seven hundred and fourty Seven Years Before these Witnesses William Crawford my factor and the said William Grieg Signed Alexr. Hay Will: Grieg witness Will: Grieg witnes Will: Crawfoord Witnes **Extracted** on this & the two preceding pages **By** [signature].

LETTER FROM ANDREW BAXTER
TO 'ALEXANDER HAY OF DRUMMELLIER, ESQUIRE'

29th November 1749

[Hay of Duns Castle Papers - Bundle 779]

Sir,

Yours of Nov^{r}. 4th N.S. came to hand Nov^{r}. 22^{d}. O.S. I am sory [sic] you was so long without a letter, but sometimes I am obliged to wait 6 or 7 days before I get the accounts from M^{r}. Seton,[1] or Baillie Angus, which I would wish to write. The £300 to M^{r}. Sandy[2] is I think a great deal too much. M^{r}. Stirling, or M^{r}. Ramsay should have informed you in what feasible way such a sum was to be laid out; or you should have insisted on some probable scheme how it was to be employed. But you write as if it had been extorted from you by their importunity, without knowing well for what end. If M^{r}. Lyon had been to go in the same ship, to have advised M^{r}. Sandy how to manage such a sum, that had been well: if no friendly person is to have the inspection of it, but a parcel of Sharpers, the Risque is that of £300. If you have time yet to write, you should demand some feasible Project. Neither M^{r}. Seton nor I have heard anything of this Demand, but from your Letter, of which I immediately acquainted M^{r}. Seton. He has a fighting life of it, and would do well, if he were not jumbled[?] He writes he has paid off the £100 Bond to Claud Alexander, and a thousand Merks in part of the Debt due to Steenhouses Representatives.

In my last of Octr. 28th to Nov^{r}. 2^{d}. (which I hope will soon come to your Hand) I gave you an account that the Dragoons had left Dunse, and that none were to come in their place: yet both M^{r}. Seton and M^{r}. Angus are hopeful you shall suffer no great Loss. M^{r}. Angus thinks to get off the Hay of cropt 1748 to the Country people at a groat[3] the stone, and is selling it at that price, whereas the Dragoons in Hadington and elsewhere pay only for it 3 pence halfpenny. And in the Summer time they propose to have as many grazing Cattle, as will eat all the grass not reserved to be Hay. They might have had a 100 head last year, which they refused; and they design to advertise the Parks this year early, and is a good Distance, as far as Coldinghame. Both M^{r}. Seton and M^{r}. Angus, are desirous to see what can be made of the Inclosures, either without setting any of them, or having to do with the Military, whom they both complain of. The Baillie and David Richardson propose to grass CheekLaw[4] inclosures next summer, as the Clover is almost decayed, and to take 4 Cropts of Hay off them successfully, would poor the ground too much. They also propose to take in Stranger's Horse that come to the well in the Inclosure at Pilrig. They might have had many last year for 3 weeks or a month, which they refused. But hope you will find both these proposals reasonable. There were 10 or 12 chaises at the Well every

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1 As the previous item shows, Baxter and Robert Seton were appointed 'commissioners' by Alexander Hay in 1747 while he went to the Continent to convalesce. They had complete authority over Hay's factors, Baillie Angus and William Crawford, and his other employees.

2 'M^{r}. Sandy' [Alexander] was Alexander Hay's second son (1728-1758). He was apparently an officer on a sailing ship.

3 A groat was a coin worth four pence.

4 'Cheeklaw', 'Pilrig' and 'Putenmill' are all farms to the south of Duns.

morning for two months last Summer. But no night horse are to [be][1] taken into any of the Inclosures.

As to the South Dyke of the Inclosure next [to] this new Well, that seems to be at a stand. Mr. Carre designs to build some houses near by the well, and proposes to few from you, or excamb,[2] some of your contiguous Ground, on the north side [of] the Burn. This would occasion some of the westmost Dyke, which is already brought near the well to be thrown down again. He likewise proposes that the Led to Putenmill should be taken off the water a little higher, and a piece of the Led to be dug new, till it come in to the old Mill-Led. In this he would bear a part of the Expenses. This no Body here will meddle with, without your orders. Mr. Angus promised to send me Mr. Carre's Scheme, and a scheme as it was first designed, to be transmitted to you, that you might compare both.

I wrote to you likeways that Baillie Angus and Mr. Crawfurd's accounts are to be gone through only in the Christmas vacance, when they will account for two years together, 1747 and 1748. And then Mr. Seton will send you a state of your affaires since you went away.

It is now certain the Presbytery are to appeal to the Parliament from the Lords of Session's sentence of Declarator. This is the reason why a new Summonds of Declarator is raised to obviate all objections. And the Declarator will be obtained, as there is no person to make any opposition. The E. of Lauderdale is the only man concerned, who can make none: But he insists for his past annual rents, as I wrote formerly. Mr. Seton delays to write to you, till he is served with this write of Appeal. He will be obliged to go up to London on that account, and hopes to take up the New Declarator in his pocket. So all that these vermin can propose is to create People trouble and expense, which indeed will not be little. But there is no help for it now.

I wrote what you desired me to my Lady Blantyre concerning Captn. He.[3] She is exceedingly vexed about it, and says neither Honour nor conscience engages him in such an affaire, and that she looks upon him as lost. She makes here Compliments to you and Mr. Hay[4], as does Lord Blantyre. James & John[5] are well at Dunse. Miss Betty[6] [is] in Edinburgh with Lady Orbiston. Miss Hay and Miss Peggy[7] are at Newmills. I have an Asthma that grows worse every day, and both my legs [are] extremely swelled. My Philosophy is of use to me in this Journey, which one can take but once. I may perhaps write to you another Letter; but have desired Mr. Seton to write to you particularly and frequently, as I believe you will be obliged to do to him. Every Body concerned in your affaires are very solicitous to keep them right. You only can put them wrong. My earnest best wishes to Mr. Hay, and I am

with the greatest Respect,

Whittingham Novr 29th. 1749

Sir, your most obedient and faithful humble Servt,

And: Baxter.

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1 [...] denotes an editorial comment or the insertion of a missing word suggested by syntax.

2 'excamb' means 'exchange' in Scots Law.

3 'Captain Henry'[?] was apparently involved in a duel.

4 Presumably this is Alexander Hay's eldest son, William (1726-1774).

5 James and John were his fourth and fifth sons respectively.

6 His second daughter, Elizabeth.

7 'Miss Hay' is his eldest daughter, Ann, and 'Peggy' his third daughter, Margaret.

(B)
A RECENTLY PUBLISHED LETTER OF ANDREW BAXTER

This letter was recently published by Heiner F. Klemme in a German language paper, 'Anmerkungen zur schottischen Aufklärung in Aberdeen' in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* vol. 74, 1992 pp.256-7. It is referred to in chapter four of the thesis above and it is important enough to be reproduced here to make it more accessible.

THE TEXT

To
The Reverend M^r^. William Warburton
at Newark upon Trent

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have of this date sent up in a Ship from Berwick, the two Pamphlets I mentioned to you in my last, to M^r^. Millar's care in the Strand, who will deliver them to your Book-Seller. They are hardly otherwise worth the while, than as they will shew you part of a Squabble betwixt my Antagonists and me. I thought to have sent you up the first Pamphlet, which gave rise to our debate; but could not get a copy of it. It is entitled *The State of the Moral world considered.* You have in the small Bundle my Reflections upon it, and their Answer, in a Letter to the Author of the state of the Mor. World considered. I made a reply; but it was too large to be printed; nor is the Manuscript yet come to my hand; But a Gentleman has assured me of it: so that if it be worth your while to read these things, I shall send it up as soon as it is returned to me. The Translation of Matho is printed, and I have ordered M^r^. Millar to send a Copy for You, to your Book-Sellers care.

I have not words to express the sense I have of the Honour ye do me, and Protection ye have given me. May all the Happiness due to Virtue and Goodness ever attend you. I am with the most perfect Respect, and deepest sense of uncommon Favours

Rev^d^. and Dear Sir,
your most obedient, and most faithful humble
Servant And: Baxter

Dunse Castle
May 16. 1740

I am still in a shattered condition, and despair of restoring the use of my Feet again

APPENDIX L

A BRIEF LIFE OF WILLIAM DUDGEON (c.1706 - 1743)

Little is known about the early life of William Dudgeon but he appears to have been born in 1706; he is reported by the newspaper, *General Evening Post,* to have died at Upsettlington on 28th January 1743 at the age of 37. We first hear of him as a tenant farmer at Lennelhill near Coldstream in the early 1730s. But it is almost certain that he had some kind of collegiate education, possibly at one of the non-conformist colleges in England.

According to the Parish Registries, he was married to Betty Bell and had seven children. Three are registered at Coldstream and four at Ladykirk. This suggests that he moved to Upsettlington near Ladykirk during or before May 1733. The parish records give the following information about his children.

Name	Date of Birth			Parish
William	15th October	1728	(ref. 733/1)	Coldstream
Margaret	28th April	1730	(ref. 733/1)	Coldstream
Mary	5th July	1731	(ref. 733/1)	Coldstream
John	20th May	1733	(ref. 746/1)	Ladykirk
George	3rd Sept.	1734	(ref. 746/1)	Ladykirk
Thomas	21st April	1736	(ref. 746/1)	Ladykirk
James	10th Sept.	1737	(ref. 746/1)	Ladykirk

The occasion of his move to Upsettlington coincides with, and was probably caused by, the trouble he had with the Kirk authorities because of his pamphleteering. This started in 1732 and is amply recorded in the Kirk records of the time. As mentioned in Chapter Five of this thesis, Dudgeon's earliest known pamphlet attacked Robert Wallace in terms that were probably offensive to the Kirk authorities. But it seems to have been ignored by them because of its anonymity (also the lack of a printer's name). But his next pamphlet, entitled *The State of the Moral World Considered* and published the next year in Edinburgh, had 'by W.D.' in the title page and, as a result, this work was the occasion of his being arraigned firstly before the Kirk Session of Coldstream and then before the Presbytery of Chirnside in 1732. The events are recorded in full in the relevant minute books to be found in the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh.

On May 30th, 1732, the Presbytery of Chirnside, on hearing 'a flagrant report' about Dudgeon having published his pamphlet, ordered John Pow to summon Dudgeon before the Kirk Session of Coldstream, and ask whether he be the author or not. He answered that he was there not to answer questions 'but if any Person have any Crime to lay to his Charge he demands a Lybel [a written accusation] and which he will Answer' and he made a formal 'Protest' against the irregularity of their proceedings.

On June 27th, he was 'compeared' before the Presbytery and gave the same answer except that he apologised if he gave any offence by his protest. It was at this point that George Home (David Hume's uncle) and James Landreth were sent out to

'deal with him'. They returned and said they couldn't get Dudgeon to acknowledge authorship.

On July 25th, the Presbytery appointed a committee of seven to draw up a 'lybel' against Dudgeon. Though John Pow was a member of the committee, George Home was not a member. The 'lybel' was produced at the next meeting on August 29th. They brought two charges against him concerning his 'errors' in interpreting Christian doctrine.

> I. You deny, and destroy, all Distinction and Difference between Moral Good and Evil, Or else you make God the Author of Sin as [when] you maintain: This Evil then is no other but what necessarily ariseth from the Imperfection of Creatures, And is Imperfection, which can't properly be called Evil or Sin, being inseparable in some Degree from all created beings &c. To the Same Purpose is what you say Page 14 nigh the End, Page 17 nigh the End and Page 18. Line 18.
>
> II. In direct Contradiction to the whole of the Holy Scriptures you deny the Punishments of another Life and that God punishes Men for Sin in this Life Yea, that Man is Accountable when Page 12 lin. 22 & 23 You draw this Conclusion from your own Principles which cuts off all Accountableness and Positive Punishment. According to you what we read of the Destruction of the old World by the Flood and of Sodom by fire, is either false or no Positive Punishment. But how little you regard the Holy Scriptures is plain from Page 29 lin. 11 where you call them only the Cry of Many. By which and many other gross Errors you have given great offence and ought to be Prosecuted with the highest Censures of the Church.[23]

On receiving these charges, Dudgeon sent the Presbytery a letter in which he wrote that 'I absolutely refuse that I ever did, or do, maintain the said Errors either in or out of a Pamphlet.' The letter was recorded in full in the minutes of the September 26th meeting, and after due consideration the Presbytery formally judged him **'contumacious** in refusing either to confess or deny the first Article of the Lybel or his having published or caused publish that Pamphlet'.

Dudgeon was summoned before the October 31st meeting and he handed over another letter which served as his answer. He then wrote that being busy with the harvest when he received the 'lybel' he did not consider fully the article relating to 'accountableness'. He denied that man is accountable in having freewill to act contrary to the will of God but affirmed that 'man is accountable and punishable for acting contrary to the Divine Precepts of our Saviour.'

At the next meeting on December 26th 1732, a lengthy petition from Dudgeon was read out in which he defended himself as a practising Christian and cited the support of scripture for his views. The Presbytery responded by voting to examine witnesses and gave Dudgeon a list of twelve of them to be called on March 30th 1733. At the latter meeting, yet another petition from Dudgeon was read out and the examination of witnesses proceeded. They all denied knowing for certain whether or not Dudgeon wrote the said pamphlet. On April 3rd, the most potential damaging witness was heard, namely, the Rev. John Pow. Despite having read the manuscript in Dudgeon's own house, Pow stated that it was not in Dudgeon's handwriting as far as he could tell. He said that he told Dudgeon of the danger of having it published, that he had heard Dudgeon argue both for and against the principles in the pamphlet, and that he did not remember him speaking 'of affixing the initial letters of his name', nor did he know of Dudgeon or his family 'selling or disposing any Copies of that Pamphlet'. Even Pow's testimony proved not to be clear-cut in pointing the finger at Dudgeon.

On April 18th, Dudgeon's appeal against the 'contumacy' decision of the Presbytery was heard before the Synod of the Merse and Teviotdale in Kelso. He

appeared there with 'Mr Archibald Murray Advocate for the said William Dudgeon'. The Synod decided that Dudgeon was not **contumacious** as he had attended the Presbytery 'in Obedience to their several citations'. It therefore absolved him from 'the Sentence of the Presbyterie finding him contumacious, and from all Censure that the aforesaid Contumacie may inferr'. In a blatant piece of buck-passing, the Synod 'leaves it to the Presbyterie to go on in the Process till they bring it to a final Issue according to the Rules of this Church'. Dudgeon reacted to this decision by appealing from the Synod to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which was to meet in May in Edinburgh.

The decision of the Synod did not go down well with the Presbytery of Chirnside. It was due to hear further witnesses on April 24th but there is no mention at all of Dudgeon in the minutes of that meeting. Then on the next meeting on May 29th 1733, the Presbytery is informed that on May 15th, the General Assembly had referred Dudgeon's petition to its Commission 'to do therein as they see cause'. The Presbytery apparently decided that matters had been taken out of their hands and, presumably with considerable relief, 'thereupon sisted [stopped] all further procedure on the said affair'. The matter kept on being referred back to the Commission in the General Assemblies of 1734, 1735, and 1736, and then disappeared from the records. By then the Assembly had enough dissension to contend with in its Professors of Divinity (John Simson at Glasgow and Archibald Campbell at St. Andrews) and its Ministers (the Secessionists, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine and their adherents).

Dudgeon's death is recorded in the General Evening Post as follows:

> Jany 28. 1742/3. This day died of a consumption at Upsetlington near Berwick on Tweed, aged 37, William Dudgeon Esq; a gentleman of great genius, and extraordinary accomplishments.

APPENDIX M

THOMAS REID'S

MINUTES OF A PHILOSOPHICAL CLUB 1736

Aberdeen University Library Ms 2131/6/I/17

[1] Jan 12 What Things in the Course of Nature we may reasonably ascribe to the continual influence & operation of God or other active powerful and Invisible beings under him.

That the preservation of Creatures in Being is owing to his continual Influence — Probable but beyond our Faculties absolutly to Determine.

The Laws of Nature which are not accountable by Mechanism {owing} to be ascribed to the same cause such as Gravity Attraction & Cohesion of the Parts of Matter Magnetism Electricity Elasticity & the Like.

The Animal Œconomy requires a Constant Supply of {Motion from Some External Cause}: force to carry on its Motion. Other instances of a Continual Influence — In Voluntary Motion — Generation — Animalcular Hypothesis not probable — Instincts of Brutes στογρη,[1] Migration of Birds. Their Nests Education of their Young, feeding, so Various in Different Tribes & so Uniform in the same Habits — Memory — Dispositions and Affections, The necessity of a continual Divine Influence to preserve these. In God we Live move & have our Being.

Concerning the Divine Government

Whether the Creating of Moral Agents does not include a right to Govern them? — They are Subject to a certain Law by their Natures — This the Divine Law — Which Must be Enforced by Rewards and Punishments — Every Being has a right to Exercise its faculties when none are harmed or prejudiced thereby, Exercise of the Moral Attributes of God Not hurtful to Creatures but on the Contrary — Our Obligation to Obedience founded on our Natures and Dispositions.— Difficulties in the Divine Government — Blessings of Some Kinds dispenced both to Good and Bad — Other Kinds Not — Necessity and Usefulness of General Laws.

[2] Jan 19 Duration, Eternity, Succession of Ideas &c

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1 η στοργη - 'love, affection, the natural affection of parents and children' - *Liddell & Scott.* Cf. Reid's chapter, 'Of the Particular Benevolent Affections', in *Reid's Works,* (ed. Hamilton), p.560b, where Hamilton refers to this word in a footnote.

The sigma, tau (στ) at the beginning of the word are indistinct in Reid's manuscript and may be taken for a delta (δ), as has been done in interpreting another instance of the word in Reid's works:

> It is the duty of the parent to rear, educate and protect their children, but even this done only from principles of Virtue, I am afraid that in the greatest number, we would find it neglected, to prevent this, we find implanted in every breast a natural affection, a[στοργη], as the Greeks called it.
>
> *Thomas Reid's Lectures on Natural Theology (1780)* - (Transcribed and edited by E.H. Duncan - University Press of America, 1981), p.115.

The editor has used the word 'δοργη' in his text and in an endnote states: 'My experts have been unable to decide just what this Greek word could be.'

Jan 26 Concerning the Several Principles of human nature.

The Nature of Man considered as made up of Instincts Senses and Desires. — This first a propensity to some certain thing or action without any previous Knowledge — Instances of this — The Second is a Power of feeling either Happiness or its Contrary on the Application of Certain things or actions to the Sense — These divided into outward & Inward — The former More Numerous than is commonly Imagined an Emuneration Attempted. Inward Senses — very numerous — an Enumeration of them — Desires and Propensions to Objects Supposed known — these for the most part have Sensations corresponding to them — An Instance of a Desire without a Sensation corresponding to it viz the Desire of fame even tho we Should be Annihilated — Desire not always attended with Anxiety or Uneasiness as Mr Locke would have it v.g. A Being void of Misery and really happy may desire an increase of its happiness — Desires possibly in the Deity — Reflections on Mr Hutchesons treatise on the Passions — He Ommits Self love in the enumeration of the Passions — A Sensation not taken Notice of By him or any other viz that temper of Mind occasioned by a Disorder of the Animal Frame that uneasiness unaptness for thought and restlessness in hazy weather and Easterly Winds & its Contrary — This may be called Good or Bad Humor — Melancholy. The Sensation occasioned by {Melancholy} taking Opium.

Feb 4 Of Liberty

The Several Schemes of Liberty Proposed — The fatalists either Suppose that the Mind is Determined either by the greatest apparent Good or by the strongest present Desire or Uneasiness - the Strongest Desires not always raised by the greatest apparent good Mr Lock of this Opinion. — Both these Schemes make one[s] actions necessary and us unaccountable — Or else they lead us into an impossible Series. Remorse impossible on the Principles of Fatality — The [3] Actual Existence of Which Shews we are perswaded that we are the Authors of our own Actions — A Suspicion that we have no higher Idea of a Cause properly so called but what we gather from our willing an Action — The Allowing a Power of Deliberation Destroys Necessity — Mr Leibnitz Scheme considered. Liberty Consists in a Power of Suspending action or acting Contrary to Desire or Instinct — Right use of Liberty is to obey the Law of our Natures. — Acting from Motives not inconsistent with Liberty — No Virtue without this — Reflections on Bishop Kings Book of the Origin of Evil. Some truth in what he Says on Election and the Pleasures Consequent upon it but not so great as he Supposes. — Difficulties concerning Liberty — Gods Prescience Certain — There can be no contradiction shewn betwixt it & Liberty — Dr Clarkes way of Accounting for the Divine Prescience Lame.

Feb 9 Self love & Benevolence

[4] Definition

The perceptions powers and faculties of the mind seem to be the same in kind in all the Individuals of the human race, but in degree they differ so widely or that all the variety of Characters & abilities among men seems owing onely to this difference. To the same is owing the difference between {the same} (a) man at one time & the same man at another time. The internal Senses particularly those of beauty & Virtue differ extreamly in their degree of acuteness in the same person at different times. Desires differ no less in their vehemence and strength. Our Intellectual powers have sometimes such a vigour as that we seem to have the perfect command both of our words and Ideas. What we would say & the manner we would say it in does voluntarily

present itself to us. Ideas & words croud upon our minds and push themselves into our view, at other times we must pump and Squeeze & beat our brows and can hardly find any thing after all. Every Man then has his own Character and Complexion of Mind which is his ordinary State. The Same Man at Different times has Ebbings & Flowings in his Character or Complexion which are the different States or Habits of his Mind. So then That Temperament of the perceptions Desires & powers of the Soul which is ordinary to a Man I call Complexion Character or Constitution of Mind. That which is occasional I call State or Habit of the mind.

Queries

1 {Is not Every Character} Are not the Ingredients in Every Character & in every State of Mind the Same onely differing in Quantity or degree.

2 Does not every Man bring into the World with him the seeds of all these Ingredients but some seeds stronger & more vigorous than others. Which Stronger Seeds, {are the} where there is no Culture thrive after[?] the weaker without Culture ly dead or are overstept by the Stronger. And thus a pure Natural Character is formed of which there {are} (may be) great variety.

3 May not {the seeds} Culture improve the weaker Seeds & weaken the Stronger so as to form a Character not onely different from but the reverse of the pure Natural one.

4 Are not the Seeds of Nature much improved or weakened by habit of body Education Example Instruction Practice Reflection & many other ways some whereof are in our Power & others not.

5 Are not the Seeds of Nature or Ingredients of Character often weakened or improved without any such Means, perhaps by Divine or Diabolical Influence or by {means[?]} (ways) altogether unknown to us and out of our power.

6 May there not be imaginary mixtures of the Ingredients of Nature which tho they make (an imaginary) Character yet make no true or Natural one. There seems to be a certain Symmetry & harmony of parts in Characters of Natures making I mean in Characters that do naturally exist. If a painter should pick features from different faces and put them all into one. I apprehend there would be something in it unlike the Work of Nature. Tho each part taken by it Self be Natural Yet all together want the Symmetry of parts, which gives Unity to the whole. Is not the Case the Same in Characters?

7 Is not a quick Sense of this Symmetry or Unity, a most Necessary Qualification either in an Author or Critick in Poetry or the Plastick Arts?

[5] Aphorisms Of Truth Sincerity.

1 Nothing can be Contrary to truth and Sincerity in the largest Sense of these words but what is done with a design to Deceive that is to bring about in the mind of another {a wrong Judgment or Conception of things} (an opinion or perswasion or belief which we know to be false.)

2. There are two ways {of Deceiving 1 when whereby we judge of things and two methods of Deception answering to these 1} whereby opinion belief or perswasion are wrought in us {and two ways of Deception answering to these} 1 We form opinions from the appearances of things themselves 2 from the testimony of others. The first we may call assent upon Evidence the 2 Assent upon testimony.

3 There are two ways of Deceiving answering to these 1 By ordering things so as that they make a false appearance to him whom we would deceive, or 2 when we testify what we know to be false to those that trust us. The first may be called Sleight Stratagem the 2^d falshood Lying.

4 The first may be used with enemies or even with others whom we are at liberty to treat as weak head Strong or unreasonable men.

5 Assent upon Testimony seems to be quite different in its kind from that which is found upon evidence. There seems to be a natural Disposition in us to believe what one assures us to be true. And this perhaps we always do till we have been deceived and learn Caution by experience yet it is Certain that villains confest have often imposed on the wisest (& most cautious) men by bold assertions accompanied with an air of Sincerity. Men Seem to have a Natural inclination to Speak as they think & to believe what they are told and much as they have to benevolence & Gratitude {or}

6 Society consists in the Mutual Communication of Sentiments and affections which cannot be without Trust.

7 All falshood & Lying is a breach of trust and dissolves the fundamental tye of Society.

8 Falshood & Lying seems to be condemned & disaproved by our Moral Sense as much as malice or ingratitude.

9 If lying is believed to be lawfull in any Case no man has reason to believe another unless he is sure that he has none of these considerations to move him to ly which make it Lawfull.

10 If the inconveniencys of allowing falshood in any case are upon the whole greater **[than]** the inconveniencys of adhering inviolably to truth. the latter ought undoubtedly to be chosen.

11 Tho the allowing falshood in some cases were convenient upon the whole for the benefit of Mankind yet if falsehood is condemned by our Moral Sense as really as malice it should never be chosen.

<u>[6]</u> Of the Principles of Action

By our faculty of Judging we can perceive the truth of propositions or the fitness of means to promote ends. But this faculty can never incline us to any one Action. It is a power meerly passive and tho we had it in such perfection as to perceive all the relations of things we behoved nevertheless to remain eternally in a State of inactivity and could neither be inclined nor obliged to any kind of action without some other kinds of Powers. Instincts & desires (onely) do immediately prompt us to action. {Sensations mediately by the intervention of the Understanding. Thus the pleasure one has in Musick may make him Study the Art that he may have the means always at hand of procuring himself this pleasure.} Instincts seem designed to Supply the {Place[?]} (defects) of Reason & Experience in Infants and brutes, and there are even Some instincts to be found in grown persons. Instincts Senses and Desires the really distinct principles in their kind, yet when they have the same object are often confounded & have the same name given them. Most desires if not all are terminate upon that which gratifyes Some Sense. and the sense and desire go often by the same name. thus the desire of {action} (force[?]) & the pleasure one takes in it are both called Ambition. but more frequently the former. Lust {signifies} (includes) an instinct a desire & Sensation but it is most commonly used to signify the Desire. Anger likewise includes all the three and The Senses cannot be called Principles of action because they are meerly passive. (Some) Desires are calm Some violent. Desires here are taken in the

most general Sense so as to include every propension to any thing or action or aversation from it which is accompanied with the knowledge of what we desire. Instinct is a blind propension. Instincts & desires may be called the primary principles of action. Hope & Fear {grief & Joy} The Secondary because these do suppose desire or aversion.

The perception of Moral Turpitude and Goodness in actions or persons or which is the Same thing the disapprobation of Some & the approbation of others is a kind of Sensation entirely different from all others and is natural and original to us. without this we could not possibly be moral Agents or capable of virtue and vice. There appears to be no contradiction in conceiving the faculty of Judging in the highest degree the Affections of Selflove Benevolence Gratitude pity & a thousand others {without this Moral Sense} in a being that is not endued with this moral Sense. but such being could be no moral Agent nor capable of virtue or vice.

[7] Of the Different States of the Intellectual Powers of the Mind

There is no man but is sensible that at some times his Memory is more ready & his discerning more acute than at other times. I find particularly that, discoursing for some (time) on a Subject or on different Subjects with Men of parts, debating points freely, especially if at the Same time I am in Good health & good humor & have a brisk Circulation in my Blood, does very much quicken My Intellectual powers, and Stirrs my Ideas So that they rise more easily in my Mind for some time after. I believe one that would be a pleader should dispute or plead almost every day.

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