

# The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy: the response of the Scottish Enlightenment to Bernard Mandeville

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PhD, The University of Edinburgh, 2002



## Abstract

My dissertation deals with eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy and political economy, particularly their discussion of sociability. My dissertation draws attention to what I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy in Scottish social thought, and presents an aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment thought as a critical response to Bernard Mandeville's paradoxical thesis, 'private vices, public benefits'.

My dissertation first traces how Mandeville tried to show that the wealth of a modern commercial society was generated only from such vices as pride, vanity and ambition and that wealth and virtue were therefore contradictory each other. I present how Mandeville made his arguments concerning government and economic policies, such as a highly mercantilist policy of aiming at a favourable trade balance, based on his paradoxical thesis, 'private vices, public benefits'.

My dissertation next tries to present Francis Hutcheson's moral and political theories as his criticism of Mandeville. I emphasise that Hutcheson's moral theory argued that human nature was not vicious as Mandeville had argued, but was capable of approving moral virtue in benevolence and guaranteeing the moral neutrality of generating wealth. I then focus on Hutcheson's political theory of duty, and present it as seeking the way of achieving both wealth and virtue by fulfilling the two sets of duties: the moral duty of being virtuous and the economic duty of being prosperous.

My dissertation then traces how David Hume shifted the controversy from the issues concerning the moral legitimacy of human nature and commercial opulence towards disputes of words. I examine how Hume's moral theory argued that whatever is useful to public benefits could not be called 'vices' but good and that human nature was capable of forming such true moral ideas as justice, public interests, political authority and industry in view of their utility as the standard of morals. I present Hume's political and economic theory as aiming at the refinement of taste and seeking to purge party rages from commerce so as to let the industry of private interests form the moderate ideas of public interests and political authority and pursue maximum utility.

My dissertation finally examines how Adam Smith resolved the controversy by showing that human nature could approve moral virtue in propriety, not in utility as Hume had argued. I present Smith's general theory of morals as attempting to show that wealth could be generated in a morally neutral manner because human nature was self-judgmental enough to understand the propriety, not merely the utility, of such human passions as ambition. I then emphasise that Smith's economic theory was his alternative policy proposal to Mandeville's favourable trade balance policy, based on his distinctive theory of taste, advocating a free trade policy and stressing the roles of legislators as enabling private interests to contribute to public benefits.

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several funding bodies having supported my research at the University of Edinburgh: the British Government for offering Overseas Research Studentship; the University of Edinburgh for offering Shaw MacFie Lang Fellowship; the Japanese Government for supplying stipends for doctoral research. Other benefactors having helped my study at higher education are: Eitetsu Foundation; former Sakura Bank (by now merged into a larger financial institution); Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan; Japan Securities Studentship Foundation, to all of which my thanks also go.

My foremost thanks with gratitude are to Dr Nicholas Phillipson, my research supervisor at the Department of History, the University of Edinburgh, who has been inspiring and warmly encouraging my research at every stage throughout my happy Edinburgh years. My mere intuitive speculation on Scottish Enlightenment thought would no doubt have never been shaped into an academically plausible form without his orientation. My thanks also go to Professor Harry Dickinson, my second research supervisor at the Department of History, the University of Edinburgh; Professor Susan Manning, the internal examiner, at the Department of English Literature, the University of Edinburgh; Professor Vivienne Brown, the external examiner, head of the Department of Economics, Open University, for their precious comments on my thesis.

Thanks of another kind more akin to friendship also go to my aunt and French scholar Yoko Furuya; and to Professor Michio Morishima at the London School of Economics and Mrs Yoko Morishima; Atila Amaral Brillhante at University College London; my colleague Miss Atsuko Becchaku at the University of Edinburgh; Tsutomu Sakashita in Osaka, Japan; Yuxi Luan at Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan; Hirofumi Tominaga at the University of Kobe in Japan; Vincent Lim Mao Quan in Singapore; Mr John Baldwin and Mrs Vivien Baldwin in Edinburgh.

## **Declaration of authorship**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has been composed by myself.

## List of abbreviations

- Characteristicks* Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (London, 1714); ed. J. M. Robertson (Indianapolis, 1964).
- FB* Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (1714; 2nd edn., 1728); ed. F. B. Kaye (Oxford, 1924).
- BOHD* Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* (1725); ed. P. Kivy (The Hague, 1973).
- MGE* Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil* (1725); in *British Moralists*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1897).
- Laughter* Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections Upon Laughter, and the Remarks Upon "The Fable of the Bees"*, originally published in *The Dublin Journal*, 1725; finally collected under the title, Glasgow, 1750; ed. P. Kivy (The Hague, 1973).
- Passions* Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728); ed. Andrew Ward (Manchester, 1999).
- MS* Francis Hutcheson, *Illustrations on Moral Sense* (1728), in *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, ed. Andrew Ward (Manchester, 1999).
- System* Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (Glasgow, 1755).
- Meditations* Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius*, translated by Francis Hutcheson (Glasgow, 1742).
- THN* David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40); eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford, 2000).

- Essays* David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary* (1777); ed. Eugene F. Miller, Indianapolis (1985).
- TMS* Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759); eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, as vol. I of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1976).
- WN* Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776); eds. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, as vol. II of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1976).
- EPS* Adam Smith, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (1795); eds. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce, as vol. III of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1983).
- LJ* Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1762-63 and 1766); eds. R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael, and L. J. Stein, as vol. V of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1978).

## Introduction

### 1. John Pocock's problematique

My dissertation deals with eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy, particularly its discussion of sociability. The question of sociability is of central importance to the social thought of the Scottish Enlightenment. In this dissertation, my arguments are presented as an attempt to answer some of the questions John Pocock (1983) set out in his paper 'Cambridge paradigms and Scotch philosophers: a study of the relations between the civic humanist and the civil jurisprudential interpretation of eighteenth-century social thought'. His paper concerns the interpretation of the Scottish Enlightenment, and its social thought in particular, in relation to his idea of civic humanism. Pocock's problematique is still useful for any attempt to interpret the Scottish Enlightenment's theory of sociability, in addition to the fact that answers, or even an overall attempt to answer his problematique, are now overdue.

The civic humanist framework in the interpretation of early modern political and social thought, and of Scottish historical and economic theory in the eighteenth century in particular, had been applied by particularising the ways in which it was used as a mode of criticism against the Whig oligarchy.<sup>1</sup> This Whig regime, whose pillars were credit, patronage and office, is perceived as having facilitated commerce by ruling through the creation of a system of aristocratic dependencies, though modern and commercial in their character rather than feudal or medieval. The expansion of trade was therefore associated with the growth of oligarchy, or the growth of dependency-turned-corruption. It is argued that the critics of the emerging Whig regime spoke in terms of an opposition between virtue and commerce and assailed the regime's dependencies in the name of independence. The ideal of the

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<sup>1</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 236.



ancient Greco-Roman classical citizen was asserted as being the head of his household, proprietor of his arms and direct participant in his own government. It was also to be the master of property in its natural form as land for cultivation, discharging its classical function of endowing him with the independence necessary for citizenship, self-mastery and virtue, depicted in Harringtonian or neo-Harringtonian terms. His morality was to be neo-Stoic and his politics, in principle, republican as independent individuals desiring to affirm their virtue against corruption. The Whig regime, with its patronage, credit and commerce in the service of parliamentary monarchy, was represented as corrupt in its modern commercial shape.<sup>2</sup>

The problem Pocock has described concerns the alternatives to the civic humanist framework offered by Scottish thought in the eighteenth century. They are posed particularly by two distinctive theses: the first presents Scottish political economy as an effective alternative to the nostalgia of agrarian republicanism; the second is a counter-thesis which argues that Scottish thought evolved mainly outside the doctrines and language of the civic humanist tradition.

The first thesis treats Scottish thought as responding to the civic humanist challenge by the massive and rapid adoption of an Addisonian Whig social culture, decisively shifting the locus of virtue from the civic to the commercial, from the political and military to the economic, cultural and social.<sup>3</sup> This thesis presents the Scottish Enlightenment as directed mainly against the ancients, replacing the *polis* by politeness, the *oikos* by the 'oeconomy', the classical political citizen of austere virtue by the social and transactional image of man as the diversification and refinement of the passions.<sup>4</sup>

The second thesis, on the other hand, presents Scottish social thought in the eighteenth century as evolving within the tradition of natural jurisprudence which Scotland shared more with adjacent Europe than with England. It argues that Scotsmen encountered natural law, the law of nations and the civil law, not merely as

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<sup>2</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 236-7. Harrington however seems not to fit well in Pocock's framework of English republican thinking: see Jonathan Scott, pp. 139-63.

<sup>3</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 242-3.

a part of professional training but as the principle of organising moral, social and political philosophy. According to this approach, the Scots based their understanding of the principles of sociability on a study of the principles of human nature and on polite letters. Seen from this perspective, the study of law was more closely associated with moral and epistemological philosophy than with the study of civic virtue. It incorporated the Stoic, Shaftesburian, or Humean theories of perception, ideas, sympathies, passions and even the newly important discourse of taste and politeness and turned these into a science of man and society founded on the universality of human nature in its geographical and historical diversity.<sup>5</sup> Pocock argued that the strength of this natural jurisprudential interpretation lies in showing that Scottish thought and culture were not reducible merely to a debate between Court and Country, or between Whig commercialism and Tory or Old Whig neo-classicism. They must be seen as operating within its own conditioning structures including provincialism within the Union. Even among civic humanists, their understandings of an active social morality might have been comfortably integrated with the moralist and jurisprudential traditions of Scotland.<sup>6</sup>

With the theoretical differentiation above, Pocock summed up his problematique as follows: if the vocabulary and language of civic humanism, together with others derived from it, were to exist side-by-side with the language of natural jurisprudence, the relationship between them needed to be determined.<sup>7</sup>

Pocock has suggested that, since the civic humanist scheme presents the ideal of republican virtue as a weapon that could be used to attack the Whig regime, it presents Scottish social theory as the latter's philosophical defence. He concluded that their delineation of commercial society was therefore not a criticism of aristocracy but a vindication of it in its Whig shape.<sup>8</sup> This interpretation presumes that Scottish social theory was identical to the ideological basis of Whig policies. My dissertation tries to disprove the case, by showing that Scottish social theory was primarily and fundamentally formulated against modern Court Whiggism. I seek to

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<sup>5</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 246-7.

<sup>6</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 247.

<sup>7</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 249-50.

<sup>8</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 243.

show that Polite Whiggism, from which Scottish social theory seems to have evolved, should be distinguished from modern Court Whiggism.

Pocock's interpretation has led him to a further question: whether it is possible to regard commercial ideology as having at any period triumphed over the ideology of civic patriotism and virtue, or as having driven it from the field. His proposition has been that the civic and commercial ideologies were struggling with one another at least down to the era of Smith and Millar, and that it is doubtful whether there had been a moment at which the former may be said to have disappeared entirely.<sup>9</sup> My dissertation suggests that the question itself does not necessarily lead to a crucial interpretation of Scottish social theory. I argue that Scottish social theory seems to have evolved from Polite Whig ideology which already contained some elements from Country Whiggism. I also argue that the Scots version of polite ideology also made use of Country elements whenever it was necessary and useful for their refutation of Court Whig ideology and policy.

Pocock has also suggested some possible strategies to use in confronting the problem: the first is to assume that the civic humanist and jurisprudential languages entailed distinct and opposing sets of ideological values, and that the relation between them therefore existed in a state of ideological tension.<sup>10</sup> My dissertation indicates that this seems not to be the case: Polite Whiggism and Scottish social theory were constructed primarily against Court Whiggism, by extracting ideas useful and effective for their purpose from both civic humanist or Country Whiggism and the natural law tradition.

Pocock's other proposal is based on Quentin Skinner's argument of Ciceronian and Senecan modes of humanism of the sixteenth century. Skinner argues that the tension between virtue and commerce had already been a great deal reduced by then. Pocock assumes that it is highly possible that these or their successors figured in eighteenth-century ideologies of sociability, sensibility and politeness, serving to reduce the stark opposition between citizenship and culture.<sup>11</sup> I argue that the non-existence of an antithesis between civic humanism and natural

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<sup>9</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 244.

<sup>10</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 250.

jurisprudence however does not necessarily guarantee the putative existence of a synthesis of them: there would be the possibility of a mere juxtaposition of them in a vast area in-between those two extreme cases. I seek to show that Scottish social theorists made use of both civic and jurisprudential idioms primarily for their criticism and refutation of Court Whig ideology and policy, most notably expressed in Mandeville, who had been neither Stoic nor Ciceronian unlike those Polite or Scots Whigs. I criticise Pocock's conception of a new 'Adam Smith problem': that is, 'How did the complex synthesis of "moral sentiment" with "the wealth of nations" evolve or degenerate into the science of classical economics'?<sup>12</sup> In view of this new 'Adam Smith problem', Pocock has suggested that 'A common strategy is to invoke Mandeville and suppose that this vindication of egotism and greed somehow unmasks commercial society and prefigures its reductionism. Yet this hardly seems convincing in the light of Hume's, Smith's and Robertson's labours to demonstrate the proliferation and diversification of personality under the conditions of commercial growth, an enterprise in which they incorporated all that Mandeville had had to say'.<sup>13</sup> My dissertation stresses that Smith's theory of 'moral sentiments' was his assault on Mandeville's ethical theory, and 'the wealth of nations' (Mandeville's term) was his consequent alternative policy proposal and conclusion in place of Mandeville's, following his own refutation of the ethical foundation of Mandeville's system.

## 2. The Scottish Enlightenment as a criticism of Bernard Mandeville

To tackle these questions and assumptions, I turn, first of all, to a general assumption made by the authors of both frameworks discussed above. They argue that the Scottish theory of sociability was rooted in Bernard Mandeville's theory of passions, of the sentiments which the passions give rise to, and of the relationship between

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<sup>11</sup> Quentin Skinner, Vol. I, Chapters 8 and 9; Pocock (1983), pp. 250-1.

<sup>12</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 251.

'private' and 'public' in his *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (London, 1714). My dissertation first offers a critique of this view, and seeks to show that eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy was partly a critical response to Mandeville's theory of passions, sentiments and sociability in what I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. The controversy was launched by Mandeville with his graphic paradox that such 'private vices' as pride, vanity and ambition alone could contribute to 'public benefits'. The debate revolved around the question of how to direct the acquisitive passions driving men into commercial relations into supplying their needs so as to establish sustainable sociability in the newly-emerging commercial society in eighteenth-century Britain.

My dissertation traces how Mandeville, seeking to show that private vice is a necessary evil for prosperity, emphasised the passion of pride as the most beneficial quality to sociability and the most necessary for producing wealth. We then look at Mandeville's argument that the task of government in establishing sociability in a commercial society is to turn private vices into public benefits and happiness. I emphasise Mandeville's economic policy that statecraft should aim at this by keeping a favourable trade balance in foreign trade. We also consider how Mandeville attempted to show that curing such vices would lead us out of prosperity into poverty and that it was impossible to attempt for both riches and moral virtues at the same time.

My dissertation stresses that, in Scottish moral philosophy, as ethics were discussed in respect to the question of 'vices', so was political economy in respect to that of 'benefits', and hence the question of sociability was by virtue of that argued in both ethics and political economy. My dissertation, above all, seeks to show that the Scottish theory of beauty and taste played a much more crucial role than has been assumed in shaping the theory of sociability as a critical response to Mandeville's arguments. An examination of the Scottish theory of beauty and taste offers us a new picture of the theory of sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment which will be rather different from Pocock's picture. I examine how and for what purposes the

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<sup>13</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 252.

Scottish language of sociability employs such technical terms as 'beauty', 'virtue' and 'wealth' as well as 'private', 'public', 'vice' and 'benefit'.

The theory of beauty and taste in Scottish moral philosophy has been lost sight of by historians.<sup>14</sup> It was with the theory of beauty and taste taken from Shaftesbury that Francis Hutcheson initiated his scholarly publications with *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725). In due course, the theory of beauty and taste was by and large adopted by and in many ways stimulated such Scots writers as Lord Kames,<sup>15</sup> Alexander Gerard,<sup>16</sup> James Beattie,<sup>17</sup> Hugh Blair,<sup>18</sup> Thomas Reid,<sup>19</sup> Archibald Alison,<sup>20</sup> and more notably, as we shall see, David Hume and Adam Smith.<sup>21</sup> It was the theory of beauty and taste that shaped, though by no means exclusively, Smith's theory of sociability as his criticism of Mandeville.

My dissertation therefore traces how Hutcheson criticised Mandeville and developed what can be called a language of beauty, which was derived from Shaftesbury, who had been the target of Mandeville. In this, Hutcheson showed that sentiments and even the love of wealth are shaped by the 'sense of beauty' and 'taste' as well as the 'moral sense' or 'moral taste'. In Hutcheson's language, therefore, sentiments are neither virtuous nor vicious in themselves, but are a means of creating resources with which men can contribute to public benefits and virtuous purposes. We look at how Hutcheson argued that the idea of beauty could be formed

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<sup>14</sup> As for the nature of aesthetics in the Enlightenment, R. G. Saisselin (1992) is particularly useful. Charles L. Griswold (1999) surveys the importance of Smith's concept of beauty in his writings. See Griswold, pp. 311-54, especially, pp. 330-5. As I argue below, 'taste' was a far more crucial concept in Smith than that of 'beauty'.

<sup>15</sup> Lord Kames (1762).

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Gerard (1759).

<sup>17</sup> James Beattie (1776).

<sup>18</sup> Hugh Blair (1783).

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Reid (1785).

<sup>20</sup> Archibald Alison (1790).

<sup>21</sup> In his *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, Dugald Stewart reflected that taste had been treated as one of the most important intellectual powers and 'an ultimate fact in the constitution of the human mind'. At the end of the Scottish Enlightenment, Dugald Stewart still thought that 'the extensive influence it [taste] possesses in such a state of society as ours, not only over the pursuits of those who devote themselves to the study of Literature and of the Fine Arts, but over the enjoyments of every individual who partakes of the general refinement of manners, might justify the allotment of a separate article to an illustration of the intellectual process by which it is formed' (*Outline*, 86). See Dugald Stewart (1854), p. 32.

indifferently to self-interest, rather than relatively to self-interest or vicious motives as Mandeville had argued, due to our sense of beauty. I emphasise that Hutcheson's objective in his moral theory was to prove that morals were not solely motivated by self-interest or vicious motives, but inferred from benevolence, due to our moral sense. I also stress that Hutcheson's ideas of the sense of beauty and the moral sense were presented for the sake of guaranteeing the moral neutrality of generating wealth against Mandeville's arguments.

My dissertation then presents Hutcheson's *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) as classifying duties into two categories: a duty of being virtuous; and a duty of being prosperous. We see that Hutcheson argued that both kinds of duty would enable us to be virtuous as well as wealthy at the same time through the moral sense. I emphasise that this compatibility of virtuous and wealthy was the hinge in the *System* of his criticism of Mandeville, who had argued that these two were contradictory each other.

Having examined Hutcheson, my dissertation then traces the theories of David Hume. Hume is generally assumed to be a friendly but sceptical critic of Hutcheson. My dissertation will emphasise that Hume owed to Hutcheson more than is realised, in terms of the theory of beauty and taste which was important in shaping the moral sentiments and sociability. My dissertation, however, seeks to show that Hume developed his criticism of Mandeville in a different way from Hutcheson. I discuss Hume's differences from Hutcheson in the context of Hume's theories of property, justice and the pursuit of wealth, and I emphasise that Hume was able to demonstrate on different grounds to Hutcheson that the pursuit of wealth shaped by the sense of beauty and utility can generate virtue. My dissertation stresses that a theory of taste also played a crucial role in Hume's system of moral philosophy. We look at how Hume was to follow Hutcheson's criticism of Mandevillian terminology and tried to organise the controversy as disputes of words. I present how Hume's moral theory argued that whatever was useful to public benefits could not be called 'vices' but good. I also trace how Hume endeavoured to show that human nature was capable of forming such true moral ideas as justice, public interests, political authority and industry in view of their utility as the standard of morals, against

Mandeville's rhetoric for destroying the distinction between morals and vices. I stress that Hume's concept of sympathy, in place of Hutcheson's idea of moral sense, was the foundational formula of sociability as well as the principle on which he relied to refute Mandeville's sceptical theory of morality. I also emphasise that, in the context of 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, introducing usefulness or utility as the standard of morals was how Hume sought to solve Mandeville's paradox, by presenting the concept as guaranteeing the moral neutrality of generating wealth. We look at Hume's arguments that our idea of beauty introduces utility as the basis for our sociability without selfishness, because our sympathy with others who possess beautiful objects and who enjoy their utility excites our love not as a selfish passion, let alone as a vicious passion.

Moving on to Hume's political and economic theory, my dissertation focuses on his emphasis on the role of taste for us to make use of our natural abilities for production. I argue that a refined taste was regarded by Hume as vital for moderation and the control of the passions and political zealotry so as to redirect passions and their capacity for industry and public interest. I emphasise that Hume presented a refined taste as capable of purging factional party rage which would otherwise jeopardise prosperity, and of enabling us to form more moderate moral ideas of government and public interest in the light of their utility as the standard of morals.

My dissertation finally seeks to prove that, in the context of the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, Adam Smith's revolution, if it may be called so, lies in his attempt to solve Mandeville's paradox by destroying and offering alternatives to Humean utilitarian thinking. Smith is presented as a moral philosopher who shared Hutcheson's and Hume's desire to respond to Mandeville's theory of sociability, who shared their belief that a true theory of sociability takes account of our taste, but who also developed his criticism of both Hutcheson and Hume. Smith's critical responses to Hutcheson and Hume allowed him to develop the theory of sociability which was needed to sustain his understanding of the workings of the market in a fully commercial society in eighteenth-century Britain. We trace Smith's arguments that virtue primarily consists in propriety, but only secondarily in utility, and that



propriety is recommended to us by moral sentiments, but only secondarily by our sense of utility. My dissertation, above all, emphasises that Smith's theory of beauty and taste was a more specific yet comprehensive attack on Mandeville's theory of passions, sentiments and sociability, which had argued that wealth was pursued by private vices alone such as pride, vanity and ambition. I present how Smith argued that the sense of beauty was not primarily concerned with the utility brought about by the beauty but originated from the pleasure of seeing the order, harmony and economy of organisation or arrangement. I also focus on Smith's argument that the propriety in generating wealth is recommended to us by the sense of beauty, because the sense of beauty propels ambition toward pursuing wealth as something proper in itself rather than merely useful.

My dissertation stresses that Smith's idea of the roles of taste in his *Wealth of Nations* was to approve and vindicate a modern commercial society as the product of the morally neutral rather than vicious motives. I present Smith's arguments that taste works as a customary sentiment which is not primarily affected by the thought or idea of utility, as Hume had argued, but extends even to the common people. We see that Smith thought of taste as an internalised faculty which is indispensable to the motivation of vanity and ambition, which are complex sentiments beyond the reach of utility calculation, in stimulating the demand for finer products and in guaranteeing the moral neutrality of generating wealth.

My dissertation concludes that Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was his alternative policy proposal to Mandevillian statecraft and the favourable trade balance policy. I argue that Smith concluded that policies aimed at gaining a favourable trade balance, that is, regulations upon commerce, were jeopardising the wealth of nations, and that a policy of free trade should therefore replace them, so that the wealth of nations can be maximised. I emphasise that the role of legislators in Smith was to turn 'private interest' into the public interest by exploiting the advantage of the division of labour and letting private interests unintentionally work for public benefits.

### 3. The types of Whiggism revisited

To be fair to Pocock, however, I acknowledge that he has further elaborated his view on Whiggism since the 1983 essay and presented a more up-to-date picture of Whiggism in his paper, 'The varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform: A history of ideology and discourse' (1985).<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, I first reconsider the Whig context of the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy by referring to Pocock (1985) and others' works.

Harry Dickinson summarises that Whiggism can be characterised by its justification of property and sociability. Philosophically and ideologically, Whiggism defended, justified and promoted the interests and privileges of the property-owning class.<sup>23</sup> This gave rise to its credibility with the characteristic commitment to the problem of sociability, or a balance between liberty (self-interests) and order (public benefits).<sup>24</sup> To achieve a balance between liberty and order was their fundamental problem. They distinguished liberty from license, and the observance of order from the arbitrary tyranny. They contended that there could be no legitimate order without liberty, and there could be no real liberty without law. They believed that a balance between liberty and order could best be achieved by support for the rule of law achieved by the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89, the Revolution Settlement of 1689, the Hanoverian Succession of 1714, the sovereignty of King-in-Parliament, an aristocratic and hierarchical social order and a limited, mixed constitutional monarchy.<sup>25</sup>

But there were considerable varieties among Whigs about how to interpret sociability, the conflicting interests between liberty and order, and how best to achieve these basic aims and principles. Their conflicting point was over the relative importance of the two fundamental objectives of Whiggism: the protection of

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<sup>22</sup> J. G. A. Pocock (1985). Yet his questions and assumptions in the 1983 essay are still to be addressed, as Pocock himself has done little either in the essay above or in any other of his works.

<sup>23</sup> H. T. Dickinson (1981), p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Dickinson (1981), pp. 29-30.

<sup>25</sup> Dickinson (1981), pp. 31 and 42. More in detail for their views on human nature, on the natural sociability, on the origins of civil society, civil government and its ends and objectives, and on the means by which they could be achieved, see Dickinson (1981), pp. 31-45.

individual liberty and the maintenance of public order. More liberal Whigs such as Court Whigs rated the rights and liberty of the subjects higher than public order, parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law. More conservative Whigs such as Country Whigs reversed these priorities. Under the early Hanoverians, Court Whigs defended Crown patronage for the smooth working of a mixed government and a balanced constitution. Country Whigs feared that the overly-increasing Crown patronage was now threatening the parliamentary sovereignty for the sake of the interests of the government.<sup>26</sup> The term 'Country' or 'Court' therefore identifies an attitude toward government rather than an ideological affiliation. Country Whigs tended to draw the line of marking off the impermissible in the name of public order and emphasise abstract constitutional theory as prescriptions. Court Whigs held power or supported those in power, and sought to ease and smooth the process of government, preferring convenience for administrations to strictures.<sup>27</sup>

### a. Country Whigs

Country or opposition Whigs advocated liberty guarded by country gentlemen, who they thought were therefore the most beneficial to the public order, and opposed to luxury, consumption, wealth or, in their idiom, 'private vices', in an age of advancing commercial civilisation. Their now somewhat out-of-date civic idiom was first naturalised by James Harrington in the 1650s and later revised by Henry Neville, a neo-Harringtonian, in the 1670s. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, grew up in this circle and he was close to Robert Molesworth and Andrew Fletcher in the 1690s. They defined liberty in terms of the virtuous participation of citizen-like subjects in their government for public order, rather than for individual freedom, premised on a personal autonomy backed by the possession of freehold land and the bearing of arms. They construed the landed gentlemen in

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<sup>26</sup> Dickinson (1981), p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> Reed Browning (1982), p. 11. For the division between Court and Country Whigs, see also William Speck (1981), pp. 63-5.

the country as the receptacle of civic virtue.<sup>28</sup>

Country Whigs perceived England as populated with autonomous landed gentlemen who were the embodiments and guardians of English virtue and liberty, whose life combined the personalities of rentier, agriculturalist, businessman, politician, officeholder, and member of local community. They juxtaposed Country to Court and regarded the latter as the primary source of corruption.<sup>29</sup> Civic writers condemned the pursuit of wealth and its consumption as luxury, and instead validated frugality.<sup>30</sup> Their concern with virtue and liberty modulated into a concern with manners. Independence, public-mindedness, martial strength, frugality and simplicity were the manners conducive to liberty and of the Machiavellian classical citizen. By contrast, self-indulgent, private, soft, sensuous, expensive and excessive ways of living were threats to economic and moral independence and public order. The cultures they admired as free and virtuous were Sparta, early Rome and Gothic Europe, as opposed to Court policies and the actual direction of modern history.<sup>31</sup>

Among Country Whigs, radical republicans like James Harrington contended that the Ancient Constitution failed to maintain the balance of powers and that a new separation and balance of powers based on a genuine republic must be sought instead.<sup>32</sup> They were Whigs in opposition and employed arguments about the independence of legislative representatives from the executive and of property from patronage, which led to the separation of powers and to republicanism.<sup>33</sup>

The more conservative Whigs among them expressed their position in terms of the Ancient Constitution, emphasising the continuity of the constitution and legitimising the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 as a return to the constitution after the digression of James II's reign.<sup>34</sup> Their criticism of executive patronage, public credit and standing armies was seen as originating in the republicanism of the interregnum and even the Renaissance.<sup>35</sup> They justified the Revolution as an act

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<sup>28</sup> Lawrence E. Klein (1994), p. 126.

<sup>29</sup> Klein, pp. 143-4.

<sup>30</sup> Klein, p. 145.

<sup>31</sup> Klein, pp. 145-6.

<sup>32</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 221. See also E. G. Hundert (1994), pp. 9-13.

<sup>33</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 222.

<sup>34</sup> Klein, p. 125.

<sup>35</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 216-7.

carried out within the structure of the Ancient Constitution, designed to preserve it and legitimated by it, though their arguments were neither complete nor satisfactory.<sup>36</sup> These Ancient Constitutionalist believed that the Revolution had established or restored the mixed monarchy, part republican, part monarchical, in Britain. They believed that property and religion would be secured in a perfect equilibrium of political authority between king, lords and commons. They held that such a constitution was rational, conforming to the classical ideals of a free constitution, restating and perfecting the Ancient Constitution of England in the gothic past.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, even more radical Country Whigs of 1688-89 were theorists of social contract and natural rights, presenting the Revolution as an opportunity for constitutional revision.<sup>38</sup> These Ancient Constitutionalist claimed that frequent or annual parliaments were rooted in medieval or Anglo-Saxon antiquity, so that to deny them by prorogation or dissolution was to deny Englishmen their constitutional inheritance or birthright.<sup>39</sup> Some held that the Revolution was a dissolution of the regime if not the government, an election of a prince by the people and an affirmation of a right to do the same again when necessary.<sup>40</sup> They held that the Revolution had been a restatement of the classic principles of limited monarchies in the feudal era in which they supposed that the power of kings had been held in check by virtuous barons. They looked back to the heroic days of the Civil War and the republican experiment that followed.<sup>41</sup>

Among them, John Locke went even further in claiming that the royal prerogative must be exercised solely for the public order. He argued that it is entrusted to the monarch to be so exercised; that if it is betrayed, such as in the calling and dissolving of parliaments, that trust is dissolved and with it the government. He contended that the people may judge whether this has happened and, by drawing the sword, proclaim that the monarch has put himself in a state of

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<sup>36</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 228. Pocock called them 'the ruling Whigs'.

<sup>37</sup> Nicholas Phillipson (1989), p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Klein, p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 226.

<sup>40</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 228.

<sup>41</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 21.

war with them.<sup>42</sup> Pocock argues that Locke was a First Whig who never became a Radical Whig or a significant contributor to their claim to 'frequent parliaments regularly chosen by the people'. This Radical Whig claim had been made on grounds of both natural and historical right in the manifestos of the army, the Levellers and the Good Old Cause.<sup>43</sup> Shaftesbury thought that Locke's work was morally subversive unless carried further in the direction of sociability.<sup>44</sup> Shaftesbury therefore thought that Radical Country Whigs had overemphasised public order over individual liberty, and hence lost the sense of balance between liberty and order in their quest for how best to achieve sociability. The more radical their arguments became, therefore, the more stress was put on public order over individual liberty.

## b. Polite Whigs

Polite Whigs approved individual liberty more than Country Whigs did over public order. Polite Whigs, who advocated politeness for cultivating sociability and against enthusiasm, included Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and a group of literary figures who were party journalists and cultivated essayists, catering to a new urban public of the readers of periodicals.<sup>45</sup> Their ideal of politeness had first appeared in the Restoration, forming a part of the campaign to replace prophetic by sociable religiosity. Their polemic against enthusiasm, which was the scars of the Puritan interregnum, was to continue throughout the eighteenth century, and the concepts of politeness, manners and taste were to remain the integral parts of their strategy.<sup>46</sup> Their 'Augustan' ethos of politeness in the rise of commerce was an active civilising force: by observation, conversation and cultivation, men and women are brought to their awareness of sociability as a highly serious practical morality.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 227.

<sup>43</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 229. Pocock called the Radical Whigs before the Revolution 'the True Whigs'.

<sup>44</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 230.

<sup>45</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 235-6.

<sup>46</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 236.

<sup>47</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 236.

In the Polite Whig view, politeness had aesthetic value against religious and moral enthusiasm. They advocated politeness as a remedy for either the fanaticism of public order or that of individual liberty. Instead of Daniel Defoe's appeals to pragmatism and profit for the sake of individual liberty, Addison's and Steele's *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays preached polite manners and morals against the vagaries of opinion and the fury of faction. They presented manners and morals as useful and virtuous codes of conduct in a modern commercial society, for ordinary citizens to learn and cultivate friendship and conversation as the best way of getting rid of their eccentricity and enthusiasm, in such forums as the coffee-house, the tavern and the tea-table.<sup>48</sup> Their essays were extensively reprinted and imitated in London and the provincial cities and towns, exerting a profound influence on a provincial culture that was being transformed by commerce.<sup>49</sup>

Addison and Steele adapted classical moral codes to modern culture, by extolling the virtues of Cicero's *De Officiis* which had taught men to be honest citizens, temperate and prudent in relationships. They also adapted the formal courtly rules of modern French *politesse* to the easier, more informal English urban life. Like Shaftesbury after 1700s, they believed that true politeness could cultivate our naturally benevolent feelings by improving imperfect taste, manners and zealotry.<sup>50</sup> 'Taste' and 'politeness' were key concepts effectively employed by the new Unionist elite, who attached themselves to such themes as moderns against ancients, and imperial against republican values, in answering the challenge of civic and republican virtue. They began to charge against Country Whigs their fanaticism of moral virtue no less than of religion, just as religious enthusiasts flung themselves into the fantasies of faith for lack of taste and polite discrimination.<sup>51</sup>

Polite Whigs addressed the problem of sociability most directly by developing an elaborate language of manners which showed how propriety, reinforced by the cultivation of taste and politeness, could encourage prudence as a virtue necessary in the daily life of a free commercial polity. Their enterprise was

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<sup>48</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 27.

<sup>49</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 25-6.

<sup>50</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 27.

<sup>51</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 241 and 243.

explicitly Ciceronian and designed to explore the resources of conversation as an instrument for generating a reformation of manners. They attempted to show how cultivating the arts of conversation could reform the morals and manners of citizens whose behaviour was shaped by the imagination and passions, especially that of pride, and to advocate the pursuit of virtue and decency as the path to a true understanding of virtue.<sup>52</sup> An essential element of Spectatorial propriety was politeness as the skill of cultivating discretion and virtue, in which propriety became its vehicle and was to curb narrow views of self-interest and develop sociability, or more extensive views of public interest and morality.<sup>53</sup> To them, politeness was a matter of cultivating the arts, sciences and a love of beauty by means of conversations which allowed the citizens to receive the truths of aesthetics and sociability. In this sense, it was politeness which underwrote Spectatorial ethics and the language of propriety on which their moderate defence of the Glorious Revolution depended.<sup>54</sup>

Polite Whiggism also stood for what was called 'the Town', the leisured urban environment spreading north and west from the old centres of Westminster and the City of London following the growth of a parliamentary aristocracy and the rentier class. The Town was meant to replace the court as the meeting point of country and city: without the urbane and suburban culture they taught, the country would be unable to exercise their liberty.<sup>55</sup> They were journalists at Grub Street who wanted to create a public opinion that would transcend political party and be more rational, more moderate, more in tune with common sense than that of the party propagandists. They sought to control the fragmentation of opinion, to attack religious and political zealotry, to bring about a reformation of manners and to secure the constitution.<sup>56</sup> Amidst the expansion of trade and increasingly complex commercial relationships, they saw that manners began to be softened and passions refined, and that 'conversation', 'intercourse' and 'commerce' could be used synonymously to denote economic, cultural or social transaction. To them,

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<sup>52</sup> Nicholas Phillipson (1993), p. 308.

<sup>53</sup> Phillipson (1993), pp. 309-10.

<sup>54</sup> Phillipson (1993), p. 310.

<sup>55</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 237.



commerce became the mother of politeness and of a post-classical alternative ideal of liberty, in which property was protected by authority and law, as was more appropriate in the commercial stage of history. They took up Addisonian politeness as a substitute for classical republican patriotism, in the names of 'taste and science'.<sup>57</sup>

Polite Whiggism was formed in the latter years of William III's reign in which party conflict was sharpened by the fears of oligarchy and by the conduct of a war which was turning Britain into an imperial polity. Grub Street writers of a newly-established and rapidly expanding periodical press revived the classic debate about divine right, resistance and passive obedience, and brought them into polemical focus.<sup>58</sup> The revival of natural law contributed to form Polite Whigs such as Addison and Shaftesbury.<sup>59</sup> The natural jurisprudence of Grotius and Pufendorf was therefore the source of their theories of limited resistance which were to be free of radical, exclusionist implications. They were also to be useful to Whigs and Tories alike who sought a more moderate defence of the Revolution of 1688 and the Revolution Settlement of 1689.<sup>60</sup> Addison and Steele addressed the problem of creating a language of interest which would reinforce the increasingly shaky authority of the language of rights on which the legitimacy of the Revolution depended.<sup>61</sup> In sum, Polite Whigs endeavoured to develop the language of politeness and taste in order to establish a balance between the protection of individual liberty and the maintenance of public order in their quest for attaining sociability.

### c. Court Whigs

While Country Whigs identified liberty with civic virtue, and Polite Whigs with

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<sup>56</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 24.

<sup>57</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 241 and 243.

<sup>58</sup> Phillipson (1993), p. 304.

<sup>59</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 219. Although Pocock selected Shaftesbury into this section of Whig, rather than the Country Whig, see also p. 226. Polite Whigs are also called 'Independent Whigs'. See p. 234.

<sup>60</sup> Phillipson (1993), p. 303.

<sup>61</sup> Phillipson (1993), p. 306.

manners and propriety, Court Whigs identified it with wealth, enlightenment and progress.<sup>62</sup> They advocated that sociability in a modern commercial society rested on the protection of individual liberty and material progress that they perceived relied hugely upon individual enterprises.

The general and fundamental axiom of Court Whiggism is the anti-utopian, more pragmatic and more realist view of politics. As Whigs in power, they declared that the perfect regime was beyond the capacity of human wisdom, and depicted their Country opponents, unjustifiably, as utopian, in order to damage the credibility of opposition assaults.<sup>63</sup>

Court Whig thinkers defined the nature of the lawful government in Britain by arguing that the British constitution, which specified lawfulness in a British context, was a product of the Restoration of 1660 and the Glorious Revolution.<sup>64</sup> They consequently magnified the monarch as a symbol of the regime.<sup>65</sup> They preached 'rational' obedience, in place of the Tory doctrine of passive obedience, in order to justify both their legacy of the Glorious Revolution and their current regime. They argued that the duty of Whigs at the time of the Revolution had been resistance because James II had assailed individual liberties, whereas their present duty was obedience because their government was now lawful.<sup>66</sup>

Court Whig clergy linked the glorification of the monarch to the superintendence of God. Court Whigs referred to the Bible, called kings 'vice-regents of God' and taught that the obedience to authority was commanded by God and conscience.<sup>67</sup>

According to J. H. Plumb's description of the 'Whig oligarchy', the Court Whig party cemented their regime after a period of turbulent politics through 1714. They established such highly specific measures as the Septennial Act of 1716, the Peerage Bill of 1719 and other measures that aristocratic patronage wielders

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<sup>62</sup> Klein, p. 128. See also Pocock (1985), p. 231.

<sup>63</sup> Browning, pp. 176-7.

<sup>64</sup> Browning, pp. 196-7.

<sup>65</sup> Browning, pp. 198-9.

<sup>66</sup> Browning, pp. 199-200.

<sup>67</sup> Browning, pp. 198-200.

maintained until after 1760.<sup>68</sup>

This Whig oligarchy was founded on the management of a system of public finance by a class of great landed proprietors.<sup>69</sup> Contrary to Country Whigs, who argued for the separation of powers and for republicanism, they employed arguments leading to the sovereignty of Parliament, as Whigs who desired to protect individual liberty.<sup>70</sup> Court Whiggism was a defence of urban life and politics not as an ancient *polis* but as a financial and military regime based on a decisive abandonment of the classical and Gothic ideal of the citizen as armed proprietor. They replaced it with an individual, leisured and acquisitive man paying for a standing army to defend his liberty. In this sense, they called for an understanding of commercial modernity based on the protection of individual liberty.<sup>71</sup>

The Whig 'oligarchy' or 'supremacy' was the effective domination of a party exploiting a parliament so far sovereign that it had prolonged its own term without elections in counties and even in boroughs. They effectively disfranchised the borough electorates who had been strengthened, involved and enlarged by the gentry in the preceding century.<sup>72</sup> The regime was consolidated and typified by Sir Robert Walpole.<sup>73</sup> This is why it is sometimes argued 'that absolute monarchy reached its height in England during the reign of George II'.<sup>74</sup> They employed a modernist, commercial and polite language in defence of the Whig aristocratic order, against discontented groups in county and borough society who chose to employ republican, classical and nostalgic language.<sup>75</sup> They argued that liberty was not ancient but modern, that the past was feudal, not free, that the constitution contained no principles to which a return to more frequent parliament could be made.<sup>76</sup>

Defoe, for example, contended that liberty appeared only when individual

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<sup>68</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 216 and 239. J. H. Plumb (1967).

<sup>69</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 218.

<sup>70</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 221-2.

<sup>71</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 235.

<sup>72</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 239-40.

<sup>73</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 240.

<sup>74</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 244. The Court Whig administrations commanded British affairs from 1721 to 1756: Robert Walpole from 1721 to 1742, Henry Pelham from 1743 to 1754, and his brother Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle, from 1754 to 1756. See Browning, pp. 10-2.

<sup>75</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 246.

proprietors emerged from feudal subordination and acquired through trade control over their own goods. Because the oligarchy acquired the control of the executive and the power to exercise parliamentary sovereignty, the defence of oligarchy and sovereignty went hand-in-hand with that of individual liberty and consequently a commercial society.<sup>77</sup> Defoe was a satirist on behalf of Court Whiggery, who celebrated pragmatism and a willingness to get on with the ordinary life without absurd and dangerous prejudices, alerting his readers to the pleasures and profits of commerce.<sup>78</sup>

Historically-minded ministerial propagandists like Lord Hervey did not believe that there had been a free constitution of any sort before the Revolution of 1688-89. In his view, the earlier history of England had been nothing other than the story of a procession of tyrants, whether regal, baronial or ecclesiastical, who had ruled without any regard to individual liberty.<sup>79</sup>

As Pocock has shown, the foundations of this Whig oligarchy lay in the military, financial and political structures that had been created in William III's reign to enable Britain to take part in major wars with France.<sup>80</sup> The militia controversy of 1698 therefore makes the distinction between Court Whiggism and Country Whiggism clear. The most prominent theme of Country Whig polemic was the reduction of William III's army. Fletcher held forth on the vices of a standing army and the virtues of a militia.<sup>81</sup> In his *Discourse of Government in Relation to Militias*, Fletcher found the Harringtonian ideal of armed civic virtue in a Gothic and medieval past, entailing specialisation in the rise of commerce and a loss of liberty due to standing armies exploiting and corrupting the freeholders.<sup>82</sup> In an Anglo-Irish context, Molesworth in Dublin had published his *Account of Denmark* and William Molyneux was about to publish his *Case of Ireland's Being Bound by Acts of*

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<sup>76</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 246-7. As for the Court Whig view of the root of liberty as in the Glorious Revolution, see also Browning, pp. 196-199.

<sup>77</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 247.

<sup>78</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 25.

<sup>79</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 84-5.

<sup>80</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 230.

<sup>81</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 230.

<sup>82</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 231.

*Parliament in England*.<sup>83</sup> As their discontent acquired in its growth a sympathy from Jacobite and High Church resentments, the categories Country Whig and Tory began to influence each other.<sup>84</sup> Civic moralists thus saw in the division of labour, and the standing army in particular, a threat to personal integrity, public order and their ideal of self-sufficiency.

In the militia debate, Country Whigs held that the Glorious Revolution had been a lost opportunity which failed to prevent a resurgence of royal power. They believed that since 1696 the Court Whig aristocratic junta had destroyed the mixed constitution by their advocacy of standing armies instead of militias, infrequent elections after 1716, the monied interest and the later corruption of Walpole's oligarchic government.<sup>85</sup>

To their Country Whig critics, however, Court Whigs defended that their government had to be strong enough to preserve the Hanoverian Succession and the Church from the Jacobites, to protect the empire and overseas trade from foreign threats, and to mediate among diverse conflicting interests in modern Britain. They claimed that the roots of liberty were modern, and not ancient, in the Glorious Revolution, and not in the feudal past.<sup>86</sup> Defoe, a Court Whig, reflected that liberty was modern and could only be found in a commercial society, where individuals profited by wealth and lost no liberty due to standing armies so long as they retained parliamentary control of the military budgets.<sup>87</sup> Defoe defended commercial opulence, employing Mandeville's phrase, 'private vices, public benefits'.<sup>88</sup>

In Court Whiggism, the growth of standing armies was linked with that of a 'monied interest' of investors in the public fund.<sup>89</sup> The Whig monied interest was an alliance of urban dissent with great financial and military interests. Anticipating the Whig oligarchy and the imperial parliamentarism of the Hanoverian reigns, the

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<sup>83</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 230.

<sup>84</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 232. For a convergence of Tories and Country Whigs as the united opposition to Court Whigs, see also Browning, pp. 21-30.

<sup>85</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 21-2.

<sup>86</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 231, and Phillipson (1989), p. 24.

<sup>88</sup> Hundert, p. 3. For the influence of Mandeville's paradox on Defoe, see John Robert Moore (1975), pp. 122-4.

<sup>89</sup> Pocock (1985), pp. 231-2.

regime conducted the War of the Spanish Succession and other wars against France, presenting itself as a system of public credit and national debt. The regime accordingly maintained an increasingly expanding professional standing army and parliamentary patronage, which waged and won wars abroad but was to pay for itself by imposing land tax on the Country Whig-minded freeholders and gentry,<sup>90</sup> even though many exercise taxes equally hit Court Whig-minded mercantile interests and most purchasers. This monied interest was a speculative society typified less by merchants than by the stockbrokers and investors in public bonds, whose property therefore consisted not of land or goods but of paper promises to repay in an undefined future, seen by Country Whigs as unprecedentedly dangerous and unstable.<sup>91</sup>

#### d. Scottish Whigs

Addison and Steele clearly played a crucial part in the formation of the language of politeness in Scotland and eventually of Scottish Whiggism. Before the Seven Years' War, the most popular polite institution was the club modelled on Addison's and Steele's Spectator Club. These clubs in the taverns and coffee-houses of countless provincial cities and towns were small and semiformal institutions. They drew their members from the middling ranks of these local communities, transmitting the polite culture of the metropolis to the provinces, altering it to local tastes and supporting the sense of the identity of increasingly prosperous provincial communities.<sup>92</sup> These clubs can also be seen as instruments designed to establish a framework of sociable relationships by the principles of friendship and sympathy, providing their members with a sense of moral autonomy, as an alternative to the *polis* in this world of provincial morality.

The *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays were reprinted in Edinburgh immediately

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<sup>90</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 234. See also Hundert, pp. 11-3.

<sup>91</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 235.

<sup>92</sup> Nicholas Phillipson (1983), p. 198. For the eighteenth-century clubs and societies in provincial towns, see Peter Clark (1984); (1986); (1988) and (2000).

after they had been published in London, and discussed and imitated throughout the eighteenth century by local moralists, and thus the language of politeness took deep root in Scotland. Polite societies proliferated in the City of Edinburgh throughout the century, creating a complex network of sympathetic relationships.<sup>93</sup>

The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707 had absorbed the Scottish political institutions into that of the English state. The cultural problems which had resulted from the Union were being tackled by Edinburgh's taverns, coffee-houses and salons which had begun to create a refined club culture. They were designed to generate politeness, eradicate religious and political factions, civilise the country and strengthen its independence by reforming its constitution, its commerce and its culture.<sup>94</sup>

The Union also originated in an urgent Scottish desire to participate in the economic growth triggered by the new financial and military power of England. It also ensured that the managers of patronage both controlled the politics of Scotland and enlarged the ministerial interest at Westminster, taking the form of an incorporation of the two parliaments.<sup>95</sup> From Polite Whigs in England, Scots Whigs were to take over the role of identifying liberty with commercial culture in their search for freedom and virtue that could grow in the post-union political dependency.<sup>96</sup> Scottish Whigs advocated the furtherance of sociability, politeness, taste, conversation and moral and economic improvement. What made them distinctively Scottish, unlike Polite Whigs, was their emphasis on moral and economic improvement. With no Tory landed interest in Scotland and an image of the Scottish past as more barbarous than it probably had been, their belief that politeness and commerce went together was to form an understanding of economic growth immediately superimposable upon feudal and hunter-warrior stages of society.<sup>97</sup>

Scottish Whiggism also absorbed a Scottish tradition of study in Roman civil law and direct it towards the science of jurisprudence in terms of manners, morals

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<sup>93</sup> Phillipson (1983), p. 199.

<sup>94</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 6-7.

<sup>95</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 237.

<sup>96</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 249.

and sociability.<sup>98</sup> Scottish Whigs were going to develop a powerful series of theories concerning the history of sociability, the psychological basis of morals and aesthetics, and eventually, political economy. These together formed an ideological vindication of the Union and took the form of what Duncan Forbes has called 'scientific Whiggism'.<sup>99</sup>

Along with other Scottish Whigs, Hume adopted Addisonian and Shaftesburian Polite Whiggism. After having recognised the unpopularity of his *Treatise* among the readership because of its overly-metaphysical style, Hume opted for the polite Addisonian essay-style as an intelligent mode of moral discourse, capable of attracting a sophisticated salon and coffee-house readership along with intellectuals.<sup>100</sup> Hume deployed a language of politeness which had been developed in London in response to the political and religious enthusiasm of the early eighteenth century, for his attempts to encourage contemporaries to reflect on the opinions and ideas of interests as citizens.<sup>101</sup>

Hume began his *Essays Moral and Political* (1742) at the end of the Walpolian era for an urban, gregarious and independent-minded readership, by showing that his philosophy could be easily recast in the Addisonian language of politeness. He emphasised the importance of friendship and conversation in shaping sociability, which had been the central concerns of polite moralists.<sup>102</sup>

In a typically Polite Whig manner, Hume tried to introduce a balance in a debate between the protection of individual liberty and the maintenance of public order by evaluating as well as criticising both Court and Country Whig ideas. Hume agreed with Bolingbroke that the British constitution had changed since 1688, because the wealth and power of the court had increased, upsetting the original balance of the constitution in the process. But Hume also agreed with Court Whigs, on the other hand, that the wealth and influence of Parliament had also grown, turning Britain into an elective monarchy or even a republic. Hume's question was,

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<sup>97</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 238.

<sup>98</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 238.

<sup>99</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 239.

<sup>100</sup> Phillipson (1983), pp. 179-80.

<sup>101</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 53-5.



however, whether liberty was indeed in danger. Hume was going to argue that the increase in the wealth and power of both Crown and Commons had brought about a new balance of power between Crown and Parliament, a different balance from any that had existed before.<sup>103</sup>

Hume however was to be a critic as well as an advocate of Addisonian and Shaftesburian politeness. Hume was to be a critic of English politeness. For, the improvement of manners advocated by the polite moralists of Whiggism, showed no apparent reason why, for instance, polite coffee-house and tea-table conversation should not lead to the creation of new political bigotry instead of an intended coterie of good citizens.<sup>104</sup> While the scepticism of Polite Whiggism gave Hume a critical mind, Scotland was his vantage point for exploring the contradictions and confusions of contemporary English polite culture with a degree of detachment from English politics.<sup>105</sup> Hume was to be a sceptical Whig in the sense that he saw that ideologies, or rival conceptions of the constitution, were always dangerous and menacing in contemporary political culture.<sup>106</sup> In his science of politics, Hume's sceptic pointed out the disadvantages and dangers in political institutions necessary to sustain liberty, which 'vulgar Whiggism' glorified as the unique perfection of the English constitution. Hume shed light on the corrupt Court Whig management of Parliament; an absence of discretionary powers in their executive ever greater than any other form of government; the easily superstitious and enthusiastic party system including both the Court and the Country.<sup>107</sup>

What Duncan Forbes has called Hume's 'sceptical Whiggism' would oppose the 'vulgar Whiggism' that confused Bourbon absolutism with despotism and upheld the belief in the Ancient Constitution.<sup>108</sup> Hume was to argue that a polite liberty, the freedom of a man to enjoy his property, might be possible under commercial conditions, not only in a Whig parliamentary oligarchy but even in a Bourbon absolute monarchy. Hume in this sense associated liberty with the authority whose

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<sup>103</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 61-2.

<sup>104</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 28.

<sup>105</sup> Phillipson (1989), p. 29.

<sup>106</sup> Phillipson (1989), pp. 18-9.

<sup>107</sup> Duncan Forbes (1975), p. 182.

<sup>108</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 251.

protection it required.<sup>109</sup> In other words, Hume saw no contradiction between Court Whig quest for the protection of liberty and Country Whig quest for the maintenance of public order, and consequently felt no need for their party rages and ideological enthusiasms.

On the other hand, Smith was a 'philosophic Whig',<sup>110</sup> who had adopted a different method and agenda from Hume's sceptical Whiggism. Smith's agenda was to make a case for a philosophic foundation of the unintended consequences of intentional private actions, thereby presenting a philosophic solution to the Mandevillian paradox.

The Humean sceptical Whiggism was not identical to political scepticism in general. As Forbes put it, Hume was a sceptical Whig because he was a political scientist, rather than a political ideologist. In a similar manner, Smith was a philosophic Whig because he was a political 'philosopher'.<sup>111</sup> Their 'scientific', 'sceptical' or 'philosophic' Whiggism was characterised by their applying experimental philosophy to morals and political phenomena. Their vantage point was their cool detachment and impartiality as spectators in, and the residents of, a peripheral nation, towards what Duncan Forbes called 'vulgar' Whiggism, by which he actually meant both Country and Court Whigs in London.<sup>112</sup> Hume and Smith were sceptical of the Radical Whig theory of political obligation, or their contract theory of government, because it had been not only false in reasoning but also parochial.<sup>113</sup>

As a Scots Whig, Smith rejected the Radical Whig idea of social contract while retaining Hutcheson's classification of rights and duties. Smith also rejected the Country Whig civic treatment of the forms of government, and agrarian laws, in favour of a natural jurist comparative historical treatment of law and government. As a Scots Whig, Smith departed from Hutcheson and, on slightly starker lines than Hume, introduced a four-stages account of the growth of law and government that

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<sup>109</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 250.

<sup>110</sup> I borrow this useful term from Nicholas Phillipson (2000), p. 84.

<sup>111</sup> Forbes, p. 180.

<sup>112</sup> Forbes, p. 180.

<sup>113</sup> Forbes, p. 181.

characterised the historicisation of Scottish social and political thought.<sup>114</sup> While complementing his theory of justice, Smith's four-stages scheme was a useful device to explain sociability, by contrasting the private intentions or aims of individuals with their unintended social or public consequences in its historical setting. It was especially useful to describe sociability in an increasingly characteristic commercial world of impersonal and anonymous interdependencies no longer similar to feudal direct dependency.<sup>115</sup> While Mandeville had presented the doctrine of unintended consequences as a Court Whig defence of commerce, Smith's defence of commercial society and sociability was not ideological but philosophic. For, while Smith showed how the improvements, civility and liberty were associated with commerce, his doctrine of unintended consequences drew attention equally to the defects of commercial civilisation. He paid attention to the detrimental consequences of the division of labour, the weakening defence of rich nations or the serious political dangers posed by extra-parliamentary mercantile pressure groups.<sup>116</sup> Smith's defence of sociability in commercial society was therefore, at the same time, his criticism of an ideological vindication by Court Whigs of commerce for their own interests. Smith's arguments of the unintended public consequences of intended private actions was to show that there was no contradiction between the two fundamental Whig objectives of achieving sociability: the protection of individual liberty and the maintenance of public order. As we shall see below, Smith argued that the former naturally brought about the latter, because the intended private actions of individual liberty could materialise the unintended public consequence of establishing the order of society.

Phillipson argues that the polite social discourses of enlightened Scotland and Scottish Whiggism however were also penetrated by a civic language alongside the language of Addisonian politeness.<sup>117</sup> It was a language which insisted upon the importance of preserving Scottish independence, and a variant of the civic language of virtue and corruption associated with Harrington and the militia controversialists

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<sup>114</sup> Donald Winch (1983), p. 264.

<sup>115</sup> Winch (1983), pp. 264-5.

<sup>116</sup> Winch (1983), pp. 265-6.

<sup>117</sup> Phillipson (1983), pp. 199-200.

of the 1690s.<sup>118</sup> In the process, Scottish Whigs laid the foundations of a new polite language of provincial morality, which was of peculiar interest to those increasingly opulent provincial communities that sprang up in the commercial age.<sup>119</sup>

Scottish Whiggism was therefore mainly evolved from Polite Whiggism but also incorporated some elements from the language of Country Whiggism. Scottish Whigs attempted, in a typically Polite Whig manner, to make a balance between the protection of individual liberty and the maintenance of public order in their theory of sociability. But they stressed Country Whig sentiments in favour of public order more than Court Whig interests in individual liberty in the age of the Court Whig supremacy. This general attitude of Scottish Whigs, more critical of Court Whiggism than of Country Whiggism, is equally applicable to Hutcheson, Hume and Smith in a specific case of the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. Contrary to Pocock's picture, these Scottish moralists appear in the controversy as persistent critics of Court Whig-minded Mandeville.

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<sup>118</sup> Phillipson (1983), p. 200.

<sup>119</sup> Phillipson (1983), p. 202.

## Chapter One

### Needs, passions and sentiments: the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy: I

Eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophers set themselves two main questions for their theory of morals: the nature of morals, and the principle of moral approbation.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I shall argue that these questions were derived directly from a debate about the relationship between 'private vices' and 'public benefits', launched by Bernard Mandeville in 1714. The debate had been concerned with such moral and economic issues as whether the passions and sentiments which encouraged the pursuit of wealth were vicious or morally legitimate. This debate was a decisive battlefield for Scottish argument pertaining to moral sentiments, sociability and taste, and their functions in establishing virtues and the rules of justice as well as in supplying the essentials of life by producing wealth. In terms of ethics, the debate centred on the above two main moral questions in Scotland. As we shall see, Francis Hutcheson was going to argue that morals rested on benevolence, and they were approved by a moral sense. David Hume was going to argue that utility should be the standard of morals, and a refined taste would be able to approve moral virtues in the light of their utility. Adam Smith was going to argue that moral virtues lay in their propriety, and moral sentiments would approve propriety as moral virtues.

What follows is a short sketch of an aspect of the controversy particularly in view of Scottish theory of moral sentiments outlined above, rather than a detailed

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<sup>1</sup> As clearly set out by Francis Hutcheson, *Illustrations on Moral Sense* (1728), in *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, ed. Andrew Ward (Manchester, 1999), p. 107, as well as by Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759); eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, as vol. I of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1976), VII. i. 2, p. 265 (abbreviated as *TMS* below). In both books, the questions appear in their accounts of the history of moral philosophy.

account of early-modern European discourse of the passions as a whole.<sup>2</sup> But it is still helpful for understanding Scottish Enlightenment's concerns and the implications of their arguments.

## 1. Bernard Mandeville

What I call here the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy was to be launched by Bernard Mandeville in 1714, as is graphically set out in *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (first volume, 1714). The debate was going to be intense and prolonged in British moral philosophy throughout the eighteenth century, concerning how to reconcile acquisitive passions driving men into commercial relations and their needs to supply human wants and establish sustainable sociability in the newly-emerging commercial society in Britain. Besides the relevance of the issue of commercial sociability in eighteenth-century Britain, the controversy was stimulated by the very power of Mandeville's style itself. Mandeville expressed his original and unaccustomed understanding of sociability in a commercial age in so forceful yet skilful terms that he could surprise and devastate his readers and set

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<sup>2</sup> I suggest that any overall description of the theory of passions in early modern Europe, regardless of its influence on the Scottish Enlightenment in particular, should include not only British novelists such as Lawrence Sterne, Henry Mackenzie and Jane Austen, but also a fairly large number of French writers from Du Bos and Rousseau to the most enlightened Marquis de Sade. Malcolm Jack, *Corruption and Progress: the Eighteenth-century Debate* (New York, 1989) attempts to describe the general and common features of what he calls the 'corruption debate', concentrating on Bernard Mandeville, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Adam Ferguson. The account analyses the context of the debate, the similarities and differences of the three participants and the influences of the debate in the eighteenth century, though apparently emphasising the influence of civic humanist culture in eighteenth-century European thought. With a different naming of the debate, on the other hand, my thesis concentrates more on the Scottish Enlightenment writers in order to understand the issues of political economy in the debate. Meanwhile, Irwin Primer misleadingly called it 'the Mandeville-Shaftesbury debate'. See Irwin Primer (1975), p. 126-7. John Dwyer, *The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment Culture* (East Linton, 1998) is an ambitious account of what he calls 'The Discourse of the Passions' in the Scottish Enlightenment. Dwyer puts Smith in the context of other Scots writers such as John Millar, Allan Ramsay, James Fordyce and James Macpherson. His argument shows that Smith was not really a typical sentimentalist of his age, for he was more interested in the general tendency of commercial society leading towards justice and self-control, than in the more popular concerns with an extended benevolence and the love towards others. See, for example, pp. 82-4. Dwyer's account shows much of the characteristics and importance of the Scottish discourse of the passions, and Smith's position

them out on a long, tricky intellectual journey of grasping what he had meant. Scots moral philosophers of the next two generations, including Hutcheson, Hume and Smith, could not escape Mandeville's challenge in their endeavours to understand the sociability of human nature.

Mandeville was a Dutch physician born in 1670, who emigrated to England in 1694 and settled in London, where he remained until his death in 1733.<sup>3</sup> Following in his father's footsteps, he practised medicine as a specialist in neurotic and digestive disorders. His concerns for 'passions' would have come from that same speciality, as he was to coin the term 'hypochondriack and hysterick passions' in his medical work, *A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions: in Three Dialogues* (1711). In his most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville came to argue about passions in a way contrary to the contemporary rationalist or deist position. Deists were rationalist in the sense that they believed in natural law as a governing principle of the world, in human reasoning as the way to understand this world, and in observation and experience as the basis for human reasoning and the understanding of this world. According to their theory, human reason was capable of reaching the true knowledge of the divine origin of the world and natural law, and the true ethics of the will of God. To the deists, therefore, there was no conflict between human reason and the truth, man's rational observation and the will of God, private judgement and eternal, universal ethics.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, Mandeville followed the sceptic or moral rigorist approach toward the issue of the relation of private judgement and ethical or religious truth. The sceptics argued that, though religion may offer the truth, human reason was incapable of grasping such universal knowledge. The sceptics were rigorist because they advocated our need to follow the strict ethics of religion since our impotent reason would not allow us to

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with regard to it. In view of Smith's theory of the passions, however, the choice of context might not necessarily be the best for considering Smith's ethical and economic arguments.

<sup>3</sup> Little is known about the details of his life, but see F. B. Kaye, Introduction, in Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, vol. I, ed. F. B. Kaye (Oxford, 1924), pp. xvii-xxx (abbreviated as *FB* below), and Hundert, pp. 2-12. For accounts on the 'radical' Enlightenment in the Hague or Amsterdam in the late-seventeenth century, preceding the 'classical' Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, see Ira O. Wade (1967) and (1971); Margaret C. Jacob (1981), as cited in Roy Porter (1990), pp. 45-6.

<sup>4</sup> Kaye, pp. xxxix-xl.

find true ethics elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> Mandeville applied his moral rigorism or scepticism mainly and extensively to his contemporary discussion about the corrupting effects of luxury upon the human passions, which had been enthusiastically argued by many writers throughout the Augustan age. But it was Mandeville who made the most thorough case in both moral and economic terms. While denouncing the deist view of human reason as capable of reaching the truth, Mandeville at the same time shrewdly adopted and altered the rationalist view of human reason. He presented human reason as still capable of pursuing our own private gain, if not public or universal ethics. Mandeville made his paradox, 'private vices, public benefits', by juxtaposing those two contradictory criteria. On the one hand, he denounced human reason as vicious for its impotence in achieving universal virtue; a transcending of the desires of corrupt human passions or a conquest of self could be attained only by divine grace. Human reason was useful only for calculating and seeking private gain: it was therefore a private vice. On the other hand, he stressed that such a vice was indispensable in stimulating the passions of pride and vanity, producing wealth and happiness, and thereby supplying the essentials of everyday life. 'Private vices', therefore, contributed to 'public benefits'. In his paradox, Mandeville praised from a rationalist point of view what he had denounced according to the sceptic or moral rigorist criterion.<sup>6</sup> In presenting his paradox as such, Mandeville built his argument in three steps: private vice is a necessary evil for prosperity; therefore 'the State's Craft' is required to turn private vices into public benefits; and finally, virtue is useless for, or even harmful to, prosperity.

The first of his claims, that the 'vilest and most hateful qualities' such as the passions of pride and vanity are the most necessary for a flourishing society,<sup>7</sup> is probably the one for which Mandeville was best known in his own age. His idea is strikingly seen, for example, in the following verse:

These [Parasites, Pick-pockets, etc.] were call'd Knaves, but bar the Name,  
The grave Industrious were the same:  
All Trades and Places knew some Cheat,

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<sup>5</sup> Kaye, p. xlii.

<sup>6</sup> The view I present is a development of Kaye's useful account: Kaye, pp. xlvi-lx, li, lvi-lx, cxx-cxxii and cxxv.

<sup>7</sup> *FB*, I, p. 4.



No Calling was without Deceit.<sup>8</sup>

THUS every Part was full of Vice,  
 Yet a whole Mass a Paradise;  
 Flatter'd in Peace, and fear'd in Wars,  
 They were th' Esteem of Foreigners,  
 And lavish of their Wealth and Lives,  
 The Balance of all other Hives.  
 Such were the Blessings of that State;  
 Their Crimes conspir'd to make them Great:  
 And Virtue, who from Politicks  
 Had learn'd a Thousand Cunning Tricks,  
 Was, by their happy Influence,  
 Made Friends with Vice: And ever since,  
 The worst of all the Multitude  
 Did something for the Common Good.<sup>9</sup>

Mandeville opened his case by arguing that the sociability or 'virtue' of industrious good people amounted to no more than making friends by exploiting the vices of others.

Virtue is made Friends with Vice, when industrious good People, who maintain their Families and bring up their Children handsomely, pay Taxes, and are several ways useful Members of the Society, get a Livelihood by something that chiefly depends on, or is very much influenc'd by the Vice of others, without being themselves guilty of, or accessory to them, any otherwise than by way of Trade, as a Druggist may be to Poisoning, or a Sword-Cutler to Blood-shed.

Wine merchants, for example, have to depend on vices such as drunkenness and lavish indulgence, yet they contribute to the prosperity of a city through their trading.<sup>10</sup> The fact that this sociability in commerce was so extensive was seen in that even thieves and robbers contribute to the public prosperity by creating jobs for locksmiths. In delineating this sort of sociability, Mandeville was cautious enough to admit that men were to be judged not by the consequences but by the motives of actions, and to conclude that thieves and robbers should be prosecuted. Yet Mandeville insisted that they still contribute to the public good through commercial sociability, because of their vices.<sup>11</sup>

Underlying Mandeville's claim was his basic idea of man as 'a compound of various Passions'; and it is the passions, not reason, that are the great support of

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<sup>8</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> *FB*, I, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> *FB*, I, p. 85.

<sup>11</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 86-7.

sociability and a flourishing society.<sup>12</sup> The passion of avarice, for instance, possibly a root of evil, is still necessary to the society, because 'it is a Slave to Prodigality'.<sup>13</sup> Prodigality, then, is called 'a noble Sin', as it 'makes the Chimney smoke, and all the Tradesmen smile'.<sup>14</sup> But among all the passions, Mandeville repeatedly emphasised the passion of pride as the most beneficial quality to sociability and the most necessary for producing wealth.

Pride is that Natural Faculty by which every Mortal that has any Understanding over-values, and imagines better Things of himself than any impartial Judge, thoroughly acquainted with all his Qualities and Circumstances, could allow him. We are possess'd of no other Quality so beneficial to Society, and so necessary to render it wealthy and flourishing as this, yet it is that which is most generally detested.<sup>15</sup>

Pride encourages us to dress expensively, for example, because we are, by virtue of sociability amongst strangers, judged by what we appear to be than by what we are.<sup>16</sup> In other words, pride stimulates industry and improvement, without intending them.

... it is this, or at least the consequence of it, that sets the Poor to Work, adds Spurs to Industry, and encourages the skilful Artificer to search after further Improvements.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Grotius, Locke and Shaftesbury, who believed that property had been originally bestowed on communities for their common benefit, Mandeville believed that private vices such as pride were necessary for unintentionally cultivating sociability, driving production and contributing to public benefits.<sup>18</sup> Like Pufendorf, Mandeville presupposed, therefore, the idea of negative community. This is crucial, because the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy following Mandeville through Hutcheson, Hume and Smith was carried, as in the precedent Continental natural jurisprudence, upon the presumption of the world as a negative community in which passions must empower men to acquire sociability and supply needs.<sup>19</sup> After

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<sup>12</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> *FB*, I, p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> *FB*, I, p. 103.

<sup>15</sup> *FB*, I, p. 124.

<sup>16</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 127-8.

<sup>17</sup> *FB*, I, p. 130.

<sup>18</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 125-6.

<sup>19</sup> See also Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (Glasgow, 1755), I, pp. 330-1 (abbreviated as *System* below): 'From what is said we see abundantly, that this earth, and all it

Cicero, the natural jurists and the Jansenists, it was probably Mandeville who made the most enduring case against the argument that men's self-preservation had been possible by the supposed sufficiency of the original property given to men. In Mandeville, on the contrary, it was passions that must have been endowed upon men for their sociability and self-preservation.

The Means by which Nature obliges every Creature continually to stir in this Business of Self-Preservation, are grafted in him, and (in Man) call'd Desires, which either compel him to crave what he thinks will sustain or please him, or command him to avoid what he imagines might displease, hurt or destroy him. These Desires or Passions have all their different Symptoms by which they manifest themselves to those they disturb, and from that Variety of Disturbances have been given them, as has been shewn already in *Pride and Shame*.<sup>20</sup>

With sociability once established, passions then gave rise to pride, envy, avarice and ambition, enlarging desires, multiplying wants and appetites and easily provoking anger, in addition to hunger and lust, which were just as much necessary for self-preservation. The establishment of sociability shifted the role of passions from simply supplying needs toward gratifying greed.

As soon as his Pride has room to play, and Envy, Avarice and Ambition begin to catch hold of him, he is rous'd from his natural Innocence and Stupidity. As his Knowledge increases, his Desires are enlarg'd, and consequently his Wants and Appetites are multiply'd: Hence it must follow, that he will be often cross'd in the Pursuit of them, and meet with abundance more disappointment to stir up his Anger in this than his former Condition, and Man would in a little time become the most hurtful and noxious Creature in the World, if let alone, whenever he could over-power his Adversary, if he had no Mischief to fear but from the Person that anger's him.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, industry was now contrary to contentment, but a thirst for gain and a

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contains, was placed by God in that state the moralists call *negative community*, and not *positive*. The negative is "the state of things not yet in property, but lying open to the occupation of any one." Positive community is the "state of things in which not any individual but a whole society have an undivided property." Goods in this positive community neither any individual member of the society, nor any other, can occupy or dispose of without consent of the whole society, or those who govern it. Now from the preceding reasons 'tis plain, that any man could acquire property, and see his right to acquire any thing he first occupied, without consulting the rest of mankind; and it would be injurious in any other person to hinder him. Thus we need not have recourse to any old conventions or compacts, with Grotius and Puffendorf, in explaining the original of property: nor to any degree or grant of our first parent, with Filmer.

All things fit for human use either yet remain in this negative community, or are in the property of individual men, or of societies'.

<sup>20</sup> *FB*, I, p. 200.

<sup>21</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 205-6.

desire to improve our conditions.<sup>22</sup>

The nature of sociability Mandeville discovered led him into the second main strand of his argument that, considering the important roles of vices, the task of government in establishing sociability in a commercial society is to turn private vices into public benefits and happiness. Mandeville called such a duty 'the State's Craft':

THIS was the State's Craft, that maintain'd  
The Whole of which each Part complain'd:  
This, as in Musick Harmony,  
Made Jarrings in the main agree;  
Parties directly opposite,  
Assist each other, as 'twere for Spight;  
And Temp'rance with Sobriety,  
Serve Drunkenness and Gluttony.<sup>23</sup>

In arguing in this way, Mandeville was taking the sceptic or moral rigorist line of belief that the passions were too strong to be controlled by reason, so any attempt by authority to encourage self-denial would fail. In other words, one passion could only be restrained by exciting another stronger passion: otherwise, sociability would be aborted.<sup>24</sup> Flattery was the key to arousing such countervailing passion while maintaining sociability, and this is what Mandeville thought is the origin of morality.<sup>25</sup> Thus, if skilful politicians invent morality in this way as a contrivance for the ambitious to reap benefit not only from their too eager pursuit of appetites but also from their ease and security, such a 'Foundation of Politicks' would soon secure sociability and bring civilisation by encouraging men to refine their moral judgement.

The first Care therefore of all Governments is by severe Punishments to curb his Anger when it does hurt, and so by increasing his Fears prevent the Mischief it might produce. When various Laws to restrain him from using Force are strictly executed, Self-Preservation must teach him to be peaceable.<sup>26</sup>

Once sociability had been shaped, the passions would redirect our attention from needs and mere self-preservation towards greed and gratification, so the first

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<sup>22</sup> *FB*, I, p. 244.

<sup>23</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 24-5.

<sup>24</sup> *FB*, I, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 42-3.

responsibility of all governments is to curb such passions as anger by punishment, and thereby render self-preservation peaceable.<sup>27</sup> The passion of fear was useful in this respect: if the fear of punishment keeps men's anger under control, it could be deployed for the peace and quiet of society.<sup>28</sup> Politicians therefore must know precisely about the human passions and private appetites in order to turn them into public benefits, by making use of the principle of honour, and thereby increasing men's fear of shame in order to control their passions.

Whoever would civilise Men, and establish them into a Body Politick, must be thoroughly acquainted with all the Passions and Appetites, Strength and Weaknesses of the Frame, and understand how to turn their greatest Frailties to the Advantage of the Publick.<sup>29</sup>

In Mandeville, 'the Principle of Honour' was 'the tye of Society'.

Do but increase Men's Pride, and his fear of Shame will ever be proportion'd to it; for the greater Value a Man sets upon himself, the more Pains he'll take and the greater Hardships he'll undergo to avoid Shame.<sup>30</sup>

Mandeville's scepticism might help to explain why he had no interest in presenting a theory of justice. He thought it was not any law but 'Wisdom in all Governments' that could control vices and passions, because in his view the human passions were too strong for the rules of justice to tame.<sup>31</sup> His brief history and description of brothels in Amsterdam was meant to show how 'the Wise Rulers of that well-order'd City' brought 'Order', 'Prudence and Oeconomy' into that city, by legalising prostitution on the grounds that it would help calm men's passions.<sup>32</sup> Compared with such wisdom, 'the Administration of Justice' is to be so extensive and limitless that it is simply impossible for the purpose of turning private vices into the public good and securing sociability.<sup>33</sup>

Given the nature of commercial sociability and the roles of vices and

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<sup>26</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 46-7.

<sup>27</sup> *FB*, I, p. 206.

<sup>28</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 206-7.

<sup>29</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 208-9.

<sup>30</sup> *FB*, I, p. 218.

<sup>31</sup> *FB*, I, p. 95.

<sup>32</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 96-8.

<sup>33</sup> *FB*, I, p. 98.

statecraft in it, Mandeville added a final attack on the rationalist claim, by showing that curing such vices would lead us out of prosperity into poverty. This idea is best illustrated in the rhyme below:

As Pride and Luxury decrease,  
 So by degrees they leave the Seas.  
 Not Merchants now, but Companies  
 Remove whole Manufactories.  
 All Arts and Crafts neglected lie;  
 Content, the Bane of Industry,  
 Makes 'em admire their homely Store,  
 And neither seek nor covet more.<sup>34</sup>

Mandeville animated his argument here to emphasise 'the Unreasonableness and Folly of those' who attempt to enjoy both riches and moral virtue at the same time, as indicated in his design of *The Fable of the Bees*.

... the main Design of the Fable, is to shew the Impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant Comforts of Life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful Nation, and at the same time be bless'd with all the Virtue and Innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age; from thence to expose the Unreasonableness and Folly of those, that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing People, and wonderfully greedy after all the Benefits they can receive as such, are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences, that from the Beginning of the World to this present Day, have been inseparable from all Kingdoms and States that ever were fam'd for Strength, Riches, and Politeness, at the same time.<sup>35</sup>

Mandeville's account of the passion of frugality would show that the classical and rationalist value of self-denial is useless for economic prosperity. While prodigality set all the men to work, frugality is 'a mean starving Virtue' for the poor, keeping them away from trading, and therefore useless for prosperity.

Frugality is like Honesty, a mean starving Virtue, that is only fit for small Societies of good peaceable Men, who are contented to be poor so they may be easy; but in a large stirring Nation you may have soon enough of it. Tis an idle dreaming Virtue that employs no Hands, and therefore very useless in a trading Country, where there are vast Numbers that one way or other must be all set to Work. Prodigality has a thousand Inventions to keep People from sitting still, that Frugality would never think of; and as this must consume a prodigious Wealth, so Avarice again knows innumerable Tricks to rake it together, which Frugality would scorn to make use of.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 34-5.

<sup>35</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 6-7.

<sup>36</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 104-5.

Mandeville's tactic here was to pay more attention to the consequent effects of frugal practices over the society as a whole, rather than to a particular individual. Private single persons or families might possibly become richer by being frugal, but to assume the same logic to be applicable to the whole nation is simply an error, because 'to make a Nation generally frugal, the Necessaries of Life must be scarce, and consequently dear'. This is why 'there ever was in any Country a National Frugality without a National Necessity'.<sup>37</sup> Frugality might render people virtuous, but also unemployed and poor at the same time.<sup>38</sup> As wealth was inseparable from 'Luxury', so considerable trade was inseparable from fraud; advanced knowledge and polished manners were inseparable from enlarged desires, refined appetites and increased vices. This was what Mandeville thought sociability was all about. In sum, Mandeville contended: 'To be at once well-bred and sincere, is no less than a Contradiction'.<sup>39</sup>

Certainly, Mandeville's sceptic or moral rigorist position allowed him to say 'that in all Societies, great or small, it is the Duty of every Member of it to be good, that Virtue ought to be encourag'd, Vice discountenanc'd'.<sup>40</sup> He also wrote that 'If I have shewn the way to worldly Greatness, I have always without Hesitation preferr'd the Road that leads to Virtue'.<sup>41</sup> However, it was his simultaneous manipulation of the quasi-rationalist view that allowed Mandeville to stress at the same time that 'no Society can be rais'd into such a rich and mighty Kingdom, or so rais'd, subsist in their Wealth and Power for any considerable Time, without the Vices of Man'.<sup>42</sup> His subtle juxtaposition of sceptic or moral rigorist and quasi-rationalist views had already been presumed in a passage in the Introduction of *The Fable of the Bees*: there he declared that, unlike most other writers, he should show his readers 'what they really are' rather than 'what they should be'.<sup>43</sup> His distinction between what he asserted men had to be and what he could say men actually were, was thus calculated to be the fulcrum of his paradox, 'private vices, public benefits'. In this sense, Kaye

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<sup>37</sup> *FB*, I, p. 183.

<sup>38</sup> *FB*, I, p. 223.

<sup>39</sup> *FB*, I, p. 185.

<sup>40</sup> *FB*, I, p. 229.

<sup>41</sup> *FB*, I, p. 231.

<sup>42</sup> *FB*, I, p. 229.

called Mandeville's ethics 'a combination of philosophical anarchism in theory with utilitarianism in practice'.<sup>44</sup> Mandeville's radical philosophical anarchism, as a sceptical reaction to contemporary rationalist thinking, was endeavouring to prove the impossibility of certain existing ideas, such as definite or final agreement between different men as to what is good, desirable or beautiful according to which a system of morality is to be planned.<sup>45</sup> According to Kaye, Mandeville then juxtaposed philosophical anarchism with utilitarianism in practice, as the ideal way of satisfying the various differing needs and desires of men. His practical utilitarianism allowed their welfare, pleasure or happiness not necessarily to be confined to one particular kind but their satisfaction to be as many diverse kinds as there are tastes.<sup>46</sup> By his practical application of the utilitarian standard, Mandeville created the paradox, 'private vices, public benefits', calling such qualities as pride and vanity private vices, which he then asserted would be useful for public benefits (and which the non-rigorists would not call vices at all).<sup>47</sup> Mandeville's concept of luxury forcibly achieved the moral paradox of 'private vices, public benefits', by confronting, in his usual manner, the ideal with the actual. Here Mandeville made his point by exposing a contradiction in current opinion, which had escaped his contemporaries, that luxury was morally evil yet inseparable from prosperity.<sup>48</sup> His premise, that Man is 'a compound of various Passions, ... which we all pretend to be ashamed of, are the great Support of a flourishing Society', came from his belief that our understanding of morality was not rooted in an understanding of our sociability.<sup>49</sup> In other words, Mandeville's true originality in understanding sociability was, as Kaye nicely put it, his 'considerations of the growth of society from the evolutionary

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<sup>43</sup> *FB*, I, p. 39.

<sup>44</sup> Kaye, p. lvi.

<sup>45</sup> Kaye, pp. lvi-lvii.

<sup>46</sup> Kaye, pp. lviii-lix.

<sup>47</sup> Kaye, p. lx.

<sup>48</sup> Kaye, p. xcvi.

<sup>49</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 39-40. An assessment in Hont and Ignatieff (1983) concerning the very distinction, that Mandeville was concerned with the matters of right whereas Smith shifted his concern to the matters of fact, therefore misses Mandeville's quasi-rationalist aspect and his theory of sociability. Smith's argument seems to me to have been directed more toward Hutcheson than Mandeville. See Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (1983), p. 12.



The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy point of view', that is, society independent of morals.<sup>50</sup> Before Mandeville, moral philosophers were caged by theological prepossessions, and failed to realise 'social evolution', or sociability, because they had been interested more in educating morals than in analysing the facts of life.<sup>51</sup> Mandeville's paradox was that commercial society relied on the sociability of self-interested individuals bound to one another not by their shared religious rectitude, but by the tenuous bonds of private vices such as envy, emulation and manipulation.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, Mandeville's paradoxical thesis, 'private vices, public benefits', was meant as a threat to the contemporary vocabulary of ethics, which, he argued, had promoted self-deception by obscuring actual human motives and thereby failing to understand the novel circumstances of modern commercial sociability.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Philip Pinkus argues that the strength of Mandeville's paradox lay in the combination of his orthodox Anglican-style scepticism concerning reason and his heresy as a writer in arguing about the irrelevance and harmfulness of Christianity to the building of a prosperous society. Pinkus concludes that Mandeville wrote a paradox (which showed the essential of the vices that contribute to public benefits) but not a satire (a criticism of the viciousness of vices from a certain moral judgement).<sup>54</sup>

Such were Mandeville's basic arguments in 1714. 'A Search into the Nature of Society', a small essay Mandeville included in the second edition of *The Fable of the Bees* in 1723, clarified Mandeville's view of sociability, this time by means of a critique of Shaftesbury who now turned out to be the foremost target in his book. The essay is said to have been a criticism of what Mandeville had come to see as a dominant theory of sociability in a commercial society, uniting the physiology in his *Treatise* (1711) with a French discourse of passions.

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<sup>50</sup> Kaye, p. cxii.

<sup>51</sup> Kaye, p. cxiii.

<sup>52</sup> Hundert, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Hundert, p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> Philip Pinkus (1975), pp. 193-211. The interpretation of Mandeville as a writer of paradox rather than of satire seems more valid than what David Hector Monro called 'the two Mandevilles' (the ascetic and austere moralist, and the cynical worldly profligate) which seem 'ambivalent' to each other. See David Hector Monro (1975), pp. 1-24 and 249-267. Monro's work presents a typical account of Mandeville as a satirist.

Mandeville was the first moralist of any importance to attack Shaftesbury's system. It was in this essay of 1723 that Mandeville directly joined issue with Shaftesbury.<sup>55</sup> Mandeville's criticism of Shaftesbury's system was that it was false in neglecting private vices as the necessary evil in establishing sociability and bringing prosperity in society.<sup>56</sup> His criticism concerned in particular his concepts of beauty and virtue, which had been the key terms in Shaftesbury's theory of sociability.

Lawrence Klein describes Shaftesbury as 'the philosopher of politeness, aiming at an intellectual and social elite',<sup>57</sup> who regarded politeness as the sociability of aesthetic value, by means of which private happiness was to be achieved as the public goodness. Politeness as 'a criterion of *proper* behaviour' was, in a contemporary definition, 'a dextrous management of our Words and Actions, whereby we make other People have better Opinions of us and themselves'.<sup>58</sup> In this sense, politeness was 'a refined sociability, bringing aesthetic concerns into close contiguity with ethical ones'.<sup>59</sup> Politeness as a refined sociability was then the sociability of gentlemen, or the range of the gentlemanly. Its spread witnessed the creation, by gentlemen, of the world in a gentlemanly image.<sup>60</sup> This new culture of politeness was demanded by the new patterns of urban development in the later seventeenth and eighteenth century. The pattern of urbanism, modelled on the Westminster, but reproduced in provincial cities and towns all over Britain, created new urban populations made up of aristocrats, gentry, pseudo-gentry, professionals and commercial elements. The new commercialised approach to leisure gave rise to a new array of institutions such as coffee-houses, clubs, assemblies, gardens and theatres, not merely as the outlets of consumption, but as a means allowing new forms of sociability.<sup>61</sup>

Shaftesbury wrote *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue* in the later 1690s and included its revised version in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*

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<sup>55</sup> Thomas Fowler (1882), p. 138.

<sup>56</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 323-5.

<sup>57</sup> Klein, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Klein, pp. 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> Klein, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Klein, p. 7.

(1711), assigning it a strategic importance.<sup>62</sup> The work presented Shaftesbury as a philosopher of sociability who wrote 'a moral treatise defending the possibility of individual ethical action in accordance with real ethical standards on the basis of natural human propensities to exist companionably with others'.<sup>63</sup> Based on the observation of '*the Oeconomy of the Passions*', Shaftesbury tried to show that serving oneself and serving others were one and the same, that happiness and goodness therefore went together, that virtue was its own reward, and finally, that there were thus reasons for us to be virtuous.<sup>64</sup> These were his arguments against egoistical moral thinking by insisting that at least some human affections were sociable so that selflessness was a natural human capacity and human behaviour could not be reduced to egoism.<sup>65</sup> In his *Inquiry*, morality or moral goodness consisted in both pursuing one's relatedness to others and to the world as well as in one's capacity to act independently. The *Inquiry* was fundamentally concerned with an ethical outlook that would balance the claims of self and others, autonomy and relatedness. This theme in Shaftesbury ultimately generated his idea of polite philosophy.<sup>66</sup> Shaftesbury's account of sociability also relied on rationalism. Though men were naturally sociable and capable of virtue, virtue was not merely a natural affection, but an affection raised to consciousness and rationality, reflecting one's connectedness to others and the demand that one act in ways that benefited them. In the sense that sociability was those affections that drew people out of solitude into beneficial relation with others, sociability could be a reliable criterion of morality.<sup>67</sup> Moral sociability was therefore constituted of selflessness.<sup>68</sup>

In his polite philosophy, Shaftesbury had defined beauty as a passion in its own right:

Of all other beauties ..., the most delightful, the most engaging and pathetic, is that which is drawn from real life, and from the passions. Nothing affects the heart like that which is purely

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<sup>61</sup> Klein, pp. 10-1 and 12-3. See also Peter Borsay (1989); cited in Klein, p. 11, footnote 19.

<sup>62</sup> Klein, p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> Klein, p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> Klein, pp. 52-3.

<sup>65</sup> Klein, p. 53.

<sup>66</sup> Klein, p. 54.

<sup>67</sup> Klein, pp. 56-7.

<sup>68</sup> Klein, p. 58.

from itself, and of its own nature; such as the beauty of sentiments, the grace of actions, the turn of characters, and the proportions and features of a human mind.<sup>69</sup>

Beauty acquires its value if aimed at 'the pleasure and good of others' and kept away from selfishness. This was exactly what Shaftesbury reckoned was the beauty of arts. In arts, 'their chief theme and subjects' was 'purely manners and the moral part': in other words, the entertainment of the imagination by showing 'a beauty of the mind', and the fancy of the amiable characters or qualities.<sup>70</sup> 'And thus', Shaftesbury concluded, 'after all, the most natural beauty in the world is honesty and moral truth'.<sup>71</sup> In the sense that beauty as a passion was the source of sociability, virtue was to be derived from the common basis as beauty:

That in the very nature of things there must of necessity be the foundation of a right or wrong taste, as well in respect of inward characters and features as of outward person, behaviour, and action,... Thus are the Arts and Virtues mutually friends; and thus the science of virtuosi and that of virtue itself become, in a manner, one and the same.<sup>72</sup>

Virtue such as private friendship, therefore, was to be disinterested, purely voluntary and 'a free choice', regardless of its circumstances and interests.<sup>73</sup> The passions, hence, which Shaftesbury assumed give rise to beauty and virtue, are accordingly to be unselfish and the hinge of sociability. After all, 'selfishness' was defined by Shaftesbury as vicious and inconsistent with the public good.<sup>74</sup> Shaftesbury perceived beauty as vital for cultivating sociability and the public good in the sense that he regarded goodness, beauty and truth as all one and the same: 'What is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good'.<sup>75</sup> In his treatment of morals, the idea of moral beauty as the Greek conception of a harmony or proportion in characters or conducts was therefore always uppermost in his mind.<sup>76</sup> The ultimate foundation of beauty and morality alike was

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<sup>69</sup> Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (London, 1714); ed. J. M. Robertson (Indianapolis, 1964), I, p. 90 (abbreviated as *Characteristicks* below).

<sup>70</sup> *Characteristicks*, I, pp. 90-1.

<sup>71</sup> *Characteristicks*, I, p. 94.

<sup>72</sup> *Characteristicks*, I, pp. 216-7.

<sup>73</sup> *Characteristicks*, I, pp. 67-9.

<sup>74</sup> *Characteristicks*, I, pp. 247-8.

<sup>75</sup> Shaftesbury, *Miscellaneous Reflections*, III. II, in *Characteristicks*; quoted in Fowler, p. 125.

<sup>76</sup> Fowler, p. 125.

then found in the principles of harmony and proportion, either of the parts in relation to each other, or of the whole in relation to other wholes. The idea of morality as harmony and proportion was better replaced by that of sociability, or of goodness or tendency to promote the general welfare.<sup>77</sup>

Shaftesbury's ideas of sociability that he presented in relation to the passions, beauty and virtue, were what Mandeville chose as the target in his argument. Accordingly, Mandeville began his criticism with his ideas of beauty and virtue. Mandeville argued that beauty and taste varied according to various 'Modes and Fashions' in different times and places: 'There are different Faults as well as Beauties, that as Modes and Fashions alter and Men vary in their Tastes and Humours, will be differently admired and disapproved of'. This is why the best paintings do not always bear the best prices: because, consequently, there is no such agreed standard of pricing them. Instead, their prices depend on absurd measures such as 'the Scarcity of his Works' and 'the Quality of the Persons in whose Possession they are as well as the length of Time they have been in great Families'.<sup>78</sup> Mandeville went on that 'In Morals there is no greater Certainty'.<sup>79</sup> Virtues or values can be discovered only when they are contrasted against vices and evils; morality is therefore relative to its situations and circumstances, as beauty is.<sup>80</sup> Mandeville referred to Cicero whom he reckoned to be the most 'able and compleat Magistrate', and satirised Cicero's reputed 'Politeness' on the grounds that it was merely a product of vices such as vanity and prodigality.<sup>81</sup> What Shaftesbury called the 'Love of Company' too is not necessarily 'a Mark of some Intrinsick Worth in Man', but simply based on self-interest: 'the Men of Sense and of good Knowledge' would rather prefer 'Solitude' whereas companies of men are more eagerly sought after by 'the weakest Minds'.<sup>82</sup> The love of company is itself a self-love, stimulated by beauty and virtue, and decorating society.

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<sup>77</sup> Fowler, p. 127.

<sup>78</sup> *FB*, I, p. 326.

<sup>79</sup> *FB*, I, p. 330.

<sup>80</sup> *FB*, I, p. 334.

<sup>81</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 334-5.

<sup>82</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 340-1.

A good House, rich Furniture, a fine Garden, Horses, Dogs, Ancestors, Relations, Beauty, Strength, Excellency in any thing whatever, Vices as well as Virtues, may all be Accessory to make Men long for Society, in hopes that what they value themselves upon will at one time or other become the Theme of the Discourse, and give an inward Satisfaction to them. Even the most polite People in the World, and such as I spoke of at first, give no Pleasure to others that is not repaid to their Self-Love, and does not at last centre in themselves, let them wind it and turn it as they will.<sup>83</sup>

After all, in Mandeville's cynical assessment, Shaftesbury was a philosopher born in ease and brought up inactive and retired, from whose circumstances his system of polite philosophy, though 'amiable', was conceived and therefore it solely depended on his peculiar life.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, sociability arises from 'not the Good and Amiable, but the Bad and Hateful Qualities of Man, his Imperfections and the want of Excellencies'. Men's 'Appetites and Passions' are necessary 'for the welfare of all trades and Handicrafts', because 'the Sociableness of Man arises only from these Two things, *viz.* The multiplicity of his Desires, and the continual Opposition he meets with in his Endeavours to gratify them'.<sup>85</sup> On the other hand, the Shaftesburian amiable qualities would conform to 'an Indolent Society', where everything is kept 'at Rest and Peace', preventing men from 'Trouble and Motion it self' [sic]. Such was indeed Mandeville's descriptions of what he made of the positive community, where 'the Bounties and Benefits of Nature' supply the needs of men and therefore nothing more is required. Whereas in what he believed as the negative community, the wants, passions and vices are necessary evils only by means of which members of society are kept at their labour and men's needs as well as greed are to be gratified.

... the Necessities, the Vices and Imperfections of Man, together with the various Inclemencies of the Air and other Elements, contain in them the Seeds of all Arts, Industry and Labour; ... our Pride, Sloth, Sensuality and Fickleness are the great Patrons that promote all Arts and Sciences, Trades, Handicrafts and Callings; while the great Taskmasters, Necessity, Avarice, Envy, and Ambition, each in the Class that belongs to him, keep the Members of the Society to their labour, and make them all submit, most of them cheerfully, to the Drudgery of their Station; Kings and Princes not excepted.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *FB*, I, p. 342.

<sup>84</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 331-4.

<sup>85</sup> *FB*, I, p. 344. See also I, pp. 346-7, 355.

<sup>86</sup> *FB*, I, p. 366.

The difference of opinions about sociability between Shaftesbury and Mandeville would reflect the difference of their circumstances and political positions. Shaftesbury was a civic-minded Polite Whig, whereas Mandeville was a powerful propagandist for the Court Whig party.<sup>87</sup> Shaftesbury started his political career as a Country civic Whig when he was young. His grandfather, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first earl of Shaftesbury, left office in the 1670s and became the leader of the Whig movement opposing royal policies and fought for 'exclusion', to exclude Charles II's brother, James, from the throne.<sup>88</sup> After Locke had gone into exile, who had been responsible for the early education of Shaftesbury, 'the future third earl spent some very unhappy years at Winchester school, which no doubt encouraged his antipathy to the Tory-dominated educational establishments'.<sup>89</sup> Shaftesbury became a Whig MP for Poole in Dorset, assuming an active role in the Parliament from 1695 to 1698. As an opposition Whig (Country Whig in opposition), he was associated with Robert Molesworth (1656-1725) and Andrew Fletcher (1655-1716), and he entertained advanced ideas such as the varieties of republicanism, deism and anti-clericalism. Their Whig politics was informed by Country and civic traditions, attacking the Court and its corrupting power.<sup>90</sup>

Shaftesbury was a Whig in the strictest sense of the term, by descent, by education and by conviction, but he noted in 1700 that the Whigs had been shameful in their over great condescension to the Court and had greatly lost interest in the country.<sup>91</sup> Shaftesbury was civic-minded in the 1690s, but no longer a Country Whig when writing the *Characteristicks* from 1708 to 1711, though he was still concerned with the themes of virtue and independence.<sup>92</sup> Between 1700 and 1702, when Shaftesbury came back to politics, the Country party was abandoning Whiggery. Shaftesbury ceased identifying himself with the Country, adjusting to a situation in which the Court was regarded as necessary and the Whig as a necessary element of

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<sup>87</sup> Irwin Primer (1975) emphasises Mandeville's dependence upon, rather than criticism of, Shaftesbury, but what he shows is no more than their shared interests in Whiggism and the theory of sociability. Primer (1975), pp. 126-41.

<sup>88</sup> Klein, p. 14.

<sup>89</sup> Klein, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> Klein, pp. 16-7.

<sup>91</sup> Fowler, pp. 10 and 16.

<sup>92</sup> Klein, p. 132. See also pp. 135-7.

power at the Court.<sup>93</sup> Shaftesbury's thought, his moralism, deism and aesthetic interests were a political project, not only an exercise in Whig radicalism but also the legitimisation of the post-1688 Whig regime.<sup>94</sup> He saw that Country was increasingly becoming Tory, especially with respect to religion and foreign policy.<sup>95</sup>

Shaftesbury's notions of sociability and politeness seized the opportunity to create a new public and gentlemanly culture of criticism in post-1688 England and post-1707 Britain, attacking Tory loyalty to the Church and the Court in the name of a new Whiggish culture.<sup>96</sup> But he was not only criticising Tory ideology and control but also a culture organised around a Whig Church and a Whig Court. He was envisaging the shape of discourse and culture in new ways, and it was the culture of politeness.<sup>97</sup> Shaftesbury's proposition, 'All Politeness is owing to Liberty', shows his Whiggism, that, if the Whigs were the party of liberty and if politeness was the concomitant of liberty, then politeness could be attained only under Whig auspices.<sup>98</sup>

As a Whig who, contrary to the Tories, wished to see the power of the Church and the Monarch reduced, Shaftesbury advocated the hegemony of gentlemen and gentlemanliness in society as the culture of politeness. He however was against those institutions which had traditionally shared the various forms of hegemony by gentlemen: the Church and the Crown.<sup>99</sup> The project of a Polite Whiggism, his vision of modernity in society, culture and politics under Whig auspices, subsumed Shaftesbury's polite philosophy as his alternative to contemporary philosophy which he criticised by using his new concept of sociability in *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*.<sup>100</sup>

On the other hand, it was Court Whig party to which Mandeville was closely attached. A part of Mandeville's income came from the South Sea Annuities held in trust for him by Dutch merchants in Court Whig circle.<sup>101</sup> Mandeville was under

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<sup>93</sup> Klein, pp. 139-41.

<sup>94</sup> Klein, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Klein, pp. 142-3.

<sup>96</sup> Klein, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Klein, p. 9.

<sup>98</sup> Klein, p. 125.

<sup>99</sup> Klein, pp. 20-1.

<sup>100</sup> Klein, p. 21.

<sup>101</sup> Kaye, pp. xxiv-xxv.



Court Whig patronage of the wealthy and powerful Earl of Macclesfield, Lord Chancellor from 1718 to 1724, whose friendship would have amply insured Mandeville against poverty and neglect.<sup>102</sup>

In his paper on Mandeville's original contribution to the Court-Country debate on corruption, Dickinson maintains that Mandeville was clearly a Whig. Mandeville criticised Tory notions of divine right, non-resistance and passive obedience, while accepting Whig position in favour of the Revolution Settlement of 1688-89 and the Protestant succession. Mandeville also praised Whig constitutional ideals of limited monarchy and the balanced constitution of the Crown, Lords and Commons, in particular in Chapter XI, 'Of Government', of his *Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church and National Happiness* (1729).<sup>103</sup>

Among Whigs, Mandeville more broadly sympathised with Court Whigs than with Country Whigs. Mandeville was tolerant on corruption, on the grounds that human nature is intrinsically corrupt.<sup>104</sup> Mandeville also legitimated Court Whig method of carrying their policies through the full exploitation of royal patronage in order to win parliament. Above all, *The Fable of the Bees* was a powerful defence of luxury and consequently an attempt to ridicule Country Whig opposition such as Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope and John Gay who accused Court reign of bribery and corruption and yearned for a return to an ideal world of honest freeholders and to a former golden age of civic virtue, frugality and the simplicity of a Spartan existence.<sup>105</sup>

As Goldsmith shows, Mandeville's theory of society was a response to early eighteenth-century ideology of Christian personal virtue and civic humanist public virtue.<sup>106</sup> Mandeville showed his sympathy with Court Whigs in his first known publication in English, *The Pamphleteers: A Satyr* (1703), his thorough-going defence of William III and his Whig ministers for their achievements of opposing French tyranny and eschewing sloth, pleasure and luxury. Dutch William had been

<sup>102</sup> Kaye, pp. xxvi-xxvii. For the relationship between Mandeville and Thomas Parker, Earl of Macclesfield, see also Harry T. Dickinson (1975), p. 81.

<sup>103</sup> Harry T. Dickinson (1976), pp. 560-1. Also Dickinson (1975), pp. 80-97.

<sup>104</sup> Dickinson (1976), p. 562.

<sup>105</sup> Dickinson (1976), p. 563.

<sup>106</sup> Maurice M. Goldsmith (1985), pp. 1-78.

put on the throne by Whigs in the Glorious Revolution, shortly after which Mandeville himself came to England. On the other hand, he reminded the dangers of tyranny and popery under James II, against the supporters of Popery and arbitrary government.<sup>107</sup> *The Virgin Unmask'd* (1709) too justified the struggle carried on by Britain and her allies against the danger of Louis XIV's France to Protestant Europe. He rejected the Tory and Country Whig view that the Dutch did not do their share for the war while the English land-tax payers were paying for the war and, worse still, enriching stockbrokers, profiteers and foreigners whose interests Tories and Country Whigs regarded were protected by Court Whig government. He distinguished modern warfare from war in classical antiquity, denying the relevance of classical, civic humanist ideals of warfare.<sup>108</sup> Similar Court Whig sentiments were again expressed in *The Grumbling Hive* (1705), the original verse fable from which *The Fable of the Bees* (1714) grew.

The Grumbling Brutes had been content  
With Ministers and Government.  
But they, at every ill Success,  
Like Creatures lost with Redress  
Curs'd Politicians, Armies, Fleets.<sup>109</sup>

But 'No Bees had better Government', even when ministers were enriching themselves at the public expense, because such peculation was a normal and unavoidable part of human nature.<sup>110</sup> His most explicit party tract, *The Mischiefs that Ought Justly to be Apprehended from a Whig-Government* (1714), expressed a solid but moderate Whiggism. Mandeville defended the Hanoverian succession in the tense political atmosphere between the death of Queen Anne and the outbreak of the Jacobite rebellion. He supported the political principles and aspirations of Court Whigs, such as the Glorious Revolution and their theory of limited monarchy against Tory theories of divine right, non-resistance and indefeasible hereditary succession which he thought suggested Tory favour of the Pretender. He also pointed out that Britain's mixed constitution meant a limited monarch, and carefully defended

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<sup>107</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 79-80; Dickinson (1975), pp. 81 and 84.

<sup>108</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 80-4.

<sup>109</sup> *FB*, I, p. 26, quoted in Goldsmith, p. 89.

<sup>110</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 88-91.



parliament's resistance to Charles I.

... for a *Whig* is one that stands up for Liberty and Property and the Welfare of the Nation; that is Obedience and Submission to his Sovereign, as long as he rules by Law, and endeavours to promote the Good of his Subjects, but thinks it lawful whenever the King, or his Favourites, invade the Constitution, and break in upon the Privileges of the People, to resist both him and his ministers.<sup>111</sup>

On this basis, Mandeville defended Britain's legitimate foreign monarchs, William III and George I, against a Jacobite restoration.<sup>112</sup> His final party political tract in 1720, *Free Thought on Religion, the Church and National Happiness*, again exhibited his defence of William III and the Hanoverian dynasty in an explicitly anti-Jacobite and implicitly anti-Tory sentiment. His support for the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89 was expressed against Tory doctrine of the inviolability of hereditary succession and passive obedience. His admiration yet again for William III and for those who preserved England liberty, religion and peace at and after 1688 was coupled with his praise for the Dutch Republic for standing up to Louis XIV.<sup>113</sup> Mandeville discussed the advantages of the current Whig government, defending Court Whig politicians by claiming that their apparent abuses were in fact the trivial private vices of individuals who as statesmen competently administered a benign constitution.<sup>114</sup> His argument that the Revolution had brought the constitution into balance with contemporary property relationships was the official thesis of the current government party.<sup>115</sup> His argument was an elaboration of the government's well-known position, and a defence of government's financial manipulation and what had commonly been called 'corruption'. He argued that political unscrupulousness through financial reward and the granting of office to manipulate parliamentary institutions had become inevitable in the modern circumstances of prosperity, and that it was now the function of a well-governed state where increasing opportunities for private gain were the prerequisites of affluence.<sup>116</sup>

After 1720, Mandeville was never employed by Court Whigs in the cause of

<sup>111</sup> *The Mischiefs*, p. 6, quoted in Goldsmith, p. 92.

<sup>112</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 91-4; Dickinson (1975), p. 84; Hundert, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 94-107.

<sup>114</sup> Hundert, p. 6.

<sup>115</sup> Hundert, pp. 8-9.

<sup>116</sup> Hundert, p. 9.

political propaganda, perhaps because of his notorious reputation as the author of *The Fable*.<sup>117</sup> This reputation was consolidated when the enlarged second edition of *The Fable* was published in 1723 and the Middlesex Grand Jury's presentment appeared in the press.<sup>118</sup> The Grand Jurymen dealing with the case were Country opponents of the current Court Whig government, having been chosen by Tory or possibly Jacobite sheriffs. These men publicly sought to assert their moral opposition to Robert Walpole whose principles they found were enunciated in *The Fable*.<sup>119</sup> In their assault on *The Fable*, those Grand Jurors spoke as Country Whigs in the language of civic humanism or republicanism. They attacked Mandeville's intense and comprehensive critique of modernity in the name of an antique Mediterranean virtue of republican Rome and Sparta.<sup>120</sup> Their hostility to *The Fable* was derived from Mandeville's compelling sketch of contemporary commercial society drastically transformed by the new mechanisms of exchange. It frighteningly demanded the relegation of civic ideals to the realm of nostalgia and the adoption of egoistic morality.<sup>121</sup>

Mandeville's political views were further reiterated in Part II of *The Fable of the Bees* (1728) and *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* (1732) with his now elaborated theory of society. Mandeville emphasised the beneficial effects of a governmental system which he thought was not necessarily the result of the wisdom of individual geniuses but that of long experience over a great length of time from the independent actions of many, ordinary human beings. By this, Mandeville argued that virtue and genius were unnecessary in politics, because the matters of government could be reduced to routine operations and easily taken decisions by those experienced in the trade but possessed neither of unusual intellect nor of extraordinary moral virtue. This was also the advantage Mandeville thought of the British constitution: it did not need to be staffed by virtuous men or the men of genius such as those in the civic ideal of philosophers as the classical guardians of republic. Mandeville's emphasis therefore

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<sup>117</sup> Hundert, p. 6.

<sup>118</sup> Hundert, p. 7.

<sup>119</sup> Hundert, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> Hundert, p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> Hundert, p. 13.

lay in the importance of the operation of government in which men's passions and interests are checked and public benefits are produced out of private vices such as bribery and graft.<sup>122</sup> Even though Mandeville was not a Court Whig party partisan in the sense that he withdrew from the actual party political issues after 1715, he was still Court Whig-minded with his political positions prior to the Hanoverian accession. For example, he advocated the defence of the Protestant succession and the Glorious Revolution; the praise of British liberty and the mixed constitution; the emphasis on the constitutional arrangement sufficiently checking the evils of private vices so as to produce public benefits.<sup>123</sup>

Dickinson concludes that Mandeville was not a typical Court Whig but an independent Whig who developed his own evolutionary theory of civil society. Dickinson argues that Mandeville can be described as a Whig in general terms, but may not be easily categorised as a particular stereotype of Whig, whether Court or Country.<sup>124</sup> For example, Mandeville did not have a high opinion of Court Whigs in power, in thinking that politicians did not have to be men of exceptional qualities: they only needed experience and a knowledge of human nature for their dextrous management in order to turn private vices into public benefits.<sup>125</sup> Dickinson also argues that Mandeville's attack on the Charity School movement was highly radical Country Whig-minded, and that his readiness to acknowledge the positive value of political opposition capable of placing some limitation on those in power was not a Court Whig attitude at all.<sup>126</sup> Dickinson finally points out that Mandeville's distinctive evolutionary theory of civil society starkly disagreed with Whig contract theory of government, in the sense that Mandeville described civil society as evolving from sociability and not from positive or artificial arrangement such as social contract.<sup>127</sup> Court Whigs were at that time abandoning the appeal to the distant past as the root of liberty in order to justify the current constitution which they

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<sup>122</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 107-118.

<sup>123</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 118-119. In all these arguments, Goldsmith regards Mandeville's politics merely as 'Whig, if somewhat idiosyncratic' (p. 88). But it seems fair to regard Mandeville's views as Court Whig-minded.

<sup>124</sup> Dickinson (1976), pp. 561-562, 564 and 570.

<sup>125</sup> Dickinson (1976), pp. 564-5.

<sup>126</sup> Dickinson (1976), p. 565.

<sup>127</sup> Dickinson (1976), pp. 566-7.

regarded was rooted in no further back than the Revolution Settlement of 1688-89.<sup>128</sup>

While agreeing with many of these views, I still regard it as more appropriate to understand Mandeville as a more Court-minded Whig than Country, even if not a typical Court Whig ideologist. For example, Mandeville in fact defended Whig contract theory.<sup>129</sup> Mandeville's view that politicians could not be expected to be the men of highest qualities was perhaps his low opinion of the actual Court Whigs in power, but it was also a typically Court Whig non-utopian, sceptical and pragmatic view of politics. Mandeville's emphasis on the order and economy of government, in place of virtuous statesmen, would reflect Court Whig interest in introducing and establishing the easy and smooth procedures of administrations. *Modest Defence of Public Stews* was a suggestion by Mandeville for introducing such an easy and smooth procedure of administration in a Court Whig style in order for magistrates to manipulate human passions and to turn private vices into public benefits.<sup>130</sup> Mandeville's attack on charity and charity schools was not necessarily his alliance with radical Country Whigs on the issue but simply an expression of highly conservative and wildly mercantilist view on the mass labouring poor. His mercantilist advocacy of favourable trade balance was, as we shall see, more in line with Court Whig commerce-based economic policies than Country Whig agrarian ideals.

It seems to me that Mandeville's distinctive evolutionary theory of civil society therefore did not necessarily 'put him nearest to the other idiosyncratic Whig, David Hume'.<sup>131</sup> Dickinson's term, 'an independent Whig', would be more applicable to Hume and Smith than to more Court Whig-minded Mandeville. The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy was therefore launched by a Court Whig-minded affection praising commercial civilisation while denouncing conventional moral teaching.

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<sup>128</sup> Dickinson (1976), p. 568.

<sup>129</sup> *Free Thoughts*, p. 298. See Primer (1975), p. 128.

<sup>130</sup> See Richard I. Cook (1975), pp. 22-33.

<sup>131</sup> See Dickinson (1976), p. 570.

## 2. Francis Hutcheson

Mandeville's vocabulary of 'private vices, public benefits' had become an established feature of popular journalism in England by the mid-1720s. The 1723 edition of *The Fable of the Bees* provoked a whole series of references.<sup>132</sup> It then infuriated Hutcheson with the implications of its attack on the possibility of benevolence, and it was said that he could not give lectures as a professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow without criticising Mandeville.<sup>133</sup> What I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy had thus been provoked by Mandeville's challenge formulated in the paradox. The subsequent participants in the controversy confronted his argument in *The Fable of the Bees*, that morals in the age of commerce were political products in increasingly inter-subjective, whimsical human relations.<sup>134</sup> *The Fable's* influence might have been greater in Scotland than anywhere else in the latter half of eighteenth century: from 1755 onward, the book was published only at Edinburgh.<sup>135</sup> The attacks on Mandeville in the controversy was naturally going to focus on his paradox, coined by juxtaposing the moral rigorist with the utilitarian and practical understanding of commercial sociability.<sup>136</sup>

Kaye thought not only that Hutcheson attacked Mandeville's moral rigorism by showing that men do act from perfectly dispassionate unselfishness, but also that Hutcheson's attempt to prove the fundamental benevolence of human nature was largely a matter of giving new names to the same passions: Mandeville had called all natural emotions selfish and evil, whereas Hutcheson proposed some of them as benevolent.<sup>137</sup> At least, Hutcheson was anxious to refute two of Mandeville's charges: that human nature was vicious, and that virtue was the product of hypocrisy or deception. Hutcheson's refutation was directed by his understanding of human nature: that men were naturally attracted by what seemed to be virtuous characters or conducts and distracted by vicious ones, and that men were genuinely interested in

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<sup>132</sup> J. Martin Stafford (1997) collects some of the earliest references to Mandeville.

<sup>133</sup> Hundert, p. 57.

<sup>134</sup> See Hundert, pp. 171-4.

<sup>135</sup> Kaye, footnote 5, p. cxvii; *FB*, II, pp. 419ff.

<sup>136</sup> Kaye, p. cxxv.

<sup>137</sup> Kaye, p. cxxvii.

seeking moral approbation for their own character or conduct. Hutcheson's moral theory then went on to suggest that unless men were able to satisfy their moral wish for self-approbation, they would remain imperfectly socialised and hence still incapable of contributing to the public good. Hutcheson's moral sense theory eventually offered his famous and controversial answer to the question of how virtue could be free from hypocrisy and deception.<sup>138</sup>

This is the setting for the most enduring and profound attack on Mandeville's views from Smith's teacher, Hutcheson. Hutcheson's first major work, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in two Treatises in which the Principles of the Late Earl of Shaftesbury are explain'd and defended, against the Author of the Fables of the Bees: ...* (1725), offered a criticism of Mandeville's work as well as a defence of Shaftesbury's theory, as proposed in the title. Mandeville had attacked Shaftesbury's account of natural sociability. By defending Shaftesbury, Hutcheson consequently passed Shaftesbury's ideas to many Scottish writers in a particular form for the sake of criticising Mandeville.<sup>139</sup> Due to having become the target of Mandeville's attack and the subject of Hutcheson's defence, Shaftesbury's moral philosophy offered three important points to the subsequent controversy about sociability. First, his adoption of a tendency to promote general welfare as the criterion of action; second, his concept of virtue as resting mainly on the exercise of benevolent affections; and finally, his theory of moral sense as pronouncing immediately on the character of actions. The first point became in Hutcheson sufficiently prominent to be expressed in a formula, and then by Hume it was established as the main doctrine of moral philosophy.<sup>140</sup> As for the second point, Shaftesbury insisted so strongly that the generous, sympathetic and benevolent affections of human nature were the foundations of the most useful and sublime virtues, that he rather threw into the shade the self-regarding and prudent virtues equally essential to both the happiness of individuals and the material well-being of the public. In Scotland, Hutcheson, Hume and Smith were to restore the balance, showing the various forms of self-regard and self-respect, when properly directed

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<sup>138</sup> Phillipson (2000), p. 72.

<sup>139</sup> Klein, p. 2.



and kept within proper bounds, which merited approbation, while fully recognising the excellence of the sympathetic feelings. The final point, the idea of moral sense, became the focal point of the subsequent controversy about the problems of morals and received a philosophical sanction that a man could instinctively and without reflection determine and act on the right course for himself, or express a valid opinion on the ethical character of the actions of his own and others.<sup>141</sup>

As we have seen, Shaftesbury's system had centred on the analysis of the notions of beauty and virtue, and the passions in which they were rooted, and Mandeville's critique of Shaftesbury had been directed at that question. It is therefore of no surprise to see that Hutcheson also began his project with the very topic of beauty and virtue. Shaftesbury's theory of beauty and virtue was already perfectly well known in Scotland. But Hutcheson's originality lies in the way he handled the argument of beauty and virtue: he regarded them as internal senses. That is, Hutcheson shifted the question of the *nature* of beauty to that of a *sense* of beauty, the issue that dominated his first treatise, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*. Hutcheson equally shifted the question about the *nature* of virtue to that of a moral *sense*, which was then concerned with in his second treatise, *An Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil*. These two treatises made Hutcheson's first book, *Beauty and Virtue*.

The Shaftesburian theory of beauty had focused on the nature of beauty so as to discuss beauty as of 'itself' or 'of its own nature'.<sup>142</sup> In view of his theory of moral sense, Hutcheson rather preferred an idea of a sense of beauty to that of beauty, and argued that beauty was an 'idea raised in us' and perceived by the sense of beauty only. Hutcheson therefore began with his definition of 'sense'. He described the sense of beauty as lying within men's power to perceive an idea of regularity, order and harmony and the moral sense as lying within men's determination to approve the affections, actions or characters of rational agents which men call virtuous.<sup>143</sup> Thus

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<sup>140</sup> Fowler, p. 163.

<sup>141</sup> Fowler, p. 166.

<sup>142</sup> See *Characteristicks*, vol. I, pp. 135-6. As to the Stoic theory of beauty that Shaftesbury might have inherited, see, for instance, Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, IV. 20.

<sup>143</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* (1725); ed. P. Kivy (The Hague, 1973), pp. 24-5 (abbreviated as *BOHD* below). See also I. IX, p. 34.

beauty itself was defined as 'uniformity amidst variety'.<sup>144</sup> These two internal senses were now understood by Hutcheson as sentiments, distinct from what Mandeville had argued as passions such as pride, vanity and ambition, especially when the ideas of beauty and virtue to be derived from them were stressed together.

In the first treatise, Hutcheson developed his argument about the sense of beauty in two ways. In the first, he tried to show that a pleasure found by a sense of beauty in the ideas of anything beautiful, regular and harmonious, does not necessarily arise from any knowledge of the usefulness of the objects, or any prospect of advantage, or a view of private interest. It arises from the very idea of beauty and harmony itself which strikes us necessarily and immediately, preceding any idea of advantage from it.<sup>145</sup>

Hence it plainly appears that some objects are *immediately* the occasions of this pleasure of beauty, and that we have senses fitted to perceiving it, and that it is distinct from that *joy* which arises upon prospect of advantage. ... Now this shows us that however we may pursue beautiful objects from self-love, with a view to obtain the pleasures of beauty, as in architecture, gardening, and many other affairs, yet there must be a *sense* of beauty, antecedent to prospects even of this advantage.<sup>146</sup>

This is the basis of Hutcheson's critique of Mandeville: in Hutcheson's view, beautiful objects might be pursued for the reasons of self-love, but a sense of beauty which derives an immediate pleasure from such beautiful objects and consequently acts as a motive for seeking beauty is indifferent to self-interest. The idea of beauty is therefore formed indifferently to self-interest, rather than relatively to self-interest as Mandeville had argued. Indeed, Hutcheson's distinction between beauty and a sense of beauty thus enabled him to go on to his argument of the 'universality' of the latter:

... men may have different fancies of beauty, and yet uniformity be the universal foundation of our approbation of any form whatsoever as beautiful. ... even among the most uncultivated nations, where uniformity still pleases, without any other advantage than the pleasure of the contemplation of it.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *BOHD*, II, II, p. 40.

<sup>145</sup> *BOHD*, I, XII-XIII, p. 36.

<sup>146</sup> *BOHD*, I, XIV, p. 37. See also III, V, pp. 50-1.

Hence, the sense of beauty is now shown to be universal, timeless and unselfish, and quite different from the self-regarding, time-bound passions and sentiments Mandeville had described.

The second main feature of Hutcheson's argument of a sense of beauty, along with his insistence on its indifference to self-interest, was his attempt to demonstrate the use of the faculty of beauty for an imperfect and weak creature such as man. This neo-Stoic line of reasoning was presented part of his proof of 'design' or intention, rather than blind force or chance that the world was the product of. Roughly speaking, this strand of his treatise might have constituted what is vaguely thought of as moral theology. As for wisdom, it was 'the pursuing of the best ends by the best means' whose evidence was to be seen in 'any machine with a great complication of parts actually obtaining an end', because such cannot be the effect of chance.<sup>148</sup> As for general causes, Hutcheson then continued, they were witnessed in 'many useful or beautiful effects flowing from one general cause'. By these,

Interest must lead beings of limited powers, who are incapable of a great diversity of operations, and distracted by them, to choose this frugal economy of their forces, and to look upon such management as an evidence of wisdom in other beings like themselves. ... Now the foundation of this beauty plainly appears to be uniformity, or unity of cause amidst diversity of effects.<sup>149</sup>

The natural and immediate action in which a sense of beauty chooses 'this frugal economy of their forces' is not selfish but disinterested, because weak beings such as men are incapable of surviving without such an internal sense letting them pursue their self-interests. Hutcheson finally referred to what he termed the final causes of the internal senses: 'the great Author of nature' who is 'making such a connection between regular objects and the pleasure which accompanies our perceptions of them'. This 'great Author of nature' would 'create the world as it at present is as far as we can observe, everywhere full of regularity and uniformity'.<sup>150</sup> After all, Hutcheson came to believe these final causes as 'moral necessity':

... we may conclude that supposing the Deity so kind as to connect sensible pleasure with certain

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<sup>147</sup> *BOHD*, VI. VII, pp. 78-9.

<sup>148</sup> *BOHD*, V. XVIII, p. 71.

<sup>149</sup> *BOHD*, V. XIX, pp. 71-2.

<sup>150</sup> *BOHD*, VIII. II, pp. 89-90.

actions or contemplations beside the rational advantage perceivable in them, there is a great moral necessity from his goodness that the internal sense of men should be constituted as it is at present so as to make uniformity amidst variety the occasion of pleasure.<sup>151</sup>

This argument was to follow natural jurists such as Pufendorf, when Hutcheson decided to defend the Deity not as the creator of the positive community, but as that of the negative community. Unlike Shaftesbury and the early-modern neo-Stoics, Hutcheson preferred to see the Deity as the source of our capacity for sociability, by virtue of his having given men a sense of beauty, rather than for having given them a common ownership of property. In other words, Hutcheson believed that the sense of beauty, rather than the existence of property, was the faculty on which sociability depended. Here Hutcheson emphasised the Christian dimensions of his arguments more systematically than Shaftesbury. His understanding of the sense of beauty as endowed in man universally, timelessly and indifferently might reflect his Calvinist or Presbyterian thinking. The point at issue was crucial because it seemed to show that the pursuit of wealth and power was driven by benevolent as well as self-regarding passions:

... the gratifications of our internal senses are as natural, real, and satisfying enjoyments as any sensible pleasure whatsoever, and ... they are the chief ends for which we commonly pursue wealth or power. ... there are ... objects of these internal senses which require wealth or power to produce the use of them as frequently as we desire: as appears in architecture, music, gardening, painting, dress, equipage, furniture, of which we cannot have the full enjoyment without property. And there are some confused imaginations which often lead us to pursue property even in objects where it is not necessary to the true enjoyment of them.<sup>152</sup>

... these internal sensations may be overlooked in our philosophical inquiries about the human faculties, we shall find in fact that they employ us more and are more efficacious in life, either to our pleasure, or uneasiness, than all our external senses taken together.<sup>153</sup>

In this way, Hutcheson could show the way men could acquire wealth and power with the help of human passions and sentiments that should not necessarily be 'private vices', but simply disinterested and innocent endowments even in the negative community. Hutcheson's first treatise was thus his refutation of the first half of Mandeville's paradox, 'private vices'.

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<sup>151</sup> *BOHD*, VIII. II, p. 92.

<sup>152</sup> *BOHD*, VIII. I, pp. 87-8.

Hutcheson's second treatise, *An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil*, which was juxtaposed with the first treatise in *Beauty and Virtue*, went on to examine what Hutcheson called a moral sense, which worked with the sense of beauty he had described in the first treatise. This treatise was going to be his refutation of the second half of Mandeville's paradox, 'public benefits'. He began by emphasising the disinterestedness of moral good and evil: moral goodness was 'our Idea of some Quality apprehended in Actions, which procures Approbation, and Love toward the Actor, from those who receive no Advantage by the Action'. Moral evil was 'our Idea of a contrary Quality, which excites Aversion, and Dislike toward the Actor, even from Persons unconcern'd in its natural Tendency'.<sup>154</sup> The argument, that the passions of love and dislike provoked by moral good and evil had nothing to do with self-interest, was in parallel with the preceding account in the first treatise concerning beauty. For, Hutcheson immediately pointed out that our sense of pleasure, occasioned both in a sense of beauty and a moral sense alike, preceded advantage or self-interest:

Our Perception of Pleasure is necessary, and nothing is Advantageous or naturally Good to us, but what is apt to raise Pleasure mediately, or immediately. ... Thus Meats, Drink, Harmony, fine Prospects, Painting, Statues, are perceiv'd by our Senses to be immediately Good; and our Reason shews Riches and Power to be mediately so, that is, apt to furnish us with Objects of immediate Pleasure: and both Kinds of these natural Goods are pursu'd from Interest, or Self-Love.<sup>155</sup>

Hutcheson's objection to Hobbes and Mandeville was explicit here, and he frequently repeated that his objective was to prove that morals were not solely motivated by self-interest, but inferred from our sentiments of love and respect for rational agents who behaved benevolently to us.<sup>156</sup> Unlike what Mandeville had claimed before, therefore, moral praise would not always be given to any politician who had been useful to the defence of his country. We would hate a traitor even though he is thought to favour us; and on the other hand we might praise a gallant

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<sup>153</sup> *BOHD*, VIII. I, p. 89.

<sup>154</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil*, in *British Moralists*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1897), p. 69 (abbreviated as *MGE* below).

<sup>155</sup> *MGE*, pp. 70-1.

<sup>156</sup> *MGE*, pp. 71-4.

enemy who is yet pernicious to us.<sup>157</sup> Yet, by following the dictate of our senses of both beauty and morals, we would fulfil not only the public good but also our private interest at once:

That as the AUTHOR of Nature had determin'd us to receive, by our external Senses, pleasant or disagreeable Ideas of Objects, according as they are useful or hurtful to our Bodys; and to receive from uniform Objects the Pleasures of Beauty and Harmony, to excite us to the Pursuit of Knowledge, and to reward us for it; or to be an Argument to us of his Goodness, as the Uniformity it self proves his Existence, whether we had a sense of Beauty in Uniformity or not: in the same manner he has given us a MORAL SENSE, to direct our Actions, and to give us still nobler Pleasures; so that while we are only intending the Good of others, we undesignedly promote our own greatest private Good.<sup>158</sup>

Our sense of beauty and our moral sense make it possible to pursue the good of others along with our private interest, both external and moral, from the disinterested motive of those sentiments. Hence Mandeville's paradox, 'private vices, public benefits', was false. Hence also Mandeville's remark 'that the Moral Virtues are the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride' was neither true nor necessary for Hutcheson.<sup>159</sup>

The second pivotal point of Hutcheson's moral sense theory, however, looks even more striking. Hutcheson went on to show how a moral sense was able to approve of the selfish passions as not only innocent but virtuous. Hutcheson began with the passions of love and hatred, of which Mandeville had offered one of his most impressive criticisms. Hutcheson first asked of the passions of love and hatred, which he considered the most important affections in morals: 'Whether they can be influenc'd by Motives of Self-Interest'.<sup>160</sup> He answered: 'Since then, no Love to rational Agents can proceed from Self-Interest, every Action must be disinterested, as far as it flows from Love to rational Agents'.<sup>161</sup> This led him to conclude 'That there must be some other Motive than Self-Love, or Interest, which excites us to the Actions we call Virtuous',<sup>162</sup> and to argue that this was a new proof of the existence

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<sup>157</sup> *MGE*, pp. 80-1. Mandeville's account at issue is in *FB*, 3rd ed., pp. 34 and 36. Hutcheson used the third edition of *The Fable of the Bees* (1724). Hutcheson's remark followed a summary of his view on the approbation of others by our moral sense (*MGE*, p. 80).

<sup>158</sup> *MGE*, p. 83.

<sup>159</sup> *FB*, I, p. 51.

<sup>160</sup> *MGE*, p. 85.

<sup>161</sup> *MGE*, p. 87.

<sup>162</sup> *MGE*, p. 90.

of the moral sense.<sup>163</sup> This allowed him to challenge Mandeville's view that the love of parents for their children was a product of self-interest. Mandeville had argued that the natural affection of parents for their children was weak until their children begin to show the signs of knowledge and affection.<sup>164</sup> Hutcheson replied that, first, 'we may find in some Parents an Affection towards Idiots', and second, 'The observing of Understanding and Affections in Children, which make them appear moral Agents, can increase Love toward them without Prospect of Interest; ... pray, may not this be a Foundation of weaker degrees of Love where there is no proceeding tie of Parentage, and extend it to all Mankind?'<sup>165</sup> He also thought that conjugal love was evidence of a determination 'to study the Interest of others, without any Views of private Advantage', strongly proving that benevolence to be natural to us:<sup>166</sup>

Here we may remark the manner in which NATURE leads Mankind to the Continuance of their Race, and by its strongest Power engages them to what occasions the greatest Toil and Anxiety of Life; and yet supports them under it with an inexpressible delight. ... how dull and insipid had Life been, were there no more [than a Desire or a Love of sensual Pleasure] in MARRIAGE? Who would have had Resolution enough to bear all the Cares of a Family, and Education of Children? Or who, from the general Motive of Benevolence alone, would have chosen to subject himself to natural Affection toward an Offspring, when he could so easily foresee what Troubles it might occasion?<sup>167</sup>

This enabled him to conclude that 'The ordinary Springs of Vice then among Men, must be a mistaken Self-Love, made so violent as to overcome Benevolence; or Affections arising from false, and rashly form'd Opinions of Mankind, which we run into thro the weakness of our Benevolence'.<sup>168</sup>

This line of argument would finally lead him to an important conclusion that the selfish passions are not vicious in themselves but innocent or even virtuous, if directed by a moral sense. Hutcheson's argument here concerned the selfish passions of ambition and shame. He defined the former as 'to delight in the good Opinion and Love of others, even when we expect no other Advantage from them' and as an

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<sup>163</sup> *MGE*, p. 94.

<sup>164</sup> *FB*, 3rd ed., p. 68.

<sup>165</sup> *MGE*, pp. 95-6.

<sup>166</sup> *MGE*, p. 140.

<sup>167</sup> *MGE*, p. 151.

<sup>168</sup> *MGE*, p. 103.

immediate good.<sup>169</sup> On the other hand, the latter, 'a grievous Sensation of Misery, from the unfavourable Opinions of others concerning us, even when we dread no other Evil from them', is an immediate evil.<sup>170</sup> As seen, Hutcheson's attitude toward the passion of ambition was favourable, and he distinguished it from 'a violent desire of Honour, and of Power' as a 'base Means to obtain them'.<sup>171</sup> Hence, the selfish passions of ambition and shame were both based on the 'strong Determination in our Nature to Gratitude, and Love toward our Benefactors ... which are exceedingly necessary to the Order and Happiness of human Society'.<sup>172</sup> For, 'were there no moral Sense, or had we no other Idea of Actions but as advantageous or hurtful, I see no reason why we should be delighted with Honour, or subjected to the uneasiness of Shame'.<sup>173</sup> Such passions are selfish but at the same time virtuous:

Ambition, or Love of Honour is really selfish; but then this Determination to love Honour, presupposes a Sense of moral Virtue, both in the Persons who confer the Honour, and in him who pursues it. And let it be observed, that if we knew an Agent had no other Motive of Action than Ambition, we should apprehend no Virtue even in his most useful Actions, since they flow'd not from any Love to others, or Desire of their Happiness.<sup>174</sup>

Hutcheson's conception of ambition as selfish as well as virtuous implies that Hutcheson thought that virtue was in some sense useful. Were anything useful accounted also as virtuous, it would not be necessary to make a distinction between ambition as vicious or virtuous, as Mandeville had elaborated. The key issue in Hutcheson's system was again his handling of the moral sense theory. If a moral sense is a basis of ambition, then it would be possible for the ambitious to love the public or to study the good of others, even when pretending to do so only for the sake of the pleasure of honour. In this sense, sociability was still sustainable without 'private vices' but with honour as 'an additional Motive to Virtue'.<sup>175</sup> This would be completing Hutcheson's explicit criticism of Mandeville's account of virtue as 'the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride' to the purposes of self-love in

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<sup>169</sup> *MGE*, p. 130.

<sup>170</sup> *MGE*, p. 131.

<sup>171</sup> *MGE*, pp. 130-1.

<sup>172</sup> *MGE*, p. 130.

<sup>173</sup> *MGE*, p. 131.

<sup>174</sup> *MGE*, p. 132.

<sup>175</sup> *MGE*, p. 132.



the flatterer.<sup>176</sup>

Hutcheson's final point in this second strand of argument was that, in a state of negative community, selfish passions such as ambition were not only innocent but necessary:

The Actions which flow solely from Self-Love, and yet evidence no Want of Benevolence, having no hurtful Effects upon others, seem perfectly indifferent in a Moral Sense, and neither raise the Love or Hatred of the Observer. Our Reason can indeed discover certain Bounds, within which we may not only act from Self-Love, consistently with the Good of the Whole, but every Mortal's acting thus within these Bounds for his own Good, is absolutely necessary for the Good of the Whole; and the Want of such Self-Love would be universally pernicious.<sup>177</sup>

Thus, if ambition was innocent and even virtuous, the pursuit of wealth and power would be a means of generating virtue and hence of honour:

Wealth and Power, the great Engines of Virtue, when presum'd to be intended for benevolent Purposes, either toward our Friends or our Country, procure Honour from others, and are apt to beget Pride in the Possessor; which as it is a general Passion which may be either good or evil, according as it is grounded, we may describe to be the Joy which arises from the real or imagin'd Possession of Honour, or Claim to it.<sup>178</sup>

Hutcheson's conception of the passion of pride thus shows how that 'general' passion which is neither moral nor evil successfully contributes to 'public benefits' by exciting ambition and the love of honour which is impossible if only with private advantage in view and without the love of others. Flourishing, therefore, is not necessarily motivated by the vicious: hence Mandeville's paradox was wrong. This theme was further developed in his *Passions and Affections* examined below.

Hutcheson's, and originally Shaftesbury's, analogy between beauty and virtue came from his view of the sense of beauty as an internal, and not an external, sense. The sense of beauty, harmony and proportion is a *reflex* sense, because it presupposes the function of the external senses of sight and hearing. It should be called an internal sense in order to distinguish its perceptions from the mere perceptions of sight and hearing, and because 'in some other affairs, where our external senses are not much concerned, we discern a sort of beauty, very like, in many respects, to that observed in sensible objects, and accompanied with like

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<sup>176</sup> *MGE*, pp. 133-4.

<sup>177</sup> *MGE*, p. 103.

<sup>178</sup> *MGE*, p. 137.

pleasure'.<sup>179</sup> The sense of beauty therefore perceives beauty not only in external objects, but also in universal truth, in the operation of general causes (the beauty of history), and in virtuous characters and actions.<sup>180</sup> This is why the sense of beauty perceives beauty wherever there is uniformity amidst variety.<sup>181</sup>

Such a formulation of the analogy between beauty and virtue was the foundation of his language of beauty, in which the word 'beauty' was meant and used as encompassing 'wealth' and 'virtue'. In Japanese, for example, the word 'virtue' came to signify not only moral virtue but also an increasingly broad range of 'strengths', even economic and financial, amidst the expansion of commerce around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Early-modern moralists and political economists in Japan therefore began to use the term 'virtue' as synonymous with 'wealth', in addressing the relationship between 'wealth' and 'virtue' in the newly-emerging commercial society. This is not the case in English, so the word 'beauty' was introduced by Hutcheson into the debate concerning the relationship between 'wealth' and 'virtue', as a bridge between 'wealth' and 'virtue', and the theory of beauty consequently became *the* crucial battleground in the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy.<sup>182</sup>

Hutcheson's second major work, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728), was in some ways a development of his moral sense theory elaborated in his previous two treatises. The work again consists of two treatises, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions*, which is sometimes called the third treatise, and

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<sup>179</sup> BOHD, I.

<sup>180</sup> Fowler, p. 210.

<sup>181</sup> Fowler, p. 211.

<sup>182</sup> The relationship between 'wealth' and 'virtue' was an issue in the emergence of commerce also in early modern Japan. The Kaitokudo Academy, set up in Osaka by Osaka merchants, was a venue for developing the debate, teaching manners of commerce to the urban residents. See Tetsuo Najita (1987). Baien Miura (1723-89), one of the moralists and political economists at the time, was almost reminiscent of his contemporary, Smith. Miura began his study in astronomy, went on to ethics and politics, and eventually wrote a treatise on market economy (1773), centrally concerned with the 'reason' or 'logos' going through the nature, morals and society. The parallel of the issue and the course of discourse in the early stage of commercial civilisation seems indissoluble (dreadfully, Japan even got a corrupt *de facto* premier called Okitsugu Tanuma (1719-88), an equivalent of Robert Walpole), though both Smith and Miura shared the Dutch intellectual tradition, more or less.

*Illustrations upon the Moral Sense*, in the same manner called the fourth treatise. The third treatise began with his review of the 'natural powers in the human mind', which was developed to confirm what had already been discussed. He had discussed the external senses, a sense of beauty, a public sense, a moral sense, and a sense of honour in the second treatise.<sup>183</sup> But his particular attention now fell on a public sense, 'our Determination to be pleased with the *happiness* of others, and to be uneasy at their *misery*',<sup>184</sup> possibly to provide a further refutation of Mandeville's term 'public benefits'. Hutcheson began with his redefinition of the term 'public sense' as 'sympathy', and which, he was anxious to prove, was by no means 'private vices', or even a selfish desire:

That this *sympathy* with others is the effect of the constitution of our nature, and not brought upon our selves by any choice, with view to any selfish advantage, they must own: whatever advantage there may be in sympathy with the fortunate, none can be alleged in sympathy with the distressed: and everyone feels that this public sense will not leave his heart, upon any change of the fortunes of his child or friend; nor does it depend upon a man's choice, whether he will be affected with their fortunes or not.<sup>185</sup>

The argument here, that men are capable of benevolence, completed his objectives set out in the preface of the third treatise: extending his argument that virtues are natural and not artificial, to a discussion of public affections<sup>186</sup> and, even more crucially, to the question of wealth and power:

... as soon as we come to apprehend the use of wealth or power to gratify any of our original desires, we must also desire them. Hence arises the universality of the desires of Wealth and Power, since they are the means of gratifying all other desires. How foolish then is the inference, some would make, from the universal prevalence of these desires, that human nature is wholly selfish, or that each one is only studious of his own advantage; since wealth or power are as naturally fit to gratify our *public Desires*, or to serve virtuous purposes, as the *selfish* ones?

How weak also are the reasonings of some recluse moralists, who condemn in general all pursuits of wealth or power, as below a perfectly virtuous character: since wealth and power are the most effectual *means*, and the most powerful *instruments*, even of the greatest virtues, and most generous actions? The pursuit of them is laudable, when the intention is virtuous; and the neglect of them, when honourable opportunities offer, is really a weakness.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728); ed. Andrew Ward (Manchester, 1999), pp. 12-3 (abbreviated as *Passions* below).

<sup>184</sup> *Passions*, p. 13.

<sup>185</sup> *Passions*, p. 17. See also pp. 18-22, especially p. 20.

<sup>186</sup> *Passions*, p. 7.

<sup>187</sup> *Passions*, pp. 14-5.

His issue here was to explore how to obtain 'the general calm desire of private good of any kind, which alone would incline us to pursue whatever objects were apprehended as the means of good, and the particular selfish Passions, such as *ambition, covetousness, hunger, lust, revenge, anger*, as they arise upon particular occasions'.<sup>188</sup> Again, the moral sense was his solution, with its enlarged roles in controlling the passions:

We obtain command over the particular passions, principally by strengthening the general desire through frequent reflection, and making them *habitual*, so as to obtain strength superior to the particular passions.<sup>189</sup>

Our *moral Sense*, though it approves all particular kind affection or passion, as well as calm particular benevolence abstractly considered; yet it also approves the restraint or limitation of all particular affections or passions, by the calm universal benevolence. To make this desire prevalent above all particular Affections, is the only sure way to obtain constant *Self-Approbation*.<sup>190</sup>

The selfish passions, therefore, if directed toward benevolence by a moral sense, would be approved in pursuing private good. The focus here though was rather more on the passions than the moral sense, for Hutcheson refined his definition of passions so as to evaluate their virtuous characteristics and thereby vitiate Mandeville's account of passions as entirely vicious:

When the word *passion* is imagined to denote anything different from the affections, it includes, beside the desire or aversion, beside the calm joy upon apprehended possession of good, or sorrow from the loss of it, or from impending evil, a *confused Sensation* either of pleasure or pain, occasioned or attended by some violent bodily motions which keeps the mind much enjoyed upon the present affair, to the exclusion of every thing else, and prolongs or strengthens the affection sometimes to such a degree, as to prevent all *deliberate reasoning* about our conduct.<sup>191</sup>

It would be why, in the third treatise, passions are frequently presented as desires, in terms of their unpredictable traits. His elaboration of his moral sense theory in the third treatise was accordingly developed from his new understanding of the passions. Here Hutcheson was again particularly concerned with ambition. Ambition was not to pursue ourselves too far so as to end up with pain, since pain was not a necessary consequence of the desire itself, but was due to the 'uneasy confused sensations,

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<sup>188</sup> *Passions*, p. 24.

<sup>189</sup> *Passions*, p. 24.

<sup>190</sup> *Passions*, p. 25.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy which often occasion fretfulness, anxiety, and impatience',<sup>192</sup> or in other words, delusions. Yet, in Hutcheson's view, such confused sensations or passions are necessary and therefore endowed by Nature, in view of the human weakness of reasoning and knowledge, in order to preserve the human species still in need of supporting itself by its labour.<sup>193</sup>

... without a great deal of human labour and many dangers, this earth could not support the tenth part of its inhabitants. Our nature therefore required a sensation, accompanying its desires of the *Means of Preservation*, capable to surmount the uneasiness of labour: this we have in the pains or uneasiness accompanying the desires of food.<sup>194</sup>

Now Hutcheson came so far as to affirm the needs of not only passions themselves but their confused sensations or delusions and hence the consequent pain brought about by living sociably in the negative community.

As expected, his approval of such delusions due to passions then led Hutcheson into his further defence of the indifference of passions to self-interest.

... how few of our passions can be any way deduced from *Self-Love*, or desire of private advantage: and how improbable it is, that persons in the heat of action have any of those subtle reflections, and selfish intentions, which some philosophers invent for them: how great a part of the commotions of our minds arise upon the *moral Sense*, and from *public Affections* toward the good of others.<sup>195</sup>

Every Passion or Affection in its *moderate degree* is innocent, many are directly amiable, and *morally good*: we have senses and affections leading us to *public Good*, as well as *private*; to *Virtue*, as well as to external *Pleasure*.<sup>196</sup>

Hutcheson also offered a meticulously casuistical account of various passions in various circumstances,<sup>197</sup> but this was simply a meticulous attempt to show how passions were necessary and virtuous and therefore had to be regarded as disinterested.

But the shift of Hutcheson's emphasis at issue in the third treatise was

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<sup>191</sup> *Passions*, pp. 23-4.

<sup>192</sup> *Passions*, pp. 31-2.

<sup>193</sup> *Passions*, p. 34.

<sup>194</sup> *Passions*, p. 35.

<sup>195</sup> *Passions*, p. 50.

<sup>196</sup> *Passions*, p. 51.

<sup>197</sup> *Passions*, pp. 43-50.

designed to show that 'our passions are not so much in our power'.<sup>198</sup> Opinions, confused ideas or strange association of ideas, fancy or delusions would therefore represent quite particular kinds of gratification that would be of great importance and furnish us with endless labour and misery:

The common effect of these Associations of Ideas is this, 'that they raise the passions into an extravagant degree, beyond the proportion of real good in the object: and commonly beget some secret opinions to justify the passions. But then the *Confutation* of these false opinions is not sufficient to break the *Associations*, so that the desire or passion shall continue, even when our understanding has suggested to us that the object is not good, or not proportioned to the strength of the desire.'<sup>199</sup>

... if this sense or desire of beauty itself be accompanied with the desire of possession or property; if we let it be guided by custom, and receive associations of foreign ideas in our fancy of dress, equipage, furniture, retinue; if we relish only the modes of the great, or the marks of distinction as beautiful; if we let such desires grow strong, we must be very great indeed, before we can have any pleasure by this sense: and every disappointment or change of fortune must make us miserable. ... A violent desire of distinction and eminence may bring on vexation and sorrow for the longest life.<sup>200</sup>

In other words, if our passions are beyond our control and calculation, they would not necessarily save our interests and could not therefore be regarded as necessarily selfish.

It would be of interest here to see whether, even if Hutcheson had eagerly rejected the Mandevillian claim of the selfishness of passions, he still had somehow to reconcile the violent and therefore, possibly, vicious and painful consequences of those passions in pursuing wealth in order to supply the needs of life and 'public benefits'. His response was that the abuse or misuse of the desire for wealth and power would be prevented by our ability to appreciate their genuine utility:

The *Desire of Wealth* must be as necessary as any other desires of our nature, as soon as we apprehend the usefulness of wealth to gratify all other desires. While it is desired as the means of something farther, the desire tends to our happiness, proportionably to the good economy of the *principal Desires* to which it is made subservient. It is in every man's power, by a little reflection, to prevent the madness and enthusiasm with which wealth is insatiably pursued, even for itself, without any direct intention of using it. The consideration of the small addition often made by wealth to the happiness of the possessor, may check this desire, and prevent that insatiability which sometimes attends it.

*Power* in like manner is desired as the means of gratifying other original desires; nor can the

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<sup>198</sup> *Passions*, p. 52. This assumption is crucial not only here but to all of Hutcheson's moral philosophy, precisely because his case is consistently that benevolent affections are so natural to us that we have to assume the existence of a moral sense.

<sup>199</sup> *Passions*, p. 55.

<sup>200</sup> *Passions*, pp. 58-9. See also pp. 54, 57 and 85.

desire be avoided by those who apprehend its usefulness. It is easy to prevent the extravagance of this desire, and many of its consequent pains, by considering 'the danger of affecting it by injurious means, supporting it by force, without consent of the subject, and employing it to *private Interest*, in opposition to *public Good*.'<sup>201</sup>

This is the case of the temperate and the chaste, with relation to the appetites; of the men of *Moderation* and *Frugality*, and *corrected Fancy*, with regard to the pleasures of imagination; of the humble and the content, as to honour, wealth or power. Such persons upon good success, want only the first transitory ecstasies; but have a full and lively sense of all the lasting good in the objects of their pursuit; and yet are in a great measure secure against both the uneasiness of violent desire, and the dejection of mind, and abject sorrow upon disappointment, or upon their being exposed to the contrary evils.<sup>202</sup>

The vital point is that Hutcheson admitted the shift of direction of the passions in a modern commercial age, from needs toward greed, which Mandeville had mischievously emphasised and tactically made use of to prove his claim that the passions were therefore 'private vices' but necessary for 'public benefits'. But Hutcheson did not agree with Mandeville's paradox that those passions were necessary for supplying the needs of life and gratifying other public desires. Mandeville had thought that frugality was harmful to the 'public benefits' because of its effect on consumption. Hutcheson thought it useful to correct delusions and render passions virtuous.

Hutcheson's solution to the problem of correcting the passions relied in his belief that we could 'refine' our 'taste'.

It is in vain to allege, 'that there is no disputing about tastes:' to every nature there are certain *Tastes* assigned by the great Author of all. To the human race there are assigned a *public taste*, a *moral one*, and a *taste for honour*. These senses they cannot extirpate, more than their external senses: they may pervert them, and weaken them by false opinions, and foolish associations of ideas; but they cannot be happy but by keeping them in their natural state, and gratifying them.<sup>203</sup>

With such true tastes and sentiments, we should be able to distinguish and compare the pleasures of wealth and those of luxury, as the former is the means of happiness to the virtuous, whereas the latter is an endless source of agony:

... wealth and power give greater happiness to the *Virtuous*, than to those who consult only *Luxury* or *external Splendour*. If these desires are grown enthusiastic and habitual, without regard to any other end than *Possession*, they are an endless source of vexation, without any real enjoyment; a perpetual craving, without nourishment or digestion; and they may surmount all

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<sup>201</sup> *Passions*, p. 62.

<sup>202</sup> *Passions*, pp. 67-8.

<sup>203</sup> *Passions*, p. 72. See also p. 91.

other affections, by aids borrowed from other affections themselves.<sup>204</sup>

As far as the desire for wealth is directed by proper tastes, there is to be no commitment to vice, for wealth is necessary to supply needs as well as to gratify other desires including those for 'public benefits'.<sup>205</sup>

Hutcheson's fourth treatise, *Illustrations on Moral Sense*, was then a reappraisal of the role of the moral sense in controlling the passions and desires, and addressed questions which had not been sufficiently dealt with in the second treatise. Hutcheson first reconstructed his questions concerning the nature and motives of moral sense: 'first, 'What *Quality* in any action determines our *Election* of it rather than the contrary?' Or, if the mind determines itself, 'What *Motives* or *Desires* excite to an action, rather than the contrary, or rather than to the omission?' Second, 'What quality determines our *Approbation* of one action, rather than of the contrary action?'<sup>206</sup> His answer was developed in his evaluation of his moral sense theory. Hutcheson immediately rejected the traditional Old Epicurean response explained in Cicero's *De Finibus*, and that of Hobbes, which had attributed all the desires of the human mind to self-love, or the desire of private happiness. For Hutcheson, such views could not account for the principal actions of human life such as friendship and gratitude, as well as the sudden approbation in actions done in distant ages and nations, which would have nothing to do with the approver's private happiness.<sup>207</sup> Instead, the fact was

<sup>204</sup> *Passions*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>205</sup> See also *Passions*, p. 101. It was a received understanding that good tastes are the necessary condition for the refinement of passions as well as the development of civilisation. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, & c.* (2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1778), 'Taste', pp. 8544-6: 'There are vast countries where taste has not yet been able to penetrate. Such are those uncultivated wastes, where civil society has never been brought to any degree of perfection, where there is little intercourse between the sexes, and where all representations of living creatures in painting and sculpture are severely prohibited by the laws of religion. Nothing renders the mind so narrow, and so little, if we may use that expression, as the want of social intercourse; this confines its faculties, blunts the edge of genius, damps every noble passion, and leaves in a state of languor and inactivity every principle that could contribute to the formation of true taste'.

<sup>206</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *Illustrations on Moral Sense* (1728), in *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, ed. Andrew Ward (Manchester, 1999), p. 107 (abbreviated as *MS* below).

<sup>207</sup> *MS*, pp. 108-9.



that we have not only *Self-Love*, but *benevolent Affections* also towards others, in various degrees, making us desire their happiness as an *ultimate End*, without any view to private happiness: that we have a *moral Sense* or determination of our mind, to approve every kind of [*sic*] affection either in ourselves or others, and all publicly useful actions which we imagined flow from such affection, without our having a view to our private happiness, in our approbation of these actions.<sup>208</sup>

His point here is, again, that a moral sense approves not only benevolent but also publicly useful affections and actions. In Hutcheson's view, the moral sense was the mechanism which made it possible for us to direct our passions to the public good. To examine how to establish compatibility between the contrary motives of self-love and 'public benefits', or in other words, sociability, was exactly what Hutcheson regarded as the core of moral philosophy:

To represent these motives of self-interest, to engage men to publicly useful actions, is certainly the most necessary point in morals. This has been so well done by the ancient moralists, by Dr. Cumberland, Puffendorf, Grotius, Shaftesbury; it is made so certain ... that no man who considers these things, can ever imagine he can have any possible *interest* in opposing the public good; or in checking or restraining his kind affections, his very self-love and regard to his private good might excite him to publicly useful actions, and dissuade from the contrary.<sup>209</sup>

On the other hand, though in many cases virtues reflect a calm undisturbed temper, which may be the effect of rational choice, they are also to be derived from affections or desires, and even from some implanted instincts. As seen above, the opinion that otherwise there could be no action of any kind, was Hutcheson's pivotal view of the passions.<sup>210</sup> If virtuous actions had to be, as Hutcheson thought, both innocent and meritorious, or useful to the public, a mere inactivity is not approved by a moral sense, as it is not meritorious to anyone, even though possibly innocent. In this sense, Hutcheson might have disagreed with the idea of a negative virtue of justice, like the one fulfilled by a man sitting in a room and doing nothing. For, his inactivity is not meritorious enough to supply the essentials of life even for himself, and consequently he would starve.<sup>211</sup> Whatever is vital for actions, such as affections, desires, instincts or passions, is necessary for human survival, and

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<sup>208</sup> *MS*, p. 109.

<sup>209</sup> *MS*, p. 140.

<sup>210</sup> *MS*, p. 146.

<sup>211</sup> To Hutcheson's theory of justice, I come back in Chapter Three below, when I discuss about his *A System of Moral Philosophy*.

therefore actions have to equip such qualities to be approved as virtuous.<sup>212</sup> Thus, by the end of his fourth treatise, Hutcheson left no room for himself to show any concession to Mandeville's paradox. By connecting his own name on the title-page with that of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson immediately made clear that he was to follow Shaftesbury. He accordingly developed Shaftesbury's arguments of the analogy between beauty and virtue, the functions of the moral sense, benevolent feelings as an original and irreducible part of human nature, and the standard of virtue as its tendency to promote the general welfare.<sup>213</sup> The moral sense is 'moral sense of beauty in actions and affections, by which we perceive virtue or vice, in ourselves or others',<sup>214</sup> which pronounces immediately and instinctively on the character of actions and affections, approving those which are virtuous and disapproving of those which are vicious.<sup>215</sup> But Hutcheson did so in order to defend the sense of beauty and the moral sense for their roles in the negative community. Unlike Shaftesbury, Hutcheson saw the source of our capacity for sociability in our sense of beauty and our moral sense, rather than in the existence of property in the positive community. For example, Hutcheson did not confuse the moral sense or moral faculty with the moral standard. Certainly, Shaftesbury would have agreed with Hutcheson that the moral criterion was its tendency to promote the general welfare of the public. Hutcheson's view of human nature as benevolent, however, maintained not only that benevolence is the sole and direct source of our actions, but also that it is the only source of actions approved as virtuous, against Hobbes's and Mandeville's view of human nature as selfish.<sup>216</sup> Hutcheson's view was that actions from self-love, such as prudence, temperance, cleanliness, industry, self-respect and other 'personal virtues', are morally neutral, and neither necessarily vicious, because they are some of the very conditions for the preservation of individuals and society in the negative community, nor necessarily virtuous.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> In this sense, the bare absence of all malice is not enough to be approved as innocent, because it still lacks moral goodness. Rather, a positive evil for the sake of positive good to others may be approved as even more virtuous than innocence. See *MS*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>213</sup> Fowler, p. 183.

<sup>214</sup> Fowler, p. 184.

<sup>215</sup> Fowler, p. 185.

<sup>216</sup> Fowler, pp. 193-4.

<sup>217</sup> Fowler, pp. 194-5.

It has been widely believed that Hutcheson's moral standard was utilitarian.<sup>218</sup> I argue that Hutcheson's moral standard was not a utilitarian one, since the moral sense was regarded as acting immediately and instinctively. 'The Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number' was simply assumed to be achieved, only as a result, and not as an intention or criterion, if the moral sense acted properly: that is, immediately and instinctively, without involving any calculation of either private or public advantage.

Like Shaftesbury's, Hutcheson's attitude toward Mandeville was determined by his Whig beliefs. Irish Presbyterian youths were ineligible for admission to Trinity College, Dublin, or to Oxford or Cambridge Universities, so that they were obliged to opt for Scotland for their higher education. Many of them were therefore carefully prepared for their Scottish university careers in dissenting academies.<sup>219</sup> One of these academies was established in Dublin by Hutcheson after he had returned from Glasgow to Dublin in 1718. Those students from Ireland who arrived in Glasgow during this period showed a flair for student politics, for clubs, student societies and for the theatre.<sup>220</sup> Their target was the Augustinian mentality of orthodox Calvinist instructors such as Loudon and Carmichael. The texts they used, such as Malebranche and Pufendorf, were Augustinian in their theology, convinced of the sin of fallen man and of the gulf separating his sensations, imagination, passions, morals and politics from the ideal or heavenly world brought through divine grace.<sup>221</sup> Students around Hutcheson were in correspondence at this time with a friend of Shaftesbury, Robert Molesworth, who had retired to Dublin in 1722 and found in some of them an audience for his Whig ideology of virtue and liberty.<sup>222</sup> They were encouraged by Molesworth's concern for the absence of liberty and virtue in the Scottish universities. Molesworth responded to William Wishart and George Turnbull, who wrote letters to him, with recommended readings for students of moral

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<sup>218</sup> For example, Fowler, pp. 189-93, which concludes that Hutcheson's description of the moral sense as acting immediately and instinctively on the one hand and his utilitarian moral standard requiring so much care and reflection in its application on the other were inconsistent.

<sup>219</sup> James Moore (1990), p. 43.

<sup>220</sup> Moore (1990), p. 45.

<sup>221</sup> Moore (1990), p. 44.

philosophy: Machiavelli's *Discourses*, Harrington's *Oceana*, and the writings of his friend, Shaftesbury.<sup>223</sup> Hutcheson's early treatises on moral philosophy were written in this context of Polite Whiggism as part of a campaign waged by the friends of Molesworth for the reform of higher education in Scotland and Ireland.<sup>224</sup> Hutcheson's early treatises manifest a coherence in opposing the selfish systems of natural jurisprudence of Pufendorf and Locke, as well as various forms of Augustinian dualism in aesthetics, ethics and psychology, most notoriously enunciated in Mandeville. This was a systematic and powerful attack on the ideas and materials used in the Presbyterian academies and the Scottish universities.<sup>225</sup> Mandeville's claims that human nature is vicious and that all motivations are necessarily 'private vices', directly challenged the core of Hutcheson's philosophy delineating man's natural sociability and of his account of the benevolent nature of the social sentiments.<sup>226</sup> As a Polite Whig, Hutcheson began by harnessing Mandeville's arguments to a natural law tradition he regarded as the narrowly self-love-based account of sociability and moral conduct associated also with Hobbes, Pufendorf and Locke.<sup>227</sup> Hutcheson presented his theory of beauty and virtue by enlarging the concept of sociability developed in modern natural law theory, partly accepted in the Polite Whig circles, and infusing the broader moral characteristic in human nature.<sup>228</sup> Hutcheson therefore wrote *Beauty and Virtue* (1725) against the Radical Whig Locke as well as against the Court Whig Mandeville. Along with Shaftesbury, Hutcheson criticised Locke for his misrepresentation of beauty, virtue, the passions and the affections, when he derived all ideas of good and evil from relation to a law and its sanctions. Endeavouring to distance himself from natural law theorists and from Mandeville, Hutcheson was determined to show that our ideas of beauty and virtue were independent from any law, interest or custom, or education, but were real ideas, perceived by internal senses quite distinct from the

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<sup>222</sup> Moore (1990), pp. 45-6.

<sup>223</sup> Moore (1990), p. 46.

<sup>224</sup> Moore (1990), p. 47. Moore describes the context as the Country Whig, rather than the Polite Whig.

<sup>225</sup> Moore (1990), p. 53.

<sup>226</sup> Hundert, pp. 78-9.

<sup>227</sup> Hundert, p. 79.

<sup>228</sup> Hundert, p. 80.

dependent and contingent sensations of the external senses. A beautiful object or a work of art is perceived by our distinctive sensibility as an idea which attends the peculiar pleasures of the internal sense. Similarly, our moral approbation was not a relational judgement in accordance with a law or rule imposed upon us, but an immediate apprehension of a virtuous character by an idea of virtue.<sup>229</sup> Hutcheson's *Moral Good* (1725) was also written in opposition to a form of Augustinian dualism enunciated in Mandeville's paradox of the 'private vices, public benefits' dichotomy, a celebration of the grumbling hive-like society where every vice is asserted to contribute to the opulence and manners of the state and its subjects.<sup>230</sup> Our ideas of virtue and vice as real ideas were defended by Hutcheson against Mandeville's theory that moral ideas were fabrications cunningly devised by skilful politicians to direct the private vices of their subjects toward the public benefits of the state.<sup>231</sup> To be persuaded by politicians, Hutcheson would have argued, subjects had to have some notions of good and evil in their own mind beforehand.<sup>232</sup>

Meanwhile, Mandeville published Part Two of *The Fable of the Bees* in 1728. It took the form of dialogues, in which Horatio was supposed to be a disciple of Shaftesbury while Cleomenes represented Mandeville's own opinions.<sup>233</sup> It is worth considering this volume as a response to Hutcheson's criticism of the ideas presented in the first volume.<sup>234</sup>

As in Part I, Part II was also overwhelmingly devoted to the defence of his idea that the passion of pride is vicious yet the principal feature of human nature and society. In the second dialogue, which was intended to demonstrate 'That a most

<sup>229</sup> See Moore (1990), pp. 49-50 and Knud Haakonssen (1990), pp. 70-1.

<sup>230</sup> See Moore (1990), p. 51.

<sup>231</sup> See Moore (1990), pp. 51-2.

<sup>232</sup> See Moore (1990), p. 52.

<sup>233</sup> Fowler, p. 142. Hundert's accounts on Shaftesbury, as a Whig with both Country and Polite elements mixed, make sense as an interpretation of Shaftesbury *per se*; but not necessarily correct as that of Shaftesbury as Mandeville's target. For, Mandeville mainly treated Shaftesbury, especially in his 'Society' (1723), as a Country Whig, rather than Polite Whig. See Hundert, pp. 123-5.

<sup>234</sup> Part II was written in the form of dialogue. There are six dialogues between interlocutors called 'Horatio' and 'Cleomenes', with the exception of the first dialogue where 'Fulvia' joins. 'Horatio' was described as a man of strict honour and justice, representing Shaftesbury's ideas. On the contrary, 'Cleomenes' was set as nearest to Mandeville himself, insisting the insincerity as universal. See *FB*, II, pp. 15-21.

beautiful Superstructure may be rais'd upon a rotten and despicable Foundation', it was asserted that 'good Offices or Duties' that Cicero had argued, or 'Benevolence, Humanity, or other Social Virtue' that Shaftesbury had emphasised, were all practised from nothing other than the passion of 'Pride or Vain-glory'.<sup>235</sup> Strikingly, using Hutcheson's own language of beauty, Mandeville sought to show that 'a beautiful Order and happy Contrivance' was made use of by the passion of pride, simply to display 'Beauty and Conveniency' which were subsequently identified as 'Curiosities and Wealth'.<sup>236</sup> One of the most fascinating aspects in Part II of *The Fable of the Bees* was that the principle of pride is examined in terms of what could have been called its abstract history. In abstract thinking, where 'Use of Conjectures' was to be adopted to 'go directly to the Fountain Head, human Nature itself, and look for the Frailty or Defect in Man', instead of troubling 'with enquiring after the Time or Country', 'good Manners or Politeness' was explained as emerging from 'Self-liking' for the sake of 'Self-preservation'. As this 'Self-liking', in other words 'Self-love' or 'Pride', caused uneasiness and disturbance in the process of self-preservation, 'good Manners or Politeness' was necessarily produced and brought to perfection by labour to overcome the human infirmities. Self-liking, or the passion of pride, was 'the Mother of Hope', as well as of good manners or politeness, and, above all, 'the strongest Armour against Despair', which prevented men from suicide: because, without self-liking, men would choose suicide from self-love! In such abstract history, it could be observed that 'all this is done without reflection'.<sup>237</sup>

Such quasi-historical insight into the passion of pride was then developed into an interesting account of the progress of sociability derived from the passion of pride. Against Shaftesbury's view that men are naturally fond and desirous of society thanks to benevolence, Mandeville argued that men became sociable out of needs. In Mandeville's view, a capacity to make our wants known to each other was

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<sup>235</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 64-5.

<sup>236</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 66-7.

<sup>237</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 128-39. See also p. 146. Mandeville later pointed out that the origin of society was also the common passion of the fear of defenceless men from wild animals, as well as, at the later stage, from the dangers of fellow men due to their passions of pride and ambition. See *FB*, II, pp 247 and 266.

vital for us to look out for and acquire the needs of life. In this sense, Hobbes's claim that men became sociable only to overcome infirmity was equally questionable to Mandeville.<sup>238</sup> After all, Mandeville let 'Cleomenes' say that

I am willing to allow, that among the Motives, that prompt Man to enter into Society, there is a Desire which he has naturally after Company; but he has it for his own Sake, in hopes of being the better for it; and he would never wish for, either Company or any thing else, but for some Advantage or other he proposes to himself from it.<sup>239</sup>

In sum, Mandeville thought that men were necessarily and viciously proud and *therefore* sociable.

Such sociability, however, was to be considered as inevitably resulting in a serious outcome, as far as it was thought to be based on the vicious passion of pride. In one of the most striking and forceful analyses in *The Fable*, Mandeville charged that:

... there is no Species but ours, that are so conceited of themselves, as to imagine every thing to be theirs. The Desire of Dominion is a never-failing Consequence of the Pride, that is common to all Men; ... This good Opinion, we have of ourselves, makes Men not only claim a Right to their Children, but likewise imagine, that they have a great Share of Jurisdiction over their Grand-Children. ... the Authority, which Parents pretend to have over their Children, never ceases: How general and unreasonable this eternal Claim is naturally in the Heart of Man, we may learn from the Laws; which, to prevent the Usurpation of Parents, and rescue Children from their Dominion, every civil Society is forc'd to make; limiting parental Authority to a certain Term of Years.<sup>240</sup>

... in the Amours of Thousands [of marriage], that revel in Enjoyments, Children are reckon'd to be the greatest Calamity that can befall them; and often, what criminal Love gave Birth to, without Thought, more criminal Pride destroys, with purpos'd and considerate Cruelty. ... the Savage is not prompted to Love, from that Consideration [of the Preservation of their Species as the End of Love]: He propagates, before he knows the Consequence of it; and I much question, whether the most civiliz'd Pair, in the most chaste of their Embraces, ever acted from the Care of their Species, as a real Principle.<sup>241</sup>

With such sociability, Mandeville continued, children were produced as engines were produced by an artificer.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>238</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 176-8 and 180-1.

<sup>239</sup> *FB*, II, p. 183.

<sup>240</sup> *FB*, II, p. 204.

<sup>241</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 227-8.

<sup>242</sup> *FB*, II, p. 229. See also Bernard Mandeville, *A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases: in Three Dialogues* (2nd ed., London, 1730): 'When the crafty Tempter of Mankind, meditating their Ruin, attack'd our first Parents in their Pride, he shew'd himself profoundly skill'd in humane Nature; from which the Vice I named is so inseparable, that it is impossible the latter should be ever entirely destroy'd, as long as the first remains. ... as it was destructive to unexperienc'd

This led Mandeville to revise his views of statecraft. Mandeville now argued that the dextrous management by which skilful politicians could turn private vices into public benefits was acquired not by 'Genius, so much as Experience', for it must have been 'a great while' before they finally found out 'the true Use of the Passions'.<sup>243</sup> As government was established on the grounds of past experience, it could be compared with a machine:

... I know nothing to which the Laws and establish'd Oeconomy of a well-order'd City may be more justly compared, than the Knitting-frame. The Machine, at first view, is intricate and unintelligible; yet the Effects of it are exact and beautiful; and in what is produced by it, there is a surprising Regularity: But the Beauty and Exactness in the Manufacture are principally, if not altogether, owing to the Happiness of the Invention, the Contrivance of the Engine. ... There is something analogous to this in the Government of a flourishing City, that has lasted uninterrupted for several Ages: There is no Part of the wholesome Regulations, belonging to it, even the most trifling and minute, about which great Pains and Consideration have not been employ'd, as well as Length of Time; and if you will look into the History and Antiquity of any such City, you will find that the Changes, Repeals, Additions, and Amendments, that have been made in and to the Laws and Ordinances by which it is rules, are in Number prodigious: But that when once they are brought to as much Perfection, as Art and human Wisdom can carry them, the whole Machine may be made to play of itself, with as little Skill, as is required to wind up a Clock; and the Government of a large City, once put into good Order, the Magistrates only following their Noses, will continue to go right for a great while, tho' there was not a wise Man in it.<sup>244</sup>

'By dividing the Employments in a great Office', and 'by careful Limitations of every Man's Power', it would be possible to establish 'the utmost Regularity' and 'the whole Oeconomy' in public office.<sup>245</sup> For Mandeville, who supported Court Whig government, however, such systematisation of government was preferable, as,

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*Adam*, by bringing Sickness and Death upon him, so it has still continued to be no less pernicious to his forewarn'd Posterity, by principally obstructing the Progress of the glorious Art, that should teach the Recovery as well as Preservation of Health' (pp. iii-iv). This much less read work dealing with his original speciality consists of three fascinating conversations between a man of 'the *hypochondriack* Passion' whose daughter has been hysteric for years and a physician from abroad who has loved and settled in England, concerning the nature and practice of medicine. *The Fable of the Bees* might have been Mandeville's mischievous diagnoses of prosperous Augustan England as a hysteric hive: 'We must believe that it is in the animal Government as it is in all others; whatever Poverty the Country endures, the Court has always Plenty, and very rarely is destitute of Necessaries. It is reasonable to think, that the Soul, who has such a great Command and is so arbitrary over the Spirits, will have them (if they are to be had) for her own immediate Use; and consequently the Brain, where she keeps her more particular Residence, shall be the last Place in all the Body that wants them; and yet this often happens in hysteric Women, when any thing extraordinary disturbs them; for upon the least Violence, that hurries any Quantity of Spirits another way, the Brain remains unsupply'd, as is manifest from their fainting Fits, in which the Act of Thinking is always more or less impair'd' (*Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases*, pp. 243-4). See also pp. 332 and 363.

<sup>243</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 318-9.

<sup>244</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 322-3.



even if there might have been virtuous men, the number of such men was too small for a nation to rely on.<sup>246</sup>

As seen so far, Mandeville was still convinced by his ideas of the viciousness of the passion of pride and its paradoxical needs for public good. He attacked Shaftesbury on the grounds that, while there was nothing mean in Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks*, it had simply excluded the 'Rules or Instruction' for 'the labouring Poor, which are by far the greatest part of a Nation'.<sup>247</sup> Therefore, 'a Publick Spirit' advocated by Shaftesbury 'can never be universally felt', since it ignored 'the meanest Tradesmen'.<sup>248</sup> This was precisely why Mandeville called Shaftesbury's system 'a Theory never to be put into Practice',<sup>249</sup> possibly thereby implying the impracticality of Polite Whiggism and Whiggism in the opposition in general. After all, Mandeville criticised Shaftesbury on the grounds 'that he labour'd hard to unite two Contraries that can never be reconcil'd together, Innocence of Manners and worldly Greatness', by neglecting the industrious multitudes.<sup>250</sup> A similar criticism was surely directed at Hutcheson as well, in his pointing out Hutcheson's unawareness concerning the decisive gap between a public spirit and a passion of ambition:

... I don't deny that there are Men, who take Pains to qualify themselves in order to serve their Country; what I insist upon, is, that the Number of those, who do the same thing to serve themselves with little regard to their Country, is infinitely greater. Mr. *Hutcheson*, who wrote the *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, seems to be very expert at weighing and measuring the Quantities of Affection, Benevolence, *etc.* I wish that curious Metaphysician would give himself the Trouble, at his Leisure, to weigh two things separately: First, the real Love Men have for their Country, abstracted from Selfishness. Secondly, the Ambition they have, of being thought to act from that Love, tho' they feel none. ... certainly, it is not the Care of others, but the Care of itself, which Nature has trusted and charged every individual Creature with. When Men exert themselves in an extraordinary manner, they generally do it to be the better for it themselves; to excel, to be talk'd of, and to be preferr'd to others, that follow the same Business, or court the same Favours.<sup>251</sup>

Thus, Mandeville was still maintaining a threat to the 'private vices, public benefits'

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<sup>245</sup> *FB*, II, p. 325.

<sup>246</sup> *FB*, II, p. 336.

<sup>247</sup> *FB*, II, p. 47.

<sup>248</sup> *FB*, II, p. 51.

<sup>249</sup> *FB*, II, p. 58.

<sup>250</sup> *FB*, II, p. 357.

<sup>251</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 345-7.

controversy, concerning how to argue not only about the divine assistance of men's conduct but also about sociability by taking the practice of the generality of men into account.

Interestingly, both Mandeville and his opponents, Polite Whigs, used the term 'politeness' to designate the problem of modern sociability by which pride, in the affluent conditions of commercial society, was successfully transformed into the materially productive, socially useful and orderly mannered styles of civility.<sup>252</sup> Mandeville saw the newly-emerging sets of 'manners' as more suitable moral rules for people, not of landed or aristocratic independence, but of commerce, the arts and leisure. This was a world where the new forms of property, such as shares on the exchange, the places of profit conferred by the government, and moveable capital, instantly traded. They were now the material conditions for the wealth of nations and the social basis of personality.<sup>253</sup> What Mandeville called 'the Rules of Politeness' was equated with 'Virtue' among an established oligarchic elite.<sup>254</sup> Politeness in Mandeville was therefore not identical to the *politesse* featured in Renaissance courtesy books, in seventeenth-century Parisian salons and then in the court at Versailles. For Mandeville, 'Politeness' was the manners of 'the Town', particularly the City of London, for monied commoners, rather than for those of the Court for the titled at Westminster.<sup>255</sup> Mandeville never conceded to the contemporary political argument that the manipulative practices of the Whig elite or the hypocrisy of the commercial populations threatened the social order. Hypocrisy as a technique necessary for concealing avarice from one another was, in Mandeville's view, a polite manner for persons bound by the web of commercial relations for hiding vanity from the gaze of fellows.<sup>256</sup> Later, in *A Letter to Dion* (1732), Mandeville remarked that 'what I call Vices are the Fashionable Ways of Living, the Manners of the Age, that are often practic'd and preach'd against by the same People: Those Vices, that the Persons who are guilty of them, are angry with

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<sup>252</sup> Hundert, pp. 69 and 74.

<sup>253</sup> Hundert, p. 117.

<sup>254</sup> Hundert, pp. 117-8 and *FB*, II, p. 12.

<sup>255</sup> Hundert, p. 118.

<sup>256</sup> Hundert, pp. 178-9.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy me for calling them so'.<sup>257</sup> It is not, therefore, as Fowler believed, that Mandeville altogether refused to admit, as explanatory of any of the phenomena of human life, any original feeling of sympathy, kindness or sociability.<sup>258</sup> What Mandeville refused to admit was only that they were useful for commercial prosperity. What Mandeville regarded as sociability was commercial sociability, distinct from the sociability that Shaftesbury and other Polite Whigs had believed was fundamental to the culture of politeness. When Mandeville talked about statecraft, or in his words, 'the dextrous management of politicians', he talked of it as the rules of politeness, as the Huguenot refugee Abel Boyer defined *politesse* as 'a dextrous management of our Words and Actions, whereby we make other people have better Opinion of us and themselves'.<sup>259</sup> Mandeville sought to show that modern manners of politeness served the publicly beneficial end of prosperity, that the goal had become a necessary policy of modern states to encourage and direct the pursuit of private ends. He added that a strict regard for the standards of Stoic or Christian virtue could therefore bring few of the benefits to be derived from commercial opulence.<sup>260</sup> The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy therefore had an aspect of polemic between Country or Polite Whigs and Court Whigs concerning the moral legitimacy of commercial civilisation.

### 3. David Hume

Hume's first major work, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) now needs to be properly placed in the context of the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. The attacks on Mandeville in the controversy focused on his paradox, coined by juxtaposing the moral rigorist with the practical and utilitarian standards of morals.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *A Letter to Dion, Occasion'd by his Book call'd Alciphron, or The Minute Philosopher* (London, 1732), p. 31.

<sup>258</sup> See Fowler, pp. 139-40.

<sup>259</sup> Abel Boyer (1702), p. 106, as quoted in Hundert, pp. 119.

<sup>260</sup> Hundert, p. 121. For the connection between Jansenism and Augustinianism, see Anthony Levi (1964).

<sup>261</sup> Kaye, p. cxxv.

Kaye argues that Hutcheson attacked Mandeville's rigorism by showing that men do act from perfectly dispassionate unselfishness. He also argues that Hutcheson's attempt to prove the fundamental benevolence of human nature was largely a giving of new names to the same passions. Mandeville had called all natural emotions selfish and evil, whereas Hutcheson proposed some of them as benevolent.<sup>262</sup> Hume was going to follow Hutcheson's criticism of Mandevillian terminology and argue that, if it be vice which produces all the benefits in the world, then such vice cannot be called vice but good. In general, Kaye points out, critics who rejected Mandeville's moral rigorism and philosophical anarchism, which had given rise to the notorious paradox, were forced away from strict rigorism and towards a utilitarian solution of the paradox.<sup>263</sup> In Hume, this was going to be attempted by showing how it was indeed possible for men to create the true ideas of morals, or to search the reliable standard of morality, against Mandeville's rhetorical nonsense of destroying the distinction between morals and vices. In Hume's view, the Mandevillian paradox was 'little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society'.<sup>264</sup> Usefulness, or utility, then was a possible standard of morals for Hume.

In the end, Hume thought that Mandeville had failed to show sociability in commercial society as an unintentional public consequence of intended private actions through customs. Mandeville had instead simply presented it as a paradox, but not as a natural process triggered by the senses rather than by the passions. Hume therefore sought to show that our moral ideas would be formed in the light of the usefulness or utility as the standard of morals. Hume was going to solve Mandeville's paradox by introducing the idea of utility as the measure of morals.

In his *Essays Moral and Political* published in 1742, Hume presented his view on what I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, and Mandeville's accounts of morals in particular. Hume distinguished two sects in moral philosophy.

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<sup>262</sup> Kaye, p. cxxvii.

<sup>263</sup> Kaye, pp. cxxix-cxxxiii.

<sup>264</sup> David Hume, 'Of the Refinement in the Arts', in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary* (1777); ed. Eugene F. Miller, Indianapolis (1985), p. 280 (abbreviated as *Essays* below).

The first was the sentiments of those inclined to think favourably of human nature. The other was the sentiments of those inclined to give us a mean opinion of our nature.<sup>265</sup> The former belonged to the 'polite and fashionable moralists' such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, who would be more advantageous to virtue. The latter would not be enemies to virtue, either, because they did not necessarily have any bad intention in exposing the frailties of human beings. Instead, they simply encouraged us to 'consider the common course of human affairs with too much indignation'.<sup>266</sup> Mandeville was a typical moralist of the latter sect, who commonly employed two means to destroy the dignity of human nature. First, 'By making an unfair representation of the case, and insisting only upon the weaknesses of human nature';<sup>267</sup> and second, 'By forming a new and secret comparison between man and beings of the most perfect wisdom'.<sup>268</sup> After all, Hume thought the controversy was nothing but a matter of language:

There is much of a dispute of words in all this controversy. When a man denies the sincerity of all public spirit or affection to a country and community, I am at a loss what to think of him. Perhaps he never felt this passion in so clear and distinct a manner as to remove all his doubts concerning its force and reality. But when he proceeds afterwards to reject all private friendship, if no interest or self-love intermix itself; I am then confident that he abuses terms, and confounds the ideas of things; since it is impossible for any one to be so selfish, or rather so stupid, as to make no difference between one man and another, and give no preference to qualities, which engage his approbation and esteem.<sup>269</sup>

He does not know himself: He has forgotten the movements of his heart; or rather he makes use of a different language from the rest of his countrymen, and calls not things by their proper names.<sup>270</sup>

In my opinion, there are two things which have led astray those philosophers, that have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. In the *first* place, they found, that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure; whence they concluded, that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing a good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.

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<sup>265</sup> *Essays*, Part I: *Essays Moral and Political* (published in 1742), Essay 11: 'Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature', pp. 80-1.

<sup>266</sup> *Essays*, p. 81.

<sup>267</sup> *Essays*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>268</sup> *Essays*, p. 83.

<sup>269</sup> *Essays*, p. 84. See also p. 83: 'It is also usual to *compare* one man with another; and finding very few whom we can call *wise* or *virtuous*, we are apt to entertain a contemptible notion of our species in general. ... When we find a man, who arrives at such a pitch of wisdom as is very uncommon, we pronounce him a wise man: So that to say, there are few wise men in the world, is really to say nothing; since it is only by their scarcity, that they merit that appellation'.

<sup>270</sup> *Essays*, p. 85.

In the *second* place, it has always been found, that the virtuous are far from being indifferent to praise; and therefore they have been represented as a set of vain-glorious men, who had nothing in view but the applauses of others. But this also is a fallacy. It is very unjust in the world, when they find any tincture of vanity in a laudable action, to depreciate it upon that account, or ascribe it entirely to that motive. ... To love the glory of virtuous deeds is a sure proof of the love of virtue.<sup>271</sup>

Hume now decided to solve the paradox as an issue of moral terminology. Even though the essay was published in 1742, after his *Treatise*, Hume had the issue in mind in writing the *Treatise* in which he was concerned with how such moral ideas as justice, industry and property could be formed as virtues for the benefits of public interests. In his argument, he was anxious to show that these moral ideas would be formed not as 'private vices', hypocrisies or disguises for our proud and ambitious passions, as Mandeville had charged.

Hume began Book I of the *Treatise*, 'Of Understanding', by defining perceptions into two sorts: impressions such as sensations, and ideas that are the faint images of these impressions in thinking and reasoning. Hume then classified passions into impressions.<sup>272</sup> More precisely, passions according to Hume were to be regarded as reflections derived from ideas, rather than sensations that had originally arisen in the soul from unknown causes, though both sensation and reflection were impressions. In this, Hume's primary concern was going to be reflection, rather than sensation, because 'The examination of our sensations belongs more to anatomists and natural philosophers than to moral'.<sup>273</sup> Hume now had to deal with two faculties of reflection: memory and imagination. Memory still retains its first vividness considerably in the new impression. Imagination, on the other hand, entirely loses that vividness, so that it is a perfect idea.<sup>274</sup> What Hume defined as imagination however was not an operation of the mind by chance alone, but a certain principle which he was going to call the association of ideas. By the association of ideas, the same simple ideas fall regularly into certain complex ideas such as moral ideas, and

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<sup>271</sup> *Essays*, pp. 85-6. Hume also identified Hobbes and Locke as modern proponents of 'the selfish system of morals' in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, especially Appendix II, 'Of Self-Love'. See editor's footnote 2, *Essays*, p. 84.

<sup>272</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40); eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford, 2000), I. I. 1. 1, p. 7 (abbreviated as *THN* below).

<sup>273</sup> *THN*, I. I. 2. 1, p. 11.

<sup>274</sup> *THN*, I. I. 3. 1, p. 11.

hence one idea naturally introduces another.<sup>275</sup> In Hume, the analysis of passions was indeed going to be his examination of the process of such association of ideas, in which simple ideas were the causes of certain passions which then resulted in producing the complex ideas.<sup>276</sup> From the beginning of his *Treatise*, Hume had a view of the extensive influence of such an association of ideas on sociability. When the one has a power of producing a motion or any action in the other, Hume argued, the relation of cause and effect in the association of ideas is 'to be the source of all the relations of interest and duty, by which men influence each other in society, and are plac'd in the ties of government and subordination'.<sup>277</sup> By planning his own theory of causation in this way, Hume would have sought the possible solution to overcome the Pyrrhonian scepticism he saw in Mandeville's paradox. His theory of the association of ideas was to show that sociability was a natural process relied on the formation and refinement of the ideas of morals by the association of ideas triggered by the senses rather than by the passions. His theory of the association of ideas was therefore to show that sociability was not a paradox but an unintentional public consequence of intended private actions directed through the association of ideas and the formation and refinement of the true ideas of morals.

Quite naturally, the association of ideas, by which vivid simple ideas were resolved into various complex ideas, was going to be analysed by Hume under his argument of cause and effect. In discussing simple ideas, Hume preferred strategically to concentrate on an analysis of belief, because a belief was, in Hume's words, 'A lively idea related to or associated with a present impression',<sup>278</sup> and therefore a good example of a simple idea. Hume, then, went on to show how a

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<sup>275</sup> *THN*, I. I. 4. 1, pp. 12-3.

<sup>276</sup> *THN*, I. I. 4. 7, p. 14. Book I of the *Treatise* accordingly examined the complex ideas of various relations as effects of the association of ideas, such as the idea of space and time (Part II) and that of cause and effect (Part III). Book II of *Treatise* was consequently devoted to analyses of how the association of ideas produce such complex ideas as its effects, and Book III then went on to examine the complex ideas of morals. The entire treatise could therefore be regarded as an analysis of the effects of passions, resulting from the principle of the association of ideas: '... I content myself with knowing perfectly the manner in which objects affect my senses, and their connections with each other, as far as experience informs me of them. This suffices for the conduct of life; and this also suffices for my philosophy, which pretends only to explain the nature and causes of our perceptions, or impressions and ideas' (I. II. 5. 26, p. 46).

<sup>277</sup> *THN*, I. I. 4. 5, pp. 13-4.

<sup>278</sup> *THN*, I. III. 7. 5, p. 67.

belief initiates the association of ideas to produce complex ideas, and in particular excites passions in the process:

The effect, then, of belief is to raise up a simple idea to an equality with our impressions, and bestow on it a like influence on the passions. This effect it can only have by making an idea approach an impression in force and vivacity. ... Belief, therefore, since it causes an idea to imitate the effects of the impressions, must make it resemble them in these qualities, and is nothing but *a more vivid and intense conception of any idea*. This, then, may both serve as an additional argument for the present system, and may give us a notion after what manner our reasonings from causation are able to operate on the will and passions.

As belief is almost absolutely requisite to the exciting our passions, so the passions in their turn are very favourable to belief; and not only such facts as convey agreeable emotions, but very often such as give pain, do upon that account become more readily the objects of faith and opinion.<sup>279</sup>

What, then, causes such a belief, which excites passions to form complex ideas by the association of ideas? Hume argued that it was custom operating upon the imagination, which was the sole origin of belief. In the process, belief was derived from a past repetition without any new reasoning or conclusion, so that the past experience on which all our judgements concerning cause and effect depended was never taken notice of, and was unknown to us.<sup>280</sup> This was why Hume came to conclude that the most conspicuous force and vividness of simple ideas which form opinion or judgement amount not to knowledge but merely to probability.<sup>281</sup> Reason, Hume argued, might have been regarded as a cause, and truth might have been believed as its natural effect, but, due to other causes interrupting as well as our inconstant mental powers, our knowledge of truth, which should be derived from reasoning, would simply degenerate into probability.<sup>282</sup> Hume's hypothesis behind his idea of probability was that

Reason can never show us the connexion of one object with another, tho' aided by experience, and the observation of their constant conjunction in all past instances. When the mind, therefore, passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determin'd by reason, but certain principles, which associate together the ideas of these objects, and unite them in the imagination.<sup>283</sup>

<sup>279</sup> *THN*, I. III. 10. 3-4, p. 82.

<sup>280</sup> *THN*, I. III. 8. 10-13, pp. 72-3. Hume defined cause as follows: 'A CAUSE is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other' (I. III. 14. 31, p. 114).

<sup>281</sup> *THN*, I. III. 13. 19, p. 104.

<sup>282</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 1. 1, p. 121.

<sup>283</sup> *THN*, I. III. 6. 12, p. 64.



... that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are deriv'd from nothing but custom; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cognitive part of our natures.<sup>284</sup>

The faculty of imagination, in this sense, was crucial in Hume, as a power giving rise to the complex idea of the continued and distinct existence of any object, because, in this case, all impressions of objects are internal and fading inevitably.<sup>285</sup> In this way, imagination observes uniformity among objects, simply to suppose their continued existence and even strengthen their certain coherence.<sup>286</sup> In the same way, an opinion of the identity of objects must arise from imagination, only by means of the resemblance of certain perceptions which the imagination has a propensity to suppose are the same. Such an idea of continued existence however is after all a fiction and therefore false.<sup>287</sup> Consequently, Hume was eventually forced to declare that 'Carelessness and in-attention' alone could afford us remedy for sceptical doubt with respect to reason, and that, therefore, he would rely entirely upon them.<sup>288</sup>

Hume summarised his argument and argued that experience and habit were the principles which conspired to operate upon the imagination and made men form certain ideas.<sup>289</sup> In sum, in Hume's analytical scheme of the association of ideas, experience and habit, or, above all, custom, produced a vivid and intense belief which then becomes a cause of complex ideas such as opinion by exciting passions in associating simple ideas. Complex ideas as such would, however, be but merely something probable, and never be knowledge, since the imagination upon which custom operated was beyond our reason. Consequently, Hume seems to have regarded the passions as something delusive, by showing how easily the passions are excited by the imagination in the association of ideas, only to form complex ideas and opinions merely as something probable and never as knowledge. His quest for the true ideas of morals, therefore, was to take such delusive character of passions into account in analysing how simple ideas are associated into complex ideas in

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<sup>284</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 1. 8, p. 123.

<sup>285</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 2. 15, p. 129.

<sup>286</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 2. 22, p. 132.

<sup>287</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 3. 43, p. 139.

<sup>288</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 3. 57, p. 144. On this point, I have heard an interesting paper: John Sutton (1999).

<sup>289</sup> *THN*, I. IV. 7. 3, p. 172.

forming the ideas of morals.

Book II of the *Treatise*, 'Of Passions', consequently launches his detailed examination of such delusive character of passions, following his scheme set out in Book I. That is, how passions which are excited by simple ideas, in the association of ideas, give rise to complex ideas. As in Book I, Hume classified passions into reflection, or secondary impressions, distinct from sensation, or original impressions.<sup>290</sup> Following Hutcheson's *Passions and Affections*, Hume further divided reflection into two: the calm reflective impressions, and the violent reflective impressions. The former includes the sense of beauty and deformity in action, composition and external objects. On the other hand, passions belonged to the latter.<sup>291</sup> Passions, thus classified into the violent reflective impressions, were still further divided into two groups. One was the indirect passions, such as the passions of pride and humility, of ambition and vanity, of love and hatred, of envy and pity, and of malice and generosity. The other was the direct passions, such as desire and aversion, the passions of grief and joy, of hope and fear, and of despair and security.<sup>292</sup> Hume's primary concern in Book II was the indirect passions, so that the passions of pride and humility were discussed in Part I, and those of love and hatred in Part II. The direct passions, however, were also dealt with in Part III, in terms of needs and greed, the theme that resulted from the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. It is worth noting, again, that all of these passions concern the relations between ourselves and others, or sociability, in forming the ideas of morals. This is why these passions are to be analysed in Book II, before it is examined in Book III how the ideas of morals are formed in the association of ideas excited by these passions.

Hume, hence, began with the passions of pride and humility. As we shall see, his discussions were in many ways going to be more sceptical than those of Mandeville and Hutcheson, due to his introduction of the theory of the association of ideas in Book I. In arguing the objects and causes of the passions of pride and

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<sup>290</sup> *THN*, II. I. 1. 1-2, p. 181.

<sup>291</sup> *THN*, II. I. 1. 3, pp. 181-2.

humility, Hume focused on the influence of the association of ideas on pride and humility.

In examining these *qualities* [of the causes of pride and humility], I immediately find many of them to concur in producing the sensation of pain and pleasure, independent of those affections.... Thus the beauty of our person, of itself, and by its very appearance, gives pleasure, as well as pride; and its deformity, pain as well as humility. Every cause of pride, by its peculiar qualities, produces a separate pleasure, and of humility a separate uneasiness.<sup>293</sup>

Again, in considering the *subjects*, to which these qualities adhere, I make a new *supposition*... that these subjects are either parts of ourselves, or something nearly related to us. Thus the good and bad qualities of our actions and manners constitute virtue and vice, and determine our personal character, than which nothing operates more strongly on these passions. In like manner, 'tis the beauty or deformity of our person, houses, equipage, or furniture, by which we are render'd either vain or humble.<sup>294</sup>

That cause, which excites the passion, is related to the object, which nature has attributed to the passion; the sensation, which the cause separately produces, is related to the sensation of the passion: From this double relation of ideas and impressions, the passion is deriv'd.<sup>295</sup>

... nature has given to the organs of the human mind, a certain disposition fitted to produce a peculiar impression or emotion, which we call *pride*: To this emotion she has assign'd a certain idea, *viz.* that of *self*, which it never fails to produce.<sup>296</sup>

Having thus understood that the passions of pride and humility are caused in relation to the self in the association of ideas, Hume asked how we get the passions of pride and humility. Hume examined the particularly interesting and important causes of these passions, such as virtue and vice, beauty and deformity, wealth and power, in the context of the association of ideas.

First, let us look at virtue and vice. These are what Hume called the most obvious causes of the passions of pride and humility, in the sense that virtue and vice produce in us a real pleasure and pain, thereby exciting pride and humility.<sup>297</sup> On the other hand, pleasure and pain, which are the primary causes of virtue and vice, are at the same time to be the causes of all their effects, and consequently, of the passions of pride and humility.<sup>298</sup> Interestingly enough, Hume was quite conscious here that

<sup>292</sup> *THN*, II. I. 1. 4, p. 182.

<sup>293</sup> *THN*, II. I. 5. 1, p. 187.

<sup>294</sup> *THN*, II. I. 5. 2, p. 187.

<sup>295</sup> *THN*, II. I. 5. 5, p. 188.

<sup>296</sup> *THN*, II. I. 5. 6, p. 188. See also his description of 'the general system': 'that all agreeable objects, related to ourselves, by an association of ideas and of impression, produce pride, and disagreeable ones, humility' (II. I. 6. 1, p. 190).

<sup>297</sup> *THN*, II. I. 7. 2-4, p. 193.

<sup>298</sup> *THN*, II. I. 7. 5, p. 194.

he was challenging what he thought were traditional views when he was talking of virtue, instead of vice, as the cause of the passions of pride, and talking of vice, not of virtue, as the cause of the passion of humility:

But not to dispute about words, I observe, that by *pride* I understand that agreeable impression, which arises in the mind, when the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfy'd with ourselves: And that by *humility* I mean the opposite impression. 'Tis evident the former impression is not always vicious, nor the latter virtuous.<sup>299</sup>

Hume was obviously criticising not only Mandeville's rigorist moral standard but also all derivations of the Augustinian theory of the passions of which Mandeville's was one, which had regarded any passion of pride as vicious. Following Hutcheson's view that the passion of pride pursuing benevolent desires were not necessarily vicious but rather virtuous, Hume could now approve the passion of pride as the effect of pleasure and therefore of virtue as well. Hume's innovation here seems to be that he argued the passion of pride as the effect of virtue, such as the consequence of feeling virtuous, but not as something virtuous in itself.

Next, let us look at beauty and deformity. Since beauty or deformity is closely related to the self, a form which gives us a delight and satisfaction becomes an object of pride. On the contrary, a form which gives us pain becomes an object of humility. In this, both passions are due to a perfect transition of impressions and ideas, so that beauty, which occasions pleasure in the mind, is immediately derived from the idea of convenience and utility.<sup>300</sup>

... whatever in ourselves is either useful, beautiful, or surprizing, is an object of pride; and its contrary, of humility. Now 'tis obvious, that every thing useful, beautiful or surprizing, agrees in producing a separate pleasure, and agrees in nothing else. The pleasure, therefore, with the relation to self must be the cause of the passion.<sup>301</sup>

In Hume's view, of the three qualities from which the association of ideas arise, that is, resemblance, contiguity in time and space, and causation (cause and effect),<sup>302</sup> the relation of resemblance is seldom a foundation of the passion of pride or of

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<sup>299</sup> *THN*, II. I. 7. 8, p. 194.

<sup>300</sup> *THN*, II. I. 8. 1-2, pp. 195-6.

<sup>301</sup> *THN*, II. I. 7. 5, p. 196.

<sup>302</sup> See *THN*, I. I. 4. 2, p. 13.

humility.<sup>303</sup>

The relation, therefore, of contiguity, or that of causation, betwixt the cause and object of pride and humility, is alone requisite to give rise to these passions; and these relations are nothing else but qualities by which the imagination is convey'd from one idea to another.<sup>304</sup>

In Hume's view, this was indeed why family relationship or friendship, and the beauty, address, merit, credit and honours of our kindred were some of the most considerable sources of our pride and vanity.<sup>305</sup> For the same reason, riches and the antiquity of our family or friend were also a subject of vanity, and this was why, Hume commented, we remove the poor as far from us as possible.<sup>306</sup> In this way, beauty and deformity excite the passions of pride and humility in the same manner as virtue and vice, by the association of ideas.

Finally, let us examine wealth and power as the causes of the passions of pride and humility. Hume primarily defined property as a certain relation, which produces most commonly the passion of pride:

such a relation betwixt a person and an object as permits him, but forbids any other, the free use and possession of it, without violating the laws of justice and moral equity. ... This in the mean time is certain, that the mention of the property naturally carries our thought to the proprietor, and of the proprietor to the property; which being a proof of a perfect relation of ideas is all that is requisite to our present purpose. A relation of ideas, join'd to that of impressions, always produces a transition of affections; and therefore, whenever any pleasure or pain arises from an object, connected with us by property, we may be certain, that either pride or humility must arise from this conjunction of relations.<sup>307</sup>

Now riches are to be consider'd as the power of acquiring this property of what pleases; and 'tis only in this view they have any influence on the passions.<sup>308</sup>

In the same manner, power excites the passion of pride, because 'power consists in the possibility or probability of any action', and 'The passions are not only affected by such events as are certain and infallible, but also in an inferior degree by such as are possible and contingent'.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> *THN*, II. I. 9. 2, p. 198.

<sup>304</sup> *THN*, II. I. 9. 4, p. 199.

<sup>305</sup> *THN*, II. I. 9. 9, p. 200.

<sup>306</sup> *THN*, II. I. 9. 10-1, pp. 200-1.

<sup>307</sup> *THN*, II. I. 10. 1, p. 202.

<sup>308</sup> *THN*, II. I. 10. 3, p. 203.

<sup>309</sup> *THN*, II. I. 10. 6-7, p. 204.

The very essence of riches consists in the power of procuring the pleasures and conveniences of life. The very essence of this power consists in the possibility of its exercise, and in its causing us to anticipate, by a *true* or *false* reasoning, the real existence of the pleasure.<sup>310</sup>

For the same reason, that riches cause pleasure and pride, and poverty excites uneasiness and humility, power must produce the former emotions, and slavery the latter. Power or an authority over others makes us capable of satisfying all our desires; as slavery, by subjecting us to the will of others, exposes us to a thousand wants, and mortifications.<sup>311</sup>

Like virtue and beauty, Hume explained, property and riches excite the passion of pride, by the association between the idea of utility derived from property and that of the self as a proprietor enjoying that utility.

This is the context in which Hume for the first time introduced his concept of 'sympathy'. In arguing that our reputation, our character and our name are also the important causes of the passion of pride, Hume pointed out that virtue, beauty and riches had little influence when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others in occasioning our passion of pride.<sup>312</sup>

No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own.<sup>313</sup>

'Tis indeed evident, that when we sympathize with the passions and sentiments of others, these movements appear at first in *our* mind as mere ideas, and are conceiv'd to belong to another person, as we conceive any other matter of fact. 'Tis also evident, that the ideas of the affections of others are converted into the very impressions they represent, and that the passions arise in conformity to the images we form of them.<sup>314</sup>

Thus if our ideas of virtue, beauty and riches arouse the sympathy of others, our passions of pride and humility are strengthened by our thought of being sympathised with. In this process of the association of ideas, our passions of pride and humility seemed, in Hume's view, to be transcended into our sentiments, and cease to be passions any more. This distinction and relationship between passions and sentiments is absolutely crucial in Hume's theory, because this is where our ideas of virtue, beauty and wealth play a vital role in our sociability and in our formation of the true ideas of morals through the association of ideas. On the whole, Hume

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<sup>310</sup> *THN*, II. I. 10. 10, p. 205.

<sup>311</sup> *THN*, II. I. 10. 11, p. 205.

<sup>312</sup> *THN*, II. I. 11. 1, p. 206.

<sup>313</sup> *THN*, II. I. 11. 2, p. 206.

<sup>314</sup> *THN*, II. I. 11. 8, p. 208.

offered an analysis of the passions of pride and humility by putting it on the basis of his theory of the association of ideas. By such a methodical procedure, Hume avoided meddling in a troublesome judgement as to whether or how far the passion of pride is virtuous or vicious. In Hume's mindset, passions were neither virtuous nor vicious in themselves, but simply the effect of virtue, beauty or riches, which should be enhanced into sentiments and thereby help us form the true ideas of morals.

The second set of passions Hume considered, following those of pride and humility, was those of love and hatred, which would turn out to be more crucial in the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. There is a difference between the passions of pride and humility and those of love and hatred. The immediate object of pride and humility is self or that identical person of whose thought, actions and sensations we are intimately conscious, whereas that of love and hatred is some other person or a thinking being of whose thought, actions and sensations we are not conscious.<sup>315</sup> As for the causes of the passions of love and hatred, however,

the same qualities that produce pride or humility, cause love or hatred; all the arguments that have been employ'd to prove, that the causes of the former passions excite a pain or pleasure independent of the passion, will be applicable with equal evidence to the causes of the latter.<sup>316</sup>

Strikingly enough, Hume accordingly concentrated on his analysis of riches and power as the causes of the passions of love and hatred, rather than, as usually expected, an analysis of virtue or benevolence. In Hume's view, esteem for others which arises from their riches and power, or contempt for others which arises from their poverty and meanness, is a typical species of love and hatred.<sup>317</sup> In this, the only possible cause of such esteem for the rich and powerful is our sympathy:

Upon the whole, there remains nothing, which can give us an esteem for power and riches, and a contempt for meanness and poverty, except the principle of *sympathy*, by which we enter into the sentiments of the rich and poor, and partake of their pleasure and uneasiness. Riches give satisfaction to their possessor; and this satisfaction is convey'd to the beholder by the imagination, which produces an idea resembling the original impression in force and vivacity. This agreeable idea or impression is connected with love, which is an agreeable passion. It proceeds from a thinking conscious being, which is the very object of love. From this relation of

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<sup>315</sup> *THN*, II. II. 1. 2, p. 214.

<sup>316</sup> *THN*, II. II. 1. 9, p. 216.

<sup>317</sup> *THN*, II. II. 5. 1, p. 231.

impressions, and identity of ideas, the passion arises, according to my hypothesis.<sup>318</sup>

In Hume, as in Hutcheson, sympathy was seen as a universal as well as an unselfish propensity:

In all creatures, that prey not upon others, and are not agitated with violent passions, there appears a remarkable desire of company, which associates them together, without any advantages they can ever propose to reap from their union. This is still more conspicuous in man, as being the creature of the universe, who has the most ardent desire of society, and is fitted for it by the most advantages.<sup>319</sup>

The passions of love for the rich and powerful is not derived exclusively from the agreeable expectation of advantage from them; if it had been, we would always expect their friendship or good-will. The fact that we esteem the rich and great even when they are dead, suggests that our sympathy is disinterested and is neither selfish nor vicious.<sup>320</sup>

Hume's concept of sympathy formed the basis for his idea of beauty, which could be seen as an alternative to that of Hutcheson who had identified the origin of our idea of beauty in a natural sense, but not in sympathy.

This conclusion from a general view of human nature, we may confirm by particular instances, wherein the force of sympathy is very remarkable. Most kinds of beauty are deriv'd from this origin; and tho' our first object be some senseless inanimate piece of matter, 'tis seldom we rest there, and carry not our view to its influence on sensible and rational creatures. A man, who shows us any house or building, takes particular care among other things to point out the convenience of the apartments, the advantages of their situation, and the little room lost in the stairs, anti-chambers and passages; and indeed 'tis evident, the chief part of the beauty consists in these particulars. The observation of convenience gives pleasure, since convenience is a beauty. But after what manner does it give pleasure? 'Tis certain our own interest is not in the least concern'd; and as this is a beauty of interest, not of form, so to speak, it might delight us merely by communication, and by our sympathizing with the proprietor of the lodging. We enter into his interest by the force of imagination, and feel the same satisfaction, that the objects naturally occasion in him.

This observation extends to tables, chairs, scritoires, chimneys, coaches, saddles, ploughs, and indeed to every work of art; it being an universal rule, that their beauty is chiefly derived from their utility, and from their fitness for that purpose, to which they are destin'd. But this is an advantage, that concerns only the owner, nor is there any thing but sympathy, which can interest the spectator.<sup>321</sup>

As we have seen, Hume argued that our admiration for the rich was based on the

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<sup>318</sup> *THN*, II. II. 5. 14, p. 234.

<sup>319</sup> *THN*, II. II. 5. 15, p. 234.

<sup>320</sup> *THN*, II. II. 5. 9, p. 233.

<sup>321</sup> *THN*, II. II. 5. 16-7, p. 235.



imagination and sympathy. In such imagination, our passion of love was an effect of beauty in the association of ideas, where the idea of beauty is identified with that of utility that riches confer, which the possessor is going to enjoy, and, without referring to self-interest of the beholder, conveys pleasure. Beauty, therefore, always excites an agreeable impression regardless of the spectator's standpoint or mindset, so that beauty is not relative to the spectator's self-interest, as Mandeville had claimed. In other words, our idea of beauty introduces utility as the basis for our sociability without selfishness, because our sympathy with others who possess beautiful objects and who enjoy their utility excites our love not as a selfish passion, let alone as a vicious passion.

Finally, in Book II, having considered the indirect passions of pride and humility, and of love and hatred, Hume examined the direct passions, and the will in particular. The direct passions are to be the impressions 'which arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure'.<sup>322</sup> Among them is the will: 'by the *will*', Hume stated, 'I mean nothing but *the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind* [Hume's *italics*]'.<sup>323</sup> Hume's aim of arguing about the direct passions was to see if the passions are beyond our will. And this discussion in Hume, as shall see, had also a particular implication in the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, concerning the shift from needs toward greed as to the nature of passions in a modern commercial society.

Hume's point was that all the passions, including even the will, were to be regarded as necessity. Necessity here 'is nothing but a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and infer the existence of one from that of the other'. This however is due merely to the effect of custom on the imagination, because, Hume argued, the ultimate connection of any object, which is not discoverable, is not a necessity. It is simply a constant, uniform and regular union with which we are acquainted, and which enters into our idea of cause and effect.<sup>324</sup> For example, sociability arises from necessity, not from our liberty:

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<sup>322</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 1, p. 257.

<sup>323</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 2, p. 257.

We must certainly allow, that the cohesion of the parts of matter arises from natural and necessary principles, whatever difficulty we may find in explaining them: And for a like reason we must allow, that human society is founded on like principles; and our reason in the latter case, is better than even that in the former; because we not only observe, that men *always* seek society, but can also explain the principles, on which this universal propensity is founded.<sup>325</sup>

In this sense, society from necessity was described in Hume as something uniform and orderly:

The skin, pores, muscles, and nerves of a day-labourer are different from those of a man of quality: So are his sentiments, actions and manners. The different stations of life influence the whole fabric, external and internal; and these different stations arise necessarily, because uniformly, from the necessary and uniform principles of human nature. Men cannot live without society, and cannot be associated without government. Government makes a distinction of property, and establishes the different ranks of men. This produces industry, traffic, manufactures, law-suits, war, leagues, alliances, voyages, travels, cities, fleets, ports, and all those other actions and objects, which cause such a diversity, and at the same time maintain such an uniformity in human life.<sup>326</sup>

Given this, Hume reached his conclusion that the actions of the will were to arise from necessity, not from liberty.<sup>327</sup> As far as all actions of the will have particular causes, no will is to be let free to act from liberty.<sup>328</sup>

In Hume, as in Hutcheson, all the passions are necessary for human survival, so that none of them is vicious. Hume's theory of necessity as a whole was his attack on the distinction and relationship between necessity and liberty which was fundamental to all Christian moral theology. But in the context of the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, his theory appeared as a fundamentally sceptical view of liberty and necessity. Mandeville had argued that all forms of acquisition beyond our needs for mere physical survival were activated by passions that were invariably argued as vicious. Hutcheson had attempted to vindicate the passions by showing that they could be approved of if, even if unnecessary for survival, they were directed at benevolent purposes. But both of them still shared a view that men had a liberty in choosing the way they make use of their passions for the pursuit of wealth. Hume was never convinced that men could have such a liberty in our perception of the

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<sup>324</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 4, pp. 257-8.

<sup>325</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 8, p. 258.

<sup>326</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 9, p. 259.

<sup>327</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 15, p. 260.

ideas of virtue, beauty and wealth. He argued that the constant association between the ideas of human actions arising from the passions and those of their consequences, that is, the causation of human actions in the association of ideas, was simply due to the effects of custom on the imagination. He concluded that, therefore, this necessary connection was merely a perception of the mind, which simply 'feels' such necessity.<sup>329</sup> Liberty or human will had therefore no role whatsoever in our use of the passions. Hume could argue, against Mandeville, that, since the passions are necessary, they are natural, and therefore neither virtuous nor vicious.<sup>330</sup> But the real Humean problem was now that, how, then, is it possible to discover the reliable standard of morals and to form the true ideas of morals through such association of ideas where men's perception leaves us no liberty in controlling the passions?

In Book III of the *Treatise*, 'Of Morals', following his arguments in the previous two books, Hume went on to show how moral ideas can be formed as complex ideas by the association of ideas involving passions. This topic was his agenda in the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, well prepared by now in the previous two books in his *Treatise* to be tackled here in Book III. His pivotal view of this topic can be seen immediately in his questioning of morals: 'Whether 'tis by means of our *ideas* or *impressions* we distinguish betwixt vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blameable or praise-worthy?'<sup>331</sup> Needless to say, such a question presumed his view that only perceptions, either impressions or ideas, were

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<sup>328</sup> *THN*, II. III. 2. 8, p. 265.

<sup>329</sup> *THN*, II. III. 1. 16, p. 261.

<sup>330</sup> Hume also used the word 'natural' as opposed to 'artificial', 'civil', and 'moral', depending on the contexts. In Hume's view, the ambiguity of the word 'natural' is due to three reasons: first, virtue and vice are equally natural as opposed to miraculous; second, virtue is the most unnatural in the sense that it is the most unusual (!), whereas vice is quite natural; third, both virtue and vice are out of nature in the sense that they are equally artificial, because at least the actions themselves are artificial with their own design and intention. Hume consequently concluded that there is no point in disputing if virtue and vice are determined either as natural or unnatural. See *THN*, III. I. 2. 8 and 10, pp. 304-5. Hume also contemplated that, even though justice ought to be regarded as an artificial virtue, it is the most 'natural' in the sense that it is an invention which is obviously and absolutely necessary, proceeding immediately from original principles without the intervention of thought or reflection. The rules of justice then are artificial, but not arbitrary, and therefore properly called the '*laws of nature*'. See III. I. 2. 19, p. 311. These remarks are quite understandable if, by 'nature', Hume meant 'necessity'.

<sup>331</sup> *THN*, III. I. 1. 3, p. 294.

present to the mind.<sup>332</sup> The same presumption also seems obvious in his rejection of reason as a factor of moral distinction. As morals have an influence on the actions and affections, morals cannot be derived from reason and discerned merely by ideas. That is, reason alone is never able to have such an influence.<sup>333</sup>

Now 'tis evident, our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible any such agreement or disagreement [consisting truth or falsehood discovered by reason]; being original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions. 'Tis impossible, therefore, they can be pronounc'd either true or false, and be either contrary or conformable to reason.<sup>334</sup>

In other words, actions are laudable or blameable, but not reasonable or unreasonable. 'Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason. Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals'.<sup>335</sup> Instead, virtue and vice must be discoverable 'by means of some impression or sentiment they occasion, that we are able to mark the difference betwixt them'.<sup>336</sup> These impressions then operate upon us in a manner that the impressions arising from virtue are agreeable, and those proceeding from vice are uneasy.<sup>337</sup>

An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very *feeling* constitutes our praise or admiration. ... The case is the same as in our judgments concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations.<sup>338</sup>

Based on the idea above, Hume went on to consider the virtue of justice, and how we could form the moral idea of justice. Hume's questions were, first, '*concerning the manner, in which the rules of justice are establish'd by the artifice of men*', and second, '*concerning the reasons, which determine us to attribute to the*

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<sup>332</sup> See *THN*, III. I. 1. 2, p. 293.

<sup>333</sup> *THN*, III. I. 1. 6, p. 294.

<sup>334</sup> *THN*, III. I. 1. 9, p. 295.

<sup>335</sup> *THN*, III. I. 1. 10, p. 295.

<sup>336</sup> *THN*, III. I. 2. 1, p. 302.

<sup>337</sup> *THN*, III. I. 2. 2, p. 302.

<sup>338</sup> *THN*, III. I. 2. 3, p. 303.

*observance or neglect of these rules a moral beauty and deformity*'.<sup>339</sup> From the first question of how the rules of justice are established, Hume derived the principle from the passion of self-interest. In Hume, no other affection but the very passion of self-interest will be sufficient and proper to 'counter-balance the love of gain, and render men fit members of society, by making them abstain from the possessions of others'. For Hume, Hutcheson's argument of benevolence as a virtue restraining the acquisitive passions seemed implausible and such benevolence to strangers too weak for the purpose. Other passions, on the other hand, would rather inflame the interested affection. This was, Hume argued, 'since 'tis evident, that the passion [of self-interest] is much better satisfy'd by its restraint, than by its liberty, and that by preserving society, we make much greater advances in acquiring possessions, than by running into the solitary and forlorn condition, which must follow upon violence and an universal licence'. Perhaps with Mandeville in mind, Hume continued that 'For whether the passion of self-interest be esteem'd vicious or virtuous, 'tis all a case; since itself alone restrains it: So that if it be virtuous, men become social by their virtue; if vicious, their vice has the same effect'.<sup>340</sup> This then led Hume to reflect on theories of the state of nature, based on assumptions about men's nature as selfishness. As society is thus necessary and inevitable, the supposed state of nature is a mere fiction.<sup>341</sup> Hume eventually concluded '*that 'tis only from the selfishness and confin'd generosity of man, along with the scanty provision nature has made for his wants, that justice derives its origin*' [Hume's italics].<sup>342</sup> A regard for public interest, benevolence or reason therefore could not be the first and original motive for our observing the rules of justice, because otherwise such rules would simply have been redundant.<sup>343</sup> Only the passion of self-interest can be the universal motive, since

justice establishes itself by a kind of convention or agreement; that is, by a sense of interest, suppos'd to be common to all, and where every single act is perform'd in expectation that others are to perform the like. Without such a convention, no one wou'd ever have dream'd, that there

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<sup>339</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 1, p. 311.

<sup>340</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 13, p. 316.

<sup>341</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 14, pp. 316-7.

<sup>342</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 18, p. 318.

<sup>343</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 19-20, p. 318.

was such a virtue as justice, or have been induced to conform his actions to it.<sup>344</sup>

Put in Hume's language in the previous books, it could be said that the moral idea of justice is formed by associating the simple ideas of beauty and wealth through the association of ideas excited by self-interest. Because self-interest is a passion in our sociability which sympathises with others' pleasure of possessing and enjoying property (appeared in our ideas of beauty and wealth), this association of ideas can happen to form the complex moral idea of justice.

Turning to his second question concerning justice, of why we annex the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice, Hume came back to his theory of sympathy. This was because, this time, Hume turned to the apparently 'unselfish' side of the virtue of justice.

... when the injustice is so distant from us, as no way to affect our interest, it still displeases us; because consider it as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one that approaches the person guilty of it. We partake of their uneasiness by *sympathy*; and as every thing, which gives uneasiness in human actions, upon the general survey, is call'd *vice*, and whatever produces satisfaction, in the same manner, is denominated *virtue*; this is the reason why the sense of moral good and evil follows upon justice and injustice.<sup>345</sup>

As anticipated, such an idea in Hume may cause a little confusion, because Hume had already attributed the origin of justice to the passion of self-interest. For this, Hume compromised as follows:

... *self-interest* is the original motive to the *establishment* of justice: But a *sympathy* with *public* interest is the source of the *moral* approbation, which attends that virtue. This latter principle of sympathy is too weak to controul our passions; but has sufficient force to influence our taste, and gives us the sentiments of approbation or blame.<sup>346</sup>

Hume however complicated his argument further by introducing a concept of statecraft for administering justice, possibly with Pufendorf and Mandeville in mind. An esteem for justice, and an abhorrence of injustice, Hume continued, could still be enhanced by 'the artifice of politicians'. This reminds us of Mandeville's argument of statecraft, but Hume thought that their roles should be an assistance to, rather than a manipulation of, those sentiments:

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<sup>344</sup> *THN*, III. II. 22. 1, p. 320.

<sup>345</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 24, p. 320.

<sup>346</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 24, pp. 320-1.

Any artifice of politicians may assist nature in the producing of those sentiments, which she suggests to us, and may even on some occasions, produce alone an approbation or esteem for any particular action; but 'tis impossible it should be the sole cause of the distinction we make betwixt vice and virtue.<sup>347</sup>

Mandeville had thought primarily that, because the passions of pride and vanity as a principle of sociability were vicious, those passions should be manipulated aggressively by politicians to produce public benefits. On the other hand, Hume on the whole 'trusted' such sentiments as sympathy, the sense of justice and the sense of beauty which would control and exploit those passions, as a foundation of sociability:

Whatever restraint they [the rules of justice] may impose on the passions of men, they are the real offspring of those passions, and are only a more artful and more refin'd way of satisfying them. Nothing is more vigilant and inventive than our passions; and nothing is more obvious, than the convention for the observance of these rules. Nature has, therefore, trusted this affair entirely to the conduct of men, and has not plac'd in the mind any peculiar original principles, to determine us to a set of actions, into which the other principles of our frame and constitution were sufficient to lead us.<sup>348</sup>

Because of our sympathy with others for their pleasure of possessing and using their property, we annex the idea of virtue (the respect of property rights) to justice, and that of vice (the violation of property rights) to injustice. Thanks to this association of ideas, the rules of justice and accordingly our moral idea of justice, once established by self-interest, can be maintained by our sociable and 'unselfish' sympathy. Statecraft may smoothen this process, but should neither accelerate nor arrange it in a Mandevillian manner. Self-interest is strong enough to reject such an intervention, and our sympathy is sufficient to supplement the working of self-interest in the administration of justice. After all, we are sociable enough and capable enough of forming our idea of justice for promoting public benefits (such as the preservation of property) without being managed, or manipulated, by politicians.

Such was Hume's idea of justice as derived from self-interest. But as far as politicians may assist the direction of justice, the virtue of justice is not a natural but an artificial virtue. Hume finally examined natural virtues that do not depend on the

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<sup>347</sup> *THN*, III. II. 2. 25, p. 321. See also III. II. 5. 9, p. 334.

artifice and contrivance of men, and how we form the moral ideas of such virtues.<sup>349</sup> As in the case of justice, the natural virtues are in the same manner approved as virtuous when they produce pleasure, and as vicious when they produce pain. What is different about justice is that, as for natural virtues, such sentiment of pleasure is specified by Hume to be the passion of pride or love, and that of pain to be the passion of humility or hatred.<sup>350</sup> Accordingly, unlike justice, the natural virtues are not directly derived from the passion of self-interest but are more dependent on the principle of sympathy.<sup>351</sup> In particular, the natural virtues are distinguished by moral sentiments. Sympathy produces our moral sentiments that then give rise to the natural virtues. In this, moral sentiments approve the natural virtues 'because of their tendency to the good of mankind', based on the principle of sympathy.<sup>352</sup>

Now we have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy; and consequently 'tis that principle, which takes us so far out of ourselves, as to give us the same pleasure or uneasiness in characters which are useful or pernicious to society, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or loss.<sup>353</sup>

The first example Hume argued as a natural virtue was the 'greatness of mind'. Hume made the greatness of mind a natural virtue of a just proportion of the passions of pride and self-esteem.<sup>354</sup> An excess of those passions is a vice, 'since it causes uneasiness in all men, and presents them every moment with a disagreeable comparison'.<sup>355</sup> In other words, it is only a vice because others think it so. On the other hand,

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<sup>348</sup> *THN*, III. II. 6. 1, pp. 337-8.

<sup>349</sup> *THN*, III. III. 1. 1, p. 367.

<sup>350</sup> *THN*, III. III. 1. 2, p. 367.

<sup>351</sup> See *THN*, III. III. 1. 7, p. 368. Hume referred in passing to the sense of beauty as based on the disinterested principle of sympathy: 'Our sense of beauty depends very much on this principle [of sympathy]; and where any object has a tendency to produce pleasure in its possessor, it is always as regarded as beautiful; as every object, that has a tendency to produce pain, is disagreeable and deform'd. Thus a conveniency of a house, the fertility of a field, the strength of a horse, the capacity, security, and swift-sailing of a vessel, form a principal beauty of these several objects. Here the object, which is denominated beautiful, pleases only by its tendency to produce a certain effect. That effect is the pleasure or advantage of some other person. Now the pleasure of a stranger, for whom we have no friendship, pleases us only by sympathy. To this principle, therefore, is owing the beauty, which we find in every thing that is useful' (*THN*, III. III. 1. 8, p. 368).

<sup>352</sup> *THN*, III. III. 1. 10, p. 369.

<sup>353</sup> *THN*, III. III. 1. 11, p. 370.

<sup>354</sup> *THN*, III. III. 2. 1, p. 378.

<sup>355</sup> *THN*, III. III. 2. 7, p. 380.



whatever we call *heroic virtue*, and admire under the character of greatness and elevation of mind, is either nothing but a steady and well-establish'd pride and self-esteem, or partakes largely of that passion. Courage, intrepidity, ambition, love of glory, magnanimity, and all the other shining virtues of that kind, have plainly a strong mixture of self-esteem in them, and derive a great part of their merit from that origin.<sup>356</sup>

Possibly responding to Hutcheson, who had attempted to show that prosperity should be brought from the passions and directed towards benevolent purposes, Hume reflected that

I am content with the concession, that the world naturally esteems a well-regulated pride, which secretly animates our conduct, without breaking out into such indecent expressions of vanity, as may offend the vanity of others.<sup>357</sup>

Needless to say, such well-balanced passion of pride is approved, not only because it is useful in encouraging us for business as well as agreeable in giving us an immediate pleasure,<sup>358</sup> but also because others sympathise with it for its utility and agreeableness. In Hume's view, our sympathy, in particular with military glory or heroism, was so persistent:

... when we fix our view on the person himself, who is the author of all this mischief [the infinite confusions and disorder, such as the subversion of empires, the devastation of provinces, the sack of cities], there is something so dazzling in his character, the mere contemplation of it so elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it our admiration. The pain, which we receive from its tendency to the prejudice of society, is over-power'd by a stronger and more immediate sympathy.<sup>359</sup>

By his argument, Hume here might have implied two points. One is that, as already argued by Hutcheson, passions such as pride are useful and advantageous in the sense that they motivate men for business. On the other hand, a sentiment such as the sense of justice, though indispensable for preserving society, is not enough in itself to encourage men to cultivate sociability and further the progress of civilisation. The other point that Hume made is that the justification of the passion of pride requires no implication of benevolence. Hutcheson had taken trouble to show that the passion of pride must be directed towards benevolent purposes if we

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<sup>356</sup> *THN*, III. III. 2. 13, p. 382.

<sup>357</sup> *THN*, III. III. 2. 13, p. 383.

<sup>358</sup> *THN*, III. III. 2. 14, p. 383.

<sup>359</sup> *THN*, III. III. 2. 15, p. 383.

were to regard it as justified. Hume now argued that its excess was vicious not because it ignored benevolence, but simply because it caused displeasure. He also argued that, in the same manner, a just proportion of the passion was virtuous, not necessarily because it accompanies benevolence but merely because others sympathise with it for its utility and agreeableness. Hume agreed with Hutcheson in disagreeing with Mandeville who had asserted that the passion of pride was always vicious, but disagreed with Hutcheson in refuting Mandeville while confusing benevolence with utility and agreeableness. We can form our moral idea of the great mind as a natural virtue because we have moral sentiments and sympathy with others who have well-balanced passion of pride, which we approve is agreeable in itself and useful in cultivating sociability and furthering the progress of civilisation. For Hume, such well-proportioned pride cannot be called vice or hypocrisy, as Mandeville had argued.

After the greatness of mind, other examples Hume showed here as natural virtues were what he was to call natural abilities. As the heroic virtue is based on the passion of pride, so these natural abilities are in the same manner approved for their utility and agreeableness to the person possessed of them.<sup>360</sup> Strikingly, Hume listed some qualities of the mind as natural abilities, such as industry, activity and application, which are advantageous in the conduct of life, as well as temperance, frugality, economy and resolution, which motivate us for business and actions. At the same time, Hume regarded prodigality and luxury, among others, as vices drawing ruin upon us, and demoralising us.<sup>361</sup> By his listing, Hume might have opposed Mandeville who had thought of frugality as a threat to prosperity, and luxury as a leverage for public benefits.<sup>362</sup> As shown above, Hutcheson trusted the passion of frugality as a good means of restraining the delusive effects of other acquisitive passions. In Hutcheson's view, on the other hand, luxury most represented such delusive force. Hume now went so far as to approve the ability of frugality for positively driving men toward prosperity, not only acknowledging its

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<sup>360</sup> *THN*, III. III. 4. 5, p. 389.

<sup>361</sup> *THN*, III. III. 4. 7, p. 389.

role of negatively controlling other passions. For Hume, it was perfectly possible for us to form the moral ideas of industry, activity, application, temperance, frugality, economy and resolution, not as 'vices' or hypocrisies, but as morals. In other words, these natural abilities cannot be called vices, as Mandeville had argued, because they are useful for public benefits and therefore agreeable.

In concluding *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume once again emphasised the importance of his principle of sympathy. Hume summarised that

sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions;... They must derive all their merit from our sympathy with those, who reap any advantage from them: As the virtues, which have a tendency to the good of the person possess'd of them, derive their merit from our sympathy with him.<sup>363</sup>

On the whole, Hume put his theory of morals on his foundational theory of the association of ideas. In his scheme, simple ideas of pleasure or agreeableness to utility are associated into complex ideas of morals. This process of the association of ideas is occasioned by our moral sentiments, our sympathy with others and our passions. In the process, the passion of self-interest (in the case of justice) or that of pride or love legitimated by sympathy from others (in the case of natural virtues) are to be excited, and finally give rise to the complex ideas of public good or morals. Hume's concept of sympathy, in place of Hutcheson's idea of moral sense, was the foundational formula of sociability as well as the principle on which he relied to refute Mandeville's sceptical theory of morality. Hume's development beyond Hutcheson, though, was that he no longer required benevolence for the passions to be approved as virtuous. Hume consequently went so far as to say that whatever may be useful to public benefits must be regarded as virtuous, even when not benevolent, on the grounds that it would always be approved of sympathetically by others if only for its utility and agreeableness. As our simple ideas of virtue, beauty and wealth implied the usefulness or utility of objects, our moral ideas, which were to be formed out of these simple ideas, would involve the usefulness or utility as the standard of

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<sup>362</sup> Beside those qualities of the mind, Hume added the beauties of body and fortune to the natural abilities. Hume's argument concerning them is a repetition of the one in Book II. See *THN*. III. III. 5. 3-5, pp. 392-3.

<sup>363</sup> *THN*, III. III. 6. 2, p. 394.

morals. And in the context of 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, this was how Hume sought to solve Mandeville's paradox: by introducing the idea of utility as the measure of morals.

The disagreement between Hutcheson and Hume on this point can be seen in the subsequent correspondence between them concerning an approach to moral subjects. Hutcheson thought that Hume was not showing 'a certain Warmth of the Cause of Virtue' in his 'abstract Enquirys', probably meaning by that, that Hume had not paid enough attention to benevolence. For this, Hume replied that, in examining the mind, 'One may consider it either as an Anatomist or as a Painter; either to discover its most secret Springs & Principles or to describe the Grace & Beauty of its Actions'.<sup>364</sup> As a moral philosopher, Hume adopted the former sort of anatomical approach. Hume contended to Hutcheson:

Actions are not virtuous nor vicious; but only so far as they are proofs of certain Qualitys or durable Principles in the Mind. This is a Point I Shou'd have established more expressly than I have done. Now I desire you to consider, if there be any Quality, that is virtuous, without having a Tendency either to the public Good or to the Good of the Person, who possesses it. ... You are a great Admirer of *Cicero*, as well as I am. Please to review the 4th Book, *de finibus bonorum & malorum*; where you find him prove against the *Stoic*, that if there be no other Goods but Virtue, 'tis impossible there can be any Virtue; because the Mind woud then want all Motives to begin its Actions upon: And tis on the Goodness or Badness of the Motives that the Virtue of the Action depends. This proves, that to every virtuous Action there must be a Motive or impelling Passion distinct from the Virtue, & that Virtue can never be the sole Motive to any Action. You do not assent this; tho' I think there is no Proposition more certain or important. I must own my Proofs were not distinct enough, & must be altered.<sup>365</sup>

This is Hume's comment on Hutcheson's argument of passions, summarising his disagreement with its emphasis on benevolence. This was also going to be the starting point for Smith in the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy in the quest for refuting Mandeville's moral theory.

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<sup>364</sup> See David Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford, 1932), letter 13, from Hume to Hutcheson, dated 17 September 1739, p. 36.

<sup>365</sup> See Letter 13, pp. 34-5.

## Chapter Two

### **Sociability and beauty in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments***

Smith set himself two questions for his theory of morals: that is, the nature of virtue, and the principle of moral approbation.<sup>1</sup> Both had a particular ethical significance for Smith. In this chapter, I seek to show that these questions were derived from an earlier debate about the relationship between 'private vices' and 'public benefits'. The debate was a decisive battlefield for Smith's argument pertaining to moral sentiments, sociability and taste, and their functions in establishing virtues and the rules of justice as well as in supplying the needs of life by producing wealth. The two moral questions determined his plan and structure of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which, taken as a whole, was to analyse the sentiments or affections from which any action proceeds and upon which its whole virtue or vice must depend. Smith decided to pursue this analysis in two respects: first, in relation to the cause or motive which excites such sentiment or affection; and second, in relation to the end or effect which it produces. As shown below, Smith eventually concluded that the first determined the propriety or impropriety of the cause which excites the sentiment, and the second determined the merit or demerit of the action.<sup>2</sup> For now all we need to remember is that this distinction was important, because Smith was going to argue that virtue rested on the propriety of the action which excited the sentiment from which action proceeded. Indeed, Smith was conscious that the relation of the

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<sup>1</sup> *TMS*, VII. i. 2, p. 265. Smith clarified these questions in reflecting the history of moral philosophy. Quite likely, in his original ethics lectures, the section of the history of moral philosophy would have come at the beginning, which eventually presented at the end of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Part VI in earlier editions, and Part VII in the final edition). The heading of Section I of Part VII was therefore: 'Of the Questions which ought to be examined in a Theory of Moral Sentiments'.

<sup>2</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 3. 5-7, p. 18.

cause of the action to the sentiment from which the action proceeded, was the factor which determined the virtue of the action, and he thought that this relationship was one that had been previously neglected in moral philosophy.<sup>3</sup> To analyse the propriety of action, Smith accordingly began his ethical dissertation by developing his theory of sympathy, which was eventually going to answer his second question of morals as well, with regard to the power or faculty which recommended us the propriety of action and the approbation of it.

In general, Kaye points out, critics who rejected Mandeville's moral rigorism and philosophical anarchism, which had given rise to the notorious paradox, were forced away from strict rigorism and towards a utilitarian solution of the paradox.<sup>4</sup> As shown below, however, Smith, included by Kaye amongst those critics who were pushed by Mandeville's paradox in the general direction of the utilitarian line of thinking, was an exception. Smith's revolution, if it may be called so, lies in his attempt to solve the paradox by destroying and offering alternatives to both moral rigorism and utilitarian thinking. Following Hutcheson, Smith did not offer a utilitarian test or standard of morals, as Fowler believed. Hence it is not necessarily the case that Smith 'curiously adopts two criteria of actions, their propriety and their merit'. And it is not the case either that, 'when closely examined, Adam Smith's two criteria can be reduced to the one criterion proposed by Hutcheson, that is, as it was afterwards called, the utilitarian test or standard of conduct'.<sup>5</sup> Smith's only criterion of moral conducts was their propriety. As far as moral sentiments such as sympathy, the sense of justice and resentment act according to their pleasure or pain, resulted from what they perceive as the propriety or impropriety of characters or actions, so Smith argued, the merit or utility of those characters or actions would be led by an invisible hand and eventually achieved naturally and unintentionally.

In an attempt to answer his first question on morals, wherein virtue consists, Smith began *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* with his theory of sympathy. Presenting an answer to the question required Smith first to emphasise strikingly the disinterested character of human nature:

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<sup>3</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 3. 8, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Kaye, pp. cxxix-cxxxiii.

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.

To Smith, this disinterested nature of men was 'a matter of fact'.<sup>6</sup> By beginning *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* with this emphasis on the disinterested nature of men, Smith immediately distanced himself from natural law theorists as well as from Mandeville, who had presumed human nature as fundamentally selfish. Smith stressed the fact that we are able to sympathise with any kind of passion, either joyful or sorrowful:

Pity and compassion are words appropriated to signify our fellow-feeling with the sorrow of others. Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike Hume, Smith also emphasised that sympathy did not so much consist in the communication of passions as in an attention to the situation of others. For instance, extremely strong passions may cause us to inquire into another person's situation rather than to sympathise.<sup>8</sup>

Sympathy, therefore, does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it.<sup>9</sup>

The compassion of the spectator must arise altogether from the consideration of what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same ... situation.<sup>10</sup>

Smith even went on to argue that we can sympathise with the dead who have no passions. Such sympathy is based on our 'very illusion of the imagination', from which, Smith continued, arises one of the most important principles of human nature. It is 'the dread of death', which in Smith's view is 'the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind', which in turn 'guards and protects the society'.<sup>11</sup> From the

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<sup>5</sup> See Fowler, pp. 232-3.

<sup>6</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 1. 1, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 1. 5, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 1. 6-7 and 9, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 1. 10, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 1. 11, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 1. 13, pp. 12-3.

very beginning of his discussion of sympathy, which was meant eventually to answer his question of wherein virtue consists, Smith seems to have been criticising Mandeville by showing that the sympathetic sentiments, which are neither vicious nor selfish, are the principle of sociability and contribute to the public good by preserving the order of society. Or rather, Smith's questions themselves were part of the project of Scottish moral philosophy to criticise Mandeville's theory of passions, sentiments and sociability.

With the questions plausibly formulated and the discussion of sympathy thus having been introduced, Smith now confidently embarked on a long, knife-edged journey to show the mechanism of the disinterested principle of sympathy in establishing sociability. Smith saw it in the harmony of passions achieved by sympathy. Smith showed that we judge the propriety or impropriety of the affections of others by their concord or dissonance with our own:

To approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them; and not to approve of them as such, is the same thing as to observe that we do not entirely sympathize with them.<sup>12</sup>

Although the compassion, or fellow-feeling, of the spectator can never be the same as the original sentiments of the person principally concerned, these two sentiments still 'have such a correspondence with one another, as is sufficient for the harmony of society'. What is demanded in the process is that 'Though they will never be unisons, they may be concords, and this is all that is wanted or required'.<sup>13</sup>

Since the passions of different individuals can never be in unison, to establish sympathy between such passions would in turn require us to see the varying point of propriety of each passion, or in other words, the pitch of every passion that the spectator can go along with. Smith next dealt with this issue in Section II of Part I. The issue about propriety would then finally offer Smith a satisfactory answer to his question of wherein virtue consists, because Smith was going to derive his conclusion, that virtue consists in propriety, exactly from his discussion concerning the issue. As seen below, the issue was raised by Smith in an attempt, primarily, to

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<sup>12</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 3. 1, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> *TMS*, I. i. 4. 7, p. 22.



refute Mandeville's theory of sociability, which had argued that sociability was a product of private vices.

Among the passions that Smith considered, two most important groupings were the unsocial passions and the selfish passions.<sup>14</sup> In Smith, the unsocial passions were indispensable in establishing justice and in the protection of property in society. The selfish passions, on the other hand, were crucial in refining taste and in the production of wealth. In discussing justice in Part II, Smith began with the distinction between the unsocial passions of hatred and resentment.<sup>15</sup> Though both passions are unsocial, the passion of hatred is satisfied merely by the misfortune of the offender whether or not we help bring it about.<sup>16</sup> The passion of resentment, on the other hand, 'cannot be fully gratified, unless the offender is not only made to grieve in his turn, but to grieve for that particular wrong which we have suffered from him'. In other words,

Resentment would prompt us to desire, not only that he should be punished, but that he should be punished by our means, and upon account of that particular injury which he had done to us.

This is exactly the reason why Smith argued that the principle of justice derived from the passion of resentment:

The natural gratification of this passion tends, of its own accord, to produce all the political ends of punishment; the correction of the criminal, and the example to the public.<sup>17</sup>

In this process, the role of sympathy is vitally important: the passion of resentment,

... as well as all the other passions of human nature, seem proper and approved of, when the

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<sup>14</sup> Smith was accordingly going to devote the rest of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* to his analyses of these two kinds of passions. The former, the unsocial passions, were studied in Parts II and III, in relation to justice, and the latter, the selfish passions, were enquired into in the following Parts IV and V, in relation to beauty. The argument about the propriety of the social, unsocial and selfish passions was going to be further developed from a viewpoint of the Stoic virtue of self-command in the final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS, VI. iii. 14-53, pp. 242-62).

<sup>15</sup> In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith first looked at the selfish passions in the rest of Part I, and next went on to argue about justice as derived from the unsocial passions in Parts II and III. In Parts IV and V, Smith then came back to discuss beauty in view of the selfish passions. In my thesis, however, I look at his theory of justice first, and later take up his idea of beauty, for convenience. This order also corresponds to the structure of Smith's jurisprudence lectures, which first discussed justice and then went on to beauty and political economy.

<sup>16</sup> TMS, II. i. 1. 6, p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> TMS, II. i. 1. 6, p. 69.

heart of every impartial spectator entirely sympathizes with them, when every indifferent by-stander entirely enters into, and goes along with them.<sup>18</sup>

In this, sympathy should be neutral and independent of the interest of the impartial spectator. The administration of punishments would then be proper. This view was not Humean, in the sense that Smith thought that a punishment could be carried out without considering the public utility of the punishment, which Hume had argued should be the standard of morals. In Smith's words, the propriety of punishment depends on whether the motive of the actions can be sympathised with, regardless of the merit or demerit of the action:

... we cannot at all sympathize with the resentment of one man against another, merely because this other has been the cause of his misfortune, unless he has been the cause of it from motives which we cannot enter into.<sup>19</sup>

In his jurisprudence lectures, Smith referred to an example of fidelity in marriage and argued that the indignation of the public against the infidelity of a wife would 'arise from their sympathy with the jealousy of the husband', but not from their consideration of the demerit of the infidelity. Marriage might have the merit but such 'utility in this constitution of our nature', that is, to train our children up 'to become useful members of society', would be established unintentionally by our passions.<sup>20</sup> In sum, the propriety of carrying out a punishment will be determined by our views of the motives of criminal actions themselves, not primarily by their tendency to promote good or evil, in view of whosoever's interest. Responding to Hume, Smith argued that the same is true in the case of moral judgements in general. Virtue primarily consists in propriety, but only secondarily in utility.

Smith was now in a position to offer an answer to his second question: by what power or faculty of the mind is that propriety recommended to us? It is by the moral sentiments, of which resentment is one of the most important for sociability. Smith admitted that the passion of resentment was unsocial and 'odious'.

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<sup>18</sup> *TMS*, II. i. 2. 2, p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> *TMS*, II. i. 4. 3, pp. 73-4.

<sup>20</sup> Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1762-63 and 1766); eds. R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael, and L. J. Stein, as vol. V of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1978) (B), 102-3, p. 438 (abbreviated as *LJ* below).

Let it be considered that resentment, though, in the degree in which we too often see it, the most odious, perhaps, of all the passions, is not disapproved of when properly humbled and entirely brought down to the level of the sympathetic indignation of the spectator.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, resentment which is proper and consequently sympathised with, is fundamental to establishing sociability.

The very existence of society requires that unmerited and unprovoked malice should be restrained by proper punishments; and consequently, that to inflict those punishments should be regarded as a proper and laudable action. Though man, therefore, be naturally endowed with a desire of the welfare and preservation of society, yet the Author of nature has not entrusted it to his reason to find out that a certain application of punishments is the proper means of attaining this end; but has endowed him with an immediate and instinctive approbation of that very application which is most proper to attain it. The oeconomy of nature is in this respect exactly of a piece with what it is upon many other occasions. With regard to all those ends which, upon account of their peculiar importance, may be regarded, if such an expression is allowable, as the favourite ends of nature, she has constantly in this manner not only endowed mankind with an appetite for the end which she proposes, but likewise with an appetite for the means by which alone this end can be brought about, for their own sakes, and independent of their tendency to produce it. Thus self-preservation, and the propagation of the species, are the great ends which Nature seems to have proposed in the formation of all animals.<sup>22</sup>

These are further remarks with which Smith tried to convince his readers of the unintended consequences of the passion of resentment for the public good and the contrivance of nature working in them. As the disinterestedness of sympathy is a matter of fact, Smith contended, so the unsocial passion of resentment being vital for the establishment of sociability is equally a matter of fact:

Let it be considered too, that the present enquiry is not concerning a matter of right, if I may say so, but concerning a matter of fact. We are not at present examining upon what principles a perfect being would approve of the punishment of bad actions; but upon what principles so weak and imperfect a creature as man actually and in fact approves of it.<sup>23</sup>

Again, the same is true in the case of moral judgements in general. Propriety as virtue is always recommended to us by our sense of propriety in the mind.

In Section II of Part II of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith then went on to examine the virtue of justice as the basic virtue in establishing sociability, following his analysis of the unsocial passion of resentment. Again, Smith contrasted resentment with hatred. Hatred is 'a passion which is naturally excited by

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<sup>21</sup> *TMS*, II. i. 5. 8, p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> *TMS*, II. i. 5. 10, p. 77.

<sup>23</sup> *TMS*, II. i. 5. 10, p. 77.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy  
impropriety of sentiments and behaviour', or by ingratitude. As ingratitude,  
however, does not do real and positive harm, mere 'want of gratitude, therefore,  
cannot be punished'.<sup>24</sup> 'Resentment', on the other hand, 'seems to have been given  
us by nature for defence, and defence only. It is the safeguard of justice and the  
security of innocence'.<sup>25</sup> In Smith, justice is accordingly a

virtue, of which the observance is not left to the freedom of our own wills, which may be  
extorted by force, and of which the violation exposes to resentment, and consequently to  
punishment. ... the violation of justice is injury: it does real and positive hurt to some particular  
persons, from motives which are naturally disapproved of. It is, therefore, the proper object of  
resentment, and of punishment, which is the natural consequence of resentment.<sup>26</sup>

Consequently, it also turns out to be the fact that observing the rules of justice,  
though necessary for the establishment of sociability, does no real positive good.  
Hence,

Mere justice is, upon most occasions, but a negative virtue, and only hinders us from hurting our  
neighbour. ... We may often fulfil all the rules of justice by sitting still and doing nothing.<sup>27</sup>

Having thus defined the virtue of justice, Smith now came to one of his most  
important concerns in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: the role of justice in our  
pursuit of wealth. His concern here was provoked by Mandeville's argument that  
wealth was produced by pursuers' private vices such as pride, vanity and ambition.

In the race for wealth, and honours, and preferments, he may run as hard as he can, and strain  
every nerve and every muscle, in order to outstrip all his competitors. But if he should jostle, or  
throw down any of them, the indulgence of the spectators is entirely at an end. It is a violation of  
fair play, which they cannot admit of. This man is to them, in every respect, as good as he: they  
do not enter into that self-love by which he prefers himself so much to this other, and cannot go  
along with the motive from which he hurt him. They readily, therefore, sympathize with the  
natural resentment of the injured, and the offender becomes the object of their hatred and  
indignation. He is sensible that he becomes so, and feels that those sentiments are ready to burst  
out from all sides against him.<sup>28</sup>

Here Smith makes various assumptions. First, spectators do not seem to think that  
the pursuit of wealth is vicious as long as persons concerned do no real and positive

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<sup>24</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 1. 3, p. 79.

<sup>25</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 1. 4, p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 1. 5, p. 79.

<sup>27</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 1. 9, p. 82.

<sup>28</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 2. 1, p. 83.

harm to anyone, do not incur their resentment and are not troubled by the impartial spectators. In other words, we seem to regard the pursuit of wealth as innocent as long as justice is respected. Second, and even more important, human nature is judgmental, and therefore men are sensible to the violations of justice, and learn to regulate their own conduct in the pursuit of wealth. Smith confirmed that

The violator of the more sacred law of justice can never reflect on the sentiments which mankind must entertain with regard to him, without feeling all the agonies of shame, and horror, and consternation. ... By sympathizing with the hatred and abhorrence which other men must entertain for him, he becomes in some measure the object of his own hatred and abhorrence.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, men are perfectly capable of forming the moral idea of justice, and, therefore, it was human nature which assured that the pursuit of wealth was generally carried on in a way which did not offend people's natural sense of justice.

Smith further endeavoured to show that this sense of justice was not motivated by self-interest but was implanted by nature as the constitution of human nature. 'It is thus that man', Smith went on, 'who can subsist only in society, was fitted by nature to that situation for which he was made'.<sup>30</sup> For justice 'is the main pillar that upholds the whole edifice' of human society, and if justice is removed, the fabric of society 'must in a moment crumble into atoms'.

In order to enforce the observation of justice, therefore, Nature has implanted in the human breast that consciousness of ill-desert, those terrors of merited punishment which attend upon its violation, as the great safe-guards of the association of mankind, to protect the weak, to curb the violent, and to chastise the guilty.<sup>31</sup>

By using the terminology he had already used to describe the passion of resentment, Smith again depicted such a sense of justice as a 'means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce'. His analogy of a watch with the sense of justice helps illuminate his case:

The wheels of the watch are all admirably adjusted to the end for which it was made, the pointing of the hour. All their various motions conspire in the nicest manner to produce this effect. If they were endowed with a desire and intention to produce it, they could not do it better. Yet we never ascribe any such desire intention to them, but to the watch-maker, and we know that they are put into motion by a spring, which intends the effect it produces as little as they

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<sup>29</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 2. 3, p. 84.

<sup>30</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 1, p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 4, p. 86.

do.<sup>32</sup>

In the end, as propriety as virtue is all the time recommended to us by our sense of propriety in the mind, so the innocence of the pursuit of wealth is guaranteed, not only by our natural sense of justice but also by our belief in the disinterested nature of the sense of justice. Smith concluded that the moral sentiments in general are intended autonomously to control human conduct to lead men into establishing sociability, in the same manner as the artifice built into a watch.

By referring to the sense of justice, Smith has shown how human nature is judgmental and therefore morally neutral, by being conscious of the likely outcome of his own injustice to others. In other words, Smith emphasised how cautious human nature is of the unsocial passion of the resentment of other people. The same is universally applicable to all cases of the moral sentiments recommending us propriety as virtue in establishing sociability. Smith concentrated on the example of justice and the sense of justice or resentment because they are the most important virtue and moral sentiment for establishing sociability. But to complete his answer to the above two questions he had set for his theory of moral sentiments, now in Part III, Smith turned to another judgmental aspect of human nature: that we are attentive to our own passions as well as to those of others.

We begin ... to examine our own passions and conduct [in front of others], and to consider how these must appear to them, by considering how they would appear to us if in their situation. We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behaviour, and endeavour to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us.<sup>33</sup>

To show this self-reflective nature of men, Smith presented his description of 'man within the breast'. The man within the breast is distinct from the man without, or an actual spectator, in the sense that the former is a mind's eye which reflects upon one's own conduct and passions, whereas the latter merely looks at those of others. In Smith's words, the man within is a 'vice-gerent' of the author of nature 'upon

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<sup>32</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 5, p. 87.

<sup>33</sup> *TMS*, III. 1. 5. p. 112. See also III. 1. 2, p. 110 and III. 1. 3, p. 111.

earth to superintend the behaviour of his brethren',<sup>34</sup> or 'This inmate of the breast, this abstract man, the representative of mankind, and substitute of the Deity'.<sup>35</sup> The role of the man within is 'counteracting the strongest impulses of self-love'. For fulfilling such an act, the man within should be 'not the soft power of humanity', 'not that feeble spark of benevolence', but 'reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct'.<sup>36</sup>

Needless to say, together with the sense of justice, the man within is equally crucial in establishing justice. In Smith's words, the man within would aid 'our moral faculties, our natural sense of merit and propriety', in forming 'the general rules of morality' founded upon the experience of what such faculties approve of or disapprove of.<sup>37</sup> In this respect, the man within the breast is also a guardian of the sense of duty. In Smith, the sense of duty consisted of the regard to those general rules of conduct, built into the human nature for directing man's behaviour.<sup>38</sup> For, 'those important rules of morality are the commands and laws of the Deity, who will finally reward the obedient, and punish the transgressors of their duty',<sup>39</sup> and who has within us set up 'those vice-gerents' promulgating those rules.<sup>40</sup> Those rules are properly called laws because 'Those vice-gerents of God within us, never fail to punish the violation of them, by the torments of inward shame, and self-condemnation; and on the contrary, always reward obedience with tranquillity of mind, with contentment, and self-satisfaction'.<sup>41</sup> Smith accordingly described the man within the breast in the same terminology of depicting the unsocial passion of resentment as a divine means endowed in the human nature to establishing justice:

... by acting according to the dictates of our moral faculties, we necessarily pursue the most effectual means for promoting the happiness of mankind, and may therefore be said, in some sense, to co-operate with the Deity, and to advance as far as in our power the plan of Providence.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *TMS*, p. 128: added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn.

<sup>35</sup> *TMS*, p. 130: added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn.

<sup>36</sup> *TMS*, III. 3. 4, p. 137: added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn.

<sup>37</sup> *TMS*, III. 4. 7-8, p. 159.

<sup>38</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 1, pp. 161-2.

<sup>39</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 3, p. 163.

<sup>40</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 6, p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 6, p. 166.

In explaining the impartial spectator, one of Smith's purposes was to show how we learn the just pursuit of wealth. As the unsocial passion of resentment enables men to avoid committing injustice to others in the pursuit of wealth, so the man within the breast guarantees wealth as a proper reward for observing the general rules of morality.

If we consider the general rules by which external prosperity and adversity are commonly distributed in this life, we shall find, that notwithstanding the disorder in which all things appear to be in this world, yet even here every virtue naturally meets with its proper reward, with the recompense which is most fit to encourage and promote it; and this too so surely, that it requires a very extraordinary concurrence of circumstances entirely to disappoint it. What is the reward most proper for encouraging industry, prudence, and circumspection? Success in every sort of business. And is it possible that in the world of life these virtues should fail of attaining it? Wealth and external honours are their proper recompense, and the recompense which they can seldom fail of acquiring.<sup>43</sup>

Because we come to believe that wealth is in this manner brought about as a reward of the laws of the Deity, the pursuit of wealth is proper and by no means vicious.

In the first three Parts of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith's two questions, wherein virtue consists, and by what power or faculty of the mind it is that virtue is recommended to us, are thus mostly answered. Virtue consists in propriety, and propriety is recommended to us by moral sentiments. Sympathy is a key emotion in human nature in judging propriety and making the moral sentiments sociable. The sense of justice or resentment recommends us to punish injustice and establish justice as a virtue fundamental to sociability. Justice then enables us to judge the innocence or propriety of the pursuit of wealth. The issue left to Smith was then to show exactly how wealth is pursued in a manner that troubles none of our moral sentiments. This is because justice only provides us with the means to judge the propriety of the pursuit of wealth, but does not guarantee its propriety itself. As Smith said above, 'We may often fulfil all the rules of justice by sitting still and doing nothing'. Smith still has to answer the second question in relation to the pursuit of wealth: by what power or faculty in the mind is it that the propriety of the pursuit of wealth is recommended to us? His answer was that it is by the selfish passions. Smith had already dealt with the question in passing in Part I, when he

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<sup>42</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 7, p. 166.

<sup>43</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 8, p. 166.



considered the effects of circumstances upon the sense of propriety.<sup>44</sup> Smith began with a comparison between the selfish passion of joy and that of sorrow. Aware that it would have been taken for granted previously 'that our propensity to sympathize with sorrow must be very strong, and our inclination to sympathize with joy very weak', Smith observed that

Notwithstanding this prejudice, however, I will venture to affirm, that, when there is no envy in the case, our propensity to sympathize with joy is much stronger than our propensity to sympathize with sorrow; and that our fellow-feeling for the agreeable emotion approaches much more nearly to the vivacity of what is naturally felt by the persons principally concerned, than that which we conceive for the painful one.<sup>45</sup>

Such sympathy with other people's joy or the selfish passion of joy, offered Smith an answer to the above question in relation to the pursuit of wealth. Smith maintained:

It is because mankind are disposed to sympathize more entirely with our joy than with our sorrow, that we make parade of our riches, and conceal our poverty. ... Nay, it is chiefly from this regard to the sentiments of mankind, that we pursue riches and avoid poverty. For to what purpose is all the toil and bustle of this world? what is the end of avarice and ambition, of the pursuit of wealth, of power, and pre-eminence? The wages of the meanest labourer can supply them. ... From whence, then, arises that emulation which runs through all the different ranks of men, and what are the advantages which we propose by that great purpose of human life which we call bettering our condition? To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation, are all the advantages which we can propose to derive from it. It is vanity, not the ease, or the pleasure, which interests us. But vanity is always

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<sup>44</sup> Section III of Part I, following the sections on the sense of propriety and the passions in relation to propriety, was titled: 'Of the Effects of Prosperity and Adversity upon the Judgment of Mankind with regard to the Propriety of Action; and why it is more easy to obtain their Approbation in the one state than in the other'.

<sup>45</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 1. 4-5, pp. 44-5. The view is corresponding to Smith's case that the point of propriety of every passion is different in different passions. Smith had already shown that the pitch of each passion which the spectator can go along with was just in the same proportion as the human nature was more or less disposed to sympathise with it (*TMS*, I. ii. intro. 1-2, p. 27). In Smith's view, the propriety of the degree of the unsocial passions such as hatred and resentment is almost lowest. For they are exceedingly difficult to get sympathy from spectators (I. ii. 3. 1, p. 34). On the other hand, the propriety of the degree of the social passions such as generosity, humanity and kindness is high, according as they are easily sympathised with by the indifferent spectators (I. ii. 4. 1, pp. 38-9). Though the propriety of the degree of the selfish passions is medium, as they hold a middle place between the social and unsocial passions (I. ii. 5. 1, p. 40), the selfish passion of joy has an affinity with agreeable social passions easily sympathised with, whereas the selfish passion of sorrow has an affinity with painful unsocial passions hard to be sympathised with. Smith himself reflected that the state of joy, that is, the state in health, out of debt and with a clear conscience, is 'natural and ordinary' for the greater part of mankind, and therefore is more easily sympathised with, while the state of adversity is rare and hence more difficult to be sympathised with, especially in a wealthy modern commercial society. Interestingly, Smith therefore named the state of joy the 'natural state' (I. iii. 1. 7-8, p. 45).

founded upon the belief of our being the object of attention and approbation. The rich man glories in his riches, because he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are disposed to go along with him in all those agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him.<sup>46</sup>

In other words, the selfish passion of ambition is excited by 'the condition of the great, in those delusive colours in which the imagination is apt to paint it'.<sup>47</sup> A person's admiration for a great king is therefore based on the inclination of human nature to sympathise with the joy and happiness of the rich and powerful more than with the sorrow and misery of the poor and weak.

All the innocent blood that was shed in the civil wars, provoked less indignation than the death of Charles I. ... Upon this disposition of mankind, to go along with all the [selfish] passions of the rich and the powerful, is founded the distinction of ranks, and the order of society. Our obsequiousness to our superiors more frequently arises from our admiration for the advantages of their situation, than from any private expectations of benefit from their good-will. Their benefits can extend but to a few; but their fortunes interest almost every body. We are eager to assist them in completing a system of happiness that approaches so near to perfection; and we desire to serve them for their own sake, without any other recompense but the vanity or the honour of obliging them. Neither is our deference to their inclinations founded chiefly, or altogether, upon a regard to the utility of such submission, and to the order of society, which is best supported by it.<sup>48</sup>

Such was Smith's description of how the selfish passion of ambition contributed to the establishment of sociability. In his account, Smith implied that the selfish passions were not vicious but innocent, as far as they were sympathised with. The

<sup>46</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 2. 1, pp. 50-1.

<sup>47</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 2. 2, p. 51.

<sup>48</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 2. 2-3, p. 52. Smith consistently argued that the obligation of subjects to obey their sovereign was not based on social contract (*LJ* (A), v. 118, p. 317), but on the principle of authority (*LJ* (A), v. 119-20, p. 318; *LJ* (B), 12-3, p. 401) and of utility (*LJ* (A), v. 120-21, p. 318; *LJ* (B), 13-4, p. 402). In Smith, authority was derived from the sense of beauty and sympathy with the joy of the rich and powerful. See *LJ* (B), 12-3, p. 401. This is why Smith regarded a hereditary monarch as the most secured authority, with his superior fortune and superior antiquity (*LJ* (A), v. 129-31, pp. 321-2). Smith vaguely understood that, in general, the principle of the Tory was that of authority, and that the principle of the Whig was that of utility. But, in Smith's view, both were insufficiently argued in the sense that the Tory were implausibly sticking to the theory of the divine rights of king, and the Whig were in vain endeavouring to reconcile their doctrine to social contract theory. See *LJ* (A), v. 123-4, pp. 319-20; *LJ* (B), 14-5, p. 402. Smith was instead attempting to present the principle of authority based on the sense of beauty, in place of the divine rights of king, mixed with that of utility to a lesser extent which was not based on the social contract. This was to show how the opinions of impartial spectator could justify the resistance of subjects to their sovereign, in cases of absurdity and impropriety of sovereign's conducts (*LJ* (A), v. 124-7, pp. 320-1; *LJ* (B), 15-8, pp. 402-4). The principle of authority was therefore to be the foundation of that utility, because of the effect of prevailing 'custom' of thinking it proper and right to pay respect to the powerful (*LJ* (A), v. 131-2, p. 322). As for the distinction of ranks and the order of society as based on the respect for the rich and the powerful, see also *TMS*, VI. ii. 1. 20, pp. 225-6 and VI. iii. 30, pp. 252-3.

passion of ambition is aroused by sympathy with great riches and power. As far as wealth is pursued by men with an impartial spectator in mind who would sympathise with the passion of the joy of possessing riches and power, such prosperity and the consequent establishment of the distinction of ranks and sociability will be perfectly justified. Thus it has been shown that the propriety of the pursuit of wealth is recommended to us by the selfish passions, distinctive to the sense of justice and resentment.

Part IV again picked up the same issue, that is, his insight into the inclination of the human sentiment to sympathise with the selfish passion of joy more than that of sorrow, but for a different purpose. Thinking that he has already answered his two ethical problems with his general theory of morals, Smith now launched a more specific yet comprehensive attack on Mandeville's theory of passions, sentiments and sociability, which had argued that wealth was pursued by private vices such as pride, vanity and ambition. In the remaining part of this chapter, I seek to show that, for such a purpose, Smith now developed his theories of beauty and taste, which has been fairly neglected so far. Revisiting his second question, in view of the issue of achieving the propriety of the pursuit of wealth, Smith began by considering the effect of the idea of utility upon the sense of propriety. Despite the chapter title, his concern in Chapter I of Part IV was to show that beauty is NOT bestowed upon the production of wealth, by the appearance of utility.<sup>49</sup> In this argument, Smith's second question of morals asked to see if private vices ever recommend to us the propriety of the pursuit of wealth. If they do, then Mandeville was right in contending that men could contribute to public benefits only with their private vices.

Smith began with Hume's account of beauty. Hume had argued that beauty was derived from utility, which would give the possessor pleasure and convenience.<sup>50</sup> There Hume had presumed his own theory of sympathy as 'the communication of passions'; in this case, the communication of agreeable sentiments from utility between the possessor and the spectator. As Smith had already argued that sympathy

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<sup>49</sup> See the sub-headings of Part IV: 'Of the EFFECT of UTILITY upon the sentiment of Approbation Consisting of One Section'; Chapter I: 'Of the beauty which the appearance of *UTILITY* bestows upon all the productions of art, and of the extensive influence of this species of Beauty'.

<sup>50</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 2, p. 179. For Hume's account of beauty in detail, see Chapter One above.

was to be excited by the spectator's curiosity to the situation of the person principally concerned, Smith accordingly had to comment on Hume's view of beauty. Quite justifiably claiming the originality of his account of beauty, Smith argued:

But that this fitness, this happy contrivance of any production of art, should often be more valued, than the very end for which it was intended; and that the exact adjustment of the means for attaining any conveniency or pleasure, should frequently be more regarded, than that very conveniency or pleasure, in the attainment of which their whole merit would seem to consist, has not, so far as I know, been yet taken notice of by any body. That this however is very frequently the case, may be observed in a thousand instances, both in the most frivolous and in the most important concerns of human life.<sup>51</sup>

Reminding his readers that his view of the sense of justice and the unsocial passion of resentment was a divine means endowed by nature to its end, Smith again chose the same example of a watch to clarify what he meant:

A watch, in the same manner, that falls behind above two minutes in a day, is despised by one curious in watches. He sell it perhaps for a couple of guineas, and purchases another at fifty, which will not lose above a minute in a fortnight. The sole use of watches however, is to tell us what o'clock it is, and to hinder us from breaking any engagement, or suffering any other inconveniency by our ignorance in that particular point. But the person so nice with regard to this machine, will not always be found either more scrupulously punctual than other men, or more anxiously concerned upon any other account, to know precisely what time of day it is. What interests him is not so much the attainment of this piece of knowledge, as the perfection of the machine which serves to attain it.<sup>52</sup>

By making beauty in this manner, in parallel with his account of the unsocial passion

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<sup>51</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 3, pp. 179-80. Even though his claim of the originality can be accepted, Smith knew Buffier's observation of beauty, which for instance had presented an anti-utilitarian argument of beauty, by stating that beauty did not necessarily consist in convenience for which each part of the body was designed, because a very large mouth for instance was surely useful for eating but not always beautiful. See Claude Buffier, *First Truths, and the Origin of our Opinions, Explained* (London, 1780), pp. 70-1. This argument might have offered Smith a weapon to criticise Hume's utility-oriented account of beauty. After arguing 'that beauty consists in the particular form which is most common among other particular forms found in things of the same species' (*First Truths*, p. 71), however, Buffier in fact eventually reached his conclusion that 'if we suppose that true beauty is to be found in the world, it must incontestably be that form which is most common to all nations; and if particular people, through prejudice, and particular habits, will not at first concur in this opinion, time and reflection must at length incline them to the more numerous party, that is, to the side of opinion of Reason and Nature' (*First Truths*, p. 75). Smith seems to have followed Buffier's conclusion all through his argument of beauty in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. As a Jesuit, Buffier too had naturally stated that nature was something existing and acting in conformity with the laws that God had established, so that, in this sense, what was natural was opposed to what was considered supernatural or miraculous (*First Truths*, p. 230). Smith examined Buffier's account of beauty in detail in Part V. But Smith more or less described Buffier as a philosopher who had derived beauty from custom, though it should be noted that Smith was more interested in the sense of beauty, rather than beauty itself, and its origin in human nature.

<sup>52</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 5, p. 180.

of resentment and the sense of justice, Smith came to imply that such a sense of beauty was not something vicious which intended only its own gratification, but indifferent to self-interest because it had been designed by nature to contribute unintentionally to the public good. The sense of beauty is not primarily concerned with the utility brought about by the beauty. Instead, Smith presented the matter of fact that

How many people ruin themselves by laying out money on trinkets of frivolous utility? What pleases these lovers of toys is not so much the utility, as the aptness of the machines which are fitted to promote it.<sup>53</sup>

Smith thought that the sense of beauty was originated from the pleasure of seeing the order, harmony and economy of organisation or arrangement. Smith then proceeded to show how such a disinterested sense of beauty could generate economic prosperity.

To show how the sense of beauty contributes to public benefits, Smith came back to the selfish passion of ambition. Smith first depicted a gloomy reality of ambition to illustrate how little the passion of ambition, and in turn the sense of beauty, was concerned with the real utility it pursued:

The poor man's son, whom heaven in its anger has visited with ambition, when he begins to look around him, admires the condition of the rich. ... It appears in his fancy like the life of some superior rank of beings, and, in order to arrive at it, he devotes himself for ever to the pursuit of wealth and greatness. To obtain the conveniencies which these afford, he submits in the first year, nay in the first month of his application, to more fatigue of body and more uneasiness of mind than he could have suffered through the whole of his life from the want of them. ... if in the extremity of old age he should at last to attain it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it. ... he begins at last to find that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body and tranquillity of mind than the tweezers-cases of the lover of toys; and like them too, more troublesome to the person who carries them about with him than all the advantages they can afford him are commodious.<sup>54</sup>

Despite such fatal consequences however, ambition pursues wealth and power in view of the beauty, or the order, harmony and economy of organisation or arrangement that wealth and power might possibly bring about to him and from which his sense of beauty would take the pleasure of seeing and experiencing them.

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<sup>53</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 6, p. 180.

<sup>54</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 8, p. 181.

Again, this was a matter of fact for Smith. Smith next explained the working of this sense of beauty in terms of his concepts of sympathy and impartial spectator. The ambitious more eagerly pursue 'The palaces, the gardens, the equipage, the retinue of the great, ... of which the obvious conveniency strikes every body', than a curiosity in the basic essentials of life, of which 'Their conveniency may perhaps be equally great, but it is not so striking'. This is

because in this, as in all other cases, we constantly pay more regard to the sentiments of the spectator, than to those of the person principally concerned, and consider rather how his situation will appear to other people, than how it will appear to himself. If we examine, however, why the spectator distinguishes with such admiration the condition of the rich and the great, we shall find that it is not so much upon account of the superior ease or pleasure which they are supposed to enjoy, as of the numberless artificial and elegant contrivances for promoting this ease or pleasure.<sup>55</sup>

Sympathy with the rich and powerful is the product of our curiosity in their situation or the beauty, order, harmony and economy of organisation or arrangement that their wealth and power might possibly bring about to them and from which their sense of beauty would take the pleasure of seeing and experiencing them. It is not always the product of our curiosity in the ease and utility in their situation or of their riches and power, as Hume had assumed. The selfish passion of ambition would therefore be more concerned with an impartial spectator and his supposed admiration for the beauty that wealth and power might possibly bring about to the rich and powerful and from which an impartial spectator's sense of beauty would be expected to take the pleasure of seeing them, than with the frivolous or even troublesome utility with which they would end up.

We are then charmed with the beauty of that accommodation which reigns in the palaces and oeconomy of the great; and admire how every thing is adapted to promote their ease, to prevent their wants, to gratify their wishes, and to amuse and entertain their most frivolous desires. If we consider the real satisfaction which all these things are capable of affording, by itself and separated from the beauty of that arrangement which is fitted to promote it, it will always appear in the highest degree contemptible and trifling. But we rarely view it in this abstract and philosophical light. We naturally confound it in our imagination with the order, the regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or oeconomy by means of which it is produced. The pleasures of wealth and greatness, when considered in this complex view, strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth all the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 8, p. 182.

<sup>56</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 9, p. 183.

And it is well that nature imposes upon us in this manner. It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind. ... The earth by these labours of mankind has been obliged to redouble her natural fertility, and to maintain a greater multitude of inhabitants. It is to no purpose, that the proud and unfeeling landlord views his extensive fields, and without a thought for the wants of his brethren, in imagination consumes himself the whole harvest that grows upon them. The produce of the soil maintains at all times nearly that number of inhabitants which it is capable of maintaining. The rich only select from the heap what is most precious and agreeable. They consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society, and afford means to the multiplication of the species.<sup>57</sup>

In such a manner, the selfish passion of ambition is motivated and led by the sense of beauty into contributing unexpectedly to the public good (supplying the needs of life). The selfish passions may thus be approved of, on the grounds that the poor would sympathise with the beauty and pleasure supposed to be enjoyed by the rich. Keeping in mind the expectation of such sympathy from the multitude, the ambitious are led in turn by delusion into unintentionally contributing to public benefits by their selfish pursuit of wealth. In other words, as the unsocial passion of resentment and the sense of justice pursue a punishment to the injustice done, for its own sake, regardless of its ultimate utility to the public, so the selfish passion of ambition, motivated by the sense of beauty, pursues the beauty of the life of the rich and powerful for its own sake, without considering its frivolous utility. But in the end, both the senses of justice and of beauty will be tricked into contributing unintentionally to public benefits, even though exclusively intending their own interest. Smith's famous term 'the invisible hand' was therefore coined to denote the artifice endowed by nature to deceive the passions into contributing to public benefits, in the same manner as the artifice built in a watch.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 10, pp. 183-5.

<sup>58</sup> See *Encyclopaedia Britannica; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, & c.* (2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1778), 'Moral Philosophy, or Morals', pp. [1]-[33] and 5197-5202 (after p. 5192, p. [33] overlaps with p. 5197): 'When the mind becomes more sensible to those objects or appearances in which it perceives *beauty, uniformity, grandeur, and harmony, ...*; to these objects the mind is led by *nature*, or taught by *custom*, the *opinion* and examples of others, to annex certain ideas of *moral character, dignity, decorum, honour, liberality, tenderness, and active or social enjoyment*. The consequence of this association is, that the objects to which these are annexed must rise in their value, and be pursued with

In Chapter II of Part IV, Smith slightly shifted his question, looked at the beauty bestowed by the appearance of utility upon the characters and actions of men, and asked how far the perception of this beauty affects our sense of propriety.<sup>59</sup> As in Chapter I, Smith began with his criticism of Hume on beauty. Hume had thought that our approbation of virtue was derived from a perception of beauty resulting from the appearance of the utility of characters and actions as judged by the spectators.<sup>60</sup> Smith's response was the same as the one in Chapter I:

it will be found, upon examination, that the usefulness of any disposition of mind is seldom the first ground of our approbation; and that the sentiment of approbation always involves in it a sense of propriety quite distinct from the perception of utility.<sup>61</sup>

Among the examples Smith referred to in order to illustrate his point, the virtue of prudence was crucial to his second question of morals in relation to the pursuit of wealth. The virtue of prudence, Smith argued, 'of all the virtues that which is most useful to the individual', consisted of two qualities:

first of all, superior reason and understanding, by which we are capable of discerning the remote consequences of all our actions, and of foreseeing the advantage or detriment which is likely to result from them: and second, self-command, by which we are enabled to abstain from pleasure or to endure present pain, in order to obtain a greater pleasure or to avoid a greater pain in some

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proportionable ardour. The *enjoyment* of them is often attended with *pleasure*; and the more *possession* of them, where that is wanting, frequently draws respects from one's fellow-creatures: This *respect* is, by many, thought equivalent to the pleasure of *enjoyment*. Hence it happens that the idea of *happiness* is connected with the mere *possession*, which is therefore eagerly sought after, without any regard to the *generous use* or *honourable enjoyment*. Thus the passion, resting on the *means*, not the *end*, i.e. losing sight of its *natural* objects, becomes wild and extravagant.

... by the deception formerly mentioned, the *merit* or the *conduct* which intitled, or should be intitle, to those marks of distinction, shall be forgot or neglected, and the *badges* themselves be passionately affected or pursued, as including every excellency. If these are attained by any means, all the concomitants which *nature*, *custom*, or *accidents* have joined to them, will be supposed to follow of course. ...

When men are once engaged in *active* life, and find that *wealth* and *power*, generally called INTEREST, are the great avenues to every kind of enjoyment, they are apt to throw in many engaging *moral forms* to the object of their pursuit, in order to justify their passion, and vanish over the measures they take to gratify it, as *independency on the vices* or *passions* of others, *provision* and *security to themselves* and *friends*, *prudent oeconomy*, or *well-placed charity*, *social communication*, *superiority to their enemies*, who are all villains, *honourable service*, and many other ingredient of *merit*'.

<sup>59</sup> See the sub-heading of Chapter II of Part IV: 'Of the beauty which the appearance of Utility bestows upon the characters and actions of men; and how far the perception of this beauty may be regarded as one of the original principles of approbation'.

<sup>60</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 2-3, pp. 187-8.

<sup>61</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 5, p. 188.



future time.<sup>62</sup>

Based on his account of the sense of beauty, Smith argued 'that superior reason and understanding are originally approved of as just and right and accurate, and not merely as useful or advantageous'.<sup>63</sup> As for self-command, the reason was the same:

That self-command, in the same manner, by which we restrain our present appetites, in order to gratify them more fully upon another occasion, is approved of, as much under the aspect of propriety, as under that of utility.<sup>64</sup>

When we act in this manner, the sentiments which influence our conduct seem exactly to coincide with those of the spectator. ... when we act as if the remote object interested us as much as that which immediately presses upon the senses, as our affections exactly correspond with his own, he cannot fail to approve of our behaviour: and as he knows from experience, how few are capable of this self-command, he looks upon our conduct with a considerable degree of wonder and admiration. Hence arises that eminent esteem with which all men naturally regard a steady perseverance in the practice of frugality, industry, and application, though directed to no other purpose than the acquisition of fortune.<sup>65</sup>

The virtue of prudence might be somehow selfish, in the sense that it aims at fortune for its own sake with the superior reason, understanding and self-command, but it does so by controlling the selfish passions, and by being approved of by the spectator as proper and even beautiful. Hence the virtue of prudence makes it possible for us to pursue wealth in an innocent manner, by being approved of by an impartial spectator expecting no gain at all from us. In sum, in Smith's view, prudence was a virtue which rendered men both virtuous and wealthy, through the sense of beauty, and was convincing enough to show Mandeville that wealth and virtue could possibly coexist. Smith's second question of morals in relation to the pursuit of wealth, namely, by what power or faculty of the mind it is that the propriety of the pursuit of wealth is recommended to us, was then partly answered. It was by the sense of beauty, because the sense of beauty propels ambition toward pursuing wealth as something proper in itself rather than merely useful. Smith tried to prove this by denying that the appearances of utility would not affect the sentiment of approbation.

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<sup>62</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 6, p. 189.

<sup>63</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 7, p. 189.

<sup>64</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 8, p. 189.

<sup>65</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 8, pp. 189-90.

In concluding his account of beauty, Smith considered in Part V the influence of custom upon the notion of beauty and the moral sentiments. Now Smith had to solve the remaining problem, whether private vices ever recommend to us the propriety of the pursuit of wealth, as Mandeville had argued. For his argument, Smith reflected upon the association of ideas, or in Smith's words, 'the habitual arrangement of our ideas', to see how custom bestows a union between two or more particular objects, and causes impropriety or deformity in their separation.<sup>66</sup> Smith admitted that our judgement with regard to the beauty of natural objects is influenced by custom and fashion. He then introduced Buffier's account of beauty which had argued that beauty was determined by custom and regarded beauty as the form and colour most usual among the things of that particular sort to which it belonged.<sup>67</sup> Smith acknowledged that the system was 'ingenious', in observing how custom played a part in our judgement of beauty. He however concluded that custom was not the sole principle of beauty, but merely affecting our judgement of it together with other principles such as utility and fitness of the means to the end.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, the influence of custom upon our moral sentiments is, in Smith's view, even less profound:

the sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation, are founded on the strongest and most vigorous passions of human nature; and though they may be somewhat warped, cannot be entirely perverted.<sup>69</sup>

In other words, custom has no influence on matters of 'the general style of character and behaviour' and 'things of the greatest importance' such as 'truth and justice', but only on 'the propriety and impropriety of particular usages' and 'the matters of small moment'.<sup>70</sup> This is because otherwise 'no society could subsist a moment'.<sup>71</sup> By thus vitiating the effects of custom upon the notion of beauty and in particular upon the moral sentiments in general, Smith attempted to exclude the turning of vicious customs into public benefits. In other words, Smith answered Mandeville by

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<sup>66</sup> *TMS*, V. 1. 2, p. 194.

<sup>67</sup> *TMS*, V. 1. 8, p. 198.

<sup>68</sup> *TMS*, V. 1. 9, pp. 199-200.

<sup>69</sup> *TMS*, V. 2. 1, p. 200.

<sup>70</sup> *TMS*, V. 2. 12-3, p. 209.

redefining 'private vices' as vicious customs. This was because passions such as pride, vanity and ambition could be innocent and justified as far as they are controlled by prudence and consequently approved of by an impartial spectator. While these passions, motivated by the sense of beauty, could recommend to us the propriety of the pursuit of wealth, private vices or vicious customs could certainly not.

Smith used the term 'invisible hand' in the paragraph quoted above for describing the 'deception' imposed upon men by nature. By this 'deception', Smith said, men rouse and keep industry. By this 'deception', Smith wrote, 'in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they [the rich or landlords] divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements'.<sup>72</sup> In this, Smith appreciated such innocent vanity of 'the proud and unfeeling landlord' as a benefactor distributing wealth among his retainers and tenants and even to strangers. Smith however became more critical of such a landlord later in his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations* for rendering his tenants and retainers dependent upon his authority, and causing violence, rapine and disorder in the country.<sup>73</sup> As examples, Smith referred to William II, Thomas Becket (1118-70; Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162-70) and Richard Neville (1428-71; Earl of Warwick, 'the King-maker') as such feudal barons.<sup>74</sup> But Smith also regarded his contemporary, 'Mr. Cameron of Lochiel, a gentleman of Lochaber in Scotland', as a

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<sup>71</sup> *TMS*, V. 2. 16, p. 211.

<sup>72</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 10, pp. 183-5.

<sup>73</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776); eds. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, as vol. II of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1976), III. iv. 6-9, pp. 414-8 (Abbreviated as *WN* below).

<sup>74</sup> *LJ* (A), i. 120 and 158; (B), 59; *WN*, III. iv. 5, p. 413. Luxury and rustic hospitality of the nobility in the middle ages was treated in relation to succession as a method of acquiring property, and the right of primogeniture in particular in the middle ages (*LJ* (A), i. 117-20, pp. 50-1; *LJ* (B), 159, p. 464). As for the introduction of the right of primogeniture for the sake of the security of property, see *LJ* (A), i. 131-5, pp. 55-7; *LJ* (B), 161, p. 465. The right of primogeniture, on the other hand, was understood to have been hindering agriculture and family (*LJ* (B), 163-4, p. 466). David Hume referred to Thomas Becket's power as a feudal baron in *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688* (1754-62); (New York, 1983), vol. I, p. 234.

violator of the peace in the Scottish Highlands, who had 'carried, in 1745, eight hundred of his own people into the rebellion with him'.<sup>75</sup> As those names might imply, together with the context of his argument in which those figures were treated, Smith's story of 'an invisible hand' would not have concerned a modern commercial society, but such feudal baronies as those in early eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands, or even in Norman England. For, the 'invisible hand' distributed wealth among the lower ranks of society where neither foreign commerce nor any of the finer manufactures could not have been seen. In his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith turned his attention to the transition from the feudal to the commercial stage in European history. Now his aim was to see exactly how 'private vices' were going to contribute to 'public benefits' in a modern commercial society, and to see if his theory of sociability in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was equally applicable to it. The main players in his scheme were the country landlords, and the merchants and manufacturers in the towns. In this, Smith explained the establishment of liberty and independence of tenants and retainers in the country as resulting from the mutual interest between the country lords and the townsmen. Smith's concerns here were the role of the vanity and taste of the country proprietors on the one hand, and the role of self-interest of the merchants and manufacturers in the town on the other. These are therefore the 'private vices' Smith is now considering. They supported each other in the following manner:

The inhabitants of trading cities [such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa], by importing the improved manufactures and expensive luxuries of richer countries, afforded some food to the vanity of the great proprietors, who eagerly purchased them with great quantities of the rude produce of their own lands.<sup>76</sup>

A taste for the finer and more improved manufactures, was in this manner introduced by foreign commerce into countries where no such works were carried on. But when this taste became so general as to occasion a considerable demand, the merchants, in order to save the expense of carriage, naturally endeavoured to establish some manufactures of the same kind in their own country. Hence the origin of the first manufactures for distant sale that seem to have been established in the western provinces of Europe, after the fall of the Roman Empire.<sup>77</sup>

Smith referred to some European examples as the first manufactures for distant sale

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<sup>75</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 8, pp. 416-7.

<sup>76</sup> *WN*, III. iii. 15, pp. 406-7.

<sup>77</sup> *WN*, III. iii. 16, p. 407.

occasioned by foreign commerce stimulated by their taste in this manner. These were 'the antient manufactures of silks, velvets, and brocades, which flourished in Lucca during the thirteenth century'; 'the manufactures of fine cloths that antiently flourished in Flanders, and which were introduced into England in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth'; 'the present silk manufactures of Lyons and Spital-fields'.<sup>78</sup> These examples show how much our ideas of beauty are established by custom and ambition. On the landlords' side, Smith showed how their taste, inflamed by their passion of vanity, caused their ruin and thereby unintentionally contributed to the public good, by distributing their wealth. In this, foreign commerce and manufactures 'gradually furnished the great proprietors with something for which they could exchange the whole surplus produce of their land, and which they could consume themselves without sharing it either with tenants or retainers'. In other words, for which 'they exchanged ... the price of the maintenance of a thousand men for a year, and with it the whole weight and authority which it could give them'. Smith argued: 'thus, for the gratification of the most childish, the meanest and the most sordid of all vanities, they gradually bartered their whole power and authority'.<sup>79</sup> And thereby,

Indirectly, perhaps, he [a great proprietor] maintains as great or even a greater number of people than he could have done by the antient method of expence. For though the quantity of precious productions for which he exchanges his whole revenue be very small, the number of workmen employed in collecting and preparing it, must necessarily have been very great. Its great price generally arises from the wages of their labour, and the profits of all their immediate employers. By paying that price he indirectly pays all those wages and profits, and thus indirectly contributes to the maintenance of all the workmen and their employers.<sup>80</sup>

The effects of this in Smith were twofold: first, that unnecessary retainers and tenants were to be dismissed;<sup>81</sup> second, the creation of the long lease of his lands to his tenants, in exchange for higher rents: 'The expensive vanity of the landlord made him willing to accept of this condition', that is, 'that they [tenants] should be secured

<sup>78</sup> *WN*, III. iii. 19, pp. 407-8.

<sup>79</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 10, p. 418-9. In other words, the nobility declined, from their self-love, by spending their wealth on 'elegance' instead of on the previous 'plain and hospitable way of living', as a result of 'the introduction of arts, commerce, and luxury'. See *LJ* (A), iv. 157-9, pp. 261-2. Or, for 'all the costly trinkets' and 'insignificant pageantry' by the 'frivolous passions'. See *WN*, V. iii. 3, pp. 908-9.

<sup>80</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 11, p. 420. See also *LJ* (A), iv. 157-9, pp. 261-2.

<sup>81</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 13, p. 420.

in their possession, for such a term of years as might give them time to recover with profit whatever they should lay out in the further improvement of the land' to pay higher rents to the landlord.<sup>82</sup> As the result, Smith concluded,

The tenants having in this manner become independent, and the retainers [sub-tenants and peasants] being dismissed, the great proprietors were no longer capable of interrupting the regular execution of justice, or of disturbing the peace of the country. ... A regular government was established in the country as well as in the city, nobody having sufficient power to disturb its operations in the one, any more than in the other.<sup>83</sup>

A revolution of the greatest importance to the publick happiness, was in this manner brought about by two different orders of people, who had not the least intention to serve the publick. To gratify the most childish vanity was the sole motive of the great proprietors. The merchants and artificers, much less ridiculous, acted merely from a view to their own interest, and in pursuit of their own peddler principle of turning a penny wherever a penny was to be got. Neither of them had either knowledge or foresight of that great revolution which the folly of the one, and the industry of the other, was gradually bringing about.

It is thus that through the greater part of Europe the commerce and manufactures of cities, instead of being the effect, have been the cause and occasion of the improvement and cultivation of the country.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 13, p. 421; *LJ* (A), iii. 124-5, p. 190; *LJ* (B), 140-1, p. 454.

<sup>83</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 13, p. 421. Discussing the decline of baronial feuding during the Tudor period, Hume had written: 'The encrease of the arts, more effectively than all the severities of law, put an end to this pernicious practice. The nobility, instead of vying with each other, in the number and boldness of their retainers, acquired by degrees a more civilized species of emulation, and endeavoured to excel in the splendour and elegance of their equipage, houses, and tables. The common people, no longer maintained in vicious idleness by their superiors, were obliged to learn some calling or industry, and became useful both to themselves and to others. And it must be acknowledged, in spite of those who declaim so violently against refinement in the arts, or what they are pleased to call luxury, that, as much as an industrious tradesman is both a better man and a better citizen than one of those idle retainers, who formerly depended on the great families; so much is the life of a modern noble man more laudable than that of an ancient baron' (*The History of England*, vol. III, pp. 76-7; quoted in N. Phillipson (1989), pp. 110-1). The churches and clergymen also lost their authority based on their estates ('the most profuse hospitality' and 'the most extensive charity') in the same manner as the country proprietors, 'upon the gratification of their own private vanity and folly' (*WN*, V. i. g. 22 and 25, pp. 801 and 803-4).

<sup>84</sup> *WN*, III. iv. 17-8, p. 422. For what Hume called 'a revolution in manners' and described in terms of the growth of enlightenment and trade, see *The History of England*, vol. III, pp. 63-7 and 121-2; vol. IV, p. 336; vol. V, p. 68. Summarising 'the revolution' in eighteenth-century Scotland, Henry G. Graham wrote: 'Probably no period was so quietly eventful in shaping the fortunes and character of the country as the eighteenth century. Others are more distinguished by striking incidents, others are more full of the din and tumult and strife which arrest attention and are treated as crises, although they may neither stir the depth nor affect the course of a people's life; but in that century there was a continuous revolution going on - a gradual transformation in manners, customs, opinions, among every class; the rise and progress of agricultural, commercial, and intellectual energy, that turned waste and barren tracts to fertile fields - stagnant towns to centres of busy trade - a lethargic, slovenly populace to an active, enterprising race - an utterly impoverished country to a prosperous land. These facts constitute the real history of the Scots in the eighteenth century' (Graham, pp. viii-ix). Graham's *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (first edition, London, 1901) seems to have characterised eighteenth-century Scottish society with a transition from the feudal to the commercial stage based on Smith's description of European history. For instance, Graham too emphasised the roles of providence (or invisible hand) and taste in rustic hospitality as a vehicle of distribution (third

In this way, Smith showed how the proprietors' passion of vanity, inflaming their taste, as well as the merchants' and manufacturers' passion of interest, unexpectedly contributed to the improvement and cultivation of the country, along with the security and independence of the cultivators. Smith eventually attributed the transition from the feudal to the commercial stage in European history to the unintentional result of the intentional motives. As usual, Smith was sarcastic in describing the behaviour of both proprietors and city manufacturers and merchants. But he was not blaming their vanity and their pursuit of wealth on the grounds that no injustice had ever been committed. In other words, 'private vices' as such are not to be condemned as injustices by Smith. Smith therefore was able to approve and vindicate a modern commercial society as the product of the morally neutral rather than vicious motives, even if not necessarily virtuous, against Mandeville who had argued that 'private vices' were a necessary evil for the public prosperity. Smith looked back to European commercial history from the viewpoint of a resident of a backward nation who was concerned with the ongoing transition from the feudal to the commercial stage in his own country.<sup>85</sup> The process became more obvious in Scotland after the 1760s: that is, after Smith had written *The Theory of Moral*

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edition, pp. 4, 12, 29-32 and 162-3), in a transformation of manners and habits (p. 56-60, 73, 199-200 and 218-19), in agricultural 'improvement' (pp. 172-3 and 201-4), in the expansion of trade and the consequent proliferation of domestic manufactures and industry after the Union of 1707 (pp. 204-6 and 515-20) and in the fall of nobility (pp. 205 and 209-10). Many points have been disproved by such subsequent historians as Handley, Richards, Whyte, Mitchison and Devine from the viewpoints of social and historical anthropology which, for instance, effectively challenge such terms as 'progress' and 'improvement' and show why they are hardly impartial. But a comparison between Graham and these historians could give us an insight into Graham's, and hopefully Smith's, preoccupations in writing Scottish and European history. See James E. Handley (1953); Eric Richards and Monica Clough (1989); Eric Richards (2000); Ian D. Whyte (1979) and (1983), pp. 119-40; Rosalind Mitchison (1978); T. M. Devine (1976), pp. 177-190; (1984), pp. 1-8 and (1988); L. M. Cullen and T. C. Smout (1976), pp. 3-18; Alistair J. Durie (1976), pp. 88-99; R. H. Campbell (1976), pp. 204-15; G. Whittington (1983), pp. 141-64; G. Gordon (1983), pp. 165-90. Roy Porter similarly argues that Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was an example of creating a scientific myth that was to replace a Christian one, as highly effective propaganda for a new age of technology and industrialisation. See Porter, pp. 21-3. See also pp. 38 and 41 for his argument that eighteenth-century intellectuals tried to find or forge a new religion of humanity in place of traditional Christianity amidst the secularisation of Europe, rationalising and refining it, or creating a more credible alternative fit for the times.

<sup>85</sup> Smith had extensive interests in the histories of foreign countries, including the Continent, eastern Europe, Tartary and Arabia, even China and Japan, as part of researching the manners and the course of development of sociability and human nature 'in the ordinary and naturall progress of things', provoked by needs, rather than by pride and vanity as Mandeville had thought.

*Sentiments*. His attention in his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations* consequently shifted to the role of sociability and taste in the newly emerging commercial society. This was a society where even the lowest and most despised member of society possessed superior abundance and affluence than the most respected savage could possess, but no longer where everybody was equally and so miserably poor. This was a society where 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest',<sup>86</sup> but no longer where rustic hospitality might have supplied the basic essentials of life. Nevertheless, Smith eventually became convinced that 'private vices' do not have to be vicious to contribute to 'public benefits' in a modern commercial society, as in a feudal society. Both in a feudal barony and in a modern commercial society, taste (or the sense of beauty, as Smith had previously called it) works as a customary sentiment which is not primarily affected by the thought or idea of utility, as Hume had argued. Taste is a more powerful convention than a mere idea of beauty that Hutcheson had discussed, which extends even to the common people far outnumbering the confined group of aesthetes who could form an idea of beauty by associating the ideas of utility and public interests. In this sense, taste is an internalised faculty which is indispensable to the motivation of vanity and ambition, that complex sentiment beyond the reach of utility calculation, in stimulating the demand for finer products. It is an internalised faculty which is also crucial to the propriety of the pursuit of wealth, working under the auspices of an 'impartial spectator', or more crucially, the internalised 'man within the breast', together with whom it would guarantee the moral neutrality of ambition. Smith's concepts of the sense of beauty, or taste, and 'an impartial spectator' were his solution to Mandeville's paradox by showing how the propriety of the pursuit of wealth could be guaranteed by the moral neutrality secured by them. They were also his solution to Mandeville's paradox by overcoming Hutcheson's and Hume's concepts of the moral sense and the sense of utility respectively as the principles of moral approbation. Smith would have thought that, as the principle of moral approbation, the moral sense and the sense of utility were not sufficiently customary,

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<sup>86</sup> *WN*, I. ii. 2, pp. 26-7; also *LJ* (A), vi. 46; (B), 220.



conventional or extended enough to establish the sociability of the common people except among only a confined group of those with high taste who would be capable enough of understanding the public utility and interests. The judgmental or self-critical aspect of human nature and sociability escaped Hutcheson's theory of moral sense and Hume's theory of utility as the principles of moral approbation because only a comparison of our own judgement and that of others could render us able to assess other people's moral approbation. Smith's new concepts of the sense of beauty, taste, 'an impartial spectator' and 'the man within the breast' solved this problem.

If *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is to be put in the context of the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, Smith would appear as a moral philosopher who was equally anxious to refute Mandeville, but still not quite convinced by Hutcheson and Hume with their strategies for challenging Mandeville. Smith would have thought that Hutcheson's moral sense and Hume's sense of utility were not satisfactory concepts to explain the sociability of a modern commercial society. For Smith, a modern commercial society had appeared to be a place where not only philosophers but also the vast majority of common people now could form the moral idea of propriety and approve or disapprove the morality of characters and conducts. For Smith, a modern commercial society was a place where these vast majority of common people now were capable of properly pursuing wealth and of judging the propriety of the pursuit of wealth. Fortunately for us, Smith was quite explicit about what he had made of Mandeville, Hutcheson and Hume. To contextualise Smith in the controversy, it is therefore of use here to look at the final Part of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* where he reflected on the history of moral philosophy, including the moral systems of Mandeville, Hutcheson and Hume.

As mentioned above, Smith began his theory of moral sentiments with two questions: wherein does virtue consist?; and by what power or faculty of the mind is it, that an excellent and praiseworthy character is recommended to us? Smith wrote his account of the history of moral philosophy in terms of the above two questions, in

the same manner as he constructed his general theory of morals.<sup>87</sup> In terms of the first question, Smith considered Mandeville's system and called it 'the licentious system' which took away altogether the distinction between vice and virtue and was consequently 'wholly pernicious'.<sup>88</sup> Smith criticised Mandeville on five grounds. First, he reckoned that Mandeville had failed to make 'a real and essential distinction between vice and virtue'. For, Mandeville had considered that whatever was done as being done from the selfish passions, and vanity in particular, and therefore regarded human virtue as 'the mere offspring of flattery begot upon pride'.<sup>89</sup> Second, he thought that Mandeville had defined 'vanity' inaccurately. In Smith's view, the love of virtue, or the desire of doing what is honourable and noble was not vanity. Equally, the love of true glory, or the desire of acquiring esteem by what is really estimable was not vanity either. Smith had already argued that vanity only meant to desire praise more than was deserved, or for what is not deserved at all.<sup>90</sup> Third, Mandeville in this way exaggerated the imperfection of human virtue, and regarded whatever fell short of complete self-denial to be 'no more than a concealed indulgence of our passions'. For example, Mandeville called it 'gross luxury and sensuality' whenever our self-command fell short of 'the most ascetic abstinence'. Smith stated:

Every thing, according to him, is luxury which exceeds what is absolutely necessary for the support of human nature, so that there is vice even in the use of a clean shirt, or of a convenient habitation.<sup>91</sup>

Fourth, as Hume had already pointed out, Mandeville was misled by 'the ambiguity of language',<sup>92</sup> 'to represent every passion as wholly vicious, which is so in any degree and in any direction'. Mandeville thus treated 'every thing as vanity which has any reference, either to what are, or to what ought to be the sentiments of

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<sup>87</sup> In Part VI (Part VII in the final edition), Smith's history of moral philosophy is to be found in Section II: 'Of the different Accounts which have been given of the Nature of Virtue', and in Section III: 'Of the different Systems which have been formed concerning the Principle of Approbation'.

<sup>88</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 6, p. 308.

<sup>89</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 7, pp. 308-9.

<sup>90</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 8, p. 309.

<sup>91</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 11, p. 312.

<sup>92</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 11, p. 312.

others'.<sup>93</sup> And finally, Smith concluded that Mandeville's system was in this way based on 'ascetic doctrines' which had placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our passions. Accepting such presumptions, Mandeville simply claimed, first, 'that this entire conquest never actually took place among men', and second, that, if it had, 'it would be pernicious to society, by putting an end to all industry and commerce'. After all, in the opinion of Smith, Mandeville thus merely pretended to prove from the first claim above 'that there was no real virtue', and from the second assumption 'that private vices were public benefits'.<sup>94</sup>

This excellent critique clarifies Smith's concerns in writing *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith felt it necessary to refute Mandeville, because, as he was quite conscious, Mandeville's system nevertheless 'in some respects bordered upon the truth'. It had been at least devastating enough to 'have imposed upon so great a number of persons' and to 'have occasioned so general an alarm among those who are the friends of better principle', despite all the faults above that Smith criticised.<sup>95</sup> It 'bordered upon the truth' because, it might have seemed to Smith, it vividly described and wittily exposed an aspect of modern commercial sociability in which unintended public consequences were brought about by intentional private actions. This would also be the reason why other Scots moralists such as Hutcheson and Hume, who defined a role of moral philosophy as being concerned with the issue of sociability, could not have ignored Mandeville either. But Smith's remark above, despite having been a harsh critic of Mandeville's *Fable*, would show that the idea of the unintentional public consequences of intended private actions probably influenced Smith most among participants in the controversy.

When it came to Hutcheson and Hume, Smith criticised their systems both in respect of their approaches to the nature of virtue and to the principle of moral approbation. Smith's criticism of Hutcheson on the nature of virtue concerned his discussion of the selfish passions. Smith reckoned that

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<sup>93</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 12, p. 312.

<sup>94</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 12, p. 313.

<sup>95</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 4. 14, p. 313.

Dr. Hutcheson was so far from allowing self-love to be in any case a motive of virtuous actions [that] This was a selfish motive, he thought, which so far as it contributed to any action, demonstrated the weakness of that pure and disinterested benevolence which could alone stamp upon the conduct of man the character of virtue.<sup>96</sup>

In Smith's view, this led Hutcheson into ignoring the propriety and approbation of such inferior virtues as prudence, vigilance, circumspection, temperance, constancy and firmness.<sup>97</sup> Disagreeing at this point with Hutcheson, Smith argued that the passion of self-interest is still praiseworthy as far as it is according to nature and propriety in acquiring the means to preserve individuals. The pursuit of wealth is in this sense not at all vicious: for example, 'the habits of oeconomy, industry, discretion, attention, and application of thought' are all 'cultivated from self-interested motives'. On the other hand, Smith continued,

Carelessness and want of oeconomy are universally disapproved of, not, however, as proceeding from a want of benevolence, but from a want of the proper attention to the objects of self-interest.<sup>98</sup>

With regard to Hutcheson's understanding of the selfish passions, Smith adopted Mandeville's criticism of Hutcheson. As seen above, Mandeville had responded to Hutcheson that it was more important to argue about matters of fact, than matters of right. In like manner, Smith reflected that Hutcheson was primarily concerned with the matters of right of the Deity, 'an independent and all-perfect Being, who stands in need of nothing external, and whose happiness is complete in himself'. Smith also insisted that it was more important to concern the matters of fact of 'so imperfect a creature as man, the support of whose existence requires so many things external to him, [who] must act from many other motives [such as selfish]'.<sup>99</sup> In fact, this criticism of Hutcheson was rather unfair. For, Hutcheson had argued that we need benevolent passions as well as selfish passions, and he too had emphasised the roles of human passions in supplying the needs of life, having accepted the view of the negative community, instead of the positive community. Nevertheless it was crucial that Smith concentrated on Hutcheson's defect in his account of the selfish passions

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<sup>96</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 3. 13, p. 303.

<sup>97</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 3. 15, p. 304.

<sup>98</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 3. 16, p. 304.

and developed a justification of the production of wealth, by clarifying the conditions of such passions in which they could be regarded as innocent.

As for Hutcheson's discussion of the principle of moral approbation, Smith, like Hume, praised Hutcheson for realising that it was based on a sentiment but not on self-love: 'Dr. Hutcheson had been at large pains to prove that the principle of approbation was not founded on self-love'.<sup>100</sup> In this sense, Smith valued Hutcheson for his critique of Mandeville. Smith however criticised in two ways Hutcheson's theory of moral sense, which Hutcheson had argued as the principle of moral approbation.<sup>101</sup> First, in Smith's view, moral sense could not explain the difference between our approbation of different sorts of sentiment. Our approbation of a tender, delicate and humane sentiment was of a different kind to our approbation of a great, daring and magnanimous sentiment.<sup>102</sup> Second, Smith was to argue that only a comparison of our own judgement and that of others could render us able to assess other people's moral approbation.<sup>103</sup> In this sense, in Smith's view, the judgmental or self-critical aspect of human nature escaped the theory of moral sense. Smith concluded that there was no such faculty exerting 'itself alone and unmixed with sympathy or antipathy, with gratitude or resentment'.<sup>104</sup> Smith's introduction of the concepts of 'an impartial spectator' and 'the man within the breast' solved this problem.

As for Hume's system with regard to the nature of virtue, which placed virtue in utility, Smith claimed that it coincided with Smith's own system which made it consist in propriety. In Part VI, Smith insisted that Hume was only different in making utility, not sympathy, the measure of the proper degree of all the affections.<sup>105</sup> With regard to the principle of moral approbation, on the other hand, Smith agreed with Hume in having supposed it to be founded on sympathy. But

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<sup>99</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 3. 18, p. 305.

<sup>100</sup> *TMS*, VII. iii. 3. 4, p. 321.

<sup>101</sup> See *TMS*, VII. iii. 3. 2, p. 321. Also VII. iii. 2. 9, pp. 320-1. Smith precisely understood that moral sense was discussed in Hutcheson as analogous to the sense of beauty. See VII. iii. 3. 6-7, p. 322.

<sup>102</sup> *TMS*, VII. iii. 3. 13, pp. 324-5.

<sup>103</sup> *TMS*, VII. iii. 3. 14, p. 325.

<sup>104</sup> *TMS*, VII. iii. 3. 16, pp. 326-7.

<sup>105</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 3. 21, pp. 305-6.

Smith seems to have been concerned that Hume had supposed sympathy as concerning only with utility of a well-contrived machine rather than with the motives or passions of persons that Smith was to regard to be more important in morals.<sup>106</sup> And the concern was in fact decisive, as Smith argued that our approbation of virtue is based on that of the impartial spectator, whereas Hume had thought it based on sympathy. As Hume had argued, the idea of utility might have been approved of as moral goodness by sympathy, as sympathy was in Hume the communication of passions and therefore the pleasure of utility might be directly transmitted through sympathy. But Smith was to argue that virtue rested primarily in propriety, and only secondarily in utility, and that propriety could only be approved through interactive and self-judgmental process involving others. His new concepts of sympathy, 'an impartial spectator' and 'the man within the breast' solved this problem concerning the principle of moral approbation.

Smith indeed elaborated his own moral theory by challenging and overcoming Hume more than anyone else. In elaborating his theory of sympathy, for instance, Smith might have had Hume's idea of sympathy in mind, though their ideas of sympathy were significantly different. The first feature of Smith's theory of sympathy was that sympathetic emotions can relate to any kind of passion, either joyful or sorrowful. This was a development from Hume's view that pleasure from sympathy was only with the joyful passions and not with the sorrowful passions and therefore an idea of pleasure from sympathy with agreeable emotions would give rise to the passions of pride and love whereas an idea of uneasiness from the sorrowful passions would excite the passions of humility and hatred. Hume called Smith's new idea of sympathy, applicable to both joyful and sorrowful passions, 'the Hinge of your System' and commented that 'I wish you had more particularly and fully prov'd, that all kinds of Sympathy are necessarily Agreeable'.<sup>107</sup> In the second edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith further clarified the point at issue:

I answer, that in the sentiment of approbation there are two things to be taken notice of; first, the sympathetic passion of the spectator; and, secondly, the emotion which arises from his observing

<sup>106</sup> *TMS*, VII. iii. 3. 17, p. 327.

<sup>107</sup> See Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, letter 169, from Hume to Adam Smith, dated 28 July 1759, p. 313.

the perfect coincidence between this sympathetic passion in himself, and the original passion in the person principally concerned. This last emotion, in which the sentiment of approbation properly consists, is always agreeable and delightful. The other may either be agreeable or disagreeable, according to the nature of the original passion, whose features it must always, in some measure, retain.<sup>108</sup>

His other emphasis on the nature of sympathy, that sympathy was an attention to the situation of others principally concerned, was also his evaluation of Hume's theory of sympathy as the mere communication of passions. His theory of sympathy was therefore to insist, along with Hutcheson, on the judgmental character of human nature.

Smith's new discussion of sympathetic feelings as pleasurable allowed him to argue about the unsocial and therefore disagreeable passion of resentment as the principle of justice. In turn his argument of resentment was obliged to respond to Mandeville, who had emphasised that it was a matter of fact that unsocial passions such as pride and vanity, or 'private vices' in the Mandevillian idiom, contributed more to 'public benefits' than did sociable passions. Certainly Smith stressed in the same manner the importance of discussing matters of fact, instead of matters of right. But Smith approved the unsocial passion of resentment as the principle of justice, not necessarily *despite* its unsocial nature, but more importantly *because* resentment could be justified if it was proper and consequently sympathised with by an impartial spectator, for its own sake and independent of its utility. In Smith, it was apparently plausible to argue that such an unsocial passion too was to be sympathised with by others, because, whatever passions they would be, sympathy with passions must be always pleasant.

At the same time Smith's insight into the nature of sympathetic feelings required him to look at Hutcheson's and Hume's criticism of Mandeville. In describing the sense of justice, which in Smith guaranteed the moral neutrality of the pursuit of wealth as well as the disinterested character of human nature, Smith not only disagreed with Mandeville but also responded to and corrected Hutcheson's and Hume's strategies for refuting Mandeville. With Hume's view in mind, Smith argued that

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<sup>108</sup> *TMS*, footnote to I. iii. 1. 9, p. 46.

The concern which we take in the fortune and happiness of individuals does not, in common cases, arise from that which we take in the fortune and happiness of society.

The passion of resentment, and the sense of justice, would be excited to see a particular case of injustice, rather than to consider the demerit and damage caused by injustice for the whole fabric of society in general:

so when a single man is injured, or destroyed, we demand the punishment of the wrong that has been done to him, not so much from a concern for the general interest of society, as from a concern for that very individual who has been injured.<sup>109</sup>

To Smith, Hume's so-to-speak utilitarian account of justice, which had assumed the passion of self-interest to be the basis of it, seemed still to be showing the selfish nature of justice, which in turn seemed more or less to make an unnecessary concession to Mandeville. Smith therefore attempted to eliminate such an implication in his account of justice, by stressing the propriety more than the utility of the virtue of justice. Smith's endeavour in this was possible on the grounds of his theory of sympathy that sympathetic feelings brought pleasure more from viewing the propriety than the utility of the passions, either agreeable or disagreeable. Now with Hutcheson in mind as well, Smith also contended that such concern for injustice did not necessarily require the social passions like 'love, esteem, and affection'.

The concern which is requisite for this, is no more than the general fellow-feeling which we have with every man merely because he is our fellow-creature. We enter into the resentment even of an odious person, when he is injured by those to whom he has given no provocation.<sup>110</sup>

Justice, after all, is derived solely from the unsocial passion of resentment, without the help of either the consideration of the public utility of justice, or any other benevolent motives. Even if the unsocial passion of resentment is painful in itself, sympathy with the proper resentment assures an impartial spectator the pleasure always derived from propriety. In sum, despite Mandeville's claim, and as Hutcheson and Hume rightly objected, human nature is least vicious even if selfish in the pursuit of wealth. For, the propriety of human conduct is continuously under the

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<sup>109</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 10, p. 89.

<sup>110</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 10, p. 90.



supervision of the sympathetic feelings of spectators, in seeking the pleasure of seeing the propriety of characters and actions. This is due to the judgmental or self-critical character of human nature. It is therefore neither because, as Hutcheson had thought, justice and other virtues were derived from benevolence, nor because, as Hume had insisted, justice was derived from the passion of self-interest in view of its public utility.

A similar response is seen in Smith's account of the man within the breast counteracting the selfish passions. This too was a criticism of Mandeville, showing that human nature was not entirely selfish:

It is a stronger love, a more powerful affection [than the love of our neighbour, and the love of mankind, that is], ... the love of what is honourable and noble, of the grandeur, and dignity, and superiority of our own characters.<sup>111</sup>

As in his account of the sense of justice, this also showed Smith's departure from Hutcheson and Hume, in the sense that Smith supposed the man within the breast as a force restraining the selfish passions neither with his benevolence to others, nor with his sense of utility. Hume especially had regarded any motive contributing to the public good to be virtuous, on the grounds that virtue is utility. In Hume, self-love, therefore, was virtuous if it controlled itself for the reasons of utility. But to Smith, Hume seemed to have again invited Mandeville's claim that human nature was accordingly selfish. Smith therefore portrayed the man within the breast as encouraging passions to seek the means to the end, that is, prosperity, exclusively for the sake of the means itself, without referring to its utility. As spectators feel pleasure in seeing the propriety of a means to an end, in this case, an action of restraining selfish passions, so the person principally concerned in the same manner feels pleasant if he is conscious of being proper in restraining his own selfish passions. In this process, the man within the breast by no means needs to consider the outcome of such restrictive behaviour of himself, that is, prosperity brought about by his frugality. For, the man within the breast can restrain the selfish passions solely from the pleasure of seeing the propriety of such restriction, without calculating his utility in doing so. Nevertheless, if the man within the breast that

Smith portrayed is a mere fiction or a delusion, it would then be the case that Smith has not yet answered Mandeville.<sup>112</sup>

As for his account of the selfish passions, Smith kept thinking of Mandeville and was still anxious to refute Mandeville's claims with his own theory of sympathy. By showing how the selfish passion of ambition would contribute to prosperity and the establishment of the order of society, Smith tried to disprove Mandeville's claim that prosperity was solely derived from private vices. As far as wealth is pursued in view of other people's sympathy with the selfish passion of the joy of the rich and powerful, such a pursuit must be approved to be at least innocent. Smith might have reluctantly admitted that pride and vanity, or ambition, would be the origin of prosperity. But Smith had to stress that the selfish passions, especially that of joy, were easily sympathised with by others and therefore they were not at all vicious. In this sense, while Hutcheson had endeavoured to disprove vanity to be the origin of prosperity, Smith was rather concerned to disprove the selfish passion of ambition to be vicious, though admitting it as the origin of prosperity. After all, sympathy with the selfish passion of the joy of the rich and powerful is a pleasant feeling derived from the pleasure of seeing the propriety of the riches and power in bringing ease and enjoyment. This is still the case even when the spectators have no prospect of enjoying the riches and power they are looking at. This was the basis Smith referred to as showing human nature as the disinterested, and the pursuit of wealth in view of

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<sup>111</sup> *TMS*, III. 3. 4, p. 137: added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn.

<sup>112</sup> Court Whigs had preached 'rational' obedience, in place of the Tory doctrine of passive obedience, in order to justify both their legacy of the Glorious Revolution and their current regime. They argued that the duty of Whigs at the time of the Revolution had been resistance because James II had assailed liberties, whereas their present duty was obedience because their government was now lawful. Court Whigs then referred to the Bible as calling kings 'vice-gerents of God' and teaching that obedience to authority was commanded by God and conscience. See, Browning, pp. 199-200. On the contrary, Smith's impartial spectator was an external moral authority that an individual should obey in terms of their own characters and conducts. The man within the breast was then an internalised authority, or a 'vice-gerent of God', offering conscience for an individual to follow in terms of their characters and conducts, and, through such obedience, leading them into unintentionally contributing to the order of society. It was an alternative authority to magistrates or ministers who would have been hardly impartial as Court Whig cronies appointed by their vested interests. It was also an alternative authority to an absolute hereditary monarch that the Tory doctrine of passive obedience had preached to obey categorically, such as James II who had assailed liberties. Smith's ideas of impartial spectator and the man within the breast were his theory of duty and obedience for the sake of public good. These concepts eventually solved the difficulties Hutcheson and Hume had had in offering an alternative account to Court Whig doctrine of authority and obedience in their response to Mandeville.

such innocent sympathy from the spectators as in the same manner morally neutral.

Finally, Smith's theory of sympathy culminated in his account of the sense of beauty, which in turn allowed Smith to show that the selfish passions of ambition and so on can justifiably contribute to the public prosperity, without violating justice. With his account of beauty, Smith responded to Mandeville with two points. First, the selfish passions are by no means vicious, but to be approved once they are sympathised with by an impartial spectator and his sense of beauty for their joy for wealth and power. This is the case because, in Smith's view, spectators' sense of beauty derives its pleasure primarily from seeing the beauty and propriety of property for attaining the ease and pleasure of the proprietor, even without considering their own gain from the proprietor. Second, wealth and power would accordingly be approved of as far as the selfish passions thus justifiably exciting and enjoying prosperity are not vicious but sympathised with by spectators' sense of beauty.<sup>113</sup> By understanding the sense of beauty in this manner, Smith consequently showed that the statecraft that Mandeville had insisted had to be necessary in contriving private vices into public benefits by the dextrous management of skilful politicians, should be simply redundant. This was because the sense of beauty, like

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<sup>113</sup> The implication of the idea that the sense of beauty is crucial in sociability and industry was apparent to his contemporaries. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, & c.* (2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1778), 'Beauty', pp. 1077-79: 'Beauty, in many instances, promotes industry; and as it is frequently connected with utility, it proves an additional incitement to enrich our field and improve our manufactures. These, however, are but slight effect, compared with the connections that are formed among individuals in society by means of beauty. The qualifications of the head and heart are undoubtedly the most solid and most permanent foundations of such connections: But as external beauty lies more in view, and is more obvious to the bulk of mankind, than the qualities now mentioned, the sense of beauty has a more extensive influence in forming these connections. At any rate, it occurs in an eminent degree with mental qualifications, in producing social intercourse, mutual good-will, and consequently mutual aid and support, which are the life of society: it must not however be overlooked, that the sense of beauty does not tend to advance the interests of society, but when in a due mean with respect to strength. ... the appetite for gratification, prevailing over affection for the beloved object, is ungovernable, and tends violently to its end, regardless of the misery that must follow. ... This suggests an important lesson, that moderation in our desires and appetites, which fits us for doing our duty, contributes at the same time the most to happiness; even social passions, when moderate, are most pleasant than when they swell beyond proper bounds'. Also in 'Moral Philosophy, or Morals': '... their [intellectual powers] immediate exercise or their proper objects yields the most rational and refined pleasure. ... For, being daily conversant with *beauty*, *order*, and *design*, in inferior subjects, he [who has a taste formed to these ingenious delights, and plenty of materials to gratify it] bids fair for growing in due time an admirer of what is fair and well-proportioned in the conduct of life and the order of society, which is only *order* and *design* exerted in their highest subjects. ... Therefore to cultivate a *true* and *correct taste*, must be both our *interest* and our *duty*, when the circumstances of our station give leisure and opportunity for it, ....' (p. 15).

the sense of justice, eventually functions as a justifier of the selfish passions producing and enjoying prosperity in a non-vicious, morally neutral way.

Smith's account of the sense of beauty finally led him to criticise Hume's view of custom as an initiator of the association of ideas. In Hume's scheme, custom gave us a simple idea of pleasure, which then should excite the passions in the association of ideas in order finally to produce a complex idea of morals. For showing that such important ideas of justice and beauty could never be affected by an arbitrary and peculiar custom, Smith excluded custom from the principle of sympathy. In this, Smith did so by showing how a vicious custom resulted in a vicious society, perhaps with both Mandeville and Hume in mind. Smith's example of the murder of new-born infants in ancient Greece is striking: in which he showed how 'so dreadful a violation of humanity', or 'the most unjust and unreasonable conduct' was approved as a custom only 'from views of remote interest or conveniency', or 'by far-fetched considerations of public utility', and eventually corrupted human nature.<sup>114</sup> By thus stressing how a private vice turned into a public vice, Smith completed his refutation of Mandeville who had emphasised private vices contributing to public benefits. In this, Smith ruled out vicious customs from the primary sources of prosperity and confirmed the innocent and justified passions to be the sole motives of the pursuit of wealth. But the project at issue was going to be more fully worked out in his subsequent jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations*, as shown below.

In sum, Mandeville had thought that all passions were vicious but inevitably necessary for prosperity. Hutcheson next had attempted to show that passions necessary for the public good were benevolent and hence virtuous, as wealth thus produced could be useful for benevolent purposes. He had also argued that selfish motives are necessary for prosperity even if they are not benevolently intended. Hume in turn had brought the dispute to a matter of words, and maintained that whatever passions were useful for prosperity were virtuous, since he had assumed that virtue was utility. Considering the merits and demerits of their arguments, Smith concluded that if passions were proper, they would be innocent, pleasant and *hence*

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<sup>114</sup> *TMS*, V. 2. 15, pp. 209-10.

useful for prosperity. His theory was that virtue was propriety, that the sympathy of spectators then derived its pleasure mainly from seeing the propriety of the passions, and that the utility of those passions hence was rather difficult to foresee with regard to its ultimate consequences. His main concern in all of these arguments in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, his jurisprudence lectures, and *The Wealth of Nations* was to prove that human nature was neither selfish nor vicious, and the pursuit of wealth by the passions could accordingly be morally neutral.

## Chapter Three

### Government and political economy: the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy: II

As the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith had two things left to do after 1759, whether in subsequent editions of the book, in his proposed volume of natural jurisprudence or in a new book. First was to reconsider Mandeville's conclusion that private vices should be manipulated by the skilful and dextrous management of politicians for public benefits, particularly through an economic policy, as we shall see below, to maintain the nation's favourable trade balance so as to prevent the decrease of the wealth of nations. Having thought that he had refuted Mandeville's premise that public benefits were always derived from private vices, Smith now had to offer an alternative conclusion and policies. The second objective was to show that, despite Mandeville's claim, private vices could never contribute to public benefits.

In this chapter we look at how Mandeville's economic policy that statecraft should keep a favourable trade balance in foreign trade was derived from his precedent argument that the task of government in establishing sociability in a commercial society is to turn private vices into public benefits and happiness. We then look at how Hutcheson's *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) argued that fulfilling duties would enable us to be virtuous as well as wealthy at the same time through the moral sense. I emphasise that this compatibility of virtuous and wealthy was the hinge in the *System* of his criticism of Mandeville, who had argued that these two were contradictory each other. We finally look at Hume's political and economic theory, especially his emphasis on the role of taste for us to make use of our natural abilities for production. I argue that a refined taste was regarded by Hume as vital for

moderation and the control of the passions and political zealotry so as to redirect passions and their capacity for industry and public interest. I emphasise that Hume presented a refined taste as capable of purging factional party rage which would otherwise jeopardise prosperity, and of enabling us to form more moderate moral ideas of government and public interest in the light of their utility as the standard of morals.

In the next chapter, I then seek to show that, in *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith was particularly interested in the role of 'legislators', not skilful 'politicians', and in the sort of private vices practised in commercial activity, which 'legislators' ought to address. As Hundert has shown, Mandeville had provided the first sketch of commercial society as a whole entity, and an analysis of the mechanisms which controlled its operations.<sup>1</sup> As his work, more than any other, called into question contemporary assumptions about the problems of sociability, his theory could only be answered by supplying a new theory of sociability.

## 1. Bernard Mandeville

What did Mandeville mean by saying that the role of politicians in a modern commercial polity was to control the passions of their subjects and turn their private vices into public benefits? His answers centred on two main points: luxury and the balance of trade on the one hand, and the poor labouring masses on the other.

Mandeville defended luxury against Country Whigs who had criticised it as corrupt, effeminising and enervating the whole society to be unfit for wars. The assumptions of many neo-mercantilist writers during the first decade of the Restoration, that the pursuit of self-interest was the sole motive required to understand economy, were effectively incorporated into Mandeville's comprehensive account of the broader social implications of modern luxury. His seventeenth-century predecessors had regarded luxury, which was unnecessary for sustaining a frugal survival, as a desire more for its aesthetic value and vanity than for actual

material needs. They had examined the psychology of envy, desire and imaginary wants, treating market relations as something more than the mere exchange of goods.<sup>2</sup> Mandeville added that it was either hypocritical or meaningless to describe the recently-emerging emulative conduct in a commercial market for the material marks of approbation in a traditional moral language of the Stoic, Christian or Country Whig.<sup>3</sup>

Mandeville defined luxury simply as anything beyond the basic essentials needed to sustain physical existence.<sup>4</sup> For those who argued that the above definition was too rigorous, Mandeville insisted that there was to be a restriction to extending the meaning of the word 'Luxury',<sup>5</sup> and that otherwise it might be claimed that there is no luxury.

I would only shew, that if once we depart from every thing Luxury that is not absolutely necessary to keep a Man alive, that then there is no Luxury at all; for if the wants of Men are innumerable, then what ought to supply them has no bounds; what is call'd superfluous to some degree of People, will be thought requisite to those of higher Quality; and neither the World nor the Skill of Man can produce any thing so curious or extravagant, but some most Gracious Sovereign or other, if it either eases or diverts him, will reckon it among the Necessaries of Life; not meaning every Body's Life, but that of his Sacred Person.<sup>6</sup>

Having assumed, as always, that avarice and prodigality were necessary to a commercial society as the private vices which inevitably contributed to public benefits,<sup>7</sup> Mandeville asserted that luxury should be consumed as much as possible, and then directed his argument into how much a whole nation could spend on luxury. The neo-mercantilist writers during the first decade of the Restoration had argued that, if a nation could maintain a favourable trade balance with *every* country, the wealth of the nation would be kept within itself. There then would be no threat to its constitution which might be triggered by importing and consuming foreign luxury

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<sup>1</sup> Hundert, pp. 14-5.

<sup>2</sup> Hundert, pp. 182-3. Those mercantilists were also the advocates of what was later going to be Whig policy for a favourable trade balance. For an interpretation of Mandeville as a conventional mercantilist, see Thomas A. Horne (1978).

<sup>3</sup> Hundert, pp. 183-5.

<sup>4</sup> *FB*, I, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 107-8.

<sup>6</sup> *FB*, I, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 250-1.



and spending its balance in foreign trade.<sup>8</sup> Mandeville offered an amendment to this 'mercantilist' theory of luxury which had insisted on the favourable trade balance with *every* country. He argued that, if a nation could keep a favourable trade balance *as a whole* in foreign trade, by the skilful management of good politicians, it would guarantee the wealth of the nation, regardless of the quantity of foreign luxury consumed in that nation.

Every Government ought to be thoroughly acquainted with, and steadfastly to pursue the Interest of the Country. Good Politicians by dextrous Management, laying heavy Impositions on some Goods, or totally prohibiting them, and lowering the Duties on others, may always turn and divert the Course of Trade which way they please; ... above all, they'll keep a watchful Eye over the Balance of Trade in general, and never suffer that all the Foreign Commodities together, that are imported in one Year, shall exceed in Value what of their own Growth or Manufacture is in the same exported to others.<sup>9</sup>

If what I urg'd last be but diligently look'd after, and the Imports are never allow'd to be superior to the Exports, no Nation can ever be impoverish'd by Foreign Luxury; and they may improve it as much as they please, if they can but in proportion raise the Fund of their own that is to purchase it. ... no Luxury or other Vice is ever able to shake their Constitution. ... of all the famous States and Empires that World has had to boast of hitherto, none ever came to Ruin whose Destruction was not principally owing to the bad Politicks, Neglects, or Mismanagements of the Rulers.<sup>10</sup>

In Mandeville's view, no luxury had ever been able to shake the constitution, and any ruin of great empires had been owed to their bad management, not luxury. What is more, for Mandeville, luxury was an important means for developing the division of labour in commercial society by stimulating the private vices such as avarice and prodigality and thereby contributing to public benefits by stimulating industry. Therefore, despite the Country Whig claim, there must be no fear for luxury effeminising and enervating the whole society to be unfit for wars, because there would always be some kinds of people fit for wars.<sup>11</sup> If sense of honour, which in Mandeville was a sentiment equivalent to virtues, was nurtured by luxury by associating it with military honour, luxury could even play a role in strengthening the army.<sup>12</sup> After all, since luxury was not to be made general across the whole nation,

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<sup>8</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 108-13.

<sup>9</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 113-6.

<sup>10</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 116-7.

<sup>11</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 119-20.

<sup>12</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 120-3.

and, therefore, the balance of trade was kept favourable, luxury was no threat to commercial polity, because luxury could not corrupt a whole country.

... what I have insisted on the most, and repeated more than once, is the great Regard that is to be had to the Balance of Trade, and the Care the Legislature ought to take that the Yearly Imports never exceed the Exports; and where this is observed, and the other things I spoke of are not neglected, I still continue to assert that no Foreign Luxury can undo a Country.<sup>13</sup>

Mandeville's accounts of luxury and of nation's balance of trade were to argue against the Country Whig view which had opposed luxury, the division of labour and a standing army while advocating a classical citizen or militia. The most prominent theme of their 1698 polemic was the reduction of William III's army. Andrew Fletcher held forth on the vices of a standing army and the virtues of a militia.<sup>14</sup> In his *Discourse of Government in Relation to Militias*, Fletcher found the Harringtonian ideal of armed civic virtue in a Gothic and medieval past, entailing specialisation in the rise of commerce and a loss of liberty due to luxury and standing armies exploiting and corrupting the freeholders.<sup>15</sup> In an Anglo-Irish context, Robert Molesworth in Dublin had published his *Account of Denmark* and William Molyneux was about to publish his *Case of Ireland's Being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England*.<sup>16</sup> Civic moralists thus saw in the division of labour, the spread of luxury as a result and the standing army in particular, a threat to personal integrity and their ideal of self-sufficiency. As a Court Whig sympathiser, Mandeville countered with his claim that commercial prosperity enhanced by the division of 'Art into many Branches' entailed the liberation of the majority from previous dependencies on landed power. He argued that the expansion of commerce brought forth much better mutual dependencies between the division of labour in the entire commercial society.<sup>17</sup> As a Court Whig supporter, Mandeville's arguments for what he called 'States-Craft' was designed to defend the economic and financial interests of the Whig oligarchy of his time. Rather than attempting to curb the corruption encouraged by enlarging commercial stimulation and luxury, Mandeville argued that

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<sup>13</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 248-9.

<sup>14</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 230.

<sup>15</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 231.

<sup>16</sup> Pocock (1985), p. 230.

politicians had now to manipulate private egoism for the sake of public benefits. He was going to infuriate his readership by showing how broadened opportunities for avarice became prerequisites of the wealth of nations and that modern subjects would accordingly be governed best by the existing government. In this new social order, Mandeville recognised that the government now controlled the new powers of finance following a transformation in British public finance which triggered an explosion of moveable capital.<sup>18</sup> Mandeville tried to attribute corruption not to the governmental functions in this new order but to corrupt human nature itself, and to legitimate their political administrations as necessary for rendering human nature useful for national prosperity.<sup>19</sup>

Mandeville's advocacy of the division of labour was therefore the hinge of his understanding of commercial sociability. He saw in the division of labour, unlike his Country Whig opponents, mutual dependencies that could generate public benefits by channelling the private vices of every individual into the now closely-knitted interrelations of commercial society. Along with his ideas of luxury and the balance of trade, Mandeville's ideas of policies towards the poor labouring masses and charity for them was accordingly influenced by this understanding of commercial sociability. Mandeville recommended to his government a moderate wage for labourers, which in his view would force the poor to spend continuously and hence keep industry going.<sup>20</sup> Moderate wages would therefore render labourers neither dispirited nor idle: 'The only thing then that can render the labouring Man industrious, is a moderate quantity of Money; for as too little will, according as his Temper is, either dispirit or make him Desperate, so too much will make him Insolent and Lazy'.<sup>21</sup> On the contrary, too much wealth would make a country idle and declining: for example, Spain had declined because of its combination of frugality and vast wealth.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hundert, pp. 196 and 204.

<sup>18</sup> Hundert, pp. 20-2. For Mandeville's accounts of statecraft, see also Hundert, pp. 77-8.

<sup>19</sup> Hundert, pp. 22-3.

<sup>20</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 193-4.

<sup>21</sup> *FB*, I, p. 194.

<sup>22</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 194-6.

Mandeville was equally unfavourable to charity and charity-schools for the labouring poor, as, in his view, charity would break mutual interdependencies between the division of labour in a wholly commercial society by rendering the labouring poor over-dependent on charity. In his 'An Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools', Mandeville said that, though charity would be a love to strangers for nothing, with no obligation,<sup>23</sup> and be counterfeited by the passions of pity or compassion,<sup>24</sup> charity would, besides pity, often be motivated by pride, avarice and self-love as well.<sup>25</sup> Charity would also be given to release ourselves from the suffering from pity.<sup>26</sup> More importantly, however, charity, if too excessive, would breed idleness and destroy industry: 'Charity, where it is too extensive, seldom fails of promoting Sloth and Idleness, and is good for little in the Commonwealth but to breed Drones and destroy Industry'.<sup>27</sup> Mandeville was accordingly critical of charity-schools.<sup>28</sup> Charity-schools would equally promote idleness, keeping the poor from working and encouraging villainy: 'Charity-Schools, and every thing else that promotes Idleness, and keeps the Poor from Working, are more accessory to the Growth of Villainy, than the want of Reading and Writing, or even the grossest Ignorance and Stupidity'.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, reading and writing taught at charity-schools would be no remedy for crimes by rogues,<sup>30</sup> because, for instance, reading and writing had not been able to prevent the South-Sea Bubble of 1720-21, committed by the wealthy and educated people.<sup>31</sup> As the plenty and cheapness of provisions, which was Mandeville's definition of prosperity, depended on a multitude of industrious poor, charity-schools would prevent them from working with cheerfulness and content, and lead the whole of society into scarcity and expensiveness.<sup>32</sup>

Mandeville even extended his wildly mercantilist argument regarding charity-schools to education in general. Education was not necessary to *everyone*, especially

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<sup>23</sup> *FB*, I, p. 253.

<sup>24</sup> *FB*, I, p. 254.

<sup>25</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 257-8. See also, pp. 261, 64 and 85-6.

<sup>26</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 258-9.

<sup>27</sup> *FB*, I, p. 267.

<sup>28</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 268-70.

<sup>29</sup> *FB*, I, p. 271.

<sup>30</sup> *FB*, I, p. 275.

<sup>31</sup> *FB*, I, p. 276.

<sup>32</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 286-8.

for sons entering into trading (and other hard labour),<sup>33</sup> because education would incapacitate youths in a commercial society.<sup>34</sup> In his view of the division of labour as mutual interdependencies within a commercial society, education was an institution which would distort the nature of society by encouraging too many children to take up 'advantageous' professions.<sup>35</sup> In the mutual interdependencies of the division of labour, on the one hand, hard and dirty labour was to be done by someone, and the children of the poor were best fitted for it.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, in foreign trade, the more industrious people are, the more successful the country is. If kept in ignorance, labourers remained content and industrious in their work.

To be happy is to be pleas'd, and the less Notion a Man has of a better way of Living, the more content he'll be with his own; and on the other hand, the greater a Man's Knowledge and Experience is in the World, the more exquisite the Delicacy of his Taste, and the more consummate Judge he is of things in general, certainly the more difficult it will be to please him.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore it would be important to keep labourers' knowledge confined within their occupation to keep them ignorant and industrious, thereby gaining advantage in foreign trading.

As by discouraging Idleness with Art and Steadiness you may compel the Poor to labour without Force, so by bringing them up in Ignorance you may inure them to real Hardships without being ever sensible themselves that they are such. ... When by these two Engines we shall have made Provisions, and consequently labour cheap, we must infallibly out-sell our Neighbours; and at the same time increase our Numbers. This is the Noble and Manly way of encountering the Rivals of our Trade, and by dint of Merit out-doing them at Foreign Market.<sup>38</sup>

As seen above, stimulating industry and keeping the balance of trade favourable to the nation had been the policy goal that Mandeville advocated for the Court Whig government, so Mandeville was making his argument against education in order to gain an advantage in foreign trade. In sum, Mandeville concluded that, while luxuries were less detrimental to a rich society,<sup>39</sup> high wages were more so by ruining

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<sup>33</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 296-7.

<sup>34</sup> *FB*, I, p. 299.

<sup>35</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 300 and 302.

<sup>36</sup> *FB*, I, p. 311.

<sup>37</sup> *FB*, I, p. 314.

<sup>38</sup> *FB*, I, p. 317.

<sup>39</sup> *FB*, I, p. 304.

servants:<sup>40</sup> if the labouring poor were maintained without education, they would therefore be more conducive to the public peace.<sup>41</sup>

Mandeville's ideas of charity and education further clarified the arguments in his essay, 'A Search into the Nature of Society'. There Mandeville denounced moral virtues as a useful means for encouraging industry, based on his mercantilist view that education was an institution that would nurture moral qualities unnecessary for industry. As seen above, in Mandeville's understanding of the nature of commercial society, sociability arises from private vices, or the bad and hateful qualities of men, not the good. 'Sociableness' would arise from the multiplicity of his desires, as well as the continual opposition (obstacles) in his endeavouring to gratify them.<sup>42</sup> Society, the wealth of nations, arts and inventions were necessary only for gratifying wants, imperfections, appetites, pride and vanity, but not the amiable virtues and loving qualities.<sup>43</sup> Amiable qualities would provide comfort to an indolent society, because rest and peace would prevent trouble and motion, and the bounties and benefits of nature would allow men to save labour; on the contrary, it was needs, vices and imperfections that would create all arts, industry and labour.<sup>44</sup> Evil was therefore an inevitable factor in forming sociability, so that private vices were to be turned into public benefits 'by the dextrous Management of a skilful Politician'.<sup>45</sup> This could be done by keeping the favourable trade balance so as to have luxury abound within the nation, and by keeping the labouring poor ignorant and, consequently, industrious.

Concerning these political and economic arguments by Mandeville, various views have been presented in order to interpret Mandeville as an economic theorist.<sup>46</sup> F. B. Kaye argued in 1924 that Mandeville was the foremost proponent of laissez-faire and individualism prior to Smith. Following Kaye, Nathan Rosenberg argued in 1963 that Mandeville was a laissez-faire theorist who did allow government intervention to ensure a favourable trade balance but not necessarily to arrange the economy by the traditional mercantilist prohibition of foreign luxury import and

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<sup>40</sup> *FB*, I, p. 305.

<sup>41</sup> *FB*, I, p. 308.

<sup>42</sup> *FB*, I, p. 344.

<sup>43</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 346-7 and 355.

<sup>44</sup> *FB*, I, p. 366.

<sup>45</sup> *FB*, I, p. 369.

excessive specie export.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, in 1953, Jacob Viner interpreted Mandeville as a mercantilist who saw a role for the 'skilful politician' in producing good from evil.<sup>48</sup> Thomas Horne elaborated this view and argued in 1978 that Mandeville was a typical mercantilist who shared views not only with his contemporary mercantilist thinkers but also even with laissez-faire theorists a concept of economic man.<sup>49</sup> Examining all the above interpretations, Goldsmith argued in 1985 that Mandeville was a theorist of the spirit of commercial society who examined human motives and passions and their link to the public benefits of prosperity and wealth, but not a theorist of the economic structure of commercial society. He concluded that Mandeville, therefore, was neither a mercantilist nor a laissez-faire economist.<sup>50</sup>

I think that all of the above interpretations of Mandeville as either a mercantilist or a laissez-faire theorist have an assumption in common: that a mercantilist is an interventionist. This however is an assumption that is now worth challenging. The policy of the prohibition of foreign luxury import and excessive specie export was first proposed by old mercantilists such as Thomas Mun before and after the Restoration of 1660, but not shared with by later mercantilists after the Glorious Revolution. These later mercantilists such as Dudley North, Josiah Tucker and Charles Davenant argued that government should provide only a framework of laws protecting people and property within which the commerce operates and should not interfere with domestic trade. They were therefore non-interventionists as far as the domestic trade was concerned, but that was still for the sake of the mercantilist policy of achieving a favourable trade balance. Therefore, it still seems fair to regard Mandeville as a mercantilist.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See Goldsmith, pp. 123-4.

<sup>47</sup> Nathan Rosenberg (1963), pp. 183-96. See Goldsmith, p. 123.

<sup>48</sup> Jacob Viner (1953), pp. 11-15. See Goldsmith, p. 123.

<sup>49</sup> Horne (1978). See Goldsmith, p. 124.

<sup>50</sup> Goldsmith, p. 124.

<sup>51</sup> Isaac Rubin argued that the later mercantilists uncovered the connection between the movement of the precious metals (money) and the overall growth of trade and industry, and were free of the naïve notions of their forerunners that increases in the quantity of precious metals was a source of a nation's wealth. See Rubin, pp. 40-1. See also Thomas Mun (1621) and (1664); Sir Dudley North (1669) and (1691); Charles Davenant (1696), (1698) and (1699); Josiah Tucker (1755), (1775) and (1781). Sir Dudley North however was the first of the early prophets of the idea of free trade, criticising the state

Mandeville's ideas of statecraft, or government, were thus aimed at preserving what he believed as mutual interdependencies between the division of labour in a wholly commercial society, because it was these closely-knitted commercial relationships that were turning private vices into public benefits. His concerns here centred on maximising the consumption of luxury, keeping the poor labouring masses industrious and, above all, keeping the favourable trade balance. How then could these objectives be achieved? Later in the second volume of *The Fable*, published in 1728, Mandeville presented his polemic for attaining these mercantile objectives by preserving the order and economy of commercial relationships. Interestingly enough, while criticising Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Mandeville presented his arguments in the Hutchesonian language of beauty, as Hutcheson had done for his description of order and economy in the universe.<sup>52</sup> In Mandeville's use of the language, statecraft now appeared as something economic and aesthetic: 'Oeconomy of a well-ordered city' was 'the Beauty and Exactness' which would produce 'a surprising Regularity', owing to 'the Happiness of the Invention, the Contrivance of the Engine'.<sup>53</sup> Once established, the government would be a machine running uninterrupted for a great while even without a wise man: '... the Government of a large City, once put into good Order, the Magistrates only following their Noses, will continue to go right for a great while, tho' there was not a wise Man in it'.<sup>54</sup> By dividing the works in administration and by the careful limitations of every official's power, the utmost regularity in public office would be established.<sup>55</sup> Economy would play a role in statecraft, because, even though the most knowing, the most virtuous and the least self-interested are the best politicians, it would be quite unlikely that we could find such people to be politicians. The next best are perhaps those wise laws to guard and entrench the constitution, and contrivances to avoid detriment from a want of the knowledge or probity of

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restrictions upon foreign trade and the level of interest. See Rubin, pp. 58-63.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter One above, pp. 60-1.

<sup>53</sup> *FB*, II, p. 322.

<sup>54</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 322-3.

<sup>55</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 325-6.



ministers.<sup>56</sup> After all, though there are virtuous men, the number is too small for a nation to rely on for useful government.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, order and economy, rather than virtuous statesmen, were to keep government functioning for attaining and preserving the order and economy of commercial relationships. This was because it was the order and economy of commercial relationships, after all, that could sustain commercial sociability, as the mechanisms of turning private vices into public benefits.

The order and economy of statecraft was reconsidered by Mandeville in his last work in 1732, *A Letter to Dion*. This short book was his polemical reply to *Alciphron: Or, The Minute Philosopher* (1732), in which George Berkeley had attacked Mandeville as a lawless libertine and atheist. Mandeville thought that Berkeley had misunderstood his argument in *The Fable*.<sup>58</sup> But what is more important is the development in *Dion* of his argument about statecraft attaining and preserving order and economy. Here Mandeville developed his discussion of government or statecraft into that of political economy, by describing how law converts private vices into public benefits, rather than in preventing private vices:

It is the Business of all Law-givers to watch over the Publick Welfare, and, in order to procure that, to submit to any Inconveniency, any Evil, to prevent a much greater, if it is impossible to avoid that greater Evil at a cheaper Rate. Thus the Law, taking into Consideration the daily Encrease of Rogues and Villains, has enacted, that if a Felon, before he is convicted himself, will impeach two or more of his Accomplices, or any other Malefactors, so that they are convicted of a Capital Crime, he shall be pardon'd and dismiss'd with a Reward in Money. There is no Doubt but this is a good and wise Law; for without such an Expedient, the Contrary would swarm with Robbers and Highwaymen Ten-times more than it does; .... All this while it is evident, that in this Case the Law has only Regard to the Publick Good, and, to procure that, sets aside all other Laws, and proceeds rather contrary to the Common Notions we have of Justice; which, according to the *Civilians*, consists in a constant and perpetual Desire of giving every one his *Due*: and for Fear he should have some Goodness left, and that natural Compassion might make him unwilling to destroy his dearest Friends, and perhaps his Brother, with his Breath, the Law invites him to it by a large Sum of Money, and actually bribes him to add to the Rest of his Crimes that Piece of Treachery to his Compassions, whom he had sworn Fidelity to, and perhaps drawn into the Villany.<sup>59</sup>

When the Law was made, it was well known, from what was observed of Thieves, Pickpockets, and House-breakers, that those Common Villains will do any Thing to get Money, and still more to save Life, when they are conscious that it is forfeited. The knowledge of this was the

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<sup>56</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 334-6.

<sup>57</sup> *FB*, II, p. 336.

<sup>58</sup> Hundert, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Dion*, pp. 42-4.

Foundation of that Law.<sup>60</sup>

This shews the Usefulness of such a Law, and at the same Time the Wisdom of the Politician, by whose skilful Management the Private Vices of the Worst of Men are made to turn to a Publick Benefit.<sup>61</sup>

Mandeville was clarifying the role of the politician as converting private vices into public benefits, rather than as merely preventing private vices. In Part II of *The Fable of the Bees* (1728) and *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* (1732), as we have seen above, Mandeville emphasised the beneficial effects of a governmental system. He thought that it was not necessarily the result of the wisdom of individual geniuses but that of long experience over a great length of time from the independent actions of many, ordinary human beings. By this typically Court Whig sentiment, Mandeville argued that virtue and genius were unnecessary in politics, because the matters of government could be reduced routine operations and easily taken decisions by those experienced in the trade but possessed neither of unusual intellect nor of extraordinary moral virtue. This was also the advantage Mandeville thought of the British constitution: it did not need to be staffed by virtuous men or the men of genius such as those in the civic ideal of philosophers as the classical guardians of a republic. Mandeville's emphasis therefore lay in the importance of the operation of government in which men's passions and interests are checked and public benefits are produced out of private vices such as bribery and graft.<sup>62</sup> It was Court Whig view that such a system of government was more suitable in the now highly commercialised polity. His argument about government was therefore concerned with how to introduce the order and economy of government as the means of encouraging luxury and industry, keeping the poor labouring masses industrious, keeping the balance of trade favourable to the nation, thereby converting private vices into public benefits. In this sense, his argument here was developed from that of politics into that of political economy. He was no longer concerned with how virtuous statesmen could prevent the private vices of multitude. He now emphasised the role of law for politicians to introduce the order and economy into government

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<sup>60</sup> *Dion*, p. 44.

<sup>61</sup> *Dion*, p. 45.

for manipulating human weaknesses in order to secure a public good. Hutcheson would have to respond to this theory in *A System of Moral Philosophy*, after believing that he had once refuted, in his *Beauty and Virtue* and *Passions and Affections*, the foundations of *The Fable*.

## 2. Francis Hutcheson

After his death, Francis Hutcheson's son, a second Francis Hutcheson, posthumously published in two volumes, *A System of Moral Philosophy, in Three Books* in 1755 (written from 1734 to 1737), with a life of the author by William Leechman, professor of divinity at Glasgow.<sup>63</sup> The work was, as the title indicates, his attempt to present his moral philosophy as an entire system ranging from moral theology and the theory of beauty to ethics, jurisprudence and political economy. It has been suggested by James Moore and others that there is a radical inconsistency between the philosophy of *A System* and that set out in his earlier works. Moore argues that Hutcheson had two separate systems. One is a coherent public philosophy expounded in the first four philosophical treatises written in Dublin in the 1720s as *Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and *Passions and Affections with Moral Sense* (1728); and the other is a parallel academic philosophy conceived in accordance with the curriculum at Glasgow after 1730.<sup>64</sup> The former consists of complementary treatises in aesthetics, ethics and psychology, formulated as polemical and illustrative discussions. The latter, written in Latin, is a system of logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy, but is in many respects contradictory to the former.<sup>65</sup> Hutcheson's early treatises of public philosophy comprehended a coherent aesthetics, ethics and psychology, postulating the natural sociability or abilities to perceive and act in a manner consistent with a sense of beauty and morals. They also comprised a Stoic discourse of the ethical value of citizenship. These early works, in other words, were

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<sup>62</sup> Goldsmith, pp. 107-118.

<sup>63</sup> Fowler, pp. 180-1.

<sup>64</sup> Moore (1990), pp. 41-2.

<sup>65</sup> Moore (1990), p. 42.

designed for adults and citizens.<sup>66</sup> Hutcheson's Latin works, on the other hand, were designed for his young moral philosophy students at Glasgow College.<sup>67</sup> Moore also argued that Hutcheson's *System* was an aborted attempt to integrate his two 'systems' into a single text.<sup>68</sup>

Whatever the case (I come back to this issue in my Conclusion), Hutcheson's main philosophical problem now was to produce an alternative idea of statecraft, or government, to Mandeville's. As shown below, this was going to be done through his wide-ranging arguments about duties and rights in his jurisprudence and political economy. Book I, *Concerning the Constitution of HUMAN NATURE, and the SUPREME GOD*, revisited his ethics in the first eight chapters of *A System*, beginning with his redefinition of passions and affections, various senses of beauty, and the moral sense. Hutcheson repeated his arguments in ethics that the sense of beauty was innocent from any vice even in the pursuit of wealth and power,<sup>69</sup> that the moral sense was a principle which would make the selfish subversive to public benefits,<sup>70</sup> and that beauty had a role in sociability:

As the order, grandeur, regular dispositions and motions, of the visible world, must soon affect the mind with admiration; ... men of genius and attention must soon discover some intelligent beings, one or more, presiding in all this comely order and magnificence.<sup>71</sup>

Hutcheson also reiterated his belief in benevolence as the principle of human nature, citing Shaftesbury while denouncing the Hobbesian and Mandevillian account of sympathy.<sup>72</sup> The pleasure of wealth and power was again justified as a means for virtuous purposes, and frugality, moderation and temperance were emphasised for turning the pursuit of wealth and power into virtuous ends.<sup>73</sup>

Hutcheson's jurisprudence began with his idea of duty:

what affections and duty are incumbent on us toward the *Deity* thus abundantly made known to every attentive mind[?]

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<sup>66</sup> Moore (1990), p. 53.

<sup>67</sup> Moore (1990), p. 57.

<sup>68</sup> Moore (1990), pp. 58-9.

<sup>69</sup> *System*, I, pp. 18-9.

<sup>70</sup> *System*, I, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup> *System*, I, p. 35.

<sup>72</sup> *System*, I, pp. 44-9.

<sup>73</sup> *System*, I, pp. 136 and 163-4.

In this matter, as much as any, our *moral faculty* is of the highest use. It not only points out the affections suited to these perfections, but sacredly necessary to a good character.<sup>74</sup>

That Hutcheson was attempting to make his jurisprudence based on ethics (the theory of senses and affections) is not surprising because *An Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil* (1725) had already dealt with his theory of obligation and rights as jurisprudence in its final section.<sup>75</sup> As for his theory of obligation, Hutcheson had asked, 'Can we have any Sense of OBLIGATION, abstracting from the Laws of a Superior?'<sup>76</sup> Basing his jurisprudence on his ethical theories, Hutcheson clearly insisted that the sense of obligation, on which the system of laws has to be founded, must be motivated by the moral sense:

... that our first Ideas of moral Good depend not on Laws, may plainly appear from our constant Inquiries into the Justice of Laws themselves; and that not only of human Laws, but of the divine. ... It must then first be suppos'd, that there is something in Actions which is apprehended absolutely good; and this is Benevolence, or a Tendency to the publick natural Happiness of rational Agents; and that our moral Sense perceives this Excellence: and then we call the Laws of the DEITY good, when we imagine that they are contriv'd to promote the publick Good in the most effectual and impartial manner.<sup>77</sup>

In this sense, obligation should be distinguished from constraint. For Hutcheson, obligation was directed by laws which the moral sense, not the sovereign, made. On the contrary, constraint was the sanction of rewards or punishments which oppose our moral sense, under what we call an evil or unjust lawgiver for the supposed contrary intention.<sup>78</sup>

As for his theory of rights, Hutcheson had in the same manner derived rights from the moral sense.<sup>79</sup> In this, Hutcheson defined vice as a violation of perfect rights, 'betrays such a selfish Desire of advancing his own positive Good, as

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<sup>74</sup> *System*, I, p. 209. Chapter IX, titled 'The *DUTIES* toward *GOD*; and first, of just sentiments concerning his *NATURE*', contained no account of the duties toward God except his proofs of God's existence and attributes. Chapter X was titled 'The *AFFECTIONS*, *DUTY*, and *WORSHIP*, to be exercised toward the *DEITY*'.

<sup>75</sup> Section VII: 'A deduction of some complex Moral Ideas, viz. of obligation, and right, perfect, imperfect, and external, alienable, and unalienable, from this Moral Sense'.

<sup>76</sup> *MGE*, p. 153.

<sup>77</sup> *MGE*, p. 158. See also p. 155.

<sup>78</sup> *MGE*, p. 159.

<sup>79</sup> *MGE*, p. 160.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy overcomes all Compassion toward the Misery of others'.<sup>80</sup> His definition possibly criticised Mandeville's too broad definition of vices by confining them to those only so judged by the moral sense. In all this, Hutcheson's theory of rights had also been presented as part of his political economy. In this sense, his theory of right also gives us an introductory sketch of what his political economy was supposed to be. Rights would guarantee 'the Goods of the Whole', which owed to men's 'Labour and Industry'. In his political economy, Hutcheson was to legitimate self-love as useful and necessary to industry and public good, whenever the moral sense approves it.<sup>81</sup> In his language, 'useful' and 'necessary' were synonymous with 'morally good', because self-love could abide by laws based on the moral sense (such as the preservation of the fruits of men's own innocent labour).<sup>82</sup>

In his *System*, obligation motivated by the moral sense was seen as a duty to God.<sup>83</sup> But more importantly in his *System*, Hutcheson classified duties into two categories: the first was a duty of being virtuous; and the second was a duty of being prosperous:

We know that the benign intentions of the *Deity* are partly to be executed by the active virtues of good men; and that in these virtues a great share of their supreme perfection and happiness consists.

The same resignation and trust we exercise for ourselves, and our own interests, we shall also exercise for all who are dear to us by any virtuous bonds, for any honourable cause in which we or others are engaged; that it shall be prosperous in this life, or tend to the future glory and happiness of those who have espoused it.<sup>84</sup>

It appears that the duty of being virtuous had been dealt with in *Beauty and Virtue*, as Hutcheson's ethics, while the duty of being prosperous was now to be fully developed in the *System* as his jurisprudence and political economy. In this sense, Hutcheson's entire 'system' of moral philosophy, ranging from moral theology and the theory of beauty to ethics, jurisprudence and political economy, could be seen as an overarching system of the theory of duties, both moral and economic. The duty of being virtuous, together with the duty of being prosperous exercised through our

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<sup>80</sup> *MGE*, p. 162.

<sup>81</sup> *MGE*, p. 164.

<sup>82</sup> *MGE*, p. 165.

<sup>83</sup> *System*, I, p. 210.

interests, would enable us to be virtuous as well as wealthy at the same time. This compatibility of virtuous and wealthy would be the hinge of his criticism in the *System* of Mandeville, who had argued that these two were contradictory each other. Hutcheson sought to show that, as far as both duties are to be exercised as duties to God, both virtue and wealth would be fulfilled through the divine grace of our sense of beauty and harmony. This was going to lead Hutcheson into criticising Mandeville's approval of luxury and making way for setting prosperity as a duty:

All the good we enjoy, all the pleasures of sense, all the delights of beauty and harmony, are so many favours conferred on us by *God*. ... He gave to all animal kinds, human or brutal, their powers, senses, instincts, affections.<sup>85</sup>

the noblest and most lasting enjoyments are such as arise from our own affections and actions, and not the passive sensations we receive from those external things which affect the body.<sup>86</sup>

As Hutcheson had already argued in his earlier treatises, the pursuit of wealth and power could be virtuous if controlled and moderated by the sense of beauty and the moral sense. Both duties of being virtuous and of being prosperous could therefore achieve the Stoic Cardinal Virtues of justice, temperance, fortitude and prudence, which would bring men into nobler virtues as well as prosperity and, hence, happiness.<sup>87</sup>

Once the scheme of Hutcheson's arguments of duties had been formulated, the rest of his *System* would be straightforward (see a diagram below).

<i>THE DUTY</i>	<i>To God</i>	<i>To the public</i>	<i>To oneself</i>
<i>Of being virtuous</i>	<u>Moral theology</u>	<u>Ethics</u>	<u>Ethics</u>
<i>Of being prosperous</i>	<u>Moral theology</u>	<u>Jurisprudence</u>	<u>Jurisprudence</u> and <u>Political Economy</u>

Book II, *Containing a Deduction of the more special LAWS of NATURE, and*

<sup>84</sup> *System*, I, p. 211. See also I, pp. 221-2.

<sup>85</sup> *System*, I, p. 212.

<sup>86</sup> *System*, I, Chapter XI: 'The *CONCLUSION* of this *BOOK*, shewing the *WAY* to the *SUPREME HAPPINESS* of our *NATURE*', p. 221.

<sup>87</sup> As to justice, see *System*, I, p. 222; temperance, I, pp. 222-3; fortitude, I, p. 223; prudence, I, pp. 223-4.

*Duties of Life, previous to Civil Government, and other adventitious States*, then developed his ethics (how to be virtuous) and jurisprudence (how to be prosperous), as a theory of the duties of being virtuous and of being prosperous respectively. It shows how both of these two duties served *the private* as well as *the public* interests. This was to follow Book I that had concerned his moral theology and the theory of beauty, as duties *to God* of being virtuous and of being prosperous.<sup>88</sup>

In his jurisprudence, Hutcheson accordingly dealt with two kinds of duties, a duty *to the public* of being prosperous, and that *to the individual*.<sup>89</sup> And his concern in the *System* was going to be dominated by these two duties for the rest of the book. Hutcheson shows here, first, that we are able to perform our duties to God, to ourselves and to others by pursuing prosperity and, second, that the moral sense will show us how this can be done virtuously. His jurisprudence started with a new definition of 'right' as a 'right' action for fulfilling the duty to the public as well as to the individual *of being prosperous*:

The actions approved as *right*, are such as are wisely intended either for the general good, or such good of some particular society or individual as is consistent with it.<sup>90</sup>

[Therefore,] a man hath a *right* to do, possess, or demand any thing, "when his acting, possessing, or obtaining from another in these circumstances tends to the good of society, or to the interest of the individual consistently with the rights of others and the general good of society, and obstructing him would have the contrary tendency."<sup>91</sup>

And, like the duties to the public as well as to the individual *of being virtuous*, the duties to the public as well as to the individual *of being prosperous* would also be fulfilled through the moral sense, naturally derived from the duties *to God* of being prosperous:

The *righteousness* or goodness of actions is not indeed the same notion with *their tendency to*

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<sup>88</sup> The purpose of Book I was to show 'that the course of life which God and Nature recommends to us as most lovely and most conducive to the true happiness of the agent, is that which is intended for the general good of mankind in the wisest manner that our reason and observation can suggest'. The purpose of Book II, on the other hand, is 'to enquire more particularly into the proper means of promoting the happiness of mankind by our actions, which is the same thing with inquiring into the more special laws of nature' by 'abstracting from those adventitious states or relations which human institutions or actions have constituted' (*System*, I, p. 227).

<sup>89</sup> Book II, Chapter III, 'The general Notions of *RIGHTS*, and *LAWS*, explained; with their divisions'.

<sup>90</sup> *System*, I, p. 252.

<sup>91</sup> *System*, I, p. 253.



*universal happiness*, or flowing from the desire of it. This latter is the highest species of the former. Our *moral sense* has also other immediate objects of approbation, many narrower affections, which we must immediately approve without thinking of their tendency to the interest of a system. In like manner we immediately condemn many unkind passions and actions, without considering their distant effects upon society.<sup>92</sup>

In this, the duty *to the public* of being prosperous was more important than that *to the individual*: therefore, a private right of possessions by innocent industry is still subordinate to any grand interest of a community, or the public interest, as a superior moral form.<sup>93</sup> Such a 'sense of right' would constitute the 'sense of liberty' as sociability, balancing the interests between the private and the public.<sup>94</sup> Such a 'sense of right' would equally constitute the sense of justice as sociability, controlling the private resenting passion of victims for bringing justice for the sake of the public interests, as well as for the private. Hutcheson envisaged the Stoic ideal of the control of passions for the general good, in which he supposed 'wise magistrates, parents, guardians' as Stoic sages who were to direct others towards the duties *to the public* of being prosperous. They should do this through their moral sense and the sense of right, without viewing their own interests, naturally derived from their duties *to God* of being prosperous.<sup>95</sup> This is Hutcheson's idea of the foundation of government which was also tacitly criticising Mandevillian statecraft or government based on hypocrisy and flattery.

His distinction between the duty *to the public* of being prosperous and that *to the individual* made his distinction between private rights and general rights.<sup>96</sup> While the preservation and practice of *general* rights were later going to be defined as duties *to the public* of being prosperous, the preservation and practice of *private* rights was defined as those *to the individual* of being prosperous.<sup>97</sup> Hutcheson then developed his account of private rights into a theory of political economy (see the previous diagram above). For the support of human life, a great many external

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<sup>92</sup> *System*, I, pp. 253-4. See also I, pp. 267-8. As to the duties *of being virtuous*, see I, p. 228.

<sup>93</sup> *System*, I, p. 254.

<sup>94</sup> 'This very sense of right seems the foundation of that sense of liberty, that claim we all naturally insist upon to act according to our own inclination in gratifying any desire, until we see the inconsistency of its gratification with some superior principles' (*System*, I, p. 255).

<sup>95</sup> *System*, I, pp. 256-7.

<sup>96</sup> *System*, I, p. 284.

<sup>97</sup> *System*, I, p. 285.

things are required as essentials and conveniences such as food, clothing, habitations, which cannot be obtained without art and labour, and the friendly help of our fellows. For, a man in absolute solitude could scarce procure to himself the bare essentials of life and much less could he procure any conveniences.<sup>98</sup> But all this could be easily possible through sociability and the advantageous division of labour.<sup>99</sup> The core of Hutcheson's theory of political economy and sociability was that such duties *to the individual* of being prosperous as the preservation and practice of private rights must be derived from the moral sense:

when men are not forced into violence for their own defence, peace and justice are still eligible to the powerful and artful as well as to others; since they know not what universal indignation may be raised by any thing injurious, from the *moral sense* of mankind, from sympathy with the sufferer, and apprehensions of their own future dangers: and a friendly just kind deportment, as it naturally engages the good-will, the esteem, and good offices of others, is the only probable method of obtaining security, and all the external advantages and pleasures of life.<sup>100</sup>

This was another criticism of Mandeville's statecraft by showing that the production of wealth through the division of labour, or sociability, was not vicious. Wealth could be pursued virtuously, as far as the duties *to the individual* of being prosperous are respected and fulfilled by the preservation and practice of private rights and, therefore, by the moral sense. For instance, 'natural private rights' such as natural liberty are 'not only suggested by the selfish parts of our constitution, but by many generous affections, and by our *moral sense*, which represents our own voluntary actions as the grand dignity and perfection of our nature'.<sup>101</sup> Equally, 'adventitious private rights' such as property rights are innocent as they are in accordance with the duties *to the individual* of being prosperous through the moral sense. Again Hutcheson was criticising Mandeville by showing that the production of wealth secured by the preservation and practice of property rights was 'innocent' so far as

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<sup>98</sup> *System*, I, p. 287.

<sup>99</sup> *System*, I, pp. 288-9. See also I, pp. 289-90. In a footnote, Hutcheson acknowledged the second book of Cicero's *De Officiis*.

<sup>100</sup> *System*, I, p. 292.

<sup>101</sup> *System*, I, p. 295. Natural private rights are 'such as each one has from the constitution of nature itself without the intervention of any human contrivance, institution, compact, or deed'. Natural liberty is 'a natural right to exert his powers, according to his own judgment and inclination, for these purposes [his own happiness], in all such industry, labour, or amusement, as are not hurtful to others in their persons or goods' (I, p. 294).

the private rights are preserved and practised as the duties to the individual of being prosperous, through the moral sense:

the first impulses of nature toward supporting ourselves, or those who are dear to us, point out the right of the first occupant to such things as are fit for present use. The obstructing this innocent design must appear morally evil, as it is ill-natured to hinder any man to take his natural support from the things granted for this purpose by God and nature, while others can otherways support themselves. [Thus] the first rule of property, that "things fit for present use the first occupant should enjoy undisturbed."<sup>102</sup>

From these strong feelings in our hearts [such as 'tender generous affections in the several relations of life'] we discover the right of property that each one has in the fruits of his own labour; that is, we must approve the securing them to him, where no publick interest requires the contrary; and must condemn as cruel, unsociable, and oppressive, all depriving men of the use and free disposal of what they have thus occupied and cultivated, according to any innocent inclination of their hearts.<sup>103</sup>

Even though a property right was an 'adventitious' private right, it constitutes a part of natural liberty that must be used in order to achieve a duty to the individual of being prosperous. As it can therefore be fulfilled through the moral sense, Hutcheson was against any intervention to property rights.<sup>104</sup> This was because preserving and practising property rights was a duty to the individual of being prosperous through the moral sense. In this Calvinist or Presbyterian thinking, Hutcheson presented the moral sense as universally and equally implanted in men and as above any external authority.<sup>105</sup>

In discussing contracts, the preservation and practice of property rights were also regarded as a duty to the individual *of being prosperous*, which was to be derived from the duties to the individual *of being virtuous* as well.<sup>106</sup> Hutcheson was again to criticise Mandeville by showing how sociable commerce secured by sincerity in contracts achieves both wealth and virtue, as it is carried out through preserving and practising property rights as the duties to the individual *of being prosperous* as well as *of being virtuous*.

<sup>102</sup> *System*, I, pp. 317-8. Adventitious private rights are rights arisen 'from some human institution, compact, or action' (I, p. 293).

<sup>103</sup> *System*, I, pp. 319-20. See also I, pp. 321-2.

<sup>104</sup> *System*, I, pp. 322-3. Hutcheson explicitly criticised Plato and Thomas More (I, pp. 323-4). However, on the contrary, general rights as the duties *to the public* of being prosperous are, as discussed below, to be fulfilled through the moral sense of magistrates, without viewing their interests, naturally derived from their duties *to God* of being prosperous.

<sup>105</sup> *System*, I, p. 339.

Hutcheson finally turned to examine the preservation and practice of *general* rights as duties *to the public* of being prosperous, distinct from the preservation and practice of *private* rights as duties *to the individual* of being prosperous. This sort of rights and duties were based on men's 'more extensive affections toward societies and mankind', or benevolence.<sup>107</sup> The most important general right in Hutcheson's discussion in jurisprudence and political economy was the social contract. Hutcheson described the social contract as a general right that is indispensable for achieving the duties to both *the public* and *the individual* of being prosperous, through the moral sense. The social contract, in Hutcheson's view, would have been naturally required by the sociability of men:

'Tis never for itself agreeable to any one to have his actions subject to the direction of others, or that they should have any power over his goods or his life. Men must have first observed some dangers or miseries attending a state of anarchy to be much greater, than any inconveniences to be feared from submitting their affairs along with others to the direction of certain governors or councils concerned in the safety of all: and then they would begin to desire a political constitution for their own safety and advantage, as well as for the general good. As men are naturally endued with reason, caution, and sagacity; and civil government, or some sort of political union must appear, in the present state of our nature, the necessary means of safety and prosperity to themselves and others, they must naturally desire it in this view; and nature has endued them with active powers and understanding for performing all political offices.<sup>108</sup>

Hutcheson's ideas were again a criticism of Mandeville who had described sociability as derived from 'private vices'. Hutcheson was showing sociability from the moral sense as fulfilling the duties 'for their own safety and advantage, as well as for the general good'. But he was also criticising Pufendorf and Hobbes for seeing the social contract as only for private safety, not the general interest.<sup>109</sup> After all, Hutcheson sought to show that the moral sense, not self-love (as Hobbes and Mandeville had thought) was a motive of civil polity.<sup>110</sup>

Hutcheson then presented civil laws as a means of achieving the duties *to the public* as well as *to the individual* of being prosperous, but which were still to be

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<sup>106</sup> *System*, II, pp. 15-6.

<sup>107</sup> *System*, Book II, Chapter XVI, 'Concerning the general *RIGHTS* of *HUMAN SOCIETY*, or Mankind as a System', II, p. 105.

<sup>108</sup> *System*, Book II, Chapter IV, 'The *MOTIVES* to constitute *CIVIL GOVERNMENT*', II, pp. 212-3.

<sup>109</sup> *System*, II, p. 222.

derived from the duties to the public as well as to the individual *of being virtuous*. Such civil laws should be preserved and practised through the moral sense of legislators, who never have their interests in mind in carrying their duties which are also to be to God.

As the end of all laws should be the general good and happiness of a people, which chiefly depends on their virtue: it must be the business of legislators to promote, by all just and effectual methods, true principles of virtue, such as shall lead men to piety to God, and all just, peaceable, and kind dispositions towards their fellows; ... It is poor policy merely to punish crimes when they are committed. The noble art is to contrive such previous education, instruction, and discipline, as shall prevent vice, restrain these passions, and correct these confused notions of great happiness in vicious courses, which enslave men to them.<sup>111</sup>

Such legislators would be required to possess some virtues, in order to achieve their duties to the public, to the individual and ultimately to God of being virtuous and prosperous. Those virtues were piety,<sup>112</sup> sobriety,<sup>113</sup> industry, justice<sup>114</sup> and fortitude.<sup>115</sup> Among them, the most important in Hutcheson's argument was industry:

Industry is the natural mine of wealth, the fund of all stores for exportation, by the surplus of which, beyond the value of what a nation imports, it must increase in wealth and power. ... Goods prepared for export should generally be free from all burdens and taxes, and so should the goods be which are necessarily consumed by the artificers, as much as possible; that no other country be able to undersell like goods at a foreign market.<sup>116</sup>

The best remedy is to raise the demand for all necessaries; not merely by premiums upon exporting them, which is often useful too; but by increasing the number of people who consume them: and when they are dear, more labour and application will be requisite in all trades and arts to procure them.<sup>117</sup>

As to taxes for defraying the publick expences, these are most convenient which are laid on matters of luxury and splendour, rather than the necessaries of life; on foreign products and manufactures, rather than domestick; and such as can be easily raised without many expensive offices for collecting them. But above all, a just proportion to the wealth of people should be observed in whatever is raised from them, otherways than by duties upon foreign products and manufactures, for such duties are often necessary to encourage industry at home, tho' there were

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<sup>110</sup> *System*, II, p. 224.

<sup>111</sup> *System*, II, p. 310. In a footnote Hutcheson added: 'This was the aim of the institutions of Lycurgus, Solon, Plato, Numa, and of the old Persians, according to Xenophon, and of the Chinese' (p. 310).

<sup>112</sup> *System*, II, pp. 310-7.

<sup>113</sup> *System*, II, pp. 317-8.

<sup>114</sup> *System*, II, pp. 321-3.

<sup>115</sup> *System*, II, pp. 323-5.

<sup>116</sup> *System*, II, p. 318.

<sup>117</sup> *System*, II, pp. 318-9.

no publick expences.<sup>118</sup>

Here is Hutcheson's case for a favourable trade balance as the conclusion of his jurisprudence or government: gaining a trade surplus was now what the legislators had to deliver as their virtue and economic duty to the public of being prosperous, through their moral sense. More importantly, even though Hutcheson criticised Mandeville's concept of luxury as a vice,<sup>119</sup> both still advocated a favourable trade balance as a policy goal for legislators, whether it is a necessary vice (in Mandeville's view) or a necessary virtue and duty of legislators (in Hutcheson's view). This might explain why Hutcheson dared not publish *A System* in his lifetime, though it was not a concern for his son who published it along with a biography. But Hutcheson's conclusion was the inevitable outcome of his arguments due to his assumption of the superiority of public laws over private laws, the superiority of general rights over private rights, hence the superiority of legislators' duties *to the public* over those *to the individual*.<sup>120</sup> Hume and Smith would have to offer an alternative policy and roles of legislators, after Mandeville and Hutcheson.

Mandeville had not necessarily presented his moral and economic ideas as a sophisticated academic system, but they were still coherent in a remarkably simple paradox, 'private vices, public benefits'. His moral idea was a rigorist and ascetic interpretation of what he called (and what others might not call) 'private vices' such as pride, vanity, luxury and honour, which are normally innocent and sometimes even virtuous. His economic idea was, on the contrary, a sceptical and, indeed, pragmatic and realist interpretation of what he called 'public benefits' that a modern

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<sup>118</sup> *System*, II, pp. 340-1.

<sup>119</sup> "'Tis vain to alledge that luxury and intemperance are necessary to the wealth of a state as they encourage all labour and manufactures by making a great consumption. It is plain there is no necessary vice in the consuming of the finest products, or the wearing of the dearest manufactures by persons whose fortunes can allow it consistently with all the duties of life. And what if men grew generally more frugal and abstemious in such things? More of these finer goods could be sent abroad: or if they could not, industry and wealth might be equally promoted by the greater consumption of goods less chargeable: as he who saves by abating of his own expensive splendour could by generous offices to his friends, and by some wise methods of charity to the poor, enable others to live so much better, and make greater consumption than was made formerly by the luxury of one' (*System*, II, p. 320). For Hutcheson's criticism of Mandeville's definition of luxury, see also Hundert, pp. 201-2.

<sup>120</sup> *System*, II, pp. 376-7. See also p. 327.

commercial polity began to deliver through the newly-emerging sociability of commerce. His paradox put these contradictory interpretations together and tried to show that it was rather ironic that the opulence of a modern commercial society was possible only when there were private vices in it. Unlike Mandeville, Hutcheson attempted to present his moral and economic theories as a unified academic system of moral philosophy. The hinge of his system rested on his theory of duty. On the one hand, there was the moral duty to be virtuous, and on the other hand, there was the economic duty to be prosperous. But for Hutcheson, these two different duties were not contradictory, because both were demanded through the moral sense. In other words, to be virtuous as well as prosperous was not a contradiction as Mandeville had claimed, but rather was a duty as a citizen of a modern commercial polity. And Hutcheson tried to convince Mandeville's and his own readers of this by presenting both of these two duties based on his moral theology, his moral sense theory and the theory of the sense of beauty that he had already developed in his earlier treatises. Hutcheson's criticism of Mandeville may have required him to write it as an academic system that was to be more credible than a paradox.

### 3. David Hume

As we have seen, Hume tried to show that Mandeville's rigorist definition of 'vices', which had called even something beneficial to the public prosperity 'vices', was an abuse of language. Hume therefore argued that anything useful should be called virtuous, and sought to show how it was still possible for us to form the ideas of morals. Hume tried to show how our simple ideas of virtue, beauty and wealth, all of which implied the usefulness or utility of objects, could be associated into our complex ideas of morals such as justice, thanks to our sociability, sympathy with others, and our sociable passions. Hume also argued that a well-balanced pride could direct us to form a moral idea of the great mind, not as a vice or hypocrisy, as Mandeville had argued, but as a natural ability. Such moral ideas as industry, activity, application, temperance, frugality, economy and resolution could equally be

formed, not as 'vices', hypocrisies or disguises for our proud and ambitious passions, but as virtues and natural abilities. As our simple ideas of virtue, beauty and wealth implied the usefulness or utility of objects, our moral ideas, which were to be formed out of these simple ideas, would involve the usefulness or utility as the standard of morals. And in the context of 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, this was how Hume sought to solve Mandeville's paradox: he introduced the idea of utility as the measure of morals.

But he left his argument of justice as a special case, in which there is still room for government to assist, even if not manage or manipulate, human passions to administer and maintain the rules of justice. If Hume's arguments of moral ideas had refuted Mandeville's ideas of 'private vices', his arguments of government and, as we shall see, of political economy, now seek to refute Mandeville's ideas of 'public benefits'. In particular, Hume sought to show how such natural abilities as industry, activity, application, temperance, frugality, economy and resolution could contribute to public benefits, with the direction of magistrates. In this, Hume thought that the administration of justice, derived from a general 'sense' of common interests, would replace the roles of politicians that both Mandeville and Hutcheson had thought, though for different reasons, would control natural passions. In this, Hume came to emphasise the role of taste for us to make use of our natural abilities for production. Magistrates then were expected to understand the nature of human taste so as to assist and direct our natural abilities. In his arguments of government and politics, Hume accordingly sought to replace the Mandevillian language of passions and greed with a new language of taste.

Book III of the *Treatise* opened up Hume's account of government. Hume's questions concerning justice in his argument of government were: first, in what manner are the rules of justice established by the contrivance of men?; and second, for what reasons do we attribute a moral beauty and deformity to the observance or neglect of these rules?<sup>121</sup> Referring to the traditional view of natural jurisprudence, of Cicero in particular, and using its language, Hume attributed its origin to the contradiction between the slender means and human infirmity endowed by nature

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<sup>121</sup> *THN*, Book III, Part II, 'Of justice and injustice', p. 311.



The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy and the simultaneous demand for needs scarcely met by these slender means.<sup>122</sup> To supply the basic needs and to compensate the infirmities were both possible by sociability alone, which provides the force through the conjunction of labour, the ability through the partition of employment (the division of labour), and the security, through mutual succour.<sup>123</sup> Sociability was rendered necessary therefore by the circumstances of human nature. On the other hand, there were incommensurable and even contrary particulars to the necessary union, such as selfishness. We have the partiality and unequal affection to others (by the passions of lust and natural affection, such as natural appetite between the sexes; natural affection between parents and children; the strongest attention to ourselves; a lesser one to our relations and acquaintances; and the weakest one to strangers). These factors influence our behaviour and conduct in society as well as our ideas of vice and virtue.<sup>124</sup> The remedy for this contradiction should be derived not from nature but from contrivance such as property rights. Property right therefore was a 'convention' to bestow stability on the possession of external goods acquired by his own industry and good fortune and his peaceable enjoyment of them. In other words, it was a convention to abstain from the possessions of others. Society is to be maintained in this manner so that the well-being and subsistence of all the members in it can be protected, even without sacrificing our own interests entirely.<sup>125</sup> Justice as a contrivance would then be crucial to balance our own and others' interests and therefore to produce both wealth and virtue, though a minimum and negative virtue. Hume offered his account of justice as his response to Mandeville's claim that self-love is always vicious and that it should be turned into public benefits by a statecraft other than justice. In Hume, convention such as justice was a general sense of common interest, which was to regulate all the members of society by certain rules.<sup>126</sup> This sense of mutual interest would give us a confidence in the future regularity of our conduct, on whose expectation our 'moderation' and abstinence could only be founded. The ideas of

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<sup>122</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 311-2. The first question, how the rules of justice are established, was considered in Section II, 'Of the origin of justice and property'.

<sup>123</sup> *THN*, III, p. 312.

<sup>124</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 312-4.

<sup>125</sup> *THN*, III, p. 314.

<sup>126</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 314-5.

justice and injustice, property, right and obligation, could arise only after this convention of abstinence from the possessions of others was observed. As selfishness is a 'natural' passion, the rules of justice and property are an artificial and moral convention.<sup>127</sup> Hume was disagreeing with Mandeville on how to restrain a 'natural' passion such as selfishness for the benefit of public interest. Hume argued that the artificial rules of justice were a possible remedy, while Mandeville had no trust in justice but in what he had called, using the language of politeness, dextrous management by a wise politician, for such a remedy.<sup>128</sup> In other words, Hume thought that the administration of justice, derived from a general 'sense' of common interests, would replace the roles of politicians that both Mandeville and Hutcheson had thought, though for different reasons, would control natural passions. Unlike Hutcheson, Hume described such a 'sense' as a judgement capable enough of foreseeing the consequent public benefits. Unlike Hutcheson, Hume described the sense of beauty in the same manner. Hume argued that the sense of beauty, or the same love of order and uniformity, arranging books in a library, and the chairs in a parlour, would contribute to the formation of society, and to the well-being of mankind, by modifying the general rules of justice concerning the stability of possession.<sup>129</sup> In this argument, justice was seen as general rules that should always be observed. The senses such as the sense of beauty would be the efficient causes of such observation and, in practice, ultimately supply the need of life. Any dispute concerning the real existence and extent of property and possession, consequently, could be decided only by the imagination, the fancy and sentiments concerning the relationship between the idea of the proprietor and that of the object.<sup>130</sup> Such consent was also the foundation of the division of labour: a mutual exchange of property by consent and commerce should be founded on a law of nature, because it was necessary for satisfying different parts of the world and different men by nature fitted

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<sup>127</sup> *THN*, III, p. 315. Language and money (gold and silver as the common measure of exchange) were also established in the same manner.

<sup>128</sup> James Moore argues that Hume's statecraft of justice was a refinement of a less elegant remark by Mandeville. See James Moore (1994), footnote 27, p. 56. But Hume's theory of justice was not necessarily what Moore regards as a sceptical account of justice that Hume is supposed to have adopted from Court Whig ideology into his 'sceptical Whiggism', as I shall argue below.

<sup>129</sup> *THN*, III, Part II, Section III, 'Of the rules, which determine property', footnote 71, p. 324.

<sup>130</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 326-7, 329. See also Hume's footnotes 75, pp. 327-9, and 76, p. 330.

to different commodities and employment.<sup>131</sup> Simple ideas of pleasure and convenience, or even needs, would give rise to the imagination, the fancy and sentiments such as the sense of beauty. The sentiments would then associate these simple ideas so as to form the complex ideas of justice and property, and accordingly produce both virtue and wealth.

Following his theory of justice, Hume offered an alternative to both Mandeville's and Hutcheson's accounts of legislators and government. Hume speculated that civil government was established to cure men's natural weakness to prefer their own interest to others', and therefore to make themselves observe the laws of justice and equity. To do this, they would immediately have had to motivate a few persons to become civil magistrates. They were to be indifferent to the greatest part of the state, have little interest of their own in any act of injustice, be satisfied with their present condition in society and have an immediate interest in executing justice for the upholding of society.<sup>132</sup> Because the rules of justice alone had had no power to constrain men so that they would observe the laws of nature or the rules of justice, government had to be invented to execute the rules of justice and thereby maintain society.<sup>133</sup> A moral obligation to submit to government would therefore have arisen not from a promise, consent, or original contract.<sup>134</sup> Hume regarded the social contract theory as fallacious and sophistical,<sup>135</sup> and argued that a moral obligation to submit to government must have arisen from the public interest for security and protection.<sup>136</sup> In this obligation, the rights of magistrates could be confirmed by five causes. First, long-term possession in any one form of government or succession of princes, reinforced by their subjects who had been accustomed to their authority as time passed, whose imagination therefore could now easily oblige loyalty for their authority.<sup>137</sup> Second, the actual possession, had long possession not been the case: that is, to submit quietly to the present government without inquiring too curiously into its origin would be the most conformable maxim

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<sup>131</sup> *THN*, III, Part II, Section VII, 'Of the origin of government', p. 310.

<sup>132</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 344-5.

<sup>133</sup> *THN*, III, p. 348.

<sup>134</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 350-2.

<sup>135</sup> *THN*, III, Part II, Section IX, 'Of the measures of allegiance', p. 352.

<sup>136</sup> *THN*, III, p. 354.

to prudence and morals. Even though the possession of the present government had been acquired by the sword, such right of the stronger was to be received as legitimate and be authorised by morality, because government was always necessary.<sup>138</sup> Third, the right of conquest, aided by the notions of honour and glory commanded submission to the conquerors. Fourth, the right of succession by the eldest son to the authority of the founding father, had all the three rights above not been available. Like the rules of justice, this right was also derived from imagination.<sup>139</sup> And finally, positive laws, after the legislature had established a certain form of government and a succession of princes. All the five causes above should conform to the public good, however. Only then would they form the strongest title to sovereignty, and be regarded as sacred and inviolable.<sup>140</sup> The above third and fourth causes had been rejected by Hutcheson as the rights of magistrates demanding obligations from their subjects. For, Hutcheson had supposed that their rights should be obliged for public benefits in the name of God, rather than, as did Hume, for needs and general interests merely for the sake of society. Always to follow custom was Hume's alternative to the roles of magistrates set by Hutcheson. Approving the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89,<sup>141</sup> Hume concluded that

Time and custom give authority to all forms of government, and all succession of princes; and that power, which at first was founded only on injustice and violence, becomes in time legal and obligatory.<sup>142</sup>

In his *Essays Moral and Political* (1742), however, Hume went on to emphasise the role of taste for us to make use of our natural abilities for contributing to public benefits. Hume accordingly set the role of magistrates in understanding the nature of human taste so as to assist and direct our natural abilities. In his arguments of government and politics, Hume consequently sought to replace the Mandevillian language of passions and greed with a new language of taste. Hume opened up his *Essays Moral and Political* with an essay 'Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion',

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<sup>137</sup> *THN*, III, p. 356.

<sup>138</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 356-7.

<sup>139</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 357-8.

<sup>140</sup> *THN*, III, p. 359.

<sup>141</sup> *THN*, III, pp. 360-2.

where he began to replace the Mandevillian language of passion with a language of taste, and closed the volume with an essay 'Of the Standard of Taste', where he perfected his language of taste. In his new language, the delicacy of passion was something which makes people 'extremely sensible to all the accidents of life, and gives them a lively joy upon every prosperous event, as well as a piercing grief, when they meet with misfortunes and adversity'.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, the delicacy of taste was something which 'produces the same sensibility to beauty and deformity of every kind, as that does to prosperity and adversity, obligations and injuries'.<sup>144</sup> In Hume's view, the delicacy of taste was to be more important than that of passion, because it places our happiness on objects chiefly depended upon by ourselves (such as books, diversions, friends). These are to be attained by the delicacy of taste, rather than things external which are very little at our disposal (such as accidents of life). Taste is more vital to happiness than passions.<sup>145</sup>

Hume was to give two reasons as to why taste, in place of passions, had become a primary concern.

They [the beauties to be studied by taste] draw off the mind from the hurry of business and interest; cherish reflection; dispose to tranquillity; and produce an agreeable melancholy, which, of all dispositions of the mind, is the best suited to love and friendship.<sup>146</sup>

... a delicacy of taste is favourable to love and friendship, by confining our choice to few people, and making us indifferent to the company and conversation of the greater part of men.<sup>147</sup>

In his language, 'taste' was going to be described as fulfilling the proper production of both wealth (by drawing off us from the excessive passions, business and interest) and virtue (love and friendship). In his language, 'taste' should now be distinguished from the sense of beauty that Hume had previously discussed in his *Treatise*. The sense of beauty had more to do with utility as the standard of morals. 'Taste' on the other hand had more to do with moderation and the control of the passions. This concept was then to replace Mandeville's language of passions and greed with a new

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<sup>142</sup> *THN*, III, p. 362.

<sup>143</sup> *Essays*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>144</sup> *Essays*, p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> *Essays*, p. 5.

<sup>146</sup> *Essays*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>147</sup> *Essays*, p. 7.

language of taste with the concept of friendship taken from Cicero. His science of politics, for instance, should be the science of how to control passions or political zealotry, by promoting moderation and exploiting passions and their capacity for industry, from particular factional interests toward more general public interest. With taste refined to control zealotry and passions, they would achieve both virtue and wealth.<sup>148</sup> Hume's replacement of Mandeville's language of passions and greed with a language of taste required him to distinguish between private interest, factional interest and public interest:

It is, therefore, a just *political* maxim, *that every man must be supposed a knave*: Though at the same time, it appears somewhat strange, that a maxim should be true in *politics*, which is false in *fact*. But to satisfy us on this head, we may consider, that men are generally more honest in their private than in their public [in this case, factional] capacity, and will go greater lengths to serve a party, than when their own private interest is alone concerned.<sup>149</sup>

The role of magistrates could be more effective if they redirect factional passions into the public [in this case, general and social] interest, rather than redirect the private into the general public as in Mandeville and Hutcheson.<sup>150</sup> Hume was therefore disagreeing with Mandeville and Hutcheson on their understanding of private interest: Hume regarded private interests as useful for public interests and therefore virtuous. Instead, Hume regarded factional interests as more vicious than private interests. Passions were seen as vices, but in Hume they were now assumed to be a source of factions, rather than of private vices.<sup>151</sup> Hume was now increasingly concerned with factions from interest:

In despotic governments, indeed, factions often do not appear; but they are not the less real; or rather, they are more real and more pernicious, upon that very account. The distinct orders of men, nobles and people, soldiers and merchants, have all a distinct interest; but the more powerful oppress the weaker with impunity, and without resistance; which begets a seeming tranquillity in such governments.<sup>152</sup>

Commercial factions from interests, instead of private vices, and their pernicious

<sup>148</sup> Essay 3: 'That Politics may be reduced to a Science', *Essays*, p. 27.

<sup>149</sup> Essay 5: 'Of the Independency of Parliament', *Essays*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>150</sup> 'if we find that, by the skilful division of power, this [separate] interest [of each court, and of each order of men] must necessarily, in its operation, concur with public, we may pronounce that government to be wise and happy' (*Essays*, p. 43).

<sup>151</sup> Essay 8: 'Of Parties in general', *Essays*, p. 56.

effects upon public interests and prosperity were then going to be the main concern in Hume's *Political Discourses* and later in Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. After having refuted Mandeville concerning the passions as private vices, Hume and Smith now confronted another set of vices: the factional vices based on the collective passions and interests. But they were going to show how such vices led the public into disadvantage in economic terms, rather than into public benefits. One of their concerns was public debts, because public debts had made the real distinctions from interest clearer and more remarkable in Britain. It had thereby become a more serious issue not only in financial terms but also in ethical terms in the sense of whether it is justified to impose the fiscal burden of the present generation onto the future generations not yet born.<sup>153</sup> In a new language of taste, in place of Mandeville's language of passions and greed, Hume's and Smith's science of politics was to be written, concerning how to control passions or political zealotry. Promoting moderation and exploiting passions and their capacity for industry will be a key issue for magistrates to assist what Hume had argued as natural abilities and to direct them from particular factional interests toward more general public interest. With taste refined to control zealotry and passions, they would achieve both virtue and wealth in the end.

This is also where Hume's, and possibly Smith's, account of government might have touched upon a party political dimension. Hume talked about parties before and after the Glorious Revolution. Before the Revolution, the Court party was 'A passionate lover of monarchy ... displeased at any change of the succession; as savouring too much of a commonwealth'. The Country party, on the contrary, was 'A passionate lover of liberty ... apt to think that every part of the government ought to be subordinate to the interests of liberty'. After the Revolution, the Tory party was '*a lover of monarchy, though without abandoning liberty; and a partizan of the family of STUART*', whereas the Whig was '*a lover of liberty though without renouncing monarchy; and a friend to the settlement in the PROTESTANT line*

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<sup>152</sup> *Essays*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>153</sup> 'The interests of these two bodies [landed and trading part of England] are not really distinct, and never will be so, till our public debts encrease to such a degree, as to become altogether oppressive and intolerable' (*Essays*, p. 60).

[Hume's *Italics*']'.<sup>154</sup> Hume could have argued that those factions formed their distinctive complex ideas of government in their association of ideas by stimulating their simple ideas of their distinctive interest and principle [in this case, their distinctive custom, habit or belief] with their factional passions. Such complex ideas of government derived from party ideologies would have been regarded by Hume as pernicious to the public. Again, a refined taste could equip men with a true idea of their own interests as citizens and with more moderate sociable passions. These would lead them into associating a more secure moral idea of government, an idea more beneficial to public interests. Such a moral idea could be formed without any party zealotry but out of a refined taste, and eventually out of habit.

This is why Hume discussed the new needs of studying commerce in the science of politics, which should be totally 'free from party-rage, and party-prejudices' and 'contributes most to public utility, and even to the private satisfaction of those who addict themselves to the study of it'.<sup>155</sup> The study of commerce was necessary 'to make a full comparison of civil liberty and absolute government, and to show the great advantages of the former above the latter'.<sup>156</sup> The issue of commerce in terms of political ideology was represented by his account on the relationship between commerce and liberty.<sup>157</sup> Public debt however is one of several threats to civil liberty in free governments.<sup>158</sup> Public debt was going to be a main concern in Hume's *Political Discourses* as well as in Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, as a threat to civil liberty. In their arguments, public debt will be regarded as having been derived from the factional or party political passions and interests, especially those of Court Whigs, which they thought discouraged the passion of avarice as a spur to industry. How to refine our taste will still be an issue to it, in order for us to form true ideas of government and public interests free from party political rages.

Hume opened his *Essays Moral and Political* with an essay 'Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion', where he began to replace the Mandevillian language of passion with a language of taste. Later, Hume was to close the volume with an essay

<sup>154</sup> *Essays*, Essay 9: 'Of the Parties of Great Britain', p. 71.

<sup>155</sup> *Essays*, Essay 12: 'Of Civil Liberty', p. 87. See also pp. 88-9.

<sup>156</sup> *Essays*, p. 89.

<sup>157</sup> *Essays*, p. 92.



'Of the Standard of Taste' in 1759, where he perfected his language of taste. A standard of taste is necessary, because 'It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision, afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another'.<sup>159</sup> For this, Hume thought that 'a more accurate definition of delicacy' is necessary:<sup>160</sup>

Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now as these qualities may be found in a small degree, or may be mixed or confounded with each other, it often happens, that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavours, amidst the disorder, in which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition: This we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense.<sup>161</sup>

Following his arguments about factional passions and interests and party prejudices, Hume referred to prejudice as an obstruction to taste:

to enable a critic the more fully to execute this undertaking [the practice of contemplating any order of beauty], he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination.<sup>162</sup>

Factional passions were possibly a prejudice which perverted the taste of beauty in their business, thereby preventing their contributing to public opulence. In other words, taste could work for a good understanding of the suitability of the means to the end:

Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose, for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must carry constantly in our view, when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes.<sup>163</sup>

Taste is a good, sound judgement that enables us to take advantage of 'means of the

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<sup>158</sup> *Essays*, pp. 95-6.

<sup>159</sup> *Essays*, p. 229.

<sup>160</sup> *Essays*, p. 234.

<sup>161</sup> *Essays*, p. 235.

<sup>162</sup> *Essays*, p. 239.

<sup>163</sup> *Essays*, p. 240.

passions and the imagination' for achieving our ends. Taste should be applied also to the skilful management by magistrates seeking to control passions and factional zealotry for public benefits, as industry should be deduced only from such passions.

Following the *Essays Moral and Political*, Hume developed his political essays and published the *Political Discourses* in 1752. In these essays, Hume was to launch and develop what he had proposed as a new study of commerce which should be free from party rages and prejudices. The fact that Hume wrote these essays still in the context of 'private vices, public benefits' controversy could be seen in his response to Mandeville's definition of luxury. Hume said of luxury as a 'great refinement in the gratification of the senses', as neither innocent nor blameable: 'The bounds between the virtue and the vice cannot here be exactly fixed, more than in other moral subjects'.<sup>164</sup> Luxury does not necessarily stimulate passions, as Mandeville had contended, but simply refines senses. If properly pursued, therefore, luxury would not be vicious but innocent:

These indulgences are only vices, when they are pursued at the expence of some virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are follies, when for them a ruins his fortune, and reduces himself to want and beggary. Where they entrench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject whence to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity or compassion, they are entirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged such by almost all moralists.<sup>165</sup>

Hume's purpose in the essay was to target the two contradictory strands in Mandeville's arguments which together had made the famous paradox 'private vices, public benefits'.

We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes [libertine principles bestowing praises even on vicious luxury and representing it as highly advantageous to society, and severe morals blaming even the most innocent luxury and representing it as the source of all the corruptions, disorders, and factions, incident to civil government], by proving, *first*, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly*, that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> *Essays*, Part II: *Political Discourses* (published in 1752), Essay 2: 'Of Refinement in the Arts', p. 268.

<sup>165</sup> *Essays*, p. 269.

To show that luxury was possibly both beneficial and virtuous was going to be Hume's solution to the Mandevillian paradox.

As for the first point, that the age of refinement was both happy and virtuous, Hume sought to show how luxury, if innocent, contributes to both private happiness and prosperity as well as to public benefits. As to how luxury brings about private happiness, Hume argued that luxury fostered the virtue of sociability and humanity in the age of improvement.<sup>167</sup> As to how luxury brings about public benefits, Hume argued that luxury augmented industry.<sup>168</sup> Luxury would also refine our delicacy of taste and thereby give rise to the moderation, curbing the factional passions.<sup>169</sup> In sum, in the age of commerce, luxury would be the foundation of liberty, security and independence:

a progress in the arts is rather favourable to liberty, and has a natural tendency to preserve, if not produce a free government. ... where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. ... They covet equal laws, which may secure their property, and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratical tyranny.<sup>170</sup>

Hume's second point in this essay, that innocent luxury is always beneficial, was his more explicit criticism of Mandeville. As in the previous *Essays Moral and Political*, his criticism concerned Mandeville's language of passions:

No gratification, however sensual, can of itself be esteemed vicious. A gratification is only vicious, when it engrosses all a man's expence, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune.<sup>171</sup>

let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous. Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public? And indeed it seems upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Essays*, p. 269.

<sup>167</sup> *Essays*, p. 271.

<sup>168</sup> *Essays*, p. 272.

<sup>169</sup> *Essays*, pp. 273-4.

<sup>170</sup> *Essays*, pp. 277-8.

<sup>171</sup> *Essays*, p. 279.

<sup>172</sup> *Essays*, p. 280.

As in his account of government and politics, Hume was going to write his account of political economy in a new language, in place of Mandeville's contradictory language of passions. There, he was to develop his accounts of the management by magistrates of commerce, or in other words, political economy as the science of magistrates for domestic politics.

Political economy in Hume's *Political Discourses* was to be concerned with the general principles of domestic politics and commerce, where the regularities of behaviour are to be found. The study was therefore to be free from any party rage and prejudice. In Hume, the regularities of behaviour are attributed to two universal causes. They were the institutions of government and the passions that tended to operate 'at all times, in all places, and upon all persons'.<sup>173</sup> A study of commerce, for instance, would require us to examine these 'general principles' which 'must always prevail in the general course of things'. For Hume, as the chief business of philosophers was 'to regard the general course of things', so the chief business of politicians in the domestic government of the state was to take 'the concurrence of a multitude of causes' into account.<sup>174</sup> For magistrates, political economy was to be a science of political and economic management skills on how to direct people's passions, natural abilities (such as industry and attention) and labour to increase the needs of life, manufactures and liberal arts.

Every thing in the world is purchased by labour; and our passions are the only causes of labour. When a nation abounds in manufactures and mechanic arts, the proprietors of land, as well as the farmers, study agriculture as a science, and redouble their industry and attention. The superfluity, which arises from their labour, is not lost; but is exchanged with manufactures for those commodities, which men's luxury now makes them covet. By this means, land furnishes a great deal more of the necessaries of life, than what suffices for those who cultivate it. In times of peace and tranquillity, this superfluity goes to the maintenance of manufacturers, and the improvers of liberal arts.<sup>175</sup>

If industry, which Hume had argued in his *Treatise* as a natural ability whose idea men were perfectly capable of forming in the association of ideas, could be managed to stimulate labour, there would be no opposition between the state, or the sovereign,

<sup>173</sup> See *Essays*, p. 113. See also 'That Politics may be reduced to a Science' and editor's footnote 1, pp. 254-5.

<sup>174</sup> *Essays*, Essay 1: 'Of Commerce', pp. 254-5.

<sup>175</sup> *Essays*, p. 261.

and the subjects, or individuals. He thought that 'Thus the greatness of the sovereign and the happiness of the state are, in a great measure, united with regard to trade and manufactures'.<sup>176</sup> The governance of passions and natural abilities as the domestic politics of commerce was also important for military causes.<sup>177</sup> But more importantly, the civilising powers of commerce, especially foreign commerce and trade, would enhance both the power of the sovereign and the happiness of subjects.

The same method of reasoning will let us see the advantage of *foreign* commerce, in augmenting the power of the state, as well as the riches and happiness of the subject. It increases the stock of labour in the nation; and the sovereign may convert what share of it he finds necessary to the service of the public.<sup>178</sup>

If we consult history, we shall find, that, in most nations, foreign trade has preceded any refinement in home manufactures, and given birth to domestic luxury. The temptation is stronger to make use of foreign commodities, which are ready for use, and which are entirely new to us, than to make improvements on any domestic commodity, which always advance by slow degrees, and never affect us by their novelty. The profit is also very great, in exporting what is superfluous at home, and what bears no price, to foreign nations, whose soil and climate is not favourable to that commodity. Thus men become acquainted with the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry*, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements, in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade. And this perhaps is the chief advantage which arises from a commerce with strangers.<sup>179</sup>

In Hume, political economy as a science for magistrates was to be management skills on how to make use of 'the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry* [Hume's *italics*]' for public benefits, rather than turning private vices into public benefits. It would be of no surprise to see that Hume was writing his account of political economy in a language of taste. 'The delicacy of taste' would still have been regarded by Hume as an important means for the refinement of those passions and natural abilities in the domestic politics of commerce.

How, then, can magistrates ensure their subjects 'become acquainted with the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry*, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements, in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade'? What did Hume have in mind for those

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<sup>176</sup> *Essays*, p. 262.

<sup>177</sup> *Essays*, pp. 262-3.

<sup>178</sup> *Essays*, p. 263.

<sup>179</sup> *Essays*, pp. 263-4.

magistrates as to their means of refining those passions and natural abilities in the domestic politics of commerce? An essay 'Of Money' offered a few concrete measures for magistrates to stimulate people's industry and hence increase the wealth of a nation. Among them the most important was 'encreasing' of money which would promote industry, even though the 'plenty' of money itself is of no consequence:

in every kingdom, into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, every thing takes a new face: labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention.<sup>180</sup>

To account, then, for this phenomenon, we must consider, that though the high price of commodities be a necessary consequence of the encrease of gold and silver, yet it follows not immediately upon that encrease; but some time is required before the money circulates through the whole state, and makes its effect be felt on all ranks of people. ... In my opinion, it is only in this interval or intermediate situation, between the acquisition of money and rise of prices, that the encreasing quantity of gold and silver is favourable to industry. ... It is easy to trace the money in its progress through the whole commonwealth; where we shall find, that it must first quicken the diligence of every individual, before it encrease the price of labour.<sup>181</sup>

we may conclude, that it is of no manner of consequence, with regard to the domestic happiness of a state, whether money be in a greater or less quantity. The good policy of the magistrate consists only in keeping it, if possible, still encreasing; because, by that means, he keeps alive a spirit of industry in the nation, and encreases the stock of labour, in which consists all real power and riches. ... This will be easily accounted for, if we consider, that the alterations in the quantity of money, either on one side or the other, are not immediately attended with proportionable alterations in the price of commodities. There is always an interval before matters be adjusted to their new situation; and this interval is as pernicious to industry, when gold and silver are diminishing, as it is advantageous when these metals are encreasing.<sup>182</sup>

This would have been a policy resulting from Hume's view of luxury, if innocent, as the source of benefits as well as virtues. But more importantly, this was a policy derived from Hume's view of money, explicitly contrasted with a factional, and certainly Mandeville's, and possibly even the Court Whig, view. All of them had identified wealth with money and thus encouraged policies aimed at increasing the quantity of a nation's bullion or money through a favourable trade balance:

MONEY is not, properly speaking, one of the subjects of commerce; but only the instrument which men have agreed upon to facilitate the exchange of one commodity for another. It is none of the wheels of trade: It is the oil which renders the motion of the wheels more smooth and

<sup>180</sup> *Essays*, Essay 3: 'Of Money', p. 286.

<sup>181</sup> *Essays*, pp. 286-7.

<sup>182</sup> *Essays*, p. 288.

easy.<sup>183</sup>

After having criticised the mercantilists or Court Whig view of the relationship between the plenty of money and low interest,<sup>184</sup> Hume then went on to criticise the mercantile factional passions of the fear and jealousy of trade, which were manipulated for their policy of aiming at favourable trade balance.<sup>185</sup> In the following famous sentences, Hume was vigorously vitiating the mercantile obsession with the favourable trade balance policy, and the policy effect (or ill-effect) of their prohibition on the exportation of money:

Suppose four-fifths of all the money in GREAT BRITAIN to be annihilated in one night, and the nation reduced to the same condition, with regard to specie, as in the reigns of the HARRYS and EDWARDS, what would be the consequence? Must not the price of all labour and commodities sink in proportion, and every thing be sold as cheap as they were in those ages? What nation could then dispute with us in any foreign market, or pretend to navigate or to sell manufactures at the same price, which to us would afford sufficient profit? In how little time, therefore, must this bring back the money which we had lost, and raise us to the level of all the neighbouring nations? Where, after we have arrived, we immediately lose the advantage of the cheapness of labour and commodities; and the farther flowing in of money is stopped by our fullness and repletion.

Again, suppose, that all the money of GREAT BRITAIN were multiplied fivefold in a night, must not the contrary effect follow? Must not all labour and commodities rise to such an exorbitant height, that no neighbouring nations could afford to buy from us; while their commodities, on the other hand, became comparatively so cheap, that, in spite of all the laws which could be formed, they would be run in upon us, and our money flow out; till we fall to a level with foreigners, and lose that great superiority of riches, which had laid us under such

<sup>183</sup> *Essays*, p. 281. See also p. 283.

<sup>184</sup> 'NOTHING is esteemed a more certain sign of the flourishing condition of any nation than the lowness of interest' (*Essays*, Essay 4: 'Of Interest', p. 295), but low interest was not due to plenty of money, which had no other effect than to raise the price of labour and commodities (pp. 295-6). Hume was criticising the mercantilist view, insisting the rate of interest was caused by the quantity of money in circulation, and therefore ultimately by the growth or decline of industry and commerce: that is, real economy, rather than monetary economy. Hume's criticism of the mercantilist view concerned their confusion between cause and effect: 'Those who have asserted, that the plenty of money was the cause of low interest, seem to have taken a collateral effect for a cause; ... It is true, when commerce is extended all over the globe, the most industrious nations always abound most with the precious metals: So that low interest and plenty of money are in fact almost inseparable. But still it is of consequence to know the principle whence any phenomenon arises, and to distinguish between a cause and a concomitant effect' (pp. 303-4). Hume was criticising their factional passions which would have given rise to the mis-association of ideas and thereby resulted in the mercantile regulations. In Hume, as already seen, the association of ideas was formed by the passions. The mis-association of ideas by the mercantilists was therefore formed by their factional passions, and led them into practising ill policies.

<sup>185</sup> 'there still prevails, even in nations well acquainted with commerce, a strong jealousy with regard to the balance of trade, and a fear, that all their gold and silver may be leaving them. This seems to me, almost in every case, a groundless apprehension' (*Essays*, Essay 5: 'Of the Balance of Trade', p. 309). Jealousy and fear were the cause of the two mercantile policies: prohibition of the exportation of commodities, and prohibition of the exportation of money (pp. 308-9).

disadvantages?

Now it is evident, that the same causes, which would correct these exorbitant inequalities, were they to happen miraculously, must prevent their happening in the common course of nature, and must for ever, in all neighbouring nations, preserve money nearly proportionable to the art and industry of each nation.<sup>186</sup>

In Hume's own words, this is 'our general theory',<sup>187</sup> because 'We need not have recourse to a physical attraction, in order to explain the necessity of this operation. There is a moral attraction, arising from the interests and passions of men, which is full as potent and infallible'.<sup>188</sup> For Hume, this was the mechanism which explained that the more universal natural abilities of industry and interests exceeded the perverted factional passions of jealousy and fear with regard to the balance of trade. Hume was then going to use his theory to show how the Union of England and Scotland had been advantageous to both countries,<sup>189</sup> whereas jealousy and hatred between France and Britain had been devastating to industry in both countries.<sup>190</sup> This is the point where Hume was not only refuting the favourable trade balance policy by mercantilists but also attempting to demonstrate the mutual advantage of free commerce. There would be no need to have fear that trading will cause a nation harm insofar as it contributes to the improvement and prosperity of its neighbours:

I will venture to assert, that the encrease of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbours; and that a state can scarcely carry its trade and industry very far, where all the surrounding states are buried in ignorance, sloth, and barbarism.<sup>191</sup>

I go farther, and observe, that where an open communication is preserved among nations, it is impossible but the domestic industry of every one must receive an encrease from the

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<sup>186</sup> *Essays*, pp. 311-2. The idea that the circulation of money will regulate itself to correspond with the demand of commodity circulation was first developed by Sir Dudley North, the first of the earliest prophets of the idea of free trade. Mercantilists had understood that trade was the exchange of a product, or use value, for money, or exchange value, because for them its aim was to increase the nation's stock of money. With North, trade was now understood as an exchange of certain products for others, where money functions simply as a medium. See Rubin, pp. 58-60. Hume's issues in his *Political Discourses*, namely the balance of trade, the rate of interest, and money, were the topics that had been constantly debated within mercantilist writings, and Hume gave the brilliant development and decisive formulation to them, and to those expressed by North in particular. See Rubin, pp. 79-82.

<sup>187</sup> *Essays*, p. 316.

<sup>188</sup> *Essays*, p. 313.

<sup>189</sup> *Essays*, p. 314.

<sup>190</sup> *Essays*, p. 315.

<sup>191</sup> *Essays*, Essay 6: 'Of the Jealousy of Trade' (1759/60), p. 328.



improvements of the others.<sup>192</sup>

Nature, by giving a diversity of geniuses, climates, and soils, to different nations, has secured their mutual intercourse and commerce, as long as they all remain industrious and civilised. Nay, the more the arts encrease in any state, the more will be its demands from its industrious neighbours. ... The industry of the nations, from whom they import, receives encouragement [by daily adopting, in every art, the inventions and improvements of our neighbours]: Their own is also increased, by the sale of the commodities which they give in exchange.<sup>193</sup>

The affection for his argument here was cosmopolitan, with a faith in free communication bringing about co-prosperity to all the parties concerned.

I shall therefore venture to acknowledge, that, not only as a man, but as a BRITISH subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of GERMANY, SPAIN, ITALY, and even FRANCE itself. I am at least certain, that GREAT BRITAIN, and all those nations, would flourish more, did their sovereigns and ministers adopt such enlarged and benevolent sentiments towards each other.<sup>194</sup>

This was also to show what sorts of sentiments the magistrates should have in their management of political economy. It was 'benevolent sentiments' towards public benefits transcending national borders, overcoming the jealousy and fear between parochial commercial entities. Hume's 'general theory' was to show how the skilful management of magistrates with such sentiments would always and naturally result in avoiding a negative trade balance.

From an essay 'Of Money' onward, Hume had been offering concrete measures for magistrates to stimulate their people's industry and hence increase the wealth of a nation. Those measures should enable magistrates to make their subjects 'become acquainted with the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry*, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements, in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade'. And there Hume focused on a measure of free trade, which would stimulate the natural ability of industry, not only in one country but also in neighbouring nations. His argument was also his criticism of the mercantile or Court Whig policy of aiming at a favourable trade balance and, above all, their factional passions. Now, from an essay 'Of Taxes' onward, Hume was to analyse another such measure, taxation. This was

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<sup>192</sup> *Essays*, p. 328.

<sup>193</sup> *Essays*, p. 329. See also p. 324.

<sup>194</sup> *Essays*, p. 331.

also to argue against the mercantile or Court Whig policy in the subsequent essay 'Of Public Credit'. Taxation could be a means of exciting what Hume had called the natural abilities of industry and frugality:

When a tax is laid upon commodities, which are consumed by the common people, the necessary consequence may seem to be, ... that the poor encrease their industry, perform more work, and live as well as before, without demanding more for their labour. Where taxes are moderate, are laid on gradually, and affect not the necessaries of life, this consequence naturally follows; and it is certain, that such difficulties often serve to excite the industry of a people, and render them more opulent and laborious, than others, who enjoy the greatest advantages.<sup>195</sup>

His taxation argument led him into his criticism of the Court Whig policy of public debts. An essay 'Of Public Credit' was written at a time when public debt in Britain was growing at an alarming rate and when there also was a controversy as to whether public debt was beneficial or harmful. Contrasting ancient and modern attitudes towards public debts,<sup>196</sup> Hume cited five disadvantages of public debts:

*First*, It is certain, that national debts cause a mighty confluence [concentration] of people and riches to the capital [LONDON], by the great sums, levied in the provinces to pay the interest; and perhaps, too, by the advantages in trade above mentioned, which they give the merchants in the capital above the rest of the kingdom.<sup>197</sup>

They [public stocks] banish gold and silver from the most considerable commerce of the state, reduce them to common circulation, and by that means render all provisions and labour dearer than otherwise they would be.

The taxes, which are levied to pay the interests of these debts, are apt either to heighten the price of labour, or be an oppression on the poorer sort.

As foreigners possess a great share of our national funds, they render the public, in a manner, tributary to them, and may in time occasion the transport of our people and our industry.

The greater part of the public stock being always in the hands of idle people, who live on their revenue, our funds, in that view, give great encouragement to an useless and unactive life.<sup>198</sup>

In the end, those disadvantages would lead a nation to its own destruction: 'It must, indeed, be one of these two events; either the nation must destroy public credit, or public credit will destroy the nation'.<sup>199</sup> But the problem of public debts had not only an economic and political but also an ethical dimension: whether it could be justified

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<sup>195</sup> *Essays*, Essay 8: 'Of Taxes', p. 343. See also p. 345.

<sup>196</sup> *Essays*, Essay 9: 'Of Public Credit', pp. 349-50.

<sup>197</sup> *Essays*, p. 354.

<sup>198</sup> *Essays*, p. 355.

to impose public debt upon future generations for the sake of present generation.

The balance of power in EUROPE, our grandfathers, our fathers, and we, have all deemed too unequal to be preserved without our attention and assistance. But our children, weary of the struggle, and fettered with incumbrances, may sit down secure, and see their neighbours oppressed and conquered; till, at last, they themselves and their creditors lie both at the mercy of the conqueror. And this may properly enough be denominated the *violent death* of our public credit.<sup>200</sup>

Hume's account of public debts was in this sense his total rejection of the mercantile or Court Whig economic policy, along with its political as well as moral philosophical foundation. In an essay: 'A Character of Sir Robert Walpole', first published in 1742 but subsequently withdrawn, Hume's criticism of Walpole's Court Whig factional passion concerned public debt in particular.<sup>201</sup>

Hume's stance towards ideologies, whether Court Whig, Country Whig or Tory, would be implied further in some of the closing essays in his *Political Discourses*. These essays show his strategy in presenting his new study of commerce which he had proposed should be free from party rages and prejudices. In an essay 'Of the Coalition of Parties', Hume made it clear that his intention was to promote a coalition of Tory and Whig parties, by supporting Tories more than Whigs who were then dominant:

There is not a more effectual method of promoting so good an end [a coalition of parties], than to prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions, to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise and blame, which we bestow on either side. The two former essays, concerning the *original contract* and *passive obedience*, are calculated for this purpose with regard to the *philosophical* and *practical* controversies between the parties, and tend to show that neither side are in these respects so fully supported by reason as they endeavour to flatter themselves. We shall proceed to exercise the same moderation with regard to the *historical* disputes between the parties, by proving that each of them was justified by plausible topics; that there were on both sides wise men, who meant well to their country; and that the past animosity between the factions had no better foundation than narrow prejudice or interested passion.<sup>202</sup>

Hume was not necessarily a Tory himself, as is often alleged, and not a Whig either.

<sup>199</sup> *Essays*, pp. 360-1. See also pp. 363 and 364. On this point, see Istvan Hont (1993), pp. 321-48.

<sup>200</sup> *Essays*, p. 365. See also p. 350.

<sup>201</sup> *Essays*, Part III: Essays Withdrawn and Unpublished, Essay 8: 'A Character of Sir Robert Walpole', pp. 575 and 576.

<sup>202</sup> *Essays*, Essay 14: 'Of the Coalition of Parties', p. 494.

He was simply trying to balance the political debate, against factions and interested passions of both parties. But Hume was mainly targeting, in preceding essays, as he himself wrote, the Whig doctrines of original contract, of the right of resistance, and their historical interpretation of the ancient constitution, perhaps because the Whig was the dominant political ideology at that time. An essay 'Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations' was his criticism of the Country Whig civic humanist interpretation of history.<sup>203</sup> Hume had some trouble in proving modern populousness over the ancient, and made use of it as a vindication of the happiness and virtue brought by the prosperity of a modern commercial society. Hume's conclusion was that happy and virtuous modern nations are more populous, whereas the passions of hatred and faction must have led the ancients into depopulation and therefore into unhappiness and vices. Another essay 'Of the Original Contract' was his criticism of the Radical Whig theory of original contract, drawn loosely from John Locke's *Second Treatise*. Arguing that the Whig doctrine was contradicted by common opinion and practice,<sup>204</sup> Hume, as usual, offered a utilitarian interpretation.<sup>205</sup> The next essay 'Of Passive Obedience' was a logical outcome of his utilitarian critique of the Radical Whig social contract theory: that is, a utilitarian convention theory.<sup>206</sup> The subsequent essay 'Of the Coalition of Parties' was therefore a reasonable conclusion from his view of passive obedience as convention, in which he naturally decided that, for the most useful government, factions and rebellions were nothing but menaces. However, again, this was not to say that Hume was a Tory: the following essay 'Of the Protestant Succession' showed his preference for the Whig arguments of the Hanoverian succession over the Jacobite arguments in support of the Stuart succession.<sup>207</sup> Hume's typically utilitarian approbation of the Protestant succession was based on his assessment of practices which had already achieved public order, and of the consequences likely to follow (public disorder) if the already established

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<sup>203</sup> *Essays*, Essay 11: 'Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations', pp. 420-1. Hume was also against the Country Whig interpretation of the ancient constitution as virtuous and benign (Essay 14: 'Of the Coalition of Parties', p. 501).

<sup>204</sup> *Essays*, Essay 12: 'Of the Original Contract', p. 475.

<sup>205</sup> *Essays*, p. 481.

<sup>206</sup> *Essays*, Essay 13: 'Of Passive Obedience', p. 490.

<sup>207</sup> *Essays*, Essay 15: 'Of the Protestant Succession', pp. 507-8.

settlement was destroyed.<sup>208</sup> The closing essay, 'Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth', was an attempt to create a perfect commonwealth as a faction-free polity. For example, Hume proposed some remedies to divisions within the senate.<sup>209</sup> His approbation of the Protestant succession as well as his idea of a perfect commonwealth partly show that Hume was balancing the political debates, from neither the Tory nor Whig side, but simply by comparing the pros and cons of the arguments from both sides. This was Hume's strategy in presenting his new study of commerce which should be free from party rages and prejudices.

Hume's arguments about government and political economy were thus to show how to stimulate such natural abilities as industry and attention as well as passions for production, without committing factional party rage and thereby jeopardising prosperity. Magistrates were expected to understand the universal principles of these natural abilities and passions and to assist them so as to work for public benefits, rather than to manipulate them and administer the whole range of commercial activities. In particular, magistrates could increase the quantity of money circulating in the economy, as well as tax their population, while reducing public debt. Free trade policy was consequently advocated by Hume as an alternative to the mercantilist, Court Whig and Mandeville's policy of aiming at a favourable trade balance. By these means, they could refine the taste of their subjects, lead them out of factional interests, and thereby help them form more moderate ideas of government and public interests. Hume therefore sought to solve the Mandevillian paradox by showing that men were perfectly capable of forming such moral ideas as justice, industry and government, not as 'private vices' but as morals; that morals were a matter of taste; that refining taste would eventually achieve both wealth and virtue at the same time, by stimulating industry as well as by enabling men to form the more secure ideas of political authority and public interests without factional enthusiasm. A refined taste would equip men with the judgement or perception of the utility of morals, and enable them to form the moral ideas in the light of the usefulness or utility as the standard of morals. Hume therefore sought to

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<sup>208</sup> *Essays*, p. 511.

<sup>209</sup> *Essays*, Essay 16: 'Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth', p. 524.

solve Mandeville's paradox by introducing the idea of utility as the measure of morals.

## Chapter Four

### Legislators and free trade in *The Wealth of Nations*

When *The Wealth of Nations* appeared in 1776, it is said, Smith's extensive debts to Mandeville were apparent to his colleagues with whom he had previously confronted Mandeville's challenge to the moral legitimacy of commercial society.<sup>1</sup> *The Wealth of Nations* rejected Mandeville's conclusion that private vices could contribute to public benefits by the skilful and dextrous management of politicians. So far as economic management was concerned, this meant following an economic policy to maintain the nation's favourable trade balance. Smith was now faced with the problem of drawing his own political conclusions. In particular, he wanted to show, in *The Wealth of Nations*, that, despite Mandeville's claim, private vices never contributed to public benefits. It was in this context that he addressed the question of the roles of 'legislators', not 'politicians', in the state. If *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* had successfully shown that innocent private passions could be productive of public benefits, *The Wealth of Nations* was to show that private vices could not only be unproductive of public benefits but also be harmful to them.

In Part IV of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith had already described what his study of 'police, the extension of trade and manufactures' involved. This should be a 'great system of government', 'so beautiful and grand a system' that 'we are uneasy till we remove any obstruction that can in the least disturb or encumber the regularity of its motions'. The sense of beauty was to be aroused in the beholder of the 'great system of government', 'so beautiful and grand a system'. The study

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<sup>1</sup> Hundert, p. 219. Hundert's accounts of Smith's debts to Mandeville are in general helpful in pointing out the resemblance of Smith's treatment of sociability to Mandeville's. But they are not entirely comprehensible in ignoring Smith's theories of sympathy and beauty which he developed

therefore was to stimulate the sense of beauty to encourage the social passions.

The same principle, the same love of system, the same regard to the beauty of order, of art and contrivance, frequently serves to recommend those institutions which tend to promote the public welfare. ... When the legislature establishes premiums and other encouragements to advance the linen or woollen manufactures, its conduct seldom proceeds from pure sympathy with the wearer of cheap or fine cloth, and much less from that with the manufacturer or merchant. The perfection of police, the extension of trade and manufactures, are noble and magnificent objects. The contemplation of them pleases us, and we are interested in whatever can tend to advance them. They make part of the great system of government, and the wheels of the political machine seem to move with more harmony and ease by means of them. We take pleasure in beholding the perfection of so beautiful and grand a system, and we are uneasy till we remove any obstruction that can in the least disturb or encumber the regularity of its motions. All constitutions of government, however, are valued only in proportion as they tend to promote the happiness of those who live under them. This is their sole use and end. From a certain spirit of system, however, from a certain love of art and contrivance, we sometimes seem to value the means more than the end, and to be eager to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures, rather from a view to perfect and improve a certain beautiful and orderly system, than from any immediate sense or feeling of what they either suffer or enjoy.<sup>2</sup>

Smith hoped that the study of government and political economy would arouse 'the public passions of men' to encourage them to contribute to public benefits by appealing to their sense of beauty. It was not Smith's strategy to explain what the advantages of a well-governed state were and how much better it was to be well housed, well clothed and well fed. 'These considerations will commonly make no great impression'. Instead, Smith described 'the great system of public police [or government] which procures these advantages', and explained 'the connexions and dependencies of its several parts, their mutual subordination to one another, and their general subserviency to the happiness of the society'. He wanted to 'show how this system might be introduced into his own country, what it is that hinders it from taking place there at present, how those obstructions might be removed, and all the several wheels of the machine of government be made to move with more harmony and smoothness, without grating upon one another, or mutually retarding one another's motions'. Smith described graphically of what such an account of government and political economy would have had to consist. It was 'the study of politics, of the several systems of civil government, their advantages and disadvantages, of the constitution of our own country, its situation, and interest with

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following the arguments of Hutcheson much more than those of Mandeville and Hume. See Hundert, pp. 219-36. I am presenting an alternative interpretation of Smith's relation to Mandeville.

<sup>2</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 11, p. 185.



regard to foreign nations, its commerce, its defence, the disadvantages it labours under, the dangers to which it may be exposed, how to remove the one, and how to guard against the other'. It would be 'of all the works of speculation the most useful'.<sup>3</sup> As the respect to persons in power was derived from their making 'the wheels of the government go on more smoothly',<sup>4</sup> the account of government and political economy would have to show how it can be achieved, how to animate the public spirit and how to make it contribute to public benefits.

Although in his jurisprudence lectures, Smith defined 'police' simply as a promotion of the opulence of the state,<sup>5</sup> later in *The Wealth of Nations* he described 'political oeconomy' as follows:

Political oeconomy, considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator, proposes two distinct objects; first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves; and secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the publick services. It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign.<sup>6</sup>

When he was contrasting a legislator with a politician, Smith was consciously offering the science of a legislator as an alternative to Mandevillian statecraft with which politicians were to turn private vices into public benefits. In Smith, 'the science of a legislator, whose deliberations ought to be governed by general principles which are always the same', was to be clearly distinguished from 'the skill of that insidious and crafty animal, vulgarly called a statesman or politician, whose councils are directed by the momentary fluctuations of affairs'.<sup>7</sup> In his own view, Smith was writing his *Wealth of Nations* for legislators, based on 'general principles' that Hume had emphasised in his study of political economy. Mandeville on the other hand had written his *Fable of the Bees* for the intelligent citizen, advocating the statecraft of skilful politicians while counting on their high taste and understanding of his paradox. Smith's legislators should be 'allowing every man to pursue his own

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<sup>3</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 11, pp. 186-7.

<sup>4</sup> *LJ* (A), v. 122, p. 319.

<sup>5</sup> *LJ* (A), i. 1-9, pp. 5-7; *LJ* (B), 5-6, pp. 398-9.

<sup>6</sup> *WN*, Book IV: 'Of Systems of political Oeconomy', Introduction, IV. intro. 1, p. 428.

<sup>7</sup> *WN*, IV. ii. 39, p. 468.

interest his own way, upon the liberal plan of equality, liberty and justice'.<sup>8</sup> Only in this way could they 'provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves'. They would be required to understand what exactly constitutes public benefits, by studying a system of 'what is properly called Political Oeconomy, or of the nature and causes of the wealth of nations'.<sup>9</sup> In this respect, Smith could have given his book such a title as 'an enquiry into the nature and causes of the public benefits'. Indeed, Lord Lauderdale, a critic of Smith, was later going to publish a book *An enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Public Wealth* (1804). The very words 'the wealth of nations' came from Mandeville (originally from Defoe), but Smith was going to give a new definition and analysis of it in his book.

In what follows I want to present Smith's account of government and political economy as it appears in his jurisprudence lectures and in *The Wealth of Nations* in terms of three questions. First, what constitutes injustice, and how injustice is detrimental to public benefits; second, how private interests contribute to public benefits; third, what policy legislators have to adopt in order 'to enrich both the people and the sovereign'. In this way, it can be shown that Smith's jurisprudence and political economy was his response to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* in what I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy.

Smith's accounts of injustices seem challenging Mandeville's definition of 'private vices'. The fact that Smith was unsatisfied with Mandeville's definition of 'vices' was apparent in his criticism of Mandeville's language of luxury. Smith defined luxuries as contrasted to the customary essentials of life:

By necessaries I understand, not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without. A linen shirt, for example, is, strictly speaking, not a necessary of life. The Greeks and Romans lived, I suppose, very comfortably, though they had no linen. But in the present times, through the greater part of Europe, a creditable day-labourer would be ashamed to appear in publick without a linen shirt, the want of which would be supposed to denote that disgraceful degree of poverty, which, it is presumed, no body can well fall into without extreme bad conduct. ... Under necessaries therefore, I comprehend, not only those things which

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<sup>8</sup> *WN*, IV. ix. 3, p. 664.

<sup>9</sup> *WN*, IV. ix. 38, pp. 678-9.

nature, but those things which the established rules of decency have rendered necessary to the lowest rank of people. All other things, I call luxuries; without meaning by this appellation, to throw the smallest degree of reproach upon the temperate use of them. Beer and ale, for example, in Great Britain, and wine, even in the wine countries, I call luxuries. A man of any rank may, without any reproach, abstain totally from tasting such liquors. Nature does not render them necessary for the support of life; and custom no where renders it indecent to live without them.<sup>10</sup>

In the above criticism of Mandeville's definition of luxuries, Smith emphasised that luxuries should be totally free from any 'appellation, to throw the smallest degree of reproach upon the temperate use of them'. In other words, Mandeville's definition of luxuries would, by condemning the temperate use of luxuries, fatally confuse the innocent use of luxuries with blameable injustices. In defining 'vices' or moral evils, such Mandevillian allegations as calling any luxury 'vices' should certainly be rejected. In the jurisprudence lectures he was delivering while writing *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in which he had already attacked Mandeville's argument about luxuries, Smith stated that his account of justice was going to be an account of injustice, or impropriety.<sup>11</sup> In other words, justice could be understood as nothing but the security from injury (injustice), or the preservation of perfect rights.<sup>12</sup> Hence his theory of justice under three subheadings: injustice to a man (or a violation of his natural rights, including his liberty, and the right to free commerce);<sup>13</sup> injustice to a man as a member of a family; injustice arising from the relations between master and servant. These three together were going to constitute his jurisprudence as 'the theory of the rules by which civil governments ought to be directed',<sup>14</sup> and 'of the general principles of law and government'. By replacing Mandeville's definition of 'private vices' with his own definition of injustice, Smith's 'general principles of law and government' was going to replace Mandevillian account of statecraft.<sup>15</sup>

There can be found numerous cases of injustice to which Smith referred in his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations*, but I will concentrate on his

<sup>10</sup> *WN*, V. ii. k. 3, pp. 869-70. See also V. ii. k. 15, p. 876. His criticism of Mandeville went on in his argument that taxes upon consumable commodities should be only upon luxuries (V. ii. k. 7, p. 872). See also I. viii. 37; V. ii. c. 12; V. ii. k. 27. In this sense, the tax upon luxuries could be a policy for a legislator for controlling sober and industrious people towards industry. This view is contrasted with Mandeville's view of luxuries as the principal drive of prosperity.

<sup>11</sup> *LJ*(A), i. 10-11, pp. 7-8; *LJ*(B), 6-7, p. 399.

<sup>12</sup> *LJ*(A), i. 1-9, pp. 5-7; *LJ*(B), 5-6, pp. 398-9.

<sup>13</sup> *LJ*(A), i. 12-3, p. 8; *LJ*(B), 7-8, p. 399; *LJ*(B), 191, p. 480.

<sup>14</sup> *LJ*(A), i. 1, p. 5.

criticisms of monopolies and slavery as injustices. Regarding monopolies, Smith argued that such exclusive privileges would be detrimental to society, promoting poverty.<sup>16</sup> But more importantly, Smith criticised monopolies as unjust. For, punishment with death, for instance, for the exportation of wool, in consideration of public utility which was alleged to be derived from the regulation of the woollen trade, was without 'the concurrence of the impartial spectator with the resentment of the injured'.<sup>17</sup> If an impartial spectator could not go along with the resentment of the injured, that is, monopolists in this case, punishment in such a case would be an injustice, or improper punishment against non-crime. This was because, in such a case, the alleged violation does not satisfy Smith's definitions of crime: first, 'an infringement of our natural rights'; second, 'an attack upon our property'.<sup>18</sup> Rather, the regulations of monopolised industry and punishments against the violations of such regulations themselves must be an infringement of natural rights. Later in *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith accused the vices of the regulations of industry, with a new economic analysis of the natural and market price of commodity, as the regulations which 'keep up the market price, for a long time together, a good deal above the natural price'.<sup>19</sup> What Smith called 'the Policy of Europe', such as 'the exclusive privileges of corporations' and 'apprenticeship in the town', all 'evidently dictated by the same corporation spirit'.<sup>20</sup> But more seriously, regulating the exclusive privileges of corporations and the number of apprenticeship in the town constitute an injustice:

The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. The patrimony of a poor man lies in the

<sup>15</sup> *LJ* (B), 5, p. 398.

<sup>16</sup> *LJ* (A), ii. 30, 33-6 and 39, pp. 82-5; *LJ* (B), 175, pp. 471-2. On the other hand, the right of inheritance was an exclusive privilege arisen from nature (*LJ* (A), ii. 27-8, pp. 81-2; *LJ* (B), 174, p. 471).

<sup>17</sup> *LJ* (A), ii. 89-92, pp. 104-5; *LJ* (B), 181-2, pp. 475-6. See also *LJ* (B), 201, p. 485. Punishment was discussed by Smith in relation to delinquency as a cause of personal rights or obligations, criticising Grotius and Pufendorf. Smith's account of punishment had been developed in *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 6-11. Appendix II of the Glasgow edition of *TMS* includes an earlier version of Smith's views on punishment. See also editors' footnotes 44 and 45, *LJ* (A), p. 104.

<sup>18</sup> *LJ* (A), ii. 93, p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> Book I, Chapter VII: 'Of the natural and market Price of Commodities', *WN*, I. vii. 20, p. 77. See also I. vii. 26, p. 78; I. vii. 28, p. 79 and *LJ* (B), 306; (A), vi. 88.

<sup>20</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter X: 'Of Wages and Profit in the different Employments of Labour and Stock', Part II: 'Inequalities occasioned by the Policy of Europe', I. x. c. 1-6, pp. 135-6.

strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing this strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour, is a plain violation of this most sacred property. It is a manifest encroachment upon the just liberty both of the workman, and of those who might be disposed to employ him. As it hinders the one from working at what he thinks proper, so it hinders the others from employing whom they think proper. To judge whether he is fit to be employed, may surely be trusted to the discretion of the employers whose interest it so much concerns. The affected anxiety of the law-giver lest they should employ an improper person, is evidently as impertinent as it is oppressive.<sup>21</sup>

Smith's outrage against monopolist manufacturers and merchants became evident when he accused them of injustice, rather than of distorting the natural balance of industry, as is often assumed. Smith cautiously acknowledged that to restore freedom of trade was as absurd as to establish an Oceana or Utopia, because of the prejudices of the public as well as the private vested interests of so many individuals.<sup>22</sup> His sense of justice however apparently urged him to bitterly accuse their too huge 'private interests' and violent practices:

But the cruellest of our revenue laws, I will venture to affirm, are mild and gentle, in comparison of some of those which the clamour of our merchants and manufacturers has extorted from the legislature, for the support of their own absurd and oppressive monopolies. Like the laws of Draco, these laws may be said to be all written in blood.<sup>23</sup>

Among numerous other instances of injustice to which Smith referred in his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations*, his criticism of slavery as an injustice was as adamant as his attack on monopolies. In his jurisprudence lectures, Smith discussed slavery in terms of injustice arising from the relationship between master and servant. He made three points. First, slavery was less economical than free tenancy.<sup>24</sup> Second, slavery was detrimental to the population, as many women who were not suitable for hard slave labour tended to turn into prostitutes and become less fertile.<sup>25</sup> Third, slavery would decrease the number of freemen of large

<sup>21</sup> *WN*, I. x. c. 12, p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> *WN*, Book IV: 'Of Systems of political Oeconomy', Chapter II: 'Of Restraints upon the Importation from foreign Countries of such Goods as can be produced at Home', IV. ii. 43, p. 471. See also IV. ii. 40, pp. 468-9.

<sup>23</sup> *WN*, IV. viii. 17, pp. 647-8. See also *LJ* (A), ii. 91, *WN*, IV. ii. 43, p. 471 and IV. viii. 20, p. 649. In this new Chapter VIII: 'Conclusion of the Mercantile System', Smith's accusation of manufacturers (targeting wool manufacturers) was escalating since the previous edition. The chapter had been Appendix in the second edition, and incorporated as Chapter VIII of Book IV in the third edition onwards.

<sup>24</sup> *LJ* (A), iii. 111, p. 185; *LJ* (B), 138, p. 453.

<sup>25</sup> *LJ* (A), iii. 131-3, pp. 192-4; *LJ* (B), 132, p. 451.

fortune, who are rather of service to promote trade and commerce by spending and distributing their wealth, led by their self-love.<sup>26</sup> In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith elaborated his point why slaves were more expensive than free workers, in terms of his analysis of wages.<sup>27</sup> This was followed by his introduction of a historical dimension to his argument against slavery. He endeavoured to show that, as entails had been hindering agriculture in Europe, so had slavery. 'It seldom happens, however, that a great proprietor [protected by entails] is a great improver'. So are slaves who occupied the land under such landlords. Tenants at will in the ancient state of Europe and bailiffs in ancient England were good examples of such slaves, while, to a lesser extent, Metayers in France and steel-bow tenants in Scotland were similar slaves who had still survived even in Smith's own days.<sup>28</sup> From his historical insight, Smith derived his conclusion: 'The experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any'. This ineffectiveness was due to the fact that slaves had no interest in their performance and therefore they were disinclined to expend their own labour.<sup>29</sup> More importantly, however, Smith criticised slavery not just because it hindered both private interests and public benefits but also because it was an injustice:

The proprietors of land were antiently the legislators of every part of Europe. The laws relating to land, therefore, were all calculated for what they supposed the interest of the proprietor. It was for his interest, they had imagined, that no lease granted by way of his predecessors should hinder him from enjoying, during a long term of years, the full value of his land. Avarice and injustice are always short-sighted, and they did not foresee how much this regulation must obstruct improvement, and thereby hurt in the long-run the real interest of the landlord.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *LJ* (A), iii. 134-44, pp. 194-8; *LJ* (B), 139, p. 453. The mechanism had been graphically described in *TMS*, IV. 1. 10.

<sup>27</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter VIII: 'Of the Wages of Labour', I. viii. 41, pp. 98-9.

<sup>28</sup> *WN*, Book III, Chapter II: 'Of the Discouragement of Agriculture in the antient State of Europe after the Fall of the Roman Empire', III. ii. 7-8, 11 and 13, pp. 385-6, 389 and 391.

<sup>29</sup> *WN*, III. ii. 9, p. 387. See also III. ii. 20, p. 395. To enquire a cause of the slow progress of opulence in the history of commerce had been one of the objectives of Smith's account of government in his jurisprudence lectures (*LJ* (B), 285, p. 521). The oppression of civil government with regard to agriculture was then regarded as due to the system of dividing lands into great portions and having them cultivated by slaves, villains, steel bows, or tenants, who had no labour incentives (*LJ* (B), 289-93, pp. 522-4). The oppression of civil government with regard to commerce was also regarded as due to manufactures run by slaves (*LJ* (B), 299-300, p. 526), as well as the policies of government (taxes, monopolies, corporations and apprenticeship) (*LJ* (B), 306-7, p. 529).

<sup>30</sup> *WN*, III. ii. 16, p. 393. Farmers and yeomanry had also been distracted by private and public services arbitrarily imposed (III. ii. 17-8, pp. 393-4), as well as by public taxes (III. ii. 19, pp. 394-5).

Slavery was often preferred by the passion of pride, which would cause its injustice:

The pride of man makes him love to domineer, and nothing mortifies him so much as to be obliged to condescend to persuade his inferiors. Wherever the law allows it, and the nature of the work can afford it, therefore, he will generally prefer the service of slaves to that of freemen.<sup>31</sup>

Here Smith referred to Mandeville's, along with others', language, 'the love of Dominion and that usurping Temper all Mankind are born with',<sup>32</sup> but he was showing that such private vices would never contribute to public benefits. Smith's overall message in his criticisms of monopolies and slavery was therefore clear: injustice never pays in the long run. Smith was counter-arguing that, while what Mandeville had called vices were not exactly vices lest the language had been abused, private vices, if they were genuinely unjust, could and should never bring public benefits.

Smith's account of government and political economy in his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations* could be organised into three main strands of argument as his response to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* in what I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. Following his argument about what constitutes injustice, I now go on to his second question, that is, how private interests contribute to public benefits. This is also an inquiry concerning sociability, by refining and associating his account of justice (or injustice and private vices) and of wealth (or public benefits).

Smith's description of sociability in *The Wealth of Nations* could be seen in terms of two questions. First, how private actions amalgamate into unintentional public outcomes. And second, how, in such an aggregation, 'value in exchange', which is primarily pursued by private interests and eventually maximised in a nation

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<sup>31</sup> *WN*, III. ii. 10, p. 388. See also *LJ* (A), iii. 114, p. 186; (B), 134, p. 452: slavery was based on 'the love of domination and authority', or 'this love of domination and tyrannizing'. Smith explained 'the love of domination and authority' as 'a certain desire of having others below one, and the pleasure it gives one to have some persons whom he can order to do his work rather than be obliged to persuade others to bargain with him' (*LJ* (A), iii. 130, p. 192).

<sup>32</sup> *FB*, i. 319, vol. I, p. 281.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy as a whole, can be converted into the maximisation of 'value in use' and, therefore, of public benefits. Smith attempted to show, with trouble, that both of these were the built-in mechanisms of a modern commercial society, and commercial sociability was capable enough of properly and effectively fulfilling them.

The first question concerning sociability, how private actions amalgamate into unintentional public outcomes, is graphically illustrated in the following famous 'invisible hand' passage:

But the annual revenue of every society is always precisely equal to the exchangeable value of the whole annual produce of its industry, or rather is precisely the same thing with that exchangeable value. As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestick industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value; every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the publick interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestick to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the publick good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need to be employed in dissuading them from it.<sup>33</sup>

This passage is slightly different from the previous 'invisible hand' sentence in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The above 'invisible hand' is leading private pursuits of 'value in exchange' into its maximisation in public as a whole. The previous 'invisible hand' in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, on the other hand, was leading private pursuits of 'value in use' into its distribution in public as a whole. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith decided to take the trouble to explain two phenomena. First, how private interests pursue 'value in exchange', instead of 'value in use', in the first instance. Second, how the pursuit of 'value in exchange' can be converted into the production of 'value in use' and, therefore, of public benefits.

The above second question concerning sociability, how the private pursuit of 'value in exchange' can result in the production of 'value in use', then, was an economic analysis of delusion or deception that Smith had already touched on in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. This is where Smith developed his language of taste

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<sup>33</sup> *WN*, IV. ii. 9, pp. 455-6.



into a language of political economy. This analysis was never advanced by anyone else before or after Smith, which has consequently made it distinctively Smithian in its character.

Regarding the above first question, Smith began with the difference and discrepancy between 'value in use' and 'value in exchange' in the following, rather trivial, paradox of value:

The word VALUE, it is to be observed, has two different meanings, and sometimes expresses the utility of some particular object, and sometimes the power of purchasing other goods which the possession of that object conveys. The one may be called 'value in use;' the other, 'value in exchange.' The things which have the greatest value in use have frequently little or no value in exchange; and, on the contrary, those which have the greatest value in exchange have frequently little or no value in use. Nothing is more useful than water: but it will purchase scarce any thing; scarce any thing can be had in exchange for it. A diamond, on the contrary, has scarce any value in use; but a very great quantity of other goods may frequently be had in exchange for it.<sup>34</sup>

Smith was following a popular example, which had also appeared in Mandeville and Hutcheson.<sup>35</sup> But Smith primarily argued the paradox in the context of his theory of taste, in which taste had been regarded as the grounds for value in exchange. The demand for a diamond, for example, would arise from its beauty, and ultimately from the passion of vanity, or taste:

The demand for those [precious] metals arises partly from their utility, and partly from their beauty. ... Their principal merit, however, arises from their beauty, which renders them peculiarly fit for the ornaments of dress and furniture. No paint or dye can give so splendid a colour as gilding. The merit of their beauty is greatly enhanced by their scarcity. With the greater part of rich people, the chief enjoyment of riches consists in the parade of riches, which in their eyes is never so compleat as when they appear to possess those decisive marks of opulence which nobody can possess but themselves. ... These qualities of utility, beauty, and scarcity, are the original foundation of the high price of those metals, or of the great quantity of other goods for which they can every where be exchanged. This value was antecedent to and independent of their being employed as coin, and was the quality which fitted them for that employment.<sup>36</sup>

The demand for the precious stones arises altogether from their beauty. They are of no use, but as ornaments; and the merit of their beauty is greatly enhanced by their scarcity, or by the

<sup>34</sup> *WN*, I. iv. 13, pp. 44-5.

<sup>35</sup> *FB*, II, p. 350; *System*, II, pp. 53-4; *Short Introduction*, 209-10. See editors' footnote 31, *WN*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>36</sup> *WN*, I. xi. c. 31, pp. 189-91. See also *LJ* (A), vi. 106 for 'a natural value' of metals as opposed to Locke's view of the agreed value of metals; also *Imitative Arts*, I. 13, *TMS*, I. iii. 2. 1 and *WN*, V. ii. e. 6 for the passion of vanity as a source of value in exchange; also *WN*, II. iii. 39 and IV. ix. 47 for variety (not expense) as a source of value in exchange, implying that value was arising from uniformity amidst variety, or in other words, beauty. See editors' footnotes 25 and 28, *WN*, pp. 189-90.

difficulty and expence of getting them from the mine.<sup>37</sup>

In his jurisprudence lectures, Smith had already argued, in his language of taste, that taste was the grounds for value in exchange. In setting objectives for government, Smith asked how to address to human weakness and needs from it,<sup>38</sup> and argued that, once human weakness and needs were to some extent satisfied, 'more elegant niceties and refinement', in addition to needs, would be sought after, by the sense of beauty. 'The taste of beauty, which consists chiefly in the three following particulars, proper variety, easy connection, and simple order, is the cause of all this niceness'.<sup>39</sup> Hence, the sense of beauty and imitation would contribute to the arts and sciences, producing 'the conveniences of it [human life] according to the nicety and delicacy of our taste', besides needs.<sup>40</sup> Overall, taste creates value in exchange, delusively and deceivingly, resulting in the increase in value in use in the end and contributing to civilisation, in which, as far as taste is innocent, prosperity could be regarded as innocent and just. Smith used the language of taste so as to show how taste, pursuing beauty which commands a huge purchasing power, or value in exchange, could innocently bring the utility and conveniences of life, or value in use, without even intending it. Taste, as such, pursuing beauty which commands a huge purchasing power, would also be described as 'the propensity to exchange' which causes the division of labour:

This division of labour, from which so many advantages are derived, is not originally the effect of any human wisdom, which foresees and intends that general opulence to which it gives occasion. It is the necessary, though very slow and gradual consequence of a certain propensity in human nature which has in view no such extensive utility; the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *WN*, I. xi. c. 32, p. 191.

<sup>38</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 8-12, pp. 334-5; *LJ* (B), 206-7, pp. 487-8.

<sup>39</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 12-4, pp. 335-6; *LJ* (B), 208, p. 488. Smith was using Hutcheson's language of beauty. See editors' footnotes 8 and 9, *LJ* (A), p. 335. The same logic was applied also to imitation (*LJ* (A), vi. 14-5, p. 336; *LJ* (B), 209, p. 488). 'The imitative arts', 5-7, in Adam Smith, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (1795); eds. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce, as vol. III of *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1983) (abbreviated as *EPS* below), refers to the same example of Dutch paintings. See editors' footnote 10, *LJ* (A), p. 336.

<sup>40</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 16, pp. 336-7; *LJ* (B), 209, p. 488.

<sup>41</sup> *WN*, Book I: 'Of the Causes of Improvement in the productive Powers of Labour, and of the Order according to which its Produce is naturally distributed among the different Ranks of the People', Chapter II: 'Of the Principle which gives occasion to the Division of Labour', I. ii. 1, p. 25. See also I. ii. 3, p. 27; *Early Draft*, 2. 12-3, in *WN*; *LJ* (A), vi. 44-6, pp. 347-8; *LJ* (B), 218-20, pp. 492-3. The

'The propensity to exchange' would pursue a purchasing power, or value in exchange, eventually fulfilling the increase of the utility and conveniences of life, or value in use, through the division of labour, or 'by the higgling and bargaining of the market'<sup>42</sup> without even intending it. Smith was clearly distancing himself from Mandeville,<sup>43</sup> by arguing that prosperity was derived not from any selfish motives. Smith was also criticising Hume, by denying utility as the cause of taste, exchange and the division of labour. In this respect, Smith remained Hutchesonian as a political economist, hence introducing Hutcheson's language of taste.<sup>44</sup>

What, then, did Smith mean by arguing that value in exchange was to be derived from taste? Smith went on to partly explain it for each of three great sources of revenue in society: wage, profit and rent. In the case of wages, Smith called attention to the point that wages in different professions were to be determined, among others, by the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the employment involved.<sup>45</sup> In this case, the natural rate of wages would be determined by the natural taste:

The natural taste for those employments makes more people follow them than can live comfortably by them, and the produce of their labour, in proportion to its quantity, comes always too cheap to market to afford anything but the most scanty subsistence to the labourers.<sup>46</sup>

Even if the above quotation was concerned with hunting and fishing, the same could be said for employment in general. For, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith had already thought of professions in terms of their nature and propriety. The beauty, character and conduct of each profession should be judged in the light of the idea of 'propriety independent of custom' of the profession concerned, which would

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idea of the division of labour had come from Mandeville (*FB*, II, pp. 284, 335-6 and 421). See editors' footnotes 17, *LJ* (A), p. 341, and 22, *LJ* (A), p. 348. But Smith was arguing it not as vicious, by showing it not as derived from human policy based on selfish motives, but from a natural and therefore morally neutral propensity to exchange.

<sup>42</sup> *WN*, I. v. 4, pp. 48-9.

<sup>43</sup> *FB*, II, p. 284. See editors' footnote 8, *WN*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>44</sup> *System*, I, pp. 288-9. See editors' footnote 9, *WN*, p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter X: 'Of Wages and Profit in the different Employments of Labour and Stock', Part I: 'Inequalities arising from the Nature of the Employments themselves', I. x. b. 2, p. 117.

<sup>46</sup> *WN*, I. x. b. 3, p. 118. The same could be said for the natural rate of profits (I. x. b. 4, p. 118).

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy be determined by the nature of the profession.<sup>47</sup> There ought to be, therefore, a natural rate of wages in each profession. It depends on the beauty, nature and character of each profession, even though it would be difficult and unlikely that the natural rate could always be fulfilled in the 'money price' of labour, because of the various conditions and customs. His idea that the natural rate of wages as exchangeable values was determined by the sense of beauty, or taste, among other things, would be seen equally in his argument of how the probability or improbability of success in each employment would affect the natural rate of wages.<sup>48</sup> For instance, the beauty of genius or superior talents in employment would hugely boost the natural wage:

There are some very agreeable and beautiful talents of which the possession commands a certain sort of admiration; but of which the exercise for the sake of gain is considered, whether from reason or prejudice, as a sort of publick prostitution. The pecuniary recompence, therefore, of those who exercise them in this manner, must be sufficient, not only to pay for the time, labour, and expence of acquiring the talents, but for the discredit which attends the employment of them as the means of subsistence. The exorbitant rewards of players, opera-singers, opera-dancers, &c. are founded upon those two principles; the rarity and beauty of the talents, and the discredit of employing them in this manner.<sup>49</sup>

When arguing that liberal wages were to stimulate, rather than discourage, industry, Smith was following Hume in his criticism of Mandeville. Mandeville had argued that offering high wages encouraged idleness among the labouring poor and therefore would be harmful to industry and prosperity, because industry was a necessary vice for prosperity:<sup>50</sup>

The liberal reward of labour, as it encourages the propagation, so it increases the industry of the common people. The wages of labour are the encouragement of industry, which, like every other human quality, improves in proportion to the encouragement it receives. A plentiful subsistence increases the bodily strength of the labourer, and the comfortable hope of bettering his condition, and of ending his days perhaps in ease and plenty, animates him to exert that strength to the utmost. Where wages are high, accordingly, we shall always find the workmen more active, diligent, and expeditious, than where they are low.<sup>51</sup>

His argument of the effects of liberal wages was also where Smith was coming back

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<sup>47</sup> *TMS*, V. 2. 5.

<sup>48</sup> *WN*, I. x. b. 21, p. 122.

<sup>49</sup> *WN*, I. x. b. 25, p. 124.

<sup>50</sup> *FB*, I, p. 192. See editors' footnote 41, *WN*, p. 99.

<sup>51</sup> Book I, Chapter VIII: 'Of the Wages of Labour': *WN*, I. viii. 44, p. 99.

to his previous account of ambition and delusion, dealt with in his theory of beauty in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Criticising Mandeville's view, Smith was to state that workmen tended to work harder when better paid:

In cheap years, it is pretended, workmen are generally more idle, and in dear ones more industrious than ordinary. A plentiful subsistence, therefore, it has been concluded, relaxes, and a scanty one quickens their industry. That a little more plenty than ordinary may render some workmen idle, cannot well be doubted; but that it should have this effect upon the greater part, or that men in general should work better when they are ill fed than when they are well fed, when they are disheartened than when they are in good spirits, when they are frequently sick than when they are generally in good health, seems not very probable. Years of dearth, it is to be observed, are generally among the common people years of sickness and mortality, which cannot fail to diminish the produce of their industry.<sup>52</sup>

Workmen, on the contrary, when they are liberally paid by the piece, are very apt to over-work themselves, and to ruin their health and constitution in a few years.<sup>53</sup>

The beauty of the talents, which would boost the natural wage of a particular employment, would work in the same manner:

The over-weening conceit which the greater part of men have of their own abilities, is an ancient evil remarked by the philosophers and moralists of all ages. Their absurd presumption in their own good fortune, has been less taken notice of. It is, however, if possible, still more universal. There is no man living who, when in tolerable health and spirits, has not some share of it. The chance of gain is by every man more or less over-valued, and the chance of loss is by most men under-valued, and by scarce any man, who is in tolerable health and spirits, valued more than it is worth.<sup>54</sup>

This was a development of his arguments in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* of ambition and delusion in his theory of beauty. This would therefore imply that Smith thought that the natural rate of wages, which was determined by the natural taste, among others, was also determined by the propriety and beauty of the profession concerned.

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<sup>52</sup> *WN*, I. viii. 45, pp. 100-1.

<sup>53</sup> *WN*, I. viii. 44, p. 100.

<sup>54</sup> *WN*, I. x. b. 26, pp. 124-5. The temptation to a profession of higher wage was due to 'the respect, credit, eminence it gives one than the profit of it' (*LJ* (A), vi. 62, pp. 354-5; *LJ* (B), 226, p. 495). Smith was agreeing with Mandeville (*FB*, II, pp. 342-3): see editors' footnote 32, *LJ* (A), p. 355. But these were not pride and vanity, but 'a part of the wages and a share of the reward', that is, a portion of 'the naturall price of labour' (*LJ* (A), vi. 62-3, p. 355). In this, natural price was 'that which is necessary to induce one to apply to a particular business', sufficient to make 'a prospect of maintaining himself and recompensing the expense of education' (*LJ* (A), vi. 67, p. 356; *LJ* (B), 224-6, pp. 494-5). This idea of natural price of labour in Smith would have partly been a response to Mandeville by showing labour incentives as not vicious but aesthetic and therefore morally neutral.

As ambition pursues the beauty of talents and their huge commanding power of exchangeable value (wages) in the presumptuous hope of success, so it pursues in the same manner the natural rate of profits, deluding so many adventurers into hazardous trades.<sup>55</sup> The Spanish American colonies were an extraordinary example in which such 'delusion' successfully worked in their favour thanks to a series of accidents.<sup>56</sup>

As he had argued in his account of ambition and delusion in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, the ambitious would be bound to ruin themselves from overwork or risky adventure but in the end unintentionally contribute to civilisation. In other words, the beauty of wealth and power that their success was supposed to bring about, would delude the ambitious into maximising public benefits while intending nothing but private interests. This was to show how such ambition and industry is morally neutral, against Mandeville's claim that they were necessary evils for prosperity.

Rents as value in exchange were equally derived from taste, demand for the beauty of situation, or vanity, along with several other factors.

This surplus rent [the ground-rent] is the price which the inhabitant of the house pays for some real or supposed advantage of the situation. In country houses, at a distance from any great town, where there is plenty of ground to chuse upon, the ground rent is scarce any thing, or no more than what the ground which the house stands upon would pay if employed in agriculture. In country villas in the neighbourhood of some great town, it is sometimes a good deal higher; and the peculiar conveniency or beauty of situation is there frequently very well paid for. Ground rents are generally highest in the capital, and in those particular parts of it where there happens to be the greatest demand for houses, whatever be the reason of that demand, whether for trade and business, for pleasure and society, or for mere vanity and fashion.<sup>57</sup>

Together with the natural rates of wages and profits, which were to be partly determined by taste, now Smith was showing that the natural rate of rents too was determined, though in a different manner, by taste as well. Smith's argument that taste arouses the demand for a commodity which in turn determines its price, or

<sup>55</sup> *WN*, I. x. b. 33, pp. 127-8.

<sup>56</sup> *WN*, Book IV: 'Of Systems of political Oeconomy', Chapter VI: 'Of Colonies', Part First: 'Of the Motives for establishing new Colonies', IV. vii. a. 18-21, pp. 562-4.

<sup>57</sup> *WN*, Book V: 'Of the Revenue of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Chapter II: 'Of the Sources of the general or publick Revenue of the Society', Part II: 'Of Taxes', Article I: 'Taxes upon Rent; Taxes upon the Rent of land', 'Taxes upon the Rent of Houses', V. ii. e. 3, pp. 840-1. See also I. ix. b. 4 for Smith's discussion of the relationship between land rent and situation. See editors' footnote 2, p. 841.

exchangeable value, is thus comprehensive, explaining that value in exchange was to be derived, among other things, from taste equally in each case of three great sources of revenue in society: wage, profit and rent.

Thus, in developing a language of taste into that of political economy, Smith developed his account of a commercial polity from the terminology used by Polite Whigs such as Addison and Hutcheson, who had also been against Court Whigs such as Mandeville. Phillipson showed that the language Smith used for his conception of a commercial polity suggests that the values it embodied had some associations with the culture of politeness.<sup>58</sup> As a 'philosophic' Whig, or a variant of Scottish Whig who used the new polite language of provincial morality in the commercial age, Smith was a moralist who philosophised about a pattern of sociable relationships and ideas of virtue deeply embedded in the political language of Scottish Whigs. Smith employed it to analyse the foundations of commercial civilisation to show that provincial propriety and taste were embodied in a morality upon which the wealth, liberty, wisdom and virtue of commercial civilisation might rely.<sup>59</sup>

How exactly, then, can the augmentation of value in exchange contribute to that of value in use? Labour value in use would be increased by the increase in labour value in exchange through delusion or deception, as described above. Labour value in exchange would then be measured through the 'higgling and bargaining' by nominal price and increased by the increase in nominal price.<sup>60</sup> Thus, delusion and bargaining together in the market would direct the increase in nominal value into the real increase in value in use, which must be the actual substance of civilisation and prosperity. Smith was hence adamant in contending that the actual increase of value in use had happened:

The real recompence of labour, the real quantity of the necessaries and conveniences of life which it can procure to the labourer, has, during the course of the present century, increased perhaps in a still greater proportion than its money price. Not only grain has become somewhat cheaper, but many other things from which the industrious poor derive an agreeable and wholesome variety of food, have become a great deal cheaper. ... The common complaint that luxury extends itself even to the lowest ranks of the people, and that the labouring poor will not

<sup>58</sup> Phillipson (1983), p. 194. More in detail, see pp. 195-7 and 199.

<sup>59</sup> Phillipson (1983), p. 202.

<sup>60</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter V: 'Of the real and nominal Price of Commodities, or of their Price in Labour, and their Price in Money', I. v. 4-6 and 21, pp. 48-9 and 55.

now be contented with the same food, clothing and lodging which satisfied them in former times, may convince us that it is not the money price of labour only, but its real recompence [value in use], which has augmented.<sup>61</sup>

The annual produce of the land and labour of England, for example, is certainly much greater than it was, a little more than a century ago, at the restoration of Charles II. ... The annual produce of the land and labour of England again, was certainly much greater at the restoration, than we can suppose it to have been about an hundred years before, at the accession of Elizabeth. At this point too, we have all reason to believe, the country was much more advanced in improvement, than it had been about a century before, towards the close of the dissensions between the houses of York and Lancaster. Even then it was, probably, in a better condition than it had been at the Norman conquest, and at the Norman conquest, than during the confusion of the Saxon Heptarchy. Even at this early period, it was certainly a more improved country than at the invasion of Julius Caesar, when its inhabitants were nearly in the same state with the savages in North America.<sup>62</sup>

These are Smith's remarks on how value in use, which must be the substance of civilisation, has been continuously increasing thanks to the working of taste, delusion and ambition. These remarks are also in line with some of the sentences in Book III of *The Wealth of Nations* having already been quoted in Chapter Two above

Smith's description of sociability in *The Wealth of Nations* thus shows that a modern commercial society has incorporated the mechanism of amalgamating private actions into unintentional public outcomes. In such an aggregation, it has also the mechanism of converting value in exchange, which is pursued, among other things, by taste in the first instance and eventually maximised, in the nation as a whole, into the maximisation of value in use and, therefore, of public benefits. Commercial sociability was capable enough of properly and effectively fulfilling both of the mechanisms simultaneously.

Understanding such mechanisms of commercial society and sociability will make it clearer what Smith supposed should be the tasks of legislators in a modern commercial society. This understanding would, consequently and naturally, determine the desirable policies for legislators to manage commercial sociability.

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<sup>61</sup> *WN*, I. viii. 35, pp. 95-6.

<sup>62</sup> *WN*, II. iii. 33-4, p. 344. This is the order in which Hume had written his *History of England*. See also II. iii. 31, p. 343: 'The uniform, constant, and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition, the principle from which publick and national, as well as private opulence is originally derived, is frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things toward improvement, in spite both of the extravagance of government, and of the greatest errors of administration'.



The science of a legislator that Smith clarified in his account of the duties of sovereign in the system of natural liberty can be seen as coming from his arguments that injustice does not pay, and that private interests can be led into public benefits through taste, delusion and ambition.

The duties of the sovereign, as dealt with in Smith's science of a legislator, are threefold: defence, justice and public services.<sup>63</sup> Regarding the duty of defence, Smith preferred a standing army to a militia.<sup>64</sup> Smith attributed its advantages to the effects of the division of labour, or of specialisation in military service, in the age of commerce.<sup>65</sup>

A well-regulated standing army is superior to every militia. Such an army, as it can best be maintained by an opulent and civilized nation, so it can alone defend such a nation against the invasion of a poor and barbarous neighbour. It is only by means of a standing army, therefore, that the civilization of any country can be perpetuated, or even preserved for any considerable time. ... In modern war the great expence of fire-arms gives an evident advantage to the nation which can best afford that expence; and consequently, to an opulent and civilized, over a poor and barbarous nation. In antient times the opulent and civilized found it difficult to defend themselves against the poor and barbarous nations. In modern times the poor and barbarous found it difficult to defend themselves against the opulent and civilized. The invention of fire-arms, an invention which at first sight appears to be so pernicious, is certainly favourable both to the permanency and to the extension of civilization.<sup>66</sup>

In his view, it was therefore necessary for the state to use 'the wisdom of the state' for their duty of defence in turning the 'so pernicious' invention of fire-arms into 'the

<sup>63</sup> *WN*, IV. ix. 51, pp. 687-8.

<sup>64</sup> *WN*, Book V: 'Of the Revenue of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Chapter I: 'Of the Expences of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Part First: 'Of the Expence of Defence', V. i. a. 23, pp. 699-700.

<sup>65</sup> *WN*, V. i. a. 24-5, p. 700. See also Smith's description of standing army (V. i. a. 18-9, p. 698). Smith gave some examples in 'the history of all ages' of 'the irresistible superiority which a well-regulated standing army has over a militia' (V. i. a. 28, p. 701): 1. the superiority of the standing army of Philip of Macedon over 'the gallant and well exercised militias of the principal republicks of antient Greece' as well as 'the effeminate and ill-exercised militia of the great Persian empire'; hence 'The fall of the Greek republicks and of the Persian empire' (V. i. a. 29, pp. 701-2; also *LJ* (A), iv. 86-7; (B), 41); 2. the superiority of the standing army of 'the great Scipio' over 'The disheartened and frequently defeated African militia' which 'composed the greater part of the troops of Annibal' at the battle of Zama; hence 'The fall of Carthage, and the consequent elevation of Rome' (V. i. a. 30-4, pp. 702-3); also the superiority of the standing armies of Rome over 'The militias of all the civilized nations of the antient world, of Greece, of Syria, and of Egypt' (V. i. a. 35, p. 703); 3. 'the irresistible superiority which the militia of a barbarous [the German and Scythian militias], has over that of a civilized nation [a corrupt, neglected, and undisciplined militia of Rome]; which the militia of a nation of shepherds, has over that of a nation of husbandmen, artificers, and manufacturers'. Hence 'The fall of the western empire' (V. i. a. 36, p. 704). See also *LJ* (A), iv. 99-104; (B), 46-9. See also the superiority of the militia of the Tartars over that of 'all the civilized countries in Asia' (V. i. a. 39, p. 705).

<sup>66</sup> *WN*, V. i. a. 39 and 44, pp. 705-6 and 708.

permanency' and 'the extension of civilization'. For a legislator in a modern commercial society, it was particularly necessary to do so because of the improvement in the art of war and its manufacture:

The art of war, however, as it is certainly the noblest of all arts, so in the progress of improvement it necessarily becomes one of the most complicated among them. The state of the mechanical, as well as of some other arts, with which it is necessarily connected, determines the degree of perfection to which it is capable of being carried at any particular time. But in order to carry it to this degree of perfection, it is necessary that it should become the sole or principal occupation of a particular class of citizens, and the division of labour is as necessary in the improvement of this, as of every other art. Into other arts the division of labour is naturally introduced by the prudence of individuals, who find that they promote their private interest better by confining themselves to a particular trade, than by exercising a greater number. But it is the wisdom of state only which can render the trade of a soldier a particular trade separate and distinct from all others. A private citizen who, in time of profound peace, and without any particular encouragement from the publick, should spend the greater part of his time in military exercises, might, no doubt, both improve himself very much in them, and amuse himself very well; but he certainly would not promote his own interest. It is the wisdom of the state only which can render it for his interest to give up the greater part of his time to this peculiar occupation: and states have not always had this wisdom, even when their circumstances had become such, that the preservation of their existence required that they should have it.<sup>67</sup>

Smith was here elaborating the language of political economy in Mandeville (that in Part II of *The Fable of the Bees*, and *A Letter to Dion*) for describing the role of legislators ('the wisdom of the state') in creating a standing army by turning 'private interest' into the public interest ('the preservation of their existence'). But, unlike Mandeville, Smith was not necessarily arguing about turning 'private vices' into public benefits. Smith was attributing the division of labour to the effects of 'the prudence of individuals', thereby approving their promoting 'their private interest better'. Smith also presented 'prudence' here as linking the private and the public interests through 'the wisdom of the state', which was to exploit the advantage of the division of labour. This was why Smith supported the scheme for a standing army, rather than a militia, because a standing army enabled legislators to execute 'the wisdom of the state':

Men of republican principles have been jealous of a standing army as dangerous to liberty. ... But where the sovereign is himself the general, and the principal nobility and gentry of the country the chief officers of the army; where the military force is placed under the command of those who have the greatest interest in the support of the civil authority, because they have themselves the greatest share of that authority, a standing army can never be dangerous to

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<sup>67</sup> *WN*, V. i. a. 14, p. 697.

liberty. On the contrary, it may in some cases be favourable to liberty. To a sovereign, ... who feels himself supported, not only by the natural aristocracy of the country, but by a well-regulated standing army, the rudest, the most groundless, and the most licentious remonstrances can give little disturbance. He can safely pardon or neglect them, and his consciousness of his own superiority naturally disposes him to do so. That degree of liberty which approaches to licentiousness can be tolerated only in countries where the sovereign is secured by a well-regulated standing army. It is in such countries only, that the publick safety does not require, that the sovereign should be trusted with any discretionary power, for suppressing even the impertinent wantonness of this licentious liberty.<sup>68</sup>

A standing army, as a principal duty of the sovereign who was required to defend the state, was thus the first example of 'the wisdom of the state', necessary in Smith besides 'the wisdom of nature'. A standing army would allow a certain degree of 'licentious liberty', in place of the Mandevillian idea of statecraft aiming at a favourable trade balance. Smith's policy proposal here was also his Humean-style balancing act in addressing Whig ideologies, showing sympathy with the Whig interpretation of the roles of the nobility in European history while being sceptical about the civic humanist Country Whig ideas of the virtues of a militia.

The second duty of the sovereign, the administration of justice, was also to be carried out effectively by incentives to private interests to work for public benefits.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the administration of justice was, in the same manner as the first duty of the sovereign (the defence of the state), described in Smith as the second 'wisdom of the state' exploiting the private interests (of judges in this case) towards the public interests (of the security of justice). In the same manner, public works, the third duty of the sovereign, would also exploit private interests to achieve public interests.<sup>70</sup> But I will here concentrate on Smith's argument about education as a public work for remedying the conditions of the labouring poor amidst the progress of the division of

<sup>68</sup> *WN*, V. i. a. 41, pp. 706-7.

<sup>69</sup> 'Publick services are never better performed than when their reward comes only in consequence of their being performed, and is proportioned to the diligence employed in performing them' (*WN*, V. i. b. 20, p. 719). English justice had effectively achieved the result by emulation between different courts: the courts of king's bench, of exchequer, of chancery, and of law (V. i. b. 21, p. 720). See also *LJ* (A), v. 25-6; (B), 69 for the rivalry between the courts. See editors' footnote 30, *WN*, p. 720.

<sup>70</sup> 'It seems impossible to imagine a more equitable method of raising a tax' (*WN*, Book V, Chapter I, Part Third: 'Of the Expence of publick Works and publick Institutions', Article I: 'Of the publick Works and Institutions for facilitating the Commerce of the Society' 'And, first, of those which are necessary for facilitating Commerce in general', V. i. d. 4, pp. 724-5).

labour in a modern commercial society.<sup>71</sup>

The state, however, derives no inconsiderable advantage from their instruction. The more they [all the inferior ranks of people] are instructed, the more liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition, which, among ignorant nations, frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders. ... They are more disposed to examine, and more capable of seeing through, the interested complaints of faction and sedition, and they are, upon that account, less apt to be misled into any wanton or unnecessary opposition to the measures of government. In free countries, where the safety of government depends very much upon the favourable judgement which the people may form of its conduct, it must surely be of the highest importance that they should not be disposed to judge rashly or capriciously concerning it.<sup>72</sup>

Providing public education in the form of reading, writing and accounting for the labouring poor was in the interests of both the state and the labouring poor. Public education could enable the labouring poor to control and redirect their private interests from 'the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition'. This was Smith's criticism of Mandeville, who had argued that it was the duty of the skilful politicians to force the labouring poor into industry and thereby more able to contribute to prosperity.

Finally, when it comes to how to raise the public revenue of the sovereign, Smith insisted in the same manner on the exploitation of private interests for the sake of maximising public revenue. For instance, Smith recommended the sale of public lands, because, apart from the immediate merit of sale for repaying the huge public debts from mortgage, the sale of public lands would work for the improvement of the land, the increase of wealth and eventually the increase of public revenue:

In the course of a few years it [the crown] would probably enjoy another revenue. When the crown lands had become private property, they would, in the course of a few years, become well-improved and well-cultivated. The increase of their produce would increase the population of the country, by augmenting the revenue and consumption of the people. But the revenue which the crown derives from the duties of customs and excise, would necessarily increase with the revenue and consumption of the people.<sup>73</sup>

By the sale of crown lands, the sovereign can raise money as well as exploit the

<sup>71</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter I, Article II: 'Of the Expence of the Institutions for the Education of Youth', V. i. f. 50, pp. 781-2. See also V. i. f. 52-4, pp. 784-5; *LJ* (B), 329-30.

<sup>72</sup> *WN*, V. i. f. 61, p. 788. See also *LJ* (B), 328-30, pp. 539-40, which argues for the needs of education for remedying the bad effects of the division of labour, especially for child labourers.

<sup>73</sup> *WN*, Book V, Chapter II: 'Of the Sources of the general or publick Revenue of the Society', Part I: 'Of the Funds or Sources of Revenue which may particularly belong to the Sovereign or Commonwealth', V. ii. a. 18, p. 824. See also V. ii. a. 19, p. 824; III. iv. 3; *LJ* (B), 309.

private interests of the purchasers of the lands in order to raise additional tax revenue. This was also 'the wisdom of the state' taking advantage of private interests for public interests.

The attention of the landlord is a particular and minute consideration of what is likely to be the most advantageous application of every inch of ground upon his estate. The principal attention of the sovereign ought to be to encourage, by every means in his power, the attention both of the landlord and the farmer; by allowing both to pursue their own interest in their own way, and according to their own judgement; by giving to both the most perfect security that they shall enjoy the full recompense of their own industry; and by procuring to both the most extensive market for every part of their produce, in consequence of establishing the easiest and safest communications both by land and by water, through every part of his own dominions, as well as the most unbounded freedom of exportation to the dominions of all other princes.<sup>74</sup>

Smith's legislator thus had to take into account commercial sociability which would make way for private interests unintentionally working for public benefits. In making policies for a modern commercial society for exploiting private interests for public benefits, legislators therefore have to enlarge the role and function of sociability where sociability does not normally work without 'the wisdom of the state'.

I have classified Smith's accounts of government and political economy in his jurisprudence lectures and *The Wealth of Nations* in terms of three main questions as his response to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* in what I call the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. First, what constitutes injustice, and how injustice is detrimental to public benefits; second, how private interests contribute to public benefits; third, what policy the legislators have to take to increase the wealth of nations. Smith asked the third question in an attempt to set objectives for government, and this required him to answer a further question: what are opulence and plenty? In other words, what are 'public benefits'? Once this question is sorted out, the rest that legislators have to do would be straightforward: first, they have to get rid of injustice from society, and second, they have to direct sociability into achieving 'public benefits'. This question concerning 'public benefits' could well

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<sup>74</sup> *WN*, Book V, Chapter II, Part II: 'Of Taxes', Article I: 'Taxes upon Rent; Taxes upon the Rent of land', V. ii. c. 18, p. 833. In this passage, Smith was praising the land tax in the Venetian territory. See also V. ii. c. 8, p. 830.

have been the one with which Smith confronted Mandeville's challenge to the moral legitimacy of a modern commercial society.

I will organise Smith's argument concerning public benefits, or the wealth of nations, into a further three topics. The first is his argument that wealth, or public benefits, do not rest on money. The second is that policies aimed at gaining money, that is, regulations upon domestic trade as well as those aiming at a favourable trade balance, are consequently wrong, because they are jeopardising the wealth of nations. Finally, his conclusion is that a policy of free trade should therefore replace them, so that injustice can be minimised and the wealth of nations can be maximised.

Smith's view that wealth, or public benefits, do not consist of money, was already reflected in his objectives of government themselves in his jurisprudence lectures. The purposes of government were to be the security of the people and the peace of society,<sup>75</sup> as well as 'the most proper way of procuring wealth and abundance', that is, the plenty and cheapness of goods in the country.<sup>76</sup> Most laws and government, therefore, were to be administered for the encouragement of these policies, by securing property, and ultimately for supplying needs.<sup>77</sup> In other words, opulence would result from high wages combined with low prices for the essentials and conveniences of life, so that wages can purchase a great quantity of commodities.<sup>78</sup> High wages in themselves did not necessarily bring opulence, unless they could purchase a great quantity of commodities, which must be produced by labour. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith argued that wealth comes from labour, or 'the toil and trouble' of the body. Gold and silver, or money, were therefore not the wealth of nations.

Labour was the first price, the original purchase-money that was paid for all things. It was not by gold or by silver, but by labour, that all the wealth of the world was originally purchased; ...<sup>79</sup>

The great wheel of circulation is altogether different from the goods which are circulated by means of it. The revenue of the society consists altogether in those goods, and not in the wheel which circulates them. In computing either the gross or the neat revenue of any society, we must

<sup>75</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 6-7, p. 333; *LJ* (B), 203-5, pp. 486-7.

<sup>76</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 8, pp. 333-4; *LJ* (B), 205-6, p. 487.

<sup>77</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 18-21, pp. 337-8; *LJ* (B), 210-1, p. 489.

<sup>78</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 33-4 and 52, pp. 343 and 350; *LJ* (B), 214-5, pp. 490-1.

<sup>79</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter V: 'Of the real and nominal Price of Commodities, or of their Price in Labour, and their Price in Money', I. v. 2, pp. 47-8.

always, from their whole annual circulation of money and goods, deduct the whole value of the money, of which not a single farthing can ever make any part of either.<sup>80</sup>

Smith's attack on an assumption that wealth consisted of money would give rise directly to his criticism of policies aimed at keeping and increasing money, that is, the regulations upon the exportation of metals. The regulations were based on a misunderstanding of the relationship between cause and effect, or between the increase of real wealth (value in commodities) and that of circulating money.<sup>81</sup> The misconception of wealth as consisting of money would consequently result in a hurtful regulation of the prohibition on the exportation of coin and bullion, pushing prices high and leading the state into poverty, jeopardising the real wealth of nations.<sup>82</sup>

The above was the starting point of Smith's criticism of Mandeville's conclusion of a favourable trade balance as a guarantee of the wealth of nations and the prevention of licentiousness. Smith regarded the systems of Mandeville, Thomas Mun and others as in the second stage of the development of mercantile systems. Unlike the first generation of mercantile theorists, they opposed the prohibition of exporting bullion, but they still advocated a favourable trade balance as a means of securing the wealth within the nation.<sup>83</sup> This would be where Smith confronted Mandeville's challenge to the moral legitimacy of commercial society. Smith's

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<sup>80</sup> *WN*, Book II: 'Of the Nature, Accumulation, and Employment of Stock', Chapter II: 'Of Money considered as a particular Branch of the general Stock of the Society, or of the Expence of maintaining the National Capital', II. ii. 14, p. 289. See also II. ii. 23, p. 291.

<sup>81</sup> *WN*, II. iii. 22-3, pp. 339-40. See also *LJ* (A), vi. 169; (B), 266-7. Smith asserted that the policy of prohibiting the exportation of coin or bullion out of the kingdom was based on a wrong notion of wealth since Thomas Mun (*LJ* (A), v. 75-7, pp. 299-300). This is the last section of his account of justice in *LJ*, connecting to his account of government.

<sup>82</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 127-30, 135-6 and 144-55, pp. 377-8, 381 and 384-8; *LJ* (B), 244-7 and 252-61, pp. 503-4 and 506-11. John Law's scheme was another example of policy bringing bad effects, based on the notion of national opulence as consisting of money (*LJ* (B), 270-81, pp. 515-9).

<sup>83</sup> *WN*, Book IV: 'Of Systems of political Oeconomy', Chapter I: 'Of the Principle of the commercial, or mercantile System', IV. i. 7-8, pp. 431-2. In jurisprudence lectures, Smith had stated that 'Mr. Mun was the first who formed it into a regular system' (*LJ* (A), vi. 135), and that Mun, Gee, Swift, Locke and Mandeville were the 'pretended doctors' of the system (*LJ* (A), vi. 167-8; (B), 261-6). Smith had also written that the confusion of wealth with money 'has given occasion to the systems of Mun and Gee; of Mandeville who built upon them; and of Mr Hume who endeavoured to refute them' (*ED*, 4. 5). See editors' footnotes 14 and 16, *WN*, pp. 432 and 496. Smith politely omitted his teacher, Hutcheson. It is also worth noting that Smith thought that Hume had failed 'to refute them'. As I argue below, Smith might have thought of Hume's policy proposal on increasing the circulating money in a state in order to stimulate industry.

*Wealth of Nations* was to refute Mandeville's conclusion to the *Fable of the Bees*, that a favourable trade balance should be the duty of the statecraft in order to preserve the prosperity of the state.<sup>84</sup> His procedure however would have required Smith to confront Hume regarding his remark that the increase of circulating money in a state was a stimulus to industry, even though only for an initial period.

The increase of the quantity of gold and silver in Europe, and the increase of its manufactures and agriculture, are two events which, though they have happened nearly about the same time, yet have arisen from very different causes, and have scarce any natural connection with one another. The one has arisen from a mere accident, in which neither prudence nor policy either had or could have any share: The other from the fall of the feudal system, and from the establishment of a government which afforded to industry, the only encouragement which it requires, some tolerable security that it shall enjoy the fruits of its own labour.<sup>85</sup>

Smith rejected the stimulating effect of the increase of circulating money in a state upon industry, to further distance himself from the mercantile notion of money as wealth. Indeed, Smith could have asked whether Hume's policy of increasing the money supply in order to stimulate industry would require a *de facto* favourable trade balance, despite Hume's point in his 'general theory' of money-flow mechanism. Smith's argument against a favourable trade balance was, then, his direct attack on Mandevillian notion of statecraft through the skilful management of politicians.

But they were sophistical in supposing, that either to preserve or to augment the quantity of those metals required more the attention of government, than to preserve or to augment the quantity of any other useful commodities, which the freedom of trade, without any such attention, never fails to supply in the proper quantity. They were sophistical too, perhaps, in asserting that the high price of exchange necessarily increased, what they called, the unfavourable balance of trade, or occasioned the exportation of a greater quantity of gold and silver. That high price, indeed, was extremely disadvantageous to the merchants who had any money to pay in foreign countries.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> *FB*, I, p. 116. See my Chapter Three above, p. 154.

<sup>85</sup> *WN*, I. xi. n. 1, pp. 255-6. *LJ* (B) had referred to Hume's *Political Discourses* (1752) as an improvement of the notion of money since Mandeville but not yet completely satisfactory. See also editors' footnotes 26-8, *LJ* (B), p. 507. Isaac Rubin however appreciated that Hume's description of the influence of a growing quantity of money and increased demand upon the motivation and behaviour of producers 'liberated' the quantity theory of money from the naively mechanical way that it had been formulated by North and Montesquieu, and paved the way for newer, psychological variants of the theory. See Rubin, pp. 82-3. Smith's argument, meanwhile, was a development from James Steuart who had directly criticised Hume and argued that it was the quantity of money in circulation which was determined by the demands of commodity circulation and the level of commodity prices. See Sir James Steuart, *Principles*, Book II, Chapter xxviii, volume II, pp. 241-50, and Rubin, pp. 84-6.

<sup>86</sup> *WN*, IV. i. 9, pp. 433.



Smith's attack on the doctrine of a favourable trade balance was presented also as his criticism of the factional argument by merchants, who had been patronised by and hugely influenced the Court Whig government policies. This would be where Smith might have had an ideological implication in his arguments about political economy.

Such as they were, however, those arguments convinced the people to whom they were addressed. They were addressed by merchants to parliaments, and to the councils of princes, to nobles and to country gentlemen; by those who were supposed to understand trade, to those who were conscious to themselves that they knew nothing about the matter. ... The merchants knew perfectly in what manner it [foreign trade] enriched themselves. It was their business to know it. But to know in what manner it enriched the country, was no part of their business.<sup>87</sup>

Mandeville might not necessarily have intended to support those merchants with his book. But eventually he too reached this 'popular notion' of a favourable trade balance. This was the theory which had been seized by the Court Whig government conspicuously in favour of merchants who were among their circles and who they regarded as by far the most useful members of society with regard to its prosperity. Smith in this respect was in line with Hume who had criticised the Court Whig foreign trade policy and advocated a cosmopolitan affection of magistrates. Smith too argued that the 'popular notion' of a favourable trade balance would result in national prejudices and animosity regarding foreign trade, 'which ought naturally to be, among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity'.<sup>88</sup> Smith thought, for instance, that the policies of colonial trade monopoly adopted as an attempt to achieve a favourable trade balance would in fact be harmful to Britain by inflicting the huge military cost on the government, in the form of public debt, in order to protect the British colonies. Britain's two most expensive recent wars, the Spanish War of 1739 and the French War of 1755, were both 'a colony quarrel' fought 'in order to support a monopoly'.<sup>89</sup> This mercantile class was among the principal funders of public debts, from which it also derived an unnaturally high rate of profit.

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<sup>87</sup> *WN*, IV. i. 10, pp. 434. Smith described the East India Company as an example (Book IV, Chapter I: 'Of the Principle of the commercial, or mercantile System', IV. i. 33, p. 449).

<sup>88</sup> *WN*, Book IV, Chapter III: 'Of the extraordinary Restraints upon the Importation of Goods of almost all Kinds, from those Countries with which the Balance is supposed to be disadvantageous', Part I: 'Of the Unreasonableness of those Restraints even upon the Principles of the Commercial System', IV. iii. c. 9, p. 493. See also IV. iii. a. 1, p. 474 and IV. iii. c. 10, p. 494.

Smith stated that, 'In England, the seat of government being in the greater mercantile city in the world, the merchants are generally the people who advance money to government'.<sup>90</sup> Smith contrasted the interests of London monopolist merchants, who had been patronised and benefited by the Court Whig government, with those of country gentlemen.<sup>91</sup> Mandeville had argued that, as long as the state kept a favourable trade balance, even if not the prohibition on the exportation of coin and bullion, the state would have secured the wealth within the country, and therefore spending money at home would not diminish wealth at home. This argument had been in the end in line with the Court Whig policies in favour of their London monopolist merchants. On the contrary, in favour of the landlords in the country, Smith argued that the nation would ruin itself if it consumed more than it produced, as he rejected the notion that money embodied the wealth of nations. Consuming commodities at home would diminish wealth at home, unless they were employed in improvement and production,<sup>92</sup> while an unfavourable trade balance itself does no harm to the wealth of nations.

There is no commercial country in Europe of which the approaching ruin has not frequently been foretold by the pretended doctors of this system, from an unfavourable balance of trade. After all the anxiety, however, which they have excited about this, after all the vain attempts of almost all trading nations to turn that balance in their own favour and against their neighbours, it does not appear that any one nation in Europe has been in any respect impoverished by this cause. Every town and country, on the contrary, in proportion as they have opened their ports to all nations; instead of being ruined by this free trade, as the principles of the commercial system would lead us to expect, have been enriched by it.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> *WN*, IV. vii. c. 64, pp. 614-6.

<sup>90</sup> *WN*, Book V: 'Of the Revenue of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Chapter III: 'Of publick Debts', V. iii. 35, p. 918. See also *LJ* (B), 323-4. See editors' footnote 38, *WN*, p. 918. This final chapter of *The Wealth of Nations* was devoted to his question of public debts as his criticism of mercantile factional interests, in relation to the monopoly of colonial trade: see IV. ix. 52, p. 688: 'what are the reasons and causes which have induced almost all modern governments to mortgage some part of this revenue, or to contract debts, and what have been the effects of those debts upon the real wealth, the annual produce of the land and labour of the society'? Like the policy of colonial trade monopoly, public debt would exert fatal effects upon the national economy (V. iii. 56, p. 928; also V. iii. 47, p. 924).

<sup>91</sup> *WN*, IV. vii. c. 58, p. 611.

<sup>92</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 167-70, pp. 392-4; *LJ* (B), 266-9, pp. 513-4.

<sup>93</sup> *WN*, IV. iii. c. 14, pp. 496-7. Isaac Rubin however argued that the mercantilist concepts of money as *the* wealth of a nation and that of foreign trade as its real source were necessary and useful for their attempt to resolve the basic problem of their age and of their social class. Hence he concluded that the Physiocrats and Smith failed to grasp that. For, mercantilists' concern lay in the growth of monetary exchange value, and not in the growth in production for use (or use value). It was an economy where the development of monetary circulation was still weak and exchange value seemed, therefore, to lay

On the whole, both Hume and Smith, along with other Scots moral philosophers, were more or less critics of the Court Whig ideology and interests. After Mandeville's attack on commercial sociability, Scottish philosophers had to set about searching for a morality which could recognise virtue in sociability, culture, conversation, commerce and moral and economic improvement. This would be the reason the Scottish Enlightenment could be described in terms of the modernisation of ethics, jurisprudence and political economy, with minimal reference to the need to overcome a civic criticism of the Whig commercial order. Their foremost targets were the ideology of Court Whigs, rather than that of civic humanists. It would not be necessary to view Scottish Whiggism as shaped by confrontation with the Tory and Jacobite-republican mixture constituting opposition ideology in England.<sup>94</sup> It seemed to have been mainly shaped by confrontation with the Court Whig ideology, and even adopted Tory elements in order to confront Court Whiggism whenever necessary and useful. Hume, therefore, as Pocock himself has acknowledged, while a defender of the Whig commercial aristocracy, expressed Tory fears of the power of public credit, which might destroy the natural aristocracy of landed families by rendering property, both real and mobile, valueless.<sup>95</sup>

In place of a favourable trade balance policy, a free trade policy should therefore be pursued, so that the wealth of nations could be maximised. Kaye argued that Mandeville's influence was greatest on Smith's laissez-faire policy.<sup>96</sup> The relationship between private and public was certainly well discussed by both Mandeville and Smith as an issue of sociability, but in Mandeville it ended up with his advocacy of statecraft and a favourable trade balance in particular in foreign economic policy, in line with Court Whig policy. In general, a utilitarian scheme of ethics or political economy could not result in a laissez-faire economic policy.

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not in the products themselves but in money, and where foreign trade was the arena within which the circulation of money was most extensively developed. Rubin also assessed that, though the mercantilist interpretation of foreign trade and profit became falacious, their embryonic ideas on the nature of exchange value and its monetary form proved, on the contrary, capable of theoretical development by subsequent classical political economists. See Rubin, pp. 53-6.

<sup>94</sup> This is Pocock's view. See, for example, Pocock (1985), p. 249.

<sup>95</sup> See Pocock (1985), pp. 250 and 253.

<sup>96</sup> Kaye, pp. xcvi-ciii and cxxxix-cxlii.

Smith's criticism of Mandeville was not merely terminological, as Kaye believed, but also a full-scale attack on utilitarianism as well as the Court Whig interests in foreign trade. In opposition to Mandeville, who had argued for a favourable trade balance as a statecraft to preserve a flourishing society, together with his concept of wealth as embodied in money, Smith concluded that

It is the highest impertinence and presumption, therefore, in kings and ministers, to pretend to watch over the oeconomy of private people, and to restrain their expence either by sumptuary laws, or by prohibiting the importation of foreign luxuries. They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society. Let them look well after their own expence, and they may safely trust private people with theirs. If their own extravagance does not ruin the state, that of their subjects never will.<sup>97</sup>

So that the best police would be to leave every thing to its naturall course, without any bounty or any discouragement.<sup>98</sup>

Among other reasons, Smith followed Hume and argued about the merits of free commerce for tackling national prejudice and animosity, because, as cited above, commerce 'ought naturally to be, among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship'.<sup>99</sup> Free trade was, for instance, the main advantage of the Union of 1707 for Scotland.<sup>100</sup>

Smith's advocacy of free trade, therefore, was not to say that, for their part, legislators had nothing to do. In Smith, legislators were no longer allowed to sit back and relax at court, facing eastward as recommended by the ancient Chinese sages. By protecting free trade, legislators had to guard the state against injustices in commerce such as apprenticeship and slavery. The tasks of the so-called minimal state, or the minimal government of police, defence and justice, are indeed huge tasks, if intended to be fully administered. It can reasonably be claimed that no

<sup>97</sup> *WN*, II. iii. 36, p. 346. See also IV. i. 11 and 15, pp. 435 and 437; IV. ii. 11, p. 456; *WN*, IV. v. b. 43, p. 540; IV. vii. c. 88, p. 630; *WN*, IV. ix. 50, p. 687.

<sup>98</sup> *LJ* (A), vi. 92-7, pp. 365-6; *LJ* (B), 235, p. 499.

<sup>99</sup> *WN*, IV. iii. c. 9, p. 493. See also IV. iii. c. 11, p. 494. In the final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VI, Section II, Chapter II: 'Of the order in which Societies are by nature recommended to our Beneficence', Smith was going to refer more explicitly to the national prejudices, especially that between England and France having been discussed by Hume. See *TMS*, VI. ii. 2. 3, pp. 228-9.

<sup>100</sup> *WN*, I. xi. b. 8, p. 165. See also *LJ* (A), vi. 158-67, pp. 389-92; *LJ* (B), 261-6 and 269, pp. 511-3 and 514. Smith had primarily thought that the improvement of land was the advantage of union: see I. xi. i. 3, pp. 239-40. See also V. iii. 89 and Letter 50, dated 4 April 1760, for other advantages of the Union. See editors' footnote 6, *WN*, p. 240.

government has ever achieved even this minimal obligation.<sup>101</sup> In Smith's view, the abolition of the corn laws was the British government's most pressing obligation in his own days, as the laws had institutionalised injustice.

To hinder, besides, the farmer from sending his goods at all times to the best market, is evidently to sacrifice the ordinary laws of justice to an idea of public utility, to a sort of reasons of state; an act of legislative authority which ought to be exercised only, which can be pardoned only in cases of the most urgent necessity. The price at which the exportation of corn is prohibited, if it is ever to be prohibited, ought always to be a very high price.<sup>102</sup>

Smith had partly been criticising Mandeville's idea of statecraft, which too might have envisaged 'an idea of public utility' or 'a sort of reasons of state', but he was possibly objecting to Hume's argument for public utility as the primary cause of government and political economy. This would have been due to the difference between Hume's and Smith's concepts of (the sense of) justice and sociability. For Smith, justice was established independently from and not primarily for the consequent economic prosperity and public benefits, as Hume had argued. This was because, in Smith's view, sociability would ensure that, once justice was established and property right was secured, the production of wealth and commercial activities would follow naturally in a just manner even if government did not intervene to ensure that public benefits were achieved by commerce. Equally, sociability would ensure that the flourishing of commerce would accompany the virtues of probity and punctuality as 'the principal virtues of a commercial nation'. These virtues are 'far more reducible to self interest, that general principle which regulates the actions of every man, and which leads men to act in a certain manner from views of advantage, and is as deeply implanted in an Englishman as a Dutchman'.<sup>103</sup> Smith's ideas of justice and sociability were in this respect his criticism of Mandeville, which showed

<sup>101</sup> Roy Porter has pointed out that physiocrats, while championing an economic policy of free trade, recognised that only a determined administration would prove capable of upholding market freedom against entrenched vested interests, contrary to the ideal of the 'nightwatchman' state so beloved of English radicals. If Porter means such political economists as David Ricardo by 'later English *laissez-faire* liberalism', Smith seems to have shared the physiocratic view of the *dirigiste* administration, rather than the English radical ideal of the maximisation of personal freedom and the reciprocal attenuation of the state. See Porter, p. 29.

<sup>102</sup> *WN*, Book IV, Chapter V: 'Of Bounties', 'Digression concerning the Corn Trade and Corn Laws', IV. v. b. 39, p. 539.

<sup>103</sup> *LJ* (B), 326-8, pp. 538-9.

that prosperity and virtues could go along with each other, especially for Englishmen and Dutchmen, the two most commercial peoples and Mandeville's compatriots.

The task of legislators was therefore to keep commerce free to let natural liberty and justice be established 'of their own accord'.

All systems either of preference or of restraints, therefore, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men. The sovereign is completely discharged from a duty, in the attempting to perform which he must always be exposed to innumerable delusions, and for the proper performance of which no human wisdom or knowledge could ever be sufficient; the duty of superintending the industry of private people, and of directing it towards the employments most suitable to the interest of the society.<sup>104</sup>

Regarding the policy for colonial trade monopoly, for instance, Smith thought that a gradual introduction of free trade into Britain's colonial trade would restore all the different branches of Britain's industry 'to that natural, healthful, and proper proportion which perfect liberty necessarily establishes, and which perfect liberty can alone preserve'. It was therefore the legislators' task to restore 'the natural system of perfect liberty and justice'.<sup>105</sup> The independence of the British North American colonies was Smith's conclusion.<sup>106</sup>

I have attempted to show that the *Wealth of Nations* was Smith's attempt to criticise many of Mandeville's arguments in *The Fable of the Bees*, logically deduced from his criticism of Mandeville in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Compared with *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, *The Wealth of Nations* looks messy with its characteristic frequent digressions and observations that were not always relevant to political economy, just as the original *Fable* is messy in a similar fashion. Smith's criticism of Mandeville however was thorough and showed no sympathy with the system of the Dutch-born doctor. Accordingly and fascinatingly, it resulted in the 'polite' fable of the citizens of a modern commercial polity, showing that vices bring no wealth but injustice, as well as legitimating that wealth is made out of no vices. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was thus his alternative policy proposal to Mandevillian

<sup>104</sup> *WN*, IV. ix. 51, p. 687. See also IV. v. b. 43, p. 540.

<sup>105</sup> *WN*, Book IV, Chapter VI: 'Of Colonies', IV. vii. c. 44, p. 606.

<sup>106</sup> *WN*, IV. vii. c. 77-8, pp. 624-5.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy statecraft and the favourable trade balance policy. The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy was finally resolved by his criticism of Mandeville's use of the languages of vices, of sociability and of benefits. Even though his jurisprudence lectures had been dealing primarily with a theory of justice, Smith's ideas of justice and sociability required him not to present his account of justice without his account of sociability, especially if he had meant it as his 'refutation' of Mandeville in the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy from his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* all the way to *The Wealth of Nations*. In this sense, his account of justice had eventually to be integrated into an account of government and political economy. In other words, his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* could never have been a single book.

## Chapter Five

### The Stoics, Cicero and Scottish classical political economy

This appendix will pay particular attention to the language of Stoic philosophy, and Cicero in particular.<sup>1</sup> The debate about sociability in Scottish moral philosophy was written in a language strongly influenced by Stoic philosophy, in particular its concept of self-command, as well as Shaftesbury's language of beauty and virtue for use in their theory of sociability. Shaftesbury's notion of natural human sociability was unambivalently Stoic, under the specific influence of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius were the Stoic philosophers whose works were reproduced by Shaftesbury in terms of not only their thought but also their technical languages.<sup>2</sup> By using Stoic language and ideas, Shaftesbury distanced himself from the egoist thinking of his contemporary natural law theorists, whom he thought were Epicurean.<sup>3</sup> Shaftesbury once called Epicureanism an 'un-polite Philosophy', which denied design, order and real beauty in the universe and excluded aesthetic experiences.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Mandeville used the egoist thinking of Epicureanism for his form of the distrust of human reason, which would announce the weakness of human reason on psychological grounds. It had some relevance to the sceptics in the sense that, in their attempt to show the elusiveness of truth, they

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<sup>1</sup> Epictetus, *Moral Discourses*, translated by E. Carter (London, 1910); Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius*, translated by Francis Hutcheson, 4th edn. (Glasgow, 1764); Cicero, 'On Friendship' and 'On Old Age', in *Cicero's Three Books of Offices, or Moral Duties; also his Cato Major, An Essay on Old Age; Laelius, An Essay on Friendship; Paradoxes; Scipio's Dream; and Letter to Quintus on the Duties of a Magistrate*, translated by C. R. Edmonds (London, 1856).

<sup>2</sup> Klein, p. 60. For Shaftesbury's relation to Stoic thinking, see Klein, pp. 70-90; Rand, prefatory introduction, in Shaftesbury (1900), p. ix.

<sup>3</sup> Klein, pp. 67-8.



considered the ability of man to deceive himself.<sup>5</sup> The sensationalist psychology of Peripatetics and Epicureans, later elaborated by Hobbes, Locke and others, was useful for Mandeville as the groundwork for his anti-rationalism.<sup>6</sup> Especially the opinion of the Epicureanism of the seventeenth century that man cannot help living for what seems to be his advantage, made way for Mandeville to argue that man's reason had no function except that of discovering and furthering what he desires.<sup>7</sup> Mandeville seems particularly to have had Hobbes in mind in arguing that human nature was egoistic, that man was a selfish animal, and society and morality were consequently artificial.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, for Hutcheson, who was to criticise Mandeville by following Shaftesbury, the task of modern moralists should be Stoic in demonstrating the existence and power of an inner faculty, the moral sense, as forming part of the constitution of the mind. It should be Stoic in showing citizens that it was prudent and virtuous to submit to its guidance because virtuous and benevolent actions would serve public benefits and humanity on the whole.<sup>9</sup> Hutcheson thought that ancient moralists, most notably the Stoics, had discovered the distinction between virtue and vice.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, Hutcheson was clearly opposed to Epicureans as much as to Mandeville. He consequently distinguished two schools of moral philosophers in his *Moral Sense* (1728): 'The one that of the old *Epicureans*, as it is beautifully explained in the first Book of *Cicero, De finibus*; which is revived by Mr. *Hobbes*, and followed by many better Writers'. The other is the view of moralists such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson himself, 'that we have a *moral Sense* or Determination of our Mind, to *approve every kind Affection* either in our selves or others'.<sup>11</sup> As professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow, Hutcheson lectured, always with the above distinction of the two streams of thought in mind, on natural religion, morals, jurisprudence, government, and Greek and Latin moralists.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Klein, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Kaye, pp. lxxviii-lxxix.

<sup>6</sup> Kaye, p. lxxxiv.

<sup>7</sup> Kaye, p. lxxxv.

<sup>8</sup> Kaye, pp. lxxxvii-lxxxviii and cix.

<sup>9</sup> Phillipson (2000), p. 72.

<sup>10</sup> Moore (1994), p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> *MS*, pp. 108-9. See Chapter One above, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> Fowler, p. 177.

His studies ranged over wide interests, including Greek and Latin classics, Hebrew, theology, natural philosophy, mathematics, civil and ecclesiastical history, the history of the arts and sciences. Among them, the study of Greek was revived in Glasgow mainly through his influence,<sup>13</sup> which, together with his alliance with Stoic philosophy, eventually produced his own translation of Marcus Aurelius's *The Meditations* in 1742.<sup>14</sup> This book is the source of Stoic concepts discussed in this appendix.

## 1. Bernard Mandeville

Interestingly, even before Hutcheson, Mandeville had already launched his criticism of modern commercial sociability by satirising Stoic ideas of sociability. Mandeville clearly had Marcus Aurelius in mind when he wrote *The Grumbling Hive* in 1705, and when he later elaborated it into *The Fable of the Bees*, because Marcus Aurelius had already written that

What is not the interest of the hive, is not the interest of the bee.<sup>15</sup>

Mandeville agreed, but for different reasons. What Marcus Aurelius had thought was that private interests would match public interests:

Certainly, I may deliberate myself. My deliberation must be about my true interest. Now, that is the true interest of every one, which is agreeable to the structure of his nature. My natural constitution is that of a rational being, fitted for civil society. My city and country, as I am Antonius, is Rome; but, as I am a man, 'tis the universe. That alone, therefore, which is profitable to those cities, can be good to me.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Fowler, p. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius*, translated by Francis Hutcheson (4th edn., Glasgow, 1764) (abbreviated as *Meditations* below). My interpretations of Marcus Aurelius in this chapter are of this translation.

<sup>15</sup> *Meditations*, Book VI. Article 54, p. 245.

<sup>16</sup> *Meditations*, VI. 44, p. 240.

Here Marcus Aurelius regarded the universe or the society as an organic whole, not just a collection of all the individual members.<sup>17</sup> His description of the word 'profit' shows that he had contemplated that private 'interest' which is 'agreeable to the structure of his nature', is indifferently 'profitable' to both the private person and society: 'let the word profitable be taken, here, in a more popular sense, to relate to things indifferent'.<sup>18</sup> 'Profit', or private interest, is therefore not evil but indifferent, because any part of the universe, however less important it is, had its own role in it. Even 'evils' are a part of the universe and allocated their own indispensable roles by providence. Providence was therefore the design, even exploiting every evil and delusion.

All which they have fallen into according to that plan, which infinite wisdom originally concerted for the most excellent purposes; seeing it to be necessary. That there should be very different orders of being, some more, some less perfect; that many particular evils must be connected with the necessary means of incomparably superior good; that these imperfections and evils are prerequisite to the exercise of the most divine virtues, in the more perfect orders of beings; which must be the ground of then eternal joy: and that many evils are even requisite means of reclaiming the less perfect beings from their vices and setting them upon the pursuit of their truest happiness, such thoughts must repress ill-will and all anger against the vicious; but do not hinder our discerning the misery and deformity of vice. And a Stoic allows the vicious could refrain from their vices, if they heartily inclined to do so.<sup>19</sup>

Mandeville himself wrote *The Fable of the Bees* as an explicit satire on Stoic ideas and Shaftesbury's, arguing that, while approving that private interests would contribute to public interests, such pursuits of private interests were vicious in the first place, because every business contains vices.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, if the whole thus contains evils in its parts, such a whole should be nothing other than evil. Mandeville then seized the opportunity to present the famous Ciceronian example of evil, that of merchants concealing the true and vital information of commodities from each other.<sup>21</sup> This Ciceronian issue in trading, however, in Mandeville's view, came from our unfair judgement toward others in which we naturally overestimate ourselves and underestimate others.<sup>22</sup> Mandeville here cited the Ciceronian idea for

<sup>17</sup> *Meditations*, VII. 13, p. 257.

<sup>18</sup> *Meditations*, VI. 45, p. 241.

<sup>19</sup> *Meditations*, V. 17, p. 194. See also VIII. 35, pp. 308-9.

<sup>20</sup> *FB*, I, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 61-3.

<sup>22</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 80-1.

his criticising Stoic philosophy. Mandeville, for instance, argued that whatever pleases men is based only on taste, not virtue, by using an Epicurean example as much as a Stoic.<sup>23</sup>

... most of the ancient Philosophers and grave Moralists, especially the *Stoicks*, would not allow any Thing to be a real Good that was liable to be taken from them by others. ... These among the Ancients have always bore the greatest Sway; yet others that were no Fools neither, have exploded those Precepts as impracticable, call'd their Notions Romantick, and endeavour'd to prove that what these Stoicks asserted of themselves exceeded all human Force and Possibility, and that therefore the Virtues they boasted of could be nothing but haughty Pretence, full of Arrogance and Hypocrisy.<sup>24</sup>

Mandeville was therefore adopting the Epicurean notion of pleasure, but then criticising it severely from a rigorist, indeed Stoic, standard of virtue, to make his paradox, 'private vices, public benefits'. Mandeville concluded that real pleasure, or private interest, was only sensual and worldly, hence evil, in contrast to virtue, or Stoic self-command. Stoic philosophy would therefore be betrayed by the real practices of all men.

... the real Pleasures of all Men in Nature are worldly and sensual, if we judge from their Practice; ... Ask not only the Divines and Moralists of every Nation, but likewise all that are rich and powerful, about real Pleasure, and they'll tell you, with the *Stoicks* that there can be no true Felicity in Things Mundane and Corruptible: but then look upon their Lives, and you will find they take delight in no other.<sup>25</sup>

In the second dialogue of the second volume, Mandeville attempted to demonstrate that a most beautiful superstructure was based on a rotten and despicable foundation. Miracles, for instance, were based on pride and vainglory; good offices or duties that Cicero had argued for, and benevolence, humanity and other social virtues that Shaftesbury had argued for, were equally based on vainglory.<sup>26</sup> Such a contradiction in Stoic philosophy between the theory of virtue and its actual practice was, in Mandeville's words, the contradiction in human nature.<sup>27</sup> Sociability could not therefore be described as anything but 'private vices, public benefits'. Mandeville therefore presented his paradox by demolishing the Stoic system of Shaftesbury.

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<sup>23</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 148-50.

<sup>24</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 150-1.

<sup>25</sup> *FB*, I, p. 166.

<sup>26</sup> *FB*, II, pp. 64-5.

## 2. Francis Hutcheson

There had been, therefore, a rationale for Hutcheson to resort to the Stoic language of morals when he went on to criticise Mandeville and praise Shaftesbury. Regarding beauty as identical to virtue, Hutcheson was to develop Shaftesbury. Following the Stoics, Shaftesbury had identified beauty and virtue and argued that the mind was a 'spectator' or 'auditor' of others' minds with its own 'eye' and 'ear' judging of their behaviour and actions. The mind judged moral virtues in the same manner as it perceived the shapes, colours and proportions from which beauty and deformity resulted.<sup>28</sup> As a persistent admirer of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson was a Stoic as much as Shaftesbury, as shown in the introduction of his translation of Marcus Aurelius, *The Meditations*.<sup>29</sup> The core of Marcus Aurelius most crucial for Hutcheson's concept of virtue was the account of beauty, which they both regarded as the modus of virtue. In it, beauty was described as a thing independent of anything else:

Whatever is beautiful or honourable, is so from itself, and its excellence rests in itself: its being praised is no part of its excellence. It is neither made better nor worse by being praised. This holds too in lower beauties, called so by the vulgar; in material forms, and works of art. What is truly beautiful and honourable, needs not any thing further than its own nature to make it so. Thus, the law, truth, benevolence, a sense of honour. Are any of these made good by being praised? Or, would they become bad, if they were censured? Is an emerald made worse than it was, if it is not praised? Or, is gold, ivory, purple, a dagger, a flower, a shrub, made worse on this account?<sup>30</sup>

This was the Stoic language of beauty for Hutcheson who was to criticise Mandeville for his argument about beauty as relative to circumstances. Virtues such as 'the law, truth, benevolence, a sense of honour' were to be independent of anything else. This

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<sup>27</sup> *FB*, I, pp. 167-8.

<sup>28</sup> Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit*, ed. D. Walford (Manchester, 1977), I. ii. 3, pp. 48-9. As for the Stoic, see Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, VII. 58 and 60.

<sup>29</sup> Hutcheson praised Stoic philosophy as 'the plainest, and yet most striking considerations' on 'the noblest emotions of piety, gratitude, and resignation to GOD; contempt of sensual pleasures, wealth, worldly grandeur, and fame; and a constant inflexible charity, and good-will and compassion toward our fellows; superior to all the force of anger or envy, or our little interfering worldly interests' (*Meditations*, introduction, p. 4).

<sup>30</sup> *Meditations*, IV. 20, pp. 150-1. See also V. 14; VI. 16; XI. 1; XII. 1, 3 and 23.

is reflected in Marcus Aurelius's statement that 'From my grandfather Verus I learned to relish the beauty of manners, and to restrain all anger'.<sup>31</sup> For, by the beauty of manners, he meant that 'From my father I learned ... his contentment in every condition; ... he acted like one who regarded only what was right and becoming in the things themselves, and not the applause which might follow'.<sup>32</sup> The beauty of manners advocated here was the life away from 'pride', 'vainglory' or 'vanity' and 'any passion'. In other words, life independent of magnificence (as beauty is independence), or 'the life according to nature'. Only beauty could therefore bring virtue into life, making it according to nature.<sup>33</sup> What is more, only beauty could make virtue and anything 'profitable' compatible to each other.

Solely intent on his own conduct, and thinking continually on what is appointed to him by the governor of the universe. Making his own conduct beautiful and honourable; and persuaded that what providence orders is good. For, each one's lot is brought upon him by providence, and is advantageous to him.<sup>34</sup>

As far as man keeps his life independent, 'solely intent on his own conduct', he can make his conduct 'beautiful and honourable', his life according to nature, and thereby make them 'advantageous to him'. In this concept of the 'advantageous', Hutcheson understood, the Stoic view of wealth was reflected, which regarded it as neither good nor evil but indifferent.

The Stoic called all external advantages [wealth etc.] or disadvantages [poverty etc.], respecting the body or fortune, things indifferent, neither good, nor evil; but they allowed this difference among them, that some were according to nature, and preferable; others contrary to nature, and to be rejected.<sup>35</sup>

The wealth which is useful to one's own nature would consequently be useful to the common nature of the whole. The wealth contrary to nature, such as luxury pursued excessively, should be rejected, as it is not according to nature. This was why 'What is not the interest of the hive, is not the interest of the bee'.

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<sup>31</sup> *Meditations*, I. 1, p. 73.

<sup>32</sup> *Meditations*, I. 13, pp. 85-90.

<sup>33</sup> *Meditations*, II. 1, p. 97. Stoic philosophy would be for making life independent of others and external materials (*Meditations*, II. 17, pp. 114-5).

<sup>34</sup> *Meditations*, III. 4, pp. 122-3. See also IV. 18, pp. 148-9; IV. 24, pp. 153-4.

<sup>35</sup> *Meditations*, Hutcheson's footnote, p. 209.

If wealth adequately pursued could improve human life and bring virtue and honour, philosophy would have to teach how to refine the way of accomplishing it. As shown in the preceding chapters, this was the question Hutcheson was concerned with in his own moral philosophy as a criticism of Mandeville. But Hutcheson's debt to Stoic philosophy in his dealing with this question could be seen most in his papers on laughter. Hutcheson's 'Thoughts on Laughter' was published during the period of his Dublin residence.<sup>36</sup> His theory, as a criticism of the insufficiency of Hobbes's ethical theory, was that laughter arises on the observation of contrast.<sup>37</sup> But they were written, though primarily as a criticism of Hobbes, who had argued about laughter, also as his criticism of Mandeville's account of human nature, by showing how wealth and virtue could become compatible through laughter, using the Aristotelian language of *Poetics* and the Stoic language from Cicero. Hutcheson criticised Hobbes for his definition of laughter as a joy from some selfish view, in accordance with Hobbes's grand view of deducing all human actions from self-love.<sup>38</sup>

it is this contrast, or opposition of ideas of dignity and meanness, which is the occasion of laughter. ... Yet even this kind of laughter cannot well be said to arise from our sense of superiority. This alone may give a sedate joy, but not be a matter of laughter, since we shall find the same kind of laughter arising in us, where this opinion of superiority does not attend it: for if the most ingenious person in the world, whom the whole company esteems, should through inadvertent hearing, or any other mistake, answer quite from the purpose, the whole audience may laugh heartily, without the least abatement of their good opinion.<sup>39</sup>

What was important was that such laughter, unlike Hobbesian laughter, could be an approbation of pursuing wealth:

A truly wise man, who places the dignity of human nature in good affections and suitable actions, may be apt to laugh at those who employ their most solemn and strong affections about

<sup>36</sup> Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections Upon Laughter, and the Remarks Upon "The Fable of the Bees"*, originally published in *The Dublin Journal*, 1725; finally collected under the title, Glasgow, 1750; ed. P. Kivy (The Hague, 1973) (abbreviated as *Laughter* below).

<sup>37</sup> Fowler, pp. 173-7.

<sup>38</sup> Hutcheson's view was based on Aristotle's *Poetics*, chapter V: 'some mistake, or some turpitude, without grievous pain, and not very pernicious or destructive' (quoted by Hutcheson, a letter in *The Dublin Journal*, June 5, 1725, in *Laughter*, pp. 102-3). Hutcheson quoted Hobbes's view of laughter from Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature*, chapter IX. Hutcheson also pointed out Pufendorf and Addison (*The Spectator*, No. 47) as the followers of Hobbes. See *Laughter*, p. 103.

<sup>39</sup> A letter in *The Dublin Journal*, June 12, 1725, in *Laughter*, pp. 110-1. See also a letter in *The Dublin Journal*, June 5, 1725, in *Laughter*, p. 104.

what, to the wise man, appears perhaps very useless or mean. The same solemnity of behaviour and keenness of passion, about a place or ceremony, which ordinary people only employ about the absolute necessities of life, may make them laugh at their betters. When a gentleman of pleasure, who thinks that good fellowship and gallantry are the only valuable enjoyments of life, observes men, with great solemnity and earnestness, heaping up money, without using it, or incumbering themselves with purchases and mortgages, which the gay gentleman, with his paternal revenues, thinks very silly affairs, he may make himself very merry upon them: and the frugal man, in his turn, makes the same jest of the man of pleasure.<sup>40</sup>

Laughter could approve the pursuit of wealth not from a selfish view but from a sort of sympathy with the person pursuing useless wealth but still thereby contributing to the public good. In this respect laughter was a sense of beauty in a genuinely Hutchesonian term. Laughter was, therefore, 'necessarily pleasant to us' and 'easy and agreeable'.<sup>41</sup> By this 'sense of the ridiculous', as by the sense of beauty, the mean pursuit of wealth could be approved and even imitated to contribute to the public good.<sup>42</sup>

The Stoic idea of Providence was undoubtedly behind this supposition. In Stoic language, 'passions' and 'senses' were independent of interest but still endowed by Providence as necessary for our interests. Providence was in this sense the foundation of sociability in Stoic philosophy:

Whatever the Gods ordain, is full of wise providence. What we ascribe to fortune, happens not without a presiding nature, nor without a connexion and intertexture with the things ordered by providence. ... Consider, too, the necessity of these events; and their utility to that whole universe of which you are a part. In every regular structure, that must always be good to a part, which the nature of the whole requires, and which tends to preserve it.<sup>43</sup>

Whether all be atoms, or there be [presiding] Natures, let this be laid down as indisputable; that I am a part of the whole; and the whole must be conducted by its own Nature, be that what it will: and that I am in some manner socially connected with the parts which are of the same kind with myself.<sup>44</sup>

This is beautiful in Plato. "When we consider human life, we should view, as from an high tower, all things terrestrial; such as herds, armies, men employed in agriculture, in marriages, divorces; births, deaths, the tumults of courts of Justice, desolate lands, various barbarous nations, feasts, wailings, markets; a medley of all things, in a system adorned by contrarieties."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Laughter*, p. 111.

<sup>41</sup> A letter in *The Dublin Journal*, June 19, 1725, in *Laughter*, p. 113. Hutcheson wrote that the purpose of the third letter was to know the proper use of laughter, by considering its effects, and the ends for which it was implanted in our nature.

<sup>42</sup> *Laughter*, p. 116.

<sup>43</sup> *Meditations*, II. 3, p. 100. See also II. 9, pp. 104-5.

<sup>44</sup> *Meditations*, X. 6, p. 366.



By using such Stoic terminology, Hutcheson was able to make an argument for the virtue of benevolence, depicting man as a part of the 'socially connected' whole. In this, the beautiful system of society (and the division of labour) could be depicted as a metaphor of music: a 'beautiful' 'system adorned by contrarieties' of both the good and the evil. This was a Stoic picture first seized by Mandeville for his satire, but then could be developed by Hutcheson for his counter-argument against Mandeville.<sup>46</sup> What Hutcheson was going to discuss as the sense of beauty and the moral sense were divine endowments directing men towards beauty and virtue.<sup>47</sup> The 'sense' of beauty and the moral 'sense' were endowed by Providence for motivating men toward actions unintentionally contributing to public benefits, without intending private interests.

... as in the first Treatise, we resolv'd the Constitution of our present Sense of Beauty into the divine Goodness, so with much more obvious Reason may we ascribe the present Constitution of our moral Sense to his Goodness.<sup>48</sup>

His argument here of beauty and virtue as qualities valued regardless of their pleasure was from the Stoics described in Cicero's *De Finibus*.

As, in approving a beautiful form, we refer the beauty to the object; we do not say that it is beautiful because we reap some little pleasure in viewing it, but we are pleased in viewing it because it is antecedently beautiful. ... [so] we are pleased in the contemplation [the virtue of another, the whole excellence] because the object is excellent, and the object is not judged to be therefore excellent because it gives us pleasure.<sup>49</sup>

This moral sense from its very nature appears to be designed for regulating and controlling all our powers. This dignity and commanding nature we are immediately conscious of, as we are conscious of the power itself. Nor can such matters of immediate feeling be otherways proved but by appeals to our hearts.<sup>50</sup>

In *Passions and Affections*, in addition to the sense of beauty and the moral sense, several other senses and desires, were also vindicated as useful means of gratifying

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<sup>45</sup> *Meditations*, VII. 48, pp. 271-2.

<sup>46</sup> See, for instance, Hutcheson's use of Stoic language in his proof of design or intention of the universe, in opposition to blind force or chance, which he thought was evidenced in wisdom, wit and prudence in the cause (*BOHD*, V. XIX, pp. 71-2); of the final causes of the internal senses (VIII. II, pp. 89-90); Hutcheson's emphasis of it as 'moral necessity' (VIII. II, p. 92).

<sup>47</sup> *MGE*, p. 83.

<sup>48</sup> *MGE*, p. 175.

<sup>49</sup> *System*, I, p. 54. See also pp. 57-8.

<sup>50</sup> *System*, I, p. 61. Footnote, p. 61, approved the Stoics in Cicero's *De Finibus*, I. iii. c. 10.

our public desires or serving virtuous purposes.<sup>51</sup> These included the external senses, a public sense, and a sense of honour,<sup>52</sup> as well as desires or aversions arising for these senses.<sup>53</sup> Hutcheson followed Cicero's *de Finibus* and its criticism of Epicures, who had argued that desires were all selfish.<sup>54</sup> Hutcheson's approval of the harmony between wealth and virtue was thus written in the Stoic language of Cicero with his idea of benevolent desires of wealth and power for benevolent purposes.

Benevolent or public desires for benevolent or public purposes were then distinguished from those for excessive ambition in the sense that the former were based on the Stoic virtue of self-command, which would abate deception, disappointment from ambition, and finally lead men to the Deity and Providence.<sup>55</sup> Either the desires are private or benevolent, the evil in each case consists in the want of their proportion:

The most natural and perfect state which our minds at present seem capable of, is that where all the natural affections, desires and senses are preserved vigorous, in proportion to the dignity of the object they pursue; so that the inferior are still kept under the restraint of the superior, and never allowed to defeat the end for which God intended them; or to control either of the two grand determinations of our souls toward the happiness and perfection of the individual, and that of the system.<sup>56</sup>

This is the typically Stoic idea Shaftesbury had been keen on revitalising in his writings, emphasising the balance between the various sentiments.

Such proportional sentiments then would be the foundation of natural sociability, giving rise to private as well as public benefits:

Larger societies have force to execute greater designs of more lasting and extensive advantage. These considerations abundantly shew the necessity of living in society, and obtaining the aid of our fellows, for our very subsistence; and the great convenience of larger associations of men for the improvement of life, and the increase of all our enjoyments.<sup>57</sup>

Regarding proportional sentiments nurturing natural sociability, Hutcheson often praised Roman law described by Cicero as a useful means of government respecting

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<sup>51</sup> *Passions*, pp. 14-5.

<sup>52</sup> *Passions*, pp. 12-3.

<sup>53</sup> *Passions*, pp. 13-4.

<sup>54</sup> *Passions*, pp. 16-7.

<sup>55</sup> *System*, I, pp. 102-4, 106 and 112.

<sup>56</sup> *System*, I, p. 154. See also pp. 150-1 and 154-7.

'the natural equality of men'.

*The natural equality of men* consists chiefly in this, that these natural rights belong equally to all: this is the thing intended by the natural equality. ... There is *equality in right*, how different soever the objects may be; that *jus aequum* in which the Romans placed true freedom.<sup>58</sup>

For example, Hutcheson paid attention to the rights and duties on parentage described in Roman law, which had supposed the natural equality of rights and duties between parents and children, which also regarded the latter as equally rational agents.<sup>59</sup> The reverse side of this argument was his dismissal of canon law, for its failure to bring both justice and equality between sexes.<sup>60</sup> Hutcheson's rare historical account of the origin of canon law shows that he was not sympathetic to Christianity, and would then have turned his attention to Stoic theology.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, while praising Marcus Aurelius's system as a 'just philosophy',<sup>62</sup> what Hutcheson talked of as God in his account of the duty to God of being virtuous was not the God of Christianity but of the Stoics. As for jurisprudence, Hutcheson criticised the rigid Christian adherence to the laws of nature, which he thought had ignored the fact that beauty and virtue were brought about by senses guided by Providence, not rigidly commanded by Scripture.<sup>63</sup>

The conclusion of his *System* was written in Stoic language, describing how the private as well as general rights would lead men into both wealth and virtue, by fulfilling the duties of being both virtuous and prosperous at the same time. This could be done by controlling selfish passions with the Stoic virtue of self-command:

From these general principles of the publick law of nations, as from those of the private law respecting individuals, we must discern the wonderful footsteps of Divine Wisdom in the constitution of our species. Since it is by following the very principles of our nature, the affections and feelings of our hearts, in that regular subordination of the more limited to the more extensive, which our inward moral sentiments recommend, and by the delightful exercise of the powers of reason which we are naturally prone to, that we obtain and secure to ourselves and

<sup>57</sup> *System*, I, pp. 289-90. The footnote acknowledged the second book of *Cicero de Officiis*. See also *System*, II, p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> *System*, I, pp. 299-300. Hutcheson on the other hand criticised primogeniture in the Roman. See I, pp. 356-7 and II, p. 286.

<sup>59</sup> *System*, II, p. 192.

<sup>60</sup> *System*, II, p. 180.

<sup>61</sup> *System*, II, pp. 182-3.

<sup>62</sup> *System*, II, p. 182.

<sup>63</sup> *System*, II, pp. 128-33.

others both the noblest internal enjoyments, and the greatest external advantages and pleasures, which the instable condition of terrestrial affairs will admit.<sup>64</sup>

Hutcheson had a Stoic faith in Providence and natural sociability bringing even the transitory external objects and happiness.<sup>65</sup> By having his theory of the sense of beauty and his moral sense theory written in Stoic language, Hutcheson showed how these senses guaranteed the pursuit of wealth in a virtuous manner. Hutcheson could then establish his jurisprudence and political economy in order to show the way for legislators to achieve their duties to the public of both being virtuous and prosperous through the practice of their moral sense. In this, he modelled civil laws, whose preservation and practice for the sake of the public good were the duties of legislators, on Roman Law for its merit as a means of government for achieving equality. In this way, Stoic language made way for Hutcheson to construct his system of moral philosophy as a Stoic, after Mandeville had demolished the deist system of Shaftesbury by his paradox.

Hutcheson however had to develop the way of using Stoic language to fully combat Mandeville's paradox, after Mandeville had already demolished the Stoic credentials of Shaftesbury's system. Following Shaftesbury, Hutcheson too supposed that beauty and virtue alike gave rise to pleasure, but he thought that the pleasure given by moral virtue was nobler than the pleasure we received from beautiful objects. For, the former directed our actions only toward the good of others whereas the latter excited us to the pursuit of knowledge and rewarded us for it.<sup>66</sup> In this, Hutcheson made the distinction between the sense of beauty and the moral sense by shifting the aesthetic and moral question from the Shaftesburian theory of beauty and virtue towards that of taste and the sense of morals.<sup>67</sup> This is Hutcheson as a critique, rather than a follower, of Shaftesbury. With his new account of the sense of

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<sup>64</sup> *System*, II, pp. 376-7.

<sup>65</sup> *System*, II, p. 377.

<sup>66</sup> *MGE*, p. 83.

<sup>67</sup> Pocock suggests that polished taste was a civil virtue associated with an economic, cultural and moral quality which was an alternative of civic virtue characterised as political and military. See Pocock (1983), pp. 240-2. Possibly, from the viewpoint of the theory of taste, civic virtue looked like a fanaticism of virtue without its taste, whereas taste was a reflective sense of that virtue more crucially demanded in a more moderate modern commercial society rather than in a *polis*. Klein offers an interpretation that links the culture of politeness with Shaftesbury.

beauty and the moral sense, Hutcheson conceived the world as the negative community and accordingly became sceptical about Shaftesbury's deist dimension to his account of sociability more suitable for the positive community. Hutcheson's ideas of the sense of beauty and the moral sense here reflected his Calvinist or Presbyterian thinking. He thought that men could form the ideas of beauty and virtue on their own thanks to the sense of beauty and the moral sense which were implanted equally in every man so as to enable them to survive in the negative community. In this sense, his Christian thinking enabled Hutcheson to construct his system of moral philosophy as a Stoic, with his own way of using Stoic language, even after Mandeville had already demolished the deist system of Shaftesbury by his paradox. Hutcheson could still use Stoic language, which had been exploited for a satire by Mandeville, as a powerful weapon to vitiate Mandeville's claims.

### 3. David Hume

Hume attempted to solve the Mandeville's paradox by discarding the rigorist line of moral thinking, and by rewriting the theory of sociability, more logically and credibly, in a way better grounded in experience and observation, or in his own words, by introducing the experimental method of reasoning into it. This meant for Hume that the Epicurean or Sceptic line of moral principles, rather than the Stoic, appeared to be more plausible, and, as a result, to be more useful when he was to refute Mandeville. As we have seen, Hume thought that we could form our moral ideas in the light of their usefulness or utility as the standard of morals. And in the context of 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, Hume sought to solve Mandeville's paradox by introducing the idea of utility as the measure of morals. This was Hume's preference for the language of natural jurisprudence written in Epicurean idioms to the civic humanist language used by Polite Whig deists such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

Hume's differentiation between Epicurean or Sceptic and Stoic languages however seems more complicated than meets the eye. In his *Essays Moral and*

*Political* published in 1742, Hume offered a sketch of his views on both Stoic and Epicurean or Sceptic philosophies. Mostly agreeing with Hutcheson, Hume understood that Stoic philosophy had preached for industry to fulfil both wealth and virtue by controlling passions. In Hume's view, the Stoics had taught that

You need but taste the sweets of honest labour. Proceed to learn the just value of every pursuit; long study is not requisite: Compare, though but for once, the mind to the body, virtue to fortune, and glory to pleasure. You will then perceive the advantages of industry: You will then be sensible what are the proper objects of your industry.

I prove to you, that even in the midst of your luxurious pleasures, you are unhappy; and that by too much indulgence, you are incapable of enjoying what prosperous fortune still allows you to possess.<sup>68</sup>

In Hume's understanding, the Stoics would think that happiness lies in prosperous fortune, or in other words, modest necessities, as well as in a cultivated mind, or virtuous spirit, attained only by industry. In other words, industry could achieve both wealth and virtue, and, as a result, industry could bring happiness to us.

If the contemplation, even of inanimate beauty, is so delightful; if it ravishes the senses, even when the fair form is foreign to us: What must be the effects of moral beauty? And what influence must it have, when it embellishes our own mind, and is the result of our own reflection and industry?<sup>69</sup>

Hume might have approved Hutcheson's use of Stoic language for arguing that wealth and virtue were simultaneously attained by the sense of beauty and the moral sense. As Hume was to argue that value came from industry, he considered the Stoic idea to be in accordance with his own idea that wealth and virtue came from industry, whose values would then be reflected in the beauty or utility of both.

But in his subsequent essay on the Sceptic, Hume was to clarify that such values were not intrinsic, as Hutcheson had argued, but merely relative depending on the variety of sentiments and taste, as the Sceptics had argued:

If we can depend upon any principle, which we learn from philosophy, this, I think, may be considered as certain and undoubted, that there is nothing, in itself, valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection. ... This is confusedly the case with regard to all the bodily senses: But if we examine the matter more accurately, we shall find, that

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<sup>68</sup> *Essays*, Essay 16: 'The Stoic', p. 150.

<sup>69</sup> *Essays*, p. 153.

the same observation holds even where the mind concurs with the body, and mingles its sentiment with the exterior appetite.<sup>70</sup>

Hume thought that the Sceptics had rightly understood that the relativity of values stems from the diversity of taste and of sentiments:

... there is a considerable diversity in the sentiments of beauty and worth, and ... education, custom, prejudice, caprice, and humour, frequently vary our taste of this kind. ... You have not even any single argument, beyond your own taste, which you can employ in your behalf: And to your antagonist, his particular taste will always appear a more convincing argument to the contrary. If you be wise, each of you will allow, that the other may be in the right; and having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess, that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature, and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object in a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind.<sup>71</sup>

Behind his interpretation of the Sceptics was Hume's own previous argument that beauty or utility, especially public utility, was a perception, or a moral idea arising from the association of ideas in the mind.<sup>72</sup> Hume appeared to be in favour of Mandeville's sceptical argument that beauty and virtue were relative, validating it with his epistemology and his theory of the association of ideas in which he thought that ideas arose from the sociable passions. But, unlike Mandeville, Hume did not argue that such taste of beauty and morals were necessarily vicious. Passions and industry would produce both wealth and virtue, and their values would be reflected in their beauties. On the other hand, what separated Hume from the Stoics and Hutcheson was that Hume thought that such passions and natural abilities were something merely probable, working by chance and fortune, and frequently under the effect of imagination and delusion. In line with the Epicurean and Sceptical traditions of morals, Hume accordingly argued differently from Hutcheson's views, which had been presented in Stoic language.<sup>73</sup> First, Hutcheson made no distinction between justice and the natural virtues, following the Stoics who had argued that the idea of virtue was always natural, in the sense that it was always amiable and agreeable to moral sense.<sup>74</sup> Second, Hutcheson argued that the rights of men to life,

<sup>70</sup> *Essays*, Essay 18: 'The Sceptic', p. 162.

<sup>71</sup> *Essays*, p. 163.

<sup>72</sup> *Essays*, pp. 166-8. See also p. 165.

<sup>73</sup> Moore (1994), pp. 33-4.

<sup>74</sup> Moore (1994), p. 34.

liberty, reputation and property were always natural or instinctive, never artificial or conventional. He acknowledged no need for conventions, the rules of justice or artificial restraints to justify those rights.<sup>75</sup> Finally, Hutcheson thought that human nature would never fail to approve benevolence or kind affection in characters. Because the idea of moral virtue would come immediately to mind when we perceive a benevolent character, the utility or agreeableness of such a quality would not prompt us to approve it.<sup>76</sup> In Hume's view, on the contrary, beauty and virtue, good and value were only relative, and life was governed by fortune, chance or probability. Hume accordingly argued in line with the Sceptics that, 'In a word, human life is more governed by fortune than by reason; is to be regarded more as a dull pastime than as a serious occupation; and is more influenced by particular humour, than by general principles'.<sup>77</sup> Hume was therefore sceptical of the ideas of virtue and vice found in the writings by the Stoics. In another essay, later withdrawn, Hume criticised the Stoics for their neglect of the influence of chance, delusion and probability upon human life, and emphasised the useful biases, instincts and prejudices, as well as the role of delusion in the sentiments of the heart.

There is another Humour, ... I mean that grave philosophic Endeavour after Perfection, which, under Pretext of reforming Prejudices and Errors, strikes at all the most endearing Sentiments of the Heart, and all the most useful Byasses and Instincts, which can govern a human Creature. The *Stoics* were remarkable for this Folly among the Antients; and I wish some of more venerable Characters in latter Times had not copy'd them too faithfully in this Particular. The virtuous and tender Sentiments, or Prejudices, if you will, have suffer'd mightily by these Reflections; while a certain sullen Pride or Contempt of Mankind has prevail'd in their Stead, and has been esteem'd the greatest Wisdom; tho', in Reality, it be the most egregious Folly of all others.<sup>78</sup>

Hume instead adopted many of Cicero's arguments, especially those ideas of virtue and vice which Cicero drew from the Epicureans and the Sceptics. Cicero was an eclectic, drawing his compositions upon the different streams of ancient moral philosophy, mostly the Stoics, the Epicureans and the Sceptics. Hutcheson, on the other hand, had read Cicero as a Stoic, and preferred those of Cicero's works written

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<sup>75</sup> Moore (1994), p. 34.

<sup>76</sup> Moore (1994), pp. 34-5.

<sup>77</sup> *Essays*, p. 180.

<sup>78</sup> *Essays*, Part III: Essays Withdrawn and Unpublished, Essay 2: 'Of Moral Prejudices' (1742), p. 539.



in favour of Stoic arguments.<sup>79</sup> Hume took over the insights of the Epicureans, revived particularly by the French writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in his attempt to reduce the insights of the ancient moral philosophers to an experimental science of morals. For, Hume thought that the ideas of virtue and happiness conceived by those ancient moralists were merely hypothetical or fanciful.<sup>80</sup> The ancient Epicurean moralists such as Epicurus himself, Lucretius and Horace, had been revived in seventeenth-century Britain by Hobbes, adapted by Pierre Bayle and Mandeville, and became identified as the morality of the Sceptics or the Pyrrhonians in the early eighteenth century. This line of Epicurean morals offered Hume the themes and topics he developed in his *Treatise*: for instance, the distinction between justice and the natural virtues; the convention to abstain from the possessions of others; the moral approbation as derived from utility and pleasure.<sup>81</sup> Hume understood and favoured Cicero in his Sceptic aspect, especially his views on probability and delusion, and his idea of utility as the only criterion of beauty and virtue. Hume saw these ideas from the Sceptics through Cicero and the Continental natural jurists as useful to his theory of sociability and worth elaboration in his *Treatise on Human Nature*.

In Hume, passions, which would give rise to causation or the association of ideas, were no more than probable, therefore knowledge derived from such causation or the association of ideas was accordingly probable. Unlike the Stoics and Hutcheson, Hume presupposed no Providence in the formation of knowledge, that is, no senses or reason guided by God towards certain knowledge.<sup>82</sup> The necessary connection of one object with another was therefore but a mere delusion in the

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<sup>79</sup> Moore (1994), p. 26.

<sup>80</sup> Moore (1994), pp. 26-7.

<sup>81</sup> Moore (1994), p. 27. See also pp. 28, 36 and 49-50. For Hume's background concerning the Epicurean tradition at Edinburgh University, see pp. 32-3. James Moore concludes that Hume's moral philosophy was not at all Hutchesonian, in the sense that Hume wrote in the Epicurean tradition revived by Hobbes and adopted by Bayle and Mandeville, who had been opposed by Hutcheson in all the separate expressions of his moral philosophy. It however still has to be shown how Hume's account of the observance of justice based on fellow-feeling and a regard to public utility was not Hutchesonian. See Moore (1994), pp. 53-4. For a similar view, see Phillipson (1989), pp. 48-9. Both Hutcheson and Hume argued against the Court Whig statecraft or government which insisted on aristocratic patronage as the contrivance of turning private interests into public benefits. Apart from Fowler's remark on both of them as the 'English Moralists', I strongly agree with Fowler in saying that Hume was one of Hutcheson's 'successors', rather than a critic (Fowler, p. 224).

imagination, which could not be determined by reason, aided only by experience.<sup>83</sup> The idea of probability in Hume was typically his scepticism of reasoning, passions, senses and knowledge concerning the association of the ideas of objects.<sup>84</sup> Hence Hume's declaration that carelessness and inattention alone could afford us remedy for sceptical doubt with respect to reason and senses, and that he would rely entirely upon them.<sup>85</sup> As a Stoic, Hutcheson had emphasised senses, such as the sense of beauty and the moral sense, as the guiding divine principle for forming the ideas of beauty and virtue. But Hume, as a Sceptic, shifted the focus back to imagination, responding to Mandeville's charge of the role of delusive imagination in forming sociability. Hume was in this respect sticking to his agenda of introducing the experimental methods into moral sciences. Unlike Hutcheson, Hume validated the role and influence of experience and habit, which would conspire to operate upon the imagination, making men form certain ideas, though merely as probable knowledge. For instance, the memory, senses and understanding were in Hume's view all founded on the imagination, or in his words, the vividness of our idea.<sup>86</sup>

Because Hume presupposed no Providence, which would guide men towards beauty and virtue through senses such as the sense of beauty and the moral sense, he set utility as the only measure of beauty and virtue. This would also mean for Hume that self was the only agent which we could rely on for forming ideas of beauty, virtue and sociability if they should be based on experience and observation. As for beauty, he argued that beauty or deformity was closely related to self. A form which would give us delight and satisfaction, or pain, was perceived only as an object of our pride or humility. This was his typically sceptic view that beauty was derived only from the ideas of convenience and utility.<sup>87</sup> For a similar reason, utility was the only cause of sociability as well. The satisfaction for utility was perceived only by

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<sup>82</sup> *THN*, pp. 62-3.

<sup>83</sup> *THN*, p. 64.

<sup>84</sup> See also *THN*, Book I, Part III: 'OF KNOWLEDGE AND PROBABILITY', Section XIII: 'Of unphilosophical probability', p. 104; Part IV: 'Of the sceptical and other systems of philosophy', Section I: 'Of scepticism with regard to reason', pp. 121-3; Section II: 'Of scepticism with regard to the senses', pp. 125-8. As for the imagination, see also pp. 129, 132 and 139.

<sup>85</sup> *THN*, p. 144.

<sup>86</sup> *THN*, pp. 172-3.

<sup>87</sup> *THN*, Book II: 'OF THE PASSIONS', Part I: 'OF PRIDE AND HUMILITY', Section VIII: 'Of beauty and deformity', pp. 195-6.

the imagination, though that would be interfered with by delusion. The cause of esteem for the rich was, for instance, sympathy, making us partake of the satisfaction.<sup>88</sup> This was because riches would give satisfaction to their possessors, which would then be conveyed to the beholder by the imagination, producing an idea resembling the original impression connected with love, an agreeable passion.<sup>89</sup> In other words, because utility was the only cause of sociability, sympathy with others' utility and satisfaction only would give us an esteem for their power and riches.<sup>90</sup>

Hume's conception of sympathy in this respect was argued for his criticism of Mandeville, who had argued that prosperity and virtue were not compatible. Hume described sympathy as a disinterested and universal principle of the universe, a basis of friendship and therefore happiness.<sup>91</sup> Such sympathy with the utility of wealth was a sociable sentiment which would both esteem for wealth as well as fulfil the virtue of friendship.

Hume's conception of sympathy in this sense came from his reading of Cicero's *Of Friendship*. Cicero had taught that 'there existed that, wherein consists the entire strength of friendship, an entire agreement of inclinations, pursuits, and sentiments'.<sup>92</sup> Friendship was exactly what we now call empathy with the sentiments of a friend: 'Now friendship is nothing else than a complete union of feeling on all subjects, divine and human, accompanied by kindly feeling and attachment'.<sup>93</sup> Hume then understood that sympathy was the communication of the passions, such as satisfaction and pleasure from wealth and power, which would form the core of sociability. Sympathy, therefore, not advantage, was the only motive of friendship.

... we are so formed by nature, that there should be a certain social tie among all; stronger, however, as each approaches nearer to us. ... in this respect friendship is superior to relationship, because from relationship benevolence can be withdrawn, and from friendship it cannot: for with the withdrawal of benevolence the very name of friendship is done away, while that of relationship remains.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>88</sup> *THN*, Book II, Part II: 'Of love and hatred', Section V: 'Of our esteem of the rich and powerful', p. 231.

<sup>89</sup> *THN*, p. 234.

<sup>90</sup> *THN*, pp. 232 and 234.

<sup>91</sup> *THN*, pp. 234-5.

<sup>92</sup> Cicero, 'On Friendship', in Cicero (1856), Chapter IV, p. 177.

<sup>93</sup> 'On Friendship', Chapter VI, p. 180. As a disinterested sentiment, the reach of this sympathy should be extensive and even reach the dead (Chapter VII, pp. 181-2).

<sup>94</sup> 'On Friendship', Chapter V, pp. 179-80.

For love (from which friendship takes its name) is the main motive for the union of kind feelings: for advantages truly are often derived from those who are courted under a pretence of friendship, and have attention paid them for a temporary purpose. In friendship there is nothing false, and nothing pretended; and whatever belongs to it is sincere and spontaneous. Wherefore friendship seems to me to have sprung rather from nature than a sense of want, and more from an attachment of the mind with a certain feeling of affection, than from a calculation how much advantage it would afford.<sup>95</sup>

But although many and great advantages ensued, yet it was not from any hope of these that the causes of our attachment sprang: for as we are beneficent and liberal, not to exact favour in return (for we are not usurers in kind actions), but by nature are inclined to liberality, thus I think that friendship is to be desired, not attracted by the hope of reward, but because the whole of its profit consists in love only.<sup>96</sup>

Wherefore friendship has not followed upon advantage, but advantage on friendship.<sup>97</sup>

... for to love is nothing else than to be attached to the person whom you love, without any sense of want, without any advantage being sought; and yet advantage springs up of itself from friendship, even though you may not have pursued it.<sup>98</sup>

In Cicero's conception of sympathy, Hume saw the possibility of a sociable sentiment which would both esteem wealth as well as fulfil friendship as a sociable virtue, capable enough of challenging the Mandevillian paradox. Hume also saw the possibility of this sociable sentiments and the virtue of friendship in what he called, in Stoic language, the middle station of life: 'But there is another Virtue, that seems principally to ly among *Equals*, and is, for that Reason, chiefly calculated for the middle Station of Life. This Virtue is FRIENDSHIP'.<sup>99</sup> The middle station of life, characterised by their virtue of friendship, was the only way to both wealth and virtue. For, in Hume's view, the inferior station of life was more suitable for attaining wealth than virtue, whereas the superior station of life was more suitable for practising virtues than attaining wealth.<sup>100</sup>

Sympathy could esteem wealth as well as fulfil friendship as a sociable virtue without taking our own interest into account. For, beauty could be derived from sympathy, or the observation of convenience could give pleasure (because

<sup>95</sup> 'On Friendship', Chapter VIII, p. 183.

<sup>96</sup> 'On Friendship', Chapter IX, p. 185.

<sup>97</sup> 'On Friendship', Chapter XIV, p. 193.

<sup>98</sup> 'On Friendship', Chapter XXVII, p. 213.

<sup>99</sup> *Essays*, Part III: Essays Withdrawn and Unpublished, Essay 3: 'Of the Middle Station of Life' (1742), p. 547.

<sup>100</sup> *Essays*, pp. 546-8. Others however would have thought the opposite might be true!

convenience was a beauty), merely by our sympathising with the proprietor, entering into his interest by the force of imagination, and feeling the same satisfaction that the objects would naturally occasion in him.<sup>101</sup> This would then tell why utility must be the only measure of beauty and virtue. A sense of beauty, for instance, depended on the principle of sympathy, because, by sympathy, all affections readily passed from one person to another, begetting corresponding movements in every human creature. So, by the sense of beauty, all pleasure or advantage even of a stranger for whom we have no friendship, pleases us with his beautiful (or useful) objects.<sup>102</sup> Equally, moral sentiments within all the natural and artificial virtues also depended on the principle of sympathy, because our approbation of virtues (and their usefulness to public benefits) extended beyond our own interest towards the most distant countries and ages.<sup>103</sup> Later in his essay 'Of the Standard of Taste', Hume set out a question of how to seek a reliable standard of taste amidst the relativity of beauty and morals: 'It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision, afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another'.<sup>104</sup> This also was to seek a reliable standard of judging utility as the only measure of beauty and virtue. Hume thought that 'a more accurate definition of delicacy' was not only possible but also necessary. For, 'Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings'.<sup>105</sup> In Hume's view, taste could be a good understanding of the suitability of the means to the end.

Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose, for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must carry constantly in our view, when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *THN*, p. 235.

<sup>102</sup> *THN*, Book III, Part III, Section I: 'Of the origin of the natural virtues and vices', p. 368.

<sup>103</sup> *THN*, p. 369.

<sup>104</sup> *Essays*, Essay 23: 'Of the Standard of Taste', p. 229.

<sup>105</sup> *Essays*, pp. 234-5.

<sup>106</sup> *Essays*, p. 240.

A well-refined taste could be, therefore, a good judgement of the suitability of the 'means of the passions and the imagination' to an end, or in other words, utility. A well-refined taste would control the passions and the imagination as the means through which the ideas of beauty and morals were formed in the association of ideas. In Hume, such good taste, or a reliable standard of utility as the only measure of beauty and virtue, would replace the Stoic-Hutchesonian design of the grace of the Providence. More importantly, good taste and a reliable judgement of utility would invite the sociable sentiment of sympathy into a crucial role in forming well-refined ideas of beauty and morals. In criticising prejudice as a destructive power of sound judgement and preventing operations of the intellectual faculties, Hume argued that 'a critic of a different age or nation, who should pursue this discourse [on a particular work of oration and performance], must have all these [particular] circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience [did in that particular age], in order to form a true judgment of the oration', by forgetting his individual being and his particular circumstances.<sup>107</sup> Hume learned from Cicero that, rather than Providence, this good taste and sound judgement of utility alone could guarantee secure ideas of beauty and morals, esteem for wealth and the virtue of friendship, by involving the sociable sentiment of sympathy. As we have seen, Hume argued that we could form our moral ideas in the light of their usefulness or utility as the standard of morals. And in the context of 'private vices, public benefits' controversy, this was how Hume sought to solve Mandeville's paradox: by introducing the idea of utility as the measure of morals. Thus Hume demolished the Stoic system of Hutcheson and presented a Sceptic, and consequently utilitarian, system of moral philosophy, while showing that it was still possible to argue against Mandeville without referring to the Stoic deism.

#### 4. Adam Smith

In comparison with Hutcheson and Hume, Smith appears to have been a more balanced reader of Stoic philosophy. Smith appreciated the merits that Hutcheson had found useful for his argument about natural sociability, as well as properly distancing himself from its demerit of the rigorous treatment of morals, as Hume had. His thinking about sociability was deeply influenced by Hutcheson at Glasgow. The philosophical education from Hutcheson was an introduction to a Stoic system of moral philosophy as intended to reactivate the idiom under pressure from the scepticism and Epicureanism of Hobbes and Mandeville. From Hutcheson, Smith learned to make the Stoic and Augustinian longing for virtue a fundamental moral need to be satisfied if men were to be genuinely sociable.<sup>108</sup> In his history of moral philosophy, Smith classified Stoic philosophy as one 'Of those Systems which make Virtue consist in Propriety', along with Plato and Aristotle.<sup>109</sup> This is the point where Smith approved of them.<sup>110</sup> Smith contrasted the Stoics with Epicures, who had presented one 'Of those Systems which make Virtue consist in Prudence'.<sup>111</sup> Smith objected to the doctrine,<sup>112</sup> but not because it made virtue consist in prudence, but because it supposes virtue arise from its utility and 'tendency to prevent pain and to procure ease and pleasure'. In this respect, Smith acknowledged Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics as philosophers superior to Epicures in thinking virtue as deserving to be pursued for its own sake and value, rather than for its utility.<sup>113</sup> In particular, Smith appreciated Stoic philosophy for its good understanding of the selfish passions, teaching 'a certain order, propriety, and grace, to be observed' in pursuing the objects of original appetite, such as riches, power and authority,<sup>114</sup> and its criticism of

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<sup>107</sup> *Essays*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>108</sup> Phillipson (2000), p. 72.

<sup>109</sup> *TMS*, Part VI: 'Of Systems of MORAL PHILOSOPHY Consisting of Four Sections', Section II: 'Of the different Accounts which have been given of the Nature of Virtue', Chapter I, VII. ii. 1. 1, p. 267.

<sup>110</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 1. 15-7, pp. 272-3. See also a paragraph added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn. on p. 275. As for Plato and Aristotle, see VII. ii. 1. 11-2, pp. 270-1. Smith's source of the Stoic philosophy was Cicero's *De Finibus*. See VII. ii. 1. 15, p. 272.

<sup>111</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 2. 1 and 7-8, pp. 294 and 296-7. Smith's source of Epicures was again Cicero's *De Finibus*. See VII. ii. 2. 2, p. 295.

<sup>112</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 2. 13, p. 298.

<sup>113</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 2. 9 and 17, pp. 297 and 299-300.

<sup>114</sup> *TMS*, Part I, Chapter III: 'Of the stoical philosophy', p. 58.

The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy excessive ambition toward wealth and power.<sup>115</sup> On the whole, Smith thus approved and praised Stoic philosophy, but at the same time he pointed out the needs of paying attention to such matters of fact as the weakness of human nature in our understanding of morals. Following Hume's criticism of the Stoics, Smith thought that the 'honourable' demerit of Stoic philosophy was its teaching 'a perfection altogether beyond the reach of human nature'.<sup>116</sup> Smith considered that the Stoics could have evaluated human passions, and their uncontrollable yet innocent and useful abilities for contributing to the public good. Smith was to aim at a moral account of passions and sentiments more suited to a wealthier modern commercial society.<sup>117</sup>

Smith decided to do this by altering the Stoic and Hutchesonian fashion for writing moral accounts. He preferred to write like a critic, following a looser method and presenting the agreeable and lively pictures of manners, such as done in Cicero's first book of *Offices*, and Aristotle's *Ethics*. Smith thought that such a method would be more useful and agreeable for a science of morals.<sup>118</sup> On the contrary, Smith considered that the Stoics and Hutcheson had written moral accounts like grammarians, introducing a sort of accuracy, and endeavouring to provide exact and precise rules for our behaviour. Such writers included not only casuists such as Hutcheson but also natural jurists such as Grotius and Pufendorf.<sup>119</sup> This method would have been appropriate for natural jurists, because they had been dealing only with the rules of justice. But the method would become inappropriate when, for instance, casuists applied it to many other moral duties. Smith reckoned that the grammarian writing of morals had rooted in 'the custom of auricular confession, introduced by the Roman Catholic superstition, in times of barbarism and ignorance'.<sup>120</sup> By this method, casuists 'attempted, to no purpose, to direct by precise

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<sup>115</sup> *TMS*, pp. 58-60 and I. iii. 2. 9-12, pp. 58 and 60-1.

<sup>116</sup> *TMS*, p. 60. See also a sentence added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn. at III. 3. 8 and 11, pp. 139-41. Hume had similarly thought that the Stoics had departed 'too far from the receiv'd Maxims of Conduct and Behaviour, by a refin'd Search after Happiness or Perfection' (Hume, *Essays*, Part III: *Essays Withdrawn and Unpublished*, Essay 2: 'Of Moral Prejudices' (1742), p. 542).

<sup>117</sup> *TMS*, III. 4. 5-6, p. 158.

<sup>118</sup> *TMS*, Part VI, Section IV: 'Of the Manner in which different Authors have treated of the practical Rules of Morality', VII. iv. 2 and 5-6, pp. 327 and 329.

<sup>119</sup> *TMS*, VII. iv. 2 and 7, pp. 327 and 329-30.

<sup>120</sup> *TMS*, VII. iv. 8 and 16, pp. 330 and 333.



rules what it belongs to feeling and sentiment only to judge of'.<sup>121</sup> Smith concluded that 'The two useful parts of moral philosophy, therefore, are Ethics and Jurisprudence: casuistry ought to be rejected altogether'.<sup>122</sup>

Smith was therefore going to write about morals as a critic, rather than as a grammarian. The rule was to be applied equally even to his theory of justice and government: Cicero's *Offices*, and Aristotle's *Ethics*, in Smith's view, 'treat of justice in the same general manner in which they treat of all the other virtues'. As for his writing on the laws of government and of political economy, Smith was going to adopt the style of Cicero's *De Legibus* and Plato's *Laws*.<sup>123</sup> It would be interesting to see that, in his typically casuistic account of ethics (on gratitude, beneficence, and so on), Hutcheson had criticised Cicero for his 'too general and inaccurate' account of 'depositum' in *De Officiis*.<sup>124</sup> In Hutcheson's definition, *depositum* was contracts 'where "the business committed and undertaken is the safe custody of goods"'.<sup>125</sup> Hutcheson's political economy in his *System of Moral Philosophy* was accordingly going to be a casuistic account of private rights, concerning property (Book II, Chapters VII and VIII), commerce (Chapter XII) and contracts (Chapters IX, X and XIII). On the contrary, Smith's political economy was to be a lively description of the passions, sentiments and sociability in commerce and production. As explained in his discussion on the regulations of the banking trade, this was because, unlike in jurisprudence, the perfectionism of morals in the science of a legislator could well jeopardise the government, or public benefits, in the name of justice, or natural liberty.

To restrain private people, it may be said, from receiving in payment the promissory notes of a banker, for any sum whether great or small, when they themselves are willing to receive them; or, to restrain a banker from issuing such notes, when all his neighbours are willing to accept of them, is a manifest violation of that natural liberty which it is the proper business of law, not to infringe, but to support. Such regulations may, no doubt, be considered as in some respect a violation of natural liberty. But those exertions of the natural liberty of a few individuals, which might endanger the security of the whole society, are, and ought to be, restrained by the laws of all governments; of the most free, as well as of the most despotical. The obligation of building party walls, in order to prevent the communication of fire, is a violation of natural liberty,

<sup>121</sup> *TMS*, VII. iv. 33, p. 339.

<sup>122</sup> *TMS*, VII. iv. 34, p. 340.

<sup>123</sup> *TMS*, VII. iv. 37, pp. 341-2. See also *LJ* (B), 1-4, pp. 397-8.

<sup>124</sup> *De Officiis*, I. i. c. 10.

<sup>125</sup> *System*, II, p. 68.

exactly of the same kind with the regulations of the banking trade which are here proposed.<sup>126</sup>

Smith's criticism of the French physiocrats was pointed to a similar defect, their too rigid regimen for political economy, echoing his criticism of the Stoic perfectionism of morals.

Some speculative physicians seem to have imagined that the health of the human body could be preserved only by a certain precise regimen of diet and exercise, of which every, the smallest, violation necessarily occasioned some degree of disease or disorder proportioned to the degree of the violation. Experience, however, would seem to show that the human body frequently preserves, to all appearance at least, the most perfect state of health under a vast variety of different regimens; even under some which are generally believed to be very far from being perfectly wholesome. But the healthful state of the human body, it would seem, contains in itself some unknown principle of preservation, capable either of preventing or of correcting, in many respects, the bad effects even of a very faulty regimen. Mr. Quesnai, who was himself a physician, and a very speculative physician, seems to have entertained a notion of the same kind concerning the political body, and to have imagined that it would thrive and prosper only under a certain precise regimen, the exact regimen of perfect liberty and perfect justice. He seems not to have considered that in the political body, the natural effort which every man is continually making to better his own condition, is a principle of preservation capable of preventing and correcting, in many respects, the bad effects of a political oeconomy, in some degree, both partial and oppressive. Such a political oeconomy, though it no doubt retards more or less, is not always capable of stopping altogether the natural progress of a nation towards wealth and prosperity, and still less of making it go backwards. If a nation could not prosper without the enjoyment of perfect liberty and perfect justice, there is not in the world a nation which could ever have prospered. In the political body, however, the wisdom of nature has fortunately made ample provision for remedying many of the bad effects of the folly and injustice of man; in the same manner as it has done in the natural body, for remedying those of his sloth and intemperance.<sup>127</sup>

This statement may remind us of Smith's criticism of Mandeville for his moral rigorism, his too strict moral standard concerning the vices such as his definition of luxury: like Quesnay, Mandeville too was a physician himself. In Smith's eyes, the physiocratic regimen of perfect liberty would have seemed as equally artificial as

<sup>126</sup> *WN*, II. ii. 94, p. 324.

<sup>127</sup> *WN*, Book IV, Chapter IX: 'Of the agricultural System, or of those Systems of political Oeconomy, which represent the Produce of Land as either the sole or the principal Source of the Revenue and Wealth of every Country', IV. ix. 28, pp. 673-4. The criticism of moral rigorism was going to be echoed in his criticism of the spirit of system in the final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. See *TMS*, VI. ii. 2. 15-8, pp. 232-4. The man of system 'does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might chuse to impress upon it' (VI. ii. 2. 17, p. 234). This is 'the highest degree of arrogance', which 'is to erect his own judgment into the supreme standard of right and wrong', and 'to fancy himself the only wise and worthy man in the commonwealth, and that his fellow-citizens should accommodate themselves to him and not he to them' (VI. ii. 2. 18, p. 234).

Mandevillian statecraft. It ignored 'the wisdom of nature', or in Smith's words, 'some unknown principle of preservation' contained in the political body itself, or more precisely, 'the natural effort which every man is continually making to better his own condition'. These were what had been called 'ambition', 'deception', 'delusion' or 'the contrivance of nature' in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. These were the principle of preservation which had been altogether verified and vindicated as just and endowed by nature, as 'ample provision', in his theory of sympathy, in an attempt to refute Mandeville's moral arguments. Based on that confident refutation, the principle was, in *The Wealth of Nations*, laid as the foundation of the science of a legislator and of political economy.

Unlike Hume, Smith however was a more sympathetic reader of Stoic philosophy and, nevertheless, preferred to develop the language of Stoic philosophy for his description of natural sociability in a modern commercial society. In a typically Smithian digression in *The Wealth of Nations*, he pointed out in passing three main reasons for his preference for Stoic moral philosophy. The first was the beauty of the system of moral philosophy seen in this ancient account. In this,

The maxims of common life were arranged in some methodical order, and connected together by a few common principles, in the same manner as they had attempted to arrange and connect the phenomena of nature. The science which pretends to investigate and explain those connecting principles, is what is properly called moral philosophy.<sup>128</sup>

In his very early essays on 'the History of the Ancient Physics' and 'the History of the Ancient Logics and Metaphysics', Smith had already developed his argument of the beauty of philosophical systems and had approved the system of Stoic theology. Even at this early stage of his academic career, Smith would possibly have planned to use Stoic language for his future account of sociability because the beauty of Stoic system seemed to him to be useful for describing the system of a commercial society as a beautiful system.<sup>129</sup> Smith thought that the purpose of the study of Stoic

<sup>128</sup> *WN*, Book V: 'Of the Revenue of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Chapter I: 'Of the Expences of the Sovereign or Commonwealth', Part Third: 'Of the Expence of publick Works and publick Institutions', Article II: 'Of the Expence of the Institutions for the Education of Youth', V. i. f. 25, pp. 768-69.

<sup>129</sup> Ancient physics, 11. Smith had primarily considered the professional philosophers' sense of order in 'The principles which lead and direct philosophical enquiries'. Smith's distinctive description of what

philosophy was to find the invisible hand of Jupiter behind the beauty of nature. Only in this way could philosophy, with its invisible connecting chain that explained the operation of nature, counterpoise superstition, which prevailed in the savage state where philosophy could not be supported or studied.<sup>130</sup> In 'the History of the Ancient Logics and Metaphysics', Smith developed his defence of Stoic philosophy, by comparing the Stoic notion of 'Idea' with that of Plato.<sup>131</sup> Smith regarded the Stoic concepts of nature and of God without substance as the most useful device for philosophy in seeking the invisible connecting principles of nature, and in writing such philosophy in style with its beauty. Such Stoic language would have seemed useful for Smith who was, along with Hutcheson and Hume, going to argue about beauty in terms of its effect upon the mind rather than of its own nature like Platonic philosophy. This systematic arrangement in ancient moral philosophy would have seemed to Smith to be a good tactic for stimulating public spirit, especially when

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philosophy was had been written in terms of philosophers' sense of beauty and order: 'Philosophy is the science of the connecting principles of nature. ... Philosophy, by representing the invisible chains which bind together all these disjointed objects, endeavours to introduce order into this chaos of jarring and discordant appearances, to allay this tumult of the imagination, and to restore it, when it surveys the great revolutions of the universe, to that tone of tranquillity and composure, which is both most agreeable in itself, and most suitable to its nature. Philosophy, therefore, may be regarded as one of those arts which address themselves to the imagination; .... It is the most sublime of all the agreeable arts, and its revolutions have been the greatest, the most frequent, and the most distinguished of all those that have happened in the literary world' (Astronomy, II. 12). Smith attempted to show there how customs and prejudices had intervened reasonable path in the history of scientific discourses, and thereby to rejuvenate 'the principles which does not always lead and direct philosophical inquiries'; in other words, the beauty and order of philosophical reasoning. The system of Tycho Brache, for instance, was accepted, even though it was, 'in any respect, more complex and more incoherent than that of Copernicus. Such, however, was the difficulty that mankind felt in conceiving the motion of the Earth, that it long balanced the reputation of that otherwise more beautiful system. It may be said, that those who considered the heavens only, favoured the system of Copernicus, which connected so happily all the appearances which presented themselves there. But that those who looked upon the Earth, adopted the account of Tycho Brache, which, leaving it at rest in the centre of the universe, did less violence to the usual habits of the imagination' (Astronomy, IV. 43). In this, Smith followed Hutcheson who thought knowledge was pursued in view of its beauty of theorems, besides its utility (*BOHD*, III. V). Hutcheson argued that pleasure arose not from any knowledge and utility but from the idea of beauty, and that utility could only add some pleasure, if any, to beauty (*BOHD*, I. XII; X. XV). For the nature of system in general, Smith compared it with a machine, by which it was indicated in Smith that philosophy was a matter of refining its taste as an artist (Astronomy, IV. 19). As shown, philosophy was described in Smith in terms of its aesthetic quality, emphasising the standpoint and sentiments of philosophers and their spectators. Philosophy was, therefore, based on philosophers' good taste of invisible connecting principles which the imagination could restore pleasant ideas thereby. In Smith, what mattered in philosophy was a taste, order and method, all of which Galileo possessed (Astronomy, IV. 50). A discovery of an analogy, for instance, 'no doubt, rendered the system of Kepler more agreeable to the natural taste of mankind' (Astronomy, IV. 56).

<sup>130</sup> See Astronomy, III. 2.

applied to political economy, as described in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Another reason why Smith preferred ancient (Greek and Roman) moral philosophy over the modern was that the former had investigated 'Wherein consisted the happiness and perfection of a man'. They had treated 'the duties of human life' as subservient to 'the happiness and perfection of human life'. In contrast, modern moral philosophy had been 'taught only as subservient to theology'. In it, 'the duties of human life' had therefore been treated as chiefly subservient to 'the happiness of a life to come'.<sup>132</sup> Modern moral philosophy had introduced 'subtlety and sophistry; the casuistry and the ascetic morality', simply 'for the education of ecclesiasticks' and for 'a more proper introduction to the study of theology' at European universities. They had therefore not been 'more proper for the education of gentlemen or men of the world, or more likely either to improve the understanding, or to mend the heart'.<sup>133</sup> This remark would again echo Smith's assessment of Mandeville's system and, in particular, of his ascetic morality, which Smith argued had presented 'the perfection of virtue' 'as almost always inconsistent with any degree of happiness in this life'. Indeed, Smith could pinpoint the fact that Mandeville was influenced by the popular Jansenist ascetic morality.

The other reason that Smith preferred ancient moral philosophy, and Roman philosophy in particular, was that he came to regard Roman Law as a useful remedy for the factions that had been institutionalised in English Common law. Smith contrasted Roman moral philosophy with Greek in this respect:

The morals of the Romans, however, both in private and publick life, seem to have been, not only equal, but upon the whole, a good deal superior to those of the Greeks. ... The good temper and moderation of contending factions seems to be the most essential circumstance in the publick morals of a free people. But the factions of the Greeks were almost always violent sanguinary; whereas, till the time of the Gracchi, no blood had ever been shed in any Roman faction, and from the time of the Gracchi the Roman republick may be considered as in reality dissolved.<sup>134</sup>

Smith attributed the superiority of Roman moral philosophy to the science of Roman Law, which in his view had succeeded in purging factional interests from legal

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<sup>131</sup> Ancient Logics and Metaphysics, 9.

<sup>132</sup> *WN*, V. i. f. 30, p. 771. See also *TMS*, III. 2. 35.

<sup>133</sup> *WN*, V. i. f. 32, p. 772.

practices.

It is perhaps worth while to remark, that though the laws of the twelve tables were, many of them, copied from those of some antient Greek republicks, yet law never seems to have grown up to be a science in any republick of antient Greece. In Rome it became a science very early, and gave a considerable degree of illustration to those citizens who had the reputation of understanding it. In the republicks of antient Greece, particularly in Athens, the ordinary courts of justice consisted of numerous and, therefore, disorderly bodies of people, who frequently decided almost at random, or as clamour, faction and party spirit happened to determine. The ignominy of an unjust decision, when it was to be divided among five hundred, a thousand, or fifteen hundred people (for some of their courts were so very numerous), could not fall very heavy upon any individual. At Rome, on the contrary, the principal courts of justice consisted either of a single judge, or of a small number of judges, whose characters, especially as they deliberated always in publick, could not fail to be very much affected by any rash and unjust decision. In doubtful cases, such courts, from their anxiety to avoid blame, would naturally endeavour to shelter themselves under the example, or precedent, of the judges who had sat before them, either in the same, or in some other court. This attention, to practice and precedent, necessarily formed the Roman law into that regular and orderly system in which it has been delivered down to us; and the like attention has had the like effects upon the laws of every other country where such attention has taken place. The superiority of character in the Romans over that of the Greeks, ... was probably more owing to the better constitution of their courts of justice, ....<sup>135</sup>

In contrasting Roman moral philosophy with Greek, Smith could well have had European mercantile policy in mind which was still in practice in his own day. Smith would have regarded Roman Law, with its attempted impartiality, as useful for remedying factional defects in the administration of justice and government, which had inherited and nurtured mercantile factional interests, at one time in favour of Court Whig interests. For instance, Roman Law could be a remedy for modern laws obsessed with apprenticeship, especially the regulations on the duration of apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships were altogether unknown to the antients. The reciprocal duties of master and apprentice make a considerable article in every modern code. The Roman law is perfectly silent with regard to them. I know no Greek or Latin word (I might venture, I believe, to assert that there is none) which expresses the idea we now annex to the word Apprentice, a servant bound to work at a particular trade for the benefit of a master, during a term of years, upon condition

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<sup>134</sup> *WN*, V. i. f. 40, pp. 774-5.

<sup>135</sup> *WN*, V. i. f. 40, pp. 778-9. See that Marcus Aurelius wrote against parties or factions: 'He who had the charge of my education, taught me not to be fondly attached to any of the contending parties in the chariot-races, or in the combats of the gladiators. ... not to intermeddle with the affairs of others, ....' (*Meditations*, I. 2, p. 75). The footnote reads: 'The keenness of these contentions among the Romans in that age, is abundantly known'.

that the master shall teach him that trade.<sup>136</sup>

Roman Law could equally be a remedy for the feudal law of succession. The law of succession in Roman law had allowed that 'all the children shared equally in the estate of the father or master of the family'. On the contrary, the law of primogeniture in European feudal law, which Smith thought was 'contrary to nature, to reason, and to justice', was occasioned by the nature of feudal government.<sup>137</sup> For instance, entails, 'the natural consequences of the law of primogeniture', 'are altogether unknown to the Romans. Neither their substitutions nor fideicommisses bear any resemblance to entails'.<sup>138</sup>

For these three main reasons, Smith decided to resort to Stoic language and develop Hutcheson's use of it for his argument concerning sociability, especially for his criticism of Mandeville and to show that wealth and virtue are compatible. The old Stoic precept of 'following nature' was revived by the neo-Stoics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and by natural jurists such as Grotius, and apparently carried over into the theory of commerce, where nature was supposed to rule as well.<sup>139</sup> Smith valued Stoic ethics for their role in encouraging sociability.<sup>140</sup> Marcus Aurelius had written that

I cannot be angry at my kinsmen, or hate them. We were formed by nature for mutual assistance, as the two feet, the hands, the eyes lids, the upper and lower rows of teeth. Opposition to each other is contrary to nature; all anger and aversion is an opposition.<sup>141</sup>

Go on straight in the way pointed out by your own nature, and the common nature of the whole. They both direct you to the same road.<sup>142</sup>

As the regular universe is formed such a complete whole of all the particular bodies, so the universal destiny or fate of the whole, is made a complete cause out of all the particular

<sup>136</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter X: 'Of Wages and Profit in the different Employments of Labour and Stock', Part II: 'Inequalities occasioned by the Policy of Europe', I. x. c. 15, p. 139. For Smith's view on the defects of apprenticeship, see I. x. c. 13-4, pp. 138-9.

<sup>137</sup> *LJ* (A), i. 115-6. For the law of succession among the Romans, see *LJ* (A), i. 94-104. See editors' footnote 6, *WN*, pp. 382-3.

<sup>138</sup> *WN*, Book III, Chapter II: 'Of the Discouragement of Agriculture in the antient State of Europe after the Fall of the Roman Empire', III. ii. 5, p. 384. On the other hand, 'even England is not altogether without them'. Let alone Scotland (III. ii. 6, p. 385).

<sup>139</sup> Kaye, p. xcix.

<sup>140</sup> *TMS*, p. 9; Phillipson (2000), p. 80.

<sup>141</sup> *Meditations*, II. 1, p. 98.

<sup>142</sup> *Meditations*, V. 3, p. 176.

causes.<sup>143</sup>

These Stoic ideas could well have inspired Smith's arguments concerning sympathy, sociability, the division of labour and his criticism of mercantile hostility, especially that between England and France. From them, Smith would have adopted a language that could replace Mandeville's in describing how individuals were to be tricked into contributing to society as a whole through the contrivance of nature such as the sense of beauty or taste, and the sense of justice. In this language, independent particular individual causes, 'your own nature' or 'all the particular causes', were to be directed into the entire design of the universe, 'the common nature of the whole' or 'a complete cause', by Providence. Stoic ideas of Providence would have given rise to Smith's ideas of the 'invisible hand' and of delusion fulfilling the needs and utility of the universe. Hutcheson and Smith developed Stoic language for their criticism of Mandeville's language of passions, in which beauty and virtue were denoted as relative to circumstances. In Stoic language, Hutcheson and Smith could describe beauty and virtue as valuable in themselves, independent of praise or external circumstances. In Stoic language, Smith could make a distinction between praise and praise-worthiness: praise was 'lower beauties' 'in material forms, and works of art', such as 'emerald' or 'gold, ivory, purple, a dagger, a flower, a shrub'.<sup>144</sup>

On the other hand, however, Smith seems to have read the Stoics in a more balanced way than Hutcheson and Hume. Smith paid attention to their defects of moral perfectionism (which Hutcheson had not cared about), as well as to their argument about delusion or the role of imagination (which Hume had accredited more to Cicero and the Sceptics than to the Stoics). In Stoic language, Smith described man as fitted by nature to society, as he needs mutual assistance, with the sense of remorse, and therewith the ability to check his own conduct, as he is likewise exposed to mutual injuries.<sup>145</sup> This was because the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy society, as justice is 'the main pillar' of society. This consciousness of guilt was therefore implanted by nature into the human breast to

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<sup>143</sup> *Meditations*, V. 8, p. 182.

<sup>144</sup> *Meditations*, IV. 20, pp. 150-1, quoted above.



enforce the observation of justice.<sup>146</sup> The conscience was the man within, as distinct from the man without, or an actual spectator. He was a 'vicegerent' of the author of nature 'upon earth to superintend the behaviour of his brethren'.<sup>147</sup> In Stoic language, he was 'This inmate of the breast, this abstract man, the representative of mankind, and substitute of the Deity'.<sup>148</sup> In Stoic language, it was also a 'means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends' of the Nature, that is, the support of the individual and the propagation of the species. It was so in the same manner as the wheels of the watch adjusted to the correct end, the pointing of the hour.<sup>149</sup> It was, in other words, a contrivance of the means to the end, to which its beauty was ascribed and man's sense of beauty would be deluded. Such beauty was also the foundation of sociability by which the selfish passions would be deluded into contributing to public benefits. This argument was also his challenge to Hume and Hutcheson. It developed Hume's utilitarian accounts on the passions of remorse and on the sense of justice and punishment.<sup>150</sup> Smith showed that our regard for individuals, concerning the injustice done to them, would have arisen for its own sake, regardless of our regard for the multitude, or the needs and utility of justice for the preservation of society. It also criticised Hutcheson's accounts on justice and on other virtues as derived from benevolence. Smith stated that such regard for the individual does not require love, esteem and affection for particular friends and acquaintances, because sympathy with the resentment of even an odious person is so universal that it never fails to check an injustice committed.<sup>151</sup> Even man's regard for the general rules of conduct was built into human nature through a sense of duty, rather than benevolence, in order to direct man's behaviour.<sup>152</sup> Therefore, 'those important rules of morality are the commands and laws of the Deity, who will finally reward the

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<sup>145</sup> *TMS*, Part II, Section II: 'Of Justice and Beneficence', Chapter III: 'Of the utility of this constitution of Nature', II. ii. 3. 1, p. 85.

<sup>146</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 3-4, p. 86.

<sup>147</sup> *TMS*, p. 128: added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn.

<sup>148</sup> *TMS*, p. 130: added in 2nd edn. and dropped in 6th edn.

<sup>149</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 5, p. 87.

<sup>150</sup> See *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 6-9 and 12, pp. 87-9 and 91.

<sup>151</sup> *TMS*, II. ii. 3. 10, pp. 89-90.

<sup>152</sup> *TMS*, Part III, Chapter III: 'Of the influence and authority of the general Rules of Morality, and that they are justly regarded as the Laws of the Deity', III. 5. 1, pp. 161-2.

obedient, and punish the transgressors of their duty',<sup>153</sup> through 'those vicegerents' within us promulgating those rules. Such general rules are properly called laws because 'Those vicegerents of God within us, never fail to punish the violation of them, by the torments of inward shame, and self-condemnation; and on the contrary, always reward obedience with tranquillity of mind, with contentment, and self-satisfaction'.<sup>154</sup> In Stoic language, unlike Hutcheson, Smith could write that

... by acting according to the dictates of our moral faculties, we necessarily pursue the most effectual means for promoting the happiness of mankind, and may therefore be said, in some sense, to co-operate with the Deity, and to advance as far as in our power the plan of Providence. ... What is the reward most proper for encouraging industry, prudence, and circumspection? Success in every sort of business. And is it possible that in the whole of life these virtues should fail of attaining it? Wealth and external honours are their proper recompense, and the recompense which they can seldom fail of acquiring.<sup>155</sup>

In Stoic language, Smith could describe how wealth could be pursued properly by selfish passions directed by divine guidance through a sense of remorse and duty, and achieved as a proper reward from the laws of the Deity. Smith used Stoic language to respond to Mandeville and to show that human nature is not vicious in the pursuit of wealth, thanks to the self-checking mechanism of the mind, but neither is it in terms of the benevolence-based utilitarian account of Hutcheson nor the oversceptical utilitarian account of Hume. Smith seems not to have agreed with Hume's terminology for denoting any motive contributing to public benefits as virtuous. Smith rather argued that self-love could be virtuous because it controls itself out of self-interest. Smith was to argue that the passions sought a means to an end for the sake of the means itself, albeit guided or tricked by the Deity. The Deity has implanted in man even

the passion properly called ambition; a passion, which when it keeps within the bounds of prudence and justice, is always admired in the world, and has even sometimes a certain irregular greatness, which dazzles the imagination, when it passes the limits of both these virtues, and is not only unjust but extravagant: hence, to be approved to proceed more from the passion itself [as in a case of a man of enterprise and ambition], than a regard to the general rule [as in a case of a man of dull regularity].<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 3, p. 163.

<sup>154</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 6, pp. 165-6.

<sup>155</sup> *TMS*, III. 5. 7-8, p. 166.

The selfish passions such as ambition arise from enterprises and great achievements, rather than from the regard to public benefits and utility. They always ought to be within the bounds of propriety and justice, aided by such moral sentiments as remorse and duty, but even if they happen not to be, they effectively bring about greater merits for prosperity and public utility than the injustice done by them. Smith's use of Stoic language would show not only that Smith, even though he shared with Hutcheson and Hume the essence of their criticism of Mandeville, was not totally convinced by their strategies and semantics, but also that Smith might have read, criticised and developed the Stoics differently.

The ancient stoics were of opinion, that as the world was governed by the all-ruling providence of a wise, powerful, and good God, every single event ought to be regarded, as making a necessary part of the plan of the universe, and as tending to promote the general order and happiness of the whole; that the vices and follies of mankind, therefore, made as necessary a part of this plan as their wisdom or their virtue; and by that eternal art which educes good from ill, were made to tend equally to the prosperity and perfection of the great system of nature. No speculation of this kind, however, how deeply soever it might be rooted in the mind, could diminish our natural abhorrence for vice, whose immediate effects are so destructive, whose remote ones are too distant to be traced by the imagination. ... It is the same case with those passions [luxury and caprice] we have been just now considering. Their immediate effects are so disagreeable, that even when they are most justly provoked, there is still something about them which disgusts us. These, therefore, are the only passions of which the expressions, as I formerly observed, do not dispose and prepare us to sympathise with them, before we are informed of the cause which excites them. ... It was, it seems, the intention of Nature, that those rougher and more unamiable emotions, which drive men from one another, should be less easily and more rarely communicated.<sup>157</sup>

His understanding of Stoic language in this manner was going to help Smith innovate the way the language was used and thereby allowed him to proceed from natural jurisprudence towards political economy. Smith could use Stoic language so as to develop a theory of justice *per se* into a new theory of sociability and such selfish passions and sentiments as parsimony and ambition, as a science of a legislator. Smith's reading of the Stoics enabled him, like Hume, to read Cicero as a quasi-Stoic but a bit more sceptical, immune from the rigorous moral perfectionism of the Stoics which Smith might have seen in Marcus Aurelius's language typically deployed by Hutcheson. The introduction of a language from Cicero into his theory

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<sup>156</sup> *TMS*, III. 6. 7, pp. 173-4.

of moral sentiments was a new step by Smith toward a new language of political economy. Political economy could well have been implausible without stepping further from a mere account of justice. A new language had to be developed wherein an account of the sense of beauty in relation to other passions could be elaborated in order to describe how the essentials of life could be supplied without committing vices. The new language had to be one in which prudence and frugality could be depicted as well-controlled sentiments, bringing wealth and virtues without committing vices.

Below, I present Cicero's language of political economy in his *Cato Major, an Essay on Old Age*, as one of the languages to which Smith owed a lot in developing his language of political economy. In this essay, Cicero was explicit that the account concerned political economy, whose origin had been Xenophon, praising agriculture as fulfilling both wealth and virtue at the same time.

For many purposes the books of Xenophon are very useful; which read, I pray you, with diligence, as you are doing. At what length is agriculture praised by him in that book, which treats of the management of private property, and which is styled "OEconomicus."<sup>158</sup>

Cicero had begun the account with questions concerning old age. Among other things, he asked whether it is true, 'that it deprives us of almost all pleasures'.<sup>159</sup> Cicero insisted that old age rather brought about the pleasure of agriculture. First, agriculture is as profitable as pleasurable.

I come now to the pleasures of husbandmen, with which I am excessively delighted; which are not checked by any old age, and appear in my mind to make the nearest approach to the life of a wise man. For they have relation to the earth, which never refuses command, and never returns without interest that which it hath received; but sometimes with less, generally with very great interest. And yet for my part it is not only the product, but the virtue and nature of the earth itself delight me.<sup>160</sup>

Second, agriculture will bring us to the pleasure and beauty of nature.

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<sup>157</sup> *TMS*, I. ii. 3. 4-5. Griswold argues about Smith's criticism of the Stoics in terms of the difference between Stoic nature and Smith's new concept of nature as revealed in an impartial spectator. See Griswold, pp. 317-24.

<sup>158</sup> Cicero, 'On Old Age', in Cicero (1856), Chapter XVII, p. 243.

<sup>159</sup> 'On Old Age', Chapter V, p. 223.

<sup>160</sup> 'On Old Age', Chapter XV, p. 240.

Of which not only the advantage, as I said before, but also the cultivation and the nature itself delights me: the rows of props, the joining of the heads, the tying up and propagation of vines, and the pruning of some twigs, and the grafting of others, which I have mentioned. ... Nor indeed is rural life delighted by reason of corn-fields only and meadows and vineyards and groves, but also for its gardens and orchards; also for the feeding of cattle, the swarms of bees, and the variety of all kinds of flowers. Nor do plantings only give me delight, but also engraftings; than which agriculture has invented nothing more ingenious.<sup>161</sup>

Third, agriculture is the best profession for old age.

Was then their old age to be pitied, who amused themselves in the cultivation of land? In my opinion, indeed, I know not whether any other can be more happy: and not only in the discharge of duty, because to the whole race of mankind the cultivation of the land is beneficial; but also from the amusement, which I have mentioned, and that fullness and abundance of all things which are connected with the food of men, and also with the worship of the gods; so that, since some have a desire for these things, we may again put ourselves on good terms with pleasure.<sup>162</sup>

Finally, agriculture, above all, achieves wealth, beauty and virtue at the same time:

Nothing can be either more rich in use, or more elegant in appearance than ground well tilled; to the enjoyment of which old age is so far from being an obstacle, that it is even an invitation and allurements. For where can that age be better warmed either by basking in the sun or by the fire, or again be more healthfully refreshed by shades or waters?<sup>163</sup>

Marcus Aurelius might have praised an independent life in the country against an ambitious life in the city, contrasting 'the safety and tranquillity' of the former and 'the danger', 'the consternation and trembling' of the latter.<sup>164</sup> But his moral rigorism had ruled out the possibility that ambition could well contribute to enhance the spirit of old age, encouraging the retired for agriculture, bringing about both prosperity and virtue through this most productive as well as beautiful and virtuous industry. Smith developed the language of Cicero in order to make his case that the retired life of merchant-landowners engaging in the improvement of land was the ideal as well as the most important way of increasing the wealth of nations.

In Cicero's language, Smith praised agriculture and country gentlemen engaging in agriculture for two reasons. One is that country gentlemen were the most virtuous people in a modern commercial society. And the other is that

<sup>161</sup> 'On Old Age', Chapter XV, pp. 241-2.

<sup>162</sup> 'On Old Age', Chapter XVI, pp. 242-3.

<sup>163</sup> 'On Old Age', Chapter XVI, p. 243. Hume also thought that the beauty of a field lay in its fertility (*THN*, p. 235).

<sup>164</sup> *Meditations*, XI. 22, p. 429.

agriculture was the most productive industry in society, and therefore country gentlemen were consequently contributing most to public benefits. As for the virtues of country gentlemen and farmers, Smith, first and foremost, thought that these people were most immune to factional spirits.

Country gentlemen and farmers are, to their great honour, of all people, the least subject to the wretched spirit of monopoly. The undertaker of a great manufactory is sometimes alarmed if another work of the same kind is established within twenty miles of him. ... Farmers and country gentlemen, on the contrary, are generally disposed rather to promote than to obstruct the cultivation and improvement of their neighbours farms and estates.<sup>165</sup>

Apparently Smith's statements such as this were written in Cicero's language because Smith was quoting Cato's words: that is, from a hero featured in Cicero's *Of Old Age*:

it is from the farming class that the bravest men and the sturdiest soldiers come, their calling is most highly respected, their livelihood is most assured and is looked on with the least hostility, and those who are engaged in that pursuit are least inclined to be disaffected.<sup>166</sup>

Smith's use of Cicero's language in his political economy would also reveal the ideological setting in which Smith wrote. The language criticised the voluntarist language of Addisonian politeness. This is where Smith affiliated himself more closely to Country Whig view of the virtue of gentlemen rather than Polite Whig affection for the virtue of urbanity with which Smith, on most other occasions, showed more sympathy. Smith seems to have been doubtful whether it was always the case that polite conversations in 'voluntary associations' such as city taverns and coffee-houses never ended up with 'the corporation spirit' or party rage.<sup>167</sup> In addition to the innocence of factional spirit, the virtuous character of agriculture

<sup>165</sup> *WN*, Book IV, Chapter II: 'Of Restraints upon the Importation from foreign Countries of such Goods as can be produced at Home', IV. ii. 21, pp. 461-2. For their innocence of factional spirit, see also I. x. c. 23, p. 143; IV. v. b. 4; vii. b. 24; viii. 34. See also editors' footnote 25, *WN*, p. 143.

<sup>166</sup> Cato, *De Re Rustica*, introduction, translated by H. B. Ash (Loeb Classical Library, 1934), pp. 2-3, quoted at *WN*, IV. ii. 21, p. 462. See editors' footnote 35, *WN*, p. 462.

<sup>167</sup> See his language in his contempt for townsmen's factional spirit and passions as contrasted with the virtues of country gentlemen: 'The inhabitants of a town, being collected into one place, can easily combine together. The most insignificant trades carried on in towns have accordingly, in some place or other, been incorporated; and even where they have never been incorporated, yet the corporation spirit, the jealousy of strangers, the aversion to take apprentices, or to communicate the secret of their trade, generally prevail in them, and often teach them, by voluntary associations and agreements, to prevent that free competition which they cannot prohibit by bye-laws' (*WN*, I. x. c. 22, p. 142).

praised in Smith was the vast knowledge it requires and the consequent superior judgement and understanding the husbandmen needed to acquire.

After what are called the fine arts, and the liberal professions, however, there is perhaps no trade which requires so great a variety of knowledge and experience. ... The common ploughman, though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in this judgment and discretion. He is less accustomed, indeed, to social intercourse than the mechanic who lives in a town. His voice and language are more uncouth and more difficult to be understood by those who are not used to them. His understanding, however, being accustomed to consider a greater variety of objects, is generally much superior to that of the other, whose whole attention from morning till night is commonly occupied in performing one or two very simple operations. How much the lower ranks of people in the country are really superior to those of the town, is well known to every man whom either business or curiosity has led to converse much with both.<sup>168</sup>

This view of agriculture as industry had two implications for Smith. One was that the effect of the division of labour was less conspicuous in agriculture than in other industries.

The nature of agriculture, indeed, does not admit of so many subdivisions of labour, nor of so complete a separation of one business from another, as manufactures. ... This impossibility of making so complete and entire a separation of all the different branches of labour employed in agriculture, is perhaps the reason why the improvement of the productive powers of labour in this art, does not always keep pace with their improvement in manufactures.<sup>169</sup>

But this was hardly a concern to Smith as evidence of the virtue of this Adam's profession. Rather, agriculture was the most virtuous profession thanks to its difficulty in subdividing the operations and the consequent requirement of greater knowledge on the part of a workman. This virtue would keep husbandmen not so ignorant as those workers in manufactures amidst the increasing division of labour in a modern commercial society.<sup>170</sup>

In Cicero's language, Smith also praised agriculture and country gentlemen engaging in agriculture because agriculture was the most productive industry in society, and country gentlemen were consequently contributing most to public benefits. Productivity was, as in Cicero, attributed to the nature involved in

<sup>168</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter X: 'Of Wages and Profit in the different Employments of Labour and Stock', Part II: 'Inequalities occasioned by the Policy of Europe', I. x. c. 23-4, p. 143-4. See also V. i. f. 50; *LJ* (B), 328. See editors' footnote 28, *WN*, p. 144.

<sup>169</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter I: 'Of the Division of Labour', I. i. 4, p. 16. See also IV. ix. 35; *LJ* (A), vi. 30-1; (B), 214.

<sup>170</sup> *WN*, V. i. f. 50.

agricultural production.

No equal capital puts into motion a greater quantity of productive labour than that of the farmer. Not only his labouring servants, but his labouring cattle, are productive labourers. In agriculture too nature labours along with man; and though her labour costs no expence, its produce has its value, as well as that of the most expensive workmen. ... The labourers and labouring cattle therefore, employed in agriculture, not only occasion, like the workmen in manufactures, the reproduction of a value equal to their own consumption, or to the capital which employs them, together with its own profit; but of a much greater value. Over and above the capital of the farmer and all its profits, they regularly occasion the reproduction of the rent of the landlord. This rent may be considered as the produce of those powers of nature, the use of which the landlord lends to the farmer. ... It is the work of nature which remains after deducting or compensating every thing which can be regarded as the work of man. ... No equal quantity of productive labour employed in manufactures can ever occasion so great a reproduction. In them nature does nothing; man does all; and the reproduction must always be in proportion to the strength of the agents that occasion it.<sup>171</sup>

Manufactures therefore produce no rent, and therefore add less value to the annual produce of labour in society and to the real wealth and revenue of its inhabitants.

The capital of the landlord, on the contrary, which is fixed in the improvement of his land, seems to be as well secured as the nature of human affairs can admit of. The beauty of the country besides, the pleasures of a country life, the tranquillity of mind which it promises, and wherever the injustice of human laws does not disturb it, the independency which it really affords, have charms that more or less attract every body; and as to cultivate the ground was the original destination of man, so in every stage of his existence he seems to retain a predilection for this primitive employment.<sup>172</sup>

In this language, 'independence' was synonymous to 'beauty', as in Hutcheson's Stoic terminology. Smith ventured that, not only in terms of its own absolute advantage, but also in terms of the relative advantage of agriculture in relation to the general interest of the society, agriculture was by far the most advantageous industry in society. By classifying the revenues of society into three: that is, rent, wages and profit, Smith concluded that the interest of those who live by rent (the nobility and country gentlemen) 'is strictly and inseparably connected with the general interest of the society'.<sup>173</sup> On the other hand, the interest of those who live by profit (the merchants and manufacturers) 'has not the same connection with the general interest of the society'. For, 'the rate of profit does not, like rent and wages, rise with the

<sup>171</sup> *WN*, Book II, Chapter V: 'Of the different Employment of Capitals', II. v. 12, pp. 363-4. See also V. i. a. 9, pp. 694-5.

<sup>172</sup> *WN*, III. i. 3, p. 378.

<sup>173</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter XI: 'Of the Rent of Land', I. xi. p. 8, p. 265.



The 'private vices, public benefits' controversy prosperity, and fall with the declension of the society'.<sup>174</sup> Though necessary, trading and manufacture were, therefore, not the most advantageous professions for public benefits. What was more, because trading and manufacture were generally prone to the factional spirit, they were not the most virtuous industry, either.<sup>175</sup> On the other hand, the interest of those who live by wages (the labourers) 'is as strictly connected with the interest of the society as that of the' nobility and country gentlemen. They tend however to be ignorant of their own interest, because of their miserable conditions, poor education and habits unfit for judgement.<sup>176</sup> This would jeopardise the possibility of making their professions the most advantageous to and productive of public benefits. This was equally the case with the nobility, because of their indolence and sloth, even though their interest was in line with the general interest of the public.<sup>177</sup> The order of people Smith eventually pinpointed as the most productive and advantageous, as well as the most virtuous in society, was consequently the country gentlemen, who engaged in the improvement of their land in order fully to understand their interest and that of the society.<sup>178</sup> This was because

A gentleman who farms a part of his own estate, after paying the expence of cultivation, should gain both the rent of the landlord and the profit of the farmer. He is apt to denominate, however, his whole gain, profit, and thus confounds rent with profit, at least in common language. The greater part of our North American and West Indian planters are in this situation. They farm, the greater part of them, their own estates, and accordingly we seldom hear of the rent of a plantation, but frequently of its profit.<sup>179</sup>

Gentlemen actively engaged in farming were the most advantageous to the increase of the wealth of nations, because their interest mattered as both landlord and investor at the same time, unlike that of the nobility indulging and simply collecting their rents. In particular, those Smith had in mind were the merchants who had turned country gentlemen and embarked on the improvement of their estates:

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<sup>174</sup> *WN*, I. xi. p. 10, p. 266.

<sup>175</sup> Their acute understanding of their own interest would eventually be even dangerous to public benefits: 'The proposal of any new law or regulation of commerce which comes from this order, ought always to be listened to with great precaution, and ought never to be adopted till after having been long carefully examined, not only with the most scrupulous, but with the most suspicious attention' (*WN*, I. xi. p. 10, pp. 266-7).

<sup>176</sup> *WN*, I. xi. p. 9, p. 266.

<sup>177</sup> *WN*, I. xi. p. 8, p. 265.

<sup>178</sup> On this issue in Smith, see also Phillipson (1983), pp. 191-3 and 197.

<sup>179</sup> *WN*, Book I, Chapter VI: 'Of the component Parts of the Price of Commodities', I. vi. 20, p. 70.

the wealth acquired by the inhabitants of cities was frequently employed in purchasing such lands as were to be sold, of which a great part would frequently be uncultivated. Merchants are commonly ambitious of becoming country gentlemen, and when they do, they are generally the best of all improvers. A merchant is accustomed to employ his money chiefly in profitable projects; whereas a mere country gentleman is accustomed to employ it chiefly in expence. ... Those different habits affect their temper and disposition in every sort of business. A merchant is commonly a bold; a country gentleman, a timid undertaker. ... The habits, besides, of order, oeconomy and attention, to which mercantile business naturally forms a merchant, render him much fitter to execute, with profit and success, any project of improvement.<sup>180</sup>

These merchant-landowners were consequently the people who had contributed most to introduce 'order and good government, and with them, the liberty and security of individuals, among the inhabitants of the country, who had before lived almost in a continual state of war with their neighbours, and of servile dependency upon their superiors'.<sup>181</sup> These merchant-landowners provided clear evidence for Smith that there was at least one profession, agricultural improvement achieved by retired merchants in their old age, which could well establish a bridge between wealth and virtue. They seemed to Smith to provide a counter-proof to Mandeville's claim that it was impossible to achieve both wealth and virtue at the same time. As in Hutcheson, 'beauty' was the term which linked 'wealth' and 'virtue' and Smith sought to show how the 'beauty' of the profession pursued by these retired merchants in their old age produced both wealth and virtue. They could combine the most productive industry with their attention and application, the virtues most required for agricultural improvement, that they had formerly acquired as successful merchants.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *WN*, Book III, Chapter IV: 'How the Commerce of the Towns contributed to the Improvement of the Country', III. iv. 3, pp. 411-2. R. G. Wilton casts a doubt on Smith's remark, that the merchants who became landed proprietors 'were the best of all improvers', on the grounds that 'the mercantile contribution to economic advance during this period' is still an open question. See R. G. Wilton (1971), p. 146. His paper presents an example of a failure in improvement by merchant-landowners with the case of the merchant house of Denison in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

<sup>181</sup> Smith added that 'Mr. Hume is the only writer who, so far as I know, has hitherto taken notice of it' (*WN*, III. iv. 4, p. 412).

<sup>182</sup> Smith might well have written about these merchant-landowners as the only alternative in Scotland to yeomanry in England, who had more secure landownership than farmers in Scotland, as the yeomanry had not emerged in Scotland. Indeed, eighteenth-century Glasgow, where Smith was a professor of moral philosophy, saw many wealthy colonial merchants, instead of yeoman, who would go on to purchase land in the country and venture upon improvement. For these examples, see Graham, pp. 66, 129, 130, 143, 203, 206 and 512-3; Mizuta, pp. 37, 40 and 76; T. M. Devine (1971), pp. 205-44. Devine concludes that, in the period 1770-1815, 'Merchants were as eager as ever to buy land and there still appeared to be enough of it to satisfy those who had the necessary financial sources to acquire it. Quite clearly few commodities could provide, in quite the same way as an estate

It is worth noting that Hume was rather critical of urban citizens converting into country gentlemen by the purchase of land, because of its effects on keeping the already-high rates of the profits of commerce, failing to encourage the circulation of money and thereby failing to encourage industry.<sup>183</sup> Smith on the other hand praised agriculture as the most productive and virtuous profession and recommended it for the old age of the town merchants. This may have been due to their different understandings of Cicero, and their accordingly different ways of introducing Cicero's language into their writings. Hume may have read Cicero as a more sceptic moralist, whereas Smith seems to have regarded Cicero as somewhat between a Stoic and a sceptic, even if not entirely as Stoic as Hutcheson would have liked to believe.

This led Smith into thinking that the most important virtue brought in by these merchant-landowners was their 'independence', a synonym of 'beauty' in Stoic language, and their capacity to judge and to practice improvement on their own initiative. Smith illustrated merchant-landowners in the North American colonies as an example, whose economy he thought was progressing most rapidly.<sup>184</sup> Smith described their prosperity in Stoic language, emphasising that 'Plenty of good land, and liberty to manage their own affairs their own way, seem to be the two great causes of the prosperity of all new colonies'.<sup>185</sup> On the one hand, certainly, there would have been circumstantial advantages for landlords in those new colonies, such as high wages, high growth of population and rapid improvement.<sup>186</sup> Also, as agriculture was the most advantageous industry for increasing wealth, Smith believed, it would have been the case that 'It has been the principal cause of the rapid progress of our American colonies towards wealth and greatness, that almost their whole capitals have hitherto been employed in agriculture'.<sup>187</sup> On the other hand, however, there must have been two factors only therewith all these conditions could have been met. One was the political institutions of the British colonies that was

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could, for the social, aesthetic and financial needs of the eighteenth-century businessman' (Devine (1971), p. 235).

<sup>183</sup> *Essays*, Essay 9: 'Of Public Credit', p. 354.

<sup>184</sup> *WN*, IV. vii. b. 15, p. 571.

<sup>185</sup> *WN*, Book IV, Chapter VI: 'Of Colonies', Part Second: 'Causes of the Prosperity of new Colonies', IV. vii. b. 16, p. 572.

<sup>186</sup> *WN*, IV. vii. b. 2-3, pp. 565-6.

<sup>187</sup> *WN*, II. v. 21, p. 366.

more favourable to the improvement and cultivation of land than those of any other nation.<sup>188</sup> The other was the independence of the merchant-landowners that allowed them to decide and practice in their own interests. In Ciceronian language, Smith depicted the British North American colonies as the most rapidly progressing economy under British political institutions which allowed free trade, and where independent merchant-landowners naturally and necessarily concentrated their capital into agriculture, thus following their own interest. This was also to postulate the Ciceronian imperative that agriculture is the most productive industry and the most advantageous to an increase in the wealth of nations.

For a legislator, 'the great object of the political oeconomy of every country, is to encrease the riches and power of that country'. Agriculture was therefore, as the most productive industry, that sector of the economy where the greatest share of the country's capital should be invested to achieve the greatest possible value of its annual produce. For, the annual produce of the state was the fund from which a legislator must be paid all the taxes. To do so, he had to do nothing more than to let the share of the capital of the country flow freely into all the sectors of economy for its own interest, because agriculture would naturally and necessarily attract the greatest share of capital. In Smith's science of a legislator, it would always be the case therefore that, as long as all sectors of the economy get capital as much as 'what would naturally flow into them of its own accord', any country can achieve the greatest possible value of its annual produce, riches and power.<sup>189</sup> The British North American colonies were the ideal political economy where capital flow was left free of political interference and merchant-landowners could fully exploit their capital for their own interest. They could thus act in a way which would consequently but unintentionally maximise the value of the public annual produce, riches and power. Smith's 'invisible hand' paragraph in *The Wealth of Nations* must be read as being based on this assumption. The 'invisible hand' works only when capital in agriculture puts into motion a greater quantity of domestic industry and gives revenue and employment to a greater number of the inhabitants of a country than an

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<sup>188</sup> *WN*, IV. vii. b. 17-21, pp. 572-5.

<sup>189</sup> *WN*, II. v. 31, p. 372.

equal capital employed in any other sector of the economy.<sup>190</sup> I agree with Phillipson in arguing that nowhere was Smith's thinking more powerful than in his insight into the fact that men are apt to value notions of propriety and justice for aesthetic rather than for functional reasons, and, more generally, all the satisfactions of life in relation to 'the order, the regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or oeconomy of means of which it is produced', rather than utility.<sup>191</sup> But that 'invisible hand' paragraph in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and the chapter in *The Wealth of Nations* about the unintended consequences of intentional actions, are not 'quasi-Mandevillian', as Phillipson and others have thought.<sup>192</sup> My thesis has been attempting to show that Smith's insight was neither Mandevillian nor Hutchesonian nor Humean, but quite peculiarly Smithian, whose equivalent was found nowhere else in other Enlightenment writers. This was one of very few passages where Smith claimed originality, quite correctly and, indeed, quite unusually for him. In this chapter I have tried to show that Smith's insight into the unintended consequences of intentional actions in the 'invisible hand' paragraph and elsewhere was written in Stoic language derived from his distinctive reading of the Stoics. On the one hand, the 'invisible hand' passage and many more in Smith would have been inspired by Stoic ideas of sociability, of sympathy between fellows and harmony within the society, of the guiding hand of providence behind individual causes or the independence of individuals. Smith used the Stoic language of beauty, such as the phrase, 'of its own accord', unambiguously emphasising the independence of each sector of the economy and the harmony between the sectors within the economy. This language was useful for Smith for two reasons. It was useful therein to present both his praise of agriculture, following Cicero, and his criticism of factional spirits in foreign trading, thus following Hume. It was as much useful for Smith therein to do so but without committing himself to what he thought of as an error by the mercantilists as well as by the physiocrats in advocating or criticising a particular sector of the economy beyond 'its own accord'. This was

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<sup>190</sup> IV. ii. 5-8, pp. 454-5. The 'invisible hand' paragraph follows at IV. ii. 9, pp. 455-6, quoted above. See also IV. ii. 3-4, pp. 453-4, and IV. v. a. 3, pp. 505-6.

<sup>191</sup> *TMS*, IV. 1. 10, p. 183, quoted above; Phillipson (2000), pp. 82-3.

<sup>192</sup> See Phillipson (2000), p. 82.

Stoic language describing the sense of beauty in Marcus Aurelius, which Smith might have had in mind:

The governing part is that which rouses, and turns, and forms itself, such as it chuses to be; and makes every event appear such to itself, as it inclines.<sup>193</sup>

What remains as valuable? This one thing, I imagine, to move, or stop yourself, in all desires or pursuits, according to the proper fabric or structure of your nature: for, this is what all design and art is tending to; this is all its aim, that the thing formed by art, should be adapted to the work it is designed for. This, the planter, and the vine-dresser, the horse-rider, and the breeder of the hound, are in quest of. ... Will you not, then, cease to value other things? If you do not, you will never attain to freedom, self-contentment, independency, or tranquillity....<sup>194</sup>

Independent agents and their taste would choose their own professions and businesses as their interests 'incline', so such a taste should be exploited by legislators, let free to achieve the maximum value of annual produce, riches and power of the country. As anything 'valuable' consists in the thing 'adapted to the work' and 'its aim', or in 'all design and art' fitted to its purpose, taste would, if left free, lead people into 'freedom, self-contentment, independency, or tranquillity'. Smith developed Stoic language into his own language of political economy to argue that taste was the source of industry, guiding people 'in all desires and pursuits, according to the proper fabric or structure of your nature'. If agriculture were pursued for its own beauty, without any regard for its advantage, its advantages (profits) could be maximised. On the other hand, if its advantage is vigorously intended, the advantage can not be maximised. As expressed in the 'invisible hand' passage,

By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the publick good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need to be employed in dissuading them from it.<sup>195</sup>

The concept of independence in Stoic language was then refined into Smith's policy

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<sup>193</sup> *Meditations*, VI. 8, p. 213. 'The governing part' may have meant 'reason' in Marcus Aurelius, but Smith would well have interpreted this as 'prudence', which depended on, in Smith's view, understanding, reason and self-command, as shown below.

<sup>194</sup> *Meditations*, VI. 16, pp. 220-1.

<sup>195</sup> *WN*, IV. ii. 9, pp. 455-6. Equally, Smith thought that restraints invented by country gentlemen and farmers upon the importation of foreign goods, intending to secure to them the monopoly of the home market, did them harm (IV. ii. 21, p. 462).

advocacy for free trade, criticising Mandeville's idea of statecraft, which had been presented as a satire of the Stoic.

Is it not cruel, to restrain men from desiring, or pursuing, what appears to them as their proper good or advantage? And yet you seem chargeable in a certain manner with this conduct, when you are angry at the mistakes, and wrong actions of men: for, all are carried toward what appears to them their proper good.<sup>196</sup>

It would have been of no surprise had a statement such as this been written by Smith himself. Smith's free market policy proposal might have been a product of his criticism of London mercantile interests against Scottish merchant-landowners' agricultural as well as colonial interests, in parallel with his criticism of Mandeville who had approved of the London merchants' vices as useful for metropolitan prosperity.

In the 6th and final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1790), Smith seems to have described the merchant-landowner as the Stoic prudent man, who would follow the path to both wealth and virtue. In that last edition of his work, Smith called for a more austere Stoicism to arm the modern citizen against the rigours of commercial civilisation, as his faith in the civilising powers of commerce became more muted in the face of what he saw as the corruption of moral sentiments.<sup>197</sup> In a new chapter added in this edition, Smith reflected that the distinction of ranks and the orders of society, though necessary, were based on the corruption of our moral sentiments caused by our disposition to admire the rich and the powerful and to despise the poor and the mean.<sup>198</sup> The corruption could be seen, Smith argued, in the fact that far more attention was paid to wealth than to wisdom. The objects of ambition and emulation are respect and admiration from mankind, for which two different roads are presented: the road to virtue by the study of wisdom, and that to fortune by the acquisition of wealth and power. Our moral sentiments are corrupt, Smith thought, because the great mob of mankind are most frequently the

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<sup>196</sup> *Meditations*, VI. 27, pp. 227-8.

<sup>197</sup> Phillipson (2000), pp. 83-4.

disinterested admirers and worshippers of wealth and greatness, rather than of wisdom and virtue.<sup>199</sup> Still, consolation for Smith was what a prudent man from the middling and inferior ranks of society could well achieve in terms of both wealth and virtue.

In the middling and inferior stations of life, the road to virtue and that to fortune, to such fortune, at least, as men in such stations can reasonably expect to acquire, are, happily in most cases, very nearly the same. In all the middling and inferior professions, real and solid professional abilities, joined to prudent, just, firm, and temperate conduct, can very seldom fail of success. ... In such situations, therefore, we may generally expect a considerable degree of virtue; and, fortunately for the good morals of society, these are the situations of by far the greatest part of mankind.<sup>200</sup>

This was what Smith had called 'the natural state', and Smith appreciated these Stoic qualities that could be seen in this 'natural state' of mankind. On the contrary, the superior stations of life were incapable of the love of praise-worthiness, and consequently void of happiness, which could not be acquired by wealth alone.<sup>201</sup> The argument then evolved into his evaluation of the Stoic criticism of ambition as well as his development of the argument of praise-worthiness in the subsequent new chapters in the final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Smith now developed the distinction between the love of praise and that of praise-worthiness in Stoic language.<sup>202</sup>

this desire of the approbation, and this aversion to the disapprobation of his brethren, would not alone have rendered him fit for that society for which he was made. Nature, accordingly, has endowed him, not only with a desire of being approved of, but of a desire of being what ought to be approved of; or of being what he himself approves of in other men. The first desire could only have made him wish to appear to be fit for society. The second was necessary in order to render him anxious to be really fit. The first could only have prompted him to the affectation of virtue, and to the concealment of vice. The second was necessary in order to inspire him with the real love of virtue, and with the real abhorrence of vice.<sup>203</sup>

In his argument, Smith was to advance further his criticism of Mandeville with his

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<sup>198</sup> *TMS*, Part I, Section III, Chapter III: 'Of the corruption of our moral sentiments, which is occasioned by this disposition to admire the rich and the great, and to despise or neglect persons of poor and mean condition', I. iii. 3. 1, p. 61.

<sup>199</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 3. 2, p. 62.

<sup>200</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 3. 5, p. 63.

<sup>201</sup> *TMS*, I. iii. 3. 6-8, pp. 63-6.

<sup>202</sup> *TMS*, Part III, Chapter II: 'Of the love of Praise, and of that of Praise-worthiness; and of the dread of Blame, and of that of Blame-worthiness', III. 2. 6-35, pp. 116-34.



account on sociability written in Stoic language, because if the love of praise resulted in nothing more than 'the concealment of vice', seeking virtues could still be vicious, as Mandeville had argued. But his argument of the love of praise-worthiness made way for Smith to criticise Mandeville:

Some splenetic philosophers, in judging of human nature, have done as peevish individuals are apt to do in judging of the conduct of one another, and have imputed to the love of praise, or to what they call vanity, every action which ought to be ascribed to that of praise-worthiness.<sup>204</sup>

In reply to the charges against human nature, Smith also responded by distinguishing two groups of people. On the one hand, there is 'the man of correct and modest virtue', who understands his own praise-worthiness, aims only at the praise due to him and therefore feels happiness. On the other hand, there is 'the man of excessive self-estimation', or 'the proud and the vain man', who can never be contented.<sup>205</sup> As pride and vanity had been the two main passions emphasised by Mandeville, Smith still thought it necessary to criticise Mandeville's moral theory in his last edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. For this, Smith used Stoic language to defend the sociability of human nature against the charges made by Mandeville:

in being anxious to avoid the shadow of blame or reproach, there may be no weakness, but frequently the most praise-worthy prudence. ... The all-wise Author of Nature has, in this manner, taught man to respect the sentiments and judgments of his brethren; to be more or less pleased when they approve of his conduct, and to be more or less hurt when they disapprove of it. He has made man, if I may say so, the immediate judge of mankind; and has, in this respect, as in many others, created him after his own image, and appointed him his vicegerent upon earth, to superintend the behaviour of his brethren.<sup>206</sup>

What, then, if such an impartial spectator failed? What if 'their own consciences', 'the supposed impartial and well-informed spectator', 'the man within the breast, the great judge and arbiter of their conduct' were 'astonished and confounded by the vehemence and clamour of the man without'? Smith however asserted that a humbled and afflicted man could 'appeal to a still higher tribunal, to that of the all-seeing Judge of the world, whose eye can never be deceived, and whose judgments

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<sup>203</sup> *TMS*, III. 2. 6, pp. 116-7. See also VII. iv. 24, p. 336 as an addition in the final edition to the argument.

<sup>204</sup> *TMS*, III. 2. 27, p. 127.

<sup>205</sup> *TMS*, VI. iii. 31, p. 253, VI. iii. 33-4, p. 255 and VI. iii. 50-1, p. 261.

can never be perverted'.<sup>207</sup> Smith finally resorted to the Stoic doctrine:

Our happiness in this life is thus, upon many occasions, dependent upon the humble hope and expectation of a life to come: a hope and expectation deeply rooted in human nature; .... That there is a world to come, where exact justice will be done to every man, ... is a doctrine, in every respect so venerable, so comfortable to the weakness, so flattering to the grandeur of human nature, that the virtuous man who has the misfortune to doubt of it, cannot possibly avoid wishing most earnestly and anxiously to believe it.<sup>208</sup>

Even at the end of his life, revising his general theory of morals for the final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith still regarded Stoic philosophy as a useful means to defend the sociability of human nature and its love of praise-worthiness against the charges made by Mandeville.

The most extensive addition in the final edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* however developed his account of who would be capable of such a quality as the love of praise-worthiness. This was to be examined in his analysis of the virtue of prudence. In Smith, prudence was to be defined as the virtue whose proper business is the care of objects upon which the comfort and happiness of the individual in this life are supposed principally to depend.<sup>209</sup> The first and the principal object of prudence is security, keeping our health, our fortune, our rank or reputation away from any sort of hazard. Smith wrote that 'It is rather cautious than enterprising, and more anxious to preserve the advantages which we already possess, than forward to prompt us to the acquisition of still greater advantages'. It only recommends to us 'real knowledge and skill in our trade or profession, assiduity and industry in the exercise of it, frugality, and even some degree of parsimony, in all our expences'.<sup>210</sup> Smith's description of such a prudent man could well have been a portrait of a retired merchant-landowner.<sup>211</sup> To begin with,

his friendship is not that ardent and passionate, but too often transitory affection, which appears so delicious to the generosity of youth and inexperience. It is a sedate, but steady and faithful attachment to a few well-trying and well-chosen companions; in the choice of whom he is not

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<sup>206</sup> *TMS*, III. 2. 29 and 31, pp. 128 and 130. As for Cicero, see III. 2. 30, p. 128.

<sup>207</sup> *TMS*, III. 2. 32-3, pp. 130-1.

<sup>208</sup> *TMS*, III. 2. 33, p. 132.

<sup>209</sup> *TMS*, Part VI: 'Of the Character of Virtue', Section I; 'Of the Character of the Individual, so far as it affects his own Happiness; or of Prudence', VI. i. 5, p. 213.

<sup>210</sup> *TMS*, VI. i. 6, p. 213.

<sup>211</sup> *TMS*, VI. i. 7-13, pp. 213-6.

guided by the giddy admiration of shining accomplishments, but by the sober esteem of modesty, discretion, and good conduct.

This is because the ways of those convivial societies and the jollity and gaiety of their conversation 'might too often interfere with the regularity of his temperance, might interrupt the steadiness of his industry, or break in upon the strictness of his frugality'.<sup>212</sup> In the steadiness of his industry and frugality, his proper exertion of self-command would be approved and even applauded by 'the impartial spectator, and of the representative of the impartial spectator, the man within the breast'.<sup>213</sup> Such friendships among prudent men were described with Ciceronian characteristics, as 'arising not from a constrained sympathy, not from a sympathy which has been assumed and rendered habitual for the sake of conveniency and accommodation; but from a natural sympathy, from an involuntary feeling that the persons to whom we attach ourselves'. Such friendships were again to be contrasted with relationships and intimacies among youths which in Smith's view 'can by no means deserve the sacred and venerable name of friendship'.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, agriculture would be the profession for the prudent man, because

He has no anxiety to change so comfortable a situation, and does not go in quest of new enterprise and adventures, which might endanger, but could not well increase, the secure tranquillity which he actually enjoys. If he enters into any new projects or enterprises, they are likely to be well concerted and well prepared. He can never be hurried or drove into them by any necessity, but has always time and leisure to deliberate soberly and coolly concerning what are likely to be their consequences.<sup>215</sup>

As agriculture had been eagerly depicted as the most productive, secure, tranquil as well as virtuous industry in *The Wealth of Nations*, the prudent man could hardly embark on anything else. In fact, the prudent man was supposed to be 'not a bustler in business where he has no concern; is not a meddler on other people's affairs'. Therefore, 'He is averse to enter into any party dispute, hates faction, and is not always very forward to listen to the voice even of noble and great ambition'. This should remind us of a portrait of country gentlemen, free from faction, and can act as

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<sup>212</sup> *TMS*, VI. i. 9, p. 214.

<sup>213</sup> *TMS*, VI. i. 11, p. 215.

<sup>214</sup> *TMS*, VI. ii. 1. 18, pp. 224-5.

<sup>215</sup> *TMS*, VI. i. 12, p. 215.

a counter-portrait to the factional mercantile interests that Smith had so fiercely attacked. Contrary to such factional merchants, prudent men could contribute most to public benefits, and therefore would be most sociable. If the care of the individuals is preserved by everyone, the total care of society would be maximised as a whole, which would consequently contribute most to the happiness and benefits of the public. To Smith, this was because

Every man, as the Stoics used to say, is first and principally recommended to his own care; and every man is certainly, in every respect, fitter and abler to take care of himself than of any other person. Every man feels his own pleasures and his own pains more sensibly than those of other people.<sup>216</sup>

That wisdom which contrived the system of human affections, as well as that of every other part of nature, seems to have judged that the interest of the great society of mankind would be best promoted by directing the principal attention of each individual to that particular portion of it, which was most within the sphere both of his abilities and of his understanding.<sup>217</sup>

Needless to say, this was a statement, rewritten in Stoic language, of the presupposition in his free trade policy, whose greatest contributors and benefactors had been supposed to be country gentlemen. But the statement would now reveal Smith's distinctive reading of the Stoics. Smith considered that Marcus Aurelius's *The Meditations* turned principally upon the highest virtue of universal benevolence from the divine Being.<sup>218</sup> But universal benevolence was, in Smith, not so important as the virtue of prudence.

The administration of the great system of the universe, however, the care of the universal happiness of all rational and sensible beings, is the business of God and not of man. To man is allotted a much humbler department, but one much more suitable to the weakness of his powers, and to the narrowness of his comprehension; the care of his own happiness, of that of his family, his friends, his country.<sup>219</sup>

In newly-written sentences of Part VII, Smith was critical of Marcus Aurelius because, in his reading, he was the great apostle of one of the two fundamental doctrines of the Stoic morality: 'the most entire submission to the order of

<sup>216</sup> *TMS*, Part VI, Section II: 'Of the Character of the Individual, so far as it can affect the Happiness of other People', Chapter I: 'Of the Order in which Individuals are recommended by Nature to our care and attention', VI. ii. 1. 1, p. 219.

<sup>217</sup> *TMS*, VI. ii. 2. 4, p. 229. See also VI. ii. 2. 10, p. 231.

<sup>218</sup> *TMS*, Part VI, Section II, Chapter III: 'Of universal Benevolence', VI. ii. 3. 5, pp. 236-7.

<sup>219</sup> *TMS*, VI. ii. 3. 6, p. 237.

Providence; the most complete contentment with every event which the current of human affairs could possibly cast up'. Marcus Aurelius was 'the mild, the humane, the benevolent' philosopher who preached natural but a sort of the perfect sociability of man.<sup>220</sup> Rather, Smith preferred to focus his reading of the Stoics on 'what we may call the practical morality of the Stoics', or 'the doctrine of those imperfect, but attainable virtues', 'which they supposed them capable of exercising, not rectitudes, but proprieties, fitnesses, decent and becoming actions, ... what Cicero expresses by the Latin word *officia*, and Seneca, I think more exactly, by that of *convenientia*'.<sup>221</sup> The Stoics seemed to Smith to be much too rigorous in their preaching that the perfect virtue capable of universal benevolence was the business of men, rather than of God.<sup>222</sup>

Finally, Smith sought to evaluate the Stoic virtue of self-command. Self-command was necessary to support knowledge so as to enable the individual to do his duty by controlling his own passions.<sup>223</sup> Self-command enhances the beauty of other virtues as well as the calamity of vices,<sup>224</sup> and is, above all, important for the virtue of prudence:

it is from the unremitting steadiness of those gentler exertions of self-command, that the amiable virtue of chastity, that the respectable virtues of industry and frugality, derive all that sober lustre which attends them. The conduct of all those who are contented to walk in the humble paths of private and peaceable life, derives from the same principle the greater part of the beauty and grace which belong to it; a beauty and grace, which, though much less dazzling, is not always less pleasing than those which accompany the more splendid actions of the hero, the statesman, or the legislator.<sup>225</sup>

In sum, Smith's distinctive understanding of the Stoic virtue of prudence as such was derived from his distinctive reading of the Stoics. Smith regarded prudence as linking wealth and virtue, controlling the selfish passion of ambition through the sense of beauty. This argument was not only a way of criticising Mandeville, but also a way of developing Hume's utilitarian criticism of Mandeville. Hume had

<sup>220</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 1. 35, p. 288. See also VII. ii. 1. 37, pp. 288-9, *Meditations*, III. II, IX. 3 and editors' footnote 39, *TMS*, p. 288.

<sup>221</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 1. 42, pp. 291-2.

<sup>222</sup> *TMS*, VII. ii. 1. 43-7, pp. 292-3.

<sup>223</sup> *TMS*, Part VI, Section III: 'Of Self-command', VI. iii. 1, p. 237.

<sup>224</sup> *TMS*, VI. iii. 11-2, p. 241.

<sup>225</sup> *TMS*, VI. iii. 13, p. 242.

considered that our approbation of virtue was derived from a perception of beauty which resulted from the appearance of the utility of characters and actions to be judged of.<sup>226</sup> Smith thought of our approbation of virtue as derived from 'a sense of propriety quite distinct from the perception of utility'.<sup>227</sup> The virtue of prudence consists of superior reason and understanding and self-command, and is admired not primarily for its utility but for its propriety. For, those qualities of reason and understanding are approved not merely as useful or advantageous but as just, right and accurate,<sup>228</sup> and that of self-command is admired just as much under the aspect of propriety as under that of utility. When the practice of prudence is proper, the eminent esteem arises 'in the practice of frugality, industry and application, though directed to no other purpose than the acquisition of fortune'.<sup>229</sup> In other words, self-command is the virtue which supported other virtues such as prudence, and has its own beauty.

The command of ... passions, independent of the beauty which it derives from its utility; from its enabling us upon all occasions to act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and of proper benevolence; has a beauty of its own, and seems to deserve for its own sake a certain degree of esteem and admiration.<sup>230</sup>

Smith's strategy for criticising Mandeville was therefore not Humean: as seen in his conclusion of Part VI, Smith thought that reason, understanding and self-command, which constitute the virtue of prudence, should be exerted by the sense of propriety, rather than by the sense of utility as Hume had thought:

Those passions which are restrained by the sense of propriety, are all in some degree moderated and subdued by it. But those which are restrained only by prudential considerations of any kind, are, on the contrary, frequently inflamed by the restraint, and sometimes (long after the provocation given, and when nobody is thinking about it) burst out absurdly and unexpectedly, and with tenfold fury and violence.<sup>231</sup>

Smith, along with Hutcheson and Hume, was criticising Mandeville's argument about the contradiction between wealth and virtue, but only with his own

<sup>226</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 2-3, pp. 187-8.

<sup>227</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 5, p. 188.

<sup>228</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 7, p. 189.

<sup>229</sup> *TMS*, IV. 2. 8, pp. 189-90.

<sup>230</sup> *TMS*, VI. iii. 4, p. 238. VI. iii. 5-13, pp. 238-42 describes the beauty of self-command.

understanding of the Stoic virtue, and in his own particular use of Stoic language, as distinct from Hutcheson's and Hume's use of that language. This was the strategy which made way for Smith to destroy Mandeville's paradox, 'private vices, public benefits', for the first time in a non-utilitarian way. This was also the strategy which allowed Smith to reconstruct a neo-Stoic system of moral philosophy in the post-Humean age after Hume had already demolished Hutcheson's Stoic system of moral philosophy.

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<sup>231</sup> *TMS*, VI. concl. 3-4, p. 263.

## Conclusion

My dissertation has tried to show that eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy was partly a response to Mandeville's theory of passions, sentiments and sociability in what I have called the 'private vices, public benefits' controversy. In other words, I have tried to write 'the Mandevillian Moment' in the Scottish Enlightenment in place of 'the Machiavellian Moment' as Pocock has presented. Scottish moral philosophy throughout the eighteenth century was more or less influenced by Mandeville with his graphic paradox that such 'private vices' as pride, vanity and ambition alone could contribute to 'public benefits'. It revolved around the question of how to direct the acquisitive passions driving men into commercial relations into supplying their need so as to establish sustainable sociability in the newly-emerging commercial society in Britain.

John Pocock has argued that, since the civic humanist framework presents the ideal of republican virtue as a weapon that could be used to attack the Whig regime, it presents Scottish social theory as the latter's philosophical defence. He concludes that their delineation of commercial society was therefore not a criticism of aristocracy but a vindication of it in its Whig shape.<sup>1</sup> This suggestion presumes that Scottish social theory was identical to the ideological basis of Whig policies. My dissertation has tried to disprove the case, by showing that Scottish social theory was primarily and fundamentally formulated against modern Court Whiggism. It presumes that Polite Whiggism, from which Scottish social theory seems to have evolved, should be distinguished from modern Court Whiggism.

My thesis will consequently cast new light on Pocock's further question following his presupposition: whether commercial ideology can be thought of as having at any period triumphed over the republican ideology of civic patriotism and

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<sup>1</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 243. See my Introduction, pp. 3-4.



virtue, or even driven it from the field. Pocock suggests that civic and commercial ideologies were struggling with one another at least down to the era of Smith and Millar, and that it is doubtful whether there had been a time when the former may be said to have been disappeared entirely.<sup>2</sup> He argued that in the era of Smith and Millar the effects of the division of labour on the labourer were beginning to arouse concern, presuming that this concern might have been about the civic capacity and virtue which employer and labourer were thought by Smith and Millar to be in danger of losing.<sup>3</sup> My thesis suggests that the question itself does not necessarily lead to a crucial interpretation of Scottish social theory. For, Scottish social theory seems to have evolved from Polite Whig ideology which already contained some elements from Country Whiggism, and the Scots version of polite ideology also made use of Country elements whenever it was necessary and useful for their refutation of Court Whig ideology and policy.

With his theoretical differentiation between civic humanism and natural jurisprudence, Pocock has summed up his subject as follows: if there were a specific vocabulary and language of civic humanism, together with others derived from it, existing side-by-side with the language of natural jurisprudence, the relationship between them is to be determined.<sup>4</sup> What Pocock has suggested as a possible strategy to use in confronting the problem is to assume that the civic humanist and jurisprudential languages entailed distinct and opposing sets of ideological values, and that the relation between them therefore existed in a state of ideological tension.<sup>5</sup> My thesis would indicate that this seems not to be the case: Polite Whiggism and Scottish social theory were constructed primarily against Court Whiggism, by extracting ideas useful and effective for their purpose from both civic humanist or Country Whiggism and the natural law tradition. In his argument as early as 1983, Pocock seems not yet to have reached a clear distinction between Polite Whigs and Court Whigs. For instance, he stated that 'The individual who found his rights in the possession and conveyance of property was easier to depict as the inhabitant of *a*

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<sup>2</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 244. See my Introduction, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> Pocock (1983), pp. 249-50. See my Introduction, p. 3.

*commercial and polite society, held together by the exchange of goods and sympathies*, than the individual who affirmed his virtue in the austere equalities of purely civic action' [my *italics*].<sup>6</sup>

Pocock's other possible solution to his problem looks more promising, based on Quentin Skinner's argument of Ciceronian and Senecan modes of humanism of the sixteenth century. Skinner argues that the tension between virtue and commerce had already been a great deal reduced by then. Pocock assumes that it is highly possible that these or their successors figured in eighteenth-century ideologies of sociability, sensibility and politeness, serving to reduce the stark opposition between citizenship and culture.<sup>7</sup> In this respect, my thesis certainly agrees with Pocock in saying that 'In the age of the Anglo-Scottish Union, when the reaction against the Whig regime in its various forms led to many dramatic restatements of the virtue-commerce tension, there is plenty of evidence for the persistence of the civic humanist paradigm. ... It is certainly not the case that the Scottish theorists in general regarded republican and jurisprudential language as distinct and ideologically opposite rhetorics'.<sup>8</sup> The non-existence of an antithesis between civic humanism and natural jurisprudence however does not necessarily guarantee the putative existence of a synthesis of them: there would be the possibility of a mere juxtaposition of them in a vast area in-between those two extreme cases.

It seems more likely to be the case that Scottish social theorists made use of both civic and jurisprudential idioms primarily for their criticism and refutation of Court Whig ideology and policy, most notably expressed in Mandeville, who had been neither Stoic nor Ciceronian unlike those Polite and Scots Whigs. My thesis would agree neither with James Moore's view (that Hutcheson failed to synthesise the civic and natural jurisprudential systems) nor with Haakonssen's view (that Hutcheson succeeded in doing so), because their question, whether Hutcheson could manage it or not, seems to be rather off the point. As a Shaftesburian Polite Whig,

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<sup>5</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 250. See my Introduction, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 250.

<sup>7</sup> Quentin Skinner (1978), Vol. I, Chapters 8 and 9; Pocock (1983), pp. 250-1. See my Introduction, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 251.

Hutcheson had used, but not necessarily intending to synthesise, both natural law doctrines from Locke and the Continental natural jurists, together with a neo-Harringtonian treatment of the forms of government, whenever useful for his criticism of Mandeville.<sup>9</sup> My thesis would not see 'us confronting a problem which is not unlike the old "Adam Smith problem" in a more complex historical form': that is, 'How did the complex synthesis of "moral sentiment" with "the wealth of nations" evolve or degenerate into the science of classical economics'?<sup>10</sup> My thesis rather understands that Smith's theory of 'moral sentiments' was his assault on Mandeville's ethical theory, and 'the wealth of nations' (Mandeville's term) was his consequent alternative policy proposal and conclusion in place of Mandeville's, following his own refutation of the ethical foundation of Mandeville's system.<sup>11</sup>

In view of this new 'Adam Smith problem',<sup>12</sup> Pocock has suggested that 'A

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<sup>9</sup> Winch (1983), pp. 264-5. Caroline Robbins focused on the Country Whig influence on Hutcheson and Smith, but her account of Hutcheson and Smith is inevitably far from systematic. See Caroline Robbins (1959), pp. 185-96 for Hutcheson and pp. 196-9 for Smith.

<sup>10</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 251.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Ignatieff (1983), argues that 'Millar's contradictions' resulted from his being trapped between those two languages of civic humanist moralism and of political economy, and concluded that 'only one of them [could have] had the resolution to force his way to an internally consistent discourse', assuming Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* was successful, unlike Millar's *Historical View*, due to Smith's preference for the new language of economics over that of civic humanism in writing his market analysis (pp. 341-2). My thesis regards that, in his political economy, Smith too used both languages, in addition to many others possibly without what Ignatieff regards as 'tensions which Smith was able to hold under control'. If something had 'broke Millar's work into irreconcilable layers' (p. 342), it still might not have been 'the tensions' between the languages of civic humanism and political economy, but could have been something else. But the topic is out of place in this dissertation.

<sup>12</sup> It would be of note that the 'Adam Smith problem' has sometimes been progressed one way or another in an attempt to associate Smith with Marx, especially in nineteenth-century Germany, in mid twentieth-century Japan and in 1970s King's College Cambridge. In Germany, those inventors of the problem like Onken and others were Marxists of the first generation. Marxism has been one of the dominant intellectual forces in Japan since 1920s, and consequently Smith studies in Japan, especially in post-war years, have been effectively hijacked by Marxists. The collection of essays in *Wealth and Virtue* originated from 1970s' series of seminars at Cambridge, and Marx is quoted right at the top of the first page of the volume, referred to frequently in subsequent chapters by Pocock, Winch and Ignatieff. One of the editors, Michael Ignatieff, later in another book made it clear that his intention was to link Smith and Marx, or the ideals of natural liberty and of classical republican citizenship. See Michael Ignatieff (1984), Chapter IV, pp. 105-31. The other editor, Istvan Hont, on the other hand, attempted to link Smith and Marx by finding a connection between the Continental natural jurisprudence tradition and socialism, particularly in their stadial theories of history: see Istvan Hont (1987), pp. 253-76. It however would have made it difficult for them to capture Smith's philosophic attitude as a Whig towards any ideological form of thinking. More 'tensions' seem to exist rather between Smith himself and any ideological understanding of sociability, particularly against that of Court Whiggism and Mandeville, than between civic humanism and natural jurisprudence in Smith.

common strategy is to invoke Mandeville and suppose that this vindication of egotism and greed somehow unmasks commercial society and prefigures its reductionism. Yet this hardly seems convincing in the light of Hume's, Smith's and Robertson's labours to demonstrate the proliferation and diversification of personality under the conditions of commercial growth, an enterprise in which they incorporated all that Mandeville had had to say'.<sup>13</sup> Were this to be the case, my thesis would collapse: but it should cause no surprise if we notice that, as early as 1983, Pocock seems not yet to have identified a clear distinction between Mandevillian Court Whig commercial ideology and Polite and Scottish Whig ideology including both Hume's sceptical and Smith's philosophic versions,<sup>14</sup> even though he could point out that 'it seems unlikely that the history of thought in this period can be organized with the clash of [civic] virtue and commerce at its centre'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 252.

<sup>14</sup> Pocock still seems to have no such clear distinction in 1985 when he argued that Polite Whigs could not have been called Whigs, but later formed an ideological buttress of the 'Whig supremacy', that they advocated a rational religion aimed at repressing moderating or replacing the 'enthusiasm' now regarded as the central characteristic of Puritans, and that this was the Whig ideology which took a decisive turn toward social, cultural and commercial virtues. See Pocock (1985), pp. 219 and 235. Klein similarly thought that Scottish Whigs offered an alternative to civic humanism, in the form of manners and politeness, as the response to their social, political and economic circumstances in eighteenth-century Scotland, conceptualising the exigencies of commercial society, and that the natural law tradition was important for their elaboration of a *legitimist* ideology for Whiggism, which was accordingly individualistic, commercial and therefore liberal. See Klein, pp. 130-1.

<sup>15</sup> Pocock (1983), p. 252.

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