Introduction

Hume, Smith, and the Opinion of Mankind

DAVID HUME'S ESSAY "Of The First Principles of Government" opened with the following declaration:

> Nothing appears more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The soldan of Egypt, or the emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: But he must, at least, have led his *mamalukes*, or *prætorian bands*, like men, by their opinion.[1]

However "surprizing" this realization might have been to those with "philosophical eyes," it was not for Hume, at least by the time he published his essay in 1741, a new one. On the contrary, he had by that point already articulated a powerful and original political theory which put at its center an analysis of the "easiness with which the many are governed by the few." This easiness was chiefly oriented around what his later essays referred to as the opinion of mankind, and which Hume declared "all human affairs" to be "entirely

1. David Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government," in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. E. F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), 32–33.

governed by."[2] This political theory was located in the second and third books of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, published in 1739 and 1740. Yet the *Treatise* was not a success in Hume's lifetime. In his own words, it "fell dead-born from the Press," and Hume's aim in many of his later essays, as well the 1748 *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and the 1751 *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, was to restate the philosophical arguments he had first published in the *Treatise* when still in his late twenties.[3] Yet, a significant consequence of the work falling "dead-born" was the submergence and general loss from historical consciousness of Hume's most sophisticated articulation of his political philosophy. For whereas the two Enquiries offered improved, as well as extended and sometimes new, articulations of Hume's epistemological and moral views, with brief restatements of his theory of justice in the second *Enquiry*, his political essays—owing to their short and accessible formatting, and their often being focused on relatively immediate political issues of concern to mid-eighteenth-century readers—did not recapitulate, let alone extend and improve, the deep political theory articulated in the *Treatise*.[4] Whilst Hume's philosophies of understanding and of morals in both the *Essays* and the *Treatise* have subsequently been recognized as contributions of the highest order, the status of his political philosophical writings remains far more equivocal. John Rawls, for example, taught his students that Hume wrote merely as an "observing naturalist," and that he was "not in general trying to answer the same questions" as Thomas Hobbes or John Locke had attempted before him, with the apparent implication that Hume's questions were of a lower order of political analysis than those of the great theorists usually afforded pride of place in the canon of Western thought.[5] This is unfortunate, if not—as I hope to show—entirely surprising. Hume was a political theorist of the first

2. David Hume, "Whether the British Government Inclines More to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic," in *Essays*, 51.

3. David Hume, "My Own Life," in *Essays*, xxxiv.

4. Regarding Hume's development and improvement of his epistemological positions, see Peter Millican, "The Context, Aims and Structure of Hume's First *Enquiry*," in *Reading Hume on Human Understanding*, ed. P. Millican (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 27–66, and also "Hume's 'Compleat Answer to Dr Reid'," Hume Conference, University of Koblenz, Germany, (Oxford: Hertford College, last modified December 16, 2011), http://www.davidhume.org/papers/millican/2006%20Hume's%20Answer%20to%20 Reid.pdf. On the second *Enquiry* as an improved version of Hume's moral philosophy, see Jacqueline Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy and Society in Hume's Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), and "Hume's Later Moral Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. D. F. Norton and J. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 311–40. That Hume also reworked and improved his theory of the passions found in bk. 2 of the *Treatise* in his later essays and the short *A Dissertation on the Passions*, see Amyas Merivale, "An Enquiry Concerning the Passions: A Critical Study of Hume's Four Dissertations" (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Leeds, 2014).

5. John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 165.

rank, but appreciating the depth of his political engagement, and the direct continuities between his thought and that of his more illustrious predecessors, requires us to first understand the wider context of debate in which he was embedded. Yet, more than that, it also requires us to recognize that the final power of his arguments depends upon a shift in our understanding of what political philosophy is and can hope to achieve. Until these things are done—and they have so far largely not been done—we will fail to appreciate the depth and originality of Hume as a political thinker. Enabling and promoting such an appreciation is one of the central endeavors of this book.

Hume's deep political theory in the *Treatise* did not, however, go entirely unnoticed by his contemporaries. In particular, his close friend and intellectual successor, Adam Smith, read and absorbed Hume's arguments, and adapted them to his own purposes in the construction of a political theory that would move beyond the *Treatise*. Unfortunately, Smith never completed this political project, and had the manuscript he had long been working on, but never finished, incinerated shortly before his death in 1790. Whilst much of that theory can now be recovered from the student notes of Smith's Glasgow lectures of the 1760s, when these materials surfaced in the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries Smith had been retrospectively anointed the founder of classical economics. The texts now known as the *Lectures on Jurisprudence* were for a long time read in that light, as well as part of the prehistory of a Marxist alternative to the mainstream. Similarly, whilst the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*—which contained some of Smith's most penetrating, albeit frequently submerged, political insights—sold well in his lifetime, its longevity did not much extend beyond the eighteenth century, and it is only relatively recently that it has again been recognized as a major work, although predominantly one of moral, not political, philosophy. The primary fate of the *Wealth of Nations*, by contrast, was to be retroactively decreed the urtext of modern economic theory. As a result, Smith, like Hume, largely passed into historical consciousness in virtue of intellectual achievements that lie predominantly outside of the realm of political thought.

Although we now have access to Smith's political theory, as well as to Hume's, the distinctive nature of their contributions remains obscured. At present, Hume is not widely regarded as a first-rate, or particularly important, political thinker in the Western tradition, periodic (often hostile) attention to his famous theory of justice as an artificial virtue notwithstanding. Certainly, whilst his stature as a major epistemological and moral philosopher is today in doubt by few, Hume's writings on politics are not typically ranked, even by his admirers, amongst the received major texts in the history of Western political thought, at least when compared with those of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and so forth. Indeed, and especially to his critics, Hume often figures as a mere sociologist of politics, a thinker who offers novel explanations of practical phenomena, but who fails to appreciate

the fundamental normative implications of proper political theory: at best a critic of weak and vulgarized versions of Locke's arguments, at worst a legitimizer of mid-eighteenth-century prejudice and complacency.[6] Smith has fared slightly better in recent scholarship, with increasing attention paid to his political theory as recovered from the lecture notes, themselves understood as deeply connected to his powerfully articulated moral philosophy in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, with ever more widespread acknowledgement that the *Wealth of Nations* is also a deeply political book.[7] Nonetheless, the nature of Smith's political contribution has not yet been properly appreciated, owing precisely to the fact that doing so first requires a proper recovery of Hume's political theory. In any case, and despite the favorable scholarly attention increasingly paid to Smith's political thought, he, like Hume, still stands largely outside of the usual pantheon of great political thinkers taken to have articulated the most important visions of politics available in the Western tradition.

Against the prevailing assessment, this book aims to show that when it comes to political theory, Hume and Smith have been underappreciated, even by their admirers.[8] Furthermore, by recovering Hume's political theory, and seeing how Smith took over and extended it in turn, we are invited to ap-

6. See especially John Dunn, "From Applied Theology to Social Analysis: The Break between John Locke and the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. I. Hont and M. Ignatieff (Cambridge, 1983), 119–36; P. F. Brownsey, "Hume and the Social Contract," *Philosophical Quarterly* 28 (1978), 132–48.

7. See most especially István Hont, "The Language of Sociability and Commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the Theoretical Foundations of the 'Four Stages' Theory," in *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Harvard, 2005), 159–84; "Commercial Society and Political Theory in the Eighteenth Century: The Problem of Authority in David Hume and Adam Smith," in *Main Trends in Cultural History: Ten Essays*, ed. W. Melching and W. Velema (Amsterdam: Rodopi: 1994), 54–94; "Adam Smith's History of Law and Government as Political Theory," in *Political Judgment: Essays for John Dunn*, ed. R. Bourke and R. Geuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131–71; István Hont and Michael Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in the *Wealth of Nations*," in Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 389–443; but also, for example, Samuel Fleischacker, *On Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations": A Philosophical Companion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Charles L. Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chaps. 6–7; Craig Smith, *Adam Smith's Political Philosophy: The Invisible Hand and Spontaneous Order* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006); Ryan Patrick Hanley, "Commerce and Corruption: Rousseau's Diagnosis and Adam Smith's Cure," *European Journal of Political Theory* 7 (2008), 137–58.

8. With regard to Smith in particular, most assessments of his political writings focus on his warnings about unintended consequences and his skepticism about governmental interference in the workings of the economy. Although these are certainly features of Smith's thought—and important ones—what I will try to bring out below is the extent to which they are more or less surface manifestations of Smith's commitment to a much deeper form of political theorizing, taken over from Hume.

preciate a mode of political theorizing that not only stands as a major histori-cal achievement in and of itself, but presents possibilities for how we can think about politics today. In order to make this ambition clearer, it will be helpful to specify more explicitly some of my intellectual points of departure, thereby also supplying a rationalization for my focus on Hume and Smith that goes beyond their considerable intrinsic merits as individual thinkers, and which may even help to persuade readers who are initially skeptical of turning to them for insight. The rest of this introduction supplies that wider background.

The Theory of the State and the History of Political Thought

In recent decades, several of the most important frameworks for understand-ing the history of political thought in the early modern period, and in par-ticular for understanding the origins and nature of the modern state, have assigned a central role to the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. Quentin Skinner has argued that the idea of the modern state came into being when politics transitioned from the status of the person of the prince—especially in Italian Renaissance political thought, but also with regards to the monar-chomach, or "king-killing," Calvinist resistance theorists of the sixteenth cen-tury—to the state *as* a person, epitomized in the theory of representative sovereignty that Hobbes outlined in *Leviathan*. Skinner has urged us to re-cover Hobbes's idea of state personhood as a way of making sense of present political predicaments, especially in relation to public debt, whilst also arguing that Hobbes is the source of a modern (albeit fallacious) understanding of lib-erty that underpins the contemporary liberal state form.[9] John Dunn, by con-trast, has long argued that Hobbes's political theory represents an inadequate prudentialism that cannot supply sufficient reasons why the state can make le-gitimate claims regarding the obedience of subjects. Dunn sees John Locke as the only theorist to have fully grasped the inadequacy of Hobbes's picture. But Locke's own solution was theistic all the way down, and thus (Dunn thinks)

9. Quentin Skinner, "The State," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. T. Ball, J. Farr, and R. L. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90–131; "From the State of Princes to the Person of the State," in *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, *Re-naissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 368–413; "Hobbes on Persons, Authors, and Representatives," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Levia-than*, ed. P. Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 157–80; *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); "A Genealogy of the Modern State," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 162 (2009), 325–70. On the long prehistory of the emergence of the modern state in Hobbes, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). See also David Runciman, "What Kind of Person is Hobbes's State? A Reply to Quentin Skinner," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2000), 268–78, but also Paul Sagar, "What is the Leviathan?" *Hobbes Studies* (forthcoming).

is not an option in our disenchanted world. Nobody, according to Dunn, has yet found a way of getting past Hobbes without Locke's unacceptably theistic grounding. Hobbes thus remains central, as both a rebuke to our incapacity to do better, and representing a positive proposal that we cannot honestly embrace if we are committed to the divided-sovereignty democratic politics of the modern world.[10] Richard Tuck, by contrast, has argued that Hobbes's moral and political theory was an attempt to defuse earlier incarnations of ethical skepticism, particularly as put forward by Michel de Montaigne and Pierre Charron, and which was achieved by Hobbes's taking over Hugo Grotius's emphasis on the ineliminable natural right of self-preservation as the foundation of an antiskeptical theory, and which stands at the origin of the emergence of the modern state. Similarly, István Hont has argued that the modern state is a fusion of Hobbes's idea of representative sovereignty with an acceptance of commercial activity as a now unavoidable feature of politics. The "modern republic," or what we now call the liberal democratic state, is a trading entity predicated upon politics as organized through the matrix of representative sovereignty—which has its origin in Hobbes.[11]

These four scholars, typically considered part of a "Cambridge school" in the history of political thought, certainly disagree about the precise nature of Hobbes's importance. Nonetheless, there is clear agreement amongst them that Hobbes *is* of central importance, and all articulate some version of a claim that his centrality rests upon the articulation of a vision of the modern state, one with which we must still reckon if we ourselves are to achieve an adequate grasp of that entity, and hence of modern politics. Yet, these "Cambridge" scholars are hardly unique in placing a heavy emphasis on Hobbes's importance to the development of Western political theory, and his enduring presence in making sense of our current situation. Leo Strauss, a very different kind of scholar, emphasized the centrality of Hobbes to the emergence of modern political theory, as have many of his students and followers.[12] John Rawls, a philosopher of a very different stripe again, taught his students that

10. John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the "Two Treatises on Government"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); "What Is Living and What Is Dead in the Political Theory of John Locke?" in *Interpreting Political Responsibility: Essays 1981–89* (Padstow, UK: Polity, 1990), 9–25; "The Politics of Imponderable and Potentially Lethal Judgment for Mortals: Hobbes's Legacy for the Understanding of Modern Politics," in Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. I. Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 433–52.

11. István Hont, "Jealousy of Trade: An Introduction," and "The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: 'Nation-State' and 'Nationalism' in Historical Perspective," in *Jealousy of Trade*, 1–156, 447–528.

12. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, trans. E. M. Sinclair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936); *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965).

Leviathan was the "greatest single work of political thought in the English language," and placed it in a "social contract" tradition that his own political theory was in part an extension of.[13] Raymond Geuss, perhaps Rawls's most scathing critic in contemporary political theory, nonetheless similarly maintains that modern Western political theory begins with Hobbes.[14] Others, such as Jeremy Waldron, see Hobbes's political writings as an important foundation of contemporary liberal political theory, and of the form of justification for the use of coercive force that a specifically liberal politics mobilizes.[15] More generally, and when it comes to the construction of traditions of thought that span multiple thinkers and across extended periods, libraries abound with volumes with titles like *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls*.[16] Yet what if a privileged emphasis on Hobbes is liable to generate mistaken, partial, and distorted appraisals of both the history of political thought and the forms that political theory may take? In particular, what if an overemphasis on Hobbes blinds us to theoretical alternatives in the historical record that stand in marked opposition to his manner of theorizing politics? And what if those alternatives should turn out to be superior? These are the possibilities taken seriously in this book, attempted primarily via a recovery of the idiom of political theory exemplified in the work of Hume and Smith, which I hope to convince the reader make for a finally more plausible and satisfying vision of politics than that which stays with Hobbes, or continues to work in Hobbesian vein.

Of course, work that starts with Hobbes—or at least takes Hobbes to be at the start of something important—need not necessarily stay with him, and

13. Rawls, *Lectures*, 23. It should be noted that Rawls did immediately qualify this statement by making clear that for him *Leviathan* didn't come "the closest to being true," nor did he think "that it is the most reasonable"—nonetheless, he still identified it as the greatest when taken on balance, and overall. This book aims to disrupt the coherence of such a judgment: that if we abandon Hobbesian ways of thinking, the sheer and undeniable intellectual power of Hobbes's conceptual edifice may not be enough to support Rawls's verdict. More generally, if Skinner is right that Rawls is a "gothic" theorist in explicitly Hobbesian mold, then Rawls's own remark about the significance of *Leviathan* may be particularly telling: Skinner, "Machiavelli on *Virtù* and the Maintenance of Liberty," in *Renaissance Virtues*, 161.

14. Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 21.

15. Jeremy Waldron, "Hobbes and the Principle of Publicity," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 82, no. 3–4 (2001), 447–74.

16. David Boucher and Paul Kelly, eds., *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls* (London: Routledge, 1994). Other examples include Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Patrick Riley, *Will and Political Legitimacy: A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Jody S. Kraus, *The Limits of Hobbesian Contractarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Mark E. Button, *Contract, Culture and Citizenship: Transformative Liberalism from Hobbes to Rawls* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).

important and interesting alternatives can and have been developed in that way.[17] Indeed, this book ought itself to be read as an attempt at such a thing: the sheer level of attention and detail given over to Hobbes in what follows is proof enough that I too assign him a central place in the history of political thought. Nonetheless, I hope to show that much can be gained in an explicit attempt to get out from under Hobbes's shadow, even if we must first spend a considerable amount of time in the shade. Hobbes is, without doubt, important—but we should nonetheless aspire to leave him behind. Hume and Smith show how this might be done, and we stand to learn a great deal from them accordingly.

What follows is intended as a dual intervention—in both the history of political thought and contemporary political theory. That this should particularly be so with regard to the theory of the state is given by the fact that although the state remains the central unit of analysis in both domestic and international politics, its basis, nature, purpose, and normative authority are subjects of protracted disagreement and confusion. This is certainly so in the history of political thought, not least because of the competing accounts that scholars supply of the state's leading historical theorizers, but also because of the manner in which theory interacts with practice in the historical instantiation of institutional structures. By contrast, in the majority of contemporary anglophone political theory the *nature* of the state is frequently assumed as being relatively unproblematic from a conceptual point of view, and hence standardly taken as given or simply left unconsidered, with far more attention focused upon the normative ends to which the power of organized rule should be directed, particularly with regard to the realization of the values of liberty and equality.[18] This, however, is an awkward state of affairs, insofar as the confusion generated by controversy in the history of political thought ought to impinge upon the confidence of contemporary normative theorizers. If we do not have a clear grasp of what the state is, including especially what its central functions and justifications are, then we cannot proceed with an adequate degree of confidence, let alone intellectual authority, when it comes to attempting to stipulate the normative constraints and goals that should govern its activities, either at home or abroad. In this sense, the history of political thought rightly acts as a *disruptive* influence on contemporary normative theorizing. By insisting that we do not have an adequate grasp of one of our most fundamental political concepts, it demands that we re-examine and make secure the foundations of our theoretical enterprises, before presuming to build upon them.

17. For a provocative and singular example, consider Richard Tuck, *The Sleeping Sovereign: The Invention of Modern Democracy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015).

18. For an indictment of this state of affairs, see Jeremy Waldron, "*Political* Political Theory: An Inaugural Lecture," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 21, no. 2 (2013), 1–23.

An aim of this book is ultimately to offer a different way of thinking about whether there are "foundations" to be had in theorizing the modern state, and what follows from getting clear on that. To this end, it will be helpful to situate my argument as being an alternative to the framework for understanding the modern state articulated by István Hont, which may be summarized as follows: On Hont's account, Hobbes is a paradoxical figure. Due to his lack of any theory of the economy, Hobbes stands as the last of the Renaissance, or premodern, theorists of politics. Nonetheless, it was a fusion of Hobbes's idea of "union" as the foundation of the state through an act of artificial representation with the post-Hobbesian emergence of "commercial society" in the eighteenth century that together "created the modern representative republic, our current state form."[19] Hont identifies "the modern doctrine of sovereignty" as central to this process, something which "started with Bodin in France and reached its classic formulation in the work of Thomas Hobbes." This "doctrine" claimed that "the survival and greatness of a political community required the creation of an ultimate decision-making agency whose task was to devise adequate responses to external challenges and stop infighting at home with an iron hand."[20] Originally a response to the religious wars of early modern Europe, and a rejoinder to theories of divided sovereignty and monarchomach theory, this idea could only become functional for the eighteenth century (and after) when it was married to the acceptance of commerce as an ineliminable feature of advanced human societies, and hence of advanced human politics. Thus, whilst Hobbes can be credited with "the self-conscious theoretical invention" of the "modern republic," his "invention" could become fully functional only after "late-eighteenth-century revisions."[21] Hont chiefly credits the achievement of such revisions to the French Revolutionary pamphleteer and constitutionalist Emmanuel Sieyès. For it was Sieyès, Hont claims, who inherited Hobbes's ideas through Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "appropriating" many aspects of the Englishman's political theory, yet rejected Rousseau's inbuilt fusion of representation and absolutism which the Genevan saw as "a vehicle for despotism."[22] Sieyès broke with Rousseau by allowing the permissible representation of sovereignty back into the theoretical framework, but also departed from Hobbes because he "explicitly anchored the modern representative republic in the economy."[23] Whilst Hont's view of Sieyès is ultimately equivocal (his thought is "not sufficiently original to warrant regarding him as the creator of democratic or civic nationalism in Europe," for it is "Hobbes's originality, mediated in part by Rousseau, which shines through Sieyès's

19. Hont, "Introduction," 21.
20. Hont, "Permanent Crisis," 464.
21. Hont, "Introduction," 128, 125.
22. Ibid., 470.
23. Ibid., 133.

thought"[24]), he nonetheless states that "Sieyès's Hobbesian constitutionalism effectively laid the foundations for the dominant state form of the contemporary era. Democracy today means a representative republic embedded in a commercial society."[25]

We might certainly question Hont's use of the definite article when talking of "the modern doctrine of sovereignty." But his framework serves as a useful critical foil for the present study. This is because even if we grant that such a thing as "the modern doctrine of sovereignty" exists—in the singular, and originating with Hobbes—Hume and Smith are best understood as operating outside of it. Once we see this, we are also in a position to better understand Hume and Smith's place in the history of political thought more generally, as well as in contrast to how they have been placed by other important interpreters.

For example, recent work by Richard Tuck has claimed that one of the most central divisions within the history of modern political thought can be understood as being between thinkers who accepted the sixteenth-century French jurist Jean Bodin's distinction between "sovereignty" and "government"—a group including especially Hobbes, Rousseau, and the Girondins of the French Revolution—and others who resisted or elided it, most notably Grotius, Samuel von Pufendorf, and Sieyès. Tuck sees Hobbes as crucial in articulating that idea of a sovereign power that is "sleeping," an innovation picked up by Rousseau, who insisted in turn that whilst government should not be democratic, sovereignty—the more fundamental site of authority—must by necessity be so, upon pain of forfeiture. Tuck claims that Rousseau thereby made "modern" democracy possible: insofar as democracy was no longer considered a feature of government, feasibility constraints associated with direct popular rule in large-scale commercial states could be bypassed. A democratic sovereign could license a nondemocratic government to rule on its behalf, which is how Tuck believes contemporary national democratic arrangements now operate (at least approximately). However, entirely neglected in Tuck's account—despite an entire chapter on "The Eighteenth Century"—is the alternative suggested in particular by Hume and Smith, and explored in detail by this book: that lying behind "government" there is no final, philosophically identifiable, and stable foundation of "sovereign" authority, but only the constant and contested changing swirl of opinion. As with Hont's "modern doctrine of sovereignty," so with Tuck's suggestion that modern democracy rests upon a sovereignty-government distinction: even if these claims about the grand trajectory of the history of political thought in (especially) the eighteenth century are true, Hume and Smith must be under-

24. Ibid., 134.
25. Hont, "Permanent Crisis," 486. The ambiguity of Hont's claim here is itself rather problematic.

stood as standing outside of this line of development, insofar as they eschew the theory of sovereignty in favor of that of opinion.[26]

By operating outside of the language and conceptualizations of sovereignty theory, in particular as traceable to Hobbes, Hume and Smith forged a way of thinking about politics that was distinctively their own. To appreciate this, however, we must first get to grips with their alternative vision of how and why human beings could live in large and lasting societies over time. In the period under analysis in this book, questions of human sociability and the analysis of the modern state were understood as being inextricably intertwined: one could not hope to understand the latter without taking a detailed position on the former. Hume and Smith took importantly different positions from Hobbes (and also from Bernard Mandeville, Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant) on the question of human sociability, and doing so enabled them to clear a conceptual space upon which to build a different theory of the state. Accordingly, this book excavates rival accounts of human sociability in considerable detail, because doing so is the only way to properly understand and appreciate the theories of politics that supervened upon this conceptually prior debate. Showing how Hume and Smith, in particular, innovated in these regards in turn enables us to understand their thought at a deeper, more integrated, and more far-reaching level than has typically been managed thus far.

What I take to be the consequent originality—and, in turn, power—of Hume and Smith's political thought has likewise generally been underappreciated in existing scholarship. This has largely been because of a tendency to excessively reduce the distinctive nature of their interventions, usually by interpreting them as more or less direct products of established predecessor discourses, rather than as new and relatively independent insights in their own right.[27] I

26. Again, see Tuck, *Sleeping Sovereign*. For doubts as to whether Tuck's account *is* true, see Robin Douglass, "Tuck, Rousseau, and the Sovereignty of the People," *History of European Ideas* (forthcoming); Paul Sagar, "Of the People, for the People," *Times Literary Supplement*, June 17, 2016, 12.

27. Examples of presenting Hume and Smith as primarily innovators within established approaches, rather than forgers of new ones, include J.G.A. Pocock's claim that they were "commercial humanists," e.g. "Virtues, Rights, and Manners: A Model for Historians of Political Thought," in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 37–50. Duncan Forbes and Knud Haakonssen opposed the view that Hume and Smith were primarily modifiers of the seventeenth-century natural-law tradition, e.g. Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), chaps. 1–2; "Natural Law and the Scottish Enlightenment," in *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982); Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); "What Might Properly be Called Natural Jurisprudence?", in Campbell and Skinner, *Scottish Enlightenment*; *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); "Natural Jurisprudence

aim instead to show that Hume and Smith were major and original innovators in the history of political thought, best understood as forging their own theoretical approach, rather than primarily taking over and adapting (even if in important and novel ways) pre-existing theories or discourses.

Accordingly, much of my argument is dedicated to showing how and why the political thought of Hume and Smith must be taken on its own terms, in order to properly understand the nature and sophistication of their interventions. But in the process another sort of question is raised. Namely, that if Hume and Smith were indeed working within a new idiom forged largely without precedent, were they *right* to do so? Did they succeed in getting further than relevant alternatives, or simply end up confused and travelling down a stagnant backwater? The majority of this book attempts the relatively less ambitious task of showing that Hume and Smith were operating in an original, in particular non-Hobbesian, idiom of political theory. I also believe, however, that they were right to do so. For the most part I do not argue directly for this latter claim: my hope is to present Hume's and then Smith's arguments in such a way that their power and merits stand out of their own accord, leaving

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and the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Philosophy and Religion in Enlightenment Britain: New Case Studies*, ed. R. Savage (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For the wider architectonic of Pocock's thought and his seminal statement of it, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); for an extended working-out of Smith's thought as influenced by Pocock, see John Robertson, "The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition," in Hont and Ignatieff, *Wealth and Virtue*, 137–78, and "Scottish Political Economy Beyond the Civic Tradition: Government and Economic Development in the *Wealth of Nations*," *History of Political Thought* 4, no. 3 (1983), 451–82. Against the civic humanist reading of Hume in particular, see especially James Moore, "Hume's Political Science and the Classical Republican Tradition," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 4 (1977), 809–39. Against the natural-law reading, see James Moore, "Hume's Theory of Justice and Property," *Political Studies* 24, no. 2 (1976), 103–19; "Natural Law and the Pyrrhonian Controversy," in *Philosophy and Science in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. P. Jones (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 6–19; and Pauline C. Westerman, "Hume and the Natural Lawyers: A Change of Landscape," in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, ed. M. A. Stewart and J. P. Wright (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 83–104. More generally, the civic-humanist and natural-jurisprudence readings of Hume and Smith have been displaced by the more recent literature's emphasis on an "epicurean" nature of Hume's thought (in particular) and his indebtedness to the controversy between Mandeville and Francis Hutcheson in moral theory, as well as growing interest in Smith's relationship to Rousseau (in the case of the younger thinker). Details of these debates are provided where relevant in what follows. Although neither the civic-humanist nor natural-law reading of Hume and Smith is widely held at present, the tendency to present Hume as merely innovating within established approaches continues: Hume's most recent intellectual biographer ultimately presents his moral and political thought as little more than a synthesis of the prior ideas of Mandeville on the one hand, and Shaftesbury and Hutcheson on the other (see James Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 35–77, 121–42).

readers to decide for themselves who has the best of things. The exception is the concluding chapter, where I offer support for some of what I see as the most important—but also the most likely to be misunderstood, or unfairly received—aspects of Hume's and Smith's thought.

With these preliminaries in place, two final preparatory matters must be covered before the analysis proper begins. First, the place that I myself must assign to Hobbes. Second, the question of the historiographical approach that I have adopted in what follows.

Hobbes's Proper Place

Despite urging that we ultimately move away from an emphasis on Hobbes and his ways of thinking in our attempts to understand the modern state, and in turn the predicaments and possibilities wrestled with by political theory, it is nonetheless necessary to devote considerable attention to Hobbes's work in what follows. This is because in order to fully appreciate Hume's, and in turn Smith's, alternatives, we must have a clear picture of the Hobbesian structure to which both were in large part providing an alternative. Once we recognize Hobbes as important for understanding Hume's and Smith's distinctive contributions, then we will be in a position to follow them out of his theoretical shadow.

In the introduction to the *Treatise*, Hume famously proposed that in order to achieve "success in our philosophical researches," we must "march up directly to the capital or center" of all the sciences, "to human nature itself." By concentrating on Hume's insistence upon the priority of a "science of man," we can begin to better bring into focus the fundamental nature of his political project. After establishing a central science of man, Hume tells us, we may in turn "extend our conquests over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life. . . . In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security."[28] Hume continues:

> And as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation. 'Tis no astonishing reflection to consider, that the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects shou'd come after that to natural at the distance of above a whole century; since we find, in fact, that there was about the same interval betwixt the origins of these sciences; and that reckoning from

28. David Hume, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of David Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. D. F. Norton and M. J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), T.I.6, SBN xvi.

THALES to SOCRATES, the space of time is nearly equal to that be-twixt my LORD BACON and some late philosophers in *England*, who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing, and have en-gag'd the attention, and excited the curiosity of the public. So true it is, that however other nations may rival us in poetry, and excel us in some other agreeable arts, the improvements in reason and philosophy can only be owing to a land of toleration and liberty.[29]

The "late philosophers in *England*" are given in a footnote as "Mr. *Locke*, my Lord *Shaftesbury*, Dr. *Mandeville*, Mr. *Hutcheson*, Dr. *Butler*, &c."—and at least two things here are puzzling.

First, that despite Hume's insistence (repeated in the "Abstract" of the *Treatise*) that these five authors have "begun to put the science of man on a new footing," they in fact share no common approach to philosophical mat-ters, and certainly not any "experimental method" of "experience and obser-vation."[30] Second, that although it is perhaps unsurprising that attention has typically been focused upon what a "science of man" founded on "experience and observation" might consist of, this distracts from Hume's claim that the five authors have begun to put it on a *new* footing. Why, after all, should they be putting it on a new footing, rather than simply establishing it afresh? Who had presented a science of man before the five authors?

It may be that Hume's wording is simply loose, his appeal to the five au-thors shallow. There is a heavy hint of national chauvinism in these passages; not just the elevating of Francis Bacon to the status of founder of modern science, but the panegyrics to the final superiority of a land of "toleration and liberty." Having recently returned from France, Hume was well aware of the accomplishments of European thinkers, recommending René Descartes, Ni-colas Malebranche, George Berkeley, and Pierre Bayle to his friend Michael Ramsay as preparation for an attempt at the *Treatise*.[31] Accordingly, his public pronouncements of the superiority of English learning can probably be treated

29. Hume, *Treatise*, T.I.7, SBN xvi–ii.

30. In the "Abstract," Hume writes that the five authors "tho' they differ in many points among themselves, seem all to agree in founding their accurate disquisitions of human na-ture entirely upon experience": *Treatise*, T.A.2, SBN 646. This is simply not true of Shaftes-bury's neo-Stoic deist teleology, nor of Shaftesbury's great admirers Joseph Butler and Hutcheson, with their extensive appeals to providence and design. Much the same could be said of Locke, who although he does proceed largely by "experience and observation," also makes extensive appeals to the role of God. As for Mandeville, as we shall see below, much of Hume's criticism of this predecessor amounts to his not having paid *enough* proper re-gard to experience and observation, being overreliant on a lopsided Augustinian view of human nature.

31. Hume to Michael Ramsay, August 31, 1737, in Tadeusz Kozanecki, "Dawida Hume'a nieznane listy w zbiorach muzeum Czartoryskich (polska)," *Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej*, 9 (1963), 133–34; cf. John P. Wright, *Hume's "A Treatise of Human Na-ture": an Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 27.

as less than entirely ingenuous. Hume may have listed the five authors simply as an attempt to tie his difficult, dense, and long book to established and well-known English debates on morals and politics—the only areas of philosophy all five authors could be said to have contributed to by 1739—in what he fruitlessly hoped would be a successful commercial, as well as philosophical, publication.

Be that as it may, the reference to the five authors and the attempt to find a new footing for the science of man offers an important clue for bringing into focus central aspects of Hume's enterprise that otherwise remain obscured. Specifically, that there might have been *another* late English author, one with whom each of the five named philosophers was certainly familiar, and in response to whom a new footing was required. In this regard there is indeed an outstanding candidate: a thinker who offered not a science of man, but a science of politics based on a deeply provocative theory of human nature, for whom geometry rather than observation and experience was the scientific archetype. That thinker was Thomas Hobbes.[32]

Chapters 1 and 2 of this book advance the case for understanding Hume's science of man as yielding a science of human sociability, placing Hume's writings in opposition to Hobbes's theory of human nature and his supervening science of politics. This is not an exclusive claim: Hume's attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects was a wide-ranging enterprise, with significant application to many areas of philosophy beyond the question of human sociability.[33] Nonetheless, reading Hume this way allows us to place his writings in a long-standing political idiom revolving around the centrality of individual recognition and the possibilities for group cooperation amongst self-interested agents. Even if Hume was less immediately preoccupied by Hobbes's challenge than earlier generations—the intermediate figure

32. On Hobbes's self-assessment as the founder of the first political science modeled on the a priori method of geometry, see Thomas Hobbes, *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, ed. B. Gert (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991) 42–43; *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan*, ed. N. Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 2, 56. For an overview of Hobbes's conception of science and of a science of politics, Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes's Science of Politics and his Theory of Science," in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002). See also Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), chaps. 3–4.

33. Particularly interesting is the suggestion by Peter Millican that Hume's science of man centers on his theory of causation, which would indicate that the observed regularities of human moral and political practice can be reduced to a science in the same way as any other observed regularities. This would help account both for Hume's insistence that the theory of causation is the "chief argument" of the *Treatise*, and his intention to offer a science of logic, morals, criticism, and politics based on the experience and observation of human nature: Peter Millican, "Hume, Causal Realism, and Causal Science," *Mind* 118 (2009), 647–712, §§ 8–9.

of Bernard Mandeville certainly commanded his attention more directly—he was nonetheless deeply invested in an ongoing debate over human sociability, the parameters of which were set by Hobbes's epochal intervention.[34]

In essence, I argue for a two-step intellectual genealogy in understanding the relationship of Hume to Hobbes. Although there is plentiful evidence that Hume read Hobbes, that evidence also points to his not having read him very closely, or having thought him of particular importance.[35] Hume's characterization of Hobbes's position on sociability frequently bears more resemblance to a (still persistent) popularized caricature than to what Hobbes actually claimed regarding people's capacities for society. Hume does not mention Hobbes in what survives of his correspondence, or in the so-called "Early Memoranda," his reading notes dating from (probably) the late 1730s.[36] Furthermore, the sheer speed with which Hume penned the *Treatise*, and at such an early age, suggests

34. My argument is different, however, to the claim of Paul Russell's that Hume's *Treatise* is fundamentally a "Hobbist" work, one modeled specifically on *The Elements of Law*. The general plausibility of Russell's interpretive claim regarding Hume's affinity with Hobbes has already been called into question by James Harris, but in what follows I seek to show that Hume's moral and political thought cannot be accurately construed as Hobbesian when we appreciate his alternative theory of human nature, even though gaining that proper appreciation requires the acknowledgment of Hobbes as a crucial background figure in the debates Hume was entering. See Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's "Treatise": Skepticism, Naturalism and Irreligion* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008); James Harris, "Of Hobbes and Hume," *Philosophical Books* 50 (2009), 38–46. Nonetheless, Russell is right to call attention to Hume's *irreligious* aims more widely, and his suggestion that we tie Hume to a tradition including Hobbes (and also Baruch Spinoza) is valuable insofar as it encourages us to see the unstated conclusions of Hume's work that would have been seen immediately by contemporaries (virtually all of whom would have been sincere believers in some version of Christian faith), but are much less obvious to modern readers. Something similar might be said of sociability, a central category of political analysis in Hume's intellectual context that needs to be excavated for modern eyes, but would have been much more obvious to the original audience.

35. Hume mentions Hobbes explicitly at two points in the *Treatise*: T.1.3.3.4, SBN 80, and T.2.3.1.10, SBN 402—once with regard to causation, the other with regard to human psychology and the capacity to form society. Hobbes's view is alluded to at several points in bk. 3; see especially T.3.2.2.7, SBN 487–88, and T.3.2.8.1, SBN 540–41, although Hume's characterization is rather loose and general. Hobbes is also mentioned in the second *Enquiry*, as an exponent of the "selfish system" of morals: David Hume, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Hume: An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. T. L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 91. Dugald Stewart thought that Hobbes's psychological theory was known to Hume, and was the only part of the earlier philosopher's corpus that Hume took seriously. See Dugald Stewart, *The Collected Works of Dugald Stewart, Esq., F.R.S.S.*, 11 vols., ed. W. Hamilton, (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854–60), vol. 1, 63–97; cf. Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 10.

36. Harris, "Hobbes and Hume," 40. More recently it has been suggested that the "Early Memoranda" date from the 1740s and relate to the development of Hume's political economy: Tatsuya Sakamoto, "Hume's 'Early Memoranda' and the Making of his Political Economy," *Hume Studies* 37 (2011), 131–64.

that his predominant mode of engagement in that work was to identify the fundamental structure of other thinkers' arguments, and react to that, rather than spending much time on the details of any particular position. Nonetheless, Hobbes was *the* crucial figure for British thinkers in "the controversy, which of late years has so much excited the curiosity of the public," which Hume presented his own intervention as bearing upon.[37] Hume may not, for the most part, have been responding directly to Hobbes—but the five authors were. Even if Hume named these authors only to indicate the set of problems his work addressed, rather than any close engagement beyond a basic familiarity with the underlying structures of their positions, the point is that he nonetheless *accurately* indicated which problems he was addressing. Specifically, problems generated by the claim that humans are not by nature sociable, wrestled with by all of the five authors, and bequeathed to them by Hobbes.[38]

In emphasizing the centrality of human sociability to understanding eighteenth-century political thought, I am indebted to Hont's path-breaking work in this regard. According to Hont, Hume was a proponent of "commercial sociability," a conceptual middle route between the thoroughgoing natural unsociability account of Hobbes, and alternative (fundamentally Christian) attempts to secure sociability through mutual benevolence.[39] For Hume, sociability is most fundamentally a product of the coordinated seeking of self-interest. Pride—the central item in Hobbes's and Mandeville's accounts of natural unsociability—is relegated to the margins, whilst benevolence is presented

37. Hume, *Treatise*, T.2.1.7.2, SBN 295. Hume claims to "reserve" his own intervention until bk. 3, though as we shall see the psychological theory of bk. 2 in fact grounds the moral and political account of the final parts of the *Treatise*.

38. The suggestion that the five authors, and a shared preoccupation with human sociability, could provide the context for understanding Hume's moral and political philosophy was in fact made by James Moore in "The Social Background of Hume's Science of Human Nature," in *McGill Hume Studies*, ed. D. F. Norton, N. Capaldi, and W. L. Robinson (San Diego: Austin Hills, 1979), 23–41. However, Moore has never pursued this possibility, opting instead to place Hume in an "epicurean" framework that exhibits important continuities with Hobbes's (and Mandeville's) approach. My interpretation in what follows seeks to show that the epicurean framework obscures as much as it illuminates, and that we are better off not using it to understand Hume's thought. Moore's principle articulations of the epicurean interpretation can be found in "Hume and Hutcheson," in Stewart and Wright, *Hume and Hume's Connexions*; "The Eclectic Stoic, the Mitigated Skeptic," in *New Essays on David Hume*, ed. E. Mazza and E. Ronchetti (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2007), 133–70; "Utility and Humanity: The Quest for the *Honestum* in Cicero, Hutcheson and Hume," *Utilitas* 14 (2002), 365–86. Moore's interpretation has been taken up by John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chap. 6; Luigi Turco, "Hutcheson and Hume in a Recent Polemic," in Mazza and Ronchetti, *New Essays*, 171–98; and Wright, *Hume's "A Treatise,"* chaps. 1 and 9.

39. Hont, "Commercial Society," and "Introduction," 40–41, 101–11, 160–63, 364–68, 476–77.

as inadequate to the task. Nonetheless, Hont's account of Hume's theory of sociability was deployed only highly schematically, and in the form he left it to us too much remains unaccounted for. In particular, there is Hume's apparent insistence in book 2 of the *Treatise* that humans are the most naturally sociable creature in the entire universe thanks to their capacity for sympathy. There is also book 3's suggestion that it is human imagination and the operations of opinion, and not the direct seeking of utility, that fundamentally ensures that modern, large-scale societies are generally cohesive and stable over time. In order to provide proper substantiation for reading Hume as a "commercial sociability" theorist, it is necessary to fully excavate Hume's theory of sociability, which chapter 1 demonstrates to be tripartite in nature: sympathy and imagination must undergird and then supplement utility, even if utility remains the central factor. Chapter 2 extends this account to understand the role of history and the family in debates over human sociability and the foundations of politics, exploring how Hume was able to revolutionize the use of state-of-nature conjectures in order to elucidate the emergence of institutional structures and related moral values. Chapter 3 builds on this to examine Hume's fully fledged political theory as an outgrowth of his commitment to commercial sociability. By basing his analysis on a different understanding of the human capacity to form society, Hume developed a thoroughly anti-Hobbesian theory of politics, culminating in a theory of the state without sovereignty.[40]

Chapters 4 and 5 explore the issues of sociability and the theory of the state with regard to two thinkers who came after Hume, and represent respectively the continuation of a Hobbesian approach and its repudiation in favor of Hume's opinion-of-mankind idiom. Chapter 4 examines the case of Rousseau, and argues that despite his attempting to start from a different place in the theory of sociability, and then offer a purposefully counter-Hobbesian theory of sovereignty, he ultimately could not get past Hobbes, and ended up returning to the latter's positions, and in turn largely considering his own political project a failure. Chapter 5, by contrast, presents Smith as taking up Hume's alternative theoretic idiom. Like Hume, Smith displays a complicated but important intellectual relationship to Hobbes. Employed for much of his working life as a university professor (which Hume never was), Smith inherited a teaching syllabus at Glasgow that emphasized the centrality of Pufendorf, a thinker whom he identified in his lectures as having set out purposefully to

40. However, what we will see is that Hume's adoption of a commercial-sociability framework ultimately took him outside of Hont's "modern doctrine of sovereignty" rooted in Hobbes. When fully worked out, therefore, Hont's insistence on recognizing the importance of commercial sociability as a competitor idiom to Hobbesian natural unsociability subverts his own "modern doctrine of sovereignty" thesis, because what emerges from Hume's theory of commercial sociability is a theory of the state entirely outside the Hobbesian mold.

"confute Hobbes."[41] Smith names Hobbes on several occasions, and alludes to his positions on still more, and in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* shows a working knowledge of Hobbes's arguments and their implications.[42] With regard to the theory of sociability in particular, Hobbes's position—the possibility of constructing society through fear—would have been known to Smith as the unmentioned third alternative in addition to his suggestions of securing society through the ties of benevolence or utility (not least because his teacher, Francis Hutcheson, had earlier assimilated the utility approach of Pufendorf to his bêtes noires, Hobbes and Mandeville).[43] Chapter 5 shows how Smith's development of Hume's alternative theoretic framework of opinion led him to construct a theory of regime forms that was deeply historically inflected, but Smith also ultimately professed the incapacity of philosophy to finally resolve the tensions and predicaments generated by purely secular politics.[44] Chapter 6 considers the implications of this, and assesses the viability of thinking about the state, and political theory more generally, from Hume and Smith's perspective.

Matters of Method

Before finally proceeding to the substance of analysis it may be helpful for me to say something regarding the "method" I have adopted in what follows. Readers who are allergic to this sort of discussion, or who would rather just let the argument do the talking, can simply skip forward. And as in all such cases

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41. Adam Smith, *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith: Lectures on Jurisprudence*, ed. R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael, and P. G. Stein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), LJ(B).3. Hont has suggested that Smith's own theory of commercial sociability, a rejection of Hobbes's natural-unsociability thesis, is itself derived from Pufendorf: see Hont, "Language of Sociability." However, and as the following chapters seek to show, Smith could have—and I believe, probably did—get all of the conceptual materials needed for resisting Hobbes in terms of a utility-based theory of sociability from Hume's *Treatise*, which he read as a student at Oxford long before he was contracted to teach at Glasgow, rather than from Pufendorf's *De Iure Naturae et Gentium*.

42. Adam Smith, *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith: The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), VII.iii.1–2 especially.

43. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, II.ii.3.1–3; Francis Hutcheson, "On the Natural Sociability of Mankind," in *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, ed. J. Moore and M. Silverthorne (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006), 191–216; cf. Hont, "Introduction," 39–40. This point is developed further in chapter 2.

44. Smith thus stands with Hume outside of the Hobbesian "modern doctrine of sovereignty," and it is therefore a mistake to try to present the thought of Sieyès as an amalgam of Rousseau's and Smith's political theories, as Hont suggests: István Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society: Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. B. Kapossy and M. Sonenscher (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 24.

of preemptive apologetics, the proof of the pudding will ultimately be only in the eating: perusal of this author's cookbook will be of real use retrospectively, upon condition that the dish is palatable. Nonetheless, it may perhaps be of some help if I attempt to offer an orientation from the outset as to what I take myself to be doing.

What follows should be understood as an attempt to put into a particular—and, inevitably, idiosyncratic—sort of practice Bernard Williams's underdeveloped, but illuminating, distinction between "the history of philosophy" and "the history of ideas." According to Williams the latter is "history before it is philosophy," whereas the former is the other way around.[45] This distinction is a refined one. It takes as given something like John Dunn's insistence that meaningful examination of past thinkers must be philosophically sensitive, whilst also being attentive to the fact that any philosophy we recover from the past is not a free-floating intellectual phenomenon, but the product of real human agents' attempts to wrestle with complex questions in thick intellectual and practical contexts.[46] Any serious and nonfallacious engagement with past philosophy must involve itself in the practice of both philosophy *and* history. Yet, as Williams remarked, whilst "in any worthwhile work of either sort, both concerns are likely to be represented," nonetheless "there is a genuine distinction" between "the history of philosophy" and "the history of ideas."[47] This, however, requires more explicit working out than Williams supplied.

The "genuine distinction" that I take to be most fruitful consists of the following. When dealing with major philosophical thinkers of the past, in doing "the history of philosophy," what takes priority is the insistence that philosophical arguments be understood primarily *as philosophical arguments*; i.e., as a specific form of intellectual contribution with its own (at least in aspiration, if not always practice) independence, unity, and coherence. By contrast "the history of ideas" concerns itself primarily with tracking, understanding, and explaining the movement and development of ideas and arguments across thinkers, times, and places. It necessarily pays attention to philosophical detail, but with the primary aim not of reconstructing that detail for its own sake so as to understand a philosophical position simply as such, but of understanding

45. Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry*, rev. ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), xiii. For an insightful discussion of Williams's distinction, which compellingly urges us to abandon Williams's correlate analogy between reading past philosophy and listening to past music, see Michael Rosen, "The History of Ideas as Philosophy and History," *History of Political Thought* 32, no. 4, 691–720, 693–96 especially.

46. John Dunn, "The Identity of the History of Ideas," in *Political Obligation in Its Historical Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 13–28. Quentin Skinner's insistence that there are no "unit ideas" in the history of philosophy, but only arguments made by living agents in real debates, is also of direct relevance, and likewise correct. See Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," in *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60, 62, 83–85.

47. Williams, *Descartes*, xiii.

the transmission, evolution, and success or failure of intellectual projects as primarily historical, not philosophical, phenomena. Clearly, both approaches need to engage philosophy and history if they are to be done well. But one is precisely philosophy "before" it is history, and the other vice versa.

Yet, properly practicing "the history of philosophy" requires that we recover and reconstruct not just particular passages—or even entire works—from past authors, but also the underlying philosophical worldview that both informs, and ultimately promises (if sometimes unsuccessfully) to make coherent and integrated any of the particular arguments offered by individual thinkers. This is because philosophical arguments are embedded not just in an external discursive context constituted by philosophical opponents and allies, but in an internal context determined by the myriad positions and beliefs any given thinker is simultaneously committed to. Whilst it is true that no philosopher argues or thinks in isolation, it is also true that no idea worth bothering to contemplate or recover exists without reference to a great many others, with such ideas being themselves dynamically interrelated: a change in one will frequently generate repercussions for the rest. Any adequate recovery thus demands a serious attempt to grasp the totality of a philosopher's arguments as adding up to something more than the sum of individual positions or points, and this is true even if our aim is only to understand those individual positions or points.

We must, however, proceed carefully. We cannot hope to reconstruct a philosopher's worldview simply by earnestly reading his or her texts very closely; by just looking at their pages over and over again until the "true" meaning emerges. Skinner is right to have insisted that the meaning of an argument depends to a significant extent upon what its author thought he or she was doing in making it, and that in turn depends upon the wider context of communicative intention and reception an agent was embedded in, required for that argument to possess coherent and intelligible content for both its author and its audience.[48] If that context has changed we will misread past authors to varying degrees, ending up with more or less sophisticated forms of anachronism. That may or may not make for good philosophy as conducted purely in the here and now. But it will certainly make for bad readings of Hume,

48. As Williams put it elsewhere: "About what a genuine historical understanding of a text is, understanding of what it *meant*, I agree with Quentin Skinner that if it is recoverable at all, it must be in the kind of terms which he has detailed, of those contemporary expectations in terms of which a communicative intention could be realized": Bernard Williams, "Political Philosophy and the Analytical Tradition," in *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline*, ed. A. W. Moore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 165. Skinner's point about meaning may need to be supplemented with the observation that sometimes recovery of authorial intention is insufficient, for example in cases of "false consciousness" or misapprehension on the part of the author. But this is a refinement, not a refutation. See, for example, Ian Shapiro, "The Difference that Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent," in *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1–18.

Smith, Hobbes, Rousseau, or anybody else not from the here and now, and the poor quality of such readings will be as much philosophical as historical, in the first instance because they won't be readings *of Hume* (or whoever) at all, but of some more or less accurate effigy.[49] Historical sensitivity is essential, and we must always be on guard against exporting what is peculiar to us back into the past. Nonetheless, we will likewise run the risk of getting figures like Hume, Hobbes, Smith, Rousseau, and so on badly wrong, albeit in a different way, if we neglect to make primary the fact that they were, at least when they wrote on politics in the modes I will be examining, *philosophers*, and what is more, philosophers who clearly advanced their arguments in a manner conceived of as contributions to pan-European discourses in which some of the key interlocutors were already dead. Hume's philosophy in particular may well have been (and, as I hope to show, in certain ways was) deeply contextually conditioned. But it must be recovered first and foremost as a philosophy that in many ways aspired to, and often succeeded in, presenting ideas and arguments that could transcend Hume's particular local context, and hold true in many others. The same is the case for Smith.[50] Recovering Hume's and Smith's work in this way means not just viewing their writings as sustained attempts to give an account of how things are in terms of arguments built in the form of premises and conclusions, but also as accounts held together by a wider picture of how the world is, and what makes it that way. This is the case not only with regard to particular details, but also to how all those details fit together to add up to an account that at least aspires to be coherent on the question of how everything is, in light of the fact that if not everything, then certainly a great many things, are connected. We will only properly understand Hume's arguments, and in turn Smith's, if we understand both of them as in the fullest sense philosophers—i.e., *not* simply as depositories of arguments grouped under the same heading because they happened to be proposed by the same historical figures.

We must, however, be alert to a further complicating factor. Philosophers are always committed (implicitly or explicitly, in the best cases consciously, but in many cases revealingly unconsciously) to conceptions about what philosophy itself is, and what it can therefore hope to achieve. Hume and Smith are particularly unusual in this regard, because in many ways their vision of the

49. Dunn, "Identity," 21–23.

50. In this regard I am sympathetic to Jeremy Waldron's point that an over insistence on thick contextualization is liable to distort our readings of past political philosophers, in particular by insisting that those thinkers must have been involved in close engagements with immediate political concerns against those thinkers' own manifest insistence that they *are* speaking—and contributing—to an established cross-generational canon of Western thought: Jeremy Waldron, "What Plato Would Allow," in *Theory and Practice: Nomos XXXVII*, ed. I. Shapiro and J. Wagner (New York: New York University Press, 1995) 143–47.

nature and role of philosophy is severely deflationary. As Hume put it in his essay "The Sceptic," "the empire of philosophy extends over a few; and with regards to these too, her authority is very weak and limited."[51] Various aspects of this study—but particularly chapters 3, 5, and 6—examine what it means to recognize that Hume's worldview comprises a revaluation not just of how the world is, but of how philosophy within that world can and should be, and what it can and cannot hope to achieve.

It matters also that both Hume and Smith were *first-rate* philosophers. If they fell into incoherencies or contradictions, these are never obvious, and always require significant effort on our behalf to be sure of and to adequately account for. This is made especially difficult by the fact that Hume in particular sought to reorient many prevalent beliefs and expectations about the nature and role of philosophy, most of which persist today. Hence, when we have found a putative incoherence or mistake in his work we must be alert to the possibility that the fault is at our end; that we are exhibiting pathologies of thought that Hume's approach recommends we get beyond. The same is not true for all past thinkers, especially those whose ability was lower than that of a Hume or a Smith. Nonetheless, I maintain that even in these cases we will likewise get further in understanding what past philosophers were trying to do, as well as understanding why they disagreed as well as what they collectively achieved, if we attempt to consider not just their arguments, but their philosophies in the broader sense. One result of this is that at times I opt to speak of one thinker agreeing or disagreeing (and equivalent locutions) with another, without necessarily intending to make a strict historical claim about the latter theorist consciously and specifically replying to the earlier one (whom indeed they may not even have read, at least on any precise point at issue). The aim rather is to draw out how patterns of argument match up, complement each other, come into conflict, evolve, die, and so on—as we shall see that they do, across both time and different thinkers. When individual authors are consciously responding to the specific points identifiably raised by predecessors, I try to note this, but I do not restrict myself to such cases alone, for we gain a deeper and more textured understanding of the philosophical arguments and positions in play if we compare conceptual alternatives, and not just individuated and discrete historical responses.

51. David Hume, "The Skeptic," in *Essays*, 168. There is some debate as to whether "The Skeptic" is an essay *in propria persona*: see especially Robert Fogelin, *Hume's Skepticism in the "Treatise of Human Nature"* (London: Routledge, 1985); M. A. Stewart, "The Stoic Legacy in the Early Scottish Enlightenment," in *Atoms, Pneuma and Tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in Enlightenment Thought*, ed. M. J. Osler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 273–96; James Harris, "Hume's Four Essays on Happiness and Their Place in the Move from Morals to Politics," in Mazza and Ronchetti, *New Essays*, 223–35. Yet even if the entire essay is not intended to expound Hume's views exactly, the remark about the empire of philosophy well captures Hume's own attitude.

Here, however, the question of history becomes pertinent once more. For it is not just that historical sensitivity is essential for avoiding anachronism and error when reconstructing philosophical worldviews. The relationship also runs the other way. Once we are in possession not just of appropriately reconstructed arguments, but of wider philosophies and their underpinning worldviews, we can offer a form of history that is driven by the development of such philosophical accounts in their entirety, in particular when they complement or clash with each other, changing, surviving, stagnating, or expiring. The outcome, as well as the method, is thus philosophy before it is history. But the resulting historical story is nonetheless a genuine contribution, albeit one that could only be achieved by taking a particular kind of path through the material.

When we take this approach, we end up with the potential for disagreement with Skinner regarding the point and purpose of the study of past philosophies. Perhaps Skinner's most famous remark on the subject of methodological practice is that there are "no perennial problems in philosophy. There are only individual answers to individual questions, and potentially as many different questions as there are questioners."[52] At a certain level this is doubtless true: questions cannot exist outside the heads of questioners. Yet there are good reasons to be skeptical of Skinner's correlate insistence that "the classic texts are concerned with their own questions and not with ours."[53] This may often turn out to be true—and perhaps especially so the further back one goes—but it is also the case that unsolved questions are typically passed on to subsequent generations, albeit with varying degrees of success and hardiness. It is certainly, as Skinner says, wrongheaded to think that one can straightforwardly turn to the history of ideas for ready-made "lessons" applicable to the here and now. Nonetheless, the questions of past thinkers may turn out to be our questions, for two reasons in particular. First, because we may have inherited them from past thinkers, rather than inventing them ourselves. Second, because we may find that the relevant context separating past thinkers from ourselves has changed only superficially, whilst the more fundamental issues that prompted and shaped the emergence of past questions and answers remain extant today. This does not mean that there are "perennial questions" after all, but rather that

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52. Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding," 88. It is worth noting that Skinner's own work in practice displays a much more complex and ambiguous relationship to such a statement than might be assumed (and of which he is often accused). John Dunn's review of Skinner's first major monograph, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, captures the point well. As Dunn puts it, the excitement of Skinner's work is generated by the promise of the extreme historicity implied in the "no perennial questions" remark, but the depth and subtlety of Skinner's engagements tend to preclude any straightforward or polemical historicity from being attributable to his arguments: John Dunn, "The Cage of Politics," *Listener*, March 15, 1979, 389–90.

53. Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding," 88.

whether there are or not is largely beside the point. If some questions do endure, and we can identify which ones, then the uses of intellectual history extend beyond the making of comparisons with alien ways of doing things so as to better illuminate our local practices. In particular, they may extend to the possibility that we can legitimately study the answers volunteered in the past to better understand the predicaments of the present, precisely because these predicaments are not new and neither are many of our attempted solutions to them.

Certainly we cannot know this to be the case a priori. Skinner is right about how to proceed in practice: we must check that past philosophers can possibly have meant what we claim they mean, or we will hear simply our own voices echoed back to us, learning only about ourselves, and even then not very much. But if we take appropriate caution, what is frequently revealed is that in many respects the same questions that we struggle to answer in political theory at the start of the twenty-first century were already being wrestled with by the best thinkers of the eighteenth. One thing this book seeks to illuminate is the *persistence* of some philosophical questions. We simply have not succeeded in getting past a great deal of eighteenth-century thought: their questions are in many ways still ours. I therefore put myself closer to the position of Dunn than of Skinner, the former of whom has maintained a view much more like the one I have just outlined than that of the latter, their usual reduction to a unitary "Cambridge school" notwithstanding. As Dunn emphasizes, given that better minds have already attempted to answer many of our questions, we should neither neglect such thinkers, nor turn them into mere mirrors for our own edification. Ultimately, what "lessons" there are to be drawn from the history of political thought depend more upon our own informed and careful judgment, than upon the dictates of any particular "methodology."[54]

I believe, and hope to show in what follows, that one of the most illuminating contexts for understanding Hume's, and then Rousseau's and Smith's, political philosophies is the competing theories their contributions were an alternative to, rather than the material political circumstances of their day, or the structural similarities their thought may exhibit with that of relevant others with regard to particular pieces of argumentation as identified through overarching traditions of thought. As a result, I have steered clear of using the categories of revived Hellenistic philosophies (in particular Epicureanism and Stoicism, and, more vaguely, skepticism) to cross-classify thinkers in order to make historical or conceptual claims, as has been increasingly popular in

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54. For the earliest and most forthright statements of Dunn's view, see Dunn, "Identity," and "Cage of Politics," but also *The History of Political Theory and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For Dunn's method as demonstrated in his work, *Political Thought*; "What Is Living"; "Judgment for Mortals."

recent scholarship of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[55] With regard to particular arguments within a philosopher's worldview, labeling an item of thought as "Stoic," or "Epicurean," and so forth may sometimes illuminate, as is the case with, for example, Shaftesbury's and Hutcheson's deployment of specifically and self-consciously Stoic moral and metaphysical ideas. But doing so across and between seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers' positions threatens to obscure as much as it reveals.[56]

Nonetheless, I have no ambitions in the direction of methodological imperialism. It would be foolish and false to claim that "the history of philosophy" is the only valid enterprise, with no room for "the history of ideas" (where the emphasis on Hellenistic traditions of thought has recently enjoyed prominence), or, for that matter, more conventional philosophy and political theory that proceed largely ahistorically. Quite the contrary: we require a division of labor not only to make progress in the detail of historically located philosophical arguments, but in enabling wider conceptualizations of what was going on in any given period. Mine is not the only perspective, and does not aspire to be. The multiple levels of both historical and philosophical analysis required to grapple with topics as large and complex as theories of sociability and of the nature of state, in the eighteenth century and beyond, are so extensive as to make it impossible for one perspective, let alone one person, to achieve all that is required. Be that as it may, by adopting the particular perspective outlined above I hope to offer some new answers, or at least new ways of seeing older problems, whilst recognizing that it is only through an appropriate division of labor—both within and between historical approaches to past philosophies—that we will collectively make meaningful progress.

55. See, for example, and in addition to the work of Robertson, Moore, and Turco noted above, Jean Lafond, "Augustinisme et épicurisme au xvii siècle," in *L'homme et son image: morales et littérature de Montaigne à Mandeville* (Paris: H. Champion, 1996), 345–68; Pierre Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Catharine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes: An Eighteenth Century Emblem in the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), chap. 3; and the essays collected in Osler, *Atoms, Pneuma and Tranquility.*

56. I examine the question of how to think about revived traditions of Hellenistic thought more extensively in Paul Sagar, "Sociability, Luxury and Sympathy: The Case of Archibald Campbell," *History of European Ideas* 39 (2013), 806–14. See also Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, 15–16, 31–32.

Sociability

Hobbes: Pride's Predicament

THOMAS HOBBES OPENED his 1642 *De Cive* with a remarkable declaration:

> The majority of previous writers on public Affairs either assume or seek
> to prove or simply assert that Man is an animal born fit for Society,—
> in the Greek phrase, Ζῷον πολιτικὸν. On this foundation they erect a
> structure of civil doctrine, as if no more were necessary for the preser-
> vation of peace and the governance of the whole human race than for
> men to give their consent to certain agreements and conditions which,
> without further thought, these writers called laws. This axiom, though
> widely accepted, is nevertheless false; the error proceeds from a super-
> ficial view of human nature.[1]

What might a less "superficial" view of human nature look like? According to
Hobbes, when human beings associate "we are not looking for friends but for
honour or advantage from them."[2] This compact declaration contained the
crux of his view. First, we are not looking for "friends." Neither mutual love nor
any natural instinct or appetite for company leads us to associate. Hobbes thus
rejected the Aristotelian dictum that human beings are by nature thoroughly
sociable.[3] The proof of this was negative: if human beings were looking for

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1. Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. R. Tuck and M. Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cam-
bridge University Press, 1998), 21–22.

2. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 22. This is an overstatement even by Hobbes's own lights, as
demonstrated by the much more expansive range of psychological capacities delineated in
Leviathan. However, it is useful to focus on Hobbes's explication in *De Cive*, insofar as this
most clearly illustrates the fundamentals of his view, which are retained in *Leviathan* even
if that work incorporates a more realistic, wider psychological account.

3. In fact, by the time Hobbes issued his political works, late-Renaissance Aristotelian-
ism exhibited a great deal of complexity in analyzing human sociability, and Hobbes's

friends there would be a cosmopolitan world society, each joining with others out of a general love for mankind, undifferentiated as such.[4] Instead we find humanity divided into hostile groupings—independent political associations that are, as he put it in *Leviathan*, "in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another."[5] The most basic of empirical observations with regard to human associations supplied evidence against the supposition of natural sociability. The proper task was to explain how *any* society was nonetheless possible—as the reality of a divided mankind attested it must in some limited way be—rather than starting from the erroneous supposition that human sociability was natural, innate, or somehow straightforward.

Human associations, Hobbes contended, were founded not on love, instinct, or appetite for company, but in the self-interested seeking of "honour" and "advantage," with friendship at best a "secondary" motive directed at specific individuals. Advantage—i.e., the utilitarian benefit of group cooperation—was a drive to society insofar as naturally indigent man could better satisfy both his basic material, and later his more developed, needs and wants, via association with others in arrangements for reciprocal self-interest. Likewise, honor propelled men to society because human beings craved the good estimation of their peers, something obtainable only in company. Man thus had two drives to society, both of them natural. So why was he nonetheless "not an animal born fit for society"?

Central to Hobbes's account in *De Cive* was the claim that "Every pleasure of the mind is either glory (or a good opinion of oneself), or ultimately relates to glory; the others are sensual or lead to something sensual, and can all be

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depiction of scholastic teaching was an oversimplistic caricature. Nonetheless, by rejecting *any* natural basis for successful human sociability in large and lasting conditions, Hobbes did put clear water between himself and early modern Aristotelianism. See especially Annabel Brett, *Changes of State: Nature and the Limits of the City in Early Modern Natural Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), chap. 5; "'The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common-Wealth': Thomas Hobbes and Late Renaissance Commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*," *Hobbes Studies* 23 (2010), 72–102.

4. Hobbes, *On the Citizen,* 22.

5. Hobbes, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan*, ed. N. Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 2, 196. For discussions of Hobbes's views of natural unsociability, Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Harvard, 2005), 20–22, 39–45; Kinch Hoekstra, "Hobbes on the Natural Condition of Mankind," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's "Leviathan,"* ed. P. Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109–27; Philip Pettit, *Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind and Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), chaps. 6–7; Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), chap. 4.

comprised under the name of advantages."[6] This division of pleasures—into those of the mind and those of the body—corresponds directly to the two social drives of honor and advantage. Of particular importance is the claim that every pleasure of the mind is glory or a good opinion of oneself. Hobbes here signaled the irreducibly inter-mental and comparative dimension of human self-assessment: agents valued their own worth by the imputed mental estimations of their peers. Human life was comparable to an endless race, defined not by a finish line (which could only be death, man's *summum malum*), but by the constant imperative to be ahead of one's peers: "this race we must suppose to have no other goal, nor no other garland, but being foremost."[7] Thanks to Rousseau (himself deeply influenced by Hobbes), we principally know the phenomenon of mental self-estimation for agents who evaluate themselves via the imputed judgment of peers as *amour propre*.[8] The modern, evaluatively neutral term for this is "recognition." For Hobbes, it was captured, albeit somewhat imperfectly, by the label of pride. As he put it in the *Elements of Law*: "GLORY, or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind, is that passion which proceedeth from the imagination or conception of our own power, above the power of him that contendeth with us. The signs whereof, besides those in the countenance, and other gestures of the body which cannot be described, are, ostentation in words, and insolency in actions; and this passion, by them whom it displeaseth, is called pride: by them whom it pleaseth, it is termed a just valuation of himself."[9] Pride was the name of glory when it offends our peers (reflecting its traditional status as a vice and the deadliest of the seven deadly sins); with the same passion rhetorically redescribed as "just valuation" by agents who believed it appropriate. The crucial problem with glory, however, is that it is by nature positional: "glorying, like honour, is nothing if everybody has it, since it consists in comparison and pre-eminence."[10] Desire for honor pushed men toward society, but successful attempts by some to glory over likewise glory-seeking competitors, and the mental pain felt by those who failed to gain the honor they craved, was liable to cause men to attack: "Since all the heart's joy and pleasure lies in being able to compare oneself favourably with others and

6. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 23–24.

7. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, ed. F. Tönnies and M. M. Goldsmith (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 47.

8. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 152, 171, 218. The term and concept of amour propre was previously used by the French Augustinians at Port Royal in the seventeenth century, especially by Pierre Nicole, in attempts to explain how morally corrupt fallen man could erect a system of utility-promoting substitute morality, thus engendering successful social living. For a discussion of this, and its influence on Mandeville (and in turn Rousseau), see E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's "Fable": Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 96–115.

9. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 36–37.

10. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 24.

form a high opinion of oneself, men cannot avoid sometimes showing hatred and contempt for each other, by laughter or words or a gesture or other sign. There is nothing more offensive than this, nothing that triggers a stronger impulse to hurt someone."[11] Whilst competition over material resources would cause flash points of confrontation between individuals, the most consistent and ineliminable source of conflict over men's wanting "the same thing at the same time, without being able to enjoy it in common or to divide it," would be honor, rooted in pride, and the attempt to secure glory as a public display of recognized superiority. "The consequence is that it must go to the stronger. But who is the stronger? Fighting must decide."[12]

Hobbes's central proposition regarding the human capacity to form society was that because "All society . . . exists for the sake either of advantage or of glory, i.e., it is a product of love of self, not love of friends . . . [so] no large or lasting society can be based on the passion for glory."[13] Human beings faced intractable difficulties in the erecting and maintaining of specifically *large and lasting* societies. The twin propulsions of honor and advantage would lead men to associate successfully for a time and in limited groupings: in the "state of nature"—i.e., lacking a common political power—men were dangerous to each other precisely because the weaker could not only lay traps for, but also form in "confederacy" against, the stronger, whilst the more successful would be attacked by those who came with men assembled to dispossess them of their "persons, wives, children, and cattell."[14] The seeking of honor was irreducibly destabilizing in large groups as a minority of individuals craving preeminence would attack others not just for material gain, but for the extraction of imputed superiority and in some cases the bare joy of domination.[15] Knowledge of the existence of even a minority of such individuals generated a permanent incentive for the majority—by disposition moderate and otherwise content with equal standing—to attack first. Indeed, even if the moderate did not attack first, their very moderation would be a provocation to those greedy for comparative recognition: "those men who are moderate, and look for no more but equality of nature, shall be obnoxious to the force of others, that will attempt to subdue them. And from hence shall proceed a general diffidence in mankind, and mutual fear one of another."[16] The destabilizing effects of reiterated attempts at glorying undermined the capacity to form

11. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 26–27.

12. Ibid., 27.

13. Ibid., 24; cf. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 44.

14. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 190–92.

15. As Hobbes reminded his readers at the outset of the second part of *Leviathan*, "Of Commonwealth," men "naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others" (*Leviathan*, vol. 2, 254), recalling his claim in *De Cive* that men are naturally more attracted to domination than to society (*On the Citizen*, 24).

16. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 71; cf. *On the Citizen*, 26; *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 190.

stable associations based on mutual advancement of utility and the need to be in company with others to secure recognition. Large and lasting society could not be stably generated out of the materials of honor or advantage alone: "no one should doubt that, in the absence of fear, men would be more avidly attracted to domination than to society. One must therefore lay it down that the origin of large and lasting societies lay not in mutual human benevolence but in men's mutual fear."[17]

In *Leviathan* Hobbes submerged the stark account that was presented in *De Cive*. His depiction of humans' natural unsociability, as put forward in the infamous chapter 13, declared there to be *three*, rather than just one, "principall causes of quarrell." These were competition, diffidence, and glory, where "The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation."[18] Yet we ought to see that the argument in *Leviathan* in fact employs the same logic that was expanded more starkly in the earlier *De Cive*. After all, the first two causes of quarrel listed by Hobbes are about advancing material interests and security (in reality two sides of the same coin, hence why they are grouped together in *De Cive* under the heading of "advantage"). And the best way to secure these would be through group cooperation, including mutually beneficial agreements to abstain from attacking each other, with defectors who disturbed the peace and threatened commodious living being quickly identified and dealt with by the majority members of the cooperating group. Given the huge risks and poor returns associated with violent conflict, or attempting to cheat the cooperative system and getting caught (and despite the presence of some relatively low level of defectors) if people sought only utility—only the needs of the body, not the mind—then natural sociability ought straightforwardly to be possible, even if imperfectly or messily achieved in practice. Accordingly, however, if humanity's "natural condition" was indeed the one of protracted misery that Hobbes so dramatically insisted upon, then the real problem must lie beyond "competition" and "diffidence," in the third cause of quarrel: "glory." And, indeed, in *Leviathan* it is ultimately the seeking of "reputation," the need to satiate pride through competition for status recognition, that generates humanity's thoroughgoing natural unsociability. Those who would invade—unexpectedly, unpredictably, potentially against their own material interests, and often without being detectable in advance—for "trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other signe of undervalue" are the real destabilizing factor.[19] Against such individuals (and nobody can know for sure who they might turn out to be) one may—indeed ought—to strike preemptively. But this generates a cascade effect of rational preemptive retaliation, as all others carry out the same calculation, thoroughly destabilizing the

17. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 24.
18. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 192.
19. Ibid.

possibility for large-scale cooperation over extended periods of time, at least based on natural materials alone.[20]

Hobbes's aggressive rhetorical presentation in *Leviathan* XIII meant that he presented the causes of natural unsociability as thoroughly overdetermined, being simultaneously from interest, security, and glory.[21] This was presumably to convince his readers, via the most forceful and persuasive terms available, of the reasons they had to submit to overawing sovereign power. But beneath Hobbes's rhetoric, the argument for natural unsociability still depended upon the seeking of reputation—of glory, driven by pride—for it to have the validity he claimed.

The result of all this was that (in the words of *De Cive*) "fear" was ultimately necessary to establish "large and lasting" society. According to Hobbes, each human being was possessed of an ineliminable and irreducible drive to self-preserve, in his terminology a "right of nature" constituting a "blameless liberty" to do whatever each individual judged necessary to survive (including killing and using the bodies of others).[22] Human beings' capacity to reason, however, led them to a corresponding set of imperatives, "laws of nature," for how to best secure their own self-preservation.[23] These imperatives indicated that each individual's interest was best secured by a cessation of hostilities. Yet in the absence of guarantees that others would not defect from agreements to conduct themselves peaceably (in Hobbes's language, "covenanting"), it would be irrational (because potentially suicidal) to act unilaterally. This was especially the case given that others might attack not just for material benefit, but for positional superiority, or out of resentment at the relative success of others. Pride interacted disastrously with the irreducible drive to self-preservation.[24] This entailed that humans in their natural subpolitical condition were in a continual state of hostility, a "state of war" characterized not by constant fight-

20. Ibid.

21. On the rhetorical presentation of *Leviathan*, see Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chaps. 9–10.

22. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 71; cf. *On the Citizen*, 34; *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 198.

23. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, chaps. 15–17; *On the Citizen*, chaps. 2–3; *Leviathan*, vol. 2, chaps. 14–15.

24. We thus cannot agree with Richard Tuck's claim that "Our entire emotional life, according to Hobbes . . . is in fact a complicated set of beliefs about the best way of securing ourselves against our fellow men, with all the familiar complexities of love, pride, and laughter in the end reducible simply to a set of ideas about our own relative safety from other people's power": Richard Tuck, "The Utopianism of *Leviathan*," in *"Leviathan" after 350 Years*, ed. T. Sorell and L. Foisneau (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 132. If the only problem we faced was other people's power, our relative safety would be secured by forming confederacies for mutual advantage. It is, however, precisely because pride—the need for recognition, expressed via glory seeking—is an irreducible component of human psychological processing that other people's power is dangerous. Pride sets the problem for calculations of self-preservation, rather than being a function of those calculations.

ing, but by the constant inclination to and threat thereof.[25] Propelled by their same ineliminable desire for self-preservation, human beings were rationally compelled to seek ways of escaping their condition of natural misery by entering upon conditions of peace, to which end they would naturally attempt associations based on honor and advantage. Their natural predicament was that from these materials alone no permanent and stable solution was possible. An *artificial* socialization device was therefore required, which Hobbes located in the imposition of fear as a way of altering the structural predicament generated by the interplay of pride and self-preservation.

Hobbes's term for confederacies based on honor and advantage, as well as families based on natural love and the limited bonds of friendship, was "concord."[26] The only viable method for the erection and maintenance of large and lasting societies, however, was "union": an artificial sociability mechanism comprising a system of representative sovereignty wedded to a structure of overarching coercive enforcement that allowed human beings to safely enter into conditions of peace by terrorizing potential defectors into conformity.[27] Hobbes did not think that honor and advantage, or love and friendship, were absent from stable political society, but he insisted that if left uncoordinated, individuals' wills would not come into stable alignment with each other—and this would sooner or later inevitably produce conflict, and ultimately the disintegration of any common peace tentatively reached hitherto.[28] Hobbes's sovereign sought to unify the disparate wills of competing individuals in two parallel ways: employing fear and the threat of overawing force to enable men to converge on the same ends with regard to the preservation of peace, and insisting that insofar as the sovereign was the representative of the will of each, *judgment* about what each person willed was relinquished to a centralized— and in turn, unifying—agency. Union meant the imposition of undivided and absolute political power: the wielding of the "public sword" to keep people in

25. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 72–73; *On the Citizen*, 29–30; *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 192.

26. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 101–2; *On the Citizen*, 72–73; *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 260; cf. vol. 2, 194, on the "government of small Families" of Native Americans, "the concord whereof dependeth on naturall lust."

27. For discussions of the concord-union distinction, Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 20–21, 40–44; Richard Tuck, "Hobbes and Democracy," in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, ed. A. Brett and J. Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 171–90; Isaac Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State: Perpetual Peace and Commercial Society from Rousseau to Fichte* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 25–34.

28. This point is perhaps most clearly made by Hobbes in the *Elements of Law* (101–2): "This consent (or concord) amongst so many men, though it may be made by the fear of a present invader, or by the hope of a present conquest, or booty; and endure as long as that action endureth; nevertheless, by the diversity of judgments and passions in so many men contending naturally for honor and advantage one above another: it is impossible, not only that their consent to aid each other against an enemy, but also that the peace should last between themselves, without some mutual and common fear to rule them."

"awe" and thus faithful to peaceable living.[29] The public sword was a *threat* to that minority whose overweening pride and greed for glory demanded more than equal recognition, but a *guarantee* to those whose moderate ambitions meant they merely required protection from the pathologically glory seeking (as well as the vainglorious, who would otherwise be permanent sources of disruption).[30] Ultimately, union involved concord, but not vice versa, and what distinguished the former from the latter was the use of fear to unify the wills of men, enabling an escape from the horrors of man's natural condition and the instantiation of large and lasting society.

In addition to safety secured by fear, however, the bearer of sovereign power must also provide not just a "bare Preservation," but also all other "Contentments of life." Similarly, the rights of sovereignty "cannot be maintained by any Civill Law, or terror of legall punishment" alone, and must instead be "diligently, and truly taught" so that men knew and acknowledged the grounds of their obedience.[31] Fear was the necessary, but not sufficient, condition for large and lasting society. In order to sustain the obedience and allegiance of subjects, sovereigns must provide them with publicly expressed and upheld reasons to obey, both in terms of private material benefit and a good understanding of the grounds of their (ultimately self-interested) political obligation of obedience.[32] This added stipulation reflected both the underlying (if often unappreciated) richness of Hobbes's psychological account, and his consistent position that most human beings are equitable and will faithfully and persistently abide by conditions of peace if given the opportunity, security, and sufficient incentive to do so.[33] Nonetheless, fear was the ineliminable foundation, the "origin," of large and lasting societies owing to the disruptive potential of honor that could not otherwise be kept in check.[34] The artifice of union gave unity to what would otherwise be a formless multitude only temporarily held together by the inadequate bonds of concord. This generated what "is

29. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 254.

30. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 71.

31. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 520–22.

32. On the publicly affirmed and transparent nature of Hobbes's political principles, see Waldron, "Hobbes and the Principle of Publicity," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 82, no. 3–4 (2001), 447–74.

33. Hobbes's stipulation in chap. 30 of *Leviathan* that terror is insufficient to maintain peace has sometimes been interpreted as yielding incoherence. Quentin Skinner, for example, writes of Hobbes "developing an argument that not only has no parallel in *The Elements* or *De Cive*, but flatly contradicts his earlier line of thought": Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 159. There is, however, no incoherence or contradiction, either within *Leviathan* or between Hobbes's works, if we understand Hobbes as claiming that large and lasting society requires fear as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for controlling the disruptions of honor seeking amongst agents craving recognition.

34. Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 24.

called a COMMON-WEALTH, in latine CIVITAS . . . the Generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speake more reverently) of that *Mortall God*, to which we owe under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence."[35]

The control of pride was thus the heart of Hobbes's account. In discussing the conditions of peace under the headings of the laws of nature, he explicitly stated the ninth to be against pride, and made clear its significance: "If Nature therefore have made men equall; that equalitie is to be acknowledged: or if Nature have made men unequall; yet because men that think themselves equall, will not enter conditions of Peace, but upon Equall termes, such equalities must be admitted. And therefore for the ninth law of Nature, I put this, *That every man acknowledge other for his Equall by Nature*. The breach of this Precept is *Pride*."[36] Pride is here the name given to a refusal to acknowledge others for one's equals, mirroring Hobbes's claim in the *Elements of Law* that pride is what others call the seeking of glory when it offends them. Designated as proud are those who refuse to acknowledge others as equal, seeking instead to extract honor as a publicly signaled positional good. Individuals "who think themselves equal" will not enter terms of peace unless the belief in their own equality is acknowledged. The important point here is thus not whether human beings *are* equal, but that others *acknowledge them as such regardless*.[37] Whilst not everybody seeks glory in terms of absolute positional superiority, nobody wishes to be gloried over: "every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himself."[38] Denial of this valuation by a refusal to recognize equality was a provocation to violence, and thus instability.

The explanation of the fact that all human beings demand to be publicly recognized as equals—that is, not as *un*equals—is precisely that they are proud; i.e., driven by estimations of their own relative standings compared to others. Whilst we *call* violations of the recognition of mutual equality pride, it

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35. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 260.

36. Ibid., 234. In *De Cive*, pride is given as violation of the eighth precept of natural law, which likewise commands acknowledgement of equals: Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 49–50.

37. On this see also Kinch Hoekstra, "Hobbesian Equality," in *Hobbes Today*, ed. S. A. Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 76–112.

38. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 190. Accordingly we must reject Noel Malcolm's claim that there is a "de-psychologizing" of the argument in *Leviathan* as compared to *De Cive*: Noel Malcolm, "General Introduction," in Hobbes, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan*, ed. N. Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 1, 18. In all of Hobbes's works the subversion of stable, large, and lasting society is generated by the competitive positional nature of honor seeking rooted in pride (in the terminology of *De Cive*, "a good opinion of oneself"), and the instability is engendered by the threat posed by a minority of glory seekers not content with equal standing. In *Leviathan*, chap. 13 especially, Hobbes emphasizes that glory seeking generates structural predicaments even for the moderate, but this remains principally because of the disruptiveness of the desire for recognition. This is continuous with his position in the *Elements* (*Elements of Law*, 70–72), as well as in *De Cive* (*On the Citizen*, 26).

is simultaneously the ubiquity of pride which means that everyone demands, at the very least, recognition as an equal (and in pathological cases of glory and especially vainglory, they disastrously demand even more than that). With good reason, Hobbes claimed that he took the name of his 1651 work from the Book of Job, "where God having set forth the great power of *Leviathan*, calleth him King of the Proud," giving the Biblical quotation of Leviathan as "*King of all the children of pride.*"[39] Hobbes's sovereign is necessarily sovereign of all the people, "the children," the point being not only that Leviathan is king of all the proud children, but that all of the children are proud. The central function of sovereignty was to impose conditions of fear under which individuals would be forced to recognize each other as equals, albeit beneath the decidedly unequal power of the sovereign.[40]

Outside of political society, human beings were consigned to a state of permanent hostility, suspicion, and aggression thanks to the interplay of pride and individual judgments of self-preservation. Despite the temporary relief of confederacies and associations built on concord, men's lives would be "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short."[41] The sole means of stable delivery from this predicament was the "artificial man" of the Leviathan commonwealth, whose "soul," its animating principle, was sovereignty.[42] The superstructure of the political theory Hobbes built upon this foundation sought to demonstrate that all members of established political society owed their peace and security, and in turn their obedience, to the sovereign who protected them.[43] Even if all commonwealths in history had been imperfectly built as though on sand, Hobbes's theory was presented as the true science of politics, promising secure and stable foundations, thanks to a clear and definitive understanding of the

39. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 496.

40. Forthrightly: "As in the presence of the Master, the Servants are equall, and without any honour at all; So are the Subjects, in the presence of the Soveraign. And though they shine some more, some less, when they are out of his sight; yet in his presence, they shine no more than the Starres in presence of the Sun." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 280. This point is rather missed by Philip Pettit, who suggests that Hobbes simply overlooks the possibility that we might all be content with recognizing each other as equals (*Made with Words*, 96). On the contrary, Hobbes explicitly ruled out this possibility through his account of the place of recognition seeking in human nature; cf. Tim Stanton, "Hobbes and Schmitt," *History of European Ideas* 37 (2011), 163–65.

41. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 192. When Hobbes describes men's lives as "solitary," he does not mean they literally live in isolation, but that the systematic lack of trust and mutual danger engendered by the disruptiveness of honor precludes their forming safe and permanent associations with others.

42. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 16.

43. Ibid., pt. 2, chap. 18; pt. 3, "A review, and Conclusion," especially. For overviews of Hobbes's account of obedience, see Kinch Hoekstra, "The *De Facto* Turn in Hobbes's Political Philosophy," in Sorell and Foisneau, *"Leviathan" after 350 Years*, 33–74; Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, chap. 6.

requisite mechanisms for successful large-scale society.[44] Predicated on a theory of human nature identifying pride as the central item in the psychologies of thinking and communicating agents, the chief goal of Hobbes's science of politics was to offer a solution to the central problems generated for human sociability by that same pride.

Once natural men had delivered themselves from their natural predicament, however, the artificial men they erected to overawe them were not subject to a parallel security dilemma in the international arena. The "gladiators" of state relations were primarily defensive, their principal endeavor being the security of their domestic peoples, which for the most part they achieved. Although these artificial men lacked a common power, and were thus in a state of nature with regard to each other, "there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the liberty of particular men."[45] Stability could be expected in the international arena in a way not possible for natural men in the state of nature. The natural law requirement of extending considerations of reciprocal self-preservation would still apply between state actors, engendering mutually recognized codes of international conduct.[46] But it would not generate the further imperative to associate under common power. The world would remain stably—if not always peacefully—divided into an arrangement of jealous, but for the most part tolerably accommodated, Leviathans. Once peaceably arranged beneath these "artificial men," the main threat to natural men came not from international conflict, but from internal rebellion propagated by self-aggrandizing glory seekers taking advantage of false doctrines, particularly in religion, and stemming from the lack of a properly known and disseminated science of politics.[47] Human pride forever threatened to plunge human beings back into the miserable natural condition generated by pride. Its control and management was the great achievement of political society; its irreducibility in human psychology the source of the most serious and permanent internal threat.

44. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 320–22.

45. Ibid., 196.

46. Ibid., 236, 246–48. See especially Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes's Theory of International Relations," in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 432–56; Tuck, *Rights of War and Peace*, chaps. 4 and 7, and "Utopianism of *Leviathan*," 134–36.

47. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, chap. 29 generally, and especially 282, 516–18; vol. 3, 928–30; *On the Citizen*, 138–39. Pride and glory seeking as the source of internal sedition is a central theme of Hobbes's history of the English Civil War: Thomas Hobbes, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes: Behemoth*, ed. P. Seaward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), "Dialogue 1," especially. On Hobbes's use of the imagery of the artificial man (and his sometimes conflicting, or at least alternative, use of the metaphor of the person of the commonwealth), see Paul Sagar, "What is the Leviathan?," *Hobbes Studies* (forthcoming), and David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 2.

Yet, in contrast to this evident pessimism about the inevitable human political predicament, Hobbes's vision of politics also held out a particular kind of promise, a theoretical, and by extension practical, optimism about the human capacity for political self-understanding, and hence the construction of artificial solutions to deep natural problems. This was embodied most clearly in his theory of union as providing the scientific definition of the "commonwealth or civitas." The promise embedded deep in Hobbes's vision was that the state, even if imperfectly realized and problematically generated in practice, was nonetheless a definite and identifiable form of human association that could be revealed by correct method, and which humans could in turn aspire to a more accomplished and complete fulfillment of. In other words, that beneath the chaos of human practical politics lay a final answer regarding the proper form of large-scale human association under organized coercive power, which a proper science of politics could help mankind come closer to perfecting in practice. Hobbes's vision of popular sovereignty as necessarily mediated through representation was purposefully constructed for application to large, heterogeneous political communities (i.e., modern European kingships), making the "res publica" not simply the form of administration of government, but something more intangible, and yet fundamentally prior to that: the permanent entity of the state.[48] This was in large measure a response to the twin threats of terminal internal tumult and external military aggression felt widely across early modern Europe, coupled with the belief that only a unified decision-making power properly equipped to meet these challenges could suffice in order to successfully preserve the political communities in which human beings must live. Yet this promise—of the state as something objectively identifiable and permanent beneath the chaos of human practice, and the theory of sovereignty as the means for both properly identifying and realizing this promise—has exercised enormous appeal and influence in the theoretical imagination of subsequent thinkers, both in the 150 years following Hobbes that this book is concerned with, and in more recent attempts to gain understandings of modern political predicaments through repeated returns to Hobbes's work. What the rest of this chapter, and indeed this book, aims to show is that Hume (and later, Smith) resisted Hobbes's vision at a fundamental level, offering a different way of understanding our political situation. What Hume and Smith supply is a vision of the modern state *without* a theory of sovereignty: the suggestion that modern political entities, at least when existing in sufficiently favorable conditions, are equipped to deal

48. As Hont puts it, the state, for Hobbes, "had to remain essentially the totality of the community, impersonal and disembodied; its intended identity being lost as soon as it was mistakenly equated with any of the actual individuals or subordinate corporations that composed the *civitas*." István Hont, "The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: 'Nation-State' and 'Nationalism' in Historical Perspective," in *Jealousy of Trade*, 466–67.

with the travails of internal and external threats without a totalizing theory of decision-making unity that posits the state as something independent of, and prior to, the actual practice of political rule in the deeply historically conditioned forms in which it actually comes down to any given people. As we shall see in chapter 3, this required a radical reconfiguration of the role and power of political philosophy, one enabling a reconceptualization of the fundamental problem of political obligation. But first, we must understand how Hume opened up that road by reconfiguring the understanding of human sociability. Getting to Hume, however, requires us to appreciate the challenge of a crucial intermediary figure in the British sociability debate of the eighteenth century: Bernard Mandeville.

Mandeville: Pride Redux

Hobbes's vision of human sociability was forcefully rejected by Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, in his 1711 *Charactersticks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Shaftesbury was preoccupied with what he saw as the morally pernicious consequences of Hobbes's philosophy: the reduction of morality to self-interested efforts at cooperation by atomistic biological units attempting to survive whilst competing in a "distracted" universe. If *that* was all morality consisted of, then for Shaftesbury it wasn't worth having at all. To be worthy of the name, morality had to be guaranteed a more fundamental reality and dignity and should not be traceable back to the operations, however well coordinated, of self-interest.[49]

Shaftesbury likewise condemned the philosophy of his former tutor John Locke, alleging that it reduced to nothing better than that of Hobbes.[50] Locke had insisted that the reality of moral distinctions was guaranteed only by God's revelation, though as such it was accessible to all men through the power of reason. Pointing to evidence of vast diversity in human moral practices, however, Locke claimed that in lieu of revelation, human moral practices were outgrowths of local custom and opinion, revealing no underlying uniformity or

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49. See especially Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit," in *Charactersticks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. D.J.D. Uyl, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), vol. 2, 1–100. The "Inquiry" was originally published in 1699 (whether with Shaftesbury's permission is unclear), but was redrafted and placed at the center of the *Characteristicks* in vol. 2, expounding Shaftesbury's positive philosophical views after building on the negative critiques advanced in vol. 1. It contains the central statement of his moral philosophy, and was highly influential in eighteenth-century debates, not least via its impact on Joseph Butler and Francis Hutcheson.

50. Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, *The Life, Unpublished Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, ed. B. Rand (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1900), 403.

reality.[51] Shaftesbury abhorred what he saw as Locke's theological voluntarism, believing it rendered human beings no better than a "Tiger strongly chain'd" or a "Monkey under the Discipline of the Whip."[52] As for Locke's skepticism about natural human moral practices due to the prevalence of diversity, this opened the door to Hobbes, once one rejected Locke's voluntarist theological solution. If there existed only diversity of custom and opinion, without any more fundamental and immutable standard of vice and virtue, all we could hope for would be Hobbes's coordinating system of self-preserving competitors. Ultimately, Hobbes and Locke were distinguished only by the former's provocative and forthright assertions openly disgracing him, taking the "point" off his philosophy. Locke was altogether more pernicious. By being less candid, he more effectively struck at "all the fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world," making the very ideas of morality "*unnatural*, and without foundation in our minds."[53]

Opposing what he saw as dangerous moral skepticism , Shaftesbury claimed that although extreme diversity could be observed in human ethical practice, this supervened upon an innate dispositional ability to discern and act upon independently valid and universal moral principles.[54] Human beings existed in an ordered teleological system designed by a benevolent deity. Moral distinctions corresponded not to individual opinion or imperatives of self-preservation, but appreciation of the order and beauty of the proper functioning of the harmonious whole, of which each individual was necessarily a part.[55] God's role was not to act as the cosmic dispenser of rewards and punishments (the heeding of which, being self-interested, would anyway negate genuine moral worth), but as the guarantor of an ordered, purposeful system within which man's end was moral living.[56] This allowed Shaftesbury to claim that "*Virtue* and *Interest* may be found at last to agree."[57] In this ordered teleological system, promoting one's own good necessitated the promotion of the good of the wider system; being virtuous (i.e., promoting the good of others) was accordingly the chief means of securing one's own good, in the form of

51. See especially Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chaps. 1–3.

52. Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, vol. 2, 32.

53. Shaftesbury, *Unpublished Letters*, 403.

54. For an overview, see Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, chap. 4. For useful discussions of Shaftesbury's moral philosophy see Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal "Ought"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chap. 7; J. B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 295–309.

55. Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, vol. 2, 21–25.

56. Ibid., 43–44.

57. Ibid., 9.

happiness.[58] In this manner Shaftesbury sought to combine a nonvoluntarist Christian theology with a revival of Stoic ethical principles to guarantee the reality of moral distinctions.[59]

Central to Shaftesbury's account was the supposition that human beings were naturally sociable. The entire universe consisted of integrated, overlapping, and harmonious systems, and humanity's natural condition in this ordered teleology was social reciprocity. Shaftesbury thus reversed Hobbes's problematic. What had to be explained was how man born fit for society nonetheless became unsociable, not just divided into rival political associations but each individual degenerating into a pathological individualism degrading his own happiness by disabling him for virtue. Shaftesbury identified an excess of the "self-passions"—i.e., failing to harmoniously integrate with others (and thus producing vice)—as the root cause of pathological individuation, itself an artificial outgrowth of human economic development.[60] Whilst an individual man might act in ways harmful to others, and "he is in this respect justly styl'd *an ill man*," this was nonetheless an aberration from a more fundamental sociable norm that necessarily involved promoting the good of others to promote one's own.[61] Faced with Hobbes's claim that human beings had only two natural drives to society—honor and advantage—Shaftesbury deployed an ontological framework in which neither of these could be of primary conceptual importance. Accordingly, the seeking of recognition was not destabilizing in the way Hobbes had envisaged. Man was born fit for society, and there was no special problem in explaining the existence of specifically large and lasting associations, only in why men moved away from their sociable norm into moral solitude and pathological individualism owing to an excess of artificially induced selfish passion.[62]

Shaftesbury thus did not attempt to go back to the condition *ante-Hobbesius*, to any appeal to natural sociability based on love, appetite, or instinct. Dealing with Hobbes's challenge required new arguments and new materials, which Shaftesbury located in a synthesis of Christian theology and Stoic and Platonic philosophy, as to some degree would his later follower Francis Hutcheson.[63] Yet

58. Ibid., 57, 73.

59. On Shaftesbury's stoic commitments, see Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, chap. 4; Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 2012), 111–24.

60. Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, vol. 2, 180–93. On this see especially István Hont, "The Early Enlightenment Debate on Commerce and Luxury," in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth Century Political Thought*, ed. M. Goldie and R. Wokler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 395–99.

61. Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, vol. 2, 12.

62. Ibid., 178–79.

63. Shaftesbury developed his novel account of natural sociability in "The Moralists: A Philosophical Rhapsody," in *Characteristicks*, vol. 2, especially 174–81. For Hutcheson as following Shaftesbury in a (qualified) revival of stoic ethics combined with a providential

the price of Shaftesbury's innovative attempt to escape the Hobbesian proposition was his ambitious ontological framework: a highly speculative, philosophically taxing, and controversial set of unargued-for metaphysical commitments, which immediately put Shaftesbury at a disadvantage compared with Hobbes's parsimonious account. It also made Shaftesbury vulnerable to attack by anyone who had no interest in following him down this route, but who wished instead to maintain Hobbes's insistence that the control of pride had to be placed at the center of social and political explanation.

Bernard Mandeville, a Dutch émigré, medical doctor, critic, and notorious author of one of the eighteenth century's most infamous, provocative, and influential *succès de scandales*, was precisely such a figure.[64] To the 1723 edition of his hitherto largely unremarked *Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville made two lengthy additions: "An Essay on Charity, and Charity Schools," and "A Search into the Nature of Society." The former, with its satirical indictment of hypocrisy and self-seeking as masquerading beneath the guise of charitable giving, gained Mandeville notoriety as a scandalous libertine. This reputation was undeserved: his was a powerful synthesis of currents in Augustinian and a revived Epicurean philosophy, satirical in presentation but deeply serious in intellectual content.[65] This was evidenced in the less immediately provocative "Search into the Nature of Society," a sustained discussion of the basis of human sociability explicitly attacking "the Lord Shaftesbury . . . in his Characteristicks." Mandeville identified Shaftesbury as the counterpoint to his own philosophy as it had stood since 1714, when originally issued as a series of extended remarks on his 1705 doggerel verse poem "The Grumbling Hive."[66]

Christian framework, see Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 159–66; James Harris, "Religion in Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46 (2008), 214–15.

64. On Mandeville's conception of human sociability see especially Hundert, *Enlightenment's "Fable,"* 49–85; John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 266–80; Hont, *Early Enlightenment Debate*, 387–95. Hundert and, especially, Robertson locate Mandeville as the intellectual successor to Pierre Bayle, taking up the latter's suggestion that a society of atheists is possible if unified by appropriate bonds of reciprocal self-interest (something Robertson contends is transmitted in turn to Hume). I do not wish to deny the influence of Bayle upon Mandeville. Nonetheless, on the question of human sociability Mandeville is more illuminatingly understood as the successor to Hobbes's idiom of politics as centered on the predicament engendered by pride. In turn, the relationship of Hume to Mandeville must come into different focus than that suggested by Robertson.

65. For Mandeville's philosophy as a synthesis of Augustinian and Epicurean ideas, see Robertson, *Case for the Enlightenment*, 124–46, 261–80; Pierre Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42–90. Both draw on Jean Lafond, "Augustinisme et épicurisme au xvii siècle," in *L'homme et son image: morales et littérature de Montaigne à Mandeville* (Paris: H. Champion, 1996), 345–68.

66. Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, Volume 1*, ed. F. B. Kaye (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), 323.

In 1723, however, Mandeville effectively conceded that any adequate account of human sociability would have to take Hobbes as its starting point. Shaftesbury's mistake was to reject Hobbes's conclusion via a wholesale denial of the starting premise. Mandeville's gambit was to accept the premise, but resist the conclusion.

In the "Search," Mandeville ridiculed Shaftesbury's ontological system as without basis, an arbitrary invention to further a confused philosophical agenda. Due to the great variety of "Modes and Custom," so "the Inferences drawn from their Certainty are insignificant," and "the generous Notions concerning the natural Goodness of Man are hurtful, as they tend to mis-lead, and are meerly Chimerical."[67] Shaftesbury's central supposition that as "Man is made for Society, so he ought to be born with a kind Affection to the whole, of which he is a part" was absurd.[68] Human beings associated only in order to derive pleasure from the esteem they thereby secured. There was no love of company as such, whether rooted in ordered teleology or natural appetite, only the love of carefully tolerated peers who repaid one's self-estimations: "Even the most polite People in the World . . . give no pleasure to others that is not repaid to their Self-Love, and does not at last center in themselves."[69] All instances of "friendly Qualities" arise from our "contriving perpetually our own Satisfaction, so on other Occasions they proceed from the natural Timidity of Man, and the sollicitous Care he takes of himself."[70] It was "not the Good and Amiable, but the Bad and Hateful Qualities of Man" which made him "sociable beyond other Animals the Moment after he lost Paradise."[71] As for Shaftesbury's claim that human beings could regulate their tempestuous passions like a well-bridled horse, this was a "vast inlet to hypocrisy," enabling the false belief that "Man, mere fallen Man," could attain virtue without divine assistance, making Shaftesbury's endeavor "not much better than a Wild-Goose-Chase."[72]

Mandeville declared his own work to be a portrait of man as "the Prey and proper Food of a full grown Leviathan."[73] The qualification "full grown" is illuminating. A full-grown Leviathan rules over a full-grown population. If Hobbes's subjects were the children of pride, Mandeville's were cunning adult psychological competitors. (In the immediate context he was invoking, strumpets, duchesses, courtiers, and the sorts of extravagant show-offs who on the one hand needed a litany of poorer manufactures to be employed in the making of luxury goods for the elite's status consumption, and on the other represented the apotheosis of insatiably pride-driven creatures who had

67. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 1*, 343.
68. Ibid., 323–24.
69. Ibid., 342.
70. Ibid., 342–43.
71. Ibid., 344.
72. Ibid., 323–24, 348, 331.
73. Ibid., 355.

nonetheless been tamed into finding nonviolent outlets for their urges.) Children might be kept in line by fear, but adult humans frequently valued position and standing above even their lives.

In fact, in *Leviathan* Hobbes had indicated two possible ways in which the vagaries of competitive honor seeking might be held in check: "The force of words being (as I have formerly noted) too weak to hold men to the performance of their covenants, there are in man's nature but two imaginable helps to strengthen it. And those are either a fear of the consequence of breaking their word, or a glory or pride in appearing not to need to break it."[74] Hobbes pursued only fear as the necessary (though not sufficient) basis of man's artificial socialization. Mandeville made Hobbes's neglected alternative—pride as a check to the disruptions of pride—the centerpiece of his theory.

Mandeville went even further than Hobbes in claiming that human beings were centrally driven by pride, "the vast esteem we have for ourselves," and that without the correction of artifice the seeking of recognition generated deeply destabilizing consequences.[75] Irreducibly creatures of mental comparison, human beings desired status in terms of superiority and displayed signals of esteem. In their natural, untaught condition, where they were "only solicitous of pleasing themselves," individuals would attempt superiority by acts of immediate physical domination and violence.[76] This made them by nature mutually odious: successful acquisition of status by one was intolerable to the proud agents whose very recognition was being secured, especially if extracted via subjugation and overt displays of glorying. But Hobbes's suggestion that fear be used as a forcible socializing corrective was fundamentally untenable precisely because of the centrality of competitive recognition in human psychology. Some humans valued returns to their pride even more than their lives, as evidenced by the suicide of Lucretia or the contemporary practice of dueling.[77] As an artificial solution to man's natural predicament, the Leviathan was necessarily stillborn: untaught man would rather fight and die in pursuit of immediate status than conform to peaceful conditions out of fear of future retribution.

Mandeville thus forced open a central question suppressed in Hobbes's account: the extent to which the explanation of what *kept* humans in society was or could be coterminous with what *got* them there, historically. Attempting to answer this question by simultaneously offering a working solution to humanity's psychosocial predicament, Mandeville surmised that pride had needed to be redirected, rather than suppressed or controlled directly. This had initially been achieved by the cunning and ambitious, "Skillful Politicians," who

74. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 216.
75. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 1*, 67.
76. Ibid., 41.
77. Ibid., 209–10, 219–23.

established systems of social virtue promoting behavior that did not affront the pride of others, manipulating the less far-sighted so as to better secure themselves in "Ease and Security."[78] Initially fear was recruited to this end—but it was psychological, rather than coercively physical. People felt shame (a passion supervening on pride) when they fared ill in the gaze of others, something that was deeply psychologically painful.[79] Contravention of the social codes to respect the pride of others brought condemnation and disapproval, a powerful constraining force for creatures whose mental operations centered on judging themselves through the opinions of their peers. On the other hand, adherence to the new social codes was rewarded with praise and esteem. Men rechanneled their desire for superiority into the pleasures gained from restraint and mutual accommodation, each individual regaling himself on "the Pleasure he receives in reflecting on the Applause which he knows is secretly given him."[80] The carrot and stick of pride's redirection encouraged human beings into tolerable and accommodating sociable living. Morality's strictures as constructed by skillful legislators, the "Political Offspring that Flattery begot upon Pride," served as a system of artificial socialization operating in line with what Pierre Bayle had correctly observed, that "man is so unaccountable a creature as to act most commonly against his principle; and this is so far from being injurious, that it is a compliment to human nature."[81] This "was (or at least might have been) the manner after which Savage Man was broke."[82]

Humans had needed to learn to live in society. But once able to satiate their pride by engaging in forms of collectively sanctioned nonviolent status competition, they were well on the path to sociable living. Enjoying the esteem of others, people increasingly sought company not for its own sake but for the returns to their pride that could be gained thereby, in particular via the pursuit of prestige-status goods and fashionable clothing, which in turn promoted economic development and an upward trajectory toward advanced civilization.[83] Governed in flourishing commercial societies by elaborate codes of social conduct evolved from the early systems of social virtue originally broached by skillful politicians, people became unknown even to themselves. In particular, they failed—as Shaftesbury did most spectacularly—to see their desire for social living as a function of their underlying pride, mistaking the instrumental desire after company for a mark of intrinsic sociability.

This genealogy of pride was not, however, vindicatory. For Mandeville, the entire modern edifice of learned sociability was deeply and unavoidably morally

78. Ibid., 47.
79. Ibid., 64–80.
80. Ibid., 78.
81. Ibid., 51, 167.
82. Ibid., 46.
83. Hont, "Early Enlightenment Debate," 387–95, 399.

compromised. Fallen man could attain true virtue only through acts of self-denial assisted by God; the invented morality of skillful politicians, and its modern social descendants, was at best a utility-promoting counterfeit.[84] Modern large and lasting society was entirely predicated upon the redirection, not the suppression, of human passions, in ways that secretly gratified individuals' pride and were thus inescapably morally vicious. It was precisely humans' bad and hateful qualities that rendered them sociable, not Shaftesbury's divinely ordered ontological habitat for well-bridled human horses. Humankind faced an irreducible trade-off between utility and virtue: between the morally compromised comforts of opulent commercial society with its *beau monde* governed by politeness on the one hand, and frugality and self-denial on the other.[85]

In the successor to the first *Fable*, which he entitled simply *The Fable of the Bees, Volume 2*, and presented as a dialogue between "Cleomenes" and "Horatio" (representing roughly his own and Shaftesbury's views respectively), Mandeville accounted for how man transitioned from his savage and imbecilic state of natural indigence and unsociability to his present state of complex, learned sociability. Integrating this with a sometimes-tortuous discussion of the place of revelation in morals and man's natural development, Mandeville offered a conjectural history of humanity's progression through successive stages of development, beginning in the family, developing through tribal groupings, and culminating in the establishment of political government and the administration of law. Insofar as Mandeville historicized (even if only speculatively) sociability, he thus moved considerably beyond Hobbes in the second *Fable*, as will be explored in greater detail in chapter 2.

However, esteem seeking and inter-mental comparison remained entirely central to Mandeville's account, and here he in effect stuck to the terms of psychological analysis Hobbes had employed in *De Cive*. In the second *Fable*, Mandeville introduced a new technical distinction between "self-love" and "self-liking."[86] Self-love referred to the needs of the body, the cares creatures must take to secure their basic material wants and needs. Self-liking, identified as the cause of pride and shame, referred to the needs of the mind and the basis of one's self-evaluations: an instinct "by which every Individual values itself above its real Worth," which "makes us . . . fond of the Approbation, Liking and Assent of others; because they strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves."[87] Although shared by the higher animals, and placed in creatures as a drive to better preserve and advance their own good, in human beings self-liking was refracted through the prism of other people's

84. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 1*, 72–73.

85. Ibid., 107–23, 124–34, 169–81, 182–98, 225–38.

86. Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, Volume 2*, ed. F. B. Kaye (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), 128–36.

87. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 2*, 129–30.

imputed evaluations. Although individuals had to like themselves before they could like others, they could only like themselves if they secured recognition. Mandeville's conjectural history, presented in dialogues five and six of the second *Fable*, supplied a natural history of how men who craved recognition escaped the natural indigence to which their greedy and direct attempts to secure self-liking initially confined them. By making that transition, human beings eventually arrived at the condition of modern opulence and complex learned sociability described in the first *Fable*. Mandeville's 1732 *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour, and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* completed the account, tracing the origins of modern politeness to the emergence of medieval honor systems, the final stage in the redirection of self-liking into socially useful and safe forms of expression, before modern conditions were finally established.[88] All this was done, however, largely "without reflection, and Men, by degrees, and great Length of Time, fall as it were into these Things spontaneously."[89]

This conjectural history attempted to reduce and refine the role of cunning politicians. In its original and blunt deployment in the first *Fable*, the device of the legislator was both historically implausible and difficult to render conceptually coherent: if humans were naturally indigent and only solicitous of pleasing themselves, how was it that some nonetheless had the knowledge and foresight to control others through the erection of systems of social virtue that would be incomprehensible to creatures who had no experience of such systems?[90] Attempting to deal with these problems, Mandeville reduced the role of legislators to the initially self-interested establishment of incentives to conform to nonaggressive patterns of competition established by early leaders of tribal groupings, themselves initially formed as confederacies of defense against wild animals. Once men were turned in this direction, learning to disguise their esteem seeking and avoiding affronting the self-liking of others, "the whole Machine may be made to play of itself with as little skill, as is required to wind up a Clock."[91] Of particular importance in achieving this was the final stage of historical development described in the second *Fable*: not only the erection of government out of the most stable tribal bandings and the enforcement of laws, but the introjection of such laws by the governed populace. However much people might try to disguise their irreducible selfishness in their controlled social interactions, they could only ever be induced to behave in specific, reliable, and peaceful ways if they thought their own selfish

88. Bernard Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War* (London, 1732), "The first dialogue," especially, 1–52.

89. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 2*, 139.

90. Hundert, *Enlightenment's "Fable,"* 77.

91. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 2*, 323. See also Cleomenes's downplaying of the individual qualities and attributes needed of prime ministers: 328–33; Hundert, *Enlightenment's "Fable,"* 67–68.

interests were advanced in the process. Fear of the law's coercive enforcement was insufficient: people had to come to believe that obedience to the law was to their own private advantage. Once they made this psychological leap, they became fully sociable for the first time: a "Creature is then truly governable, when, reconciled to Submission, it has learn'd to construe his Servitude to his own Advantage."[92] Humans became creatures who introjected external commands, internally sanctioning themselves in advance of trespasses they became strongly disinclined to commit—something fear of the public sword alone could never have achieved, but which was indispensable in explaining how and why humans submitted themselves to organized coercive power. Self-love and self-liking combined in a desire for rule-governed society wherein people could safely secure the esteem of others as well as the more developed trappings of comfort and ease. The needs of both the body and the mind were thus harmonized in a learned sociability people forgot that they (or more precisely, their ancestors) had ever needed to learn. Human sociability did not exist "before great Numbers of them are joyn'd together, and artfully manag'd," precisely because "Men become sociable, by living together in Society."[93]

Mandeville did not, however, dispense entirely with the device of the legislator.[94] "Nature," he explained, "had design'd Man for Society, as she has made Grapes for Wine."[95] Individual grapes neither contain wine, nor can be made into wine; what is required is a large number combined together and put through a process of fermentation by the directing intelligence of a wine maker. Although making wine is impossible without the naturally occurring grape, there is nonetheless no wine in nature. The same was true of human sociability. But as Horatio demanded of Cleomenes, "you must shew me, that in Society there is an Equivalent for Fermentation."[96] This was what dialogues five and six supplied: the conjectural working out of the artificial fermentation required for society to be heightened to perfection over many centuries. The complexities of modern society were related to human primitive social beginnings as the mighty seafaring warships of modernity were related to the first rudimentary boats: the former inconceivable to the designers of the latter, who were nonetheless their genealogical ancestors.[97]

Pride's disruptive effects, ran Mandeville's central claim, could only be mitigated by turning pride in new directions. But given that, historically, this must have been achieved *before* men achieved large and lasting society, both the basis and justification for Hobbesian absolutism were removed. Pride did not

92. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 2*, 184.

93. Ibid., 188–89.

94. Hundert, *Enlightenment's "Fable,"* 75–77; Robertson, *Case for the Enlightenment*, 301.

95. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 2*, 185.

96. Ibid., 189.

97. Ibid., 141, 322.

need to be (and anyway, was not) kept in check by fear of the public sword, whilst established political society was nowhere near as internally precarious as Hobbes supposed. As for the threat of international competition, this was best countered by pursuing luxury-driven economies of opulence as the foundation of national power, a far more effective discouragement to foreign conquest than frugal citizen militias of civic virtue associated with the now-obsolete city-state republics of the Renaissance. Stability and prosperity in Britain, whilst unavoidably morally compromised in Mandeville's Augustinian schema, were best secured by commercial expansion under the constitutional settlement of William III. Mandeville agreed with Hobbes's diagnosis of man's natural predicament, but he was not committed to his solution of the artifice of union yielding sovereign absolutism, not least because Mandeville placed sociability in a historical framework that allowed for the human capacity to form and maintain large and lasting society to evolve over time, which Hobbes did not (as we shall see in more detail in chapter 2). Mandeville's alternative solution to the question of how man born unfit for society nonetheless came to live everywhere in society consistently undergirded his publicly affirmed Whig politics, an outgrowth of a fundamentally Dutch commitment to a modern republicanism of commerce that would in turn play an important contributory role in the evolution of the form of politics that we now call liberalism.[98]

Hume: Sympathy and Sociability

In the *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume agreed with Hobbes and Mandeville that "there is no such passion in human minds as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourself." Like Hobbes, Hume took the proof to be essentially negative. There is a natural appetite for generation between the sexes and "Were there an universal love among all human creatures, it would appear after the same manner"— but this is plainly not the case.[99] There was also no disputing that humans were creatures whose psychological operations were deeply characterized by forming self-estimations based on the evaluations of peers: "Everything in this world is judg'd of by comparison," most especially our self-estimations when "comparing ourselves with others, as we are every moment apt to do."[100]

98. Hans Blom, "The Republican Mirror: The Dutch Idea of Europe," in *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. A. Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112–15; Rudolf Dekker, "Private Vices, Public Benefits Revisited: The Dutch Background of Bernard Mandeville," *History of European Ideas* 14 (1992), 481–98; Hundert, *Enlightenment's "Fable,"* 6, 11, 204; Hont, *Early Enlightenment Debate*, 388, 392–95.

99. David Hume, *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of David Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. D. F. Norton and M. J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), T.3.2.1.12, SBN 481.

100. Hume, *Treatise*, T.2.1.11.18, SBN 323; T.2.1.6.5; SBN 292.

There are "few persons, that are satisfy'd with their own character, or genius, or fortune, who are not desirous of shewing themselves to the world, and of acquiring the love and approbation of mankind."[101]

Unlike Hobbes and Mandeville, however, Hume did not locate the propensity to compare and seek recognition in a single principle, such as pride or "self-liking." Instead, pride was one of four central "indirect" passions, alongside humility, love, and hatred. These operated on a "double relation" of "impressions and ideas," compound impressions determined by the manner in which objects (in the broadest sense) generating pleasure or pain were related either to oneself, or to another thinking creature.[102] A beautiful house owned by oneself caused pride; an ugly one, humility. Riches or virtue possessed by another, love; poverty and meanness, humility or hatred. Although these indirect passions—which Hume identified as the basis for human beings' more complex psychological operations such as compassion, envy, and malice—were determined by the operations of pleasure and pain in relation to the self or others, they were fundamentally conditioned by the opinions of peers: "We fancy Ourselves more happy, as well as more virtuous or beautiful, when we appear so to others."[103] Good health was not a source of pride, because shared with too many. Attendance at a fine banquet would bring joy to all, but pride only for the individual who played host.[104] "Men always consider the sentiments of others in their judgment of themselves," and there was no doubt that "Comparison is in every case a sure method of augmenting our esteem of any thing. A rich man feels the felicity of his condition better by opposing it to that of a beggar."[105]

Yet Hume sharply distinguished his account from that of Hobbes and Mandeville. For a start, pride was presented not as a vice, but as a virtue, owing to its being pleasant in both generation and possession. Hume in turn dismissed those "accustomed to the style of the schools and pulpit" who had "never considered human nature in any other light, than that in which they place it," and who insisted on pride's status as a vice.[106] A remark aimed primarily at the rigors of Augustinian, particularly Calvinist, moralities, Hume nonetheless thereby disassociated pride from the vicious and even scandalous connotations it continued to carry in Hobbes and Mandeville.[107] Furthermore, not only was pride only one (albeit arguably the most important) of four

101. Ibid., T.2.2.1.9, SBN 331–32.
102. Ibid., T.2.1.1–5, SBN 275–90.
103. Ibid., T.2.1.6.6, SBN 292; cf. T.2.1.11.1, SBN 316.
104. Ibid., T.2.1.6.2–5, SBN 291–92.
105. Ibid., T.2.1.8.9, SBN 303; T.2.1.10.12, SBN 315–16.
106. Ibid., T.2.1.7.8, SBN 297–98.
107. On Hume and the Calvinist tradition in Scotland see James Harris, "Hume's Use of the Rhetoric of Calvinism," in *Impressions of Hume*, ed. M. Frasca-Spada and P.J.E. Kail (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 141–60.

central passions, it did not need to be irreducibly competitive: a well-placed and moderately exhibited pride could excite *love* in one's companions.[108] Human beings, precisely because they always considered the sentiments of others in their judgments of themselves, were more dynamically interresponsive than Hobbes and Mandeville appreciated.

Most importantly of all, however, human beings were possessed of "sympathy." A technical term, sympathy referred to the transforming of the "idea" of another's emotive state into an "impression," literally entering into their sentiments.[109] The minds of men were "mirrors" to each other, reflecting passions back and forth.[110] The joy of another was sympathized with, something detected by the original agent and in turn augmenting the pleasure attending the original joy. Men were thus not mutually odious in the manner Mandeville supposed: the success of one need not be a provocation in terms of relative failure, because via sympathy human beings could share each other's pleasures. Men sympathized, in Hume's aptly chosen example, with the rich and famous: imagining the pleasures that riches and power brought, the less fortunate transformed this idea into a pleasant sensation of their own, and were led to esteem, rather than resent and attack, superiors.[111]

Certainly, humans were not always entirely amicable. They felt envy when a comparison with the success of another put their own standing in poor light: malice was the passion of provoking misfortune in another so as to draw pleasure by favorable comparison. But these passions not only supervened on the more basic operations of pride, humility, love, and hatred, they accounted for only a small fraction of human psychological processes and interactions. As a result, the picture that emerged of the natural human capacity to form social groupings was very different to that supposed by both Hobbes and Mandeville: "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. We can form no wish, which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer."[112]

Hume notably insists that man has naturally both an ardent desire for society beyond its instrumental utilitarian benefits, *and* that he is fitted for it by the "most advantages." He is here discussing man's endowment with regard to the needs of the mind, the capacity man has in what Mandeville called his "untaught" state, to associate in terms of reciprocal interactions amongst

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108. Hume, *Treatise*, T.3.3.2.8, SBN 596–97.
109. Ibid., T.2.1.11.8, SBN 319–20.
110. Ibid., T.2.2.6.21, SBN 365.
111. Ibid., T.2.2.5.1–6, SBN 357–65.
112. Ibid., T.2.2.5.15, SBN 363.

agents that judge and compare. And Hume here marks a crucial break with Hobbes and Mandeville: due to the operation of sympathy, men's untaught seeking of esteem via the recognition of peers is not disruptive, but in general the exact opposite. Sympathy assumes the function assigned by Mandeville to the counterfeit virtue of cunning politicians. But rather than regulating their actions because of the sanctions of an externally imposed code, people's inbuilt affective reactions lead them to automatically regulate themselves, insofar as the pain and pleasure of others become their own.

Hume emphasized the point in the *Treatise*'s discussion of free will, where he made people's propensity to form society an example of undeniable necessity founded on experience of uniformity, stating that "we not only observe, that men always seek society, but can also explain the principles, on which this universal propensity is founded." That explanation was the generation of offspring by savage couples, leading to family groupings based on natural affection and a desire for society in turn yielding utilitarian benefits—i.e., securing of the goods of the body, as well as of the mind—which would both be lost if society was dissolved. Such "inconveniences" were purposefully avoided, human beings opting for continued "close union and confederacy" even after arriving at physical maturity.[113] What marked Hume out from Hobbes and Mandeville, therefore, was not the claim that people naturally sought society or reaped utilitarian benefits from its establishment—as we have seen, neither denied this—but his insistence that people's capacity to sympathize tended to the stability of such arrangements by ensuring that the seeking of recognition was socially cohesive rather than disruptive. We can see this point by turning to one of Hume's few explicit references to Hobbes in the *Treatise*:

> Should a traveller, returning from a far country, tell us, that he had seen a climate in the fiftieth degree of northern latitude, where all the fruits ripen and come to perfection in the winter, and decay in the summer, after the same manner as in England they are produced and decay in the contrary seasons, he would find few so credulous as to believe him. I am apt to think a traveller would meet with as little credit, who should inform us of people exactly of the same character with those in *Plato's Republic* on the one hand, or those in *Hobbes's Leviathan* on the other.[114]

It is clear that Hume's characterization of Hobbes (and Plato) is loose, and what this passage provides is only evidence for Hume's general dismissal of Hobbes's position. Nonetheless, we can reconstruct what the more precise point of philosophical disagreement was, even if Hume himself did not make

113. Ibid., T.2.3.1.8, SBN 402.
114. Ibid., T.2.3.1.10, SBN 402.

this explicit (something that remains applicable even if Hume did not read Hobbes particularly carefully). In essence, we can understand Hume as indicating that there was no need for a full-blown propriety theory (in Adam Smith's later terminology) such as Plato's—or, Hume might equally have said, Shaftesbury's—requiring human beings to comprehensively regulate their passions through conscious reflection.[115] But, likewise, Hobbes's vision of men engaging in aggressive and destabilizing competition was too extreme. Hume's science of man offered a middle course between Hobbes's position and the metaphysically taxing and excessively hypothetical teleological alternative proposed by Shaftesbury (a speculative system anyway impermissible under a proper science of experience and observation).

And yet, despite Hume's rejection of there being in reality a people of the character described in *Leviathan*, he nonetheless agreed with Hobbes that there existed impassable obstacles to the formation of specifically *large and lasting* human society by *natural* means alone: "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."[116] Unambiguously an artifice, Hume identified government as necessary to the regulation of ranks and property, and therefore all the complexities of developed large-scale society that supervened upon those innovations. Mandeville had ultimately been correct, albeit for the wrong reasons: explaining modern social conditions of greatness and opulence did require going beyond the capacities generated by men's natural psychological endowments alone. But departing from a different psychological starting point, Hume located both the need for, and mechanism of, artifice in a fundamentally different explanatory matrix. To see this, we must turn to what is now usually known as Hume's "theory of justice," but which in its proper eighteenth-century context

115. Adam Smith, *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith: The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 267–93. Smith reprises Hume's analogy of the traveller in his rejection of Mandeville's "licentious system": 314.

116. Hume, *Treatise*, T.2.3.1.9, SBN 402. Accordingly, sympathy alone is not sufficient to explain human sociability in Hume's view, even if we agree with James Harris that the purpose of bk. 2 of the *Treatise* is to outline a new vision of human sociability as "sympathetic sociability": James Harris, "A Compleat Chain of Reasoning: Hume's Project in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Books One and Two," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 109 (2009), 129–48. For a relevant discussion see also Christopher J. Finlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy: Human Nature and Commercial Sociability in the "Treatise of Human Nature"* (London/New York: Continuum, 2007), chaps. 6 and 7.

is more properly viewed as a utility-based theory of human sociability for large and lasting conditions.[117]

Hume: Justice and Government

Hume agreed with Hobbes and Mandeville that humans, considered in isolation, were naturally indigent and vulnerable. They lacked the defensive and offensive natural weapons of beasts, whilst possessed of inadequate physical capacity to secure their extensive needs for food, shelter, and raiment: "to consider him only in himself, he is provided neither with arms, nor force, nor other natural abilities, which are in any degree answerable to so many necessities."[118] Man could remedy this situation only by forming associations: "it is by society alone he is able to supply his defects, and raise himself up to an equality with his fellow-creatures, and even acquire a superiority above them."[119] Grouping together in primitive families founded on the sex instinct, savage man learned the advantages of sociable living, which sympathy ensured that psychologically he both desired and was well fitted for. The attendant "mutual succour" generated "additional *force*, *ability*, and *security*" that made society advantageous, and human beings aware of its advantages.[120]

Problems immediately arose, however, when the utilitarian benefits of society generated the production and increased dissemination of possessions, encouraging people into competition for goods. Against the portrait of psychologically isolated and almost exclusively self-interested individuals painted by Hobbes and Mandeville, Hume was keen to affirm that humans were not by nature excessively selfish:

> I am sensible, that generally speaking, the representations of this quality have been carried much too far; and that the descriptions, which certain philosophers delight so much to form of mankind in this particular, are as wide of nature as any accounts of monsters, which we meet with in fables and romances. So far from thinking, that men have no affection for any thing beyond themselves, I am of opinion, that though it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet

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117. I focus here on Hume's account of justice as it relates to the debate over human sociability. The "theory of justice" is one of the most misread and misunderstood aspects of Hume's philosophy. Useful correctives and overviews can be found in Jason Baldwin, "Hume's Knave and the Interests of Justice," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42 (2004), 277–96; Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality: Feeling and Fabrication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), chaps. 6–9.

118. Hume, *Treatise*, T.3.2.2.2, SBN 485.

119. Ibid., T.3.2.2.3, SBN 485.

120. Ibid., T.3.2.2.4, SBN 486.

it is as rare to meet with one, in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not overbalance all the selfish.[121]

Nonetheless, man's natural passions were disruptive to the establishment of large and lasting society:

> For it must be confest, however the circumstances of human nature may render an union necessary, and however those passions of lust and natural affection may seem to render it unavoidable; yet there are other particulars in our natural temper, and in our outward circumstances, which are very incommodious, and are even contrary to the requisite conjunction. Among the former, we may justly esteem our selfishness to be the most considerable.[122]

Men's reasonable pursuit of their own self-interest was coupled with a desire to help their families and loved-ones, but indeed so "noble an affection, instead of fitting men for large societies, is almost as contrary to them, as the most narrow selfishness."[123] Acting for either self-interest or the good of one's family, each would seek to acquire the possessions of non-kin. Yet the replication of such behavior across groups was deeply destabilizing: if everyone pursued immediate self-interest, the security of possessions would be lost, and with it the advantages of society humans needed in order to supplement their naturally indigent state. Accordingly, it was the pursuit of utility that principally required regulation in order to explain the emergence of large and lasting societies:

> All the other passions, besides this of interest, are either easily restrained, or are not of such pernicious consequence, when indulged. Vanity is rather to be esteemed a social passion, and a bond of union among men. Pity and love are to be considered in the same light. And as to envy and revenge, though pernicious, they operate only by intervals, and are directed against particular persons, whom we consider as our superiors or enemies. This avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, is insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly destructive of society. . . . So that upon the whole, we are to esteem the difficulties in the establishment of society, to be greater or less, according to those we encounter in regulating and restraining this passion.[124]

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121. Ibid., T.3.2.2.5, SBN 486–87.
122. Ibid., T.3.2.2.5, SBN 486–87.
123. Ibid., T.3.2.2.6, SBN 487.
124. Ibid., T.3.2.2.12, SBN 491–92.

What was needed was agreement amongst individuals to abstain from immediate, unlicensed appropriation of the goods of others in return for mutually accommodating behavior: "This can be done after no other manner, than by a convention entered into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry."[125] This took the form not of a contract, but of compact: it "may properly enough be called a convention or agreement betwixt us, though without the interposition of a promise; since the actions of each of us have a reference to those of the other, and are performed upon the supposition, that something is to be performed on the other part." Just as "two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other," so men came to establish conventions to abstain from each other's possessions, although this was done initially without design and solely for the mutual promotion of self-interest.[126]

This was the origin of the "artificial virtue" of justice: a convention for the regulation of possessions and prerequisite for large and lasting societies composed of agents characterized more by a desire of securing utility than competitive recognition.[127] The path to large and lasting society was blocked not, as Hobbes thought, by the pursuit of honor, but the aggregated pursuit of advantage. The only way around this problem was to redirect the pursuit of advantage into nondestablizing—indeed, actively improving—avenues. The solution Mandeville applied to pride was properly directed at utility: "There is no passion . . . capable of controlling the interested affection, but the very affection itself, by an alteration of its direction." Once that was achieved, humans began their upward progress towards successful large-scale association. "The question, therefore, concerning the wickedness or goodness of human nature, enters not in the least into that other question concerning the origin of society," for whether "the passion of self-interest be esteemed vicious or virtuous, it is 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."[128]

Justice first generated what Hume called a "natural" obligation rooted in the self-interested benefits individuals reaped from adhering to the new conventions. But regard for justice rapidly developed beyond immediate regard to self-interest, acquiring a "moral" obligation attended to the belief that upholding the conventions of justice was not merely a matter of individual prudence, but a fully-fledged moral virtue in its own right. This was an effect of sympathy.[129] The advantages of adherence to the social conventions brought

125. Ibid., T.3.2.2.9, SBN 489.
126. Ibid., T.3.2.2.10, SBN 490.
127. Ibid., T.3.2.2.10, SBN 490.
128. Ibid., T.3.2.2.13, SBN 492.
129. Ibid., T.3.2.2.23–24, SBN 498–500.

pleasure to those who benefited from them, as did the idea of peaceful, commodious society to which justice was attached. Acts of injustice aroused painful sympathy with victims of violation, whilst disruption of the conditions of social peacefulness aroused uneasiness in men seeking their own secured interests.[130] This sympathetic engagement, and the association of the upholding of justice with pleasure to self or others, generated the belief that justice was a moral virtue (which it indeed thus fully became in Hume's account). This "moral" obligation further motivated people to adhere to justice's strictures, in turn better securing the regulation of possessions and the stability of society. Having established the artifice of justice, they were then able to establish the notion of property, and the idea and practice of its legitimate transference by means of consent.[131] From there humans could practice socially regulated, utility-promoting reciprocal interactions for the exchange of possessions, putting them on a trajectory toward not just large and lasting society, but economically advanced civilization.

Although this entire "progress of the sentiments be *natural*, and even necessary"—humans being an inventive species, it was natural for them to invent artifices—Hume allowed that the process was "forwarded by the artifice of politicians," who in order to "govern men more easily, and preserve peace in human society, have endeavour'd to produce an esteem for justice, and an abhorrence of injustice." But Mandeville had been wrong to make cunning legislators the indispensable condition of the emergence of stable large-scale human association: "nothing can be more evident, than that the matter has been carry'd too far by certain writers on morals, who seem to have employed their utmost efforts to extirpate all sense of virtue from among mankind." The artifice of justice had to supervene on natural materials: "For if nature did not aid us in this particular, it would be in vain for politicians to talk of honourable or dishonourable, praiseworthy or blameable." Hence, "The utmost politicians can perform, is, to extend the natural sentiments beyond their original bounds; but still nature must furnish the materials, and give us some notion of moral distinctions."[132] With the innovation of sympathy, the cunning legislator was explanatorily obsolete, and a wholly naturalistic—and thereby historically and conceptually plausible—story of humanity's progression to large and lasting society could be supplied.[133]

But before men could arrive at fully modern conditions, a further artificial innovation was necessary: government. The initial benefits of adhering to conventions of justice would lead not only to increased material prosperity, but increases in the size of human associations. Still driven primarily by

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130. Ibid., T.3.2.7.1–8, SBN 534–39.
131. Ibid., T.3.2.3–5, SBN 501–25.
132. Ibid., T.3.2.2.25, SBN 500.
133. Hundert, *Enlightenment's "Fable,"* 84–86; Robertson, *Case for the Enlightenment*, 301.

self-interest, in large-scale conditions people could not easily align their desire for immediate obtainment of possessions promoting their own utility with the conventions demanding abstention from the goods of others. Large-scale association generated anonymity through weight of numbers, and decreased sympathetic engagement with victims of violations of justice one was unlikely to personally encounter. Opportunities were increasingly provided for anonymous defection from the conventions of justice, which on an individual scale would be negligible, but if sufficiently aggregated would topple the entire social arrangement. Humans always preferred contiguous good to remote, and so were powerfully incentivized to violate the rules of justice: self-interest threatened to overpower the (increasingly negligible) "natural" obligation to virtue and the greatly weakened "moral" obligation undermined by anonymity and increased social distance. "You are, therefore, naturally carry'd to commit acts of injustice as well as I." Your example pushes me by imitation, as well as incentivizing me to defect first, "by showing me, that I shou'd be the cully of my integrity, if I alone shou'd impose on myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others."[134]

The solution was again to make self-interest a check to self-interest, now via the innovation of "magistracy." Specific individuals were charged with and rewarded for the upholding of the conventions of justice, backed by organized public coercive force. The self-interest of the minority of magistrates was aligned with upholding the rules of justice, in turn realigning the majority of humans' contiguous interests (avoiding punishment and securing ease) with their otherwise neglected and remote interest (preventing large-scale defection that would undermine the entire edifice of civilized society erected on the foundation of justice). "By means of these two advantages, in the *execution* and *decision* of justice, men acquire a security against each other's weakness and passion, as well as against their own, and under the shelter of their governors, begin to taste at ease the sweets of society and mutual assistance."[135]

The introduction of magistracy was the origin of government. But again Hume was keen to stress his differences from Hobbes and Mandeville: "so far am I from thinking with some philosophers, that men are utterly incapable of society without government, that I assert the first rudiments of government to arise from quarrels, not among men of the same society, but among those of different societies." As people developed larger and more prosperous associations, the incentive to rapacious conquest by organized outsiders—international war—grew larger. Yet "foreign war to a society without government necessarily produces civil war. Throw any considerable goods amongst men, they instantly fall a quarelling, while each strives to get possession of

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134. Hume, *Treatise*, T.3.2.7.3, SBN 535.
135. Ibid., T.3.2.7.8, SBN 538.

what pleases him, without regard to the consequences."[136] Governments were originally established in times of crisis, leaders being required to impose internal discipline as well as external security, guaranteeing people's possessions from both within and without. "Camps are the true mothers of cities": humans learned to live under government in times of war, and continued this innovation in times of peace for the advantages rendered by orderly and hierarchical rule in the administration of justice, the stability of property, and the different ranks supervening on both.[137] Although government was originally an innovation of war, human beings became sensible of its advantages and retained it, employing magistrates to facilitate the conventions of justice necessary to secure large and lasting conditions: "And as the failure of any one piece in the execution is connected, though not immediately, with the failure of the whole, they [magistrates] prevent that failure, because they find no interest in it, either immediate or remote. Thus bridges are built; harbours opened; ramparts raised; canals formed; fleets equip'd; and armies disciplined every where, by the care of government, which, though composed of men subject to all human infirmities, becomes, by one of the finest and most subtle inventions imaginable, a composition, which is, in some measure, exempted from all these infirmities."[138] Once government was established, men had an immediate "natural" obligation of obedience derived from its furthering their own interests by the stability it rendered. In other words, because government (at least in general, and in most cases) promoted the good of those it ruled over, those same ruled individuals ipso facto had immediate reasons to obey, albeit reasons rooted in private self-interest. But it was a clearly observable psychological fact, Hume thought, that people were carried beyond the bounds of their interests by "general rules," and came to form a "moral" obligation to government rooted in sympathy: the belief that obedience was owed to established government irrespective of immediate private self-interest, and as a matter of normative principle.[139] This was the origin of political authority, whose undergirding artificial virtue was allegiance.[140] This virtue—i.e., belief that it was morally good to obey rulers, and attendant moral disapproval of those who rebelled against rightful rule—was an artifice, rooted in conventions,

136. Ibid., T.3.2.8.1, SBN 540.

137. Ibid., T.3.2.8.2, SBN 540–41.

138. Ibid., T.3.2.7.8, SBN 539.

139. Ibid., T.3.2.9.3, SBN 551.

140. David Hume, "Of the Original Contract," in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. E. F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), 480; Andrew Sabl, *Hume's Politics: Coordination and Crisis in the "History of England"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 7; cf. István Hont, "Commercial Society and Political Theory in the Eighteenth Century: The Problem of Authority in David Hume and Adam Smith," in *Main Trends in Cultural History: Ten Essays*, ed. W. Melching and W. Velema (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 54–94.

in just the way that belief in the normative validity of the rules of justice was. But in Hume's picture, that was again simply a genealogical explanation of the phenomenon, with no bearing upon the validity of the practice.

As Hume elaborated in his 1741 essay "Of the First Principles of Government," "Nothing appears more surprizing . . . than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few." Force is always on the side of the former, and the latter have "nothing to support them but opinion."[141] "Opinion" was composed of beliefs regarding public interest, the right to power, and the right to property, and upon these "are all governments founded, and all authority of the few over the many."[142] Opinion—that is, human imagination and not just redirected self-interest—was required to explain why people submitted themselves to government beyond immediate regard to, and sometimes in spite of, private advantage, instead obeying the commands of superiors out of a belief in their right to rule.

Yet being at base an invention for the furthering of interest, government could have no continued justification if it became excessively oppressive: "There is evidently no other principle than interest; and if interest first produces obedience to government, the obligation to obedience must cease, whenever the interest ceases, in any great degree, and in a considerable number of instances."[143] Although obedience to tyrannical regimes would not continue indefinitely—it "is both the general practice and principle of mankind . . . that no nation, that cou'd find any remedy, ever yet suffer'd the cruel ravages of a tyrant, or were blam'd for their resistance"—the propensity to allegiance beyond regard to self-interest significantly aided the promotion of social stability. Advanced political society did not fall into rebellion and discord at the first sign of individual interest being violated, because authority in practice depended directly on opinion, and only indirectly upon utility. Likewise, people's propensity to form allegiance—belief that authority could be located in conditions as diverse as "*original contract*, *long possession*, *present possession*, *succession*, and *positive laws*"—allowed them to rapidly reenter political society after times of civil breakdown.[144] Although at points of crisis the designation of rightful rulers was "less capable of solution from the arguments of lawyers and philosophers, than from the swords of the soldiery," human imagination and the propensity to conceive of a "moral" obligation to governmental authority swiftly reconciled people to conditions of political rule, with only minimal regard to the means by which title was acquired.[145] The promotion of utility and the regulation of self-interest remained the decisive function and justification of government. It was simply that "The same interest . . . which causes us to

141. David Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government," in *Essays*, 32.
142. Hume, "First Principles," 34.
143. Hume, *Treatise*, T.3.2.9.4, SBN 553.
144. Ibid., T.3.2.10.15, SBN 562.
145. Ibid., T.3.2.10.15, SBN 562.

submit to magistracy, makes us renounce itself in the choice of our magistrates, and binds us down to a certain form of government, and to particular persons, without allowing us to aspire to the utmost perfection in either."[146]

Hume's account of human sociability is thus ultimately tripartite. Sympathy ensured that human beings had the most ardent desire for society, and when securing the needs of the mind they were psychologically fitted for it naturally by the most advantages. The artifices of justice and government were employed to correct for collective-action problems in the securing of utility when people associated in ever greater numbers to better satisfy the needs of the body, as well as the more developed needs of the mind, which came to depend upon the possession of goods not just of subsistence, but of status and comfort (i.e., luxury as an attendant to, and motor of, economic development). Finally, in advanced conditions human imagination rendered people obedient to forms of government based on authority, without immediate regard to utility, but which best secured that utility even if this underlying fact and origin became obscured by the very experience of living under such conditions. Hobbes and Mandeville, as we have seen, offered accounts which focused primarily on pride and its consequences, but which were finally supplemented by regard to utility. (In Hobbes, providing the contentment and comforts of life and teaching the true grounds of obedience in protection; in Mandeville, rendering subjects "governable" by making them believe political rule was in their own self-interest.) Hume emphasized the inadvertently destabilizing pursuit of utility as the central sociability problem that needed to be accounted for (his "theory of justice"), but supplemented this with an incorporation of the empirically attestable fact that humans in fully developed large and lasting society subscribed to conditions of peace *not* primarily out of regard to self-interest, but out of a belief in the rightfulness of political authority.[147] In a

146. Ibid., T.3.2.10.3, SBN 555.

147. With these qualifications, we can identify Hume as ultimately a theorist of what Hont termed "commercial sociability": a middle route, focusing on utility, between the pride-focused natural unsociability of Hobbes, and the more thoroughgoing natural sociability accounts of thinkers such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson: see István Hont, "The Language of Sociability and Commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the Theoretical Foundations of the "Four Stages" Theory," in *Jealousy of Trade*, 159–84; "Commercial Society," 54–72; and "Jealousy of Trade: An Introduction," in *Jealousy of Trade*, 40–44. By contrast, it is not accurate to group Hume, as James Moore has done, with Mandeville and Hobbes under the heading of an "Epicurean tradition" in morals, even as opposed to the broadly Stoic philosophy of Hutcheson. Hume's emphasis on the management of utility, not pride, sets him distinctively apart from Mandeville and Hobbes, and likewise means his philosophy cannot accurately or illuminatingly be described as a commitment to straightforward "natural unsociability." See James Moore, "Hume and Hutcheson," in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, ed. M. A. Stewart and J. P. Wright (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 23–57; "The Eclectic Stoic, the Mitigated Skeptic," in *New Essays on David Hume*, ed. E. Mazza and E. Ronchetti (Milan: FrancoAngelli, 2007), 133–70; and "Utility and Humanity: The Quest for the *Honestum* in Cicero, Hutcheson and Hume," *Utilitas* 14 (2002), 365–86.

sense, Mandeville had been right that men thus became, at least partially, unknown to themselves. But Hume's genealogy of justice and government was vindicatory, not debunking.[148] And even if "few persons can carry on this train of reasoning" with regard to the origin of society and government in utility, it was nonetheless true that "all men have an implicit notion of it, and are sensible, that they owe obedience to government merely on account of the public interest."[149]

After government was established, Hume concluded, "Political writers tell us, that in every kind of intercourse, a body politic is to be consider'd as one person."[150] As Hobbes had thought, state persons stood toward each other in a fashion analogous (though, again, not identical) to how natural persons stood towards each other. In both cases the establishment of conventions secured mutual interest: the "laws of nations" were the international equivalent of the rules of justice, which themselves continued to obtain, if somewhat more loosely, between state actors in order to govern transactions of property and commerce. Being founded to promote utility, the laws of nations generated a "natural" obligation, and were likewise attended with a "moral" one too. But because the interest of state actors in obedience to these laws was less rigid and constant than to the domestic implementation of justice, both the natural and moral obligations were in practice much weakened. Although few politicians would openly admit it, the maxim that "there is a system of morals calculated for princes, much more free than that which ought to govern private persons" was "authoriz'd by the practices of all ages."[151]

The existence of the laws of nations, though weaker in force and less rigidly observed than those of domestic justice, attested to the relative stability of

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Moore's reading has been endorsed by Robertson, *Case for the Enlightenment*, 289–324; Luigi Turco, "Hutcheson and Hume in a recent polemic," in Mazza and Ronchetti, *New Essays*, 171–98; John P. Wright, *Hume's "A Treatise of Human Nature: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chap. 9. A dissenting voice is James Harris, "The Epicurean in Hume," in *Epicurus in the Enlightenment*, ed. N. Leddy and A. Lifchitz (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2009), 161–81, which questions Hume's being part of an "Epicurean" tradition on different grounds to those advanced here.

148. For a different, but helpfully illustrative, discussion of the possibility of vindicatory genealogy, especially in relation to Hume, see Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2002), chap. 2.

149. Hume, *Treatise*, T.3.2.9.4, SBN 552–53. For a detailed discussion of this matter, see chap. 6.

150. Ibid., T.3.2.11.1, SBN 567. It is noteworthy that Hume does not explicitly endorse this as his own position, but attributes it instead to "political writers." This suggests a certain deliberate distancing from the explicit state-person theory of Hobbes, potentially a function of Hume's jettisoning of the categories of sovereignty and representation (see below, and chapter 3)—although, of course, Hobbes was neither the first nor the last to make such a claim, and Hume's locution indicates that he was aware that the view was not unique to Hobbes.

151. Hume, *Treatise*, T.3.2.11.3, SBN 568.

international relations. In the *Treatise* Hume essentially agreed with Hobbes, but based the conclusion on his alternative theory of artificial conventions: international war would continue to occur, but its destructive potential was limited, and the relations between state persons were broadly stable and tended to the security of domestic populations. Likewise, Hobbes was right that the division of humanity into rival states indicated that the attainment of society at subglobal levels could not be explained by appeal to natural propensities alone.

Hume, however, would later significantly qualify his estimation of the relative stability of the international arena in his 1752 *Political Discourses*, when examining the interaction of modern commercial competition and military-political expansionism. He there identified the innovation of national finance as threatening to turn states into mutually devastating fiscal-military war machines, meaning "either the nation must destroy public credit, or public credit will destroy the nation."[152] The possibilities opened by national debt rendered Mandeville's suggestion that commercial expansion was a safeguard against external conquest dangerously mistaken, whilst the modern international sphere, where war met commerce, was liable to be far more unstable and destructive than Hobbes had supposed.[153] But that is a story for another time.

Conclusion

Hume's science of man, by displacing Hobbes's theory of human nature and establishing an alternative vision of how humans interacted, helped clear the ground for an alternative science of politics, as Hume proposed was possible in his 1741 *Essays, Moral and Political*. The constancy and consistency of human nature meant that institutions, laws, and forms of government were the crucial materials upon which to work, as "consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us."[154] With a proper science of human nature in place, "politics admit of general truths, which are invariable by the humour or education either of subject or sovereign."[155] Of particular importance was "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."[156] The successful ordering of large-scale society turned on institutional design: the pitting of rival interests against each other as mutual

152. David Hume, "Of Public Credit," in *Essays*, 360–61. On this see especially István Hont, "The Rhapsody of Public Debt: David Hume and Voluntary State Bankruptcy," in *Jealousy of Trade*, 325–53. See also Nakhimovsky, *Closed Commercial State*, 120–22, 125.

153. Mandeville, *Bees, Volume 1*, 115–23.

154. David Hume, "That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science," *Essays*, 16.

155. Hume, "Reduced to a Science," 18.

156. David Hume, "Of the Independency of Parliament," in *Essays*, 42–43.

checks, so as to secure stability and prosperity via the implementation of good laws. "Legislators . . . ought not to trust the future government of a state entirely to chance, but ought to provide a system of laws to regulate the administration of public affairs to the latest posterity. Effects will always correspond to causes; and wise regulations in any commonwealth are the most valuable legacy that can be left to future ages."[157] Although it was not strictly necessary for Hume to reject Hobbes's theory of human nature in order to reject his theory of government—one could advocate (as others had, and did afterwards) something like Hume's vision of institutional checks, against a vision of sovereign absolutism, based solely on the projected consequences of such an arrangement—it *was* necessary, from Hume's point of view, to get human nature right in order to delineate a proper science of politics. But getting human nature right told decisively against Hobbes, and in turn helped to support the case for Hume's alternative vision of government. For it was in advocating a vision of utility-based, or commercial, sociability that Hume could deny the irreducible need for politics to be structured around a sovereign agent whose job was to unify the disparate wills of competing individuals who would otherwise inevitably fall into devastating conflict. No such unifying power was necessary—in other words, one did not need a *representative* to take over the act of judging on behalf of individuals, so as to pacify their aggregated consequences—and as a result, politics could be conceived of without making sovereignty on Hobbes's understanding a necessary component of large and lasting political arrangements (this matter is explored in detail in chapter 3).

Hume in turn also distanced himself from the "civic humanist," or "republican," tradition that had emphasized the importance of individual citizen virtue and public-spirited participation in the healthy functioning and security of free polities.[158] But he also reconfigured an emphasis on good political institutions as the central building blocks of order, security, and stability in a crucially counter-Hobbesian manner. Not only must authority always be balanced with liberty, but one of the truths revealed by the science of politics was the "universal axiom . . . *That an hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by their representatives, form the best* MONARCHY, ARISTOCRACY, *and* DEMOCRACY."[159] In other words, the English constitutional structure of the eighteenth century, which did not exemplify unified sovereign absolute power but rather a delicate balance of mixed ele-

157. Hume, "Reduced to a Science," 24.

158. See James Moore, "Hume's Political Science and the Classical Republican Tradition," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 10 (1977), 809–40.

159. Hume, "Reduced to a Science," 18. On the balancing of liberty and authority, see David Hume, "Of the Origin of Government," in *Essays*, 40–41. This essay was Hume's final addition, first published with the posthumous version of his *Essays* in 1777. It is a streamlined and compact summary of Hume's view of the origin, historical progression, and perfection of government, meaning it is in turn a succinct statement of his political thought.

ments, could generate stable and lasting government for advanced societies. This was thus more than a cosmetic modification of Hobbes's emphasis on the importance of state institutions in more auspicious times yielding a mixed government model in support of a cautious mid-eighteenth-century Whiggism.[160] More fundamentally, Hume's science of man displaced the need for a theory of union (which in Hobbes's framework generated, indeed entailed, political absolutism) in accounting for the conceptual origin and continued functioning of the state. Hume accordingly dispensed with the central Hobbesian devices of sovereignty and representation, insisting instead that the authority structures needed to sustain large and lasting society could be generated by the mechanisms of human opinion.

It is of course true that in *Behemoth* Hobbes himself stipulated that "the power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people."[161] That is, in order for sovereign power to be stable and successful, a sufficient majority of subjects must cooperate in its being preserved and upheld—i.e., by adhering to the laws on a daily basis and accepting the inconveniences that living under common power would necessarily impose.[162] To this end, *Leviathan* insisted that sovereigns provide not just a "bare Preservation" but also all other "Contentments of life, which every man by lawfull Industry, without danger, or hurt to the Common-wealth, shall acquire to himself."[163] Yet these sociological considerations were of supplementary and secondary importance in Hobbes's conceptual edifice: they related to how already-instantiated sovereigns were to succeed in ruling continuously, and hopefully ruling well. Mere opinion, however, did not constitute the ultimate grounds for rightful authority: this required consent, authorization, and the erection of union, which constituted the state as an objectively identifiable and specific entity, itself enabling man's definitive exit from the savagery of his natural condition, and into civilization. By contrast, Hume sought to build his

160. On Hume's relationship to Whig politics see Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), chap. 5.

161. Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 128.

162. Certainly imagination is irreducibly important in Hobbes's account, as the Leviathan is in effect an imagined entity, and is only able to sustain its power over men—providing their protection in exchange for their obedience—if enough individuals continue to believe in its right to rule. This point is made in Robin Douglass, "The Body Politic 'Is a Fictitious Body': Hobbes on Imagination and Fiction," *Hobbes Studies* 27, no. 2 (2014), 126–47, and also Stanton, "Hobbes and Schmitt," 165–66. Yet, for Hobbes, the role of imagination is limited to the sociological conditions of success for political structures, and is not extended to apply to the true underlying nature of political society and the constitution of sovereignty itself, which is revealed by a science independent of what people may happen to (correctly or mistakenly) think at any given point. As we shall see in chapter 3, this marks a crucial distinction from Hume, even if the role of imagination in Hobbes at times brings him closer to Hume than he would seem were this ignored.

163. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, vol. 2, 520–22.

political theory of organized coercive power, and the behavior it could rightfully extract from those subjected to it, solely on the foundation of opinion. As we shall see in chapter 3, this required the deployment of a theory of the state without sovereignty, and thus a major departure from Hobbes.

Before that case is presented, however, chapter 2 seeks to recover an important aspect of the sociability debate that has been left relatively marginalized in recent studies: the role of history, and the place of the family, in explaining the emergence of large and lasting human society as put forward first by Hobbes, and then by his eighteenth-century British critics. Appreciation of these neglected themes will allow us to gain a better grip in trying to understand eighteenth-century political thought, Hume's contribution to that wider milieu, and the way in which an alternative counter-Hobbesian conception of political theory could be more fully opened up and exploited, first by Hume, and then by Smith.