

A PREVIEW OF THE CLARENDON EDITION OF A *TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE*¹

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We began work on the critical edition of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* – on the Clarendon *Treatise* – nearly twenty years ago. In January 2000 the Oxford Philosophical Texts (OPT) edition of the *Treatise* and *Abstract*, a student edition of these works based on the critical texts we have established, was published. We can now report that the two-volume, critical edition of the *Treatise*, which includes *An Abstract of...A Treatise* and also *A Letter from a Gentleman*, is in press. This preview provides (1) an outline of the two volumes and (2) some brief excerpts from the editorial materials that make up vol. 2.

(1) The critical texts of the *Treatise*, the *Abstract*, and the *Letter from a Gentleman* make up vol. 1 of the Clarendon *Treatise*, a volume of 450 pages of which 431 are text. The texts of the *Treatise* and *Abstract* in the Clarendon Edition are the same – not only word for word, but also line for line and page for page – as those found in the eleventh and all subsequent printings of the OPT edition² (the *Letter* is not included in the OPT edition). The editorial commentary in vol. 1 is limited to a brief 'Note on the Texts'. The 750-page second volume begins with an 80,000 word 'Historical Account' of the *Treatise*, an account that runs from the beginnings of the work to the period immediately following Hume's death in 1776. This essay is followed by a comprehensive bibliographical discussion, 'Editing the Texts', which provides an account of our editorial procedures and policies, a formal bibliographical description of the *Treatise*, *Abstract*, and *Letter*, and a complete, detailed record of the differences between the first-edition texts of these works and the critical texts found in the Clarendon Edition. A facsimile of the only extant manuscript (a variant version of the 'Conclusion of this book' found at 3.3.6) and reproductions of the title pages of the *Treatise* are also included. The third component of vol. 2 is the 'Editors' Annotations', 150,000 words of historical materials and references 'intended to illuminate, but not interpret, Hume's texts'. In addition, there is a four-part 'Bibliography', followed by two indexes of the continuously pagged volumes.

(2) Excerpts. We provide here three excerpts: (A) a large part of the 'Note on the Texts' found in vol. 1; (B) the section titles and nearly all of the first section of the 'Historical Account'; and (C), from the 'Editors' Annotations' a brief account of the kinds

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2. For a complete list of corrections or revisions made to the earlier printings of the OPT edition, go to the McGill David Hume Collection website (<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/hume>), and then click on 'Corrections to the OPT Treatise'.

of annotation, and then representative annotations to the Introduction to the *Treatise*; to Sect. 2.2.1, '*Of liberty and necessity*'; to Sect. 3.2.1, '*Justice, whether a natural or artificial virtue?*'; and to the *Letter from a Gentleman*. Because of limitations of space, we have elected not to include an excerpt of the discussion of bibliographical matters found in 'Editing the Texts'.

A. From vol. 1: xi-xiii

A Note on the Texts

As early as March 1740, Hume told Francis Hutcheson that he was impatient to publish a second edition of the two volumes of the *Treatise* already published, because he wanted to make alterations to his work. Regrettably, because sales of the *Treatise* were unexpectedly slow, no further edition of these volumes, or of Volume 3, was published during Hume's lifetime. Hume did, however, take steps both to correct and to amend all three volumes of the *Treatise*. The critical text of that work reflects what we know or suppose to be Hume's intentions for a second edition of it, and inferences we have drawn about many of the formal features of the no longer extant manuscripts that were delivered to the printer responsible for the production of the three first-edition volumes. More specifically, the critical text follows Hume's directions, found in the Appendix to the third and final volume of the first edition, concerning additions and corrections to be made to the text of Book 1. In addition, the critical edition incorporates the hand-written corrections made by Hume in presentation copies of Volumes 1 and 2, and the amendments he made in his own copy of Volume 3. Finally, on a relatively few occasions, it reflects judgements that we and other editors have made about the wording of the text. Consequently, the critical text of the *Treatise* is, like all critical texts, a constructed text. It is a hybrid constituted of the first-edition text as modified by Hume's corrections and amendments and by editorial corrections and emendations. As far as circumstances permit, this text in some respects approaches the second edition of the work that Hume envisioned. In other respects it restores (by eliminating inconsistencies of form introduced by the compositors of the first edition) some of the formal features of the manuscripts that Hume put into the hands of his publishers. The circumstances alluded to include the fact that we have limited evidence of Hume's intentions regarding a second edition of the *Treatise*, and to the further fact that the critical text has been printed in a modern, scholarly format that facilitates, in ways outlined below, its use by the modern scholarly reader. A detailed account of our editorial procedures and policies and a complete record of the differences between the first-edition text of the *Treatise* and the critical text that follows is set out in *Editing the Texts*.

The texts of the *Abstract* and the *Letter from a Gentleman* are also critical

texts, but these pamphlets were the consequences of circumstances significantly different from those associated with the *Treatise*. The *Abstract*, or at least the main body of its text, was composed initially with the hope that it would be published in a journal largely made up of abridgements or accounts of new books, and that the attention to the *Treatise* thus brought about would both clarify a central argument and improve sales of the work. When that plan failed, Hume and John Noon, the publisher of the first two volumes of the *Treatise*, arranged for the *Abstract* to be published anonymously and with the imprint of a publisher who specialized in clandestine publication....³

The *Letter from a Gentleman* had still another, different kind of history. Roughly half of the pamphlet derives from a manuscript circulated by William Wishart in an effort to forestall Hume's appointment as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. This manuscript quoted extensively, though not always accurately, from the *Treatise*, and then levelled six charges at the author of that work. The second half of the pamphlet is made up of Hume's reply to these charges, a reply that Hume sent as a letter that he may have intended to be circulated in manuscript, but which he apparently did not intend to have published....

The critical texts facilitate modern scholarship in several ways. (1) Each larger segment of the *Treatise* (each book, part, and section) has been numbered in arabic, and each paragraph of the three texts has been numbered, also in arabic. These paragraph numbers are printed in the left-hand margin of each page. (2) The footnotes of the *Treatise* have been numbered consecutively. (3) A guide to line numbers has been printed in the right-hand margin of each page. (4) The corresponding page numbers of the earlier, widely used Oxford University Press edition of the *Treatise* edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge in 1888, and lightly revised by P. H. Nidditch in 1978, have also been printed in the right-hand margins of the critical text...items (1) and (2) are consistent with the intent of the General Editors of the Clarendon Edition of Hume's works to provide Hume scholarship with a standard or universal form of reference for all the works found in this edition....

B. From vol. 2, the opening pages of the 'Historical Account of A *Treatise of Human Nature* from its Beginnings to the Time of Hume's Death'. The 'Historical Account' is made up of ten sections, comprising pp. 433-588

1. Writing the *Treatise*
2. Publication of Volumes 1 and 2
3. The *Abstract* of the *Treatise*

3. Two brief notes have also been omitted from this excerpt.

4. Revising Book 1
5. Revising and Publishing Book 3
6. Announcements and Advertisements
7. Notices, Reviews, and Criticism, 1739-41
8. The *Letter from a Gentleman*
9. Further Responses, 1751-1776
10. Hume's Assessments and Recastings of the *Treatise*

The excerpt here consists of most of the main text of Section 1. In order to reduce the length of this preview, substantial portions of many of the longer footnotes have been deleted.

1. Writing the *Treatise*

David Hume was born in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital, on 26 April 1711. The years of his youth were divided between that city and Ninewells, his family's small landholding at Chirnside, a village near the border with England. Little is known about Hume's childhood. His father, Joseph Home, died when David was 2; his mother, Katherine, never remarried, but, according to Hume, devoted herself to her three children.¹ In the absence of positive evidence about Hume's earliest education, one may speculate that he and his brother John and sister Katherine were tutored by the Revd George Home of Broadhaugh, his uncle by marriage and the minister of Chirnside from 1704 to 1741, or that he attended school in Chirnside or Edinburgh.² On either alternative, the young Hume would have had instruction in the doctrines of the Church of Scotland and also learned Latin and possibly some Greek. It is likely that he began studies at the College of Edinburgh in 1721 (when about two years younger than most other beginning students), and probably continued there through the spring of 1725. Hume was later to report that his education consisted largely in the study of languages.³ It is true that during his first year at university he would have studied Latin, and that during the second year he would have studied Greek.⁴ But in his third year he would have followed a course in logic and metaphysics, while in his fourth and final year he would have followed a course in natural philosophy organized around the writings of Robert Boyle.⁵ The plans originally drawn up for this course in

1. 'My Own Life', 3. [The note numbers in this excerpt are those of the Clarendon Edition itself.]

2. The first two suggestions are not exclusive; the local minister might well have had a hand in the local school. Near the end of his life, Hume was interviewed by James Boswell....

3. Letter of spring 1734, to an unnamed physician, in *Letters*, 1: 13.

4. I am drawing on the much more detailed accounts provided by M. A. Stewart, 'Hume's Intellectual Development', 11-25, and M. Barfoot, 'Hume and the Culture of Science in the Early Eighteenth Century', 151-65. For more general accounts of the arts curriculum at the University of Edinburgh....

1708 also included provision for some instruction in ethics, but there is no firm evidence that this provision was in effect in 1724-5, the session in which Hume would have attended the course. There was also available to him an optional course in moral philosophy, the first half of which would have dealt with ethics, the second with pneumatology, including natural religion, and perhaps an account of the passions.

....

It is difficult to say when Hume began working on the *Treatise*. His final word is that he 'composed' the work during a stay of three years (1734-7) in France.⁶ Surviving earlier comments suggest the work then composed was begun well before 1734. In the spring of 1751, he told a friend that the 'vast Undertaking' that became the *Treatise* was 'plan'd before I was one and twenty, & compos'd before [I was] twenty-five'.⁷ In 1754 he was to say again that the work was 'compos'd before I was five & twenty'.⁸ In 1775 he wrote and had published a brief Advertisement in which he asked his critics to disregard the *Treatise*, 'a Work, which the Author had projected before he left College, and which he wrote and published not long after'.⁹ Given that Hume left college when 14 and published the first two volumes of the *Treatise* nearly fourteen years later, and the different suggestions made in the letters to Elliot and Stewart, there are grounds for doubt about this account of the beginnings of the *Treatise*.

The issue itself is ambiguous. What counts as *beginning* a philosophical treatise? Has the author begun it when he first puts on paper thoughts about issues found in the published work, but with perhaps no clearly formed intent of making these discussions public? Or has he begun a work only when he has a relatively clear idea of the method, structure, and scope of his undertaking, and has actually written what we would recognize as drafts of some part of the work? If we adopt this second, narrower understanding of *beginning*, then we may decide that Hume was at least 18, and perhaps even 20, when he began the *Treatise*. If we adopt the first, more relaxed understanding of *beginning*, then we may conclude that he had begun the work at a younger age. Hume's earliest extant letter, written a few weeks after his sixteenth birthday, reveals that prior to that date he had been writing about some of the issues central to the *Treatise* as published, and was known by at least one person to be doing so. In this letter, written to his friend, Michael Ramsay, he defends

5. In addition, in Dec. 1724 Hume joined a private library (the Physiological Library) that gave him access to a wide range of books on the sciences then studied; see n. 50....

6. 'My Own Life', 2.

7. Letter of March-April 1751, to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, *Letters*, 1: 158....

8. Letter of Feb. 1754, to John Stewart, *Letters*, 1: 187. To both Elliot and Stewart, Hume expressed regret for publishing the *Treatise* too soon, before he had properly mastered an appropriate form for his thoughts; for further details, see Sect. 10 below.

9. On this Advertisement and its first publication, see Sect. 10 below.

himself for not having sent, in a previous letter, drafts of his 'papers':

You say That I would not send in my papers because they were not polishd nor brought to any form;¹⁰ w^{ch} you say is Nicety. But was it not reasonable? Would you have me send in my loose, uncorrect thoughts? Were such worth the transcribing? All the progress that I made is but drawing the Outlines, in loose bits of Paper; here a hint of a passion, there a Phenomenon in the mind accounted for, in another the alteration of these accounts; sometimes a remark upon an Author I have been reading,¹¹ And none of them [of] worth to any Body & I believe scarce to my self. The only design I had of mentioning any of them at all was to see what you would have said of your own.¹²

By the time he was 16, then, Hume had attempted explanations of phenomena of the mind. As these topics are also those of Books 1 and 2 of the *Treatise*, this letter, although it contains no explicit reference to plans to publish a systematic account of human nature, lends some credence to Hume's claim to have 'projected' the *Treatise* in his mid-teens.¹³

Further aspects of Hume's literary struggles are the focus of what is by far the fullest account of his early efforts to produce what became the *Treatise*: namely, his remarkable letter to an unnamed physician.¹⁴ This letter, written in the spring of 1734 by a then discouraged young scholar who, finding his 'Spirits' unequal to the task he had set himself, had decided to 'lay...aside for some time' his 'Pretensions in Learning' in favour of a 'more active life' in the employ of a merchant. In this same letter Hume reports that he had finished college by the time he was 14 or 15, and that he was thereafter left to his own choice of reading. This he divided between books of 'Reasoning & Philosophy' and those of 'Poetry & the polite Authors'. He then immediately adds: 'Every one, who is acquainted either with the Philosophers or Critics, knows that there is nothing yet establisht in either of these two Sciences, & that they contain little more than endless Disputes, even in the most fundamental Articles.'¹⁵ Far from being put off by these disputes, Hume also reports that, as a result of them, he

10. Hume was later to describe the work he had done in France as 'my Papers'....

11. M. A. Stewart has shown that the notes published as 'Hume's Early Memoranda' were almost certainly begun no earlier than 1739. See Stewart, 'The Dating of Hume's Manuscripts'... and for further discussion....

12. Letter of July 1727, *Letters*, 1: 9.

13. We have no way of knowing, however, whether any of Hume's earliest ideas or drafts survive in the work he published in 1739-40, nor does the available evidence tell us exactly when his most characteristic or original ideas first occurred to him.

14. Letter of March-April 1734, *Letters*, 1: 12-18. The physician is thought to have been either Dr George Cheyne or Dr John Arbuthnot....

15. *Letters*, 1: 13. Pierre-Daniel Huet has an interlocutor say: 'When first I apply'd my self to the Study of Philosophy in my younger Years, I was very much offended at the continual Disputes of Philosophers about every Trifle...one might see every Day some new Disputes arise' (*Philosophical Treatise concerning the Weakness of Human Understanding*, 3). Hume alludes to this work at *Letter from a Gentleman* 24. See also n. 25.

found a certain Boldness of Temper, growing in me, which was not enclin'd to submit to any Authority in these Subjects, but led me to seek out some new Medium, by which Truth might be establish'd. After much Study, & Reflection on this, at last, when I was about 18 Years of Age, there seem'd to be open'd up to me a new Scene of Thought, which transported me beyond Measure, & made me, with an Ardor natural to young men, throw up every other Pleasure or Business to apply entirely to it.¹⁶

Here we find Hume reporting that, before he was 18, he had devoted 'much Study, & Reflection' to precisely those issues which were to be his central concern in subsequent years.

Hume goes on to tell his correspondent that, following this philosophical epiphany, he 'cou'd think of no other way of pushing my Fortune in the World, but that of a Scholar & Philosopher', and that he was 'infinitely happy in this Course of Life for some Months'. Suddenly, however, 'about the beginning of Sept^r 1729', he lost interest in his project:

all my Ardor seem'd in a moment to be extinguisht, & I cou'd no longer raise my Mind to that pitch, which formerly gave me such excessive Pleasure. I felt no Uneasiness or Want of Spirits, when I laid aside my Book; & therefore never imagin'd there was any bodily Distemper in the Case, but that my Coldness proceeded from a Laziness of Temper, which must be overcome by redoubling my Application. In this Condition I remain'd for nine Months, very uneasy to myself, as you may well imagine, but without growing any worse, which was a Miracle.¹⁷

....

Whatever our conclusion about the date at which Hume began to think about and write the *Treatise*, it is clear from his account of these years that his early interest in the problems of moral philosophy was deeply personal as well as academic and literary. Having, he wrote, read many books of morality (those of Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch are mentioned)²¹ and 'being smit with their beautiful Representations of Virtue & Philosophy, I undertook the Improvement of my Temper & Will, along with my Reason & Understanding. I was continually fortifying myself with Reflections against Death, & Poverty, & Shame, & Pain, & all the other Calamities of Life.' Such efforts, he was ruefully to conclude from experience, are useful if undertaken as part of an active life, but undertaken 'in Solitude', as his were, 'they serve to little other Purpose, than to waste the Spirits'.²² During the summer of 1730 Hume

16. *Letters*, 1: 13. Hume never explains what he means by the 'new Scene of Thought' that captured all his attention and energy in 1729, thus leaving ample room for speculation about the identity of this phenomenon. Several of these speculations are summarized and criticized by....

17. *Letters*, 1: 13. [Notes 18-20 have been omitted].

....

21. Hume may also have read Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, for the Hume Library included a seventeenth-century copy of this work; see Norton and Norton, *David Hume Library*, 76, item 151.

22. *Letters*, 1: 14; cf. *EPM*, A Dialogue 57.

was also struck with some physical symptoms of illness. The physician he consulted told him he was suffering from the 'Disease of the Learned'.²³ This diagnosis relieved his mind, for he could now infer that his inability to concentrate on his intellectual project arose 'not from any Defect of Temper or Genius, but from a Disease, to which any one may be subject'. Consequently, he resumed his studies, but with moderation: 'I now began to take some Indulgence to myself; studied moderately, & only when I found my Spirits at their highest Pitch, leaving off before I was weary, & trifling away the rest of my Time in the best manner I could.'²⁴ The symptoms of his illness lingered or recurred for some months, but in time he came to reflect more calmly on the task he had set for himself:

Having now Time & Leizure to cool my inflam'd Imaginations, I began to consider seriously, how I shou'd proceed in my Philosophical Enquiries. I found that the moral Philosophy transmitted to us by Antiquity, labor'd under the same Inconvenience that has been found in their natural Philosophy, of being entirely Hypothetical, & depending more upon Invention than Experience.²⁵ Every one consulted his Fancy in erecting Schemes of Virtue & of Happiness, without regarding human Nature, upon which every moral Conclusion must depend. This therefore I resolved to make my principal Study, & the Source from which I wou'd derive every Truth in Criticism as well as Morality.²⁶

Previous philosophers appeared to have failed, Hume went on to say, not for want of genius, but for want of control over their genius. Success in philosophy requires the ability to cast aside preconceptions in favour of a faithful, meticulous search for the facts of human nature – facts drawn as much from the reports of others as from the philosopher's own experience. From 1731 to early 1734 Hume doggedly tried to carry out this task, but found the results of his efforts discouragingly inadequate:

I believe 'tis a certain Fact that most of the Philosophers who have gone before us, have been overthrown by the Greatness of their Genius, & that little more is requir'd to make a man succeed in this Study than to throw off all Prejudices either for his own Opinions or for this of others. At least this is all I have to depend on for the Truth of my Reasonings, which I have multiply'd to such a degree, that within these three Years, I find I have scribbled many a Quire of Paper, in which there is nothing contain'd but my own Inventions. This with the Reading most of the celebrated Books in Latin, French & English, & acquiring the Italian, you may think a sufficient Business for one in perfect Health; & so it wou'd, had it been done to any Purpose: But my Disease was a cruel

23. As John Wright has pointed out (*Sceptical Realism of David Hume*, 236 n. 10), this phrase and talk of the wasting of spirits are found in Mandeville....

24. *Letters*, 1: 14-15. Hume later recommended this mixed way of life to his nephew David....

25. Hume's opinion regarding ancient moral philosophy may be compared with that of William Wotton, a copy of whose *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* was in the Hume Library....

26. *Letters*, 1: 16. Hume's earliest surviving speculations about human nature are found in 'An Historical Essay on Chivalry and modern Honour'....

Incumbrance on me. I found that I was not able to follow out any Train of Thought, by one continued Stretch of View, but by repeated Interruptions, & by refreshing my Eye from Time to Time upon other Objects. Yet with this Inconvenience I have collected the rude Materials for many Volumes; but in reducing these to Words, when one must bring the Idea he comprehended in gross, nearer to him so as to contemplate its minutest Parts, & keep it stedily in his Eye, so as to copy these Parts in Order, this I found impracticable for me, nor were my Spirits equal to so severe an Employment. Here lay my greatest Calamity. I had no Hopes of delivering my Opinions with such Elegance & Neatness, as to draw to me the Attention of the World, & I wou'd rather live & dye in Obscurity than produce them maim'd & imperfect.

Such a miserable Disappointment I scarce ever remember to have heard of.²⁷

This autobiographical letter was written as Hume was travelling to Bristol to begin the more active life he had resolved to try. We know little about Hume's time in Bristol. In 'My Own Life' he describes his trial there as 'very feeble'. It was certainly brief, for by late summer of this same year, 1734, he was on his way to France with the 'View of prosecuting my Studies in a Country Retreat'.²⁸ Why Hume sought a country retreat in France rather than Britain is not known. John Wright conjectures that, *if* the letter to the physician was sent to Cheyne, whose practice was in Bath, only about twelve miles from Bristol, then Hume might well have consulted Cheyne in person. And *if* Hume did in fact consult Cheyne, the latter might not only have recommended a sojourn in France, but also have provided a letter of introduction to his friend Andrew Michael Ramsay (the Chevalier Ramsay), whom Hume visited on his arrival in Paris.²⁹ Consistent with this conjecture is another. We know that at some point Hume began to be self-conscious about his lack of visible success. In December 1737 he confessed to his friend Henry Home 'one of my Foibles':

I have a great Inclination to go down to Scotland this Spring to see my Friends, & have your Advice concerning my philosophical Discoveries; but cannot over-come a certain Shamefacedness I have to appear among you at my Years without having yet a Settlement, or so much as having attempted any. How happens it that we Philosophers cannot as heartily despise the World as it despises us?³⁰

Later, in the *Treatise* itself, he was to observe that 'men of good families, but narrow circumstances' often leave their friends and country, and rather seek their livelihood by mean and mechanical employments among strangers...remov'd from all our friends and acquaintance' (2.1.11.14). In Bristol

27. *Letters*, 1: 16-17. Hume's attitude toward the imperfect expression of his opinions may well have been influenced by Cicero....

28. 'My Own Life', 1-2.

29. Wright, 'Dr. George Cheyne, Chevalier Ramsay, and Hume's Letter to a Physician', 131-3....

30. *New Letters*, 2. On being appointed a Lord Ordinary of the Scottish Court of Session in 1752, Henry Home took the title Lord Kames.

Hume subjected himself (perhaps under family pressure) to what could only be, for someone who sought to find nothing less than a new way of establishing truth and who could conceive of no other way of life than that of 'a Scholar & Philosopher', a 'mean' and inconsiderable employment as a trader's clerk. In both Bristol and in France Hume was removed from family and friends, sheltered from those who may have wondered about his lack of visible progress or success.

There is little to report about Hume's three years in France or about his work on the *Treatise* while there. During the summer of 1734, he wrote three letters to Michael Ramsay, of which only one, that of 12 September, is extant. We have also his letter of the same date to James Birch, an acquaintance from his brief period in Bristol. These letters reveal that Hume had visited Paris, where he met the Chevalier Ramsay, and, armed with letters of introduction from Ramsay, had then gone to Reims, where he expected to live. A large part of the attraction of Reims may well have been the three letters of introduction Ramsay had provided, especially one to a man said to be not only among the most learned in France, but also in possession of an excellent library of which Hume hoped to take advantage.³¹ From the letter to Birch, dated 18 May 1735, we learn, however, that after only a brief stay in Reims, Hume took up residence in La Flèche, where he remained until 1737.³² Here, too, there would have been a library – that of the Jesuit College at which Descartes had been a student – to which Hume may have had access. He did at least discuss philosophical topics with some of the Jesuits,³³ but perhaps not regularly, for in this letter to Birch he suggests that he was devoting most of his time to his work: 'For my part, I spend alwise more of my Time in Study, than it would be proper for you, who certainly wou'd choose to give one half of the day to Company, & the other to Reading'.

Even without this letter we can infer that Hume worked long hours in France. For, although he may have arrived there with many of the quires of paper composed before he left Scotland, his literary production during his years abroad was substantial. When he left La Flèche in the summer of 1737, he had progressed to the point that he could inform Michael Ramsay which philosophical works would help him understand a draft of the *Treatise*. He could also dread a self-imposed obligation to show this draft to Ramsay, whom he expected to see in Paris:

I shall submit all my Performances to your Examination, & to make you enter into them more easily, I desire of [y]ou, if you have Leizure, to read once over le Recherche de la

31. For conjectures regarding the individual with this library, see F. Baldensperger, 'La première relation de David Hume en France'.

32. E. C. Mossner, 'Hume at La Flèche, 1735: An Unpublished Letter'.

33. Hume later told George Campbell that an argument found in his essay on miracles occurred to him while in conversation with one of the priests at La Flèche...(letter of 7 June 1762, *Letters*, 1: 361).

Verité of Pere Malebranche, the Principles of Human Knowledge by D^r Berkeley, some of the more metaphysical Articles of Baile's Dictionary;³⁴ such as those [o]f Zeno, & Spinoza. Des-Cartes Meditations wou'd also be useful, but [I] don't know if you will find it easily among your Acquaintainces. These Books will make you easily comprehend the metaphysical Parts of my Reasoning. And as to the rest, they have so little Dependence on on [sic] all former Systems of Philosophy, that your natural Good-Sense will afford you Light enough to judge of their Force & Solidity....³⁵

Hume's earliest letters, although they provide little detail about the reading he did before leaving for France in 1734, do give us useful hints about the intellectual forces that contributed to the form and substance of the *Treatise*. Both before and after psychological problems overtook him in 1729, Hume read avidly and widely. In the first of his surviving letters (that of July 1727 mentioned above), he told his friend Michael Ramsay that he could not abide 'task-reading' (the kind of reading that would have prepared him for a career in law), but that he was none the less diverted by his library and was then alternating between Cicero and Virgil. The same letter shows him to have owned a copy of Milton, and to have begun reading *On the Sublime*, the work mistakenly attributed to Longinus. By 1734, the date of his letter to the unnamed physician, he knew the moral philosophy of the ancients well enough to find it, like ancient natural philosophy, defective. He also reported that in the previous three years he had read widely among the best-known books in Latin, French, and English, and some in Italian.³⁶

Hume's early reading left him with the impression, as he told the unnamed physician, that philosophy is characterized by 'endless Disputes'. When we turn to the published *Treatise*, the disputatious character of philosophy becomes Hume's starting-point. Anyone acquainted with the sciences, he says in the Introduction, can see the flaws in even the most widely received philosophical systems. In fact, one need not be learned 'to discover the present imperfect condition of the sciences'. Even 'the rabble' outside the halls of learning

may judge from the noise and clamour, which they hear, that all goes not well within. There is nothing which is not the subject of debate, and in which men of learning are not of contrary opinions. The most trivial question escapes not our controversy, and in the most momentous we are not able to give any certain decision. Disputes are multiply'd, as if every thing was uncertain; and these disputes are manag'd with the greatest warmth, as if every thing was certain (Intro. 2).

The situation is so bad, he adds, that 'even amongst those, who profess themselves scholars, and have a just value for every other part of literature',

34. That is, Pierre Bayle, author of the *The Historical and Critical Dictionary*, the work mentioned....

35. Letter of 26 Aug. 1737....

36. Stewart has noted many of the privately owned titles that Hume may have read prior to writing the *Treatise*; see 'Hume's Intellectual Development', 26-33, 36-41.

there is a widespread prejudice 'against metaphysical reasonings of all kinds', against 'every kind of argument, which is any way abstruse, and requires some attention to be comprehended', a prejudice Hume is unwilling to share:

nothing but the most determin'd scepticism, along with a great degree of indolence, can justify this aversion to metaphysics. For if truth be at all within the reach of human capacity, 'tis certain it must lie very deep and abstruse; and to hope we shall arrive at it without pains, while the greatest geniuses have fail'd with the utmost pains, must certainly be esteem'd sufficiently vain and presumptuous. I pretend to no such advantage in the philosophy I am going to unfold, and wou'd esteem it a strong presumption against it, were it so very easy and obvious (Intro. 3).

Hume's long letter to the physician also reports, as we have seen, that these disputes emboldened him. They made him disinclined to accept the conclusions of any previous 'Authority in these Subjects' and to seek a new means 'by which Truth might be establish'd'. It was in this letter that he first suggested that the moral philosophy of the ancients failed because it was too speculative and did not give due regard to human nature, and reported his resolve to make human nature his principal study and the source from which he would derive his philosophy. The *Treatise*, by his own description, is clearly the result of this resolve:

'Tis evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even *Mathematics*, *Natural Philosophy*, and *Natural Religion*, are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judg'd of by their powers and faculties...There is no question of importance, whose decision is not compriz'd in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. 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 (Intro. 4, 6).

Many passages in Hume's reading could have contributed to this view of the centrality of the science of man. Thomas Hobbes had said that a true understanding of 'the elements of laws, natural and politic' depends upon, among other things, 'the knowledge of what is human nature'.³⁷ Nicolas Malebranche supposed that of 'all the human sciences, the science of man is the most worthy'.³⁸ Robert Hooke had undertaken, as the first step toward the improvement of natural philosophy, 'An Examination of the Constitution and Powers of the Soul...being an Endeavour of Discovering the Perfections and Imperfections of Humane Nature'.³⁹ Francis Hutcheson began his *Inquiry* saying that 'There is no Part of *Philosophy* of more importance than a *just*

37. *Elements of Law*, 1.1.

38. *The Search after Truth*, p. xxv.

39. 'A General Scheme, or Idea of the Present State of Natural Philosophy', 7.

Knowledge of Human Nature, and its various Powers and Dispositions'.⁴⁰ He also hoped that his later *Essay* would serve as such an account of human nature until 'some Person of greater Abilities and Leisure apply himself to a more strict Philosophical Inquiry into the various *natural Principles* or *natural Dispositions* of Mankind'.⁴¹ Isaac Watts insisted that there 'are few Studies so worthy of Man as the Knowledge of Himself'.⁴² Alexander Pope (to whom Hume presented an autographed copy of the...*Treatise*) gave the suggestion poetic expression in his *Essay on Man*, where he announced that the 'proper study of Mankind is Man', and set as the final line of the same famous work: 'And all our Knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.'⁴³

Perhaps nothing was quite so much to the point, however, as some remarks found in Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks*, a book that Hume acquired sometime in 1726.⁴⁴ It is easy to suppose that Hume's attention was drawn to this work because it includes such obvious discussions of morals as *An Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit*. That supposition may be correct, but the *Characteristicks* also includes *Soliloquy: or Advice to an Author*, and one can equally well suppose that the young Hume, whenever it was that he began to try his hand at becoming an author of moral philosophy, would have found this essay of great interest for its extensive advice about writing such philosophy. A 'Study of *Human Affection*', of the passions, Shaftesbury says in the *Soliloquy*, 'cannot fail of leading me towards the Knowledge of *Human Nature*, and of MY-SELF'. Furthermore, a philosophy that achieves this end 'has the Pre-eminence above all other Science, or Knowledge...[it presides] over all other Sciences and Occupations; teaching the Measure of each, and assigning that just Value of everything in Life. By this Science *Religion* itself is judg'd, *Spirits* are search'd, *Prophecys* prov'd, *Miracles* distinguish'd.' But this endorsement comes with a qualification. The 'Study of human Nature' can reach these valuable goals only if it is pursued with the appropriate moral engagement: the true moral philosopher must be engaged in an effort to know and improve himself. Those who, like Descartes, although engaged in a study of human nature, discover only the effects of the passions on the body or only the different ways in which the different passions affect the limbs or muscles, could by their efforts become qualified 'to give Advice to an Anatomist or a Limner', but they would not become qualified to give genuinely philosophical advice to humankind or even to themselves.⁴⁵

40. *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, p. ix. The Hume Library included a copy of the 2nd edn. (1726) of this work (item 677).

41. *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, p. xii.

42. *Philosophical Essays on Various Subjects*, p. iv.

43. *Essay on Man* 2.2, 4.398. For further background, see Editors' Annotations, ann. 4.3.

44. *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Hume's copy of the 3rd edn. of this work (1723), now in the collection of the University of Nebraska, is signed and dated 'David Home 1726'. This volume also bears Hume's bookplate; see Norton and Norton, *David Hume Library*, 16. The citations that follow are from the edition of 1714.

45. *Soliloquy* 3.1 [297, 293]. Later in the *Characteristicks* Shaftesbury adds....

Advice of the sort Shaftesbury gives may have fitted well with Hume's mid-teen efforts to improve his own 'Temper & Will, along with [his] Reason & Understanding'. As we have seen, however, Hume at some point concluded that this form of self-concern was wasting his spirits. Rejecting all authority, Shaftesbury's included, he undertook exactly the enterprise – a descriptive moral anatomy – that Shaftesbury thought unessential and even wrong-headed.⁴⁶ Near the end of Book 1 of the *Treatise*, having finished his 'examination of the several systems of philosophy, both of the intellectual and natural world', and having 'fully explain'd the nature of our judgment and understanding', Hume is ready 'to proceed in the accurate anatomy of human nature' (1.4.6.23). When he had finished that undertaking, he argued that it would be of benefit to the practical moralist, the moral painter or limner. In response to Francis Hutcheson's complaint that Book 3 of the *Treatise* lacked 'a certain Warmth in the Cause of Virtue', Hume suggested that one can examine the mind either as an anatomist or as a painter, and that he had chosen the former approach, but not without supposing that in doing so he would be giving assistance to the practical moralist.⁴⁷ In the final paragraph of Book 3, Hume abruptly ends an already brief reflection on how his findings might contribute to 'the *happiness*, as well as of the *dignity* of virtue'. Such reflections, he says, have no place in the anatomy of human nature he has undertaken. 'The anatomist', he says, 'ought never to emulate the painter; nor in his accurate dissections and portraitures of the smaller parts of the human body, pretend to give his figures any graceful and engaging attitude or expression.' But he again insists that an anatomist 'is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter...the most abstract speculations concerning human nature, however cold and unentertaining, become subservient to *practical morality*; and may render this latter science more correct in its precepts, and more perswasive in its exhortations' (3.3.6.6).

Hume's search for a new means 'by which Truth might be establish'd' led him also to look for a new method. Ancient philosophers had relied on genius and imagination, a lively but unsatisfactory approach. The 'tedious lingering method' of their modern successors, is equally unsatisfactory. It dawdles in the provinces when it should march directly to the capital, directly to the philosophical heart of things, 'human nature itself'. Moreover, this new and sorely needed foundational science of human nature itself requires a reliable method. As we know from the subtitle of the *Treatise*, this is the 'experimental Method of Reasoning'. Just 'as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation' (Intro. 6-7).

46. Shaftesbury appears to return a similar verdict on the kind of philosophy found in Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*....

47. Letter of 17 Sept. 1739, *Letters*, 1: 32-3. The relevant text is quoted in Sect. 5 at n. 120 and n. 121 below.

That Hume would be impressed by the use of the experimental method in natural philosophy is not difficult to understand. As he saw it, this method had been, for more than a century, widely and successfully employed in that domain – so successfully that by the 1730s it had virtually no opposition, while the person perceived to be its most accomplished practitioner, Sir Isaac Newton, was a British icon. Who or what may have put into Hume's mind the idea of using this method in moral philosophy is the more interesting question. In the *Treatise* he suggests that some recent British philosophers (he mentions Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Hutcheson, and Butler) had begun to 'put the science of man on a new footing' (Intro. 7), but it is not obvious that any of these five explicitly recommends the use of the experimental method in moral philosophy. Indeed, as we have seen, Shaftesbury questions the usefulness of disengaged observation. Some may suppose that Newton's remark, 'if natural Philosophy in all its Parts, by pursuing this Method [‘of Experiments and Observations’], shall at length be perfected, the Bounds of Moral Philosophy will also be enlarged', provided Hume with the relevant hint. But Newton says only that natural philosophy correctly pursued will improve our knowledge of the First Cause and of our duties toward that Cause.⁴⁸ He makes no recommendation concerning how best to do moral philosophy. Alexander Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, suggests that we 'Account for moral as for nat'ral things', but read in context, the remark fails to make the relevant point about method.⁴⁹

Two other possibilities come to mind. One of these is Edmé Mariotte, a French experimental philosopher who in his *Logique* argues that one class of moral propositions, those having to do with 'les moeurs & les inclinations des hommes' ('*Nous sommes curieux d'apprendre ce que nous ignorons*' or '*Nous haïssons ceux qui nous contredisent*', for example), derive from 'induction & experience', but, although this work was available to Hume, there is no direct evidence that he was aware of it.⁵⁰ The more likely possibility is Francis Bacon, of whom Hume clearly was aware, and who was himself ready to extend his new method to moral subjects. It may be asked, Bacon said, whether he means to improve

only Natural Philosophy by our method or also the other sciences, Logic, Ethics and Politics. We certainly mean all that we have said to apply to all of them; and just as common logic, which governs things by means of the syllogism, is applicable not only to the natural sciences but to all the sciences, so also our science, which proceeds by *induction*, covers all. For we are making a history and tables of discovery about anger, fear, shame

48. *Opticks* 3.1, qu. 31 [405].

49. *Essay on Man* 1.162. Both this remark and that from Newton's *Opticks* 3.1, are quoted on the title-page of vol. 1 of George Turnbull's *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, a work published in the same year as Vol. 3 of the *Treatise*.

50. *Essai de logique*, Part 2, art. 3 [109]. Hume had access to the works of Mariotte through the Physiological Library....

and so on; and also about instances of political affairs; and equally about the mental motions of memory, composition and division, of judgement and the rest.⁵¹

Whatever it was that led Hume to attempt to introduce the experimental method into moral philosophy, he optimistically expected substantial results from this novel approach. By the 1730s, British pride in the achievement of its natural philosophers, most notably Newton, was great indeed.⁵² Yet Hume could suggest that the use of the experimental method in the science of man would result in no 'less honour to our native country' than did its use in 'natural philosophy'. We ought, in fact, to suppose that this new science will result in even 'greater glory', both because of its 'greater importance...as well as the necessity...of such a reformation' in moral philosophy. We cannot expect an experimental moral philosophy 'to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature' (the 'essence of the mind' is as unknown to us as 'that of external bodies'), and thus we must be content with a fundamental ignorance. None the less, 'from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from [the mind's] different circumstances and situations', we can expect to form a 'notion of its powers and qualities'. Indeed, when experiments of the appropriate kind are 'judiciously collected and compar'd, we may hope to establish on them a science, which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension' (Intro. 8-10).

In 1734 Hume was so discouraged that he was ready to put aside his philosophical work. Four years later, 'carry'd away by the Heat of Youth & Invention', as he was later to say,⁵³ he sent to press the first two volumes (and proposed three others) of a philosophically vast book that confidently offered solutions to long-standing philosophical disputes and to problems not hitherto noticed by philosophers. On the issue of infinite divisibility, 'philosophy and common sense', he said a few months later, have 'waged most cruel wars with each other' (*Abs.* 29). *Treatise* 1.2 (*Of the ideas of space and time*) attempts to reconcile these warring parties. The work of previous philosophers is defective in so far as it fails to give an account of the form of probability or belief on which life and action depend (*Abs.* 4), while substantially different and unsatisfactory accounts have been given of necessary connection and of the origin of our idea of it. *Treatise* 1.3 (*Of knowledge and probability*) undertakes to remedy these defects by providing an original account of belief, then links this account to our idea of necessary connection, and provides us,

51. *New Organon* 1.127. At *Treatise* Intro. 7, Hume takes Bacon to be the father of the modern experimental method. Hume's early familiarity with Bacon's work is also suggested by an essay he first published in 1741....

52. The 1704 theses at the University of Edinburgh included one stating that 'Wise Newton is an example of how indebted the human race can be to one man....

53. *Letters*, 1: 158, letter of spring 1751; for a fuller citation, see Sect. 10 below.

for good measure, a set of rules 'by which to judge of causes and effects'. *Treatise* 1.4 analyses and criticizes important forms of scepticism and both ancient and modern philosophy, argues that previous accounts of the nature of the mind and of the origin of our idea of the self are woefully inadequate, and proposes an alternative account of the latter as well as of our belief in external objects. Indeed, so confident had Hume become that he found it advisable to close Book 1 by warning his readers that certain expressions, '*tis evident*' and '*tis certain*', for example, were 'extorted' from him by the heat of passing philosophical moments, and should not be taken as evidence of either a 'dogmatical spirit' or a 'conceited idea' of his own judgement. Book 2 (*Of the Passions*), he tells us, contains opinions about the passions that are 'new and extraordinary', and along the way puts the issue of liberty and necessity in a 'new light', a light strong enough, he suggests, to settle this long disputed matter (*Abs.* 30, 34). Book 3 (*Of Morals*), published nearly two years later, considers two leading accounts of the foundation of morals, rejects one, supports a second, and then goes on to give a novel account of the nature and origin of the virtues. We know that the *Treatise* of 1739-40 is in some way related to a schoolboy's loose papers of 1726-7, and to the many pages, too maimed for public scrutiny, that this same individual had produced by 1733-4; but we are still left to speculate how these early efforts are related to the work making 'great pretensions to new discoveries in philosophy' (*Abs.* 35) that Hume published in 1739-40.

C. From vol. 2, 685-95; 858-62; 896-902; 968; 979

Editors' Annotations

These annotations provide materials intended to illuminate, but not interpret, Hume's texts, a distinction which, however difficult to maintain in practice, provides a useful ideal. The annotations have been prepared for readers with diverse scholarly interests and competence...Those looking for expositions of Hume's texts or interpretative suggestions are referred to the Oxford Philosophical Texts edition of the *Treatise* and *Abstract*.

Each annotation is intended to serve one or more of several, sometimes overlapping, purposes:

1. *Explanation of* [archaic, obsolete, or puzzling] *terms or phrases*....
2. *Translation*....

3. *Amplification of cross-references*. Hume occasionally provided notes to direct readers to relevant discussions found elsewhere in the *Treatise*. Far more often he simply says that something has been discussed above, or will be discussed below, without indicating where this discussion is to be found. We have supplied the likely targets of such references...Some annotations also

supply the location of earlier or later textual materials or of other annotations related to a topic of importance.

4. *Amplification of Hume's references to other authors....*

5. *Identification of authors or works to which Hume alludes.* Hume often mentions the views of others without identifying the sources to which he alludes. We attempt to identify the authors whose works espouse or discuss the views that Hume mentions, focusing, as much as possible, on authors or works Hume is known or thought to have read, or at least would likely have had access to, before the *Treatise* was published....

6. *Provision of information about aspects of the intellectual background of views expressed in the Treatise, the Abstract, or the Letter from a Gentleman.* We believe that any defensible interpretation of Hume's texts requires attention to, and thus appreciation of, the intellectual and philosophical context that gave rise to the issues dealt with in these texts. In some annotations we have, in order to suggest the state of the argument or issue at the time the *Treatise* was written, mentioned or cited reference works of the period (e.g., Chambers's *Cyclopædia*) or a textbook (e.g., Watts's *Logic*). In other annotations, especially certain relatively lengthy ones, we describe controversies or positions to which Hume appears to respond. In the largest group of annotations, including many of those described in the previous paragraph, we cite or describe texts that in some sense prefigure positions that appear in the *Treatise*, either as positions Hume accepts, although perhaps in a modified form, or as positions he opposes. Hume presents this material, whether an opinion, a set of distinctions, the formulation of an issue, or the structure of an explanation, in a manner that sometimes follows, though in varying degrees, the form of his predecessors. In annotations of this sort we have often quoted, if only briefly and incompletely, rather than paraphrased, the relevant materials.¹ We have done so for two reasons.

First, we have come to think that Hume, as he wrote the *Treatise*, was relatively close to some of the philosophical materials that helped to inform or motivate his work. This conjecture is not to be taken as a suggestion that the views of the *Treatise* are fundamentally unoriginal. The work may in fact be at its most original in the use it makes of shared materials, in the manner in which it builds on or recycles existing views, or the new explanations it gives of previously observed phenomena. Given that Hume destroyed or arranged to have destroyed his commonplace books and nearly all his loose notes, the evidence in support of this conjecture is constituted by whatever marked similarities one finds between earlier materials that Hume may have known – the books that provided so much of his 'cautious observation of human life' – and the text of the *Treatise*.² Second, even if adequate support for the foregoing

1. Quotations replicate period punctuation and spelling without use of [*sic*].

2. Intro. 10. M.A. Stewart has shown that the manuscript notes published as 'Hume's Early Memoranda' were almost certainly *begun* no earlier than 1739 (see above, Historical Account,

conjecture should in any given case prove elusive, we prefer to quote, rather than summarize, on the grounds that the original articulations of the classical and early modern literature available to Hume, preserve, even in translation, their semantic and conceptual character to a degree that no paraphrase can.

7. *Guidance to texts or discussions that reappear, typically in modified form, in Hume's later works....*

We recognize – indeed, we emphasize – that our annotations are neither complete nor definitive, and thus we welcome suggestions for their improvement.

Excerpts from the annotations to *A Treatise of Human Nature*

Title-page ***Rara...licet***] 'The rare good fortune of a time when you may think what you like and say what you think' (Tacitus, *Histories* 1.1). Addison had used this epigraph in the first issue (23 Dec. 1715) of *The Free-holder*. Spinoza adapted Tacitus' words to a chapter title ('It is shown that in a free state every man may think what he likes, and say what he thinks'); see *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*, ch. 20, and translator's note. An edition of this work published in London in 1737 was subtitled, in part: '*To prove that the Liberty of Philosophizing (that is Making Use of Natural Reason) may be allowed without any Prejudice to Piety, or to the Peace of any Commonwealth*'. Hume refers to the 'Liberty...of Philosophy' at LG 41; cf. ann. 431.20. Berkeley also spoke, but ironically, of 'this most wise and happy age of free-thinking, free-speaking, free-writing, and free-acting' (*Alciphron* 2.6). See also 'Liberty of the Press' 1; *HE* Appx. 4 [5: 130-1], 71 [6: 540].

Introduction

....

Intro. 2 3.24-5 **victory is not gain'd by the men at arms...but by the trumpeters, drummers**] Bacon spoke of the time before the Greeks, when the 'sciences of nature' may have flourished 'without the benefit of Greek pipes and trumpets' (*New Organon* 1.122). As Laird noted, Bolingbroke spoke of '*the Drummers and Trumpeters of Faction*' who drown the voices of reason and truth (see Bolingbroke, *Dissertation upon Parties*, 12; Laird, 21)*.

n. 11). Consequently, these notes are unlikely to provide direct clues to the reading that informed the *Treatise*.

* [Annotations are keyed to page and line, and introduced by an excerpt of the text that is meant to remind the reader of the text to which the annotation relates. We emphasize that the annotations are intended to be read in conjunction with the texts they annotate. These texts may also be found at the cited pages and lines in the OPT edition of the *Treatise*.

References to works by authors other than Hume are by author and title or short title. In these selections from the Editors' Annotations we have used the following abbreviations for the titles of Hume's works: *Abs.*, for *Abstract of the Treatise of Human Nature*; *DNR* for *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*; *EHU* for *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*; *EPM* for *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*; *HE* for *History of England*. The following are titles, or short titles, of essays by Hume cited in the selections: 'Civil Liberty'; 'Coalition of Parties'; 'Of Commerce'; 'Liberty of the Press'; 'National Characters'; 'Original Contract'; 'Remarkable Customs'; 'The Sceptic'.]

- Intro. 3 3.27-8 **that common prejudice against metaphysical reasonings**] This prejudice was mentioned by others. Norris spoke of the ‘general Prejudice that most Men are under against very Abstract and Metaphysical Arguments’ (*Essay towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World* 1.1.4). Watts noted that attacks on scholastic metaphysics have ‘tempted our Youth to run to another Extreme: many of them will sneer at the name of *Metaphysicks*...and...renounce all Pretence to it with Pride and Pleasure’. Watts himself argued that metaphysics, although better called ‘ontology’, is a useful and even necessary science (*Brief Scheme of Ontology*, Preface; cf. *Improvement of the Mind* 20.15; *Logick* 1.6.9). See also *EHU* 1.7-13.
- 3.36-4.2 **metaphysics...deep and abstruse...philosophy...easy and obvious**] That the truths of nature are difficult to access was a recurring theme in early modern philosophy. Bacon remarked: ‘The fabric of the universe, its structure, to the mind observing it, is like a labyrinth, where on all sides the path is so often uncertain, the resemblance of a thing or sign is deceptive, and the twists and turns of natures are so oblique and intricate’ (*New Organon*, Preface, 10). Chambers said: ‘The real and scientific Causes of natural Things generally lie very deep: Observation and Experiment, the proper Means of arriving at them, are in most Cases extremely slow; and the human Mind impatient’ (*Cyclopaedia*, ‘Hypothesis’). See also Malebranche, *Search* 3.1.3.1-2. Hume’s reference to metaphysical truth that is ‘deep and abstruse’ and to an ‘easy and obvious’ philosophy resembles a distinction drawn in an early issue of the review *Memoirs of Literature*. There are, said an anonymous reviewer, ‘two sorts of Philosophy. The one is sublime and abstruse, and properly cultivated by those that are call’d *Philosophers*: The other is sensible and natural; it is the Philosophy of ingenious Men of all Conditions. The Poets apply themselves to this second sort of Philosophy, as being the most useful’ (*Memoirs of Literature* 2: 66-7). See also Berkeley, *Principles*, Intro. 5; Butler, *Three Sermons*, Preface §§2-4. Hume returns to the differences between philosophy that is ‘easy and obvious’ and that which is ‘accurate and abstruse’ in *EHU* 1, especially ¶¶ 3, 16. See also 1.3.12.20; ‘Of Commerce’ 1-3.
- Intro. 4 4.3-6 **all the sciences...are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN**] Many of Hume’s predecessors recommended the careful study of human nature, and some also spoke of the ‘science’ of man or human nature. Malebranche, although pursuing a significantly different agenda, said that ‘of all the human sciences, the science of man is the most worthy’, and that ‘the science of man, or of oneself, is a science that cannot reasonably be depreciated’ (*Search*, Preface [p. xxv]; 4.6.2). Pufendorf saw the study of human nature as central to the discovery of moral law: ‘there seems no Way so directly leading to the Discovery of the Law of Nature, as is the accurate Contemplation of our natural Condition and Propensions’ (*Law of Nature and Nations* 2.3.14). Locke, having met with some friends to discuss a subject ‘very remote’ from the human understanding, saw that it was first ‘necessary to examine our own Abilities, and see, what Objects our Understandings were, or were not fitted to deal with’ (*Essay*, Epistle to the Reader, 7).

Fiering reports that, in 1739, a student at Yale College defended a thesis

entitled, *Philosophiae studium homine dignissimum, est humanae naturae scientia* ('The philosophical study most worthy of man is the science of human nature', *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth-Century Harvard*, 195). For similar comments by Hobbes, Hooke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Pope, and Watts, see above, Historical Account, Sect. 1. See also Charron, *Of Wisdom*, Intro.; Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, 206; Hale, *Primitive Origination of Mankind* 1.4; Bellegarde, *Letters*, Preface; Barbeyrac, *Historical and Critical Account of the Science of Morality* 1; Crousaz, *New Treatise of the Art of Thinking*, 1: 8; Gordon, *Cato's Letters* 31. See also *Abs.* 1-3; *EHU* 1.1-2.

....

- Intro. 5 4.20-3 **The sole end...on each other]** This sentence is quoted, with minor changes, at *Abs.* 3.
- Intro. 6 4.28-30 **leave the tedious lingring method...march up directly to the...center of these sciences]** Bacon complained in similar terms: 'For as yet we are but lingering in the outer courts of nature, nor are we preparing ourselves a way into her inner chambers' (*New Organon* 2.7, edn. of Spedding, *et al*).
- Intro. 7 4.41-3 **only solid foundation...to this science itself must be...experience and observation]** That 'experience and observation' were the keys to a sound natural philosophy was widely proclaimed well before 1739. Experiments were, in Bacon's hands, typically recorded observations of common experiences, as his *Sylva Sylvarum, or Natural History* illustrates. Harvey said that 'Silly and inexperienced persons wrongly attempt, by means of dialectics and far-fetched proofs, either to upset or to establish which things should be confirmed by anatomical dissection and credited through actual inspection. Whoever wishes to know what is in question...must either see for himself or be credited with belief in the experts' ('Essay to Riolan', in *Circulation of the Blood*, 166). Boyle, who in 1661 said that he found it most useful 'to make experiments and collect observations', also said that he began his work with the intent of continuing the work begun by Bacon (*Certain Physiological Essays*, 302-5; cf. *Defence of the Doctrine Touching the Spring of the Weight of the Air*, Preface, 121-2). Hume probably owned *Certain Physiological Essays*, and would also likely have read this work while a student in Robert Steuart's natural philosophy course at Edinburgh College. (See Norton and Norton, *David Hume Library*, 77; Barfoot, 'Hume and the Culture of Science'. On Hume's early education and reading, see above, Historical Account, Sect. 1.) Hooke in 1665 said that the 'Science of Nature has been already too long made only a work of the *Brain* and the *Fancy*: It is now high time that it should return to the plainness and soundness of *Observations* on *material* and *obvious* things' (*Micrographia*, Preface [p. xiii]; for Hooke's extended discussion of the experimental method and its advantages, see his clearly Baconian 'General Scheme, or Idea of the Present State of Natural Philosophy'. See also Cumberland, *Treatise of the Laws of Nature* 1.3 [40-1]; Newton, *Opticks* 3.1, qu. 31 [2: 404]; Desaguliers, *Course of Experimental Philosophy*, Preface; and the ann. above to the subtitle of the *Treatise*.

4.44-5.1 **application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects...after that to natural...about the same interval betwixt the origins of these sciences]** If we assume that classical natural philosophy began with Thales, then Hume's timetable may derive from Cicero. The latter, presenting the views of Antiochus of Ascalon, said: 'it is universally agreed, that Socrates was the first person who summoned philosophy away from the mysteries...[of] nature herself...and led it to the subject of ordinary life, in order to investigate the virtues and vices, and good and evil generally, and to realize that heavenly matters...however fully known, have nothing to do with the good life' (*Academica* 1.4.15). This account is repeated by Bacon; see *New Organon* 1.79. See also Seneca, *Moral Epistles* 71.7; Stanley, *History of Philosophy* 3.5, 'Socrates'; Rapin, *Whole Critical Works* 1: 335-6. For a different story, traced to Aristotle, see Barbeyrac, *Historical and Critical Account of the Science of Morality* 20. Dryden had already in 1668 asked, 'Is it not evident, in these last hundred years (when the Study of Philosophy has been the business of all the *Virtuosi* in *Christendome*) that almost a new Nature has been reveal'd to us?...more useful Experiments in Philosophy have been made, more Noble Secrets in Optics, Medicine, Anatomy, Astronomy, discover'd, than in all those credulous and doting Ages from *Aristotle* to us?' (*Essay of Dramatick Poesy*, 15).

Bacon himself recommended the application of his new method to the moral subjects. It may be asked, he said, 'whether we are speaking of perfecting only Natural Philosophy by our method or also the other sciences, Logic, Ethics and Politics. We certainly mean all that we have said to apply to all of them; and just as common logic...is applicable not only to the natural sciences but to all the sciences, so also our science, which proceeds by *induction* covers all. For we are making a history and tables of discovery about anger, fear, shame and so on; and also about instances of political affairs; and equally about the mental motions of memory, composition and division, of judgement and the rest' (*New Organon* 1.127). See also Pope, *Essay on Man* 1.162. Newton in his *Opticks* suggested that if natural philosophy, by following the experimental method 'shall at length be perfected, [then] the Bounds of Moral Philosophy will be also enlarged', for we will then, 'so far as we can know by natural Philosophy what is the first Cause', his power over us, and his benefits to us, but he does not there suggest using the experimental method in moral philosophy itself (3.1, qu. 31 [405]). See also above, Historical Account, Sect. 1.

5.3 and n. 1 **LORD BACON and some late philosophers in England]** For the dates and relevant works of the philosophers Hume mentions, see the Bibliography. English-speaking writers were in nearly unanimous agreement that Bacon had initiated the changes that put the sciences on a new and productive course. Sprat, for example, discussing the new experimental philosophy, said: 'I shall onely mention one great Man...the *Lord Bacon*. In whose Books there are every where scattered the best arguments, that can be produc'd for the defence of Experimental Philosophy; and the best directions, that are needful to promote it' (*History of the Royal-Society*, 35). Barbeyrac suggested that it was from reading the works of Bacon that

Grotius was inspired 'to compose a System of the Law of Nature' that became the foundation of the first genuine science of morality (*Historical and Critical Account of the Science of Morality* 29). See also Voltaire, *Letters concerning the English Nation* 12; Hume, *Abs.* 1-2, and, for Hume's later assessment of Bacon, *HE* Appx. 4 [5: 153-4].

5.7-8 improvements in reason and philosophy can only be owing to...toleration...liberty In an essay first published in 1741, Hume attributed to Longinus the view that 'the arts and sciences could never flourish, but in a free government' ('Civil Liberty' 4; cf. *On the Sublime* 44). As Hume points out in this essay, Shaftesbury and Addison are among 'the eminent writers in our own country' who accept this view, but he himself is critical of it and offers counter-examples. For Shaftesbury's view, see *Soliloquy* 2.1-2; for Addison's, see *Tatler* 161; *Spectator* 287.

Intro. 8

5.9-10 Nor...will do less honour to our native country than...natural philosophy The view that 'our native country', Britain, ruled the world of natural philosophy was not limited to the British. Voltaire suggested that Newton, obviously the foremost representative of British science, had 'obtain'd a kind of universal Monarchy over the Sciences' (*Letters concerning the English Nation*, Index s.v. 'Newton', [265]). Bacon supposed that 'the introduction of remarkable discoveries holds by far the first place among human actions' (*New Organon* 1.88).

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5.15 from careful and exact experiments As was intimated in ann. 4.41, no sharp distinction was drawn between 'experience' and 'experiment' in the early modern period. A recent translator of Bacon has observed: '*Experientia* and *experimentum* are used indifferently by Bacon both for the unforced observation which we might call experience and for the contrived experience which we might call an experiment' (M. Silverthorne, *New Organon* 1.70 n.). Hobbes said that the 'remembrance of the succession of one thing to another, that is, of what was antecedent, and what consequent, and what concomitant, is called an experiment; whether the same be made by us voluntarily...or not made by us, as when we remember a fair morning after a red evening. To have had many experiments, is that we call EXPERIENCE, which is nothing else but remembrance of what antecedents have been followed with what consequents' (*Elements of Law* 1.4.6). Boyle did 'not scruple to confess...that I disdain not to take notice even of ludicrous experiments, and think, that the plays of boys may sometimes deserve to be the study of philosophers' (*Certain Physiological Essays*, 307). Rohault distinguished three kinds of experiment: the first makes use only of the senses; the second makes use of deliberate trials; the third involves reasoning (*System*, Preface [A8]). Locke aptly demonstrates the interchangeability of the two terms when he says first that the stages of difference 'between earnest Study, and very near minding nothing at all, Every one, I think, has experimented in himself', and then that 'almost every one has Experience of [a certain effect] in himself' (*Essay* 2.19.4; see also anns. 153.2, 44; 162.36). In *EPM* 1.10 Hume again recommended the 'experimental method', and contrasted it with the 'other scientific method, where a general abstract principle is first established, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and conclusions'.

- Intro. 9 **5.29-31 at the utmost extent of human reason, we sit down contented...of our ignorance]** Hume's recommendation is reminiscent of Locke's, that the 'Mind of Man...be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its Comprehension; to stop, when it is at the utmost Extent of its Tether; and to sit down in a quiet Ignorance of those Things, which, upon Examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our Capacities' (*Essay* 1.1.4; cf. 4.3.22). Before Locke, Arnauld and Nicole had claimed: 'The best way to limit the scope of the sciences is never to try to inquire about anything beyond us', and then '*Nescire quaedam magna pars sapientiae*' [Some ignorance is a great part of wisdom] (*Logic* 4.1 [230]). Chambers provided a digest of the central Lockean grounds for supposing that our ignorance is insurmountable. Because we lack adequate ideas, our reason, he says, 'carries us...very little beyond particular Matter of Fact; and therefore...how far soever human Industry may advance useful and experimental Philosophy in Physical Things, yet scientific [i.e. 'certain Knowledge'] will still be out of our reach'. In addition, there is a 'want of discoverable Connection between those Ideas we [do] have'. Thus, of 'the Causes, Manner, and Certainty' of effects we must 'be content to be ignorant' (*Cyclopædia*, 'Ignorance'). See also Rapin, *Reflexions upon Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, 82; Huet, *Philosophical Treatise* 1.4; 'sGravesande, *Mathematical Elements*, 1: p. xi; and Hume, *Abs.* 27; *EHU* 1.6, 12.25; *EPM* 5 n. 19; *DNR* 4.11, 14.
- Intro. 10 **5.42-6.1 impossibility of explaining ultimate principles...defect common to...all the sciences]** The inherent limitations of the new science were widely noted. Bayle supposed that the typical modern natural philosopher was ready to grant the impenetrability of nature, and for that reason was a sceptic: 'there are very few good natural Philosophers in our age, but are convinced, that nature is an impenetrable abyss, and that it's springs are known to none, but to the maker and director of them. So that all those Philosophers are, in that respect, Academics and Pyrrhonists' (*Dictionary*, 'Pyrrho' [B] [4: 653b]). Argens generalized the point: 'The greatest Men, and those who distinguish themselves the most in the Sciences they study, ingeniously confess, that there is a vast Number of Things above their Knowledge, and which the Mind of Man is not capable of comprehending' ('Preliminary Discourse' 2, *Philosophical Dissertations*). Trublet embraced a similar scepticism about learning the ultimate principles of behaviour, saying: 'There is always something we cannot reach, at the bottom of the heart we think we have seen furthest into; and the greatest perfection we can arrive at in this art, will afford us but some uncertain conjectures upon the principles of mens actions' ('Uncertainty of any Judgment...upon Human Actions', *Essays* 27 [385]). See also Bacon, *New Organon* 1.10, 66; Glanvill, *Vanity of Dogmatizing* 3; Newton, *Principia*, 2: 543-7; Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education* 190; Ayloffe, *Government of the Passions*, 1-3; Keill, *Introduction to Natural Philosophy*, lect. 1 [8]; Huet, *Philosophical Treatise* 3.10; and Hume, *Abs.* 1; *EHU* 4.12, 16; *EPM* 9.13.
- 6.14-15 **glean up our experiments...from a cautious observation of human life]** Hume's recommendation is reminiscent of Locke's remark that in 'the Knowledge of Bodies, we must be content to glean, what we

can, from particular Experiments...Where our Enquiry is concerning...[that] which by Contemplation of our *Ideas*, we cannot discover; there Experience, Observation, and natural History, must give us by our Senses, and retail, an insight into corporeal Substances' (*Essay* 4.12.12). Dryden suggested that 'All History is only the precepts of Moral Philosophy reduc'd into Examples' (*Plutarch's Lives*, 274). Chambers said that without the 'Observations of others', made available through language, not even the 'most sagacious Observer' could produce an art or a science (*Cyclopædia*, Preface [p. vi]. See also Hume, 'Study of History' 6.

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2.3 *Of the will and direct passions*

2.3.1 *Of liberty and necessity*

257.title ***Of liberty and necessity*** Hobbes and Trenchard had also used this title (see ann. 257.14). Hume uses the title again for *EHU* 8, which not only takes up many of the issues found in this and the following section, but occasionally follows closely the texts found here.

2.3.1.2 257.5-6 **the WILL...be not comprehended among the passions** Hobbes conflated the will and the passions: 'Appetite, fear, hope, and the rest of the passions are not called voluntary; for they proceed not from, but are the will; and the will is not voluntary' (*Elements of Law* 1.12.5). Others emphasized the close relationship between the will and the passions. Cumberland said: 'Our *Acts of the Will*, whether *Chusing*, or *Refusing*...are call'd by the names of several *Passions*, on the one hand, of *Love*, *Desire*, *Hope*, *Joy*; on the other, of *Hatred*, *Fear*, *Aversion*, *Grief*' (*Treatise of the Laws of Nature* 5.12 [208]). Locke said that desire invariably accompanies voluntary actions, a fact which explains why 'will and desire are so often confounded', and that passions accompanied by 'uneasiness...influence the will' (*Essay* 2.21.39); Watts, that some of the passions 'include the Act of the Will in them', and that most 'have a tendency to excite the Person to lively and vigorous Actions' (*Doctrine of the Passions Explain'd* 3.3). Reynolds (*Treatise of the Passions*, 40, 42) and Descartes (*Passions of the Soul* 1.41, 46-9) include substantial accounts of the will in their discussions of the passions.

257.8-10 **will...internal impression...when we knowingly give rise to any new motion...perception** Malebranche also spoke of the will as an impression, rather than a faculty, when he proposed 'to designate by the word WILL, or capacity the soul has of loving different goods, *the impression or natural impulse that carries us toward general and indeterminate good*' (*Search* 1.1.2 [5]). Hobbes said that 'In *deliberation*, the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the WILL; the act, not the faculty, of *willing*' (*Leviathan* 1.6 ¶53; cf. 4.46 ¶28). Chambers, although he repeats Malebranche's definition, also said that the will is 'usually defined a Faculty of the Mind, whereby it embraces or rejects any thing represented to it as Good or Evil by the Judgment', and attributes this point of view to Locke (*Cyclopædia*, 'Will';

cf. 'Liberty'). See also Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* 1.7.2; Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* 1.1.2.11; Descartes, *Meditations* 4 [AT 7: 57-8]; Locke, *Essay* 2.21.6, 71; and the anonymous *Essay on the Freedom of Will*, 37.

257.10-11 **This impression...impossible to define]** Locke also remarked on the 'difficulty of explaining, and giving clear notions of internal Actions by sounds, that I must here warn my Reader that *Ordering, Directing, Chusing, Preferring*, etc. which I have made use of, will not distinctly enough express *Volition*, unless he will reflect on what he himself does, when he *wills*' (*Essay* 2.21.15). On indefinable entities, see also above 2.1.2.1, 2.2.1.1; ann. 182.16.

257.14-15 **long disputed question concerning liberty and necessity]** Collins and Chambers provided historical perspective on the 'long disputed question'. The former reviewed the views of several ancient and some twenty-five modern writers who had taken positions on the question of liberty and necessity (*Philosophical Inquiry*, 14-57). Chambers offered a briefer history of the dispute. Having concluded that '*Necessity* is usually confounded with Constraint', he said that Plato, Epictetus, Augustine, and many divines had distinguished two kinds of necessity, '*Violent*', or that which is 'opposite to Liberty', and '*Spontaneous*', or that which is consistent with liberty because it only '*necessitates* all things to act according to their Nature', while the Scholastics distinguished between *physical, moral, absolute, and relative* necessity, all of which are contrary to liberty (*Cyclopædia*, 'Necessity'). Elsewhere Chambers reported that Aristotle distinguished between *willing* (choosing an end) and *election* (choosing a means), while some of his followers divided acts of the will into the *elicited*, or those produced by the will itself, and the *commanded*, or those produced by sensitive, locomotive, or intellectual powers acting on the will, and that 'Most of the Schoolmen confound *Liberty* and the *Will* together, and make one Definition serve for 'em both' (*Cyclopædia*, 'Will', 'Liberty'). Other early modern philosophers discussing this question typically made reference to classical and scholastic disputes about liberty, necessity, and the will. See Bramhall and Hobbes in the latter's *Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*, *passim*.

Other works of the period explicitly on liberty and necessity include Erasmus, *Discourse on Free Will*; Luther, *Of the Bondage of the Will*; Bramhall, *Defence of True Liberty*; Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*; Sterry, *Discourse of the Freedom of the Will*; S. Clarke, *Remarks upon a Book, Entitled, a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty*; Trenchard, 'Of Liberty and Necessity', *Cato's Letters* 110-11; Jackson, *Defense of Human Liberty, in Answer...Particularly to Cato's Letters*. Still further titles may be found in the eighteenth-century bibliographies provided by Bentham, *Introduction to Moral Philosophy*; Grove, *System of Moral Philosophy*; and Johnson, *Quæstiones philosophicæ*. The phrase making up the lemma is repeated in *EHU* 8.2. For additional background, see Ja. Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, 1-87.

2.3.1.3-4

257.16-258.4 **'Tis universally acknowledg'd...acknowledge a necessity]** Nineteen of these lines are repeated in *Abs.* 31-2. Omitted there are the words, 'Every object...actions; and', found here in lines 19-24.

2.3.1.3 257.17-18 **universally acknowledg'd...operations of external bodies are necessary]** This view was indeed widely asserted. Malebranche said: 'It is clear that no body, large or small, has the power to move itself' (*Search* 6.2.3 [448]; cf. 6.2.5 [473]; *Elucidations* 15 [660]); Keill, that 'Every Mutation induced in a natural Body, proceeds from an external Agent; for every Body is a lifeless Heap of Matter, and it cannot induce any Mutation in itself' (*Introduction to Natural Philosophy*, lect. 8, axiom 3). See also Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* 1.7.2; Locke, *Essay* 2.21.9, 13; Cheyne, *Essay of Health* 6.1; Collins, *Philosophical Inquiry*, 53; Butler, *Three Sermons*, Preface §13; Anon., *Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, 69. A similar claim is made in *EHU* 8.4.

257.19-21 **Every object is determin'd...to a certain degree and direction of its motion]** Pemberton, paraphrasing Newton's second law of motion, had used similar language: 'The second law of motion is, that the alteration of the state of any body, whether from rest to motion, or from motion to rest, or from one degree of motion to another, is always proportional to the force impressed. A body at rest, when acted upon by any power, yields to that power, moving in the same line, in which the power applied is directed' (*View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* 1.1.5). See also Newton, *Principia*, axioms, law 2 [1: 13]; Hume, *EHU* 8.4.

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2.3.1.9 259.1-3 **skin...nerves of a day-labourer...different stations of life influence the whole fabric]** According to Cheyne, 'those whose *Organs* of Sensation are...un-elastic, or intirely callous...for want of Exercise...have scarce any *Passions* at all, or any lively Sensations, and are incapable of lasting Impressions...such are *Ideots*, *Peasants* and *Mechanicks*, and all those we call Indolent People' (*Essay of Health* 6.5). Watts said: 'Different Employments, and different Conditions of Life, beget in us a Tendency to our different Passions' (*Doctrine of the Passions Explain'd* 13). See also 'National Characters' 3-6.

259.6-7 **Government...establishes the different ranks of men]** Compare 'Civil Liberty' 10; *HE* 17 [2: 290-3].

2.3.1.10 259.11 **Shou'd a traveller, returning from a far country]** Compare *EHU* 8.8.

259.17 **Plato's Republic]** Plato's *Republic* supposes that reason is the superior and guiding principle of human nature, and portrays a society in which reason, embodied in philosopher-kings, neatly organizes and rules two further classes of citizens, those embodying the two kinds of passions, the spirited and the appetitive.

259.17-18 **Hobbes's Leviathan]** Hobbes's *Leviathan* claims, notoriously, that humanity's natural state is a chaotic one, 'a condition of war of every one against every one' because, in that state, all behaviour is determined by

ungoverned, selfish passions (*Leviathan* 1.14 ¶4; cf. 1.13 ¶8). See also anns. 308.36, 370.4. For Hume's assessments of Hobbes, see *EPM* Appx. 2.3; *HE* 62 [6: 153].

259.19-20 **characters peculiar to different nations**] See also 2.1.11.2; ann. 206.20.

2.3.1.11 259.24-5 **denying that uniformity of human actions**] See also 2.1.4.3; ann. 186.16; *EHU* 8.7-12.

2.3.1.13 260.9 **commonly allow'd that mad-men have no liberty**] Hobbes observed that even Bramhall, a defender of liberty, 'says that the actions of *children, fools, madmen*, and *beasts*, are indeed *determined*' (*Of Liberty and Necessity*, 242; see also *Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* 8; Bramhall, *Defence of True Liberty*, 34, 40). Collins mentioned 'furious madmen, whom all allow to be necessary agents' (*Philosophical Inquiry*, 92). Locke pointed out that the actions of the mad have, as Hume puts it, 'less regularity' than the actions of the prudent, and thus, if 'to break loose from the conduct of Reason...be *Liberty*, true Liberty, mad Men and Fools are the only Freeman' (*Essay* 2.21.50). See also Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* 1.7.4; Bayle, *Dictionary*, 'Rorarius' [F].

2.3.1.15 260.23-5 **moral evidence...a conclusion concerning the actions of men**] At least some authors took 'moral evidence' to be constituted of credible testimony. According to Chambers, 'A Thing is said to be *morally Evident*, so far as I have a distinct Notion, or Knowledge thereof, by unexceptionable Witnesses'. In contrast, a thing is said to be '*Physically*' evident 'so far as natural Sense and Reason pointing out any Thing, convinces one thereof' (*Cyclopædia*, 'Evidence'). Hume comments again on the notion of moral evidence in the two following paragraphs of this section, and at *Abs.* 33; *LG* 26; *EHU* 8.19, 10.3, 12.21. See also anns. 99.29, 115.25.

260.37-8 **A general...makes account of a certain degree of courage**] Hume uses an idiom, 'makes account of' found in, among other works, Bacon's *Essays* ('Of Plantations' [92]; 'Of Gardens' [129]), and in the work attributed to Allestree, *The Whole Duty of Man* (8.18). Bailey defined 'To Esteem' as 'to value, to make account of, to believe, to judge, to reckon' (*Dictionarium Britannicum*, 1731). Early printings of the Oxford Philosophical Texts edition of the *Treatise* mistakenly emend 'makes' to 'takes'.

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3.2.1 *Justice, whether a natural or artificial virtue?*

307.title **Justice...natural or artificial virtue**] The distinction between the natural and artificial virtues is briefly characterized at *LG* 38; see also 'Original Contract' 33-4. Hume returned to the topic of justice and its origin in *EPM* 3 and Appx. 3.

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- 3.2.1.2 307.7-9 **when we praise any actions, we regard only the motives...and consider the actions as signs...of...certain principles in the mind]** The view that actions are themselves only signs of 'principles in the mind and temper' – of 'design and intention' (see 305.34) or 'motives' – and that our approbation or disapprobation is ultimately directed to these, is a venerable one that was widely repeated in the early modern period. Seneca had said that the 'same act may be either shameful or honourable: the purpose and the manner make all the difference', and that 'the act itself is of no great consequence, since it appears that the man who from evil intent actually renders a service has not given a benefit' (*Moral Epistles* 95.43; cf. 95.57; 'On Benefits' 2.19.1, 3.6.1-2, 3.18.2, 6.7.2, 6.8.1, 6.12.2; ann. 333.40). Montaigne said 'That intention is the judge of our actions' (the title of Essay 1.7) and that 'a sound intellect will refuse to judge men simply by their outward actions; we must probe the inside and discover what springs set men in motion' ('Of the inconsistency of our actions', in *Complete Essays*, 244). Religious writers, especially Protestants reacting to Roman Catholic formalism, found the inner state of the believer, not acts or 'works', the essential component of a proper moral and religious life. Luther, e.g., said that 'good works are purely and simply outward signs. They proceed from faith, and, like good fruits, prove that man himself is already righteous at heart' ('Preface to Romans', *Selections*, 27). The authors of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England pronounced that actions or 'Good Works' that 'spring not of faith...have the nature of sin' (arts. 12-13). See also Cicero, *De finibus* 3.9.32; Grotius, *Rights of War and Peace* 2.4.3; Shaftesbury, *Inquiry* 1.3.1; Addison, *Spectator* 213; Blackmore, 'Essay upon False Vertue', 243-7; Gay, *Dissertation*, pp. xxiii-xxvi; Mandeville, *Enquiry*, 56; Hutcheson, *Inquiry* 2.2.1, 4-6; 2.3.1, 14; Butler, 'Of the Nature of Virtue' §7; *THN* 2.2.3.3-5, 2.3.2.6, 3.3.1.19-21; anns. 226.1, 8; 333.40; 373.19.
- 3.2.1.3 307.15-16 **one...shou'd be influenc'd by the proper motive]** Hutcheson and Butler had also traced vice to a defect of motive, including neglect. The former said that 'my *prior Negligence*, in not examining the Tendency of my Actions, is a plain Evidence of the want of *that* Degree of good Affections which is necessary to a virtuous Character; and consequently the *Guilt* properly lies in this *Neglect*' (*Inquiry* 2.3.12 [189]); the latter that 'vice in human creatures consist[s] chiefly in the absence or want of the virtuous principle' ('Of the Nature of Virtue' §6).
- 3.2.1.5 307.35-6 **blame a father for neglecting his child...shows a want of natural affection]** That parents have a natural affection for their children was a common observation. Steele quoted Cicero, 'What is there in nature dearer than a man's own children to him?' (*Spectator* 431, from Cicero, *Speeches...Post reditum ad Quirites* 1.2; cf. *De finibus* 3.19.62; *De officiis* 1.4.12). Hutcheson, said that 'NATURE, who seems sometimes frugal in her Operations, has strongly determin'd *Parents* to the Care of their *Children*, because they universally stand in absolute need of Support from them' (*Inquiry* 2.5.1 [217]); Butler, that 'natural affection leads to this', that 'a parent has the affection of love to his children: this leads him to take care

of, to educate, to make due provision for them', while a 'reflection' that this 'is his proper business' leads him to 'a much more settled principle, and carries him on through more labour and difficulties for the sake of his children' (*Three Sermons*, sermon 1 §8). See also Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.1, 12 (1155^a16-19, 1161^b17-28); Montaigne, 'Of the affection of fathers for their children', in *Complete Essays*, 278-93; Cumberland, *Treatise of the Laws of Nature*, Intro. 26 [32-3]; Shaftesbury, *Miscellaneous Reflections* 4.2; A. Forbes, 'Essay on Self-Love', 267-74; *THN* 2.2.12.5; ann. 255.33; 'The Sceptic' 10.

- 3.2.1.6 308.7-8 **We regard these actions as proofs of the greatest humanity]** Shaftesbury treated 'Humanity' as synonymous with a '*Sense of Publick Good*, and the *common Interest* of Mankind' and 'Good-nature' (*Sensus Communis* 3.1 [105], *Inquiry* 2.1.2 [81]; cf. Whichcote, *Select Sermons*, 381). Hutcheson, discussing the '*moral Beauty of Characters*' spoke of a '*fix'd Humanity*, or *Desire of the publick Good* of all', and later of the 'thousand tender Sentiments of *Humanity* and *Generosity*' (*Inquiry* 2.3.14 [191], 2.6.5 [256]). For similar usage in *EPM*, see 2.5; 5 n. 19; 5.18, 46.
- 3.2.1.7 308.11-13 **no action can be virtuous...some motive...distinct from the sense of its morality]** Hume in a letter to Hutcheson, traced this view to Cicero; for the text of Hume's remark, see above, Historical Account, Sect. 5. Cicero had said that the Stoics, 'who have no other standard in view but abstract right and morality, will not be able to find a source and starting point for duty and for conduct', were in that respect mistaken, because 'Considerations of conduct or duty do not supply the impulse to desire the things that are in accordance with nature; it is these things which excite desire and give motives for conduct' (*De finibus* 4.17.46, 48). See also 3.2.6.6; ann. 307.7.
- 3.2.1.8 308.16-20 **person...may perform the action without the motive...to acquire...that virtuous principle...disguise to himself...his want of it]** Hutcheson, having granted that pursuing self-interested motives does not produce virtue, thought that such 'Motives may make us desire to have *benevolent Affections*, and consequently turn our *Attention* to those Qualities in Objects which excite them' (*Inquiry*, 3rd edn. 2.2.6 [149]). Some took the more cynical view that those lacking virtuous motives undertake what appear to be virtuous actions to disguise their lack of virtue, not to themselves, but to others: 'Who is there who does not wish to seem beneficent? who, even in the midst of his crimes and injuries, does not aspire to a reputation for goodness?' (Seneca, 'On Benefits' 4.17.2); 'As bad as Men are, they dare not appear to be the Enemies of Vertue' (La Rochefoucauld, *Moral Reflections and Maxims* 489).
- 308.23-4 **fix our attention on the signs, and neglect...the thing signify'd]** Hutcheson noted that, while vice or guilt lies in intention, '*Human Laws* however, which cannot examine the *Intentions*, or secret Knowledge of the *Agent*, must judge in gross of the Action itself; presupposing all that Knowledge as actually attain'd which we are oblig'd to attain' (*Inquiry* 2.3.12 [189]).

- 3.2.1.9 308.36-7 **in his rude and more natural condition**] Hume was later to point out that the 'fiction of a state of nature' was not invented by Hobbes, for Plato had challenged the notion in his *Republic*, and Cicero supposed the hypothesis of such a state 'certain and universally acknowledged' (*Pro Sestio* 42.91-2, quoted in *EPM* 3 n. 11, where Hume's comment is found). Among modern writers, Hobbes had created the most notice by undertaking to 'demonstrate' that 'the state of men without civil society, which state we may properly call the state of nature, is nothing else but a mere war of all against all; and in that war all men have equal right unto all things' (Hobbes, *De Cive*, Preface [xvii]; cf. *Leviathan* 1.13 ¶13 and 1.13 ¶ 8, quoted in ann. 259.17-18). For Cumberland's criticisms of Hobbes on the 'state of nature', see *Treatise of the Laws of Nature* 1.26-35 [74-91]). Pufendorf described the 'natural State of Man' as 'such a State as we may conceive Man to be plac'd in by his bare Nativity, abstracting from all...Rules and Institutions', but went on to acknowledge that 'all Mankind did never exist together in a mere natural State' (*Law of Nature and Nations* 2.2.1, 4; see also *On the Duty of Man* 2.1.3-6). Locke said that 'Men living together according to reason, without a common Superior on Earth, with Authority to judge between them, is properly the State of Nature' (*Two Treatises* 2.3.19; cf. 2.2, 'Of the State of Nature'). See also A. Campbell, *Enquiry* 1, App. [240 ff.]; Pope, *Essay on Man* 3.147-50. See also below 3.2.2.14-15, 28; 3.2.7.1; 'Remarkable Customs' 16; 'Coalition of Parties' 5.
- 308.39-40 **Wherein consists this...justice...in restoring a loan**] Hobbes said that 'injustice against men presupposeth human laws, such as in the state of nature there are none' (*De Cive* 1.10 n.); Pufendorf, that in 'our present state there are a large number of affirmative precepts which seem to have had no place in the primeval state. This is partly because they presuppose institutions which (for all that we know) did not exist in mankind's condition of felicity...For example, we now have among the precepts of natural law...return borrowed money at the agreed time' (*On the Duty of Man*, Preface). See also Seneca, *Moral Epistles* 90.46; *LG* 38-9; 'Original Contract' 37; *EPM* 9.8 n. 57.
- 3.2.1.10 309.10-12 **self-love, when it acts at its liberty...the source of all injustice and violence**] A. M. Ramsay had spelled out the likely form of a society founded entirely on private interest or self-love: 'if it was permitted everyone to seize upon what he stands in need of, because everyone hath an equal Right according to the Law of Nature, the generality of Mankind would so serve themselves from this Principle, as became so many Thieves and Robbers: it would be impossible to preserve the Order and Peace of Society, and they would continually be falling into Anarchy and Confusion. But for avoiding these Inconveniencies, it is necessary that there should be Civil Laws, as Contracts and Successions for regulating the Division of Estates' (*Essay upon Civil Government*, 64).
- 3.2.1.11 309.20 **shown...hereafter**] See 3.2.2.2-22.
- 3.2.1.12 309.31-2 **no such passion...as the love of mankind, merely as such**] Butler, noting that 'moral writers' had suggested, for the 'object for our

benevolence, mankind', objected that this 'is an object too general, and very much out of our view', or beyond our reach. Love of our neighbour, he says, or 'that part of mankind...which comes under our immediate notice', is what scripture (Rom. 13: 9) enjoins, and what we can achieve (*Three Sermons*, sermon 12 §2). Although Hutcheson in contrast suggested that there is such a general love of mankind, he none the less granted that our 'strong Instincts' of love or attachment 'are by *Nature* limited to small Numbers of Mankind, such as *our Wives* or *Children*' (*Inquiry* 2.3.10 [181]; cf. 2.2.11, 2.5.1-2; ann. 317.35). See also Cicero, *De finibus* 3.19.63, 65.

310.7-10 **love...Englishman in Italy...European in China...a man...in the moon**] Compare Berkeley: 'Two *Englishmen* meeting at *Rome* or *Constantinople*, soon run into a Familiarity. And in *China* or *Japan*, *Europeans* would think their being so a good Reason for their uniting in particular Converse. Further, in case we suppose our selves translated into *Jupiter* or *Saturn*, and there to meet a *Chinese*, or other most distant Native of our own Planet, we should look on him as a near Relation, and readily commence a Friendship with him' (*Guardian* 126). This similarity was first noted by Hall, 'Did Hume Read Berkeley Unawares?'.

- 3.2.1.13 310.14-15 **much less can private benevolence, or a regard to the interests of the party concern'd**] Butler also argued that private benevolence could not, of itself, provide a foundation for morality. It may be observed, he said, 'that benevolence, and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case...our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to every thing, but the degrees in which benevolence prevailed, and the degrees in which it was wanting...But...suppose one man should, by fraud or violence, take from another the fruit of his labour, with intent to give it to a third, who he thought would have as much pleasure from it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment, and his vexation in the loss of it; suppose also, that no bad consequences would follow: yet such an action would surely be vicious' ('Of the Nature of Virtue' §12). See also *EPM* Appx. 3.11 n. 65.16-22.

- 3.2.1.14 310.28-9 **greater cruelty to dispossess a man of any thing, than not to give it him**] Trublet speculated that there 'is not a man who enjoys twenty thousand a year, that would refuse to accept of twenty more, upon condition of having it taken from him, if he was not the happier for it; and yet he would make but a sorry bargain in taking it upon these terms. Probably, this addition to his estate would make no essential addition to his happiness...But if he should then be deprived of this accessional fortune, for not coming up to the terms upon which he had received it, he would certainly be made very unhappy: his situation would be considerably lower, than that he was in before his advancement' ('Of Happiness', *Essays* 14 [171]). Hume later suggested that in 'depriving me' of property that 'is mine, and *ought* to remain perpetually in my possession...you disappoint my expectations, and doubly displease me, and offend every bystander. It is a public wrong, so far as the rules of equity are violated: It is a private harm, so far as an individual is injured' (*EPM* Appx. 3.11).

- 3.2.1.16 310.36 **A man's property is suppos'd to be fenc'd against every mortal]**
See 2.1.10.1; ann. 202.9.
- 3.2.1.18 311.9 **œconomy of a certain species]** Shaftesbury spoke of the 'System of all Animals; an *Animal-Order* or *Oeconomy*, according to which the Animal Affairs are regulated and dispos'd', and of the 'Constitution or *Oeconomy* of a particular Creature, or Species' (*Inquiry* 1.2.1, 2.1.3 [19, 91]).
- 3.2.1.19 311.20 **the word, natural, only as oppos'd to artificial]** The term *natural*, according to Chambers, is 'used for something coming immediately out of the hands of Nature, in opposition to *Factitious*, or *Artificial*, which signifies something wrought by Art' (*Cyclopædia*, 'Natural'; cf. 'Nature'). Rohault said that Aristotelian 'Forms are commonly distinguished into *Natural* and *Artificial*: They call those *Natural*, which belong to the Subject without the Assistance of Men...*Artificial Forms* are those that proceed from Art'. This distinction, he went on, is not satisfactory: '*Artificial Forms* are as natural as the *Natural Forms* themselves, because they proceed from Causes purely natural' (*System* 1.18.7). See also Watts, *Brief Scheme of Ontology* 18; *Treatise* 3.1.2.7-10; *LG* 10, 38; anns. 304.36; 305.20, 24; *EPM* Appx. 3.9 n. 64.
- 311.20-2 **In another sense...no virtue is more natural than justice]** Cumberland, considering whether the agreement 'express'd by *Covenants*' should be called *natural* (as he preferred), or *artificial* (as Hobbes preferred) concluded that such agreement 'ought either not to be called *Artificial*, or if it be so called that Term is to be taken in such Sense, as to be consistent with, not oppos'd to, what is *natural*, as if such Agreement were less constant or lasting, as *Hobbes* would have it' (*Treatise of the Laws of Nature* 2.22 [142]). See also Castiglione, *Courtier* 4 [290-2].
- 311.23-5 **where an invention is obvious...as...natural as any thing...immediately from original principles]** Barbeyrac had distinguished between those duties that are in Hume's terms 'natural' (those that derive from 'the natural and primitive Constitution of Man immediately') and 'artificial' (those that depend on or presuppose 'human Establishment' and 'are but the Consequence of the former'), but he took the two sorts to be alike in being natural in so far as both are 'prescribed by the Law of Nature' (in Pufendorf, *Law of Nature and Nations* 2.3.22 n.).
- 311.26 **rules of justice be artificial...not arbitrary]** Cicero associated the notion that justice is artificial with Carneades, whom he represented as saying that 'the justice which we are investigating is a product of government, not of nature at all; for if it were natural, then like heat and cold, or bitter and sweet, justice and injustice would be the same thing to all men' (*De re publica* 3.8.13). Cicero himself said, ambiguously, that nature is the 'foundation of Justice', and that justice is natural because it can be said to 'originate in our natural inclination to love our fellow-men' (*De legibus* 1.10.28 ff., esp. 15.43). Grotius treated the view that justice is not natural as a form

of moral scepticism, and to this end cited Lactantius's account of Carneades: 'Laws (says [Carneades]) were instituted by Men for the sake of Interest; and hence it is that they are different, not only in different Countries, according to the Diversity of their Manners, but often in the same Country, according to the Times. As to that which is called NATURAL RIGHT, it is a mere Chimera...either there is no Justice at all, or if there is any, it is extreme Folly, because it engages us to procure the Good of others, to our own Prejudice' (*Rights of War and Peace*, Preliminary Discourse 5, citing Lactantius, *Institutes Divine* 5.16.3). Among moderns, Hobbes, although sparing in his use of the term *artificial*, argued that justice is the product of a covenant among men and a specific 'law of nature' (viz. that '*men perform their covenants*'), for 'where no covenant hath preceded, there hath no right been transferred, and every man has right to every thing; and consequently, no action can be unjust...the definition of INJUSTICE, is no other than the *not performance of covenant*' (*Leviathan* 1.15 ¶¶1-2; see also *De Homine* 10). Cudworth complained of those, Hobbes especially, who said 'that Justice, Honesty and Morality are but thin, airy and phantastical Things...not natural, but artificial and factitious' (*Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* 4.6.5; see also ann. 193.40). S. Clarke insisted that justice is in no sense artificial: '*Justice...must needs be obligatory, antecedent to any consideration of positive compact, and unalterably and independently on all Humane Constitutions whatsoever*' (*Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion* 1.7.3 [232]; see also A. Forbes, 'Essay on Self-Love', 276-81. In contrast to these authors, H. More took '*Justice in general*' to be '*the first of the three principle Virtues, which are term'd Derivative*' (*Account of Virtue* 2.4 title). See also 2.1.7.3; 3.2.5.5-6, 11; the three preceding annotations; and anns. 193.10, 42-3.

311.27-8 **call them laws of nature; if by natural we understand what is common to any species]** The leading natural lawyers maintained that the laws of nature relevant to morality may be determined by observation of the human species. Pufendorf claimed that the '*true Original of the Law of Nature is derived from the Condition of Man*', and that laws of nature 'can be traced out and known by the light of man's native reason and by reflection on human nature in general' (*Law of Nature and Nations* 2.3.14 title; cf. 4.4.14; *On the Duty of Man* 1.2.16). Cumberland repeatedly supposed that it is observation of humanity that discovers natural laws; see, e.g., *Treatise of the Laws of Nature* 1.3; 2.2.12; 5.1-3 [40-1, 112, 189-95]. Barbeyrac said that the very notion of natural law itself shows that its 'Principles ought to be deduced from the Nature of Man' (in Pufendorf, *Law of Nature and Nations* 2.3.14 n.). See also Grotius, *Rights of War and Peace*, Preliminary Discourse 6-11, as well as Montaigne, 'Of age', in *Complete Essays*, 237; Hobbes, *Leviathan* 2.26 ¶8; Shaftesbury, *Inquiry* 2.1.1.

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Excerpts from the annotations to *A Letter from a Gentleman*[†]

- Title-page **A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh**] Hume's contributions to the *Letter from a Gentleman* were written as a letter to John Coutts, former Lord Provost of Edinburgh. For further details, see the following annotation and above, Historical Account, Sect. 8.
- Specimen of the Principles...said to be maintain'd in...A Treatise of Human Nature**] Two of the four parts of the *Letter*, the *Specimen* (§§4-12) and the *Sum of the Charge* that follows it (§§13-19), were apparently composed by the Revd William Wishart. The *Specimen* is largely constituted of, as Hume described them in §2 (see also §41), '*maim'd Excerpts*' of the *Treatise*. Copies of these two parts were then circulated ('industriously spread about'; see §1) in an effort to discredit Hume as a candidate for a vacant post, Professor of Moral Philosophy, in the University of Edinburgh.
- [*Preamble*]
- LG 3 420.13 **insert the Accusation...take notice of the Specimen**] Parts of this paragraph are repeated in §20.
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- LG 41 431.2-3 **the Author had better delayed the publishing of that Book**] For similar authorial assessments of the *Treatise*, see above, Historical Account, Sect. 10.
- 431.20-1 **Country of Freedom...Liberty, at least of Philosophy**] Milton reported in 1644 that 'lerner men' in countries where 'inquisition tyrannizes' had congratulated him on being born 'in such a place of *Philosophic* freedom, as they suppos'd England was' (*Areopagitica*, 24). In Hume's day, the idealization of Britain as the land of liberty was particularly the rhetoric of supporters of the Protestant Succession as effected by legislation in 1689 and 1714. The phrase, 'the liberty of philosophy', meaning the freedom of philosophical enquiry from ecclesiastical or political controls, gained currency in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries among the followers of Copernicus and Galileo, who were defending new modes of thought in natural philosophy, particularly in cosmology, against the Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church. It surfaced again in the mid-seventeenth century when Protestant Dutch theologians attempted to prevent the teaching of Descartes's natural philosophy because they judged its metaphysical foundations atheistic. In Britain, the phrase was popular with publicists such as Thomas Sprat and Joseph Glanvill, who, championing the new experimentalism of the Royal Society, opposed the Aristotelianism that still prevailed in the universities. See, by M. A. Stewart, '*Libertas philosophandi*' and *Independency of the Mind*. For Spinoza's application of the phrase to philosophy as a whole, rather than specifically to natural philosophy, see the annotation to the title-page of Vol. 1: *Rara...licet*.

[†] [There are also, pp. 961-8, annotations to the *Abstract*.]