Political Power and the Moral Foundation of Modern Commercial States From Hume's Perspective

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Abstract

This project is built upon Istvan Hont's research on the eighteenth-century political theorists. It argues that the political thought of David Hume presents a compelling response to Hont's concerns about the power and the moral foundation of the modern commercial state.

In the first half of the thesis, encompassing the first two chapters, Mandeville and Hume's perspectives on the political power of the modern commercial state are examined. While Hont looks to neo-Machiavellian theorists to address the state's power in commerce, Mandeville and Hume delve deeper, considering the broader impact of commerce on the moral condition. They both acknowledge the necessity for modern states to foster commercial prosperity to maintain their national security, bolstering their political power through increased tax revenue and manpower. However, Mandeville and Hume differ in their assessments of morality in a commercial era. While Hume dismisses Mandeville's focus on hypocrisy within the *Beau Monde*, he proposes evaluating moral life in the commercial era by scrutinizing the burgeoning middling ranks.

In the second half, comprising the remaining three chapters, I investigate Hume's political theory as a response to Hont's concern regarding the indispensability of government authority. I argue that while Hont underscores utility-seeking as central to sociability, he overemphasizes the economic aspect. In contrast, Hume tackles Hont's concerns by scrutinizing the moral foundation of government authority through an accurate understanding of human nature. I approach Hume's theory by critically examining the consent principle, contextualized within the backdrop of the debate surrounding the Glorious Revolution.

I employ Hume's analysis of the Glorious Revolution as a gateway to his political philosophy. This pivotal event, which curtailed the king's prerogative, established the rule of law, and emphasized the principle of popular liberty, serves as a crucial backdrop. While acknowledging its contribution to popular liberty, Hume also underscores the indispensability of political authority in maintaining public order and national security in a commercial era. In contrast to prevalent theories of the original contract and popular consent, as advocated by John Locke and his Whig disciples, Hume rejects these notions and elucidates the role of government in addressing the inherent partiality of human nature. He contends that subjects bear both a natural and moral obligation to political authority. Therefore, a political theory of modern commercial states cannot solely focus on the civilizing process and liberty. Instead, it should elucidate the complex relationship between public authority and liberty, grounded in an accurate understanding of human nature, to offer a comprehensive perspective on the public order of a commercial era.

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who are patient and caring, yet resilient in the face of adversity. They have set a lifelong example for me.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Introduction

Recent decades have brought to light a series of events that emphasize the need for a reassessment of the state's role and a reevaluation of competition among commercial states. The rise of right-wing governments, the escalation of trade protectionism, and the Sino-American trade war have all challenged the long-held beliefs in "commercial pacifism" and the idea of "the end of history".[1] The growing politicization of the economic sphere, along with the recurring significance of the state, has been made evident through these events, exposing the inadequacies of existing analytical paradigms. Consequently, scholars have recognized the necessity of reassessing the state's role and redefining the interplay between commercial states in rivalry.

In this regard, Istvan Hont's work has been pioneering. In his first book, *Jealousy of Trade*, Hont argues that it is "commercial states in rivalry" rather than commercial pacifism that characterizes our present era. He advocates for placing the study of the modern commercial state at the forefront of scholarly agendas, emphasizing the importance of revisiting the insights of eighteenth-century political thinkers who grappled with the concept of competitive commercial states in a systematic manner.[2] In his second work, *Politics in Commercial Society*, Hont highlights the contributions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith as exemplary theorists in addressing this issue. He contends that their diverse perspectives on the political landscape are rooted in a nuanced understanding of human nature within a commercial era.[3]

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[1] Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 2-4. Fukuyama's essay adopted a Hegelian viewpoint of history mixed with Nietzsche's pessimism, see Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?' *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3–18.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 1-5.

[3] "I argued that both [that is, Rousseau and Smith] accepted as fact the idea that human nature contained no primary or inbuilt principle of sociability that could be the foundation for both morality and politics." Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith*. eds. Bela Kapossy and Michael Sonenscher (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 25-26, 51.

While I agree with Hont's overarching proposal to theorize the modern commercial state, I argue that David Hume's insights into the nature of the modern commercial state offer a better vantage point, especially when considered alongside the intellectual dialogues with Bernard Mandeville and John Locke. Expanding on Hont's insights, my thesis seeks to prompt a critical reassessment of his approach, specifically addressing his oversight of David Hume's significant intellectual contributions to understanding the modern commercial state. As detailed in the thesis, Hume presents a comprehensive framework for analyzing the commercial state and provides a compelling response to Hont's key concerns, such as the power of the state and the moral foundation of political authority in a commercial era.

In the introductory chapter, I will outline my main argument in five parts. Firstly, I will clarify the concept of "commercial states," illustrating why both Mandeville and Hume can be viewed as theorists of such states. Following this, I will provide an overview of the methodology employed in this study. Then I will conduct a critical examination of Hont's analysis, focusing particularly on his propositions regarding the power of the state and commercial sociability. This will pave the way for my exploration of Hume's ideas, situated within the context of intellectual dialogues with Mandeville and Locke. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a roadmap outlining the thematic trajectories and analytical frameworks that will be investigated in the subsequent chapters.

1. What is the "Modern Commercial State"

1.1 Conceptual Clarification

To avoid confusion and lay the groundwork for further analysis, this section aims to clarify several interrelated concepts, notably "commercial society," "commercial state," and "commercial sociability". It is crucial to begin by elucidating that the term "modern commercial state," referenced in the title, signifies the major trading nations of eighteenth-

century western Europe, typified by civilized monarchies such as England and France.[1] Among the eighteenth-century theorists, whose primary concern was to grapple with the novel experiences of politics in a commercial era, there was a shared conviction that widespread trade served as a transformative force, reshaping public thinking, social interactions and the political landscape. Hence, their analyses of the commercial state often commenced with theorizing commercial society. In this section, I adhere to Hont's suggestion and utilize Adam Smith's definition of "commercial society" as a point of departure. Then I will examine Hont's concept of "commercial sociability," before concluding with an investigation of the "commercial state," with a particular emphasis on the political dimension.

To understand "commercial society", it is helpful to draw from Hont's proposal to take Adam Smith's definition of "commercial society" as a suitable starting point. As Smith highlights in the opening section of *Wealth of Nations*, a society is considered "properly a commercial society" only when "[e]very man…lives by exchanging, or becomes in some measure a merchant."[2] In this context, while commercial activities may have existed in previous stages such as hunting-gathering, shepherding, and agriculture, these societies do not fit into this category. The term "commercial society" signifies a distinct stage where commerce plays a central role, prompting individuals to engage in the division of labor to satisfy needs through reciprocal exchange.[3]

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[1] I agree with Harris's criticism of Hont's work for not clearly outlining how a deeper understanding of historical intellectual resources can enhance our self-understanding. Therefore, it is vital to highlight that this project is primarily historical research, focusing on the commercial state through the lenses of Mandeville and Hume. Their discussions revolve around commercial states of the eighteenth century, not our present era. While their theories are thought-provoking, it is crucial not to view them as panaceas solely based on conceptual similarities. It is a pity that space constraints prevent a detailed explanation of why understanding past theorists helps in analyzing contemporary issues. Paul Sagar, 'Smith and Rousseau, after Hume and Mandeville'. *Political Theory* 46, no. 1 (2018): 50-1; James Harris, 'Istvan Hont, Politics in Commercial Society: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith'. *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (2016): 160-1.

[2] Hont*, Politics in Commercial Society*, 3, and citation from Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, I.iv.1; Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 199.

[3] Not all eighteenth-century theorists explicitly referenced commercial society as a distinct stage, akin to Smith's formulation. However, as Berry notes, the unique characteristics of commercial society were

Beyond the quantitative benchmark, commercial society also underpins a distinct moral framework for mutual interactions. This leads us to the second core concept, "commercial sociability." As commerce expands, it also nurtures a "market-like" mentality characterized by the pursuit of utility and widespread interdependence among members of society, thereby reshaping belief systems, norms of conduct, and various institutions.[1] This indicates a shift in the patterns of interaction among individuals in the commercial era compared to previous societies, and heralds "a paradigmatic change" in both the theory of public order and its underlying theoretical foundation, moral psychology.[2] Hont observes that eighteenth-century thinkers drew insights from various traditions, including theology, natural jurisprudence, and anthropology, in their efforts to develop a more nuanced understanding of human nature and portray the moral psychology within a commercial society—or, in Hont's terminology, "commercial sociability."[3]

As Smith's analysis reveals, the state holds a vital role in upholding social order within modern commercial society. In contrast to ancient republics, modern commercial societies

discernible across a spectrum of Enlightenment thinkers, in particular Scottish theorists. Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 198-9; Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 159-161.

[1] Andrew Skinner holds the inter-dependency of relations as the focal point of a commercial society. Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 199-200, 206; Andrew Skinner, *A System of Social Science: Papers Relating to Adam Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 177.

[2] Hideo Tanaka, 'Beyond the Ambivalent View of Commercial Society: Commerce, Industry, and Alienation in the Scottish Enlightenment'. *The International Journal of Public Affairs* 3 (2007): 32.

[3] Hont draws inspiration from Kant's deliberate oxymoron of "unsocial sociability" (ungesellige Geselligkeit) and traces this intellectual tradition back to Hobbes's concept of "the state of nature". Robin Douglass critiques Hont's endeavor to elucidate the concept "commercial sociability" through an interpretation of Adam Smith's texts. Douglass contends that while Smith does recognize shifts in moral psychology within commercial society, the principal emphasis of this Scottish philosopher lies on the prevalence of commercial exchange. This emphasis diverges from Hont's central focus on moral psychology. Such a contrasting approach challenges the foundational elements of Hont's thesis, prompting Douglass to conclude that "Hont presents commercial society in a very different light compared to the one thinker whose use of the term 'validates it historically'." Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 4, 10, 17-21, 42ff, 137, 142, 159–184, esp. 161; *Politics in a Commercial Society*, 1-4, 6-8, 13; 'Commercial Society and Political Theory in the 18th Century: The Problem of Authority in David Hume and Adam Smith', in *Main Trends in Cultural History, Ten Essays*, edited by Wyger Velema and Willem Melching (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 60-72; Robin Douglass, 'Theorising Commercial Society: Rousseau, Smith and Hont'. *European Journal of Political Theory* 17, no. 4 (2018): 503-4, 509; Paul Sagar, 'István Hont and Political Theory'. *European Journal of Political Theory* 17, no. 4 (2018): 476–500;

operate on a larger scale, with most interactions occurring anonymously and impersonally among strangers. Smith emphasizes the necessity of a lawful government to facilitate the smooth functioning of society. Such a government must ensure the consistency and predictability of the legal system, instilling confidence among members of society regarding future-oriented market behavior. This is achieved by preventing individuals from causing harm to others while pursuing their own interests.[1]

Apart from the domestic perspective, there is also an international dimension to consider when examining the modern commercial state. As Hont observes, since the early modern era, the prosperity derived from international trade has been closely intertwined with the viability of the state.[2] Gaining an advantage in international trade thereby became a primary objective for states, leading to intense rivalry in trade among nations on the global stage, often manifested in warlike ruthlessness. The importance of profitable trade also reshaped the international landscape, propelling post-feudal European nations with vast territories into formidable civilized monarchies.[3] These states surpassed the Renaissance republics and the Netherlands to emerge as influential global actors. This context marked the beginning of the interdependence of politics and the economy as the central theme of political theory.[4]

In this project, I explore what would come to be known as the "commercial state" and "commercial society" in the writings of eighteenth-century theorists, particularly in reference to the public order of commercial nations in western Europe during that era. As they developed theories about the modern commercial state, these thinkers often started with

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[1] As Berry maintains, the Scottish philosophers are "institutionalists" and the so-called "spontaneity" occurs only "interstitially". Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 194ff, 207; 'Sociality and Socialisation', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by Alexander Broadie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 243–57.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 4-6.

[3] The rise of modern state, see Charles Tilly, 'Reflections on the History of European State-Making', in C. Tilly and G. Ardant, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 3–83; 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime', in Peter Evans *et al.* ed., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169-91.

[4] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 4, 22-3; Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 199.

discussions about social bonds, laying the foundation for understanding the role of the state in such societies. This aligns with Hont's argument that political associations should be seen as an "outgrowth" of these commercial societies.[1] However, it is important to note that these theorists never entertained the notion that a commercial society could exist and thrive without the presence of government. They did not use the term "commercial society" to describe social interactions based solely on commercial reciprocity, devoid of governmental structures, as the term "civil society" is sometimes understood today. Instead, these theorists employed "commercial society" as a concept representing the public order of commercial nations in eighteenth-century western Europe. This usage is similar to the concept of "political society" employed by early modern natural lawyers like Hobbes and Locke.[2] Hence, in this thesis, when I refer to "commercial society" and "commercial state," the distinction between the two terms arises not from their object of reference but rather from the emphasis placed on each term. "Commercial society" highlights aspects such as commerce, material prosperity, and the advancement of civility, while "commercial state" underscores the political dimension and the role of government in maintaining order within such societies.

Here we face a series of questions. Firstly, upon scrutinizing Smith's texts cited by Hont, questions arise regarding whether the Scottish thinker regards eighteenth-century commercial states in western Europe as the sole historical model when conceptualizing "commercial society," potentially overlooking other civilized nations from consideration. Secondly, it calls for further clarification when extending Smith's implications to other political theorists, such as Mandeville and Hume. In the subsequent sections, I will explore these critiques and offer a response.

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[1] The term "outgrowth" is taken from Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, 25; the term "association" is taken from Michael Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1975).

[2] For instance, Bernard Mandeville argues that "by Society I understand a Body Politick, in which Man either subdued by Superior Force, or by Persuasion drawn from his Savage State, is become a Disciplin'd Creature". Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, Vol.1, edited by F. B. Kaye (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1924]1988), 347.

1.2 The Scope of the Commercial State

Hont's theory of the commercial state drawn from his interpretation of Adam Smith has sparked intense debate. In a polemical work, Paul Sagar accuses Hont of overlooking Smith's meticulous use of the technical term "commercial society". Sagar maintains that Smith never restricts this term solely to full-fledged commercial states in early modern western Europe, but also employs it to characterize other advanced societies, including ancient Mediterranean city-states and China during Smith's era.[1] In each of these societies, individuals are also woven into a complex division of labor system, engaging in the exchange of goods and services to fulfill their needs. This interpretation squares with Smith's technical usage of "commercial society" in the opening section of *The Wealth of Nations*. Consequently, the concept of "commercial society" remains flexible in terms of its politics, prompting further exploration to discern the specific type of commercial society Smith discusses in different contexts and in specific historical locales. For Sagar this represents a departure from previous Smith scholars who see Smith's "normative" analysis of commercial societies as applying to the modern commercial state and its institutions in an abstract and general manner.[2] Through this lens, Sagar challenges Hont's portrayal of Smith as a theorist who exclusively focused on early modern European commercial nations.

While Sagar's analysis offers valuable perspectives, it also carries the risk of distorting Smith's original ideas. Following Christopher Berry's view, we can observe Smith's use of the qualifications "everyman" and "far greater part" in the passages that Sagar considers definitive of Smith's "technical usage" of commercial society. We can also infer from this that ancient commercial republics, where a large segment of the population was comprised of slaves who did not participate in mutual exchange of goods and services, may not strictly

[1] Sagar further points out that Smith primarily focuses on early modern European societies when discussing "external relations" such as international trade and warfare, using terms like commercial "states," "nations," or "countries" rather than "commercial society". Paul Sagar, *Adam Smith Reconsidered: History, Liberty, and the Foundations of Modern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 12n2.

[2] Sagar argues that it will "simply be false" to suppose that Smith's "commercial society" is incompatible with (say) republican political organization. Sagar, *Adam Smith Reconsidered*, 50-1, 106.

fit within the category of "commercial society." With regards to China, Smith explicitly highlights its lack of a rule of law.[1] As a result, Sagar's attempt to broaden Smith's application of the term commercial society is untenable. A more fruitful approach, giving a more precise understanding of the term, is one that focuses on early modern European commercial nations, while considering others as marginal cases, rather than assigning them equal weight. Seen in this way Hont's approach of seeing Smith as an exemplary theorist of commercial society who directs his attention to a particular eighteenth-century west European context is more compelling.

1.3 Mandeville and Hume's Role

While Sagar's attempt to broaden the spectrum of "commercial society" may have some problematic aspects, his critique of Hont's discussion of the context of the development of Adam Smith's ideas is more convincing.[2] As Sagar suggests, Hont's preoccupation with exploring Smith's relationship with Rousseau is mistaken, instead Sagar suggests that Smith is engaging with a far more sophisticated British philosophical debate about moral psychology that can be traced to Bernard Mandeville and David Hume. Hont recognizes Smith and Rousseau as exemplary theorists with similar ambitions, noting that their shared moral theory up to a point serves as the moral foundation for two distinct visions of politics. He alleges that their theoretical synthesis lays the foundation for commercial and representative republics of modern era.[3] Recent research has drawn Hont's analysis of Rousseau into question. As Sagar indicates, it may be more compelling to take into account the roles of Hume and Mandeville in shaping Smith's thought.[4] Sagar's new book *Adam Smith Reconsidered* makes the case that Smith's contribution to theorizing commercial states

[1] Christopher Berry, 'Adam Smith Reconsidered: History, Liberty, and the Foundations of Modern Politics. By Paul Sagar. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022'. *Perspectives on Politics* 20, no. 4 (2022): 1433.
[2] Sagar, 'Smith and Rousseau, after Hume and Mandeville', 29–58.
[3] Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, 22-24.
[4] As Douglass reminds us, Rousseau only articulated a three-stage theory and his philosophy questioned the necessity to theorize a further stage as "commercial society", as we find in Smith. To make things worse, Rousseau seems to be more resistant to commercial progress than Hont allows. These arguments are in tension with Hont's attempt to establish Rousseau as a theorist of commercial society. Douglass, 'Theorising Commercial Society', 506-8.

is better contextualized as a contribution to a discussion in British political philosophy in which Mandeville and Hume loom large. While it is fair to say that Hont mentions both Mandeville and Hume as thinkers who prefigure Smith and share some of his concerns, he instead focuses his own analysis on Hobbes, Pufendorf and Rousseau as precursors to Smith. This represents a gap in Hont's analysis, and one of my main contentions is that his analysis of thinking about the modern commercial state can be enriched by following Sagar's alternative proposal.

In doing so I will make the case that both Mandeville and Hume have modern commercial states as a focus of their discussion. It is reasonable to think that as they were writing earlier in the 18th century then their views on commerce are less realized than those of Smith and more inflected by aspects of mercantilist thinking. As I will illustrate, it is reasonable to read them as providing comprehensive and profound analyses of commercial states, even though various aspects of their theories are also applicable to earlier or other forms of political associations. There is ample evidence to indicate that both authors were aware they were addressing a new form of politics and that it formed the focal point of their attention in a manner suggesting they recognized significant distinctions between this and more generalized claims about politics in general.

At first glance, Mandeville's analyses in the two *Fables* appear to apply to all civilized nations in general, rather than being confined to modern commercial states in Western Europe. Cleomenes, serving as Mandeville's spokesman in *Fable II*, suggests that the connection between luxury and politeness extends beyond modern commercial states to encompass "old Greece, the Roman Empire, or the great Eastern Nation," revealing a longstanding preference for earthly pleasures and good manners among the *Beau Monde* throughout history.[1] However, Mandeville underscores in the "Preface", which sets the tone

[1] Mandeville, *Fable II,*146-7.

for the entire work, that the hive metaphor portrays "a large, rich and warlike Nation…happily govern'd by a limited Monarchy", characteristics more closely associated with early modern commercial states in Western Europe.[1] In light of this, although his examination of "sociableness" intertwined with luxury and politeness may apply to all civilized societies, both ancient and modern, it is more instructive to interpret Mandeville as a theorist of modern commercial states, illustrating how these states enhance their political and military power by fostering commercial prosperity and harnessing the vicious passions in human nature.

In the context of Hume's philosophy, I assert that his defense of government authority, as articulated in the third book of the *Treatise*, sheds light on the crucial role of governmental authority in civilized societies in general, with a particular emphasis on modern commercial states. Hume asserts in the *Treatise* that "government would still be necessary in all large and civilized societies."[2] While he does not explicitly define "civilized societies" in the *Treatise*, we can clarify the concept by examining Hume's *Essays*. In these essays, the term "civilized" or "uncivilized" appears 28 times, 11 times associated with "European monarchy," "monarchy," or modern commercial nations such as Italy or Holland.[3] Although mentioned four times in relation to ancient nations, Hume acknowledges twice that the Greek city-states and Roman republic, primarily focused on war, were considered "uncivilized people",[4] while claiming that the Roman Empire, particularly during the age of Trajan and the Antonines, were civilized.[5] Moreover, Hume explicitly makes a compassion between ancient and modern politics. He cites famous Latin writers to highlight the lack of refinement in their customs, suggesting that "scarcely any part of Europe at present [is] so uncivilized as to admit of such a custom."[6] Therefore, despite certain ambiguities in terminology, it is

[1] Mandeville, *Fable I*, 6.
[2] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 3.2.8. 7.
[3] To list a few, see Hume, *Essays*, 92-93, 94, 124-7, 275, 278.
[4] Hume, *Essays*, 274-5, 341n17.
[5] For textual evidence in support of Roman empire as "civilized", see Hume, *Essays*, 121, 341n17, 457-8.
[6] Hume, *Essays*, 132-3n33, 278 (where Hume discussed " refined Greeks and Romans").

reasonable to conclude that modern commercial states can be considered exemplary and fully "civilized" societies according to Hume's criteria. As Berry points out, although Hume never adopts a stadial approach to discussing social change and the commercial state, he dedicates significant attention to depicting the ideal type of a commercial society. Thus, we can interpret the third book of Hume's *Treatise* as concerned with the "operation of a modern society".[1]

Moreover, it is worth highlighting that Hume demonstrates a keen awareness that his theory directly pertained to early modern commercial states in western Europe, a fact he regarded as his principal scholarly contribution to "the science of politics", as per his own assessment. In his essay "Of Civil Liberty", Hume criticizes previous political theorists for neglecting the impact of commerce, noting that even notable figures like Machiavelli focuses on the "furious and tyrannical government" of ancient times or Renaissance Italy. In contrast, Hume highlights the increasing significance of trade from the seventeenth century onwards, analyzing how commerce shaped modern monarchial states as they ascended to prominence on the global stage, characterized by their "opulence, grandeur, and military" power.[2] It is reasonable to interpret his writings as primarily centered on political entities characterized by civil liberty and commerce.[3] Therefore, Hume's primary concern is to understand politics in modern commercial states, rather than any civilized nations in ancient times or other parts of the world.

Furthermore, Hume's examination of modern commercial societies gains additional credibility due to his comprehensive understanding of ancient politics, something he uses as a benchmark for comparison in essays like "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations". Hume became keenly aware of significant disparities between ancient republics and modern

[1] Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 198.
[2] Hume, *Essays*, 88-9.
[3] Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, 199-200; Donald Livingston and Nicholas Capaldi, eds. *Liberty in Hume's History of England* (Kluwer Academic Publishers: Springer, 1990).

commercial states, and dedicated theoretical speculations to the latter.[1] Essays such as "Of Refinement in the Arts" and "Of Commerce" illustrate this contrast, explaining why ancient rulers often resorted to enforcing sumptuary laws to preserve public order, while modern commercial states embrace trade and the sensual pleasures of their subjects. Hume views the coordination of public good and private enjoyment as a notable advantage of modern European commercial states. As he restates in his *History of England*, the progress of the arts "among the Greeks and Romans" merely "[i]ncreased the number of slaves," whereas in the modern era, it "proved to be so general a source of liberty."[2] As a result, Hume demonstrates a keen awareness of the distinction between ancient and modern public order, and his scholarly focus positions him as a theorist of modern commercial states.

2. Methodology

In this section, I will outline the method I will use in this project, which I term contextually informed textual analysis. This approach is developed by engaging with Skinner's methodological arguments about contextual analysis, a widely accepted approach among contemporary scholars.[3] Firstly, I concur with Skinner's contention that understanding authors' intentions requires exploring the contexts of their work. But when examining philosophical texts, it is advisable to relax Skinner's definition of "context" as "local and temporal" historical occasions and encompass the wider intellectual debates the authors were engaged in. From this perspective, it is reasonable to view John Locke's writings as part of the philosophical backdrop for David Hume's work, considering it a more illuminating context than the pamphlet wars of Hume's lifetime. Secondly, I argue against Skinner's

[1] As Baumstark notes, Hume dedicated himself to the study of classical antiquity during his formative years, and his ideas were crystallized in his essays. These essays provided insightful commentary on commercial states, serving as a contrast to his examination of ancient politics. Moritz Baumstark, 'David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian. A Reconsideration' (PhD Thesis, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2008).

[2] David Hume, *The History of England*, Vol.2 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012), 523.

[3] Danielle Charette and Max Skjönsberg, 'State of the Field: The History of Political Thought'. *History (London)* 105, no. 366 (2020): 470–83; Gary Browning, 'Quentin Skinner, the Cambridge School, and Contextualism', in *A History of Modern Political Thought: The Question of Interpretation*, edited by Gary Browning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

stance to dismiss all arguments for theoretical coherence as "myths". As I will show we can identify a sustained attempt to explore the nature of the commercial state that runs across all of David Hume's writings.

Skinner's approach underscores the significance of context in understanding the concerns of past intellectuals, but his method is better applied to polemical texts. According to Skinner, it is noteworthy that previous works, particularly those dealing with social, ethical, and political themes, are not abstract speculations detached from the issues of their era.[1] Scholars should approach these works with historical sensitivity, endeavoring to unearth the questions these authors sought to address. This approach is invaluable for avoiding anachronisms and gaining a clearer understanding of the author's intentions. It also helps us to see why it is so productive to take seriously the idea that the thinkers under discussion here were informed by and focused on the world as they saw it around them.[2] However, when employing the term "context," Skinner adopts the model of "illocutionary acts" and suggests that the text is often responding to "parochial and temporary" debates, linked to the "more immediate circumstances" or political conflicts.[3] In this light, he risks oversimplifying various types of texts into mere polemic pamphlets or ideological products

[1] It is crucial to contextualize Skinner's approach within the broader framework of the Cambridge intellectual tradition. Charette and Skjönsberg, 'State of the Field: The History of Political Thought', 472-4; Stefan Collini, 'A Place in the Syllabus: Political Science at Cambridge', in Stefan Collini, Donald Winch, and John Burrow ed., *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 341–63; James Alexander, 'The Cambridge School, c.1875-c.1975'. *History of Political Thought* 37, no. 2 (2016): 360–86; Mark Goldie, 'The Context of The Foundations', in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3-5.

[2] Skinner's primary concern lay in the realm of "languages" or "utterance," which he thinks analogues to expressing ideas or what Austin's theory terms as a "locutionary act" in the context of "performative utterance." However, the richness and sophistication within these texts often surpass the straightforward application of linguistic or discursive frameworks, highlighting the multifaceted nature of intellectual and historical analysis. Quentin Skinner, 'Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts', in *Visions of Politics*, Vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 103–27; Peter Steinberger, 'Analysis and History of Political Thought'. *The American Political Science Review* 103, no. 1 (2009): 138-9.

[3] Skinner appropriated Wittgenstein and Austin's insights to substantiate Collingwood's "logic of question and answer". Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas'. *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 37-40; "Surveying the *Foundations*: A Retrospect and Reassessment", in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 242; 'The Rise of, Challenge to, and Prospects for a Collingwoodian Approach to the History of Political Thought', in Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk ed., *The History of Political Thought in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 175–88.

shaped by specific circumstances without due discrimination.[1]

I contend that when engaging with "Great Books", it is advisable to consider their historical "contexts" from two distinct angles. To begin with, it is instructive to heed Skinner's advice and recognize that classical texts were authored within specific historical epochs, with their authors addressing their own concerns at first.[2] For instance, when Mandeville and Hume penned their works, their focus lay predominantly on the burgeoning commercial states of their own era, rather than those of today. Though some enduring themes such as rivalry among commercial states persist across time, significant historical and intellectual developments over the ensuing centuries (such as the industrial revolution, the expansion of bureaucracy, and the prevalence of anti-colonialism and radical ideologies) have profoundly reshaped both political structures and public mindsets.[3] Hence, it is prudent to approach these texts primarily as responses to the questions and issues of the eighteenth century, rather than as a panacea to the dilemma of our era. By doing so, one can sidestep the risk of anachronism, a pitfall that Hont appears susceptible to by assuming that his examination of commerce can directly inform modern thought.[4]

Apart from the broad historical condition underlined by Skinner, the intellectual debates can also be substantiated as the "context" to grasp the questions they addressed. Not all texts serve as polemical pamphlets; rather, some are authored by exceptional minds who offer systematic reflections on critical questions with trans-historical or timeless significance,

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[1] Tim Beaumont, 'A Perennial Illusion? Wittgenstein, Quentin Skinner's Contextualism and the Possibility of Refuting Past Philosophers'. *Philosophical Investigations* 41, no. 3 (2018): 304–28; Yves Zarka, 'The Ideology of Context: Uses and Abuses of Context in the Historiography of Philosophy'. *Rivista Di Storia Della Filosofia* 58, no. 2 (2003): 149.

[2] I partially agree with Skinner's assertion that "classic texts cannot be concerned with our questions and answers, but only with their own." It is essential to recognize that these texts were originally composed to address the concerns of their own. However, Skinner overstates the case by excluding all possible connections these canonical texts may have with our questions. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', 50.

[3] The great minds in the past are attractive, because we share certain concerns with them. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 4-6, 156; Sagar, 'Smith and Rousseau, after Hume and Mandeville', 50-51.

[4] Harris, 'Istvan Hont, Politics in Commercial Society: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith', 160-1.

such as human nature, politics, and morality. When composing these texts, the writers grapple with abstract and enduring questions, aiming to defend what they perceive as truth against their intellectual adversaries, rather than solely reacting to immediate political events. Skinner's method may be invalid in recovering the intentions of these theorists, because the interpretive possibilities of these texts extend far beyond the historical context defined by political conflicts of their own time. As a reply, I suggest that it is more reasonable to identify the intellectual debates with which the authors engaged as proper "contexts" for understanding these "Great Books". These authors frequently reference the texts they directly respond to in various ways, and taking these clues brings us to the center of the theoretical battleground.[1]

3. Jealousy of Trade and the Limits of Republicanism

Returning to the work of Istvan Hont, we are now in a position to explore his discussion of the eighteenth-century neo-Machiavellian theorists who attempted to integrate commerce into the framework of Renaissance theory known as "reason of state," allowing them to portray competitive nature of the commercial state as the focus.[2] As I will demonstrate, Hont is justified in emphasizing the relevance of the power of the state in a commercial era. However, he does not sufficiently explore the moral implications associated with the rise of commerce, a topic that posed challenges to their republican framework.[3] Mandeville and Hume are pivotal figures as they both express concerns to the power of the commercial state while also engaging with the moral dimension. Their frameworks offer greater coherence for analyzing the modern commercial state.

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[1] Skinner's approach becomes less clear when he grapples with perennial philosophical questions. He later concedes that he has no intention to deny the existence of perennial questions when sufficiently abstractly framed. However, he explicitly claims that "there simply are no perennial problems in philosophy: there are only individual answers to individual questions", and his 1969 essay was initially titled "The Unimportance of the Great Texts in the History of Political Thought". Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', 38, 49-51; Skinner, "A Reply to My Critics", in J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 231–288.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 9-10.

[3] John Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition', in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* edited by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 137–78.

3.1 "Jealousy of Trade" and the Power of the Modern Commercial State

In the first section, I will examine Hont's attempt to understand modern politics through the concept of the "jealousy of trade." This concept, derived from the Renaissance theory of "reason of state," brings commerce into the study of the competition among states. One of Hont's aims in introducing the concept "jealousy of trade" is to transcend traditional divides between realism and liberalism, offering a more nuanced perspective on the relationship among modern states engaged in global trade. Coined by Hume as a variation of Hobbes's "jealousy of state", this term "jealousy of trade" serves as an analytical tool for understanding rivalries among commercial states.[1] Traditional approaches in political philosophy tend to prioritize either military competition or commerce, resulting in a divide between realism and liberalism. However, Hont argues that this dichotomy overlooks the complexity of reality in the realm of political economy, where the interplay between commerce and politics is often asymmetrical, with political conflicts exerting a more significant influence than trade based on reciprocal principles. As he maintains, trade wars have emerged as a novel form of competition among different states. Even in the absence of armed conflicts, states engaged in international trade keep a vigilant posture to their commercial competitors, with the specter of war shaping their decisions and actions. Hence, the world becomes a stage for the ceaseless contention of states through political economy.[2] In this light, the concept "jealousy of trade" better illuminates the complexity of political economy, and suggests a more nuanced comprehension of conflict in various forms among modern commercial state.[3]

To align with previous intellectual traditions, Hont invokes the concept of "reason of state" to bolster his emphasis on the competition among modern commercial states. When drawing inspiration from the natural law tradition to explicate individualism, property rights, and

[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 1-2, 8.
[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 6-7.
[3] Hont contends that contemporary discussions on international trade are constrained by frameworks established three hundred years ago, lacking genuinely compelling ideas for moving beyond them. In contrast, Hont's exploration of "jealousy of trade" illuminates the intricate interplay between politics and the economy, which he considers its "natural home." Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 6-7, 265-6.

liberty in domestic commercial society, previous political theorists often overlook the intense interstate competition among the commercial states.[1] In contrast, the theory of "reason of state", inherited from Renaissance thinkers, underscores the imperative of safeguarding the state against external threats. It allows for emergent actions without strict adherence to legal and moral constraints, providing a framework for understanding the complexities of state behavior in the context of interstate competition.[2]

As "reason of state" does not adequately emphasize commerce, Hont advocates revisiting neo-Machiavellianism. This framework represents a stage where traditional concepts of reason of state grapple with the emergence of commerce, thereby enhancing our comprehension of modern commercial state. He dedicates his attention to Charles Davenant, a late seventeenth-century republican theorist, who integrated "an element of a theory of right" into the Machiavellian foundation.[3] According to Hont, Charles Davenant recognized the benefits of wealth and commercial prosperity for the public interest and self-preservation of the state, but he also voiced concerns about the potential moral decay resulting from excessive luxury. Davenant was alleged to warn that the "insalubrious features of emergent commercial society" could breed vice and effeminacy, ultimately threatening the state's ability to defend itself. [4]

[1] Hont confronts the prevailing scholarly perspective that predominantly attributes the origins of political economy to the political theories of the 'natural' jurists, while disregarding humanism or Renaissance republicanism as "premodern" or even "antimodern". He finds this approach insufficient for grasping modern politics, and turns to emphasize that the enduring competition between the state and commerce continues to be significant in contemporary times. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 9-10, 13.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 11, 16.

[3] In the second chapter of *Jealousy of Trade*, entitled "Free Trade and the Economic Limits to National Politics," Hont centers his attention on Charles Davenant as the central figure under investigation. Hont also delves into the works of James Harrington, who emerged as an intellectual adversary to Hobbes and embodied Machiavelli's inclination towards the politics of growth rather than preservation. Cheney provides a critique of Hont's analysis from a different perspective, arguing that Hont's interpretation modernizes the theories of thinkers like Davenant to facilitate their relevance in engaging with later figures such as Hume, Ricardo, and ultimately twentieth-century advocates of flexible specialization. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 18, 185-266, esp. 201-3; Paul Cheney, 'István Hont, the Cosmopolitan Theory of Commercial Globalization, and Twenty-First-Century Capitalism'. *Modern Intellectual History* 19, no. 3 (2022): 883–902.

[4] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 10, 203, 206-7.

The ambivalence within Davenant's intellectual framework epitomizes the tension faced by neo-Machiavellianism in reconciling republican principles with the demands of commercial prosperity. For example, Hont's Davenant advocated for cultivating the virtues of frugality while also endorsing "the ability to 'live with necessity'". This flexibility resonated with the concept of "modern prudence" and Machiavelli's doctrine of rejecting moral absolutism upheld by ancient and Christian theorists.[1] Trade was thereby viewed as a necessity but still "at odds with the best life," while simplicity remained esteemed as a virtue.[2] But in contrast to the Renaissance era, where state exigencies were considered exceptional, the rivalry among commercial states infiltrated domestic society through trade, becoming so ordinary and so integral to the new way of life as to pose a threat to republican ideals. The moral reservations among neo-Machiavellians about commerce, rooted in a republican heritage, proved a hindrance to a comprehensive understanding of the emerging commercial states. John Pocock's examination of early modern political discourses reveals that neo-Machiavellianism experienced a decline, transitioning into a quarrelsome "opposition thought" or "nostalgia". This trajectory suggests that the principles of civic republicanism were inadequate for providing a holistic analysis of the modern commercial state.[3]

Pocock's analysis of republican discourse in the eighteenth-century British debates helps set the scene for the central thesis of this project. Pocock argues that civic republicanism is an

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[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 209-211.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 207-9.

[3] Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition', 137–78; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 401-506, esp. 488, 505-6. Hont appreciates Pocock's examination of Machiavellianism, but their analyses diverge notably. While Pocock only proves republicanism as a diminishing discourse post-revival, Hont aims to uncover enduring insights from the Renaissance era that remain relevant today. Hont emphasizes that the "strategic aim" of his book is not to merely replicate recent discussions on the moral tension between Renaissance republicanism and commercial modernity, but aims to demonstrate that these ideologies also generated significant political synergies, particularly between the republican ideal of national grandeur and modern global market politics. Despite this assertion, his citations indicate that he does not fully address the moral tension notified by Pocock and offer a viable alternative to neo-Machiavellianism. As a result, Hont's explanations of the "jealousy of trade" fail to clarify the nature of these "synergies". Hence, it is imperative to uncover the primary concerns underlying republican analysis and examine how they are addressed within the context of a commercial era. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 10n.13, 11, 58n.122; Bela Kapossy *et al*., 'Introduction', in *Markets, Morals, Politics: Jealousy of Trade and the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 10-12.

often-overlooked tradition, pivotal to the political debates between the Country and the Court factions. The former championed virtue and civic life within an agricultural republic, emphasizing ideals such as virtuous citizen soldiers and landed property, while the latter favored increased national wealth and a professional army despite the dangers of moral corruption.[1] Nevertheless, Pocock recognized that these factions "were in symbiosis rather than in opposition", and represented "a common experience of *a new politics and economics*" (italic as my emphasis) that left them "aware that change was going on in both the material and the moral world".[2] Both factions recognized the profound changes occurring in politics and economics, and this necessitated a reevaluation of their moral frameworks. Their adherence to a heritage rooted in classical antiquity, characterized by land ownership and citizen-warriors, became obsolete in a rapidly shifting landscape marked by movable property, credit, and strong government.[3] Duncan Forbes argues that Pocock's research reveals civic republicanism as a recessive rather than dominant intellectual tradition in the eighteenth century, explaining how it gradually faded from public consciousness.[4]

So far, we have established that neo-Machiavellianism, focusing on frugality, fell short in adapting to evolving political and economic challenges. While Hont's proposal to revisit "reason of state" offers insights, focusing solely on eighteenth-century neo-Machiavellianism as a way of thinking about these issues is limiting. Instead, this study aims to explore how eighteenth-century thinkers addressed and grappled with these challenges within their own intellectual frameworks. Rather than trying to trace a continuity of thought

[1] Pocock's analysis offers a historical context that excludes figures like natural lawyers such as Locke, instead emphasizing civic republicanism as a central ideological framework in these discussions. Great thinkers like Hume, Smith, and Rousseau are also being reassessed through the lens of civic republicanism. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 424-7, 486-505.

[2] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 449-50, 486-505.

[3] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 446, 449-50, 486.

[4] Duncan Forbes, 'J. G. A. Pocock, "The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition" (Book Review)'. *The Historical Journal* 19, no. 2 (1976): 553–55. Sonenscher demonstrates that even if we acknowledge the survival of republicanism into the nineteenth century, it underwent significant changes and lacked intellectual continuity, because its continuity is rather formal than substantive. Michael Sonenscher, 'Liberty, Autonomy, and Republican Historiography', in *Markets, Morals, Politics*, 173-184.

that gradually fails to answer the pressing question of the time, this investigation seeks to uncover deeper transformations in their ideas regarding "reason of state". By examining the thinking of Mandeville and Hume we can see how their responses to shifting political and economic realities provides an alternative to the failing neo-Machiavellian and republican discourses.

3.2 The Power of the State in the Era of "New Politics and Economics"

In the preceding section, we saw that 18th-century neo-Machiavellian thinkers recognized the necessity of adapting the concept of "reason of state" to the challenges of the commercial era but that their conceptual framework proved inadequate for theorizing the transformed world of commerce. This section illustrates how their collective focus on adapting to political realities and embracing commercial prosperity converged in their shared goal of bolstering state power for self-defense and the public good. The escalating costs of warfare demanded a fresh approach to enhancing state military capabilities. Contrary to Hont's analysis, I argue that rather than the neo-Machiavellian theorists we should look to the works of Mandeville and Hume if we are to find a successful intellectual response to thinking about the new politics and economics. These thinkers explore the issue of the power of the state in a commercial age, shedding light on the limitations of republicanism, and offering an alternative way of thinking that more successfully responds to the realities of the time.

As Hont observes, the acceptance of commercial prosperity by neo-Machiavellian theorists was driven by the mounting expenses of war. Advances in military technology and logistics had heightened the efficacy of warfare while simultaneously increasing its costs. States lacking sufficient resources to sustain their military prowess would not only suffer from a loss of international influence but also face the risk of political collapse and foreign conquest. Consequently, political leaders came to recognize that strategies for public security were

intricately linked to financial considerations.[1] Faced with the financial burdens of warfare, modern states found traditional revenue sources inadequate and were compelled to seek alternative ways of seeking the surplus which proved the linchpin of a robust financial framework upon which military prowess were built.

A perceivable consequence of this shift was the emergence of new influential actors on the global stage. The survival and prosperity of modern states became contingent upon their ability to secure greater profits in the international market, often achieved by reducing the prices of goods to capture a larger market share. Recognizing the strategic significance of active participation in economic ventures, large territorial states in Europe moved away from ceding control of international trade to smaller maritime republics and engaged directly in global trade. It followed that they ascended to prominent positions on the world stage. This transformation epitomized the dynamic interplay between politics and economics that defined the evolving landscape of the time.[2]

The dominance of profit-driven trade in the international market underscores two reasons why it was necessary to overhaul the framework of "reason of state", rather than attempt a mere incorporation of trade into the existing structure. Firstly, the growing importance of economic factors expanded the concept of "the reason of state" well beyond its initial boundaries. Originally rooted in the imperative of patriotic self-defense during periods of dire military necessity, the concept of "the reason of state" evolved in the commercial era to incorporate the pursuit of profit from global trade. According to Machiavelli, rulers were

[1] In the 1770s, de Pinto considered financial calculations to be the most crucial element in the entire "science of government" (science politique), which in turn determined all other aspects. This perspective is illustrated by the decline of the Netherlands. See Hamish Scott, 'The Fiscal-Military State and International Rivalry during the Long Eighteenth Century', in *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Essays in Honour of P. G. M. Dickson*, ed. Christopher Storrs (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 26, 29, 33-40.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 185-6. Charles Tilly, 'Cities and States in Europe, 1000-1800'. *Theory and Society* 18, no. 5 (1989): 563–84. For analysis of the Dutch Republic, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy 1600-1750*, Vol. II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). Marjolein Hart, 'Cities and State-making in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1680'. *Theory and Society* 18, no. 5 (1989): 663–87.

compelled to pursue the national security at first, then expand to the broader well-being of the community, eventually extending to the pursuit of grandeur through territorial expansion.[1] As prosperity and wealth gained greater influence, so Hont argues, the focus further expanded from its own territory to the accumulation of wealth in global trade, and considerations such as long-distance trade and overseas colonization became integral aspects of eighteenth-century politics.[2] Therefore, the power of the state relied more on its success in global trade than on military virtue, and this meant that military strength and virtue had to be redefined.[3]

Secondly, as international trade gained momentum, its impact was twofold: it not only reshaped the fabric of daily life, but also triggered a reevaluation of societal norms and values. The allure of wealth and convenience, catalyzed by commerce, enticed individuals to embrace opulence, prompting a departure from traditional sumptuary laws and the moral ideals of frugality. Furthermore, the role of citizen-warriors, once essential to national defense, became obsolete in the face of evolving circumstances. As a result, the transition from a self-contained, simplistic existence to the promotion of a surplus economy necessitated the establishment of a new value system. This shift compelled a thorough reassessment of social structure and moral codes to navigate the evolving landscape shaped by the formidable forces of international trade and economic prosperity.[4]

In response to Hont's focus on neo-Machiavellian thinkers and their attempts to navigate these issues, this project argues that a closer examination of the works of Mandeville and Hume reveals that they are wrestling with the same problems in a fashion that proved more coherent and more successful. While Hont mentions both Mandeville and Hume, his work does not provide us with a detailed examination of their role in the development of

[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 16-17.
[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 17, 213.
[3] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 187.
[4] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 212.

eighteenth-century thinking about these matters. I argue that in addressing the neo-Machiavellian concern about the power of the state that depends on commercial prosperity, Mandeville overcomes the incoherence in their framework by integrating a new moral psychology. He underscores that commercial success relies on evil impulses of human nature, such as selfishness and pride, which can only be redirected but cannot be eradicated through social mechanisms. Central to Mandeville's theory is the notion of sociableness, wherein individuals are obliged to adhere to social norms to receive validation from others while satisfying their own desires. His renowned motto, "private vices, public benefits," succinctly encapsulates the essence of his acute observations on modern commercial state.

Building upon Mandeville's thesis, Hume offers insights into the mechanisms of the modern commercial state through a comparative analysis with ancient nations, and advocates for a reevaluation of the notion of the good life in the context of modern commercial states. While republican ideals like intrepidity and frugality were suitable for ancient republics, Hume argues that they are not decisive factors in the modern era.[1] Contrary to the belief that abandoning such virtues would weaken military strength, Hume asserts that the power of the state in modern times is closely related to military discipline and training than to the extraordinary virtues. This underscores the importance of commercial prosperity over moral simplicity. Therefore, Hume indicates a new framework to conceive the good life and politics in this changed context. His shorthand for this is the "indissoluble chain…[linking] industry, knowledge, and humanity".[2]

To summarize, while Hont's reevaluation of "jealousy of trade" offers valuable insights into

[1] This comment echos Rousseau's comment on the Genevans, "you are neither Romans, nor Spartans; you are not even Athenians. Leave aside these great names that do not suit you. You are Merchants, Artisans, Bourgeois, always occupied with their private interests, with their work, with their trafficking, with their gain; people for whom even liberty is only a means for acquiring without obstacle and for possessing in safety". Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to Beaumont, Letters Written from the Mountain, and Related Writings*. tr. by Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001), 292-3.

[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in Hume, *Essays*, 268, 271.

the interplay between commerce and the state, his heavy reliance on neo-Machiavellianism in the eighteenth century is flawed and perhaps reflects the intellectual fashions of time at which he was developing his thinking. Hont rightly underscores the importance of an adaptation to political reality in a commercial era and leveraging commercial prosperity to strengthen state power. However, he fails to fully address the substantial challenges that commerce presents to traditional ideals, and also overlooks interconnected issues such as property rights, political authority, and moral principles in a new context. In this thesis, I maintain that if we are to understand the development of thinking about the modern commercial state, attention should be directed to the works of Mandeville and Hume rather than towards the failed attempts of the neo-Machiavellian thinkers. Mandeville and Hume argue for the pivotal role of international trade and a thriving commercial society in enhancing political power, as a response to neo-Machiavellian concerns. Moreover, they overcome the limitations of republican morality and offer a new framework for evaluating governmental authority and domestic life suited to the realities of the commercial state.

4. Revisiting Commercial Sociability

This part delves into Hont’s exploration of "commercial sociability," which defines human nature within the context of a commercial era and forms the cornerstone of analyzing the modern commercial state. While I admire Hont's efforts to illuminate eighteenth-century theorists and reconstruct their theoretical frameworks with reference to Hobbes's binary of "unsocial sociability" and "sovereign state", I disagree with his assertion that commercial sociability, with its emphasis on utility and physical needs, can adequately explain modern commercial states. In my view, Hont’s perspective risks underestimating the complexities of human nature and thereby obscuring the indispensability of government authority in understanding public order. I posit that a well-founded comprehension of the modern commercial state must be based on an accurate reevaluation of human nature, particularly recognizing the destructive passions inherent in human nature. It is within this framework that Hume crafts an alternative theory.

To illustrate this point, this part will be divided into two sections. The first examines the discussion of "commercial sociability" in Hont's account of Pufendorf, where this is understood as the interpersonal social bonds in a commercial era. Hont explores how Pufendorf revises Hobbes's theory of the state of nature, which overemphasizes pride, by stressing utility-seeking and commercial reciprocity, thus forming the theoretical foundation of the modern commercial state. The second part delves into Hont's interpretation of Pufendorf's theory of public order that focuses on "cultura" and demonstrates why Hont's Pufendorf fails to provide a comprehensive alternative to Hobbes's theory in theorizing modern commercial state. This part concludes with a brief discussion of Hume's contribution to clarifying the indispensability of government authority based on his understanding of human nature.

4.1 Commercial Sociability as a Revision to Hobbes

As illustrated in Part 1, Hont introduces the term "commercial sociability," derived from Adam Smith's concept of "commercial society" – the culmination of Smith's social development theory – to capture the moral psychology of modern commercial societies. To fully grasp this concept, Hont advocates for contextualizing it within a wide range of discussions on human nature across various fields including theology, natural jurisprudence, and anthropology during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Hont, Thomas Hobbes emerges as a central figure in these discussions, and subsequent theorists embarked on a reevaluation of Hobbes's framework. They sought to integrate the element of commerce into his theory of the state, aiming to formulate alternative understandings of the modern commercial state. In this section, I will cast light on Hont's rationale for interpreting political thinkers through the prism of Hobbes.

Hont positions the eighteenth-century theorists as seeking to theorize public order in a commercial era by navigating between two intellectual extremes represented by Aristotle and Hobbes. As far as Hont is concerned, Aristotle's philosophy suggests that human beings are by nature political animals (*zoon politikon*), which underlines that friendship and a sense

of attachment among individuals lead to a political order characterized by "concord."[1] Hobbes poses a challenge to this view, advocating for the passion of pride and desire of recognition from others which he thinks are ingrained in human nature. According to the English philosopher, individuals choose to live with others to gain recognition and compliments from their companions, implying that human beings are naturally inclined towards conflict, resulting in a state of "war of all against all". To tackle this dilemma, Hobbes considers it necessary to establish a supreme power capable of instilling fear and curbing the passion of pride, thereby laying the foundation for a public order characterized by "union."[2] Thus, Aristotle and Hobbes represent two ends of the spectrum: Aristotle advocates for "natural sociability" and "concord", while Hobbes espouses "unsocial sociability" and "union."

For early modern theorists in western Europe, as Hont explains, Hobbes's description holds greater credibility. Hont's focus on commerce as the cornerstone of modern politics leads him to view Hobbes as a "borderline case," or more precisely, the last of the "post-Renaissance" or "new humanist" theorists of politics due to Hobbes's acceptance of a regulated economy. Genuine "modern" political philosophers, as Hont argues, should direct

[1] It is crucial to approach the interpretations with care. In fact, Aristotle's position is more intricate than Hont presents. Aristotle's use of the term "πεφυκός" is ambivalent in Greek, carrying the dual meanings of "by nature" or "by birth." Aristotle adopts the former and incorporates this concept into his teleological framework, emphasizing our inherent disposition for living in a community rather than living alone. However, Aristotle underscores that this natural inclination requires assistance from education and "habituation" (e*thismos*). This carries a political implication, suggesting that those naturally noble should assume the role of rulers. In contrast, Hont is emphatic on natural affiliation and friendship, in alignment with eighteenth-century theorists of natural sociability, influenced by a medieval (mis-)interpretation of Aristotle represented by Thomas Aquinas and his intellectual descendants. As a result, "socialitas" in Latin or "sociability" in English are used to translate Aristotle's "zoon politikon" and weakens the implication of political domination in Aristotle's own words. Jeannine Quillet, "Community, Counsel and Representation", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c. 1450*, ed. John Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 521-538; Wayne Ambler, 'Aristotle on Nature and Politics: The Case of Slavery'. *Political Theory* 15, no. 3 (1987): 390–410; Richard Kraut, 'Nature in Aristotle's Ethics and Politics'. *Social Philosophy and Policy* 24, no. 2 (2007): 199–219; Nicholas Gooding and Kinch Hoekstra, 'Hobbes and Aristotle on the Foundation of Political Science', in *Hobbes's On the Citizen: A Critical Guide,* ed. by Robin Douglass and Johan Olsthoorn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 31–50.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 20-22, 41-44.

their focus directly towards the luxurious commercial society.[1] To properly theorize the commercial state, these thinkers are dedicated to not only revising Hobbes's political theory of the sovereign state by incorporating commercial elements, but also reassessing Hobbes's theory of human nature, given the interconnectedness of these two aspects within Hobbes's system.[2] In essence, to articulate an integrated framework of modern commercial states, distinct from Hobbes's political philosophy of the sovereign states with a regulated economy, they must develop an account of "commercial sociability" that casts light on social bonds in a commercial era as the foundation of modern commercial states, to revise Hobbes's overemphasis on vainglory as the foundation of a sovereign state characterized by regulated economy.[3]

According to Hont, the key to understanding commercial society lies in the satisfaction of physical need, or the pursuit of profit and advantage – a thematic thread that can be traced back to Hobbes's *De Cive*.[4] In his early work, *De Cive*, Hobbes argued that maintaining a large-scale society depends not only on fear as a counterbalance to pride but also on need (*indigentia*), which in turn facilitates the pursuit of profit (*utile*) and advantage (*commodium*). The eighteenth-century thinkers, categorized as theorists of commercial sociability by Hont, embraced and developed Hobbes's early view of human nature, claiming that commercial society is driven by extensive interactions aimed at the satisfaction of insatiable and varied needs, rather than wishful natural affiliations or recognition from others.[5] Hont views

[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 10, 17-21; Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, 6-8.

[2] Hont's approach draws inspiration from Kant's deliberate oxymoron of "unsocial sociability" (ungesellige Geselligkeit). This concept allows Hont to position key theorists, spanning from Hobbes to Marx, on a spectrum where they provide different answers to a common question. Hont further emphasizes that "what Smith described as commercial society is what Kant called unsocial sociability", and this identifies the "interaction between utility and amour-propre as the putative stabilizing factor of modern commercial societies". See Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 42ff, 137, 142; *Politics in a Commercial Society*, 13; Hont, "Commercial Society and Political Theory in the 18th Century", 54-94.

[3] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 161-3.

[4] Hont traces the intellectual connection as follows: Pufendorf "reconstruct[s] Grotius's jurisprudence by applying the intellectual method of Thomas Hobbes," resulting in "a new concept of sociability". This concept plays such a key part in Adam Smith's theory of commercial society that Smith considers the 'Age of Commerce' to be "the decisive fourth stage in human history." In constructing this model, Pufendorf "returned directly to the ideas of *De Cive*." See Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 159-160, 173.

[5] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 162-3.

Pufendorf as an exemplary figure to them. The German philosopher is claimed to creatively redefine Hobbes's state of nature to underscore physical needs, rather than pride or vainglory underlined by Hobbes himself, as the primary factor to explain social bonds in a commercial era.[1] I will explore Hont's elucidation in detail as follows.

Hont views Pufendorf's reformulation of Hobbes's theory of the "state of nature" as a pivotal step toward establishing a theory of "commercial sociability." Hont's Pufendorf views the "state of nature" as a hypothetical and analytical tool to delineate a fundamental aspect of human nature: the inherent disparities between needs and the means to fulfill them, emphasizing the impetus for unity-seeking as the essence of commercial sociability.[2] Central to Hont's interpretation is Pufendorf's incorporation of utility-seeking or satisfaction of physical needs in commercial reciprocity to address Hobbes's concept of "the state of nature."[3] Unlike Hobbes, who highlights recognition from companions as the primary motivation for joining a society, Pufendorf underscores the challenge of satisfying physical needs. While animals are fully equipped for self-preservation, human beings are not. Apart from lacking ability, human beings are troubled by their insatiable and varied needs.[4] In the absence of society, individuals are left "indigent and free", which means that people enjoy natural liberty but lack material goods. Hence, it is a necessity to foster mutual cooperation to acquire material goods and develop industry, and the satisfaction of physical needs drive individuals to join society. This philosophical anthropology, contrasting human beings with animals to underline physical need, is considered the essence of sociability as advocated by eighteenth-century political theorists.[5]

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[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 159-60.
[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 163-4.
[3] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 5, 160-1.
[4] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 167, 169-170.
[5] Hont maintains that Hobbes's "state of nature" is a perpetual war, an antithesis of civitas or the political community, while for Pufendorf, it is a status where individuals live in a "poor but liberal" way without mutual help or reciprocity, as opposed to "*cultura*" or "industry" where they cooperate to satisfy mutual needs. Hont observes that Smith stands with Pufendorf in this respect. Smith acknowledges that humans possess abilities "far superior to that which she (i.e., nature) bestowed on any other animals," yet they are simultaneously in a more helpless and destitute condition concerning the support and comfort of their lives. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 159-161.

To summarize, the theory of "commercial sociability" serves as a middle ground between two extremes: Aristotle's notion of "natural sociability" and Hobbes's idea of "unsocial sociability." Hont observes that Pufendorf's revisions of Hobbes's "unsocial sociability" better serves us in understanding the foundation of public order in a commercial era, but this analysis also prompts questions about the type of state theory that emerges from this revision. In the following section, I will probe into Hont's interpretations of Pufendorf, aiming to show why Hont's depiction of Pufendorf's reevaluations and alterations of Hobbes's binary notions – "unsocial sociability" and sovereign states – falls short of providing a new approach to theorizing modern commercial state.

4.2 Commercial Sociability and the Intractable State[1]

Having examined Hont's elucidation of Pufendorf's theory of the state of nature, it remains to be seen what theory of state it implies. Since Hont's Hobbes presents two interconnected notions—"unsocial sociability" and the sovereign state—a revision of the former necessitates a relevant reinterpretation of the latter. As we will see, Hont's attempt to theorize commercial sociability through his interpretation of Pufendorf undermines his own proposal for understanding the modern commercial state. I suggest that a more effective approach to achieving this goal is to follow Hume, who explains the indispensability of the modern state by addressing the inherent weaknesses of human nature.

[1] Hont's departure from his more familiar territory of Karl Marx in favor of referencing Adam Smith serves a specific purpose: to iron out ideological wrinkles imposed on "capitalism" and "bourgeois society" by the Marxist intellectual tradition. Paul Cheney, however, offers a critical interpretation of this maneuver. He believes that Hont's endeavor represents an attempt to "retreat from" and "bury" Marx, thereby aligning more closely with Hume's "cosmopolitan theory of commercial globalization." Cherry thinks that this alignment overlooks the widening gap between affluent and impoverished nations in the realm of international trade. However, Cheney may underestimate the nuances differentiating Hume and Hont. In addition, my concern in this project is more theoretical. Despite Hont's endeavor to disassociate from Marxist economic determinism, it is essential to recognize that Karl Marx sets the scene for Hont's probing into Pufendorf and Scottish Enlightenment, and Miller summarizes Hont's concern as "Pufendorf- Marx" axis. Cheney, "István Hont, the Cosmopolitan Theory of Commercial Globalization, and Twenty-First-Century Capitalism", 883-911; Peter Miller, 'Marx and Material Culture: Istvan Hont and the History of Scholarship'. in Kapossy et al. ed., *Markets, Morals, Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 23-52.

As discussed above, Hont contextualizes the concept of "commercial sociability" within an intellectual tradition heavily influenced by Hobbes. Hobbes's theory was considered to portray the seventeenth-century European monarchies with regulated economies, but this framework was deemed inadequate for theorizing the eighteenth-century commercial state. The theorists of the following generation sought to renovate Hobbes's intellectual system, replacing his "unsocial sociability" with a theory of "commercial sociability." This new theory emphasized utility-seeking, luxury, and refined social norms as the cornerstones of modern commercial states. Hont views Pufendorf as a pioneering theorist dedicated to this task.

To distance Pufendorf from Hobbes and elevate the former as a theorist of commercial sociability, Hont underlines that Pufendorf not only revises Hobbes's state of nature but also emphasizes the concept of "cultura", which is synonymous with politeness, good breeding, and mutual interaction. Contrary to Hobbes's belief that "only a contractual artifact——the political power of the state" can restrain the "destructive and antisocial traits of human nature" and guarantee individual self-preservation, Hont's Pufendorf emphasizes commercial sociability and "cultura".[1] The concept of commercial sociability underscores utility-seeking and commercial bonds in industry and productive activities, suggesting that modern commercial society fosters a mindset that balances self-love with concern for others in commercial interactions. This line of reasoning goes hand in hand with Hont's discussion of "cultura", since Hont's Pufendorf thinks that the destructive tendencies in human nature can be mitigated by "cultura," and implies that the change lies in "the sheer extent of cultura" rather than "its psychological underpinnings."[2]

[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 169.
[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 175, 180.

Furthermore, Hont associates "cultura" with "society", arguing that the latter should be theoretically dissociated from the "state." According to Hont, the society outlines the development of living standards and should take a central role in the theoretical framework. In this light, commercial sociability corresponds to "societas" rather than "civitas."[1] While acknowledging that Hobbes's suggestion was correct "in most historical cases", Hont contends that a civilized standard of living and the presence of government are "not a necessary connection", so the society should be regarded as "an organizational form independent of the *civitas*," and the theory of society and the theory of the state must be "separated even more sharply."[2] To cite Hont's own words, the interpersonal obligations in social life "had their own separate foundation in men's sociability rather than in state power founded upon contract."[3] This assertion relegates the state to a peripheral role and weakens the relationship between human nature and state authority.

From this reasoning, we can understand better why Hont's attempt to elevate Pufendorf as a theorist of commercial sociability and "cultura" leads to a predicament in theorizing the commercial state. Through a creative revision of Hobbes's state of nature, Hont's Pufendorf implies that human beings "were able to form society and to acknowledge plain obligations without making a contract". Instead of providing a new theory of the state, Hont's Pufendorf eliminates the "generic link" between the state of nature and political government, and ultimately fails to establish a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the commercial state.[4]

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[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 173-4.

[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 182-3, italic as my emphasis. A misunderstanding in Hont's interpretation becomes evident when examining the texts Hont cites from Pufendorf's works. For instance, Pufendorf's statement, "there are many states today which seek the merchandise that satisfies their need or pleasure from outsiders, and which nonetheless do not consider it necessary on that account to coalesce into one state with them", is not a denial of the necessity of the state as Hont implies. Instead, Pufendorf argues that "neediness was by no means the sole or the chief cause of the establishment of state." See Samuel Pufendorf, *On the Law of Nature and of Nations*, VII.1.6.

[3] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 173.

[4] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 171.

Hont's predicament in understanding the commercial state exposes a self-contradiction within his exposition of commercial sociability. Upon examining Pufendorf's analyses, Hont concludes that "commercial sociability," confined to utility-seeking and the fulfillment of physical needs, can only explain "mere society," which is considered a "secondary" order to the sovereign state but "important enough to be theorized in its own right."[1] Consequently, Hont views the state as a preexisting apparatus, placing commercial society under its protection without attempting to understand the state theoretically. This approach explains why Hont bypasses Pufendorf's discussion of the state and focuses solely on "cultura."[2] However, this endeavor contradicts Hont's original proposition, which posits commercial sociability as the fundamental concept upon which the commercial state is founded, serving as an alternative to Hobbes's notion of unsocial sociability that helps explain the public order of the sovereign state. As Hont himself admits, his interpretation of Pufendorf renders the German philosopher's ideas "fragmented" and ultimately concludes in a "failure" to present a viable alternative to Hobbes.[3]

Therefore, Hont's analysis of "commercial sociability" overemphasizes the physical needs and the economic aspect when theorizing social bonds in a commercial era. In response to Hont's interpretation of Pufendorf, who is alleged to deem "cultura" as an effective remedy to the destructive passions in human nature, I propose that we should consider the destructive passions when assessing human nature in a commercial society to elucidate the theoretical

[1] The term "mere society" and "secondary order" are both used by Hont, to focus exclusively on economic relationship among people to satisfy their physical needs. According to Hont, "Pufendorf was willing to identify commercial society with Aristotle's *koinonia,* that is, with 'mere' society." Likewise, he argues that although "Pufendorf accepted that society was secondary in importance to the political state, nonetheless he saw it as important enough to be theorized in its own right". Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 45. A similar comment on Smith, see Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, 8.

[2] Not all Pufendorf scholars agrees with Hont and interpret Pufendorf's views as suggesting the dispensability of the state in a commercial era. Palladini, for instance, challenges the conventional depiction of Pufendorf as an opponent of Hobbes, asserting instead that Pufendorf largely adhered to the core tenets of Hobbesian philosophy. Craig Carr and Michael Seidler. 'Pufendorf, Sociality and the Modern State'. *History of Political Thought* 17, no. 3 (1996): 354–78; Fiammetta Palladini, 'Pufendorf Disciple of Hobbes: The Nature of Man and the State of Nature: The Doctrine of Socialitas'. *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 1 (2008): 26–60.

[3] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 45.

underpinnings of the commercial state.[1] A more favorable approach to achieving this task is to glean insights from David Hume's writings.

As elucidated in the third and fourth chapters, Hume's theoretical framework counters the prevailing Whig principle, rectifying their excessive zeal for liberty that neglects the essential role of government. This paves the way for his philosophical analysis in the final chapter. Hume notes that within the framework of a well-functioning commercial order, natural inclinations such as the preference for short-term utility and partiality towards family and acquaintances often conflict with the obligation of following general rules. Hence, government authority is indispensable to rectify the weaknesses of human nature and ensure widespread compliance with laws, thereby promoting the well-being of its citizens. This goes beyond the mere satisfaction of physiological needs suggested by Hont. Through this analysis, Hume contributes to understanding public order in a commercial era based on an accurate understanding of human nature, and his discussion serves as a cogent response to Hont's endeavor to theorize the modern commercial state.

In summary, while Hont's examination of "commercial sociability" vis-à-vis Hobbes provides valuable insights, it primarily focuses on commercial reciprocity within "mere society" and neglects the governmental institutions indispensable to uphold this society. As a result, although Hont acknowledges the importance of political authority in a commercial era, his analysis of "commercial sociability" falls short of formulating a comprehensive theory of public order. This oversight raises doubts about Hont's assertion that the Pufendorf-Smith axis of "commercial sociability" represents a better alternative to Hobbes's binary

[1] In fact, while addressing the physical needs, Pufendorf never neglects pride and vainglory. As Hont himself admits, Pufendorf notes that despite the initial handicap with which human beings began their lives, they were able to turn the "Infirmity of his Nakedness into an Occasion of Vanity and Pride". The plasticity and diversity of needs and desires can give rise to "competition not only for riches but also for honor", as well as "a restless desire after power". Therefore, it is untenable for Hont to extract the satisfaction of physical needs from Pufendorf's analysis as the foundation of commercial society. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 170.

system for theorizing modern commercial states. Instead, I argue that a more nuanced understanding of government authority necessitates an accurate depiction of human nature, including the recognition of destructive passions as potential threats to public order. It is through this lens that it becomes imperative to revisit Hume's political thought within its proper intellectual context.

5. Hume’s Political Philosophy of Modern Commercial States and the Outline of the Thesis

The third and fourth parts have illuminated both the insights and limitations of two intellectual aspects within Hont’s analysis, and bring to the forefront the benefit of revisiting Hume’s political philosophy. Hume scrutinizes various aspects of the modern commercial state across a range of literary forms, including philosophical treatises, political essays, and historical writings. Among them, his discussions about the power of the state and the moral foundation of political authority in a liberal and civilized society directly engage with Hont’s concerns and warrant further consideration.

For a long time, Hume's significance as a political philosopher has been overshadowed by his contributions to epistemology and moral philosophy. He never authored a definitive monograph that could be hailed as his magnum opus of political philosophy, like Hobbes’s *Leviathan* or Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government*. Instead, his insights into politics can only be gleaned from his moral philosophy, as presented in the third book of *A Treatise on Human Nature* (hereafter referred to as *Treatise*), and *Enquiries concerning Principles of Morals* (hereafter referred to as the *Second Enquiry*).[1]

[1] Richard Hiskes rightly comments that most philosophers "do not spend great amounts of time either with Machiavelli or with Hume’s political philosophy, and political theorists (with some Rawlsian exceptions) largely ignore Hume’s ethics, epistemology, or histories". Hume's significance has often been viewed through the lens of later intellectual movements rather than being assessed on its own merits. For example, Sir Leslie Stephen posits that Hume foreshadows nineteenth-century utilitarianism, while Haakonssen positions Hume as a precursor to Smith's natural jurisprudence. However, Berry contests these approaches by highlighting the multifaceted nature of Hume's analysis. Richard Hiskes, ‘Hume and Machiavelli:

Recent scholarship offers a more nuanced perspective and enriches our understanding of Hume's intellectual legacy, by advocating for an expanded focus on Hume's historical and political essays.[1] However, while this shift in focus is commendable, it often falls short of fully capturing Hume's overarching concerns. Intellectual historians recognize that it is Hume's six-volume historical writings, rather than his philosophical treatises, that garnered him acclaim not only in Britain but also across Europe.[2] This discovery has sparked renewed interest in his historical works.[3] Political theorists, on the other hand, have drawn attention to Hume's *Essays*, which cover a wide array of topics, including the debates of the eighteenth-century politics and political economy. Despite loose organization, these essays reveal Hume's active engagement in political debates and position him as an intellectual precursor to modern political economy and political science.[4] While such efforts are laudable, it is imperative not to merely approach Hume with antiquarian curiosity or view him solely as a precursor to modern social science. Instead, we must recognize and appreciate Hume's intellectual contributions in their own right.

Political Realism and Liberal Thought (Review)'. *Hume Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 181; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. 2* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), 86-7; Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 4-44; Christopher Berry, *David Hume* (New York and London: Continuum, 2009), 57, 109-114.

[1] For instance, Andrew Sabl, *Hume's Politics: Coordination and Crisis in the History of England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Margaret Watkins, *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[2] For Hume's influence on eighteenth-century historiography and politics in the trans-Atlantic world, see Philip Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture: From Clarendon to Hume* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 170-209; Laurence Bongie, *David Hume: Prophet of the Counter-Revolution* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), vii-ix.

[3] For instance, Duncan Forbes, "Introduction", in David Hume, *The History of Great Britain: The Reigns of James I and Charles I*. ed. Duncan Forbes (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 8-9; Frederick Whelan, *Hume and Machiavelli: Political Realism and Liberal Thought* (Oxford; Lexington Books, 2004); Andrew Sabl, *Hume's Politics: Coordination and Crisis in the History of England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Jia Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017).

[4] Neil McArthur, *David Hume's Political Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Carl Wennerlind and Margaret Schabas ed., *David Hume's Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2008); Margaret Watkins, *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

As I will show, a fruitful approach to Hume's political philosophy involves recognizing his keen interest in the emerging commercial state. This thematic focus is central to Hume's intellectual inquiry, encompassing not only his *Treatise* but also his political essays and history.[1] In his historical writings, Hume examines the ascent of the modern commercial state in England amidst the backdrop of the European landscape, while his *Essays* adopt a comparative lens to elucidate the principles of modern politics in contrast to ancient city-states, illustrating the compatibility of public benefit with individual happiness as a hallmark of modern commercial states. This leads us to explore Hume's philosophy of modern commercial states, wherein he argues that government is essential to remedy the destructive passions inherent in human nature, such as partial self-love towards families and acquaintances, and that obedience to political authority is thereby essential to maintain civil liberty.

This project unfolds as follows. The first half comprises the first two chapters, addressing concerns about the power of the commercial state. In the first chapter, I trace Mandeville's critique of Hobbes to explore how Mandeville develops a theory of sociableness, to describe social bonds in a commercial era. This theory helps explain the dilemma for modern commercial states, whose political power is based on moral hypocrisy, encapsulated in his maxim "Private Vices, Public Benefits." In the second chapter, I examine Hume's critical reference to Mandeville. Hume sharpens Mandeville's observations on civilized society through a comparative analysis of ancient and modern politics, and further suggests the possibility of leading a moral life in a commercial era.

[1] Likewise, Donald Livingston suggests that we should view Hume's philosophical works "as of a piece", and interpret his historical works as "the fulfillment of a demand imposed by his conception of philosophy". Forbes also identified intellectual continuity in Hume's career. Although Hume revised his views presented in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, deeming it a failure, Hume was said to sharpen his views to articulate a science of politics "scattered about in essays." Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), x; Donald Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2-8, 272-284; James Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 8-14.

The second half consists of the following three chapters and addresses the moral foundation of the modern commercial state. The third chapter shifts its focus to how Hume presents a deep understanding of the Glorious Revolution, challenging the traditional Whig interpretation, to set the stage for Hume's philosophical speculations about modern commercial states. The fourth chapter focuses on Hume's critique of Locke's political philosophy, which lays the moral foundation of government authority on popular consent. The project concludes with Hume's constructive analysis, which provides a nuanced analysis of human nature to address the indispensability of government and elucidate the obligation of obedience to government authority in modern commercial states.

Ch.1 Mandeville on Power and the Moral Predicament of Modern Commercial States[1]

Bernard Mandeville was one of the most influential theorists in eighteenth-century Europe. His seminal work, *The Fable of the Bees*, though attacked as a subversive defense of vices, irreligion and indulgence, initiated a plethora of analyses by those who followed him.[2] In the past decades, Mandeville is often deemed as a precursor to Adam Smith in the teleological history of economic thought, and the scholarly debates focused on whether his maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits" can be read as a betrayal of Mandeville's identity as a proponent of free-market and laissez-faire principles.[3] Recently, scholars have afforded some remedy for this approach. They are now inclined to interpret Mandeville's work with historical sensitivity, by recovering the intellectual context where his ideas developed and were received.[4] In addition, they are aware that Mandeville casts light on the nature of

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* Some of the material in this chapter is a development of Shuai Zhang, 'Human Nature and Politics of Commercial Society：Mandeville on Sociableness and Commercial State'. *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 5 (2021): 180–207.

[1] References to Mandeville's text are given to Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. Edited by F. B. Kaye. 2 Vol (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1924]1988). Because one of my major interlocuters is Mikko Tolonen, who maintains that there is an obvious intellectual transformation between the two books, I will cite two volumes abbreviated respectively as *Fable I* and *Fable II*.

[2] Most pertinent to our discussion here, Tolonen argues that Mandeville's second volume gave occasion to Hume's discussion of the origin of society in *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 83 and *passim*. For a general view of Mandeville's interpretation and reception, see F. B. Kaye, "Introduction", in *Fable I*, vii-cxlvi.

[3] Jacob Viner, *Studies in the Theory of International Trade* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 99; Jacob Viner, *Essays on the Intellectual History of Economics*, Douglas Irwin ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 184, 338n.7; Eli Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, translated by Mendel Shapiro (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1935), 164, 167, 293, 319; Nathan Rosenberg, 'Mandeville and Laissez-Faire'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24, no. 2 (1963): 183–96; Friedrich Hayek, 'Dr Bernard Mandeville', in *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 249–66; Alfred Chalk, 'Mandeville's Fable of the Bees: A Reappraisal'. *Southern Economic Journal* 33, no. 1 (1966): 1–16; T. W. Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy, 1662-1776* (New York: Blackwell), 1988, 123-6. For a recent commentary, see Tomáš Sedláček, *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011), 183-90. For summaries, see Salim Rashid, 'Mandeville's Fable: Laissez-Faire or Libertinism?' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18, no. 3 (1985): 313–30; Renee Prendergast, 'Bernard Mandeville and the Doctrine of Laissez-Faire'. *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics* 9, no. 1 (March 2016): 101–23, in particular 104-12.

[4] Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Maurice Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Edward J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

commercial society, and explains how its emergence transforms our understanding of politics and morality as a whole, so they treat him as a significant theorist with philosophical values in his own right. This shift in perspective provides us with a better chance to appreciate Mandeville's intellectual contributions.[1]

This chapter examines Mandeville's theoretical contributions, focusing on his seminal work, *The Fable of the Bees*. Mandeville offers a nuanced analysis of the modern commercial state, addressing concerns raised by Hont from two perspectives. On the one hand, Mandeville explores the concept of "sociableness," suggesting that social bonds in any civilized society are driven by pride and the desire for recognition, rather than mere utility-seeking, as indicated in Hont's theory of "commercial sociability." This lays the foundation for Mandeville's emphasis on the indispensable role of government in civilizing people and nurturing their sociable nature.[2] On the other, Mandeville's maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits," responds to Hont's concern about the power of modern commercial states. Mandeville argues that in the face of international competition, a nation with a flourishing commercial society has better chance to enhance its political power by harnessing and manipulating vices such as mutual rivalry, vainglory and hypocrisy. Through this lens, Mandeville illuminates the connection between moral vices and political power in the

[1] For some recent works, see Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume: Anatomists of Civil Society* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013); Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind: Sociability and the Theory of the State from Hobbes to Smith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018),81-93; Daniel J. Kapust, *Flattery and the History of Political Thought: That Glib and Oily Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 132-169; Christiane Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism and the Selfish Hypothesis: Key Debates from Eighteenth-Century British Moral Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 58-85; Samuel Hollander, *A History of Utilitarian Ethics: Studies in Private Motivation and Distributive Justice, 1700-1875* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 47-54. For a recent appraisal at greater length, see Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*. Mandeville's claim can be seen as good textual evidence for them that what he conducts is "a Philosophical Disquisition into the Force of the Passions, and the Nature of Society". Bernard Mandeville, *A Letter to Dion*, edited by Bonamy Dobrée (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1954), 54-55.

[2] As opposed to Hont's views that "the theory of society and the theory of state now had to be separated even more sharply", and that society is thereby "an organizational form independent of the civitas", Mandeville underscores that the "undoubted Basis of all Societies is Government: This Truth, …will furnish us with all the Reasons of Man's Excellency, as to sociableness". Mandeville makes a similar comment that "by Society I understand a Body Politick, in which Man either subdued by Superior Force, or by Persuasion drawn from his Savage State, is become a Disciplin'd Creature". See Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 182-3, comp. Mandeville, *Fable I*, 347; *Fable II*, 184.

context of modern commercial state.

It is noteworthy that these two aspects of Mandeville's thinking have different ranges of application. In *Fable II*, Mandeville explores the concept of "sociableness" to delineate human interactions among the *Beau Monde* in various historical contexts. He contends that this notion applies to civilized nations throughout history, such as "old Greece, the Roman Empire, or the great Eastern Nation."[1] Therefore, Mandeville's theory of sociableness is important for understanding what he says about commerce in modern European states, and it is not confined to them alone. On the other hand, Mandeville's maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits," is specifically tailored to the modern commercial states in western Europe. As he states explicitly at the outset of the *Fable*, the hive metaphor illuminates commercial states in eighteenth-century Europe, particularly focusing on "large, rich, and warlike" nations governed by limited monarchies.[2]

In this chapter, I primarily engage with Mikko Tolonen's research. While I value Tolonen's approach of scrutinizing Mandeville's thought as a modification of Hobbism, I propose an adjustment. I argue that it is more enlightening to directly compare Mandeville to Hobbes's own theory. This approach facilitates a better understanding of how Mandeville diverges from Hobbes's theory of "unsocial sociability" and presents a novel perspective on human nature. Mandeville emphasizes hypocrisy as a fundamental aspect, wherein individuals conceal their pride behind politeness, and this serves as a cornerstone for his analysis of civilized nations. On the other hand, I diverge from Tolonen's interpretation regarding the gap between the two books of *The Fable*. While Tolonen suggests a significant disparity, I argue that *Fable II* refines, rather than negates, the principles established *Fable I*. By viewing *Fable I* and *Fable II* as integral parts of a cohesive whole, we can gain a deeper understanding of the paradox faced by the modern commercial state: its military prowess

[1] *Fable II*, 146-7.
[2] *Fable I*, 6.

must be gained at the cost of moral vices. Mandeville's analysis lays a foundation for approaching Hume's intellectual endeavors explored in the upcoming chapters.

1. Tolonen's Analysis of Mandeville's "Fable"

As noted above, recent research in Mandeville scholarship has focused on his discussion of the nature of commercial society and how its emergence transforms our understanding of politics and morality as a whole. Mikko Tolonen's research is exemplary in this regard. In this part, I will start by elucidating Tolonen's three major arguments: political sociability, Mandeville's intellectual transformation as confirmed by book history, and the evolutionary perspective as an epitome of the transformation in Western intellectual history. I will then explore the advancements we can achieve by using Tolonen's work as a primary focus.

Among the various investigations, Tolonen's examination stands out for three compelling reasons. Firstly, his interpretation provides a good chance to reassess Hont's thesis by delving into the philosophical significance of Mandeville's system. Tolonen argues that Mandeville should be regarded as a theorist of "political sociability" rather than simply "commercial sociability." As Tolonen explains, while both concepts revolve around mechanisms that facilitate social interactions and trade, "political sociability" underscores political elements, particularly the role of government, whereas "commercial sociability" focuses solely on social activities without reference to government.[1] Tolonen's point here is that Mandeville does not overlook political aspects. This observation resonates with Hont's overarching aim to establish a theory of the commercial state, making Tolonen's analysis a valuable perspective to reconsider.

[1] When Tolonen employs the word "commercial sociability", what he has in mind is Christopher Finlay's interpretation of Hume. Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 20, 30-32, 65n.110; comp. Christopher Finlay, 'Hume's Theory of Civil Society', *European Journal of Political Theory* 3 (2004), 371.

Secondly, Tolonen adopts a historical perspective to delve into the publishing history of Mandeville's work, challenging the prevailing view. The authoritative version of *Fable* we read today is based on the 1924 Oxford Edition edited by F. B. Kaye, published in two volumes: *Fable I* and *Fable II*. Each volume comprises a multifaceted collection of research projects. *Fable I*, first published in 1714, includes Mandeville's "Grumbling Hive" verse, accompanied by a series of "Remarks" elucidating its key ideas, along with an associated essay titled *An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*. Initially receiving a lukewarm reception, it gained traction with a second edition in 1723, featuring two additional essays, "An Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools" and "A Search into the Nature of Society," along with significant expansions of the "Remarks."[1] In 1728-29, Mandeville published a new volume in the form of a dialogue, where Cleomenes defended the ideas presented in the initial book against challenges posed by Horatio. Tolonen contends that the decision to combine these two volumes for publication was influenced more by the commercial aspects of the publishing business than by Mandeville's own proposal. According to Tolonen, the true companion volume to *Fable II* is the work from 1732, titled *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*. This reasoning supports his claim that Mandeville initially intended to convey separate and distinct ideas within the second book.[2] In this light the *Fable* we encounter on our desks is not a single work in two volumes, but rather a combination of two distinct books conveying disparate ideas. As such, it may be more appropriate to approach them as separate entities rather than as a unified whole.

[1] It is helpful to mention that a front line can be drawn between the 1714 and 1723 versions. In his book, Robin Douglass provides a detailed explanation. From the length of discussion, the 1723 edition "is nearly twice as long and the two new essays—the 'Search', and 'An Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools'—are each far lengthier than any of the individual essays or 'Remarks' from 1714 edition", while from a philosophical perspective, the 1723 edition is a "considerably richer text than the earlier one (Fable II would prove richer still)". Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable,* 95-96; Ben Dew, 'Spurs to Industry in Bernard Mandeville's Fable of the Bees'. *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005): 151–65; Andrea Branchi, *Pride, Manners, and Morals: Bernard Mandeville's Anatomy of Honour* (Madrid: Brill, 2021), 98.

[2] As Tolonen notes, *The Fable of the Bees* and *Part II* "do not appear to have that much in common apart from the title and the author", and they are "different works and intellectually apart". Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 37-39, 103-46, esp. 116, 133-4, 138; Eugene Heath, 'Mikko Tolonen, Mandeville and Hume: Anatomists of Civil Society. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation (SVEC), 2013'. *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 13, no. 2 (2015): 161.

Tolonen's examination of the book history of *Fable* plays a crucial role in pinpointing Mandeville's intellectual evolution. According to Tolonen, in *Fable I*, Mandeville established his views within the framework of what Tolonen terms "Hobbism", which does not strictly align with Thomas Hobbes's own theory but instead represents a broader theoretical framework incorporating various arguments inspired by Hobbes's work. As this Hobbist theory faced criticism from Anglophone theorists in the 1720s, Mandeville felt compelled to refute this polemical Hobbist account and committed himself to developing an "original social theory" that elucidated the evolutionary aspect of civil society.[1] Tolonen discerns a distinct shift in Mandeville's outlook in *Fable II*, marking an intellectual break from his earlier stance.

Tolonen notes two aspects of intellectual shifts in Mandeville's intellectual journey. Firstly, Tolonen's Mandeville embraces psychological egoism in *Fable I*, arguing that all actions stem from self-love and self-preservation, but transitions in *Fable II* to recognize pride as a passion directed towards others.[2] This shift underscores Mandeville's awareness of the significance of natural affections and the influence of social perceptions on self-conception, culminating in a new theory emphasizing the role of pride in shaping human nature.[3] Secondly, Tolonen notes a change in Mandeville's view of social order. In *Fable I*, Tolonen's Mandeville relies on self-love and fear enforced by political authority for maintaining order, and deems notion of morality as arbitrarily invented by politicians.[4] In *Fable II*, Tolonen contends that these social constructs do not arise from *a priori* reasoning or arbitrary political inventions but evolve gradually, eventually solidifying into established laws. It is the distinction between self-love and self-liking that acts as the basis of justice and politeness respectively.[5] This shift prioritizes evolutionary processes and conventions over the

[1] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 8-13, 41, 68.
[2] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 53.
[3] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 49-53.
[4] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 48-49.
[5] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 12. Stafford depicts this change as one from a "conspiratorial thesis" to an "evolutionary thesis". J. M. Stafford, 'General Introduction', to *Private Vices, Publick Benefits? The Contemporary Reception of Bernard Mandeville*, ed. J. Martin Stafford (Solihull: Ismeron, 1997), xvi.

normative implications underlined by natural lawyers, and reduces reliance on politicians.[1]

Thirdly, Tolonen regards Mandeville's intellectual shift as an epitome of a transformation in the history of Western political thought. In *Fable II*, Mandeville introduces the influence of other-regarding passions, offering not only a novel theory of human nature but also a groundbreaking framework for understanding social order in a commerce-dominated era. This shift signifies a significant departure from traditional approaches and sets the stage for a new era in social thought.[2] At the heart of Mandeville's conception of civil society, according to Tolonen, lies the emphasis on the evolution of conventions. This perspective catalyzed a wave of analyses by subsequent theorists, including David Hume, who delved into the conventions of justice and general rules. Thus, the divergence within the *Fable* symbolizes a paradigm shift in political thought. According to Tolonen, the eighteenth-century political theorists gradually moved away from the traditional framework of natural jurisprudence, such as focus on social contract and sovereignty, and embraced a new paradigm rooted in the concept of commercial society and characterized by an evolutionary approach to social organization. Mandeville's intellectual journey represents a crucial chapter in this transformative period, shaping the trajectory of political theory for the following generations.[3]

Tolonen's research offers valuable insights into Mandeville's work, although I think it risks overstating the intellectual divide in the *Fable*. Two aspects warrant further examination. Firstly, it is essential to note that in *Fable I*, Mandeville already ascribes a significant role to pride. In the *Grumbling Hive*, he emphasizes that it is impossible to maintain social order by

[1] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 24–29, 71, 86.
[2] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 82-3.
[3] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 6-9, 73-77. See also M. M. Goldsmith, 'Regulating Anew the Moral and Political Sentiments of Mankind: Bernard Mandeville and the Scottish Enlightenment'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 4 (1988): 605. Hayek was one of the most influential to emphasize that the evolutionary theory "contributed no less to produce what we call the modern mind", thus marking a turning point in the history of political thought. See F.A. Hayek, 'Dr Bernard Mandeville', 249–66.

force alone, and emphasizes luxury and pride.[1] Without recognizing pride as a socially constructive passion, it would be puzzling why Mandeville suggests that cunning politicians could manipulate through flattery.[2] Thus, it might be inaccurate to label early Mandeville simply as a "Hobbist", and the distinction between self-love and self-liking in *Fable II* requires reevaluation within this context. Secondly, Tolonen underestimates the significance of politicians in *Fable II*. While it is true that Mandeville places greater emphasis on the evolutionary process within *Fable II*, it is crucial to recognize that he does not intend to reduce the role of politicians in law-making and maintaining domestic order by enacting laws. Therefore, it is better to interpret the disparity between *Fable II* and *Fable I* as a shift in emphasis rather than a complete intellectual divergence.

In the upcoming paragraphs, I will address Tolonen's perceived overstatement by reevaluating Mandeville's contributions through the lens of Hobbes's own theory, replacing Tolonen's focus on Hobbism. This approach involves clarifying three key points, which will structure this chapter into three distinct parts. Firstly, to challenge Hobbes's theory of "unsocial sociability," Mandeville posits that the passion of pride does not inevitably lead to mutual jealousy and hostility that menace public order but can manifest in politeness and hypocrisy. Mandeville develops a theory of "sociableness," asserting that socialized individuals are inclined to adhere to societal norms and politeness driven by the desire to receive compliments from their companions and thus satisfy their pride. Hence, Mandeville suggests that pride does not necessarily pose a threat but can contribute to maintaining public order, laying the groundwork for a civilized order. Secondly, while acknowledging Tolonen's attempt to position Mandeville as a theorist of "political sociability" and his emphasis on an evolutionary perspective, I disagree with his assertion that *Fable II* assigns a peripheral place to politicians or lawmakers. On the contrary, Mandeville's emphasis on the evolution of social conventions can coexist with the significance of politicians. They play an active role

[1] *Fable I*, 25, 34-35,42.
[2] In fact, Tolonen has noticed this point, but he does not know how to interpret it. Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 47.

in defending against external threats and maintaining domestic order by enacting laws through civil governance, rather than merely codifying widely accepted conventions retrospectively. Lastly, I will examine Mandeville's maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits," to explore the interconnected political and moral implications of commercial prosperity. He argues that, in the face of international competition, promoting economic prosperity over rigid moral doctrines enhances the power of the state and secures a favorable position in global rivalries.

With these points clarified, we gain a deeper understanding of Mandeville's contribution to theorizing the commercial state. He argues for an economy of abundance and luxury over Hobbes's regulated economy, highlighting the theoretical implications for our understanding of human nature, morality, and the state. Moreover, Mandeville's assertion that international competition necessitates an acceptance of commercial society challenges established moral doctrines, sparking interest among eighteenth-century theorists. This establishes Mandeville as a theorist of the commercial state as proposed by Hont and sets the stage for exploring Hume's response in the next chapter.

2. Mandeville’s "Sociableness" against Hobbes

This part explores Mandeville's theory of human nature in comparison with Hobbes. Tolonen associates Mandeville's work with "Hobbism," which does not strictly align with Thomas Hobbes's own theory but instead represents a broader theoretical framework incorporating various arguments inspired by Hobbes's work. Instead, I advocate for a thorough examination of Mandeville's contribution compared with Hobbes's philosophical framework.[1] Firstly, I will shed light on Hobbes's method, which forms the basis for his

[1] For the purposes of our discussion, it is not essential to determine whether Mandeville's interpretation of Hobbes is entirely accurate, and we should avoid being overly optimistic about Mandeville's charitable reading of Hobbes. In a footnote to Cleomenes's reference to Hobbes, Kaye argues that "Mandeville somewhat misses Hobbes’s real point". However, this does not imply that we cannot glean valuable insights into human nature and social order from it. See *Fable II*, 157.

understanding of human nature, as illustrated by his "state of nature" theory and the necessity of a supreme common power to maintain public order. Secondly, Mandeville offers astute commentary on the concept of pride. While aligning with Hobbes in certain aspects, Mandeville diverges by placing significant emphasis on "sociableness" and accentuating the value of politeness and hypocrisy. His recognition of the significance of pride, evident in *Fable I,* is highlighted in *Fable II*, with a nuanced analysis of self-liking to elucidate his earlier theory. Lastly, Mandeville's analogy between "Vinosity of Wine" and sociableness is examined,[1] alongside an explanation of how his introduction of self-liking in *Fable II* enriches his portrayal of human nature rather than contradicting it.

As I will demonstrate, Mandeville's concept of a "certain fitness" to society emerges as central to understanding human behavior in a civilized society in general, to which commercial society is not an exception. This aspect of human nature manifests as "sociableness," wherein individuals seek the validation of their own superiority through the conformity to social norms. This interplay of pride and hypocrisy, suggesting a satisfaction of their pride in a circuitous way, demonstrates that individuals driven by pride do not necessarily undermine social order as posited by Hobbes. Instead, they aim to exhibit refinement and superiority within the confines of social rules, earning admiration from their peers. This nuanced perspective on Mandeville's theory sheds light on the complexities of human behavior within society and lays the groundwork for an evolutionary understanding that underscores the role of political leadership, as further explored in the third part of this chapter.

2.1 Hobbes's Method and Analysis of Human Nature[2]

I will start by outlining Hobbes's understanding of human nature as proposed in his theory

[1] *Fable II*, 189.

[2] I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Li Meng of the Department of Philosophy at Peking University. His contributions to the field of Hobbes scholarship have not only enriched the academic discourse but have also provided me with a strong and essential foundation for my analysis of Mandeville.

of the "state of nature," along with the establishment of sovereignty as the cornerstone of public order. This discussion will serve as the backdrop for our subsequent analysis of Mandeville.[1] In the preface of *De Cive*, Hobbes sheds light on his method of analysis. Just like dismantling a watch to understand the function of each part and wheel, by dissecting the commonwealth, we can comprehend the nature of humanity—its suitability and unsuitability for constructing a commonwealth.[2] From this argument, we can deduce that human nature, representing "men's natural disposition" or "men considered in mere nature," serves as the "matter" or constituent of the commonwealth, similar to the parts and wheels of a clock.[3]

In Hobbes's lexicon, the term "nature" stands in opposition to "artifice," forming a complementary pair of concepts with "the state of nature" and "sovereign power."[4] To gain a precise sketch of human nature, it is essential to strip away all artificial constructs, achieved through the "dissolution of a Commonwealth" and return to a state of nature. The state of nature represents a condition where man is placed by "mere nature," which exists "outside civil society" or "out of civil states." In this state, the common power that keeps subjects in awe has been dismantled, leaving individuals without any shared authority acting as a public arbitrator. This process of degeneration stands in stark contrast to the attempt to establish a commonwealth through a covenant.[5]

For Hobbes, the state of nature reveals a profound discord within human nature, leading to

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Li Meng, 'The State of Nature as the State of War: Hobbes's Two Arguments on the Reconstruction of Humanity'. *Journal of Yunnan University (Social Sciences Edition)* 13, no. 5 (2014): 3-23; Li Meng, *Natural Society: The Law of Nature and the Formation of Modern Moral World* (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing, 2015).

[1] The version of Hobbes's works will be: *Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) (abbreviated as *Elements*); *On the Citizen*, edited by Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) (abbreviated as *De Cive*); *Leviathan*, edited by E. M. Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1994). Subsequent citations to them will be Book. Paragraph. Italics in quotations are original unless otherwise noted.

[2] *De Cive*, "Preface", 9-10.

[3] *De Cive*, "Preface to the Readers", 9.

[4] *De Cive*, x.3n; *Leviathan*, Introduction.1-2, xvii.1.

[5] *Leviathan*, "The Introduction", 3; xxix.3; *Elements*, xiv.2; *Leviathan*, xiii. 9; xxiv. 8.

a state of war where every individual is pitted against one another. When public authority disintegrates, individuals are left to ensure their own safety with only the resources and ingenuity at their disposal.[1] Hobbes deems this status as one of natural equality, where individuals should acknowledge equality among themselves.[2] However, two distinct threads in Hobbes's argument suggest that stable order cannot prevail in the state of nature. On one hand, individuals possess a desire for precedence and superiority over others, even when they lack the advantage of power. This inclination fosters diffidence and conflicts among individuals.[3] On the other hand, the drive for self-preservation compels individuals to acquire whatever they deem necessary for security, even if it means subjugating others. This perpetual pursuit of power results in a state of war, prompting every individual to adopt "reasonable suspicion," leading to a life that is "isolated, impoverished, harsh, brutish, and short."[4]

Hobbes emphasizes that the state of war arises from human nature and necessitates a counterbalance in the form of fear of death to motivate compliance with agreements and laws.[5] Therefore, Hobbes sees it as imperative to establish a common power capable of inspiring awe and ensuring obedience to laws. This view challenges the common notion that reason and the law of nature alone can free individuals from this dire predicament. Hobbes argues that without the sword to enforce them, covenants are merely words and provide no real security. While he acknowledges reason's role in proposing peaceful resolutions, he asserts that the law of nature must be reinforced by supreme power.[6] Hence, the only solution lies in establishing a common power capable of instilling fear, thereby resolving the issue of reasonable suspicion and curbing their tendency towards mutual distrust, rendering their reliance on their own strength and art futile.[7]

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[1] *De Cive*, “Preface to the Readers”, 10.
[2] *Elements*, xiv. 1-2; *De Cive*, I.3.
[3] *Element*, xiv.2-3; *Leviathan*, xiii.2, xvii.1.
[4] *Leviathan,* xiii.4, xi.2, 34-5, 75; xi.1, xiv. 18, xiii.9.
[5] *De Cive*, 21-24, 29-30; *Leviathan*, xiii. 14, xvii.1-2, 12.
[6] *Leviathan*, xiii. 8, 14, xv. 32-33, xvii.1; *De Cive*, “Preface to the Readers”, 14.
[7] *Leviathan*, xiv. 18, xvii.1-2. In a recent article, Skinner emphasizes sociable character in Hobbes’s law of

Hobbes's analysis underscores the consistency of human nature from the state of nature to civil society. He contends that social experience is key to understanding human nature. On the one hand, Hobbes argues that our "natural disposition" encompasses not only physical strength but also one's entire social experiences, rational capacity, and cultivated passions. Hobbes encourages his readers to consider their own social experiences, "read thyself", and reflect on examples like carrying weapons while traveling and neighboring commonwealths surveilling each other to illustrate human nature's entrenchment in mutual distrust. These social experiences suggests that humans are inherently inclined towards mutual distrust on a psychological level, as revealed by the "state of nature."[1] On the other hand, the establishment of sovereign power does not prompt a transformation of human nature. Instead, it serves as a mechanism to utilize fear to manage and regulate mutual distrust, guiding individuals towards a more cooperative existence under the sway of political authority.[2] As we will see below, Mandeville's analysis focused on hypocrisy and politeness challenges this point.

2.2 Sociableness, Politeness and Hypocrisy

In this section, I examine Mandeville's concept of "sociableness" as a departure from Hobbes's theory of unsocial sociability. Mandeville argues that while sociability is intrinsic to human nature, it comes with a caveat: individuals are not predisposed to social life or naturally friendly to their peers. However, through nurture and cultivation, they can be molded into beings suitable for social interaction. As I will demonstrate below, Mandeville

nature, but he disregards that these clauses of natural law only "bind in *foro interno*". Without the sovereign power, these are only words without strength. Hence, the cornerstone for maintaining security and order lies in sovereignty rather than individual prudence. Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes and the Social Control of Unsociability", in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, ed. P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 432-450; Li Meng, 'Commonwealth by Institution: Hobbes's Contractual Construction of Political Society'. *World Philosophy* No. 5 (2013): 92-105.

[1] *De Cive*, I.1, 11-13; *Leviathan*, "The Introduction", 3, xiii.10. For a good discussion of this issue, see Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 27-57.

[2] Li Meng, 'The State of Nature as the State of War', 3-23.

emphasizes self-love and pride as Hobbes does, but diverges by suggesting that individuals in a civilized society behave differently from Hobbes's depiction. Instead of displaying rugged mutual trust, they tend to conform to social norms by adopting politeness and hypocrisy to get compliments from their peers.[1] This subtle distinction lays the foundation for Mandeville's proposition of a more constructive utilization of pride, a concept we will further investigate in the following section.

In *Fable II*, Mandeville elucidates the idea of human beings as a "sociable creature" in terms of their "certain Fitness" to society,[2] suggesting that people naturally seek cooperation in society. When living in a civilized society, every individual is so reliant on one another that it becomes inconceivable to live a life devoid of social interactions. Participation in society ensures ease and security, driven by the innate desire to improve one's condition. In addition, the gradual enhancement of comfort and security within society fosters an increasing dependence on society. As he summarizes, "the more extensive their Knowledge is, the higher their Quality, and the greater their Possessions are, the more necessitous and helpless they are in their Nature".[3] Hence, the primary motivation for participation in a society is to sustain and enhance one's life and condition.

As Mandeville's analysis unfolds, we can perceive him as a theorist of sociability or sociableness. This theory places a central emphasis on self-love and the pursuit of individual betterment, contrasting with the ideas of natural sociability put forth by figures like the Earl

[1] Daniel Luban takes hypocrisy as a fundamental theme of Mandeville's analysis, "Indeed, it is difficult to come up with a thinker who was more exhaustive in investigating and exposing hypocrisy". Robin Douglass further attaches hypocrisy to sociableness, but he is inclined to read Mandeville against the work of Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Time*. See *Fable II*, 45; Daniel Luban, 'Bernard Mandeville as Moralist and Materialist'. *History of European Ideas* 41, no. 7 (2015): 848; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 92-131, esp. 110. On the theme of political hypocrisy in Mandeville, see also David Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 45–73.

[2] *Fable II*, 183.

[3] *Fable II*, 180-2.

of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson.[1] Mandeville challenges the notion that humans have a greater inherent affection for their own species compared to animals, dismissing it as a "Compliment which we commonly pay to ourselves".[2] Even if we acknowledge that people born in society are more inclined towards social life than any other animal, Mandeville questions whether this inclination is natural. He suggests that individuals join society and seek companionship primarily "for his own Sake, in hopes of being the better for it" or "for some Advantage or other he proposes to himself from it".[3] Therefore, in his exposition of the theory of sociableness, Mandeville stands with theorists who prioritize self-love, rather than with advocates of natural sociability like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

Mandeville's concept of "sociableness" underscores that self-love can contribute to making individuals fit into the social order, challenging Hobbes's portrayal of humans as naturally "unsocial." A key point of contrast lies in their different interpretations of pride. While Hobbes sees pride exacerbating social conflicts stemming from natural equality, Mandeville acknowledges pride as inherent but contends that it need not necessarily threaten public order.[4] Mandeville argues that civility and politeness, far from contradicting pride, actually presuppose a further provocation of it. In *Fable I*, he posits that good manners and civility are essential for maintaining public order. Individuals are expected to "appear decently" and uphold it as "a Duty", while also skillfully "Flattering the Pride and Selfishness of others and concealing our own with Judgment and Dexterity". These refined manners and good breeding are nurtured by the adept management of pride, or else, following "the Dictates of

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[1] For present purposes, it is enough to posit Mandeville's comment on them and explore how Mandeville carves out a middle approach between natural sociability and Hobbes's theory. I cannot delve into how Shaftesbury and Hutcheson articulate their views, nor can I assess whether Mandeville reads them in a charitable way. On Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, see Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 43-62; Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, 75-82; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 98-103; Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought', 1640-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 176-243; Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[2] *Fable II*, 177, 183.

[3] *Fable II,* 180-183. This is reminiscent of Hobbes's comment, "even if man were born in a condition to desire society, it does not follow that he was born suitably equipped to enter society. Wanting is one thing, ability another". Hobbes, *De Cive*, I.2.n2.

[4] *Fable II,* 203.

Nature…warping her by Education and Custom".[1] Mandeville illustrates this logic through the example of the *Beau Monde*, the fashionable elites, who excel in the art of hypocrisy driven by pride. Despite outward display of virtue, their true motivation is to appear well-bred and agreeable, to receive compliments from others. Mandeville concludes that "the more dexterous, by this Means, Men grew in concealing the outward Signs, and every Symptom of Pride, the more entirely they became enslaved by it within".[2]

Furthermore, Mandeville illustrates that politeness and civility in a civilized society do not signify a triumph over passions; rather, they involve an attempt to conceal them, "playing the Passion against itself."[3] The gratification individuals derive from flattery, juxtaposed with their obligation to outwardly disavow it, exposes the pervasive hypocrisy inherent in social interactions. Mandeville's analysis reveals that social norms require the redirection of the passion of pride and its concealment behind a facade of concern for others. This discord between outward appearances and inner feelings undermines sincerity and integrity within society.[4] Hence, a civilized commercial society cannot be maintained with genuine integrity.

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[1] *Fable I,* 77-8; see also *Fable I,* 27-8, 52，63, 71, 126; *Fable II*, 204-205. It is noteworthy that Hobbes also underlines the importance of education. "Therefore, a human being is made fit (*aptus . . . factus*) for Society not by nature, but by education (*disciplina*)." However, Hobbes's education is more based on the discipline by a deterrent supreme power. This supplements his claim that human beings are "made fit for society not by nature, but by training". See *De Cive*, I.2n; Gooding and Hoekstra, 'Hobbes and Aristotle on the Foundation of Political Science', 35–43.

[2] *Fable I*, 9-12, 72-73, 144; *Fable II*, 12-17.

[3] *Fable II,* 67, 125. This hypocrisy and dissimulation can be so thorough that we have no awareness of its character. As Mandeville argues, "owing to that strong Habit of Hypocrisy…we have learned from our Cradle to hide even from our selves the vast Extent of Self-Love, and all its different Branches". (*Fable I*, 135) Harris thus argues that Mandeville's idea insinuates a "repudiation of a picture of the human situation central to the entire western philosophical tradition", which portrays our situation as a battle-ground between reason and passion. James Harris, 'The Government of the Passions', in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 280-3.

[4] *Fable II*, 17. In a seminal paper, Daniel Luban draws our attention to the presence of two distinct types of hypocrisy that hold significant roles in *Fable*. In addition to the well-polished hypocrisy, there is another form termed "brute hypocrisy" which exposes the publicly visible failure of the self-righteous to live up to their professed ideals. But Luban goes too far to connect this dichotomy to Mandeville's endeavor to reconcile two dimensions within a single overarching philosophy, namely, materialism and moralism. Both forms of hypocrisy point to the fact that the indulgent satisfaction of sensual pleasures must still be concealed, highlighting the continued primacy of "moralist" sensual pleasures driven by the passion of pride. Luban overlooks that the integral role of grumbling within the social mechanism, which distinguishes Mandeville from the conventional and cynical critiques of moral hypocrisy. As Dickey clarifies, grumbling is "the price that must be paid to avoid the perils of shame on the one hand and Hobbesian absolutism on the other". See Luban, 'Bernard Mandeville as Moralist and Materialist', 831–57; comp. Lawrence Dickey, 'Pride,

In this manner, Mandeville's analysis reveals the limitations of human nature. He observes that individuals in society are equally enticed by glory, which he deems as "A Chimera without Truth or Being."[1] Previous moral theorists, committed to stringent moral standards and the conquest of evil passions, would likely disapprove of Mandeville's emphasis on hypocrisy and insincerity. However, Mandeville argues that the futile attempts to overcome these natural inclinations highlights the inherent constraints of human nature.[2] A more practical solution is to relinquish these stringent moral strictures and instead embrace civility and polite manners.[3] This approach allows our desire for respect to find fulfillment, and contributes to the maintenance of social order, as these desires prompt individuals to act in accordance with social expectations and seek admiration from others.[4] In contrast to the pursuit of integrity and adherence to virtues through various means, hypocrisy serves as the lubricant of everyday social interactions and is the price society must pay to sustain communal existence.[5] This discussion also suggests that while the notion of virtue remains significant, it is not indispensable in social life.[6]

Hypocrisy and Civility in Mandeville's Social and Historical Theory'. *Critical Review* 4, no. 3 (1990): 387–431, citation from 412, 429; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 130.

[1] *Fable I,* 216.

[2] *Fable II,* 17.

[3] Dario Castiglione, 'Excess, Frugality and the Spirit of Capitalism: Readings of Mandeville on Commercial Society', in *Culture in History: Production, Consumption and Values in Historical Perspective*, edited by J. Melling and J. Barry (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992), 161-2.

[4] Arthur Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), 169.

[5] Dickey, 'Pride, Hypocrisy and Civility in Mandeville's Social and Historical Theory', 412-3; Peter Olsthoorn, 'Bernard Mandeville on Honor, Hypocrisy, and War'. *The Heythrop Journal* 60, no. 2 (2019): 205–18.

[6] Mandeville's analysis of hypocrisy is premised on the notion of virtue and vice, and this is why he devotes an essay to the origin of virtue. However, Mandeville approaches this issue in a different way from traditional discussions. As Douglass notes, Mandeville elevates the moral bar to a height almost impossible to touch, and suggests that the moral notion of virtue is essential in social life. This approach provokes confusion among scholars. The main debate is whether we should be serious about Mandeville's claim that virtue must be based on a conquest of natural passions and read him as a Kantian moralist, or whether he presents less a serious moral philosophy than a satire, to expose the porous foundation of morality in human life, echoing the enduring tradition of moral skepticism. My analysis adopts a functional interpretation as elucidated by Heath, Mandeville's Bewitching Engine of Praise'. *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1998): 205–26. See also John Colman, 'Bernard Mandeville and the Reality of Virtue'. *Philosophy (London)* 47, no. 180 (1972): 125–39; Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1975; Robin Douglass, 'Mandeville on the Origins of Virtue'. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (2020): 276–95; *Mandeville's Fable*, 118-123.

Cleomenes, representing Mandeville's stance in *Fable II*, offers valuable insights into understanding Mandeville's analysis against Hobbes. Cleomenes points out a key distinction from Hobbes's perspective: Hobbes primarily describes the human nature of "infants" who lack knowledge of social norms, rather than that of "Men and Women full grown".[1] Cleomenes emphasizes that when individuals discover something valuable, they willingly strive to serve the governing authority in order to attain honor. Compliance with social rules earns them compliments, prompting them to behave politely and show deference to others to reinforce their self-esteem. In essence, most adults in society willingly adhere to social norms rather than fulfill obligations out of fear of punishment. Cleomenes distinguishes between "being submissive" and "being governable" from this observation and concludes that "there is not one Creature so tame, that it can be made to serve its own Species, but Man." [2]

We can now construct a potential response from Mandeville to Hobbes, although Mandeville himself does not explicitly connect the dots. Mandeville aligns with Hobbes's recognition of the importance of pride but would argue that Hobbes overlooks how our desire for esteem, rooted in pride, can be fulfilled indirectly—by "flattering the Pride and Selfishness of others, and concealing our own with Judgment and Dexterity."[3] His theory of sociableness posits that humans possess a sociable character that combines pride with an aptitude for society, expressed through hypocrisy, politeness, and good breeding. This perspective underscores the intricate relationship between pride and social interaction in a civilized society.

Mandeville's theory of "sociableness" navigates a middle ground, suggesting that the foundation of society neither rests solely on widespread benevolence, as proponents of natural sociability propose, nor solely on mutual suspicion driven by self-preservation and

[1] For Mandeville's reference to Hobbes, see *Fable II,* 177, 180.
[2] *Fable II,* 184.
[3] *Fable I,* 69-70.

pride as a threat to public order, as Hobbes posits.[1] According to the Dutch theorist, in a civilized society, the fulfillment of self-love (particularly through the passion of pride) can be attained by adhering to social norms of politeness and civility, albeit with a certain degree of hypocrisy. In doing so, Mandeville illustrates how the pursuit of individual interests can coexist with social expectations, highlighting the adaptability of human behavior.

To summarize, Mandeville underscores two key points. Firstly, he argues that in a society, pride finds fulfillment through adherence to social norms, in contrast to Hobbes's view of "unsocial sociability," which portrays pride-driven desire for glory as disruptive. This highlights Mandeville's belief in the adaptability of human nature. Secondly, Mandeville observes that individuals prioritize approval and agreement from others over their own virtue, leading them to conceal their desire for superiority through adopting polite manners and civility voluntarily. Paradoxically, this desire for superiority, fueled by pride, serves to civilize individuals, transforming them from seemingly unruly beings into sociable ones.[2] However, a challenge arises: how does Mandeville adjust his theory given that pride can be expressed through politeness? This adjustment is crucial for Mandeville’s attempt to reshape Hobbes's framework and theorize public order, as we will explore in the following section.

2.3 "Sociableness" as "Our Nature"

As shown above, Mandeville's insight challenges Hobbes by asserting that human nature is more pliable and can be made sociable by hypocrisy. He argues that achieving this transformation necessitates politeness and hypocrisy as tools to manipulate the passion of pride and render individuals suitable for society. In this section, I will examine Mandeville's

[1] Douglass, *Mandeville’s Fable*, 154.

[2] Hont is insightful to highlight Hobbes as a post-Renaissance or "new humanist" political theorist interested in a regulated economy. My analysis further underscores the idea that the rise of a commercial society calls for a new approach, which lays emphasis on social norms and mutual relationships. When juxtaposed with Hobbes's theory, Mandeville's emphasis on the importance of good breeding becomes even more relevant and persuasive for an era defined by commerce. It is his special concern about good breeding and hypocrisy, when read with his motto, "private vices, public benefits", that positions Mandeville as a qualified theorist of modern commercial states. His insights offer valuable guidance in understanding the dynamics of a society deeply influenced by commercial activities. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 10-17.

exploration of the malleable nature of pride in his theory of human nature, and how Mandeville offers a revision to Hobbes's political philosophy. My focus will be on two main points. Firstly, in *Fable II*, Mandeville's emphasis on self-liking expands upon the earlier notion in *Fable I* that the passion of pride can function as a manipulative tool to uphold public order. This indicates that Tolonen exaggerates the degree of Mandeville's intellectual development. Secondly, Mandeville employs the analogy of sociableness as the "Vinosity of Wine", departing from Hobbes's method of deconstruction, and setting the stage for Mandeville's narrative of conjectural history.

I will start with an elucidation of Mandeville's discussion of sociableness from the perspective of self-liking. Tolonen argues that in *Fable II*, Mandeville introduces the distinction between self-love and self-liking to shed light on the origins of justice and politeness. Tolonen sees this as evidence of Mandeville moving away from his Hobbism in *Fable I*, where Mandeville is alleged to posit fear of punishment as the sole remedy to self-love. However, this assertion lacks textual support.[1] On the one hand, Mandeville's analysis in *Fable I* already incorporates the idea of pride as a supportive element of public order, thus challenging Tolonen's characterization of early Mandeville as a strict adherent of Hobbism. On the other hand, in *Fable II*, Mandeville does indeed make a distinction between self-love and self-liking, but his intention is to put the concept of self-love aside and instead underscore the importance of self-liking. Therefore, it would be more accurate to assert that self-liking serves as the foundation of a civilized society, which encompasses both justice and politeness.

In *Fable I*, Mandeville underscored that pride plays a role of no less significance than fear in civilizing subjects and ensuring obedience to public laws. While Mandeville admits fear

[1] Robin Douglass contends that Tolonen's assertion is overstated because the distinction between self-love and self-liking can be traced back to Mandeville's early work, the *Female Tatler*, although the precise terminological differentiation between the two is only fully developed in his later writings. Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 36-7.

as the most effective passion for preserving societal tranquility, he also notices its limitations, especially in the context of potential warfare. It is in this context that he highlights the importance of pride.[1] Considering the potential threat of external attack, politicians must adapt their strategies to mitigate fear while igniting the fighting spirit among their populace. Mandeville advocates for nurturing a "principle of Valor" by appealing to individuals' pride through flattery, motivating them to defend their honor out of fear of shame, because individuals who hold themselves in high esteem will exert more effort and endure greater hardships to avoid shame. In this way, Mandeville broadens the concept of fear beyond Hobbes's dread of punishment to include the fear of shame, and his emphasis on pride as a civilizing force is already evident in *Fable I*.[2]

In *Fable II*, Mandeville further develops his argument by introducing the concept of self-liking as a central idea.[3] Notably, Mandeville does not place equal emphasis on self-love and self-liking, but rather shifts the focus to self-liking as a fundamental motivation. This claim is supported by textual evidence. Following Cleomenes's introduction of the self-love/self-liking distinction, its novelty piques Horatio's curiosity, and then the conversation shifts to a detailed examination of "self-liking," which is prevalent in this section and mentioned far more frequently than "self-love" throughout *Fable II*. As we will see, Mandeville argues that these two passions are intertwined, with self-liking being even more intrinsic than self-love in comprehending self-preservation and the genesis of politeness.

Mandeville begins by discerning that self-preservation is not only driven by the instinct of self-love, as commonly assumed. While self-love impels creatures to gather everything necessary for survival, it alone is insufficient to explain their behavior and necessitates an additional concept of self-liking, a passion that instills into each individual "a real liking to

[1] *Fable I*, 205-6, 219.
[2] *Fable I*, 207-9.
[3] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 99-102; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 35-38.

its own Being, superior to what they have to any other".[1] For both animals and humans, self-liking creates illusions, providing a sense of enjoyment for life even in adverse circumstances, shielding them from the harsh reality of their inherently needy and often unhappy nature.[2] This illusion enables creatures to value themselves beyond their true worth and intensifies their efforts to preserve themselves.[3]

Mandeville further suggests that self-liking is even more fundamental than self-love in facilitating self-preservation. As he maintains, "if this liking was not always permanent, the love which all creatures have for themselves could not be so unalterable as we see it is." When this liking diminishes, creatures lose hope for themselves and face the dissolution of their being. Conversely, as long as they cherish their situation, whether in present circumstances or future prospects, they continue to care for themselves.[4] A compelling illustration of the intricacy is suicide. When individuals commit suicide, they prioritize gratifying their self-liking at the expense of their lives. Hence, self-liking is not only intertwined with self-love but proves to be more deep-seated.

Mandeville's elucidation of self-liking sheds new light not only on self-preservation, but also on the origins of politeness within human nature. As Cleomenes argues, "the seeds of it (i.e., politeness) are lodg'd in this Self-love and Self-liking".[5] It is inherent in human nature to strive to outshine others, fueling desires for ostentation and vainglory that could lead to a state of war, reminiscent of Hobbes's depiction. But Mandeville discerns a restraining element. It is specifically "in Man" that the pursuit of superiority is accompanied by "a Diffidence, arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value

[1] *Fable II*, 129-30.
[2] *Fable II*, 130, 133.
[3] *Fable II*, 130, 134.
[4] *Fable II*, 129-30, 136; Bjorn Gomes, *The Desire and Struggle for Recognition,* (Columbia University PhD thesis, 2017), 39-44.
[5] *Fable II*, 133, 138. This serves as a crucial piece of textual evidence to challenge Tolonen's assertion that the self-love/self-liking distinction corresponds to the origin of justice and politeness.

ourselves". It is this passion that drives our fondness for the approval, liking, and assent of others because they "strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves".[1] Social members are inclined to seek more gratification and recognition from others than they might truly merit. However, they must exercise caution to avoid an excessive display of pride, which can incur aversions from their companions. This is how self-liking functions within a civilized society: adherence to social norms is necessary to garner additional compliments from others and fortify one's self-esteem. For members of a society, adhering to principles of politeness becomes obligatory, signifying a well-educated status of themselves. The introduction of self-liking thus explains "sociableness" characterized by politeness, and explains why pride does not necessarily give rise to the reasonable suspicions that Hobbes anticipates.[2]

Therefore, we can conclude that in *Fable II*, Mandeville focuses on self-liking, which intertwines the pursuit of recognition with the apprehension that we may overvalue ourselves, as the psychological foundation to comprehend the foundation of a civilized order characterized by politeness and justice. This elucidation in *Fable II* refines rather than completely rejects Mandeville's earlier views in *Fable I*, where he regarded pride as a passion employed by politicians to manipulate and civilize subjects. Therefore, Tolonen appears to overstate the extent of Mandeville's intellectual shift.

Having put self-liking at the center of the stage, we can move onto Mandeville's second contribution, that is, his redefinition of sociableness as "our nature," to reformulate Hobbes's framework. As illustrated, Hobbes presents "reasonable jealousy" as a natural condition of human beings, with the establishment of a supreme common power being the only solution

[1] *Fable II*, 130, 138-9.

[2] Politeness, as a social institution, reflects the influence of public opinion in large-scale societies. In such societies, individuals are conditioned to show respect and follow established norms to gain approval. Therefore, the existential condition of modern society is not about self-judgment but about being dependent on others' perceptions and evaluations for self-satisfaction. This underscores how social dynamics and external assessments shape one's identity. Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature*, 163-9, 234-9.

to maintain social order. Human beings are predisposed to descend into a state of war, leading to the disintegration of the commonwealth. Therefore, the possibility of communal life in peace and security relies on a common power as an external imposition imposed on human nature. Hobbes's binary framework, the state of nature and the sovereign power, sets a standard for theorists of the following century.

Mandeville recognizes that individuals are "made sociable" as Hobbes suggests, yet he diverges from Hobbes by asserting that the primary factor in public order is not a deterrent supreme power, but that the propensity to adhere to social norms is inherent in human nature to some degree.[1] To illustrate this point, he employs two analogies. The first analogy draws a parallel to the training of horses. No fine-spirited horse was ever tame or gentle without management, human beings must be managed to be sociable as well. "What you call Natural, is evidently Artificial, and belongs to Education".[2] In addition, Mandeville likens human sociability to the "Vinosity of Wine". Mandeville suggests that every grape has a bit of juice, but it is not enough to produce wine. These grapes must be heaped and squeezed, with the help of skillful management and fermentation as adventitious elements. Likewise, individuals need to be gathered and influenced with skillful management, with the addition of fermentation as an ancillary factor, to bring forth their sociable nature as a nascent possibility in them.[3]

These examples are conductive to illustrating two facets of human nature. The first scenario he presents is that of brutish savages when they are left uninstructed in a primitive state. In this "wild State of Nature", everyone is governed by the instinct of sovereignty, yielding to the impulses of their unruly nature and asserting dominion over everything within their reach. In such circumstances, they pay no heed to the concerns of others.[4] This echoes his comment

[1] *Fable I*, 34; *Fable II*, 184, 191.
[2] *Fable II*, 268-270.
[3] *Fable II,* 188-190.
[4] *Fable II,* 199-201, 268-79, 285-6.

in *Fable I* that there is no creature in the world "more unfit…for Society than Man".[1] However, this brutish nature of the uninstructed does not contradict the view that we can be "sociable" as a species. As he posits, both reason and revelation tell us that

> When we speak of *a Quality peculiar to our Species*, and say, that Man is a Sociable Creature, the Word implies no more, than that in *our Nature* we have *a certain Fitness*, by which great Multitudes of us co-operating, may be united and form'd into one Body.[2] (Italics as my emphasis)

To augment this point, Mandeville spells out that some "peculiar Instincts…belong to a whole Species", and they can neither acquired by art or discipline. Just like chickens cannot swim like ducks, even if we try to teach them to do so.[3] This implies that the management is crucial to refine and develop something nascent in their nature. In other words, human beings as a species have the potential to be made sociable. When they gather and are artfully managed, they engage in communication and develop sociability, fostering a sense of obligation to show respect to others through "Manners and Good Breeding".[4] In this environment, individuals can learn to be sociable. However, if they are left unattended and uninstructed, they are inherently wild and unsociable.

Hence, Mandeville's discovery of "sociableness" as "our nature" contributes to figuring out the foundation of civilized society, and how it displays progression compared with Hobbes's framework. Firstly, Mandeville diverges from Hobbes's view that individuals in society adhere to laws solely out of fear of punishment imposed by a supreme power, a viewpoint that appears more suited to uncultivated savages. Instead, Mandeville argues that well-educated individuals living in a social context are inclined to follow laws and social rules because they believe it can improve their living conditions and garner flattery from others, thus satisfying their passion for pride.

Secondly, we can reconstruct Mandeville's response as a revision of Hobbes's method. Hobbes's method is contentious because it implies that human beings are inherently unsocial, and public order relies solely on a common power as an artificial construct, so it leaves no

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[1] *Fable II,* 180; comp. *Fable I*, 27, 347.
[2] *Fable II,* 183ff.
[3] *Fable II*, 205.
[4] *Fable II,* 185-8.

room for the possibility of uncultivated human nature becoming civilized in terms of hypocrisy and politeness and denies the potential development of "sociableness". [1] Mandeville, however, addresses the potential for sociability but posits that individuals are not inherently predisposed to it. In less developed or uncivilized conditions, such as in primitive societies or during early stages of individual life, the instinct of sovereignty is dominant, and individuals are driven to claim whatever is within their reach, thus posing threats to public order. As individuals spend time within a society and recognize that communal living offers a better way of life compared to a primitive and savage existence, they can adapt to follow social norms and seek fulfillment of their self-love and pride in a more sociable manner. Mandeville refers to this adaptation as the "instincts that belong to a whole species", of which a very considerable part is acquired through the interaction of individuals "conversing with one another."[2] In this light, Mandeville revises Hobbes's theory of human nature and lays the groundwork for his attempt to transform Hobbes's dichotomy (the state of nature/sovereign state) into a developmental schema through his conjectural history.[3]

To sum up, I approach Mandeville's contributions by referencing Hobbes's political philosophy rather than "Hobbism", as suggested by Tolonen. Mandeville's insights can be summarized as follows. Firstly, Mandeville aligns with Hobbes's emphasis on pride and the idea that individuals can become sociable, but he goes further by suggesting that human beings are more adaptable and inclined to conform to social norms than Hobbes argues. This leads Mandeville to articulate the theory of sociableness, which emphasizes politeness and hypocrisy as the foundation of social order. Secondly, by defining sociableness as "our

[1] *De Cive*, I.2.
[2] *Fable II,* 189, 205.
[3] Contemporary scholars adopt the term "conjectural history" to describe Mandeville's approach, and textual evidence supports this. Mandeville argues that we cannot know anything about the beginning of human life with certainty because men were destitute of letters and everything was obscure, but we can "make Use of Conjectures" according to "the Nature of the thing". *Fable II*, 128, 231; Branchi, *Pride, Manners, and Morals*, 129-36; Frank Palmeri, 'Bernard de Mandeville and the Shaping of Conjectural History', in Edmundo Balsemão Pires and Joaquim Braga, eds. *Bernard de Mandeville's Tropology of Paradoxes: Morals, Politics, Economics, and Therapy* (Leiden: Springer Nature, 2015), 15-24.

nature," Mandeville challenges Hobbes's binary system of the state of nature and sovereign states, and thereby introduces the developmental schema as an alternative to Hobbes's method of dissolution and constitution.

In this light, Mandeville's philosophical contribution allows for a "historicized" understanding of Hobbes's state of nature, shifting the focus of establishing public order from the institution of an overawing common power to a developmental scheme, offering new possibilities for theorizing human nature. However, it is essential to note that Mandeville's acceptance of a developmental perspective does not imply that he sidelines the role of government and politics. As we will explore further, Mandeville maintains the significance of government and written law in the civilizing process.

3. The Origin of Society and Politics

In Part 2, I shed light on how Mandeville revises Hobbes's theory of human nature, giving prominence to sociability characterized by politeness and hypocrisy, and further introduces the concept of self-liking for explanation. Since Hobbes's theory of "the state of nature" relates to the theory of sovereignty as an explanatory mechanism for ensuring public order, the next task for us is to delve deeper into the political theory implied by Mandeville's innovative approach. This aspect will be explored in greater detail in this part.

This part revolves around two themes. I agree with Tolonen's emphasis on the importance of government and written laws. Mandeville increasingly highlights natural affections in his later works, but they are still not enough on their own. This viewpoint underscores the essential role of government and written laws in effectively regulating complex societies. Secondly, I agree with Tolonen’s comment that Mandeville emphasizes the evolutionary character of artificial convention, but I diverge from Tolonen in my belief that Mandeville never reduced the influence of politicians. As I will show, the final four dialogues in *Fable II* where Mandeville delves into the rise of a large and refined society, politicians and

lawgivers still have an essential role to play. A more fitting interpretation is that Mandeville refines his analytical focus and "adds several layers of historical nuances to the first",[1] rather than creating an intellectual divide.

3.1 The Natural Stage and Family

Mandeville references the early stages of society in various parts of *Fable II*, as we can note in his discussions on sociability in the fourth dialogue, the origin of society from a savage family in the fifth dialogue, and governance through written laws in the sixth dialogue. One crucial dimension in his discussion of the primitive state is what he calls the "natural Instinct of Sovereignty," which he introduces in the sixth dialogue to cast a new light on "every thing that I have said Yesterday and the Day before".[2] This analysis not only clarifies that self-liking is a transformed expression of the instinct of sovereignty that exists in human nature in its uncultivated form but also lays the foundation for his investigation of how this instinct is managed in the subsequent stages of societal development.[3]

In the sixth dialogue, Cleomenes introduces the concept of the "instinct of sovereignty," which he describes as "a domineering Spirit, and a Principle of Selfishness".[4] As a response to Horatio's proposal that self-liking should be labeled as the "Love of Praise" or a "Desire for the Applause of others," Cleomenes contends that this view "confound[s] the Effect with the Cause", and suggests that the sociableness emerges from a gradual process of interaction, wherein individuals learn to conceal their natural instincts and avoid displaying excessive self-liking that could offend others.[5] For savages, their passions are tumultuous, constantly shifting and replacing one another, so they could not maintain a steady train of thought or

[1] Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 136; Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, 62-96.
[2] *Fable II*, 269, 271.
[3] I agree with Douglass's view that the importance Mandeville accords to our love of dominion and sovereignty is far greater in *Fable II* and represents one of its most significant theoretical innovations. Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 137.
[4] *Fable II*, 271-5. Cleomenes refers to the instinct of sovereignty as a desire of dominion leading to the "Strive for Superiority", to revise the apparent self-contradiction in Mandeville's portrayal of human nature as a "a timorous Animal" while driven by the desire of glory. *Fable I*, 204-5; *Fable II*, 204, 267.
[5] *Fable II*, 131-2; Gomes, *The Desire and Struggle for Recognition*, 55-89.

pursue a single goal with consistency.[1] The desire for dominion drives them to claim everything within reach as his own without regard for justice or injustice. When they come together by accident, they are more likely to engage in disputes and quarrels rather than forming an aggregate body.[2] Confronted with this challenge, Mandeville is compelled to explain the process of civilization and how it transforms instinct-driven primitives into individuals capable of coexisting in a civilized society.

The initial stage of society consists of private families, where natural affections hold sway, but this underscores the limitations of such affections and the need for governance. In this primitive state, wild savages form families and have children. However, the father regards his children as his property and utilizes them in ways that serve his own interests, driven by the desire of dominion. Paternal governance maintains order through the children's reverence, which is a mix of love, fear, and esteem towards their fathers.[3] Though governing children calls for only ordinary capacity, the savage father is still quite unfit for the task of governing, because he is a man who never has been taught to curb any of his passions.[4] At this stage, the father's superiority of power is still the most critical to establish reverence among children and keep them under control, and the wild children's reverence for their father is "a significant step" in the formation of society.[5] But due to their want of reasoning and foresight, the parents would hardly establish rules for future behavior, which is in contrast to their inclination to extend their authority over subsequent generations, driven by the desire of dominion.[6] As the offspring increase, the first savage father would decline in power and find himself incapable of government, and the primitive society will end in a

[1] *Fable II*, 199-200. In *Fable II*, Mandeville expands his discussion of savages. Cleomenes criticizes Sir William Temple for projecting societal character traits onto savages. This clarification allows Mandeville to affirm that humans are driven by passionate impulses and reject the notion of the family as a stable basis for authority. Moreover, it sets the stage for Mandeville's analysis of governability. See *Fable II*, 199. Martin Knott, 'Mandeville on Governability', *Journal of Scotish Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (2014): 31-39; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 157-159.
[2] *Fable II*, 199-200, 204.
[3] *Fable II*, 201-2.
[4] *Fable II*, 201-3.
[5] *Fable II*, 201, 221, 278. Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 78.
[6] *Fable II*, 204-5.

perpetual state of conflict.[1] In addition the love of species and natural affections for one another are neither "instrumental to the Erecting of Societies" nor essential to our prudent commerce with one another.[2] Therefore, while natural affections may indeed play a constructive role in preserving order within a small-scale familial community, their relevance diminishes when attempting to comprehend order within a larger and polished society.[3] Mandeville argues that artificial institutions, particularly government governed by written law, are essential for this purpose.[4] The next step involves a reevaluation of Mandeville's analysis to clarify the intricate relationship between evolutionary theory and politics in his works.

3.2 The Role of Politicians and Government

The previous section explores the formation of primitive society or the "natural stage", but as Mandeville argues, without lawful government "there is not in the World a more unfit Creature for Society than Man."[5] Mandeville identifies the establishment of a government operating on written laws as the second and third steps in historical evolution, recognizing the transition from primal natural affections to a structured society as critical for evolution.

Cleomenes suggests that while common danger prompts humans to unite, they eventually realize that they often pose the greatest threat to each other's survival.[6] At first, the beasts pose a lethal threat to nascent human settlements and menace the survival of the species. With limited knowledge and means of defense, people must unite for security and protection.[7] Hence, this initial step towards society is an effect generated by the common danger they face.[8] After the common danger fades, rivalries between families emerge,

[1] *Fable II*, 230.
[2] *Fable II*, 183.
[3] *Fable II*, 205; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 159-60.
[4] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 80-83.
[5] *Fable I*, 347.
[6] *Fable II*, 242, 244.
[7] *Fable II*, 230-1, 239, 244.
[8] *Fable II,* 261.

sparking conflicts fueled by pride and ambition, so much so that humans can be more destructive to each other than wild beasts.[1]

This realization underscores the fragility of public order when the tensions escalate, and people would live in this "rough and uncultivated" status for ages, as instantiated by some of the "unciviliz'd Nations, that are still subsisting in the World".[2] During this era, laws were absent, leaving primitive societies in a precarious state where individuals often sought revenge and resorted to violence due to the lack of justice. The progress and the development of societal norms were hindered by the continual discord and contention among individuals, despite potential wisdom passed down through generations. Without public peace and education, achieving substantial progress proved challenging.[3] The establishment of order relied on exceptional leadership rather than the evolution of conventions. It is to be expected that the strongest and most valiant individuals would dominate over the weakest and most fearful, while the latter would align with those they perceive as offering the best protection for their safety. In this scenario, wise rulers recognized the need to establish laws and penalties to restrain such unruly behavior.[4] It would take "three or four generations" for leaders to grasp human nature and understand the importance of maintaining peace and security. They realized that prevalent strife and discord diminished the utility of the people they led.[5]

Elaborating on why the primitive people find themselves trapped in this unfortunate state leads us to the third stage: to establish a governance system based on written laws.[6] It is this

[1] *Fable II*, 230-1, 238- 9, 266-8.
[2] *Fable II*, 267, 319-20.
[3] *Fable II*, 341.
[4] *Fable II*, 268, 275.
[5] *Fable II,* 268, 284, 275. To recall Mandeville's analogy of making wine from grapes, Sagar adds that the fermentation also requires "directing intelligence of wine maker", and this can be understood as leader of the bands and lawgivers, who play significant roles in this process. See Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, 48; Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 157n.85.
[6] Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 168-171.

step that sets people on the path toward the gradual advancement of arts and sciences, fostering their transformation into socialized and civilized beings. Mandeville's analysis moves from the sounds to language and finally to the letters that serve written law.

In the early stages, communication among the wild couples was limited to sounds and gestures, constraining their understanding and desires to immediate needs for survival.[1] Over time, as the primitive people lived together for a long time, there would be progress of sounds and language, which can be conveyed to the younger generations.[2] This advancement expanded their emotional range and reasoning abilities, allowing for greater expression and understanding.[3] However, increased intellectual capacity did not guarantee peace; conflicts were likely to arise. In the absence of written laws, verbal accounts often led to disputes concerning "Matters that require Exactness".[4]

In this context, a government that upholds written laws becomes indispensable. By reducing disputes and fostering societal interaction, people gain confidence in public security and property rights, thereby enabling the division of labor. This division, in turn, safeguards life and property. Moreover, written language preserves valuable knowledge and encourages further innovations.[5] In primitive conditions, perpetual conflicts fostered aversion to society and a staunch adherence to savage liberty. However, with the establishment of a government governed by written laws, individuals begin to appreciate the benefits of social living, fostering a sense of community. Consequently, once governed by written laws, "all the rest comes on a-pace".[6] The invention of letters bestows upon humanity a "Prerogative…in point of Time" compared to other animals, offering a unique opportunity to advance in

[1] *Fable II*, 284-6.
[2] *Fable II*, 287-8.
[3] *Fable II*, 299-300.
[4] *Fable II*, 269.
[5] *Fable II*, 283-4, 300.
[6] *Fable II*, 283-4, 300.

wisdom and enhance human sociability.[1] This is where the progress of civilization begins. Government based on written laws are crucial pillars of human society and progress. [2]

Having explored Mandeville's accounts, we can revisit Tolonen's thesis regarding Mandeville's intellectual shift from relying on politicians to embracing an evolutionary perspective. [3] Tolonen proposes two key arguments that reinforce each other. The first highlights the people's efforts through trial and error, and then the politician's role in fixing them into laws. The former focuses on sociability, which involves establishing a coherent system of artificial moral principles through a continuous process of trial and error. The development of moral conventions requires extensive time and accumulated experience, beginning with children experimenting with different conventions to navigate social interactions, despite initial failures due to lack of experience. With artificial institutions in place, even individuals of moderate capacity become capable of governing others.[4] The latter posits that public order is viewed as a joint labor of several ages, and the laws formalize former conventions, rather than fix moral distinctions derived from the invention of lawmakers or clever politicians. Hence, public order and laws are primarily shaped from the bottom up, with politicians tasked mainly with codifying widely accepted conventions into law.[5]

I contend that Tolonen underplays the role of politicians and thereby overstates the intellectual rupture between two volumes of *Fable*. Firstly, an obvious piece of textual evidence is that Cleomenes admits that the topics being discussed in *Fable II* have previously been addressed, as "you have seen in *the Fable of the Bees*", suggesting this discussion as a

[1] *Fable II*, 182.
[2] *Fable II*, 269.
[3] Tolonen is not the only one to claim an intellectual transition. Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 11–12; Knott, 'Mandeville on Governability', 21–24; Palmeri, 'Bernard de Mandeville and the Shaping of Conjectural History', 19.
[4] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 78-81.
[5] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 12, 73, 78-79, 93-97.

restatement or further elaboration, rather than a denial, of the thrust in *Fable I*.[1] Secondly, as I will show below, the evolution of conventions is a long-term development from a providential perspective, but it does not necessarily undermine the importance of politicians. Rather than dismissing the significance of politicians, it signals a shift in emphasis.

Tolonen views this evolutionary process as intertwined with providence, suggesting a long-term perspective, and asserts that providence oversees and governs everything without exception.[2] However, due to the limitations of human understanding, we cannot fully grasp the supreme wisdom and intricate design inherent in the universe's general system.[3] While we may boast about our species' excellence, from the perspective of providence, various forms of suffering, including conflicts, massacres, and violence, may be part of a divine plan and somewhat indifferent. Nevertheless, from a human standpoint, the efforts of good politicians to mitigate these disasters remain valuable. This notion is supported by Robin Douglass's comment that any human practice or institution can be seen as an unintended consequence when viewed from a long-term perspective.[4] Thus, the evolution of conventions from this vantage point can be compatible with the importance of politicians.[5]

Admittedly, Cleomenes acknowledges that crafting good laws requires "joynt Labour of several Ages", rather than being the products of a wise and legendary genius,[6] but he does not advocate for a purely bottom-up model where politicians play a minor role once consensus is reached, as Tolonen suggests. Instead, Cleomenes emphasizes the essential role

[1] In contrast to Tolonen's emphasis on intellectual rupture, I concur with Robin Douglass's overarching observation on intellectual consistency. Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 36-38, 137-51.
[2] *Fable II*, 54, 98. For discussion about the evolutionary perspective, see Renee Prendergast, 'Knowledge, Innovation and Emulation in the Evolutionary Thought of Bernard Mandeville'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 38, no. 1 (2014): 87–107, esp. 89; J.A.W. Gunn, "Mandeville and Wither: Individualism and the Workings of Providence", in Irwin Primer ed., *Mandeville Studies: New Explorations in the Art and Thought of Dr. Bernard Mandeville, 1670-1733* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1975), 98-118.
[3] *Fable II*, 244-7, 251, 315.
[4] Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 176.
[5] Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, 92, comp. *Fable II*, 147.
[6] *Fable II*, 319, 322.

of great politicians in the civilizing process. He believes that the appearance of wise politicians is not coincidental. In contrast, the politicians and lawgivers continue to play a crucial role in crafting laws and without these interventions, no social order can be secured.[1] According to Cleomenes, the advancement of society depends on the capacity of governors, who are obligated to prioritize promoting and rewarding beneficial actions while discouraging harmful ones as their primary responsibility.[2] It is the "Work of Ages" that raises a politician who can "make very Frailty of the Members add Strength to the whole Body, and by dexterous Management turn private Vices into publick Benefits".[3] Therefore, the role of politicians are never marginalized as Tolonen maintains.

Now it becomes clear that Mandeville's contribution lies in his unique theoretical perspective, shifting focus from supreme power institutions to politeness, commerce, and hypocrisy through an evolutionary lens. However, Mandeville's emphasis on the evolution of social conventions does not diminish the crucial role of politicians in lawmaking and wise governing, which form the foundation of civilized society. In the commercial state, utilitarian bonds from commercial reciprocity, as anticipated by Hont, are insufficient without the state and government.[4] Mandeville underscores the necessity of government for peace, intertwining the progress of civilized society with a rule-of-law-based system.[5] Therefore, we should be cautious against interpreting Mandeville's theory as "proto-sociology" in a

[1] I'm inclined to stand with Douglass, whose view is that Mandeville "repeatedly downplays the importance of individual genius in his explanations of the civilising process", but this is not to "deny that lawgivers played an important role in the civilising process…but their interventions were based on accumulated knowledge rather than superhuman personal qualities", although this role is "not the same role as that played by politicians and lawgivers in the 'Enquiry' and 'Remark R'". Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 147-151, 176.

[2] *Fable II*, 319-321.

[3] *Fable II*, 319.

[4] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 39–40, 160–163. Albert Hirschman also asserts that capitalism's foundation is rooted in the pursuit of self-interest, which eclipses the pursuit of glory and honor. However, it is doubtful whether human nature can be reduced to mere calculators of self-interest, especially lacking a strong state apparatus. Hirschman also admits that the emphasis on self-interest must be understood within the context of the emergence of states in early modern Europe, which aimed to establish public security and mitigate civil wars and religious conflicts. Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 17-20, 134-5; Rudi Verburg, 'Bernard Mandeville's Vision of the Social Utility of Pride and Greed'. *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 22, no. 4 (2015): 662–91.

[5] *Fable II*, 230.

contemporary sense that downplays the deliberate actions of politicians or the exclusion from consideration, nor view politicians as merely reacting with hindsight.[1]

4. Commercial Prosperity and the Power of the State

The preceding part has illuminated the critical role played by politicians and governments in the formation and maintenance of public order in a civilized society. Robin Douglass rightly observes that the theory of sociableness is applicable, yet not exclusively confined, to modern commercial states.[2] As I will demonstrate below, however, it is instructive to read Mandeville's theory of sociableness in conjunction with his work in *Fable I*, where he references modern commercial states of eighteenth-century Europe as his primary concern. This approach enables us to gain a deeper understanding of Mandeville's maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits," and to illuminate Mandeville's analysis of the challenges confronting modern commercial states.[3]

Mandeville's theory offers valuable insights into the rivalry of the commercial states during the eighteenth century in Europe. As articulated in the preface to *Fable I*, Mandeville's satire of the beehive sketches a "a large, rich and warlike Nation, that is happily govern'd by a limited Monarchy" whose inhabitants enjoy "Glory, Wealth, Power and Industry".[4] In the face of intense rivalry among states, it is prudent to embrace commercial prosperity and luxury. To encourage indulgence in luxury fosters industries, and inspires "a Thirst after Gain,

[1] Pekka Sulkunen, 'The Proto-Sociology of Mandeville and Hume'. *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 15, no. 3 (2014): 361–65.

[2] According to Robin Douglass, *Fable II* is not solely intended to apply to the experiences of modern European states but also to civilized nations in general. Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 183-5, 218-9, citation from 218.

[3] Mandeville's insight into the advantage of commercial nations in international rivalry bears out the influence of England in the eighteenth century and the achievement of the Glorious Revolution. See Sylvana Tomaselli, "The Spirit of Nations", in Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler, eds. *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 110-5; Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 36-7, 305-399; Christopher Storrs, "Introduction", in *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Essays in Honour of P. G. M. Dickson* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 1-17.

[4] *Fable I*, 6. Mandeville also suggests that the modern state "should always be conquering others by their Arms Abroad, and debauching themselves by Foreign Luxury at Home". *Fable I*, 13.

and an Indefatigable Desire of meliorating our Condition".[1] These industries not only generate additional tax revenue, thereby serving as the financial foundation for military endeavors, but also cultivate disciplined and hardworking labor forces who are "strong and hardy enough in a Campaign or two to make good Soldier".[2] Mandeville concludes that the encouragement of lavishness underpins the expansion of industries and facilitates the military power of the monarchy. This perspective underscores the strategic importance of embracing commercial prosperity within the milieu of competition among different nations.

Mandeville's observation captures the core issue facing modern commercial states. As a novel mode of civil association, the commercial state enjoys a distinct advantage—namely, a thriving commercial society provides it with the economic and human resources necessary to bolster its political power. This ascendancy grants the commercial state a decisive edge over other forms of political organization, including empires, papal states, and theocracies. Over time, the commercial state, characterized by its "capitalized coercion", solidifies its position as the predominant political entity on the stage of international politics, and asserts itself as the sole legitimate and feasible form of civil association.[3]

Mandeville not only suggests that the political power of these commercial states is based on the allure of luxury and extravagance, but further traces it back to the deep-seated desire for compliments from companions, veiled under the cloak of hypocrisy. As he argues, the citizens of a larger and more civilized state are constantly "rous'd by his Desires" to act. Their desires, serving as potent motivators, propel individuals to engage in various endeavors, including land cultivation, navigation, and international trade.[4] Analogous to "a

[1] *Fable I,* 274. Castiglione, 'Excess, Frugality and the Spirit of Capitalism: Readings of Mandeville on Commercial Society', 165; Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, 73-179.
[2] *Fable I,* 120.
[3] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D.990-1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Michael Oakeshott, "On the Character of a Modern European State", in his *On Human Conduct*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 185-326.
[4] *Fable I*, 183-4.

breath of Air" setting a windmill into motion, the passions prompt citizens to harness their "Excellence and Abilities" and fuel the flourishing of industries within "a large, stirring Nation".[1] This reasoning maps onto social effect of two sets of moral ideals. As we will see, Mandeville deems it inadvisable to stick to moral ideals characterized by the pursuit of wisdom or humility. Instead, he advocates for the satisfaction of the desire for esteem and superiority, achieved through skillful manipulations of the passions of pride and hypocrisy by politicians, in order to facilitate worldly greatness and prosperity.

In contrast to the mainstream moral ideals held by most theorists who worked within classical and Christian intellectual traditions, Mandeville accuses these moral doctrines of instilling self-contentment, which he believes deprives society of the opportunity for material progress. According to these ascetic doctrines, individuals should pursue wisdom or humility and refrain from the desire for acquiring more (*pleonexia*) or displaying luxury. Mandeville identifies this legacy among his contemporaries, citing Shaftesbury as an example. In response, he argues that these moral ideals only breed drones and may only qualify individuals for the passive enjoyment found in a monastic life. Such ideals encourage individuals to keep their passions dormant and withdraw from civic life, avoiding labor, assiduity, and ambitious undertakings. Moreover, to curb the stubborn inclination towards ease, idleness, and sensual pleasures, the doctrines foster self-delusion and lead individuals to hold a higher opinion of their inward state than it deserves. Content with the "calm serenity of the mind," individuals would accept their present circumstances, reduce their motivation to seek improvement, and forego their contribution to society. To console themselves, they often mask their frailties with the pretext of modesty and aversion to boasting. This complacency leads to the corruption of the heart and the gradual decline of various industries.[2] "Bare Virtue can’t make Nations live/ In Splendor; they, that would revive A Golden Age, must be as free, For Acorns, as for Honesty." It only gives rise to frugal lives,

[1] *Fable I*, 104, 184.
[2] *Fable I*, 105-6, 246, II. 118-120

"poor, ignorant, and almost wholly destitute of what we call the Comforts of Life."[1] Such a society would be impoverished and destitute.

Furthermore, the moral ideals in support of "calm Serenity of the Mind" set the limits to the political power of the state, rendering it incapable of contending with a large and powerful nation.[2] In his satirical "The Grumbling Hive" verse, Mandeville's primary contention is that the secret of modern commercial society lies in the fact that the various vices and transgressions of its citizens conspire to bring about the prosperity of the state.[3] The widespread moral doctrines cater to the entrenched attachment to ease, idleness, and the indulgence of sensual pleasures in human nature. To counterbalance these tendencies and encourage individuals to engage in noble undertakings, it is necessary to appeal to "Passions of greater Violence."[4] Active and ambitious individuals strive to enhance their merit in the eyes of others, magnifying their abilities beyond what they truly possess. The passion of pride drives them to acquire more finery, clothes, furniture, equipages, and other luxuries enjoyed by their superiors, thereby fostering the development of social prosperity and industries.[5] These active individuals, following the dictates of their nature, would encounter numerous obstacles and challenges. They must utilize their skill and prudence to overcome these obstacles and earn the admiration of their peers, rather than succumbing to every passing passion and allowing their hearts to be corrupted.[6]

In this light, it is characteristic of commercial society that passions traditionally considered negative, such as the desires for vainglory and pride, emerge as instrumental engines of social prosperity and political power. This insight is linked with Mandeville’s emphasis on

[1] *Fable I*, 37, 183-4.
[2] *Fable I*, 150, 213, 242.
[3] *Fable I*, 9.
[4] *Fable I*, 333.
[5] *Fable II*, 111-3.
[6] *Fable II*, 117-8.

individuals being governable rather than submissive.[1] Forced submission entails embracing something we dislike, to avoid what we dislike even more, ultimately "of no Use to the Person we submit to".[2] Being governable means voluntary compliance, implying that we would like to please and exert ourselves in behalf of the governors. Citizens become more receptive to governance as they interpret servitude to their own advantage and find satisfaction in the labor they perform for others. To put it bluntly, we are voluntarily to follow the rules set by governors because we think it is beneficial for ourselves. Cleomenes argues that this discovery furnishes us with all the reasons for man's excellency lying in sociableness.[3]

This analysis prompts Mandeville to emphasize the art of governing, leveraging flattery to encourage subjects to pursue noble achievements for the common good. This claim runs through the two volumes of the *Fable*. In *Fable I*, Mandeville argues that politicians should understand the strengths and weaknesses of human nature, particularly the dominant passion for pride. With this knowledge, politicians can effectively use praise and flattery to inspire subjects to pursue noble goals, channeling their passions lawfully and sacrificing immediate gratification for the greater public good, and making compensations for the hardships endured by subjects.[4] Inspired by these imaginative rewards, individuals would be motived to outdo their peers, which drives the growth of a dynamic society and a strong state, embodying what Mandeville calls the "Prey and proper Food of a full grown Leviathan."[5] In *Fable II*, Mandeville reiterates his maxim. As Cleomenes maintains, the subjects would

[1] For reading Mandeville as a medical therapist, see Martin Knott, 'Mandeville on Governability', 19–49; Harold Cook, 'Bernard Mandeville and the Therapy of "The Clever Politician"'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60, no. 1 (1999): 101–24.
[2] *Fable II*, 184.
[3] *Fable II*, 184.
[4] *Fable I*, 28-31, 42-43, 230-231.
[5] *Fable I*, 355. There has been a group of scholars who read Mandeville's reference to politicians in a metaphorical sense, following Goldsmith's comments. But Douglass rightly notes that this view lacks textual support. Goldsmith, 'Regulating Anew the Moral and Political Sentiments of Mankind', 605; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 62. Rosenberg, 'Mandeville and Laissez-Faire', 194-5; Eugene Heath, 'Carrying Matters Too Far? Mandeville and the Eighteenth-Century Scots on the Evolution of Morals'. *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (2014): 106-7, comp. Douglass, *Mandeville's Fable*, 138-9, citation from 141.

like to embrace national happiness, that is, "Wealth and Power, Glory and Worldly Greatness; to live in Ease, in Affluence and Splendour at Home, and to be fear'd, courted and esteem'd Abroad". However, achieving such felicity requires embracing vices such as avarice, profuseness, pride, envy, and ambition.[1] Hence, "Luxury will render a Nation flourishing, and that private Vices are publick Benefits".[2]

Mandeville underscores that the political power of modern commercial states relies on individuals' relentless pursuit of greater lavishness and luxury, often concealed by outward conformity to social norms.[3] Recognizing that the well-being of the public and the greatness of nations are rooted in these less admirable passions, modern commercial states must abandon hopes of returning to ideals from ancient or Christian doctrines. Instead, they must accept moral corruption and tolerate a degree of disorder.[4] Meanwhile, governments should consider harnessing the "strange ridiculous Vice" deeply embedded in human nature rather than futilely attempting to suppress it. Through this approach, evil passions, which are deemed to pose a challenge to political schemes, become an engine of public benefits.

Therefore, Mandeville elaborates on the dynamics of modern commercial states characterized by luxury and hypocrisy, encapsulated in his maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits." Despite some shifts in emphasis and elaboration, I contend that these volumes exhibit a greater continuity than Tolonen argued. Mandeville warns against romanticizing virtue based on frugality, emphasizing the peril of reverting to a frugal and impoverished society. As members of modern commercial state, we must recognize that enjoying the benefits of a flourishing nation entails accepting certain inconveniences that no government

[1] *Fable II*, 106.
[2] *Fable II*, 106.
[3] *Fable I*, 222.
[4] Mandeville's examination of dueling merits special consideration. For detailed analysis, see Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 263-302.

can fully resolve.[1] Mandeville's maxim, "Private Vices, Public Benefits," illuminates the intrinsic link between the moral quandary of the modern commercial state and its relentless pursuit of vast power.

5. Conclusion

As analyzed above, Mandeville's intellectual contributions aligned with Hont's concern about "politics in a commercial society" in several ways. Firstly, Mandeville's theoretical ambition is motivated by his acute awareness of the competition and rivalry between commercial states. He argues for the need to embrace commercial society, even if it means forsaking the virtues upheld by previous moralists. Secondly, Mandeville attempts to propose a fresh theory of human nature adapted to civilized society and also applicable to modern commercial states. This theory modifies Hobbes's theory of the "state of nature," which Hont regards as the description of post-Renaissance monarchy characterized by a regulated economy.[2] Lastly, while Mandeville deems the amelioration of their own living conditions as the primary cause to join a society, echoing Hont's definition of commercial sociability,[3] he has no intention of downplaying the crucial role played by government in maintaining social order and facilitating progress. It is within a framework of governing by written laws that the seeds of sociability can thrive. In doing so, he casts light on the theoretical link between human nature and government authority, establishing himself as a theorist of the commercial state.

In addition, we can address Hont's comment on Mandeville from the viewpoint of intellectual history. Hont discusses two prominent intellectual debates revolving around morality and commercial society in eighteenth-century Europe. The first revolved around the criticism of luxury by republican and Christian theorists, constituting a clash between

[1] *Fable I*, 8.
[2] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 18, 21.
[3] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 40.

the 'ancients' and the 'moderns.' The subsequent debate unfolded within the realm of the 'moderns' who sought to determine "how to make it politically and morally benign." Mandeville actively participated in both debates.[1]

In response, I contend that Hont's expertise in intellectual history seems to obscure Mandeville's intellectual impact. Mandeville's great influence during the Enlightenment era was inseparable from his unwavering stance and the philosophical consistency of his theory. Mandeville argues that in order to have a good position in the international arena, the state must embrace luxury, foster economic prosperity, and establish a system of public order grounded in written laws. Moreover, domestic prosperity is inconceivable without the manipulation of vicious passions. He underscores the uncomfortable truth that for a "large, rich, and warlike Nation," its power relies on its economic prosperity and moral hypocrisy among its subjects, and reveals that the notion of achieving an "honest modernity" held by the preceding generation was merely wishful thinking.[2]

Mandeville's exploration of the political implications of a flourishing commercial society, and the intricate interplay between political power and morality within such a framework, lays the groundwork for subsequent theorists and informs our comprehension of the modern commercial state.[3] For those dissatisfied with Mandeville's bleak appraisal and seeking an alternative analytical framework, Hume's perspective becomes relevant. As we will elucidate in the forthcoming chapter, Hume's perspectives serve to counterbalance Mandeville's cynicism, offering a more sanguine outlook on morality within the context of modern commerce.

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[1] Istvan Hont, "The Early Enlightenment debate on Commerce and Luxury", in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, 379-418.
[2] Hont, "The Early Enlightenment debate on Commerce and Luxury", 382.
[3] Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville,* 76-85; Goldsmith, 'Regulating Anew the Moral and Political Sentiments of Mankind', 596-606.

Ch.2 Hume on the Power and Morality of the Commercial State[1]

In the previous chapter, I investigated Mandeville's contributions to comprehending modern commercial states in rivalry. In the context of international competition, modern commercial states are compelled to strengthen their power by nurturing a thriving commercial society. This necessitates the manipulation of vicious passions, such as greed and hypocrisy, by politicians. In this chapter, I will explore Hume's reply to Mandeville in his *Essays*, which presents an alternative viewpoint on the challenges encountered by the commercial state, with a particular focus on the power and the moral foundation of modern commercial states.[2] Hume recognizes the necessity of strengthening the power of the state through commercial growth, but he does not accept moral corruption as an inevitable consequence.

Hume's responses to Mandeville are twofold. On the one hand, he echoes Mandeville's observation that domestic commercial prosperity bolsters the power of the state, while also advocating for the maintenance of military strength. As he posits, to keep domestic commerce and opulence safe, they must be "defended by proportional power."[3] To elaborate

[1] References to Hume's *Essays* are given to David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Eugene F. Miller, T. H. Green, and T. H. Grose (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985). References to the *Treatise* (abbreviated "T") by Book, part, section, and paragraph are given to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007); the page references following "SBN" are given to Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). "EPM" implies Hume, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, the page reference to Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and the Principles of Morals* (abbreviated "SBN"), ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

[2] On the life of Hume as an essayist, see James Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 143-97, 265-289; Roger Emerson, 'Hume's Intellectual Development: Part II', in *Essays on David Hume, Medical Men and the Scottish Enlightenment: Industry, Knowledge and Humanity* (London: Routledge, 2009), 116-20; James Harris, 'Hume's Life and Works'，in *The Oxford Handbook of Hume*, edited by Paul Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5-10. For a discission about his intellectual career, see John Robertson, 'Hume, David (1711–1776)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 28*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 740–58; M. A. Stewart, 'Hume's Intellectual Development, 1711–1752', in *Impressions of Hume*, edited by M. Frasca-Spada and P. J. E. Kail (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 11-58.

[3] Hume, "Of Public Credit", in *Essays*, 359.

this point, Hume compares ancient city-states with modern commercial states, elucidating how the latter augment their political power and deal with warfare differently from the methods employed by ancient republics. On the other hand, Hume diverges from Mandeville concerning the moral condition in a commercial state. As Hume notes, Mandeville's moral standards derive from a philosophical criterion, so that the passions conducive to social prosperity and politeness are, paradoxically, regarded as vices. Hume encapsulates this view by stating, "virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected."[1] In contrast, Hume adopts a political perspective, suggesting that trying to eradicate certain vices may exacerbate issues, given the impossibility of eliminating all defects in human nature.[2] He considers it more practical to delineate a desirable and achievable moral standard in a commercial era and underscores the necessity to "regulate anew our moral as well as political sentiments," thereby allowing certain passions once deemed "pernicious and blameable" to be viewed as "laudable or innocent."[3] Therefore, Hume directs his attention towards the emerging middling ranks to examine the potential for a commendable lifestyle within the modern commercial state, and this diverges from Mandeville's emphasis on the *Beau Monde*.

Hume's discussions address Hont's concerns and positions him as a significant theorist of the modern commercial state in accordance with Hont's criteria. As argued in the introduction, Hont's focus on eighteenth-century republican theorists reveals an attempt to integrate commercial elements into a republican framework, which results in analytical inconsistencies. Instead, focusing on Hume deepens our understanding of this challenge by not only addressing the power of the state, but also delineating the moral impact of commercial prosperity and refinement. This serves as a point of departure for his philosophical speculations about the nature of the commercial state in the upcoming chapters.

[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279.
[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279-280.
[3] EPM 2.21, SBN 181.

1. Hume’s Concern about Commercial States

Before examining Hume's *Essays* in detail, it is essential to clarify my point that theorizing the modern commercial state holds a central place in his work, exemplified by his term "the science of politics". While James Harris disputes Hume's intellectual continuity, I am inclined to embrace Duncan Forbes' perspective, which posits that Hume's "science of politics" represents a philosophical engagement with eighteenth-century English politics. I do so because the latter better encapsulates Hume’s ambitions. Hume illuminates how the rise of commerce reshaped the European landscape, and his "science of politics" places domestic politics within an international context. In addition, it is noteworthy that Hume’s conception of the "science of politics" diverges from contemporary "political science", since he retains a profound concern for morality within a commercial context built upon an accurate portrayal of human nature, which he inherits from earlier political philosophers. This serves as the foundation for a more profound investigation into Hume's philosophical speculations concerning the nature of the modern commercial state.

According to James Harris, it is a wild-goose chase to try to find a guiding thread in Hume’s intellectual explorations, in particular in his *Essays*. Harris argues that his intellectual biography of Hume is premised on the idea that Hume never pursued a singular project to which most of his works could be said to contribute. Instead, Harris’s Hume only aspires to be a famous man of letters enjoying independence.[1] When it comes to the *Essays*, Harris emphasizes Hume’s words that each essay could be considered "as a work apart", composed in ease and aimed at freeing the readers from any "tiresome stretch of attention or application". This supports Harris's strategy, wherein readers are encouraged to "go some way towards respecting Hume’s wishes by considering separately the essays".[2]

[1] James Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), ix, 13. A critical reflection of Harris’s approach, see Paul Russell, ‘Review of James Harris, Hume: An Intellectual Biography’. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 1 (2016).[https://philarchive.org/rec/RUSROJ]

[2] Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography,* 145. M. A. Box also reads this book as a collection of papers

Not all scholars subscribe to Harris's interpretation.[1] Duncan Forbes, for instance, underscores the overarching aim to construct a "philosophical politics". Forbes advocates for a historical approach and examines Hume's intellectual journey as a cohesive effort to provide an intellectual foundation for the established, Hanoverian, regime.[2] Two key points merit further clarification here. Firstly, Forbes underscores that Hume aims to apply the experimental method and the ethos of science to English politics. This should be regarded as the very essence of Hume *qua* "philosopher" in politics.[3] Secondly, Forbes warns against interpreting Hume's "philosophical or scientific Whiggism" as being "ministerialist", because it is "beyond court and country as much as it is beyond Whig and Tory".[4] It is reasonable to read the *Essays* as a philosophical reflection on the early modern commercial state, taking England as an example, even if Forbes himself never explicitly states this.

By emphasizing Hume's "science of politics", we can discern the analytical thread that runs through his *Essays*, that is, his ambition to outline how the rise of trade influenced politics and society in European monarchies. While acknowledging the authority of Machiavelli in

published periodically and intended to appeal to the public's interests of the day. The words Harris cited are from the advertisement to the first volume of *Essays, Moral and Political*, which was anonymously published in 1741. John Robertson contends that the majority of Hume's essays were political in nature. To emphasize the main theme, many of the polite essays were removed when these works were integrated into the final version of *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literature* as we know it today. In this light, there is room for debate about whether the words from that advertisement can be applied to the later *Essays*. See Harris, "Hume's Life and Works", 6-10; Robertson, "Hume, David (1711-1776)", 745-8; M. A. Box, *The Suasive Art of David Hume* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 111-62, esp. 112-6.

[1] Apart from Duncan Forbes, as we will explore, Margaret Watkins also partially challenge the fragmentary reading. She contends that Hume's *Essays* "share a broad common aim", and its practical aim to promote public benefit "does not vitiate their philosophical significance". Hence, she reads the *Essays* "as parts of a complex conversation between numerous parties, including their readers". In fact, Watkins takes the *Essays* to underline that "the *Essays* constitute part of Hume's philosophy". Margaret Watkins, *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 2, 4-5.

[2] Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, ix-x.

[3] Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 136. Forbes lays great emphasis on Hume's self-claim that he is proud of his independent and detached perspective as an observer of politics, "[t]he desire to be, and the claim that he has been…independent of the Establishment generally, as well as of parties and sects, is a constant refrain in his letters". With a nuanced analysis of three different stages of his essays, Forbes insists that behind these "dazzling mosaic of the most baffling complexity and difficulty", there is still a philosophical dimension, stating that "[t]here is far more consistency between the young and the old Hume". See Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 125-36.

[4] Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 139-40.

the realm of political analysis, Hume contends that Machiavelli's theory was defective in confining his study to the furious and tyrannical governments of ancient times or to the little disorderly principalities.[1] This refutation sets the stage for his emphasis on trade, which not only transforms the way governments of European monarchies operate and contributes to their military achievements, but also has a profound impact on their domestic social norms. As Hume notes, such "mighty revolutions" have happened in human affairs, and so many events have arisen "contrary to the expectation of the ancients".[2]

Viewed from the perspective, debates about trade and luxury have been a prominent and multifaceted topic since the late seventeenth century. These discussions transcended mere economic considerations, delving into moral and political issues, including investigations into the consequences of industry and public debt. Recognizing this, it is imperative to approach Hume's discussions with a holistic perspective that encompasses political economy, rather than fixating solely on the economic aspect.[3] Hume demonstrated a keen awareness of this evolving intellectual landscape. He examines "the effects of refinement both on private and on public life" to illustrate that the ages of refinement are "the happiest and most virtuous".[4]

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[1] Hume, "Of Civil Liberty", in *Essays*, 88.

[2] Hume, "Of Civil Liberty", in *Essays*, 89. Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 160; Frederick Whelan, *Hume and Machiavelli: Political Realism and Liberal Thought* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), 1-37, esp. 8-11, 15-19; Joel Landis, 'The Praises of Modernity: Hume and Machiavelli on Founders, Factions, and Faiths'. *The Review of Politics* 81, no. 2 (2019): 207–30.

[3] For an overview of these debates, see Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, ed., *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Istvan Hont, "The 'Rich Country –Poor Country' Debate Revisited': The Irish Origins and French Reception of the Hume Paradox", in *Jealousy of Trade*, 267-322. Hume's *Political Discourses* gained quick popularity in Europe, notably in France, upon their release in 1752. It advocated for France to adopt the political strategies of England and the Netherlands, known as the "new politics of the nations". This underscores how Hume's influence in the 18th-century intellectual sphere was intertwined with contemporary politics. Loïc Charles, "French 'New Politics' and the Dissemination of David Hume's *Political Discourses* on the Continent, 1750–70", in Wennerlind and Schabas ed., *David Hume's Political Economy*, 181-202.

[4] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 263. Scholars often focus on Hume's significant economic insights and his understanding of human behavior within commercial development. However, it is essential to note that these analyses tend to lean more towards economics than politics. My analysis emphasizes the political dimension, seeking to uncover how the economic aspects of trade expansion offer fresh perspectives on politics. For related researches, Carl Wennerlind and Margaret Schabas ed., *David Hume's Political Economy*, citation from 1-2; David Levy and Sandra Peart, "Sympathy and Approbation in Hume and Smith: A Solution to the Other Rational Species Problem." *Economics and Philosophy* 20, no.2 (2004): 331-349; Carl

Therefore, Hume agrees with Mandeville on the significance of trade, and goes a step further by using the impact of commerce as a key factor for distinguishing between the ancient and modern eras in his historical perspective.[1] Hume's "science of politics" seeks to recalibrate the impact of commerce on government and society within European monarchies. It is thereby justifiable to approach Hume's attempt as a response to Mandeville and an analysis of the modern commercial state, in particular how the rise of commerce strengthens the power of the state and reshapes its moral principles. This allows us to see the Scottish philosopher as a theorist of the commercial state.[2]

This approach is reinforced by considering Hume's intellectual development through the lens of the history of his works. The modern book *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* is a compilation of essays from two previously published books which reflect Hume's intellectual evolution through several distinct stages while at the state time showing a consistent concern running through them. The first source is Hume's two-volume *Essays, Moral and Political*, initially published in 1741 and 1742, with subsequent revisions. The majority of the first volume involves the science of politics, with a special concern about forms of government, and the eighteenth-century British politics compared to France. The second volume includes essays on ancient philosophy, the progress of arts and sciences, and various polite topics. The second source, Hume's *Political Discourses*, first published in 1752, were influenced by his study of Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws*. This engagement left a profound impact on Hume, leading him to explore the political economy of

Wennerlind, "The Link between David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* and His Fiduciary Theory of Money." *History of Political Economy* 33, no.1 (2001): 139-160; Richard Sturn, "The Sceptic as an Economist's Philosopher? Humean Utility as a Positive Principle." *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 11, no.3 (2004): 345-375.

[1] Carl Wennerlind, 'David Hume's Political Philosophy: A Theory of Commercial Modernization'. *Hume Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 247–70.

[2] I endorse Christopher Berry's claim that Hume's essay 'Of Luxury', first published in 1752 but re-titled 'Of Refinement in the Arts' in 1760, is deigned "designedly organised as a response to Mandeville", as the "most obvious contribution to the eighteenth-century debate". Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 142.

contemporary Europe. Contrasting it with antiquity, Hume explored the intricate interplay between politics and the economy across several essays within the work.[1] From this perspective, it becomes evident how Hume implemented his plan for a "science of politics." He enriched his early concerns about forms of government, as well as those about the progress of the arts and sciences, with detailed analyses of political economy, while introducing a comparative framework between the ancients and the moderns.

While Hume's interest in international affairs does not allow us to classify him as an "international theorist", he nonetheless conducts his analysis with one eye on the fact that modern commercial states exist within an international context. I agree with Forbes that a European rather than Scottish perspective is more proper to understand Hume's investigation of modern politics.[2] In addition, Hume has an international scope to claim that law of nations has "not the same force" as that of domestic laws, so it is crucial to note that rivalry among states plays a significant role when analyzing domestic politics. However, these remarks do not suffice to label Hume as a full-blown international political theorist.[3] His works contain only fleeting remarks and analyses on international politics, and he does not attempt to construct a comprehensive theory of international order from scratch. Instead, Hume's primary focus lies in domestic order, which includes topics related to commercial society and the constitution. As he emphasizes, the domestic government is more influenced

[1] Harris, "Hume's Life and Works", 6-10; Robertson, "Hume, David (1711-1776)", 745-8.

[2] For Hume's influence in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment, see Nicholas Phillipson, 'Hume as Moralist: A Social Historian's Perspective', in S. C. Brown ed., *The Philosophers of the Enlightenment* (Brighton: Harvester, 1979), 140-161; see also his 'The Scottish Enlightenment', in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, edited by Roy Porter and Michael Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 19–40; *David Hume: The Philosopher as Historian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). For related discussions, see Colin Kidd, 'The Phillipsonian Enlightenment'. *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 1 (2014): 175–90; 'Lord Dacre and the Politics of the Scottish Enlightenment'. *Scottish Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (2005): 202–20; James Harris, 'Phillipson's Hume in Phillipson's Scottish Enlightenment'. *History of European Ideas* 48, no. 2 (2022): 145–59; Max Skjönsberg, 'Hume and Smith Studies after Forbes and Trevor-Roper'. *European Journal of Political Theory* 19, no. 4 (2020): 623–35; John Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition', 137–78.

[3] T 3.2.11.3, SBN 568. For a general reappraisal of Hume as an international theorist, see Edwin Van De Haar, 'David Hume and International Political Theory: A Reappraisal'. *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 2 (2008): 225–42. For a recent examination of Hume's idea of international law, see Carmen Pavel, 'Hume's Dynamic Coordination and International Law'. *Political Theory* 49, no. 2 (2021): 215–42.

by "the concurrence of a multitude of causes", while foreign politics are contingent upon "accidents and chances, and the caprices of a few persons". Since Hume's science of politics revolves around "the general course of things", I stress on this piece of text and cast light on his analysis of domestic order.[1]

These threads converge into the conclusion that Hume's "science of politics" is dedicated to the analysis of how the rise of commerce redefines our understanding of domestic order in the context of international rivalry. Hume's intention is to establish a "science of politics" that encompasses more than what we typically categorize as "political science" today. It not only includes the examination of "particular forms of government" but also extends to areas such as morality and an understanding of human nature.[2] For instance, when Hume examines constitutional matters, he not only sheds light on the forms of civil government and party politics, but also engages with the speculative principles of civil government, such as the original contract and passive obedience. Moreover, he extends his analysis to issues concerning morality, such as the advantages of luxury to cure idleness. Hence, Hume's science of politics encompasses a more profound objective to disclose the moral doctrine in different political and social contexts. In the following part, I will elucidate the interplay between politics and economy, with a comparative perspective between ancient city-states and modern commercial states.

2. Economy and Political Power, Ancient and Modern[3]

Building upon the earlier analysis rooted in Hume's central concern in his *Essays*, we can delve deeper into how the interplay between the economy and politics differs in modern

[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays*, 254-5.

[2] Hume, "That Politics may be reduced to a Science", in *Essays*, 16. Here I disagree with McArthur's claim that Hume's overarching focus is on the machinery and functioning of government rather than abstract ones about its nature and foundation, and that Hume's analyses "look much more like what is now called political science". See McArthur, *David Hume's Political Theory*, 14-15.

[3] For related discussion, Yasuo Amoh, 'The Ancient-Modern Controversy in the Scottish Enlightenment', in *The Rise of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, edited by Tatsuya Sakamoto and Hideo Tanaka, (London: Routledge, 2003), 69–85.

commercial states compared to ancient city-states. Hume's comparative analysis sheds light on Mandeville's perspective, particularly regarding the treatment of wars in ancient and modern politics. While Mandeville's theory of sociableness applies broadly to civilized nations, he lacks elaboration on the differences between ancient and modern politics. In contrast, Hume's exploration of the "science of politics" begins with a focus on modern commercial states. He intricately dissects how moral values like frugality and austerity stem from the political and economic contexts of ancient city-states. This ethos is distinct from that we experience in modern societies. Hume's examination of the difference underlines the need to develop a fresh framework for moral evaluation a topic of significance in the coming chapters.

In the Western intellectual tradition, there has long been a strong emphasis on the moral and political virtues associated with frugality and a simple, austere lifestyle. Hume presents a compelling argument that these moral doctrines were originally formulated to address the specific social and political conditions prevalent in ancient city-states, characterized by low productivity and the constant threat of warfare. In such environments, these virtues were indispensable for the survival of these ancient political entities. The rise of international trade and the spread of luxury in the modern era have brought about significant transformations. Embracing a thriving commercial society not only enhances the well-being of its citizens but also strengthens the state by generating substantial tax revenue and building a strong military. In this modern context, there is an opportunity to reevaluate the parameters of a meaningful moral life in response to these changing circumstances.

2.1 The Logic of Ancient Republics

It helps to begin by exploring Hume's understanding of public order in ancient city-states. Ancient philosophers often view luxury as the opposite of poverty and brand it with negative moral connotations. However, Hume reveals that these perceptions are influenced by particular social and political contexts. Firstly, ancient political philosophy often portrays life in small-scale republics, with nations fragmented into minor commonwealths before

Rome's full consolidation of power.[1] Secondly, economic productivity was constrained due to the harsh rule of ancient tyrants, which deterred merchants and manufacturers, potentially depleting the population reliant on industry and commerce alone.[2] These ancient entities prioritized cultivating virtuous citizen-warriors and allocated significant resources to preparing wars. Hume's analysis illuminates the intricate connections between pagan moral doctrines and their socio-political contexts, urging a reevaluation of the dynamics between politics, economy, and morality in the modern era.

In Western intellectual history, the term "luxury" often carries negative moral connotation. Corresponding to the public dimension of this issue, there is a moral psychology aspect as well, rooted in the belief that individuals should live according to nature.[3] Take Aristotle's political science as an example. According to the natural hierarchy, reason is superior to desire, and the wise are expected to possess not only a comprehensive understanding of the natural order and human limits but also to adhere to nature's guidance, satisfying only inherent desires, which have inherent limits.[4] Household management, aimed at meeting daily needs, also operates within natural boundaries, allowing only an appropriate level of desire satisfaction. For instance, surplus goods may be produced for exchange to fulfill basic requirements rather than solely for profit-seeking.[5] Individuals who indulge in excessive desires and unrestrained pleasure are seen as undermining a rational way of life and enslaved by their desires.[6]

The Greek mindset deeply influenced Latin writers, who attributed the decline of the Roman

[1] In contrast, "modern Europe is shared out mostly into great monarchies". For related discussion, see Hume, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations", in *Essays*, 401-3.
[2] Hume, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations", in *Essays*, 419.
[3] Julia Annas, The *Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 135-220; Christopher Gill, *Learning to Live Naturally: Stoic Ethics and Its Modern Significance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).
[4] Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1111b15, 1118b15–18.
[5] Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1252b, 1256b.
[6] Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1151a10–12.

Republic's constitution to the influx of Asian luxuries. As Roman soldiers conquered barbarians and Asia, luxury flooded into Rome. Republican soldiers, once austere, gradually became indulgent, indulging in lavish banquets and luxuriating in grand villas instead of prioritizing public affairs. This shift towards extravagance led to reluctance to endure hardship and display courage on the battlefield. In this context, the intrepid citizen-warriors degenerated into effeminate men, forsaking their duty to safeguard the republic. Luxury eroded the pillars of republican liberty, "poverty and rusticity, virtue and public spirit", and had a negative effect on virtuous citizens and their homeland.[1]

From this intellectual background, the ancient philosophers are inclined to define natural desires as fundamental physical needs.[2] They admit that basic physiological needs must be satisfied, but these needs are by nature limited. Hence, poverty implies austerity, moderation, and self-restraint based on the rule of reason. Its antithesis, luxury, means intemperance, indulgence, and being vicious. In response to this perspective, Hume points out that the doctrines of frugality and poverty are rooted in specific social and political contexts, namely, the small-scale ancient republics faced with the risk of wars and limited productivity.

Hume begins by unveiling the economic foundation of ancient city-states. Within this framework, a fundamental dichotomy emerges between husbandmen tilling the land and

[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 275-6. Christopher Berry, "Hume and Superfluous Value (or the Problem with Epictetus' Slippers), in *David Hume's Political Economy*, 51; Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*, 67-74; Barbara Levick, 'Morals, Politics, and the Fall of the Roman Republic'. *Greece & Rome* 29, no. 1 (April 1982): 53–62; Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, tr. Oswyn Murray and Brian Pearce (London: Penguin Press, 1990); Moses Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 150-4.

[2] Due to space constraints, it is a regret that we cannot delve into the Christian critiques of luxury, and how early Christian thinkers learned a lot from the classical tradition. See George Lawless, 'Ambitio, Auaritia, Luxuria', in *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, edited by George Lawless (Oxford University Press, 1990), 3-8; Berry, *Idea of Luxury*, 87-98. In the late middle ages, the discussion about poverty laid the foundation for the modern theory of natural right. For related discussion, see Janet Coleman, 'Property and Poverty', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c. 1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 607-48. On Hume's anti-religious interpretation, see for instance, Ryu Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), citation from 102; Paul Russell, *The Riddle of Hume's Treatise: Skepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

manufacturers transforming agricultural outputs into practical or ornamental goods. In these underdeveloped societies with low productivity and rudimentary craftsmanship, most people engage in agricultural work to meet basic needs, leaving limited surplus for ornamental luxuries. In addition, time and experience improve arts and increase the population sustainable by the land, reflecting the evolutionary nature of economic and cultural development.[1]

The picture gets more complicated when considering the role of warfare. Ancient republics are known for their bellicose nature and dedication to cultivating virtuous soldiers. Hume asserts that this impression is valid; even the smallest republics raised and maintained armies surpassing those of eighteenth-century states, despite having fewer inhabitants.[2] This was achieved by directing the majority of agricultural surplus to the military sector rather than the arts. Citizens sacrificed personal comforts for public service and the sustenance of their military, illustrating their immense dedication to military objectives and collective commitment to maintaining a formidable military presence.

Among the ancient city-states, Hume highlights Sparta and Rome as exemplary cases. In the European intellectual tradition, Sparta is often associated with the virtues of military prowess and the rejection of luxurious indulgence. Hume admits that Sparta was more powerful than any contemporary state with an equal population, attributing this political power entirely to the absence of commerce and luxury. However, he is clear-minded that the Spartan regime was built upon two fundamental premises. The first is the division between citizens and Helots, with citizens engaging in military training while the Helots bear the burden of agricultural labor to support them. In fact, the case of Sparta epitomizes the slavery widespread in the ancient world. Hume deems the practice of slavery as the "chief

[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 256.
[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 257-8.

difference" between ancient and modern *domestic* economy.[1] The second premise involves laws that actively oppose luxury and trade, a deviation from the "more natural and usual course of things." These laws are enacted to ensure that citizens abstain from engaging in trade and manufacturing, as well as from indulging in ease and delicacy, and encourage them to dedicate themselves to military training and martial prowess.[2] This Spartan model emphasizes the deliberate suppression of luxury and commerce in favor of military strength.

Compared to the semi-mythic Sparta,[3] republican Rome was organized in a natural way, yet it grappled with a predicament similar to Sparta's. Roman citizens, enjoying equal legal status and actively participating in public affairs, demonstrated their loyalty to republican ideals. Hume notes that "this amor patriæ" (love of country) likely intensified in such a situation, particularly when the public is almost constantly under threat, and individuals are constantly obliged to expose themselves to the greatest dangers for its defense. Faced with successive wars, the republic had to shape its citizens into warriors. citizens had limited access to industry, pleasures, or refinement, as the labor of the farmers were left to maintain soldiers rather than artisans. This lifestyle, characterized by "their want of commerce and luxury," played a pivotal role in the military power of these ancient states.[4] The necessity of continuous warfare led to a society where the majority of citizens were engaged in the agricultural sector, supporting a significant military force vital for the defense and expansion of the republic.

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[1] Hume, “Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations”, in *Essays*, 383-4. For related researches, see Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Paul Millett, ‘Aristotle and Slavery in Athens’. *Greece & Rome* 54, no. 2 (2007): 178–209; Malcolm Heath, ‘Aristotle on Natural Slavery’. *Phronesis* 53, no. 3 (2008): 243–70. For a historical research, see Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 62-94. For recent investigation of slavery in modern order, see Andre Willis, ‘The Impact of David Hume’s Thoughts about Race for His Stance on Slavery and His Concept of Religion’. *Hume Studies* 42, no. 1 (2016): 213–39; Zhu Huahui. ‘Wealth, Domination, and the State: Adam Smith on the Abolition of Slavery and the Foundations of Modern Liberty’. *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 5 (2022): 124-151.

[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 257-9.

[3] Hume, “Of Commerce”, in *Essays*, 259.

[4] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 257-9.

The dilemma of public benefits and individual contentment brings the moral perspective to the forefront. The cases of Sparta and the Roman republic reveal that the ambition of the rulers must encroach on the luxury of citizens, just as the luxury of individuals must diminish the strength and restrain the ambition of the sovereign.[1] From an economic standpoint, compulsory military service can be seen as akin to "a heavy tax."[2] Hume's assertion that the pursuit of ease and delicacy is a natural inclination raises the question of why the majority of citizens seemed content and compliant with policies that contradicted this inclination. Hume's recognition of pride as an essential passion in human nature, subject to skillful manipulation by politicians, is a crucial aspect of his analysis of ancient republics. Despite the imposition of an obligation to serve the defense of the republic for all citizens, politicians had the means to enact laws and craft narratives that fostered a sense of "honour and revenge more than pay".[3] This manipulation of citizens' passions redirected their natural inclinations towards a readiness to serve their city-state with valor.

In ancient republics, the specter of persistent warfare loomed large. Hume attributed this continuous state of conflict to various factors, including the martial spirit, love of liberty, mutual emulation, and the prevailing hatred among nations. As a result, the ancient republics were almost "in perpetual war". Given the relatively modest size of these political entities, the city-states were vulnerable to incursions. Furthermore, the military organization and the prevalence of plunder underscored the intense and often brutal nature of ancient battles. Cities endured sieges, and the aftermath of defeat brought profound suffering—soldiers sought revenge, wives were raped, and many faced the menace of enslavement. Hence, citizens were deliberately nurtured as courageous soldiers, instilled with a readiness to defend their city-state's independence and liberty, even at the peril of their own lives. This was deemed essential in the face of encroachments from neighboring states.[4]

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[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 257.
[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 259.
[3] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 259.
[4] Hume, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations", *in Essays*, 404-6.

In return for their bravery and dedication, the intrepid warriors received honor and recognition as heroes, with citizens encouraged to emulate them and seek glory through courageous deeds on the battlefield, attaining esteemed status. Moreover, politicians in these republics played a crucial role in promoting frugality among citizens.[1] This emphasis served a dual purpose: directing economic output towards military expenditures rather than luxury, and shaping citizens accustomed to a simple, disciplined life, better equipped for the rigors of war. Frugality and courage thus formed the foundational principles of ancient republics, ensuring stability and vitality by shaping citizens' behavior and aspirations, highlighting the intertwined relationship between politics, culture, and moral ideals in ancient republics.

Hume thereby develops a systematic examination of public order in ancient nations, and reveals the intricate relationship between the economy, politics, and moral ideals, illustrating how these factors interweave to shape the values and behaviors of ancient societies. While acknowledging the achievements of the ancient civilizations, Hume is not blind to the heavy cost associated with their great political power. The ancient city-states existed during the early stages of human civilization, where access to advanced arts and skills was limited. Faced with the imperative of maintaining a robust military force, ancient city-states imposed strict prohibitions on indulgence and luxury. They directed their limited surplus from agriculture to support soldiers, prioritizing military needs over the development of arts and industries. Hume underscores that the great power of ancient states over modern ones can likely be attributed to their lack of commerce and luxury. In this context, "ancient policy was violent, and contrary to the more natural and usual course of things".[2] Moral standards were intertwined with the social and economic condition, where politicians endorsed sumptuary laws during peacetime and emphasized the pursuit of glory in battle. This intricate interplay between economic necessity and moral values formed the foundation of their social and

[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 257-8.
[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 258-9.

political structure, enabling them to maintain power despite significant costs. Hume's approach acts as a counterbalance to an unreasonable attachment to ancient moral ideals. His aim is not to criticize the ancients or portray their political systems as incompatible with human nature, but rather to suggest that modern societies have the opportunity to reevaluate their own political and moral principles in light of their unique historical circumstances.

2.2 Modern Commercial States

As we have discussed earlier, ancient city-states prioritized the enhancement of their power, often at the expense of trade and manufacturing. However, it is inconceivable for us to return to that status. In a modern political context, it is more advisable to follow "the common bent of mankind" and foster all the improvements which it can achieve.[1] As Hume demonstrates, an advantage of the modern commercial state is that it allows for the prosperity of the public without subjecting individuals to violence and poverty.

Hume suggests that commerce helps coordinate the common good and the natural inclination of human beings. He notes that the greatness of a state and happiness of its subjects are "commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce".[2] When a modern state embraces a commercial society, these thriving industries provide employment for a large workforce convertible to soldiers during times of conflict and generate substantial tax revenue for the government. Both are critical for enhancing the military strength of a commercial state. The public thereby becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of these private individuals. Conversely, the individuals can enjoy greater security in the possession of their trade and wealth due to the power of the public.

On the one hand, modern commercial states facilitate the fulfillment of desires and the

[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 260.
[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 255-6.

growth of industries. During times of peace, the surplus is directed towards maintaining manufacturers and advancing the arts.[1] As arts and skills progress, there is an increasing surplus that can be channeled into producing ornaments and non-essential items, fostering opportunities for indulgence and vanity. Increased productivity motivates individuals to enhance their skills and industry in exchange for desired pleasures, as "[e]verything in the world is purchased by labor; and our passions are the only causes of labor."[2]

On the other hand, the proliferation of industries enhances the power of the state as well. During wartime, governments need to conscript additional individuals to address military challenges, and it is easier to convert those engaged in manufacturing into soldiers than those in agriculture, as agricultural production provides essential goods with little or no room for reduction.[3] Besides the manpower advantage for conscription, a thriving commercial state also has more taxes to collect, which help serve the public and "maintain or support its fleets and armies".[4] Conversely, in a nation lacking these industries, subjects may become lazy and indolent, and the tax burden imposed by military needs could overwhelm the society. Hume summarizes that manufactures increase the state's power by storing up labor that the public can claim without depriving anyone of necessities. "[T]he more labor…is employed beyond mere necessaries, the more powerful is any state."[5]

The refinement of industry serves as a valuable indicator of the progress of a commercial society and the power of the state. By using surplus production to support soldiers in emergencies, modern society resolves the tension between individual well-being and public power featuring in ancient republics. When surplus labor contributes to the production of fine arts or luxury, it increases satisfaction for everyone in modern society.[6] This implies

[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 261.
[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*,260-1.
[3] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*,261-2.
[4] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in Essays, 272.
[5] Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays*, 261-262; "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 272.
[6] Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays,* 256.

that people in a commercial state can align with the "more natural and usual course of things," and establish a synergy between individual happiness and public power. The development of industries and luxuries results in "the government [being] great and flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous".[1]

Apart from the analysis of the interplay between commerce and political power, Hume provides a thoughtful response to concerns raised by rigorous moralists regarding the corrupting influence of luxury on soldiers.[2] Hume's responses are twofold. Firstly, Hume, echoing Mandeville's observation, argues that moralists exaggerate the decline of courage in the modern era. While politeness and refinement may temper raw courage driven by anger, courage driven by a sense of honor is more constant and governable, because it is nurtured by sustained training, capable of being coordinated with discipline and martial skill. Hume emphasizes that contemporary warfare demands courage built upon a sense of honor, rather than relying solely on soldiers' natural disposition.[3] This argument reflects a notable transformation in the military sphere. The power of a large commercial state relied more on well-trained soldiers with martial spirit and discipline, cultivated through industry and training, rather than a small group of citizen-warriors with martial virtue.[4] Therefore, financial support and human resources from thriving industries became indispensable. Commercial prosperity and industrial development cultivated numerous diligent workers who could be converted into intrepid soldiers when needed, enhancing the power of the state in dealing with international conflicts. Martial spirit based on cultivated honor is more fitting for an age of knowledge and refinement.[5]

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[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays,* 258-261; "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 272.
[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 275-6.
[3] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 274-5.
[4] John Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 2009). Hume also expressed his admiration of militia in his essay, "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth", in *Essays*, 519-21, 525, 527.
[5] As Berry notes, "these fighters will benefit not only from the technology that a civilized society can command but also from the overall higher level of intellectual competence". Comparatively, those "ignorant and unskillful'' soldiers of rude nations "are ineffective against trained troops armed with sophisticated weaponry. A further consequence of this is that the quintessentially male virtue of courage is now passé." Berry, "Hume and Superfluous Value", 56-7.

Hume's second argument addresses the misconception drawn by Latin writers from Rome's decline and fall. He contends that widespread corruption was less a result of luxury and the arts, and more a consequence of "ill-modeled government and the unlimited extent of conquests".[1] While wealth inherently appeals to everyone due to the pleasure it brings, what distinguishes a civilized government is its ability to properly regulate wealth to prevent the citizens' moral corruption. Hume emphasizes that nothing can restrain or regulate the love of money except a sense of honor and virtue. In Rome's case, endless conquests led to the influx of Asian luxuries and disrupted established moral standards without establishing a new framework. Therefore, the blame lies more in the failure to discover a novel form of honor rather than the introduction of luxury.[2]

In summary, this part contends that Hume's work builds upon Mandeville's insights by exploring the interactions between politics, economy and morality in modern states, contrasting them with ancient city-states. Hume illustrates how the moral principle of frugality was deeply ingrained in the political and economic systems of ancient republics. However, with the advent of commerce, modern states can enhance their power without compromising individual happiness or defying human nature. This is achieved through increased taxation and a disciplined workforce that can be mobilized for military purposes. Hume suggests the necessity of redefining the moral framework to evaluate refinement and political authority in the context of modern states, setting the stage for a discussion on reassessing luxury from a politician's perspective in the subsequent part.

[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 276; Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 104ff; Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Second Edition) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 199–201, 237.

[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 276; McArthur, *David Hume's Political Theory*, 96-100.

3. Luxury and Morality in a Commercial Society[1]

In the previous part, I explored Hume's observation that significant power of modern commercial states is derived from commercial prosperity, refining Mandeville's observations on commercial societies. However, unlike Mandeville, who contends that public benefits come with the price of private vices, Hume is more optimistic about the harmony between public benefits and a moral life in a commercial society, arguing that commerce not only transforms domestic life but also necessitates a new moral standard. Hume sees the flourishing of commerce as a catalyst for productivity and the enjoyment of refinements, leading to progress in knowledge, the liberal arts, social interaction, and manners. He believes it essential for theorists to develop a coherent framework of moral appraisal suitable in a commercial era.

As I will demonstrate below, Hume contrasts his own political perspective with Mandeville's philosophical viewpoint on the moral appraisal of modern commercial states, delineating three key differences.[2] First and foremost, he adopts Mandeville's insight on the semantic ambiguity of "luxury" but introduces a distinction between "innocent luxury" and "vicious luxury" based on political and motivational criteria. Secondly, this observation extends to a sociological dimension, with Hume shifting the focus to the industrious middling ranks, to replace Mandeville's emphasis on the *Beau Monde* known for luxury and extravagance. Lastly, Hume offers a systematic analysis of the laudable and moral life among the rising middling ranks in a commercial society, captured by the "indissoluble chain" linking "industry, knowledge, and humanity".[3] I will investigate these three aspects respectively.

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[1] We cannot provide a social and economic background of the rise of luxury but to name a few important works: Celina Fox, *The Arts of Industry in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Joel Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: An Economic History of Britain 1700-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Margaret Jacob, *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279.

[3] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 271.

3.1 Redefining Luxury

In this section, I will begin by clarifying the concept of "luxury." As I will demonstrate, both Mandeville and Hume draw from ancient wisdom in defining "luxury" broadly as anything beyond necessity.[1] While Mandeville views luxury as politically acceptable yet morally reprehensible, Hume offers a more nuanced reasoning. He recognizes the semantic ambiguity of "luxury" and insists that a certain degree of luxury enjoyment is inherent to human nature. This leads him to differentiate between "innocent luxury" and "vicious luxury," associating the former with the notion of "refinement". This differentiation forms the basis of his examination of the middling ranks.

According to Mandeville, items that are "not immediately necessary to make Man subsist as he is a living creature" can be categorized as luxury. In saying so is to emphasize that the concept of "luxury" is so inclusive that it is hard to have an exact definition of what constitutes luxury. In fact, many things once seen as luxury are now deemed essential for the destitute reliant on public charity. He admits that defining "luxury" in this way is too inclusive and ambivalent, yet any relaxation of its boundaries would lead to more ambiguity. Terms like "comforts of life" will be equally vague that their implications become challenging to discern, and any initial concession would result in an endless retreat, leaving one to ponder, "I'm afraid we shan't know where to stop".[2]

Following Mandeville, Hume also adopts a broader definition of luxury. But his subsequent efforts indicate a departure from Mandeville's viewpoint to mitigate its negative moral connotations. Hume's opening statement, that luxury is a word of "an uncertain

[1] For a general discussion of luxury in western intellectual history, see John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*; Hont, "The early Enlightenment debate on commerce and luxury", 379-418. Hume's treatment of luxury, see Andrew Cunningham, 'David Hume's Account of Luxury'. *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 27, no. 3 (2005): 231–50.

[2] *Fable I*, 108-9, 169.

signification, and may be taken in a good as well as in a bad sense",[1] sets the tone for his investigations, revealing that the complexity and richness of the concept defies any oversimplified moral label. We can identify several steps he takes.

Above all, Hume employs the term "refinement" to denote a certain part of luxury that can be beneficial and redefine it by appealing to the natural inclination of human beings. Hume prefers the words "refinement" and "finer arts", because the term "luxury" (in Latin "*luxuria*", derived from "*luxus*") suggests excess in its etymology, and carries negative connotations related to its effects on characters such as effeminacy, decline, inequality, and a lack of virtue. When it came to the 1760s, Hume even changed the title of his essay from "Of Luxury" to "Of Refinement in the Arts". In addition to the prudent wording, Hume also maintains that it is a natural inclination of human beings to seek sensual gratifications. The category of "luxury" can include all those great refinement in the gratification of the senses, none of which can "of itself be esteemed vicious".[2] This subtle change in terminology reflects his intention to distance himself from those accustomed to view luxury in a negative light, and provides a solid foundation for further analysis.[3] In other words, refinement on the pleasures or convenience of life "has no natural tendency to beget venality and corruption".[4]

Nonetheless, redefining luxury as refinement does little to reduce the complexity of philosophical analysis to distinguish "innocent luxury" and "vicious luxury". Hume rightly notes that the innocence or culpability of luxury varies with factors like age, location, and individual circumstances, making it challenging to precisely delineate the line between virtue and vice.[5] Echoing Mandeville, he admits that as the arts and culture progress, what

[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 268, 275-6.
[2] Hume, “Of Refinement in the Arts”, in *Essays*, 268, 279.
[3] Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 94-95. As Hume states, his discusses "the finer arts, which are commonly denominated the arts of luxury". Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays*, 256.
[4] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 276.
[5] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 268. As for the negative usages of "refinement" in Hume’s philosophy, see Donald W. Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 217-25.

was considered a luxury in the past may become a necessity in the future. Additionally, different regions of the world can have varying standards for what counts as luxury, due to their social structure and specific background. As he maintains, a degree of luxury may be "ruinous and pernicious in a native of Switzerland", but it can "fosters the arts, and encourages industry in a Frenchman or Englishman".[1]

In light of the temporal and geographic variations, Hume deems it appropriate to establish a flexible benchmark for distinguishing between "innocent luxury" and "vicious luxury." On the one hand, luxury becomes pernicious or vicious when an individual indulges in it beyond their means, leading to impoverishment, or when it detracts from virtues like generosity and charity.[2] If luxury contributes to the public good, such as through private expenditures aiding the poor, it is not deemed harmful. This criterion aligns closely with production and refinement, as Hume classifies refinements as "innocent luxury" when they benefit the public.[3] On the other hand, Hume emphasizes the motivational impact of refinement as a solution to idleness, thereby qualifying his conception of "refinement" as the beneficial aspect of luxury. He argues that luxury, while morally corrupting if indulged in without temperance, can also serve to motivate individuals to work diligently and improve their quality of life.[4] Politicians, aiming for practical solutions, should harness luxury as a tool to address greater vices in human nature, rather than "cure every vice by substituting a virtue in its place".[5] Hume thereby contends that Mandeville is inconsistent in "talk[ing] of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society" as luxury, when properly managed, can have

[1] EPM, 'A Dialogue' 41, SBN 337.
[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 269, 279. This standard echoes his own early comment in his juvenile work, *Treatise*, that luxury can be vicious when it "draw[s] ruin upon us, and incapacitate[s] us for business and action". See T. 3.2.4.7, SBN 611. 269, 278.
[3] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 278-9.
[4] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 270; *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, in *Principal Writings on Religion Including Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and The Natural History of Religion*, ed. by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 110-1.
[5] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279-280. This view aroused wide debate among French scholars, and was adopted by Saint-Lambert in the Encyclopedia. See John Shovlin, "Hume's *Political Discourses* and the French Luxury Debate", in *David Hume's Political Economy*, 203-22.

positive societal effects.[1]

From the aforementioned analysis, we can see that Hume's distinction between "innocent luxury" and "vicious luxury" is driven more by political considerations than purely philosophical perspectives, which sets his approach apart from Mandeville's.[2] Hume acknowledges that avarice, or "the desire of gain," is a universal passion, operative across all times, all places, and upon all persons.[3] Hence, in a philosophical discussion, it is possible to deem luxury as vicious, and imagine a miraculous transformation of humanity where vices are eliminated, and various virtues abound. After all, from a philosophical perspective: "virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected".[4] However, such ideals are often too distant and impractical to serve as the primary basis for political decision-making. Magistrates and government officials should focus on practical possibilities and acknowledge that they cannot completely eradicate vices from human nature. Instead, they should prefer what is least pernicious to society. When it comes to luxury, Hume admits that excessive luxury can lead to various social problems, but it is still in general better than sloth and idleness. When luxury is entirely eliminated, it paves the way for sloth to take hold, leading to some other defects in human nature. It follows that "a mean uncultivated way of life prevails amongst individuals, without society, without enjoyment".[5] His aim is to strike a balance between the virtues of moderation and the dangers of excessive indulgence.

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[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279-280.

[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279. In addition, Hume diverges from the French physiocrats, who advocate for government intervention to curb luxury. See Tom Velk and A. R. Riggs. "David Hume's Practical Economics." *Hume Studies* 11, no. 2 (1985): 154-165; Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 118-20.

[3] Hume, "Of Civil Liberty", in *Essays*, 93; "Of the Rise of Arts and Sciences", in *Essays*, 113.

[4] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279.

[5] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279-80. Therefore, Hume chooses to defend a prosperous and civilized society from a political perspective, "I should, without much scruple, prefer, the latter [that is, refined living], in a view to politics at least". See Hume, "Of Money", in *Essays*, 293.

3.2 Refinements and the Rising Middling Ranks

Hume's analysis of refinement in the former section paves the way for his observation that the rising middling ranks are characteristic of modern commercial states. This challenges the association of "luxury" with the *Beau Monde* in Mandeville's discourse, suggesting a broader understanding of luxury as a pillar of modern commercial states.[1] In the previous chapter, we note that for Mandeville, luxury in a commercial society revolves around a specific class, the *Beau Monde* as a fashionable class throughout Christendom. They are dedicated to the pursuit of earthly ease and pleasure while meticulously adhering to social norms to avoid provoking public disapproval. Their primary concern is to be agreeable and maintain an appearance of good breeding. Their life is characterized by prodigal behavior, ostentation, dissimulation, and hypocrisy. It is this class that serves as the model for others, shaping the customs of society by disseminating indulgence and hypocrisy throughout every facet of life.[2]

Hume diverges from Mandeville's perspective and instead appreciates luxury within a limited scope, particularly admiring its role in fostering what he terms "innocent luxury," which he associates with the emerging middling ranks.[3] It is instructive to reference the debate between Hume and the Marquis de Mirabeau.[4] In response to Mirabeau's praise of "splendor and pomp" as a means of showcasing a monarch's hospitality, Hume contends that "[p]rodigality is not to be confounded with a refinement in the arts".[5] The former, he argues, is more of a remnant from the feudal era. Back then, vassals enjoyed ample leisure, making them ready for any disorder or mischief, so they were kept by the baron as perpetual retainers on his person. This situation necessitated the baron to exhibit his hospitality and invite the

[1] It helps to cite Hume's words as textual evidence. "The same principle of moral causes fixes the character of different professions, and alters even that disposition, which the particular members receive from the hand of nature". His words remind us to consider who best exemplify the character of commercial society, and speculate whether they can live a moral life. Hume, "Of National Character", in *Essays*, 198.
[2] Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bess*, II. x-xii.
[3] Schabas and Wennerlind, *A Philosopher's Economist*, 122.
[4] Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 118-20.
[5] Hume, *Essays*, 632.

vassals to live and enjoy society in his hall. The proceeds of agricultural activities were largely devoted to rustic hospitality by the baron or his officers.[1] These barons and knights, unacquainted with better enjoyments, were prone to indulging in prodigality. As this case shows, "idleness is the great source of prodigality at all times." In contrast, in a commercial and cultivated age, prodigality loses its allure. People from the lower and middle ranks, as well as those engaged in busy professions, tend to practice frugality.[2] Therefore, the extravagant spending admired by Mirabeau in the context of princely hospitality is now considered an outdated style of expenditure and should not be equated with true "refinement" analyzed by Hume.[3]

By substituting "refinement" for the more commonly used concept of "luxury", Hume traces the emergence of the middling ranks back to the breakdown of the feudal system. The feudal lords began to increasingly indulge in luxuries facilitated by international trade and squander wealth. Their subordinates, no longer content with "vicious idleness," sought to escape from the countryside to learn some calling or industry and live in an independent manner on the fruits of their own industry. Confronted with these emerging economic mechanisms and the rise of merchants, the noble class struggled to uphold their previous dominance, leading to a gradual loosening of the traditional power structures in the old system.[4] Towns and cities attracted people from diverse social strata who aspired to lead independent lives, and rose into powerhouses of prosperity and liberty. England experienced a profound transformation

[1] Hume, *History of England*, vol. 1, 462-4; vol. 2, 179. See Sabl, *Hume's Politics*, 66–8

[2] Hume, *Essays*, 632. As Susato astutely reminds us, this was the sole fundamental addition to the essay "Of Refinement" after its publication in 1752, though Hume made some minor revisions of expressions and changed its title from "Of Luxury" after the 1760 edition. Another text mentioning this issue is Hume's discussion of social change during Elizabeth's rule, where the nobles' cultivation of a taste for elegant luxury led to the decay of glorious hospitality. Hume contends that it is "more reasonable to think that this new turn of expense promoted the arts and industry, while the ancient hospitality was the source of vice, disorder, sedition and idleness". Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 119; Hume, *History of England*, vol. 2, 383; Shovlin, "Hume's *Political Discourses* and the French Luxury Debate", 209; comp. Watkins, *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays*, 94n.23.

[3] In fact, Hume insists the distinction between prodigality by lords and refinement in a commercial era. "Liberality in princes is regarded as a mark of beneficence", however, these "delicious cakes for the idle and the prodigal" are gained from "homely bread of the honest and industrious". See EPM 2.20, SBN 181.

[4] Hume, *History of England*, vol. 3, 76; Vol. 4, 384.

during this period. When it came to the early Stuart era, the benefits arising from economic prosperity were deemed solid and real, while distinctions of birth and title were increasingly viewed as empty and imaginary. Engaging in commercial activities in England was considered more honorable than in other European kingdoms, affording the nation a significant opportunity to develop its commerce.[1]

As a result, Hume argues that it is the middling ranks, characterized by their moderate enjoyment of luxury, rather than the *Beau Monde* analyzed by Mandeville, that serves as the exemplar in this commercial era. He summarizes the significant role the middling ranks play in both times of peace and in times of conflict: "trade and industry are really nothing but a stock of labour, which, in times of peace and tranquillity, is employed for the ease and satisfaction of individuals; but in the exigencies of state, may, in part, be turned to public advantage."[2] In this context, Hume focuses on the idea that trade has a positive impact on industry, diverging from the perspective of many mercantile theorists who emphasize the accumulation of metallic currency.[3] The emerging middling ranks are well aware that their financial security, social standing, and overall well-being relied on their diligence in work and their moderation in the enjoyment of luxury. They will develop characters marked by industry and temperance. This shift prompts us to reevaluate the possibilities for happiness and morality that arise from the pursuit of refinements in a commercial era. This will be explored in the next section.

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[1] Hume, *History of England*, vol. 4, 384; Vol. 5, 132; Vol. 6, 148; See also "Of Civil Liberty", in *Essays*, 93.

[2] Hume, *Essays*, 262-3. It is a defining transformation in the history of political economy to regard the true value of a society as not based on scarce metals but on labor and industry.

[3] Due to space constraints, we cannot delve deeply into the connections between Hume and the mercantile tradition. While Hume does argue that a thriving commercial society is crucial for a strong state, it is worth noting that he does not support mercantilist policies. We can find three pieces of evidence. The first is his refutation of the beggar-thy-neighbor approach to trading success in his essay "Of Jealousy of Trade." The second point is the importance of labor's value over the accumulation of metallic currency, as we mentioned earlier. Schabas also claims that "Hume was part of a broader movement that sought to discredit mercantilism, particularly its emphasis on a favorable balance of trade and the accumulation of specie". Apart from these, Hume also maintains that it is not advisable to take a mercantilist strategy to keep wages low to boost exports at the cost of creating a class of impoverished individuals. As Berry notes, "Hume is noncommittal about the Elizabethan Poor Law. It is, however, consistent with his stress on action and the virtue of industry that labourers are more deserving than sturdy beggars". See Margaret Schabas, "Temporal Dimensions in Hume's Monetary Theory", in *David Hume's Political Economy*, 127; Berry, "Hume and Superfluous Value", 64.

3.3 Morality and Happiness in a Commercial Era

As observed earlier, Hume's novel perspective on luxury, seen through the prism of refinement, enables him to propose a new moral framework suitable for commercial state characterized by intensive social interactions and commercial activities. His assertion that "the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous"[1] suggests that a life of virtue and happiness remains attainable in the commercial era, epitomized by the emerging middling ranks. This section delves into Hume's exploration of a moral framework suitable for modern commercial states. Firstly, while acknowledging happiness as a primary concern, Hume shifts his focus to the importance of action rather than idleness as suggested by ancient philosophers, and highlights the virtue of industry, as well as the progress of arts and sciences, resulting from active engagements. Secondly, he challenges Mandeville's emphasis on hypocrisy, arguing instead that only in a prosperous society can the liberal arts flourish, leading to the cultivation of moderation and refined enjoyment based on a redirection of passion.

Hume's first point is a new elucidation of happiness. Following the tradition of ancient philosophers, Hume holds happiness as the primary concern and "the great end of all human industry".[2] However, his conception of happiness diverges from that of the ancient philosophers. Ancient philosophical schools often associated happiness with a retreat from worldly affairs and dedication to contemplative reflection, while Hume asserts that happiness is intricately connected to worldly occupations and industry.[3] He identifies three sources of happiness: action, pleasure, and indolence, and focuses on action. While

[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 269; Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 98.

[2] Hume, "The Stoic", in *Essays*, 148-9. Ancient philosophers on this point in general, see Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 27-46. 120-31.

[3] Annas, The *Morality of Happiness*, 330-333; Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 115; James Moore, 'The Eclectic Stoic, The Mitigated Skeptic', in *New Essays on David Hume*, edited by Emilio Mazza and Emanuele Ronchetti (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007), 133–70; Neven Leddy and Avi S. Lifschitz, 'Epicurus in the Enlightenment: an introduction', in *Epicurus in the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2009), 1-11; Thomas Kavanagh, *Enlightened Pleasures: Eighteenth-Century France and the New Epicureanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Hsueh Qu, 'Hume's Stoicism: Reflections on Happiness and the Value of Philosophy'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 60, no. 1 (2022): 79–96.

indolence provides intervals of rest from labor to prevent exhaustion, excessive idleness can lead to languor and lethargy. Hume lays stress on active engagement in commercial activities, where individuals find fulfillment and pleasure in their work. He argues that industry and the pursuit of arts lead to perpetual occupation, offering rewards not only in the fruits of labor but also in the enjoyment derived from the work itself.[1] When industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures as the fruit of their labor.[2] This perspective challenges the classical understanding of happiness and proposes a moral framework suited to the demands of a commercial age.

The engagement in activities will shape human behavior and habits. He cites Virgil's words, "*Curis acuens mortalia corda*", to underscore the role of desire as a potent driving force.[3] Hume posits that our passions drive us to labor, and those engaged in profitable endeavors develop a passion for their work, finding fulfillment in witnessing the growth of their fortunes.[4] This desire for greater profits serves as a potent motivator, spurring individuals to overcome indolence and invest more effort. As a result, the mind becomes invigorated, expanding its capabilities through diligent engagement in honest industry, thus satisfying natural desires while warding off the emergence of unnatural ones fostered by idleness.[5] Moreover, consistent practice and attention lead to the refinement of arts and skills, reshaping habits over time. Hume underscores the pivotal role of habit in molding the mind, as virtues like punctuality, concentration, and diligence become ingrained through repeated practice. As habits strengthen, behaviors contrary to these virtues become less appealing, reinforcing the cultivation of a virtuous disposition.[6]

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[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 269-270; "Of Interest", in *Essays*, 300-301.
[2] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 270.
[3] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 267.
[4] Hume, "Of Commerce", *in Essays*, 261; "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 301.
[5] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 270.
[6] In this context, Hume's use of the term "industry" encompasses not only various aspects of the political economy but also denotes people's virtues and character. It signifies the profound impact of desire, passion, and habit on individuals' work ethics and moral dispositions. McArthur, *David Hume's Political Theory*, 24-30; Watkins, *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays*, 86-96.

Having highlighted the disposition of industry, Hume also recognizes that the development of industry leads to progress in the arts, sciences, and knowledge.[1] As the refinement increases, there would be advancements in the arts and sciences. In Hume's discourse, the term "art and science" is a frequently used phrase that encompasses not only various fine arts but also skills related to agriculture and manufacturing.[2] Beyond these productive skills, Hume also underscores that commercial prosperity fosters an appreciation for knowledge in the humanities, particularly in "high culture" nourished by a dynamic and open-minded intellectual environment. Once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, human minds will turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. As a result, human beings of this age can enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, "to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body".[3]

Hume's elucidations challenge the classical view surviving from ancient times. In ancient philosophy, idleness or leisure was often seen as a prerequisite for higher pursuits, such as political engagement or philosophical contemplation. Labor, on the other hand, was considered a burden of necessity and was often relegated to the slaves. However, Hume's view is quite different. Idleness is no longer regarded as a noble state but serves merely as preparation for industry or, in some cases, as a form of evil that requires correction. Labor, which was previously seen as burdensome suffering and relegated to slaves in classical philosophy, is now seen as an essential support for happiness. However, Hume's departure from the classical perspective does not necessarily mean he neglects ancient wisdom. In the

[1] Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays*, 260-1; "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 279.

[2] Hume's conception of the term "arts" extends beyond traditional forms of art with aesthetic implications, such as "sculpture, painting, music as well as poetry", and also encompasses more practical and utilitarian creations, like tables and chairs, saddles and plows. In Hume's time, the term "science" was synonymous with various forms of knowledge and learning. Hence, the combination of "arts and sciences" represents a broad spectrum of human intellectual and practical endeavors that encompass not only creative and artistic expressions but also various branches of knowledge and expertise. See Hume, "Of Civil Liberty", in *Essays*, 90; Schabas and Wennerlind, *A Philosopher's Economist*, 131-2.

[3] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 271; "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", in *Essays*, 112.

following paragraphs, we will see that Hume gradually reintroduces some classical views on learning and happiness, indicating a nuanced and evolving perspective.

Hume's second contribution lies in his defense of a viable moral life in a commercial state in contrast to Mandeville's emphasis on hypocrisy. He rejects Mandeville's notion that good breeding only involves self-centered passions and vanity, and emphasizes genuine concern for others and a notion of moderation, promoted by the progress of arts and sciences. Engagement with liberal arts fosters refined taste and judgment, leading to enduring happiness beyond material pursuits.

Thanks to the prevalence of Augustinianism, a range of eighteenth-century theorists capture the "theatricality", or widening gap between reality and appearances in civilized societies.[1] Mandeville argues that to maintain public order, individuals must restrain their self-centered tendencies and conform to social norms, displaying politeness and good manners to earn respect and satisfy their passion of self-liking. Virtue involves subduing all passions, more austere than good breeding or politeness, which are derived from those giving their vices the appearance of virtues. Hypocrisy is thereby the underlying logic of morality and good life in a commercial era.

Set against this background, it is notable that there was an "(almost) complete absence of the issue of possible increase of hypocrisy" in Hume's works.[2] Terms like "hypocrisy" and "dissimulation" in Hume's *Essays* are concentrated in a footnote in the essay "Of National Characters", where Hume critiques the mentality of the clergy.[3] In this footnote, Hume clarifies that the hypocrisy among clergy arises from their need to conceal their inability to

[1] Edward Hundert, 'Augustine and the Sources of the Divided Self'. *Political Theory* 20, no. 1 (1992): 86–104; Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 106.
[2] Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 105-8, the citation from 108.
[3] Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 111.

adhere strictly to the ascetic principles of Christianity, which contradict natural human inclinations. While some individuals may be momentarily drawn to ascetic religions, very few possess the unwavering commitment needed to adhere to such rigorous principles. Clergymen, being drawn from the common mass of mankind, often feel compelled to feign more devotion than they actually possess and promote superstition through continued grimace and hypocrisy.[1] Hume argues that both the clergy and their followers must consistently dissemble to gain respect and support from others, while maintaining an appearance of extreme contempt for worldly life.[2]

For Hume, the emphasis on the middling ranks serves to illustrate that leading a moral life in a commercial society is not only feasible but also preferable, countering Mandeville's assertion. Mandeville's depiction of the *Beau Monde* suggests that self-centered passions are insurmountable, with sociableness merely a facade to dissimulate the pursuit of compliments from their companions. In contrast, Hume argues that from the perspective of middling ranks, self-centered passions, such as vanity and the pursuit of sensual pleasures, when moderated, are not inherently vicious but can instead motivate industriousness and promote balanced enjoyment of prosperity. As Hume demonstrates, it is the middling ranks, rather than the *Beau Monde*, that have a better grasp of moderation, noting that excessive indulgence undermines true pleasures.[3]

Hume's exploration of refinements encompasses various sensual pleasures including material wealth, but he is more interested in the study and appreciation of finer arts like poetry, eloquence, music, and painting.[4] He contrasts prodigality with refinement, highlighting the importance of propriety and gratification in these forms of pleasure. Pomp

[1] Hume, "Of National Character", in *Essays*, 199-200; Hume, *History*, Vol.5, 304.
[2] EPM "Dialogue" 55, SBN 343. See also Hume's investigation of the independents, Hume, *History*, Vol.5, 441-2. This paragraph is reminiscent of Mandeville's critique of those who led a life of poverty in surface but indulge themselves in private.
[3] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 271.
[4] Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion", in *Essays*, 7.

and prodigality, according to Hume, represent feverish and empty amusements of luxury. Those solely indulging in such luxuries without an appreciation for ambition, study, or conversation are deemed lacking in vigor and intelligence. In contrast, greater and more refined pleasures are found in conversation, society, study, health, nature's beauty, and introspection on one's conduct.[1]

According to Hume, engaging with the liberal arts can, by influencing the individuals' disposition and judgement, get them to become more civilized, sociable, and refined as members of society. A serious devotion to the sciences and liberal arts "softens and humanizes the temper", diverting attention from mundane concerns to foster reflection and tranquility.[2] By sharpening sensibility to beauty and deformity, individuals develop an appreciation for subtle details, experiencing an agreeable melancholy that suits love and friendship. Cultivated individuals with a delicate taste are often equipped for prudent interactions due to their refined emotions.[3] Moreover, liberal arts also help us strengthen judgment and enhance individuals' capacity for happiness. With their enlarged scope and refined sensibility, well-educated individuals derive more happiness from what pleases their taste than from gratifying their appetites.[4] They become indifferent to pursuits that preoccupy others and instead focus on what truly satisfy them. Recognizing the scarcity of great pleasures compared to great pains, they prioritize aspects of life within their control, leading to a more profound and enduring sense of happiness and contentment.[5] As Hume summarizes, "the happiest disposition of mind is the virtuous".[6]

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[1] EPM 9.25, SBN 283–4; "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 269; "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion", in *Essays*, 5.
[2] Hume, "The Sceptic", in *Essays*, 170;
[3] Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion", in *Essays*, 4, 6-7; "The Sceptic", in *Essays*, 170. Allan Silver, 'Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Social Theory and Modern Sociology'. *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 6 (1990): 1474–1504, esp. 1479-80.
[4] Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion", in *Essays*, 5.
[5] Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion", in *Essays*, 3-6.
[6] Hume, "The Sceptic", in *Essays*, 168.

Therefore, in a commercial and civilized society, good breeding goes beyond mere adherence to social norms and concealing self-centered passions with politeness, as Mandeville supposes. Hume suggests that being sociable requires a redirection of human passions and a sincere regard for others' well-being. Engaging in cultural pursuits has the capacity to temper emotions, reshape character, and enrich the pleasures of social interactions. Hume asserts that in more luxurious ages, individuals can "feel an encrease of humanity" from conversation, contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. "As these refined arts progress, people become more sociable."[1] Consequently, Hume argues that sociableness is more than mere pretense; it necessitates a foundation rooted in compassion and genuine emotional connection.[2]

To summarize, Hume challenges Mandeville's depiction of morality in civilized society as rooted in dissimulation and hypocrisy. Instead, he posits that the emerging middling ranks embody the moral ideal of this era. This is in contrast with Mandeville's focus on the *Beau Monde*. Hume sheds light on the term "luxury," distinguishing innocent refinements from vicious luxury, underlining the significance of this distinction from a politician's standpoint. Moreover, he emphasizes the "indissoluble chain" linking "industry, knowledge, and humanity",[3] suggesting that prosperity enables the flourishing of liberal arts and contributes to individual happiness based on reshaping their dispositions and judgment rather than mere pretense.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored Hume's *Essays*, which aim to establish a "science of politics"

[1] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 271.
[2] We can identify this point from Hume's critiques of ancient philosophy. Hume admits that "magnanimous firmness" of Stoic philosophic sages, however, their philosophy offers us "refined system of selfishness, and reason[s] out of all virtue, as well as social enjoyment". This implies that Hume's own philosophy aims to present how we can cultivate virtue adaptable to "social enjoyment". See EHU 5.1, SBN 40 (italic as my emphasis); Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 175-80.
[3] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 271.

suitable for a commercial era. Hume emphasizes the transformative significance of trade in reshaping our political landscape. He argues that this evolution necessitates a moral and political philosophy that can adapt to the shift from republics to commercial states. In response to Mandeville's assertion, "Private Vices, Public Benefits," Hume offers a nuanced perspective on two critical issues: the nature of state power and the moral dimensions of life in a commercial society.

Firstly, Hume acknowledges Mandeville's concerns regarding the expansion of commerce and examines the intricate relationship between economic activity and political authority. He argues that modern states have evolved alternative methods to ensure national security, departing from practices employed by ancient city-states. Hume suggests that modern states should not prioritize bolstering their power at the expense of the happiness of their subjects. This perspective underscores the necessity for a new moral framework that aligns with the acceptance of luxury in a thriving commercial society.

Secondly, Hume presents a new moral ideal suited for a commercial society, contrasting with Mandeville's focus on the *Beau Monde* and their hypocritical lifestyle. He highlights the rising middling class, characterized by modest enjoyment of refinements and the virtue of industry. By challenging the notion that luxury is inherently vicious, Hume proposes a moral framework grounded in the indissoluble chain linking "industry, knowledge, and humanity," exemplified by the rising middling ranks. The middling ranks not only drive prosperity and progress in arts and sciences, but also foster the growth of liberal arts and moderate social interactions, resulting in a new moral standard. Here, politeness and good manners are not mere dissimulation; they reflect genuine concern for companions and contribute to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Hence, understanding Hume’s response to Mandeville in this way shows that he is indeed a theorist of morality in a commercial state and that part of his project aligns with the project outlined by Hont.

Hume's *Essays* are dedicated to crafting "a science of politics" suitable for a commercial era, with this era understood as the society in which Hume himself lived—the Britain shaped by the political legacy of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. Recognizing the pivotal role of the Glorious Revolution, Hume views it as a watershed moment for England, reshaping its old constitution to adapt to the modern era and leaving a lasting impact on eighteenth-century English politics and the evolution of modern political philosophy. In the upcoming chapter, I will cast light on Hume's historical analysis of the Glorious Revolution, seeking insights into the emergence of the modern commercial state in England. This historical exploration will lay the groundwork for the philosophical analysis in the final two chapters.

Ch.3 Constitutional Transformation in an International Context

Hume's Analysis of the Glorious Revolution[1]

In the previous chapter, we delved into Hume's *Essays* to explore his conception of the modern commercial state, with particular focus on the power of the state and the new social ethos that allows innocent luxury. These analyses are situated within the broader political context of eighteenth-century England.[2] Moreover, Hume attributes England's transition to a modern commercial state largely to the Glorious Revolution, a pivotal event in its history. In this chapter, our attention shifts to Hume's examination of the Glorious Revolution, as it provides insight into his understanding of the political foundations of a commercial state in England. By exploring Hume's historical analysis of this significant event, we can better unravel his thinking about the modern commercial state.[3]

This chapter also provides a compelling historical case study examining the relationship between state power and political authority in a commercial era, addressing concerns raised by Hont. While Hont emphasizes how international trade reshapes our understanding of politics and calls for theorizing the commercial state, he overlooks the link between them. The key issue in theoretical terms is the balance of liberty and political authority. As we will

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* This chapter draws on similar material to Shuai ZHANG. "International Rivalry and Ancient Constitution: Hume on the Glorious Revolution and the Making of Modern Constitution in England". *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 1(2023): 1-26.

[1] The version of Hume's *History* referenced in this chapter is the Liberty Fund edition, published in six volumes, with specific volume and page numbers cited. David Hume, *The History of England* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012).

[2] Phillipson, *David Hume*, 9; Harris, *Hume*, 318, 340; Watkins, *The Philosophical Progress of Hume's Essays*, 14-18.

[3] As DeGaberiele underlines, "the revolution is not merely a change in government but an event that stands as a definitive interpretation of the constitution", and this also has an impact on political philosophy, "to do political philosophy, or even to discuss politics, after 1688 is fundamentally different than it was before this signal event". Peter DeGabriele, 'Resistance, Immunity, and Polite Silence: The Legacy of 1688 in David Hume's Political Thought'. *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 39, no. 1/2 (2015): 137–51, citation from 137.

see, early modern England grappled with the need to strengthen state power amidst international rivalry, but the methods employed by monarchs were met with resistance, resulting in a precarious state of political authority. The Glorious Revolution prompted England to reform its constitution, ensuring the rule of law and establishing new methods for enhancing state power. This revised constitution required a different approach to theorizing the balance between liberty and authority, enabling the state to mobilize greater resources for military power and managing international rivalries. The political philosophy of the commercial state, therefore, demands an elucidation of well-founded political authority in an era promoting liberty, protecting property rights, and reinforcing the rule of law. Hume's analysis of the revolution, focusing on the consolidation of state power and the restoration of political authority to ensure national security and domestic liberty, offers a pertinent response to Hont's concerns.[1]

Hume's *History* receives comparatively less attention than his more philosophical work in contemporary Hume scholarship. However, during his own time, Hume's historical work was renowned and played a significant role in his rise to fame.[2] In this chapter, the focus of our inquiry does not revolve around the reception or commercial success of Hume's historical writing in England and on the European continent. Rather, the objective is to elucidate why Hume argued that the Glorious Revolution "forms a new era in our constitution",[3] in

[1] In this chapter, I demonstrate that Hume's approach provides a critical response to the Whig interpretation of the Glorious Revolution. The collection of papers commemorating the tercentennial anniversary of the revolution underscored its global significance. As editor Jonathan Israel argued in the introduction, "the Revolution of 1688–89 was an inspiration for late-eighteenth century revolutionaries in France, in North America, and elsewhere". Jonathan Israel, "Introduction", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and Its World Impact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-43; Pincus, *1688*, 11-29.

[2] In his late years, Hume admitted that the first volume suffered from severe attacks from readers of different inclinations, and it was the second volume that was "better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother". Recent research highlights that Hume's *History* quickly asserted itself on the islands as the dominant work about the history of modern England and retained this status until Sir Thomas Babington Macaulay introduced his neo-Whig alternative in the mid-nineteenth century. On the European continent, Hume achieved even more rapid and enduring acclaim. Hume, "Of My Own Life", in his *Essay*s, xxxvii-xxxviii; Ernest Mossner, *The Life of David Hume* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 316; Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture*, 170-209; Laurence Bongie, *David Hume: Prophet of the Counter-Revolution* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), xiii-xxii, 1-15.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 531.

particular how it lays the constitutional foundation for a commercial state. The point here is not that trade held a trivial role before the revolution, but that the revolution not only led to a change in government but, more importantly, brought about a profound transformation of the constitution, which facilitated the prosperity of a commercial society. To be specific, it redefined the prerogative, a core element of the so-called "ancient constitution", and established a constitutional framework that was better suited to maintain a secure order in a commercial era. Hence, the revolution's significance lies in the constitutional sense, which helps advance Hume's political philosophy of the commercial state, an issue worthy of exploration in the forthcoming chapters.

Hume's historical account spans a thousand years, yet his focus remains on the emergence of the modern commercial state.[1] In his essay "Of Civil Liberty", Hume puts forth the thesis that the rise of trade is a fundamental hallmark of modern politics.[2] He reinforces the viewpoint and argues that its roots can be traced back to the reign of Henry VII. During this period, "America was discovered. Commerce extended. The Arts cultivated Printing invented. Religion reformed. And all the Governments of Europe almost changed".[3] These changes heralded a fundamental change of public order in England. The growth of international trade and the influx of foreign luxuries also eroded the feudal system. Many subjects who had previously lived under a feudal dominance moved into cities and towns, becoming free craftsmen and members of the rising middling ranks.

[1] Despite Hume's substantial influence on eighteenth-century readers and the praise he received from figures such as Gibbon and Voltaire, my approach to Hume's historical writings will prioritize his own perspective over his role in the development of modern historiography. Edward Gibbon's contributions to the formation of modern historiography are more noteworthy. Comparatively, Hume's historical writing was less a self-standing work in the development of historiography, than a part of his exploration in political philosophy. See Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture: From Clarendon to Hume*; cf. Joseph Levine, 'Philip Hicks, Neoclassical History and English Culture: From Clarendon to Hume (Book Review)'. *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 2 (1999): 459-60; Moritz Baumstark, 'David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian. A Reconsideration'. (Phd Thesis of University of Edinburgh, 2008), 164-217; Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method'. In *Studies in Historiography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 40–55.

[2] Hume, "Of Civil Liberty", in his *Essays*, 87-9.

[3] David Hume, *The Letters of David Hume,* Vol.1, edited by J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), 168, 249.

Doctrines that encouraged the pursuit of liberty gained ground, and the old system was hanging by a thread. It was during James I's reign that "the House of Commons first began to assert its influence, leading to a conflict between Privilege and Prerogative."[1] This conflict triggered a series of political upheavals in the seventeenth century, culminating in the Glorious Revolution. It was the revolutionary settlement that "gave such an ascendant to popular principles, as has put the nature of the constitution beyond all controversy".[2] Hence, the period from Henry VII to the Glorious Revolution represents England's transformative era. During this time, the nation transitions from a feudal constitution to a modern state that settles "our present plan of liberty".[3]

This chapter presents two key points. Firstly, Hume's analysis of the Glorious Revolution must be understood within an international context. The revolution arose from concerns over the king's attempts to enhance the power of the state, which were perceived as echoing French absolutism and threatening English liberty. Its resolution not only addressed domestic anxieties but also positioned England strategically within Europe, reshaping the balance of power on the continent. Secondly, Hume emphasizes the constitutional changes driven by the revolution, particularly in curtailing the monarch's prerogative and enhancing parliamentary sovereignty. This new constitutional framework sought to balance effective governance with the preservation of individual liberties, aligning with the needs of England's emerging commercial society. Thus, Hume portrays the Glorious Revolution as a transformative moment with both domestic and international implications.

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[1] Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol.1, 168.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 531.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 355; Vol.5, 569. Hume's approach continues to wield significant influence in contemporary scholarship, such as Steve Pincus and Jonathan Scott. Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10; Pincus, *1688*, 8-10, 30-45; David Como, Rachel Weil, and Steve Pincus. 'Modernity and the Glorious Revolution'. *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2010): 135–62; J.D.C. Clark, Lisa Cody, Tim Blanning and Don Herzog, "Round-Table, Steve Pincus's 1688: The First Modern Revolution". *Britain and the World* 2, no. 2 (2010): 297-330; Hamish Scott, 'The Making of a Revolution?' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 41, no. 2 (2010): 227–42; Frédéric Herrmann, 'The Glorious Revolution (1688-1701) and the Return of Whig History'. *Études Anglaises* 68, no. 3 (2015): 331–44.

In this chapter, my argument unfolds in three parts. The first part addresses the work of two influential scholars, Duncan Forbes and Nicholas Phillipson, contending that a better point of departure lies in Hume's analysis of the Glorious Revolution rather than that of the early Stuarts and the Civil War, as they indicate.[1] The second part delves into Hume's three distinct threads concerning the international dimensions of the Glorious Revolution. These include the imperative task of allocating more financial resources to enhance military power, the apprehension surrounding Catholicism and a standing army representative of French absolutism, and the pivotal role played by William of Orange, who was indispensable to the settlement in England and the establishment of a balance of power in Europe. The third part explores the reshaping of the constitution centered on the prerogative and emphasizes that Hume's political philosophy revolves around achieving a delicate equilibrium between political authority and liberty, in support of the rule of law in a commercial society.

1. The Glorious Revolution and the Commercial State

In the first part, I will illustrate the significance of an investigation of Hume's historical writings and offer a perspective distinct from that of Duncan Forbes and Nicholas Phillipson, who concentrated on the fifth volume concerning the early Stuarts and the Civil War. In contrast, my emphasis is on the last volume, which involves the history of the late Stuarts and culminates in the Glorious Revolution. I will demonstrate that this volume not only serves as a pivot point around which the entirety of Hume's *History* revolves but also provides a path to approach Hume's political philosophy of the commercial state.

To start with, it is helpful to gain a brief overview of the book's history with some key

[1] There is an enduring debate over which event, the Civil War in 1640-42 or the Revolution in 1688-89, should be regarded as a "revolution".Blair Worden, "The Revolution of 1688-9 and the English Republican Tradition", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 241-77.

details.[1] Today, the authoritative edition is published by the Liberty Fund, which consists of six volumes titled *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to The Revolution in 1688*. However, it is important to note that the volumes covering the more recent era, that is, the reign of the Stuarts, were actually the first ones to be completed. In 1754 and 1757, Hume published the initial two volumes, encompassing the period from James's accession as the king of England in 1603 to the Glorious Revolution, under the title *History of Great Britain*. Hume initially planned to present a three-volume *History of Great Britain* that would conclude with the Hanoverian succession in 1714. However, he changed course, deciding to backtrack to the Tudor period and then delve further into Roman past. Eventually, these volumes were collected into a comprehensive history and titled *History of England* in 1762.[2] Since then, the six volumes were published together. Hence, it is worth remembering that in the current authoritative edition, the fifth and sixth volumes were the first to be completed and were initially regarded as independent works.[3]

Hume's primary objective in addressing the history of the Stuarts was to challenge the conventional approach to historical writing, particularly that of the Whig historians. Historical writing in England, especially since the early seventeenth century, had become a central battlefield for political disputes between the Whigs and the Tories.[4] Hume's historical writing bore political implications, yet he deliberately avoided aligning himself with any

[1] The following discussion of book history can be found from Harris, 'Hume's Life and Works', 10-13; Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 301-308; John Robertson, 'Hume, David (1711–1776)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 751-2.

[2] As Baumstark observed, the original title of this volume "the History of Great Britain" was quite a challenge to readers of that era, because it emphasized Hume's awareness of the intricate constitutional structure of Great Britain. The revised title shown on the Liberty Fund edition mitigated the initial impact created by the original title upon the publication of the first two volumes, and could have misled us in understanding Hume's original intention. Since the 1970s, the growing utilization of the term "British history" aligns with Hume's suggestion. Baumstark, 'David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian. A Reconsideration', 117-146; J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject'. *The Journal of Modern History* 47, no. 4 (1975): 601–21; Jonathan Israel, "Introduction", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 10-40.

[3] Until the end of his life, Hume repeatedly revised his works, including his six-volume history. Frederic L van Holthoon. 'Hume and the 1763 Edition of His History of England: His Frame of Mind as a Revisionist'. *Hume Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 133–52.

[4] For a similar critique from Montesquieu, see Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. by Anne Cohler *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Part 3, Book 19, ch.27, 333.

side. He notably maintained "almost complete silence" towards previous general histories, refraining from discussing other historians or positioning himself in relation to them. This approach was a deliberate effort to present his work as a fresh departure from existing historical narratives.[1] In his own words, "Style, judgment, impartiality, care...everything is lacking in our historians," with impartiality being of utmost importance among these qualities.[2] This transition is evident in Hume's earlier favorable assessment of the Whig historian Paul de Rapin-Thoyras, whom he once regarded as "the most judicious of our Historians." However, by 1757, Hume's perspective had shifted, and he came to view Rapin as a "despicable" historian due to his perceived partiality.[3] Hume's critique of the Whig historians was echoed in the concluding remarks of the Stuart volumes, where he once again mentioned Rapin-Thoyras and criticized the Whig historians for "many gross falsehoods". What worsened the situation was that their works had been widely praised, circulated, and read among the public.[4]

Hume's strong commitment to impartiality was tied to his criticism of the biased historical accounts presented by the Whig historians. The key disagreement between Hume and the Whig historians centered on principles. Hume argued that the Whigs' error stemmed from their somewhat "ridiculous" interpretation of the English constitution. The Whig historians adopted a parliamentarian perspective, emphasizing an immemorial ancient constitution,

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[1] Harris, *Hume*, 326-7.

[2] Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol.1, 170. This letter, composed in January 1753, can be interpreted as an elucidation of his decision to embark on the journey of writing history. He reiterates this point, arguing that "The first quality of an historian is to be true & impartial; the next is to be interesting". Hume, *Letters*, Vol.1, 210; comp. Laird Okie, 'Ideology and Partiality in David Hume's History of England'. *Hume Studies* 11, no. 1 (1985): 1–32.

[3] In an important letter, Hume saw himself as "certain of escaping [the reproach] of partiality", indicating his self-assertion in historical writings. He transitioned from a pro-Whig orientation to a more impartial stance, and this shift in viewpoint constitutes a pivotal element in our interpretation of Hume's historical works. Hume, *Letters,* Vol.1, 5, 170, 179, 258. A concise discussion about Rapin's history, see Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture*, 146-50.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 533. The link between Hume and Rapin has been explored from diverse angles. Max Skjönsberg, *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 174-9, 195-6; M. G. Sullivan, 'Rapin, Hume and the Identity of the Historian in Eighteenth Century England'. *History of European Ideas* 28, no. 3 (2002): 145–62.

characterized by the role of the Commons to counterbalance the monarchs. According to them, the English Constitution was a "regular Plan of Liberty" and Parliament's resistance to the kings should be appreciated. In contrast, they disapproved of the reasonable efforts by the Stuart kings to strengthen political authority, accusing them of imposing tyrannical rule on the English people.[1] Hume's response was to highlight the confusion within the English constitution they referred to, describing it as "an inconsistent fabric, whose jarring and discordant parts must soon destroy each other".[2] The Whig historians overlooked the fact that their regard to liberty, though laudable, should "be subordinate to a reverence for established government", or it would lead to perpetual unrest.[3] This counterargument against the Whig historians prompted Hume to delve into political philosophy to explore the connection between liberty and property rights on one side and submission to political authority on the other. In view of the aforementioned analyses, Hume's two volumes of Stuart history had an obvious bearing upon the present political debates linked with party politics.[4]

Although it is generally acknowledged that Hume's historical writings are anchored in the two volumes on the Stuarts, the question of which volume should be considered of greater importance remains a subject of debate. Both Duncan Forbes and Nicholas Phillipson assert that the volumes encompassing the early Stuarts are of greater significance, although for

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[1] Hume, "My Own Life", in *Essays*, xxxviii. The debate between the Parliamentarians and Royalists originated in the political disputes of the early seventeenth century. For related discussion, see "Of the Parties of Great Britain", in *Essays*, 72; Simon Targett, 'Government and Ideology during the Age of Whig Supremacy: The Political Argument of Sir Robert Walpole's Newspaper Propagandists'. *The Historical Journal* 37, no. 2 (1994): 289–317; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Norton, 1967); also his *Barbarism and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 163-257; Mark Goldie, 'The Ancient Constitution and the Language of Political Thought'. *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 1 (2019): 3–34. About the Whig ideas in post-revolutionary intellectual debate, see two classical researches, Quentin Skinner, 'The Principles and Practice of Opposition: The Case of Bolingbroke versus Walpole', in *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J.H. Plumb*, ed. Neil McKendrick (London: Europa, 1974), 93-128; Mark Goldie, 'The Roots of True Whiggism, 1688–94'. *History of Political Thought* 1, no. 2 (1980): 195–236.

[2] Hume, "Of Parties in Great Britain", in *Essays*, 67; *History*, Vol.5, 59. In addition, Hume also notes "irregular nature of the old English government". Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 476.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 533.

[4] Harris, *Hume*, 329.

differing reasons. Conversely, I uphold the view that the sixth volume, concluding with the Glorious Revolution, holds more weight in terms of its importance for a comprehensive understanding of Hume's analysis of the commercial state.

Duncan Forbes was among the earliest to recognize the value of Hume's historical works, particularly emphasizing Hume's treatment of the early Stuarts before the civil war. In an era where the History had long ceased to be reprinted and was neglected by modern scholars, Forbes held Hume's historical writings in high esteem. He regarded it "it is a masterpiece; it is essential and vintage Hume. No one can say he knows Hume who is ignorant of the *History*".[1] Forbes particularly highlighted the fifth volume as pivotal, considering it the crucial hinge upon which the entire work turns. He supported this assertion by citing Hume's own evaluation, noting that the subject matter of this volume allowed for greater eloquence and distinctive reasoning. In contrast, Forbes regarded the sixth volume, which covered events from the Restoration to the Glorious Revolution, as somewhat repetitive, echoing the tragedy of the early Stuarts, and he considered it "comparatively an anti-climax.".[2]

According to Forbes, the history of civilization and a political history work together in Hume's history and "the two aspects of the *History* fuse", reaching their culmination in the fifth volume. On the one hand, Hume's history of liberty reflects the progress of civilization, intertwined with economic and social advancement, as depicted in the first volume he published.[3] On the other hand, throughout his narrative, Hume stages a series of compelling debates at pivotal moments, infused with dramatic tension and historical insight. These

[1] Duncan Forbes, "Introduction", in David Hume, *The History of Great Britain: The Reigns of James I and Charles I* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 8. Forbes composed the "Introduction" specifically for the early Stuarts volume published by Penguin Books, and he endorsed this volume as a self-contained work, not merely as one of the six volumes authored by Hume.

[2] Forbes's complaint on the restoration was more severe. Forbes, "Introduction", 10, 53. Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol.1, 240.

[3] Forbes, "Introduction", 39; Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, 298; comp. Frederic van Holthoon, 'Hume and the End of History', in *David Hume: Historical Thinker, Historical Writer*, edited by Mark G. Spencer (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 143–46.

debates do not merely aim to document historical conversations but rather assign perspectives and arguments to key figures of the era as Hume perceived them. Through these passages, Hume had a political message, one emphasizing the imperative of achieving a harmonious equilibrium between liberty and authority. In this light, the fifth volume, authored by "a philosopher of such eminence", was featured by its profound thoughtfulness and was qualified as the "most intellectual…narrative history in that language". Hence, Forbes deems it reasonable to characterize it as "philosophical history", and integrate them into Hume's broader theoretical explorations, because it serves to expound upon Hume's political principles and can be read as "an extension of his political philosophy".[1]

Nevertheless, Forbes's emphasis on the "anticlimactic" nature of Hume's "History" contradicts with Hume's own emphasis on the Glorious Revolution.[2] On the one hand, Forbes emphasizes the historical narrative of the early Stuarts, particularly its link to the breakdown of political order resulting from an excessive pursuit of liberty. On the other, Forbes underscores the significance of maintaining a stable political order within a civilized commercial society, which matches Hume's aim of "giv[ing] the established, Hanoverian, regime a proper intellectual foundation".[3] Forbes thereby maintains that Hume deliberately downplays the importance of Glorious Revolution as supposed by readers. As we will see, this contradicts with Hume's stress on the 1688-89 Revolution. After all, the quest for liberty in commercial, religious, and social activities must be placed within a political framework, and this constitutes the primary accomplishment of the Glorious Revolution. This pivotal event settled the notion of the popular pursuit of liberty as a constitutional principle and laid the groundwork for the subsequent development of a civilized commercial society. Therefore,

[1] Forbes, "Introduction", 10-17, 53-54. Many scholars take note of Hume's emphasis on the political debate. Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture*, 180ff; Baumstark, 'David Hume: The Making of a Philosophical Historian. A Reconsideration', 164-197, 215-220; Harris, *Hume*, 339-40.

[2] Forbes drew on Hume's words taken from his letter to the publisher William Strahan as evidence that "the Public is so capricious as to prefer the second (indicating the second volume on Stuarts, covering the period from the civil war to the Glorious Revolution)". In light of this, Forbes's claim that Hume intentionally designed his history as an "anticlimax" to disappoint his readers is too strong. Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol.1, 240.

[3] Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, x.

it is essential to probe into Hume's analysis of the Glorious Revolution, as it addressed the political turmoil of its time and established a solid foundation for political stability in an age characterized by commerce and trade.

Another influential scholar in this field is Nicholas Phillipson. He agrees with Forbes in regarding the volume on the early Stuarts as the heart of Hume's historical series, emphasizing that it was where "the intellectual excitement lay." [1] But Phillipson's perspective differs due to his emphasis on religious aspects. He posits that the apex of this volume was the Civil War, which, in his view, was "far from being a conflict about the constitution" but rather "a war of religion."[2] Phillipson's interpretation of Hume's work revolves around the narrative of the decline of an old constitution, largely instigated by religious zealots. This fervent religious sentiment fueled political unrest, undermining the traditional obedience to authority and leading to armed rebellion. The monarchs of the period were ill-prepared to handle this crisis, and the feudal system, operating as a form of limited monarchy, demonstrated its inability to maintain orderly and civilized governance. [3] Phillipson's emphasis on religion aligns with a persistent anti-religious interpretation, suggesting that Hume's philosophy aimed to confront religious fanaticism with skeptical thought and promote public order rooted in rational and secular hedonism. Within this framework, Hume's historical writings are seen as integral to his broader intellectual endeavor.[4]

Phillipson's emphasis on the Scottish context, coupled with his dedication to the importance of moderation and civility, led him to divert attention from the political dimension. This resulted in an undervaluation of the significance of the Glorious Revolution when analyzing

[1] Phillipson, *David Hume: The Philosopher as Historian*, 72.
[2] Phillipson, *David Hume*, 67.
[3] Phillipson, *David Hume*, 123.
[4] For instance, Thomas Merrill, *Hume and the Politics of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Hume's historical writings. Phillipson recognizes the central role of politics in Hume's historical writings, asserting that the "unique capacity of human beings to create and obey governments was the key to the civilizing process, the key that had the power to unlock a people's capacity for justice, humanity and wisdom". However, he does not consider the revolution and the subsequent regime in the light of political achievements, nor does he regard it as the epochal event. Instead, Hume is depicted as seeing it as a manifestation of political prudence by a self-interested usurper, rather than the wisdom of the Parliament. According to Phillipson, Hume insinuates that the crisis of political authority remained unresolved when he concluded his work on the Stuart volumes in the 1750s. This interpretation places Phillipson in a dilemma as it challenges his own claim that the Glorious Revolution "saved Britain from a new civil war."[1]

Phillipson's predicament in explaining the Glorious Revolution arises from his Scottish-centered perspective and adherence to a paradigm marked by civility, moderation, and social interactions. The principal emphasis of the Glorious Revolution was on addressing the crisis within the English constitution, not that of Scotland. This event set the stage for the development of a robust commercial state to the south of Scotland. This, in turn, played a crucial role in the subsequent crisis in 1690s Scotland and ultimately led to the 1707 Act of Union, which deprived Scotland of its political autonomy.[2] Phillipson focuses on Scotland, coupled with a limited interest in England's Glorious Revolution, and his emphasis on manners and politeness at the expense of political engagement, confines his analysis to the realm of "citizens without sovereignty".[3] This restricts his awareness of the political achievements in establishing a stable public order during the 1688-89 Revolution.

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[1] Nicholas Phillipson, 'Propriety, Property, and Prudence: David Hume and the Defence of the Revolution', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 302–30; see also his *David Hume*, 98, 133.

[2] See Kidd, 'The Phillipsonian Enlightenment', 182-4.

[3] This utterance is used by Daniel Gordon to describe the eighteenth-century French thought before the revolution. See Daniel Gordon, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670-1789* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

As we have shown above, both interpretations eschewed Hume's own insight. Hume maintains that the Glorious Revolution formed "a new epoch in the constitution".[1] In the period preceding the revolution, "[f]oreign affairs…were either entirely neglected, or managed to pernicious purposes", while "in the domestic administration there was felt a continued fever…sometimes the most furious convulsions and disorders". The Glorious Revolution said goodbye to this tumultuous past, and ushered a new constitutional order. On one hand, it shifted the dynamics of domestic politics by elevating popular principles to such an extent that the nature of the English constitution became indisputable.[2] On the other, it supported the exercise of government authority and military power, which were crucial in safeguarding the constitution on the international stage. This transformation enabled English subjects to discard what Hume described as "an exceptionable administration" and embrace the "noble liberty," "sweet equality," and "happy security", and distinguish themselves "above all nations in the universe".[3] In this light, "the Revolution of 1688 was considerably more important" than the early Stuart volume.[4]

Hume's approach to the Glorious Revolution from a constitutional perspective also hints at a way of exploring his political philosophy. I agree with Forbes's observation that Hume's central concern revolved around achieving a delicate equilibrium between liberty and authority. Hume's thesis is straightforward: liberty represents the 'perfection of civil society,' yet without authority, true liberty cannot exist.[5] Indeed, the Stuart history largely comprises negative instances. As James Harris points out, the conflicts between Parliament and the Crown were central to the political upheaval of the seventeenth century. "Further conflict

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 531. This is why the revolution stands as a point of reference when any discussion of fundamental political principle took place. The significance of the Glorious Revolution is still under discussion today. H. T. Dickinson, 'The Eighteenth-Century Debate on the "Glorious Revolution"'. *History* 61, no. 201 (1976): 29.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 531.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol.4, 370; Vol.6, 531.
[4] Harris, *Hume*, 330.
[5] Forbes, "Introduction", 16.

between crown and parliament had ended only with the constitutional regularization of a system of limited monarchy in 1688".[1] In other words, the public order established by the revolution helped England to resolve the constitutional crisis, and revealed that the modern commercial state should embrace the concepts of liberty as "the perfection of civil society" and a due "reverence for established government".[2]

To summarize, in this part, I have pointed out that a thorough examination of Hume's *History*, with particular concentration on the Glorious Revolution rather than the early Stuarts and the Civil War, allows us to gain insights not only into the English constitution in the commercial era but also into Hume's political philosophy, which seeks to theorize the commercial state with a balance between liberty and authority. I will begin by examining the international backdrop of the revolution in Hume's work. As I will demonstrate, it is crucial to consider the broader international context to gain a comprehensive understanding of Hume's view of the Glorious Revolution.

2. The International Dimension and Its Impact on Domestic Politics[3]

In this section, we will delve into three main themes concerning the international dimensions of the revolution as outlined by Hume. Firstly, the growing military strength of European nations escalated financial strains in England, leading to heightened tensions between Charles II and Parliament over fiscal matters. Hence, Charles II found himself compelled to seek aid from France due to financial difficulties exacerbated by Parliament's reluctance to

[1] As Harris reminds us, "the two volumes of *The History of Great Britain*, though initially published separately, need to be treated as constituting a single line of historical and political argument". Harris, *Hume*, 330.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 533-534.

[3] The international perspective provided Hume with an opportunity to comprehend the intricacies of the revolution and to counter the isolationist interpretation adopted by the Wihgs. By placing the revolution in an international context, we uncover its complexity and can better empathize with the Tories. Therefore, it is crucial to consider its international backdrop in order to comprehend Hume's "impartiality" and "philosophical spirit." Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol.1, 179; Mossner, *The Life of David Hume,* 316.

provide support. Secondly, James II maintained intricate connections with the French court and pursued a series of controversial religious and military policies reminiscent of French absolutism. These policies raised significant concerns that the Stuarts harbored intentions of implementing French-style absolutist rule. Lastly, it is crucial to examine the role of William of Orange, who received invitations from the English Parliament to safeguard Protestant rule. William's acceptance not only led to the formation of an Anglo-Dutch alliance aimed at offsetting French ambitions and securing the Netherlands but also spurred significant changes in the English constitutional framework.[1] Hume's conclusion was that an international perspective is vital for a comprehensive view of the Glorious Revolution.

2.1 Military Rivalry and Financial Challenge

The first thread Hume outlines involves the need to establish a financial-military state in the early modern era. As Jia Wei rightly reminds us, "[f]inancial administration was central to Hume's narrative of the transformation of English government in the seventeenth century", and this problem was linked with the constitutional problem, "a clear division of power between Crown and Parliament".[2] In Section 2.1, I will focus on the military-financial dispute in Charles II's period. As we will see, since the expenditures of military struggle among different nations rose greatly, international competition necessitated every nation to exploit more financial resources to support its national security and interest. In England, this ignited a sequence of political disputes between the king and parliament. The commons, in contrast to the king, seemed oblivious to the "incessant change of times and situations" and were unwilling to reach a compromise. Their stubbornness placed the state in a precarious position.[3] In the subsequent discussion, I will further elaborate on the military expenditure driven by international rivalry and explore the profound schism between the monarchs and

[1] Many scholars approach Hume's work from a European perspective. Forbes, "Introduction", 18-24; Duncan Forbes, 'Hume and the Scottish Enlightenment'. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 12 (1978): 94–109; Harris, *Hume*, 341-2; Jia Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), 2-3. See also Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 56–92.

[2] Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England*, 9, 79-106.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 535

the Commons.

My investigation begins with Hume's assertion that England faced mounting pressure from international rivalries since the late Tudor era, coinciding with the European "military revolution" as noted by historians. During this period, other nations were advancing their military capabilities, emphasizing specialization and professionalism, leaving England in a vulnerable position.[1] While England boasted numerical strength in its army, its discipline and experience lagged behind. The newly constituted militia was deemed unfit for defending the kingdom.[2] Similarly, England's navy was inadequate, prompting Queen Elizabeth to initiate reforms by building ships and encouraging merchants to construct vessels for military use. However, these efforts fell short, highlighting the navy's comparative weakness.[3] Both the army and navy proved incapable of safeguarding England's security and national interests. There arose a pressing need to bolster military power, necessitating increased financial support from society.

In parallel with this necessity, monarchs faced a gradual erosion of their financial independence, compelling them to turn to the Commons for assistance. Throughout the Tudor era, monarchs relied on revenues from ancient demesnes. However, escalating military expenditures forced them to resort to selling off these demesnes outright, rather than

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[1] Roberts, 'The Military Revolution, 1560–1660', 195–225; Geoffrey Parker, 'The "Military Revolution," 1560-1660--a Myth?' *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 2 (1976): 196–214; Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution?: Military Change and European Society 1550-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1991); Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 378; Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States, 1494-1660* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 352-60; Michael J. Braddick, *The Nerves of State: Taxation and the Financing of the English State, 1558–1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 91–109; Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England*, 91-106.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 377-8. The situation becomes even more complex when we consider overseas colonies. The American colonies contributed to the expansion of international commerce, but the primary beneficiaries were London merchants rather than the government. Hume endorsed investment in colonies because he recognized that the colonies played a crucial role in maintaining the balance of power within the European system. See Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England*, 92ff; Jeremy Black, *Convergence or Divergence?: Britain and the Continent*. (London: Macmillan, 1994), 116-38.

collecting taxes from them, to offset deficits. Matters worsened during the English Civil War, as the remaining ancient demesnes were completely abolished following the execution of Charles I and were never reinstated during the restoration period.[1] As a result, with the crown losing almost all its ancient demesnes, it became entirely reliant on voluntary grants from the people or parliamentary approval.[2]

After the revolution, "the parliament had regard to public freedom as well as to the support of the crown".[3] However, the former often outweighed the latter. The Commons were reluctant to allocate sufficient resources, and left the king vulnerable in managing both international and domestic affairs.[4] Hume provides two illustrative examples. The first pertains to the disbandment of veterans. Despite the necessity for security, the Commons showed great reluctance in allocating the required funds for disbanding an army that posed a threat due to its formidable nature and history of rebellion. This army subsequently became a source of trouble for public order.[5] The second example centers on the rivalry between England and the Netherlands.[6] English merchants, envious of their Dutch counterparts' profitable global trade facilitated by their industry and frugality, planned to use their superior naval power to disrupt Dutch commerce. However, despite offering the largest supply ever granted to an English king, Parliament's reluctance to fully support the navy hindered these

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 377-8, Vol. 5, 129, 135-8; *History*, Vol. 6, 159-60, 234, 238, 537-8. According to Braddick, the English underwent a real breach from the past since the civil war. Michael Braddick, 'The Rise of the Fiscal State', in *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, edited by Barry Coward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 85; F. W. Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England: A Course of Lectures Delivered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 434.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 159.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 159.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 234.

[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 160.

[6] A brief exploration of the pertinent factors is sufficient, but it is worth noting that the Anglo-Dutch relationship played a pivotal role in understanding the transformation of the state and the formulation of foreign policy in seventeenth-century England. J. R. Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Longman, 1996); Steve Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jonathan Israel, 'The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650–1713', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century,* edited by Nicholas Canny and W.R. Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1998), 423–44; Scott, *England's Troubles*, 474-96.

plans.[1] As the war persisted, seamen and soldiers faced dire circumstances, leading to complaints and discontent. Consequently, England not only suffered a decline in trade and commerce but also encountered hostility from other European nations, rendering the war's objectives futile.[2]

A set of data helps to reveal the predicament. To deal with the pressure of international rivalry, the expenses for the navy and various other items amounted to 800,000 pounds, which was ten times the previous crown expenditure. Although Parliament allocated the king a supply of 1,200,000 pounds, with the expectation of full payment within a year, they scarcely assigned funds that could yield two-thirds of that sum. It follows that their grant did not address the underlying problem. Even with the addition of some new taxes, the total revenue never exceeded one million pounds, which was "a sum confessedly too narrow for the public expenses".[3]

From Hume's perspective, while Charles II couldn't be entirely absolved of blame,[4] greater responsibility should be placed on Parliament. In the late seventeenth century, "[a]ll the princes of Europe were perpetually augmenting their military force, and consequently their expense". It became requisite that England, from motives both of honor and security, should bear some proportion to them and adapt its revenue to the new system of politics that prevailed.[5] However, the Commons were not fully accustomed to this new situation and were content with following the examples of their predecessors in a rigid frugality of public

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 192-5.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 207-8.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 177-178. Lord Danby's account can further substantiate this argument. Despite some additional funds, all of the revenues were insufficient to meet the "yearly expence of government…without mentioning contingencies, which are always considerable, even under the most prudent administration". Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 534-5.
[4] As Hume notes, Charles II was extravagant, too careless and indolent to earn certain respect from the parliament. Therefore, it is with reason to deem him as "the aggressor, nor is it possible to justify his conduct". Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 177, 235, 288.
[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 159.

money.[1] Their actions were driven by faction and fanaticism, rather than a rational understanding of public affairs, until it was "too late" and they were startled "by fatal experience".[2] By considering the international context, Hume displayed more sympathy toward Charles II than the Whig historians did, as Charles II's efforts to secure his authority should have been embraced by the Commons.

In summary, this section delves into how international rivalries exacerbated the financial disputes between the king and parliament, as outlined by Hume. While the king believed that further innovation was necessary given the situation of public affairs, parliament was resistant to making concessions, leading to "continual jealousy" between them. This standoff hindered England's ability to effectively address international rivalries.[3] Parliament's reluctance to allocate more revenue to Charles II forced the king to seek financial assistance from France. The affinity between France and Stuart England triggered concerns among subjects about the rise of absolutism, setting the stage for subsequent events.[4] This sets the stage for further exploration in Section 2.2.

2.2 The Shadow of French Absolutism

The preceding section underscores how the conflicts between the Commons and the King regarding public finance rendered the state ineffective in managing international rivalry. This issue was closely intertwined with concerns about French absolutism.[5] As Hume contends,

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[1] Hume argues that in Europe, "every nation, by its increase both of magnificence and force, had made great additions to all public expenses". Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 233-4.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 535. For similar reasons, Parliament also rejected Charles I's request for funds to strengthen the naval power and left the nation defenseless. Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 247.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 531-2.

[4] Hume commented that Charles II, the king of England, "had secretly sold his alliance to Lewis, and was bribed [i]nto an interest contrary to that of his people". Hume also referenced Sir William Temple's remonstrance to Charles II to clarify why offering subsidies to France would be seen as provocative and perilous, given the significant differences in their social and political structures. Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 289-90, 321, 535.

[5] As Laslett revealed in his historical research, the English parliament and the people suspected the later Stuarts of introducing French absolutism into England. We could find Locke's notes of "de morbo gallico (Gallic Disease) " as evidence. Peter Laslett, "Introduction", in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 62-66.

international rivalry involved not only power struggles but also popular resentment towards different lifestyles and political principles.

According to Hume, a clear illustration of this phenomenon can be seen in the widespread Francophobia in England, which had been prevalent since the Restoration era. During Louis XIV's reign, France established an absolutist regime and emerged as the most dominant state in Europe, with ambitions of achieving a universal monarchy across the continent. In the mid-seventeenth century, England underwent political turmoil for decades, and the younger generation of the Stuarts, including future kings, Charles II and James II, were raised and educated in France. In the restoration era, their policies, which often went against the wishes of the parliament, were frequently perceived as efforts to establish an alliance with France. The people and the parliament grew anxious that their kings had a deliberate plan to undermine the English constitution and replace it with a form of French-style absolutism.

Hume indicates that a key starting point is to recognize the interconnection between religious and financial issues and their association with France's influence. As we have mentioned above, at the outset of the Restoration, Charles II faced a series of domestic challenges, including the dissemination of radical ideas and the unsettled veterans, but the Parliament refused to allocate enough funds. Simultaneously, the Commons adhered to "overfrugal maxims" and were reluctant to grant proper supplies to the crown. As a result, Charles II resorted to unconventional measures to safeguard public security.[1] One option he considered was seeking assistance from the French court, and his policies seemed to indicate that he was "bribed into an interest contrary to that of his people".[2] From that point onward, the close relationship between the Stuarts and the French court raised suspicions in the

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 214.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 321. A good example is that Charles II sold Dunkirk to France. To cite Hume's comment, this was "one of the greatest mistakes, if not blemishes, of his reign". He complained that when French "erected itself in Europe without any opposition from us, and even sometimes with our assistance", England was "still occupied in domestic disputes". Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 183; "Of the Protestant Succession", in his *Essays*, 507.

Parliament, who were apprehensive of the king's attachment to France and his potential intention to import French absolutism to England. In general, Hume leaves us with two main threads: the issue of a standing army and Catholicism. In this section, I will show how, for Hume, the looming specter of French absolutism played a pivotal role in giving rise to the Glorious Revolution.

One significant point of contention during this period was the establishment of a standing army, as Hume notes. Throughout the seventeenth century, many countries on the continent had established standing armies, leading their rulers to wield unlimited authority and suppress the liberties of the people through force or manipulation.[1] Early in his reign, Charles II desired a standing army, but the Commons vehemently opposed it, viewing it as a "dangerous innovation." Parliament recognized that a standing army could serve as a tool for the king to quell opposition within the kingdom and potentially erode the English constitution, resembling French absolutism.[2] As a result, England chose to maintain a modest number of royal guards and garrison troops, alongside the militia for domestic peacekeeping, while relying on the navy and mercenary services for military activities abroad.[3] This decision played a crucial role in upholding the cherished concept of liberty, renowned throughout Europe.

Hume concedes that the revolution was hardly an inevitable outcome when James II ascended the throne. James enjoyed unparalleled advantages upon assuming power in England, with ample opportunities to solidify his rule and establish absolutism. However, his own missteps and misconduct hastened his downfall. Chief among his errors was his deviation from established traditions and norms.[4] Upon assuming power, he sought to

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 18.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 468-9.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 163-164,177. "As England had no military force, while all the other powers of Europe were strongly armed, a fleet seemed absolutely necessary for her security". Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 235.
[4] Hume, History, Vol. 6, 470.

achieve financial independence by demanding "an unreserved obedience to his commands" from the parliament. He insisted on receiving a substantial allowance as he did before, without compromise.[1] Then he declared the militia to be useless and requested an additional payment to raise more forces. Parliament reluctantly conceded and provided what he requested, but they were soon aware of what a mistake they had made. James II established a standing army in Ireland which posed a great threat to England, so Parliament had missed the opportunity to restrain the monarch.

Hume argues that the second crucial aspect was the deeply rooted suspicions surrounding Catholicism.[2] Religion played an essential role in the seventeenth century, as the prelates had a major influence on moral and political education.[3] In accordance with the customs of the time, people were expected to follow the faith of their king, who was also the religious leader of English subjects. Since Charles II and James II were raised in the French court during England's civil war, there was suspicion about whether they had converted to French Catholicism and whether they would undermine the Anglican tradition in England. As a result, England during the Restoration period experienced a series of religious tensions. The tension intensified considerably during James II's accession. While he was still the Duke of York, James openly declared his Catholic faith. Radical Whigs made efforts to strip him of his right to inherit the crown, and the intense conflict between exclusionists and royalists deeply divided the state, pushing it to the brink of another civil war.[4]

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[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 451-2, 454.

[2] It is important to recognize that Hume's examination of religion primarily centers on its influence on politics rather than religious devotion itself. This is apparent in his analysis of the character of the kings during the Restoration period. For Harris's insightful comment, see Harris, *Hume*, 345.

[3] As Hume notes, the Roman Catholic religion spent more on training priests and friars and was less tolerant. Dissatisfied with the division between sacerdotal and regal office, it also bestowed the sacerdotal office to the foreigners, and went against the public interest in most cases. Hume, "Of the Protestant Succession", in *Essays*, 510.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 399. This was a good instance to show why James II's imprudence made him less qualified than Charles II as a monarch. As Hume pointed out, "Charles II was not made wiser by the example of his father; but prosecuted the same measures, though at first, with more secrecy and caution." Hume, "Of the Parties of Great Britain", in *Essays*, 69.

After James's rise to power, suspicions regarding his leanings towards French Catholicism intensified for several reasons. Firstly, he dispatched agents to the Roman Catholic pope to facilitate England's formal re-admission into the Catholic Church. Secondly, in his diplomatic endeavors, he opted to align with, rather than counterbalance, the French monarch Louis XIV, with the aim of advancing the Catholic religion in England.[1] His council was primarily composed of Jesuits who were largely unfamiliar with government affairs in England but deeply committed to religious zeal.[2] Lastly, he embarked on challenging the Test Act. According to English laws, only those who adhered to the Anglican faith were eligible for public employment, including positions in the government and the army. James II not only enlisted a significant number of Catholics and exempted them from the Test Act, allowing them to hold public offices, but also disarmed many Protestant soldiers in Ireland and dismissed numerous officers, citing their Puritan ancestry as a pretext. Consequently, Catholics came to hold significant sway within the military forces.[3]

The animosity towards Catholicism among the subjects intensified further due to an international incident. In 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, abandoning the policy of religious tolerance, which resulted in the expulsion of French Huguenots. Many of these displaced individuals fled to England and shared their harrowing accounts of tyranny inflicted upon them, reigniting among Protestants a deep-seated resentment against the oppressive and persecutory nature of popery. This experience served as a stark warning to England of the bleak prospects under James's rule, who was seen as "irritated by such obstinate and violent opposition" but far less skilled in exercising these virtues than Louis XIV.[4]

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[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 451, 485.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 452.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 468, 477-8. Beyond the military dimension, the crisis in Ireland deepened in the subsequent years due to James II's expulsion of Protestants and the redistribution of land to Catholics. Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 484-5.
[4] Hume reminds us that the expulsion of Huguenots following the repeal of the Edict of Nantes was detrimental to Louis XIV's endeavors. "From a view of the state of Europe during this period, it appears, that Lewis, besides sullying an illustrious reign, had wantonly by this persecution raised invincible barriers to his arms, which otherwise it had been difficult, if not impossible, to resist." Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 471, 498-9.

Ultimately, according to Hume, it was the rumor of the birth of a male heir that dealt a critical blow to the Stuart monarchy. Word spread that James II had fathered a male child, which pleased zealous Catholics but plunged the nation into despair. Protestants had hoped that the Catholic James II would be nothing more than a temporary ruler in the line of Protestant monarchs, as the succession would eventually pass to the Prince and Princess of Orange, both devout Protestants. However, the birth of the new baby changed things. He would not only be raised in a Catholic court dominated by Jesuits but would also enjoy a priority in the line of inheritance. This aggravated the panic that James II would promote a Catholic orthodox faith without regard to prudence, potentially subverting the Anglican order established since the time of Henry VIII.[1] Now there was a rage in the nation that the King attempted "a violation of their laws and the danger of their religion".[2] This ominous prospect pushed the King's supporters, mainly Tories and Anglican Royalists, to seek collaboration with the Whigs. They invited William of Orange to safeguard the precarious balance of political and religious liberty. This brings us to the third thread, the Dutch role in the revolution, as we will explore in the following section.

2.3 The Dutch Perspective

Hume's international perspective was remarkable when he emphasized what an essential role William of Orange played in the revolution. While they insisted on the fact that James II had used his prerogative to strengthen state power and had even established a standing army, and how the birth of the Prince of Wales menaced the Protestant tradition, Hume explicitly points out that what truly made the revolution inevitable was the arrival of the Dutch Stadtholder, William of Orange.[3] As Hume notes, "had not an attack been made from abroad, affairs

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 494-5, 498, 501-2.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 517. As Trevor-Roper notes, both parties sank their ideological difference because they "were facing a fearful threat…'popery and slavery'. ". Hugh Trevor-Roper, "Epilogue: The Glorious Revolution", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 485.

[3] I concur with Harris's viewpoint that Hume's emphasis on the international perspective was distinctive, especially when compared to other historians like Thomas Macaulay and Charles Trevelyan, although the latter did mention international aspects. However, it is also worth noting that the invitation of English

might long have remained in their present delicate situation, and James might at last have prevailed in his rash, and ill concerted projects".[1] Viewed in this context, the collaboration between the Whigs and Tories to invite William was a pivotal move, and it was indeed justifiable to celebrate him as "the restorer of law and liberty."[2] However, Hume does not shy away from admitting that William's arrival was, in fact, an "attack" and that his principal objective was to safeguard the Netherlands' national security by establishing a fresh balance of power in Europe, rather than to ensure the preservation of the English constitution. Hence, William's multifaceted role highlights best revealed the international backdrop against which the revolution unfolded.

As Hume notices, the ascendancy of France had a profound impact on the balance of power in Europe. In 1668, when France invaded Flanders, it sent a clear signal that it posed a threat to the general liberties of Europe. Among all the nations, the Netherlands were particularly apprehensive. Initially, they had considered forming an alliance with France against England for economic advantages. However, they soon realized that France had become a menacing presence on their borders. The Dutch recognized the urgent need to prevent Louis XIV from extending his dominion over Europe and believed that the best option was to ally with England. They speculated that England, too, might be interested in forming an alliance against France.[3]

As Hume maintains, the Dutch misjudged the English policies and found themselves in a desperate situation. Despite expectations from Parliament, his ministers, and the public for involvement in European affairs, Charles II hesitated due to fears of potential consequences.

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parliament contributed to lending William's landing a greater sense of legitimacy. See Harris, *Hume*, 336-7.

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 497. See also Jonathan Israel, "The Dutch Role in the Glorious Revolution", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 105-62; K. H. D. Haley, 'The Dutch, the Invasion of England, and the Alliance of 1689', in *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspective,* ed. by Lois G. Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 21-34.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 516.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 191-2, 216-223

He worried about Parliament exploiting his financial difficulties and stripping him of his prerogative, similar to what happened to his father. Additionally, Charles II faced internal threats, including the prevalence of republican principles and veteran soldiers retired from the civil wars. With Parliament reluctant to allocate funds, he saw an alliance with France as a solution to his financial woes. This alliance could provide him with a considerable income in times of domestic turmoil.[1] Hence, he leaned towards neutrality rather than joining the anti-French league. The Netherlands, deprived of England's support, found themselves vulnerable due to their geographical position between the French army on land and the English navy at sea. This vulnerability led to a general revolt aimed at overthrowing the republican regime, during which William of Orange emerged as a prominent figure, gaining significant political authority.[2]

Despite earnest efforts to fortify their position, the Dutch nation soon realized that their national security would be compromised without the support of England. Under the leadership of William, the Dutch defended their sovereignty, becoming a beacon of inspiration for other European nations. The prospect of Holland's subjugation was viewed by other European nations as a precursor to their own enslavement, leading to a loss of hope in their ability to defend themselves against the growing power of France.[3] They united in the Augsburg League against France, with William assuming a leadership role driven by both his natural inclination and his interest.[4] Nonetheless, England remained reluctant to join this growing coalition due to the pro-French stance of the Stuart monarchy. William also recognized that the league was "imperfect and unequal to its end" as long as England maintained its neutrality, which it had hitherto persevered.[5] In this context, France had a good opportunity to achieve "a monarchy of Europe…exceeding the empire of Charlemagne,

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 242, 287, 302-3.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 268.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 272.
[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 497.
[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 499.

perhaps equaling that of ancient Rome".[1] The balance of power in Europe remained an elusive goal without England as his ally.[2]

According to Hume, the resolute stance of the Stuarts generated anti-French sentiment among the English populace and prompted Parliament to extend an invitation to William of Orange in 1688. This shift in political dynamics favored the anti-French alliance led by William. As discussed earlier, by the 1680s, a strong anti-French sentiment had taken hold in England. James II's policies had become so extreme that they alienated a significant portion of his subjects. People from various political backgrounds, including Whigs, Tories, and the Church party, united in appealing to Prince William as their savior for "the recovery of their laws and liberties". The Whigs, champions of liberty, led the charge, while the Tories and the Church party, feeling neglected and threatened by James's actions, set aside their doctrine of passive obedience to support William's cause. Even the Catholics, although James had granted them religious freedom through the Act of Indulgence, saw their rights as more secure under William's rule. For William, the invitation from both Whigs and Tories to rule as king of England was seen as a divine mandate. His primary ambition was not to navigate England's domestic politics but to lead a confederate army and seek vengeance against the injuries inflicted by Louis XIV upon himself, his country, and his allies. His paramount concern was the "domestic happiness and security" of the Netherlands.[3]

The decision of William had a far-reaching impact. As Hume recognized, William found himself in "so happy a situation" that he not only became a protector of liberty in England and the Netherlands but also extended his influence to the whole of Europe. Since the time of the Reformation, Europe had been engulfed in turmoil, and many monarchs had resorted

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 320-1.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 499, 505.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 503-5. To save his own country was the most formidable reason driving William of Orange to take a risk, even if he might suffer resistance from James II's standing army when he set foot on England. See Hugh Trevor-Roper, "Epilogue: The Glorious Revolution", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 484-5.

to absolutism as a supposed remedy. Across the continent, most nations were in a state of distress, with their security threatened by the ambitious expansion of France. The Netherlands was no exception, and even in England, the country party had employed violent and unjustifiable measures in their struggle against the monarchs, causing much of the nation to be "in extreme jealousy" of the principle of liberty. It appeared that most countries were averse to the cause of liberty.[1] However, the presence of William in England tipped the balance. With England now a part of the league, the Augsburg League became powerful enough to counterbalance France's ambitions to establish a universal monarchy in Europe. This influence extended "from one end of Europe to the other", making William the guardian and protector in many countries.[2]

In the context of the balance of power in Europe, it is clear that William of Orange's role was quite intricate. From William's standpoint, the Glorious Revolution presented a valuable opportunity to leverage England's defensive capabilities to protect the Netherlands from a potential French invasion. Hume, in his observations, remarked that "it will be difficult to find any person, whose actions and conduct have contributed more eminently to the general interests of society and of mankind."[3] William's strategic approach to English political affairs was primarily aimed at gaining support from the country for his own objectives, and the development of England's new constitution was seen as a by-product of this strategy.

In this part, I have explored Hume's analysis of the international factors influencing the evolution of the English constitution. Firstly, the Stuart monarchs, mirroring their European counterparts, sought to strengthen the state's military prowess, leading to increasing tensions

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 455.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 504-5. As Pincus noted, the revolutionaries of 1688–89 "aimed to transform the orientation of England's foreign policy…One of their chief aims was to reverse the foreign policy of Charles II and James II and instead align with the Dutch against the growing French power." Pincus, *1688*, 305-65.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 504. In Hume's narrative, the juxtaposition of a sublime reputation and a humiliated motivation once more attests to the cunning of history. A widespread gossip also proved how paradoxical William was, "a prince who having well nigh enslaved his own States, is come to fight us into liberty". Israel, "Introduction", 42.

between the monarchy and Parliament during a pivotal era. Secondly, the rivalry with France fueled Francophobic sentiments among the English populace, who suspected King James II of harboring intentions to establish an absolutist regime marked by a standing army and Catholicism, further exacerbating tensions. Thirdly, William of Orange emerged as a key figure in reshaping the balance of power in England, fundamentally reforming the principles of the English constitution. Hume underscores the revolution's international context, emphasizing the role of international rivalries in shaping a modern English constitution. The focus now shifts to examining how the revolution specifically redefined and reconstructed the English constitution, which we will explore in the next part.[1]

3. Prerogative and Modern Liberty

As I've illustrated earlier, Hume argues that international competition compelled both the king and Parliament to strengthen the power of the state, while avoiding emulation of the French model. This part will clarify why this pressure from international rivalry ultimately converged on the prerogative at the core of the so-called "ancient constitution". Hume proposed two key arguments. First, the prerogative, as an integral and legitimate component of the so-called "ancient constitution", allowed monarchs to exercise discretion. The mistake made by the Stuart kings was not in exercising this power, but rather in the imprudent manner in which they wielded it. Secondly, Hume contends that the revolutionary settlement curtailed the monarch's prerogative, establishing the rule of law in domestic affairs. This transformation replaced the previous "old English government," known for its "irregular nature", with a more "uniform and consistent" system that upheld "the most entire system of liberty, that ever was known among mankind".[2] This new constitution, fortified with secured authority, also upheld a stable order in domestic governance and protected national security on the global stage. As Hume summarized, the revolution introduced a commercial state

[1] G. C. Gibbs, 'The Revolution in Foreign Policy', in *Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714*, edited by Geoffrey S. Holmes (London: Macmillan, 1969), 59-79; see also D. W. Jones, *War and Economy in the Age of William III and Marlborough* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Pincus, *1688*, 11-29.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol.5, 59; Vol.6, 476, 531.

characterized by both liberty and political authority, and that the "glory of the nation" stemmed from "the progress in the arts of peace" and "valor and success in war".[1]

Hume's discussion responded to the prevalent Whig narrative in historical writing about the Glorious Revolution, which maintained that the revolution ousted James II and restored English liberty within the framework of the so-called "ancient constitution", as displayed in Part I. As Hume notes, their perspective "proved destructive to the truth of history, and has established many gross falsehoods".[2] In the upcoming two sections, I will illustrate how the revolution reshaped the so-called "ancient constitution". The first focuses on its treatment with the prerogative, and the second will delve into how the revolutionary settlement established a constitution that ensured liberty, both domestically and internationally.

3.1 The Prerogative

This section starts with an exploration of the prerogative. As we can see below, Hume associated the prerogative with the feudal system. During the late Tudor period, the influx of luxury brought about changes in the social and political structure, leading to the dissolution of the feudal order and a growing prominence of the prerogative in the constitution. In tandem, the Reformation sparked a fervent attachment to liberty and roused suspicion of the prerogative. The conflict between the prerogative and the pursuit of liberty ran through the entire seventeenth century, reached its peak during James II's rule, and played a significant role in triggering the revolution from a constitutional perspective.

From a constitutional standpoint, the prerogative was a pivotal element of the feudal system. It vested political power in the monarchs to enforce laws, safeguard property, and ensure the overall safety of their subjects. It should be recognized that laws could not cover every

[1] Hume, "Of the Protestant Succession", in his *Essays*, 508.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 533.

possible situation. Hence, it was pragmatic to grant a certain level of discretion to the supreme magistrates. In cases where supreme political authorities confronted extraordinary circumstances not addressed by legal provisions, the prerogative permitted them to extend their authority by dispensing with the execution of laws in such specific cases as might necessitate an exception or leniency.[1]

During the later reign of the Tudors, the expansion of commerce brought about significant changes in the social and political landscape. The growth of international trade led the nobility to develop a taste for luxurious living, which "dissipated the immense fortunes of the ancient barons". They were compelled to cut back on traditional hospitality and reduce the number of retainers they maintained. The influence of the aristocracy, once "historically formidable," steadily waned. Likewise, the land proprietors also sought to profit from their land by "demising those useless hands". It followed that the crown could attach the counties palatine and separate jurisdictions of the barons to the crown. Hume referred to these changes as "the secret revolution of government".[2] With the passage of time, the authority of the crown grew progressively, and positioned itself as the ultimate origin of all laws, with the sovereign will considered as unlimited.[3]

In response to the Whig historians, who portrayed Queen Elizabeth's reign as exemplary of the "ancient constitution" in their accounts, Hume maintains that at the zenith of this development, Queen Elizabeth I exercised "the most absolute authority". She did so with the extensive use of over twenty types of prerogatives, which were deemed as the "ordinary course of administration".[4] She not only enjoyed the prerogatives vested in her, but found

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 472-3.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 383-5.
[3] For instance, the monarch extended their authority over feudal powers and the counties palatine, in addition to the despotic power previously held by the popes in matters of ecclesiastical affairs. Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 367, 384-5; Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 481.
[4] Hume's comment that the government of England during that age bore "some resemblance to that of Turkey at present" is quite astonishing for his readers. It is evident that this perspective garnered significant criticism. Horace Walpole deemed Hume as a "superficial mountebank" on the grounds that Hume was

that her subjects generally accepted her discretionary rule.[1] Therefore, the English "ancient constitution" shared many similarities with the monarchical systems on the European continent, allowing the sovereign to take advantage of the present situation and assume an authority almost absolute.[2] The key difference was that English monarchs employed the prerogatives less frequently compared to their continental counterparts.

In this period, despite the problematic and irregular nature of the prerogative system within the constitutional framework, the parliament was unable to effectively counterbalance it. Hume highlighted the social changes accompanying the rise of luxury, noting the decline of dominance by nobles and land proprietors, and the emergence of a prosperous middle class in the cities. He believed this middling rank would constitute "the best and firmest basis of public liberty".[3] However, he disagreed with the views of Lord Bacon and Harrington, who argued that Henry VII's laws strengthened Parliament. Instead, Hume observed that in the late Tudor era, the Commons were seen merely as an ornament to the fabric of governance, without essential influence.[4] During Elizabeth's reign, the monarch held significant power over Parliament, including the right to convene and dissolve it and to set its agenda. The legislative power of Parliament was deemed illusory, and it was explicitly prohibited from involvement in state matters. Moral sermons preached obedience, and dissent against the

accused of having "studied nothing relative to the English constitution before Queen Elizabeth, and had selected her most arbitrary acts" to reach his own goal. Quoted in Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England*, 70-1; Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 360, 367-371, 414.

[1] This fundamental disagreement lies at the heart of Hume's contrast with the Whig historians. While Whig historians praised the "liberty" they believed was safeguarded by the ancient constitution, they overlooked that the essence of this old constitution was the king's prerogative, which often conflicted with popular liberty. Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 354.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol.5, 59, 562. As monarchs expanded their power, their primary aim was to challenge the authority of feudal barons, rather than intending to grant freedom to the general population. The common people, for their part, were chiefly concerned with the security of their personal property and their well-being, with little consideration for public liberty. Consequently, the quest for liberty had its roots in the Reformation and the radical Puritans, rather than being connected to the granting of royal prerogative. Forbes, "Introduction", 24-5; comp. Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England*, 75.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 384; "Of Refinement in the Arts", in *Essays*, 277.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 127; Vol. 4, 384. As Hume also notes in the letters, it was during James I's reign that "the House of Commons first began to assert its influence, leading to a conflict between Privilege and Prerogative." Hume, *The Letters of David Hume*, Vol.1, 168.

crown was viewed as sedition.[1] The prevailing principles of the time heavily favored monarchy, bestowing upon it almost absolute and unlimited authority. As Hume summarized, "in all the historical plays of Shakespear[e]…there is scarcely any mention of civil Liberty".[2] It reflected the mindset of the era.

The Reformation catalyzed the pursuit of liberty by igniting a transformation in the social climate and the mindset of subjects. Hume noted that it was during the Stuart era that the principles of liberty began to take root, finding refuge amidst puritanical beliefs. [3] The Reformation stirred a "bold and daring spirit," not only in religious discourse but also in political discussions. This boldness led to the advocacy of resisting or restraining princes, preparing the minds of the people for potentially seditious actions. Gradually, the principles of civil liberty, previously little discussed in the nation, began to spread under the guise of puritanical beliefs.[4] These doctrines inspired subjects to desire a new system of governance that would allow for their voices to be heard and their concerns addressed. As trust in monarchs waned, people came to realize the incompatibility of certain branches of prerogative with the exact or regular enjoyment of liberty. They began to perceive the monarchs' use of prerogative to safeguard national security and well-being as arbitrary rule or even tyranny. [5]

Hume notes that due to James I's penchant for speculative reasoning and his frequent use of the prerogative for convenience, conflicting perspectives emerged, leading to theoretical

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[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 363–6, 368; Vol. 5, 127.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 368. This can be confirmed by the words of Sir Walter Raleigh. As a parliamentarian politician, he admitted that the "to give contentment to the other degrees, they [the Commons] have a suffrage in making laws, yet ever subject to the prince's pleasure and negative will." See Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 561; Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's History of England*, 74.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 368. Hume commented that "the spirit of civil liberty gradually revived from its lethargy, and by means of its religious associate, from which it reaped more advantage than honour, it secretly enlarged its dominion over the greater part of the kingdom". Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 559.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 123-4, 329.

[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 364; Vol. 5, 177-8. For a good sketch of Hume's discussion, see Eugene Miller, 'Hume on Liberty in the Successive English Constitutions', in *Liberty in Hume's History of England*, edited by D. Livingston and N. Capaldi (Kluwer Academic Publishers: Springer, 1990), 82-101.

confrontations and eventually the outbreak of the civil war. On one side, the subjects believed they possessed certain privileges, though not precisely bounded and secured by law, but universally acknowledged due to long-standing tradition. On the other side, the King viewed Parliament's privileges as matters of grace and indulgence, contending that the prerogative was a divine right necessary to protect the English constitution. The monarchs believed it justified to draw additional resources for national security through the prerogative. Hume notes that the appearances were sufficiently in favor of the King to apologize for following such maxims, yet public liberty under this exorbitant prerogative was precarious, rendering opposition from the people not only excusable but laudable.[1]

Compounding the issue, Hume contends, the Stuarts lacked governing skills, exacerbating their conflict with Parliament and the subjects. This clash escalated into a bloody civil war, followed by a period of government characterized by half-hearted republicanism, and ultimately the restoration of the monarchy, all without a definitive resolution to the fundamental issue. Thus, clashes between two distinct interpretations of the constitution persisted through subsequent eras: one emphasizing the king's prerogative and the other focusing on the privileges of the subjects. Each interpretation had its justifications, but their one-sided nature contributed to the intensification of partisan fervor.[2]

This tension remained a central and unresolved question throughout the restoration and extended into the debate over the Glorious Revolution. Hume's international perspective made him more sympathetic to the kings than the Whig historians, and challenges the view that James II made a systematic attempt to introduce French-style absolutism into England.[3] However, Hume deemed it justified to hold James II accountable for his arbitrary

[1] Hume, "Of the Parties of Great Britain", 67-8; *History*, Vol. 5, 236.
[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 59, 562, 569-570.
[3] Hume depicts Charles I's transgressions as "imprudent" rather than a deliberate malicious plan, suggesting that Charles I still acknowledged the English constitution as a limited monarchy and had no intention of subverting it. Hume held a similar viewpoint when it came to James II. "An absolute monarch would not feel the need to assert his power aggressively and so provoke. opposition. This is frequently supposed to

disposition and imprudent use of the prerogative, which he saw as a significant factor leading to the outbreak of the Glorious Revolution.[1] Firstly, as soon as he ascended to the throne, James II claimed a substantial amount of revenue from the Parliament, and even threatened that he had resources in his prerogative for supporting the government, independent of their supplies. This contradicted his own promise to govern according to the laws.[2] Secondly, in his efforts to grant a general liberty of conscience to Catholics amidst growing Francophobia, James II suspended the Test Act and penal laws through the prerogative, allowing Catholics to hold positions in the military and government. These policies undermined the convention that prerogative should be limited to specific cases, and infuriated the Anglicans and Royalists, even embarrassing those Catholics, who preferred religious freedom within a liberal constitutional framework. These actions heightened public concerns that James II aimed to subvert the constitution.[3] Thirdly, James II proceeded to annul charters and strip boroughs at home and in overseas colonies of their privileges. According to English law, "the statutes, which regard private property, could not legally be infringed by that prerogative". These actions begat a "universal discontent against the king's administration".[4]

James II's policies not only led to his political downfall but also triggered a constitutional crisis. Subjects and Members of Parliament, whether Whigs or Tories, were acutely aware that the king had the power to "invade at once their constitution," "threaten their religion," and "establish a standing army."[5] In Hume's words, "[a]lmost the whole of this short reign consists of attempts always imprudent, often illegal, sometimes both, against whatever was

have been the case with Charles the First; and if we may now speak truth, after animosities are ceased, this was also the case with James the Second." Hume, "Of Passive Obedience", in *Essays*, 491-2. For a reassessment of James II's policies, see J. R. Jones, "James II's Revolution: royal policies, 1686-92", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 47-71.

[1] Hume acknowledged that James II's most contentious actions, like religious indulgence, were "laudable in themselves" for sake of equal rights granted to the Catholics and dissenters. However, the jealousy provoked by this trail of actions were "equally justifiable". Hume, *History*, Vol.6, 451, 507,520-1.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 453-4.

[3] The religious challenge remained unresolved until the final days of James II's reign, particularly during the summer of 1688. Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 470, 478, 482-3, 489-493.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 486-9.

[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 468, see also 451-5, 477-83, 485-9, 539.

most loved and revered by the nation."[1] The missteps of James II validated the earlier prediction of Sir Edward Coke, who was a "great oracle" of English law. The prerogative admitted of abuse, and authority founded on an exorbitant prerogative was inconsistent with law and a limited constitution. Therefore, it must be backed by many strong precedents in the history of England.[2] Prior to the seventeenth century, regal authority, in all these particulars, had never once been called into question. In those times, this authority was undisputed and secure. However, once the use of the prerogative was perceived as susceptible to exceptions, individuals not only opposed it but also began to outright deny the claims of legitimacy upon which it was traditionally founded.[3]

In summary, Hume argues that James II's reign precipitated a constitutional crisis, prompting a push for restrictions on the prerogative, which had empowered monarchs to disrupt the lives of their subjects. Amidst international competition, monarchs often leaned on the prerogative, contradicting the populace's pursuit of liberty. The prerogative, steeped in tradition and precedents, had facilitated a potent but dangerous authority, "sufficient in an instant to overturn this whole fabric, and to throw down all fences of the constitution".[4] Despite its historical significance and occasional usefulness, Hume recognized the prerogative as a relic of antiquated times, ill-suited for a modern, cohesive institution.[5] Even those in positions of political authority were vulnerable to its unchecked power, as noted by Harris, highlighting a disconnect between past beliefs and present realities.[6] Thus, Hume argued that the revolution needed to address this issue and establish a more secure foundation for public authority.

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[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 481. Hume acknowledged that the character of the King played a crucial role in history. He stated that the irony lay in the fact that at such a pivotal moment, a king with "middling talents" but an "arbitrary disposition" sat on the throne. The king also lacked an "essential quality" for a king, a "due regard and affection to the religion and constitution of his country". Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 482, 451, 513，520.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 474-7, 481.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 126; Vol. 6, 482.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 475.

[5] Hume agreed that the prerogative was helpful to suppress party strife, but it was outdated in this new era. Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 61-5, 166; Vol.5, 561-2; Vol.6, 475-6.

[6] Harris, *Hume*, 330.

3.2 Liberty and National Security

In the following paragraphs, I will delve into two key aspects of the new constitution that emerged from the Glorious Revolution, as described by Hume. On the one hand, the revolutionary changes, covered with a series of dexterous manipulations, put restrictions on the prerogative and established a system based on the rule of law, allowing subjects to enjoy liberty as they saw fit. On the other hand, Hume's global perspective also underlines that domestic liberty necessitates the state's ability to establish political authority and protect itself against external challenges. These two intellectual threads link to his broader political philosophy concerning commercial states and the balance between liberty, political authority, and the power of the state. Hume observes that in the post-revolutionary era, English subjects enjoyed the privileges of a legitimate constitution, which granted them a remarkable increase in power more than that in any other European state. This newfound framework was characterized by "noble liberty," "sweet equality," and "happy security". [1]

The foremost achievement of the revolution was the restriction of the prerogative and the establishment of domestic liberty under the rule of law. This explanation refuted the Whig idea that the revolution merely restored the ancient constitution's law and liberty. Among Whig historians, it was commonly believed that William's accession to the throne signified England's deliverance from tyranny and the restored religion, liberty, and property. Hume only partially agrees with this viewpoint, because it overlooks the fundamental changes brought about by the revolution. While William's reign indeed "restored" these liberties that had been infringed upon during James II's rule, the basis upon which these liberties were founded had been transformed by the revolution, which curtailed the prerogative as used in the old constitution, elevated the authority of Parliament over the monarch, and emphasized the ascendancy of popular principles in the new political order.

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 370, 379.

The perception of William's "deliverance" was, in part, a result of the "profound tranquility" that England experienced during the revolution.[1] Hume dissents from the Whig narrative that the events of 1688-89 constituted a "sensible" or "bloodless" revolution.[2] In reality, this period witnessed significant civil turmoil and acts of cruelty. Hume notes that during this temporary dissolution of government, the populace became the masters, with no disorder too extreme to be dreaded from them in their present ferment. Enraged subjects, some of whom were armed soldiers, ransacked Catholic churches and the residences of Catholic ambassadors. They also subjected the former chancellor Jeffery to torment during his escape, ultimately leading to his death.[3] For the politicians and bishops, who initiated the decision to invite William, their primary concern was the preservation of the community…In this extremity. Upon accepting the invitation, William landed in England with a formidable fleet and a numerous army, which could be the last resort in an emergent status.[4] Referring to these events as an "attack" is indeed an accurate characterization and agrees with the Tory perspective that viewed William as an "invader".[5]

Despite all these, Hume still appreciates the Whig perspective that Dutch stadtholder indeed "made a deliverance of this island…with very little effusion of blood",[6] which was inseparable from the political prudence of William of Orange and the Parliament. William prudently refrained himself from seizing the crown "by right of conquest" and instituting a completely new order. Instead, he insisted on ascending the throne based on principles of

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[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 522.

[2] John Morrill, 'The Sensible Revolution', in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 73-104. As Scott notes, the words employed to describe this revolution, such as "moderate" "respectable" "reasonable" and "godly", apart from "sensible" and "bloodless", are "all curious adjectives to apply to a process that involved sudden political change". Edmund Burke also deemed the regime chance as "a revolution not made but prevented", and characterized the decisive events of November and December 1688 as "a just [and necessary] civil war". About these items, see Scott, 'The Making of a Revolution?', 227–42, citation from 228; J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Fourth English Civil War: Dissolution, Desertion and Alternative Histories in the Glorious Revolution'. *Government and Opposition (London)* 23, no. 2 (1988): 151–66.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 517, 521.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 517.

[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 497, 511.

[6] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 521-2.

liberty. Before he landed, he had already launched propaganda to persuade the public that his mission was a restoration of the liberty that had been eroded during James's rule. Then he convened a parliament, considered the most proper representative of the people, to validate his authority, to conform to the principles of governance that held value for the English population.[1] Though disguised as a regular parliament, the members of Parliament were fully aware that they were in the midst of a revolutionary moment.[2] When disputes arose regarding how to judge James II's misdeeds and William's legal status, William conveyed his intentions to the Members of Parliament, who thereby brought their debate to a timely conclusion.[3]

Hume appreciates the achievement of a peaceful transition during the revolution, but he does not imply that the revolution lacked substantial changes. According to him, the revolution could have easily led to bloody conflict and political upheaval. However, thanks to a series of political maneuvers driven by the wisdom of William III and the politicians in Parliament, they managed to create the illusion that William had ascended the throne supported by all the legal authority and had succeeded in the "most regular manner" to the vacant throne.[4] The Whig historians were misled by this elaborately constructed image, maintaining that the revolution merely restored the long-standing freedoms that had existed before. However,

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[1] Before James's escape, he "threw the great seal into the river; and he recalled all those writs, which had been issued for the election of the new parliament". The assembly convened by William of Orange was not a regular parliament but rather a revolutionary convention. Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 516-519, 520-22.

[2] Howard Nenner noted that the 1688-89 Convention "legitimized the illegal and pretended that the revolution was never there". This was insightful but underestimated the constitutional significance of the event. In contrast, Schwoerer argued that William III transformed a revolutionary convention into a standard parliament by employing political symbols and ceremonies, setting the stage for the revolutionary settlement. This perspective offers a valuable revision to Nenner's comment that "the triumph was not of substance but of form". Howard Nenner, 'The Convention of 1689: A Triumph of Constitutional Form'. *The American Journal of Legal History* 10, no. 4 (1966): 282–96. Lois Schwoerer, 'The Transformation of the 1689 Convention into a Parliament'. *Parliamentary History* 3, no. 1 (1984): 57–76.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 523-30. The controversy revolved around three interconnected questions: how to characterize James II's position (whether he forfeited all title to the crown due to his abuse of power and was thus radically dethroned, or whether he was incapable of holding power), whether the throne was vacant at that point, and how to interpret William's role in the constitution (as a king by right of succession or as a regent). Lois G. Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights, 1689* (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 521-2.

Hume cautioned against being deceived by the appearance, and emphasized on the fundamental changes in political principles. In other words, the revolution changed "the regal part of the government", but also achieved a fundamental shift in political principles and the constitution itself, resulting in a "full and lasting settlement of religion, liberty, and property".[1]

Therefore, the revolution's central transformation revolved around its treatment of the prerogative, which had been a cornerstone of the old government. By restricting the prerogative, the revolution became "an event of mighty consequence, and the firmest foundation of British liberty".[2] In the past, kings had frequently and imprudently wielded the prerogative, raising suspicions among their subjects. The fervor for liberty had been ignited by the Reformation's opposition to the prerogative, which exposed the "irregular nature of the old English government". Furthermore, the imprudent use of the prerogative by the Stuarts revealed the "monstrous inconsistency" within the ancient constitution, where arbitrary and despotic power acted as an obstacle to the rule of law and domestic liberty.[3] It became evident that "there was no possible remedy, but by a full declaration of all the rights of the subject in a free parliament".[4]

The new constitution restricted the king’s prerogative, and also settled "the zeal for liberty" among subjects. The Bill of Rights abolished all dispensing power held by the crown, put a restraint on the prerogative, and thereby removed elements "incompatible with all legal liberty and limitations."[5] In this way, "every subject of England had entire power to dispose

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[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 510. As Julian Hoppit contends, "the constitution which emerged after 1688 was new, not old." Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?: England 1689-1727* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 49-50.
[2] Hume, "Of the Parties of Great Britain", in *Essays*, 70.
[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 475.
[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 510.
[5] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 476. 510. Hume rightly notes that the Declaration of Rights, promulgated by the convention in February 1689 did not "venture to condemn the dispensing power in general". It was in the Bill of Rights, which received royal assent on December 1689, that "the parliament took care to secure themselves more effectually against a branch of prerogative, incompatible with all legal liberty and limitations; and they excluded, in positive terms, all dispensing power in the crown". Hume, *History*, Vol. 6,

of his own actions, provided he did no injury to any of his fellow-subjects; no prerogative of the king, no power of any magistrate, nothing but the authority alone of laws, could restrain that unlimited freedom". Both the king and the people were "taught to know their proper boundaries", and the pursuit of liberty can be safeguarded in the new order.[1] Since then, the island enjoyed the "most entire system of liberty, that ever was known amongst mankind." The revolution was thereby not a coup d'état, but an event that transformed the political principles governing England. It established genuine liberty under a "singular and happy government, which we enjoy at present" in England.[2] To cite Gerald Straka's summary, 1688 marked "Year One of English Liberty" in the modern sense.[3]

Secondly, this constitution of liberty had to contend with international rivalry as well.[4] Hume's first point is that the revolution helped establish a new balance of power in Europe. Following the revolution, England had to protect itself against the Jacobite plan for restoration, supported by France, and also joined alliances led by the Netherlands to counter France's ambition for a universal monarchy under absolutism in Europe. Hume's analysis in an international context underscores its significance in shaping the broader European landscape.

Furthermore, in order to sustain this equilibrium of power, a new constitution with a stable political authority became imperative. As Hume suggested, it is essential to have a state with substantial revenues and a formidable military force, founded upon secure authority and the rule of law. As he notes, "[t]he force, which now prevails, and which is founded

476. 510; Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights,* 269-280.

[1] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 114; Vol. 6, 475-6.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 114; *History*, Vol. 6, 528-531. Harris argues that Hume seems to indicate that the "most entire system of liberty" is not "the best system of government", because the latter calls for political authority." See Harris, *Hume*, 339.

[3] Gerald Straka, '1688 as Year One of English Liberty', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, edited by Louis T Milic (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971), as cited in Harris, *Hume*, 510n61.

[4] D. W. Jones, "Sequel to Revolution: The economics of England's emergence as a Great Power, 1688-1712″, in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment*, 389-406.

on fleets and armies, is plainly political, and derived from authority, the effect of established government".[1] In other words, a stable authority was essential for both domestic liberty and national security on the international stage. In the context of commercial states, revenue and military force were indispensable, but must be based on secure authority and the rule of law. This underscored the importance of having an established government with political authority. It is only with a secure political authority that this new settlement of the constitution can be long-standing.[2] The political disputes did not quiet down after the revolution, but these debates happened in the parliament, in the form of "laws, and votes, and conferences, and concessions", rather than on the battlefield, via "sword, and by devastation, and by civil war".[3] In other words, after a century of political turmoil, both parties no longer sought to overturn the constitution and spark another revolution; instead, they aimed to find practical ways for it to operate with a solid foundation. Therefore, Hume's assertion remains persuasive that the revolution "put the nature of the English constitution beyond all controversy".[4]

The historical trajectory of England also supports this perspective. In order to defend the revolutionary settlement, England became involved in the Nine Years' War under William's leadership to prevent France from a rise to dominance in Europe. This war incurred massive

[1] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 468. His emphasis on authority became more pronounced in his later works. In a later revision of his *History*, he acknowledged a "melancholy truth" that "in every government, the magistrate must either possess a large revenue and a military force, or enjoy some discretionary powers, in order to execute the laws, and support his own authority." Hume, *History*, Vol. 5, 129.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 531.

[3] Hume, "Of the Protestant Succession", in Essays, 508.

[4] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 531. I share Harris's observation that "the immediate causes of that event were less important than what followed it... The only thing that could prove the Revolution to have been justified was its consequences." Historians generally agree that the Revolution did not definitively dictate England's future course, and even the term "Glorious Revolution" was not coined until two decades later. However, as Dickinson notes, the revolution was the basis for "the whole political settlement of the eighteenth century", and the eighteenth-century debate over political principles could not take place without the events of 1688-89 being used as a source of inspiration or guidance. See Harris, *Hume*, 320; Jennifer Carter, 'The Revolution and the Constitution', in *Britain after the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714*, edited by Geoffrey S. Holmes (London: Macmillan, 1969), 39–58; James Hertzler, 'Who Dubbed It "The Glorious Revolution? "' *Albion (Boone)* 19, no. 4 (1987): 579–85; Dickinson, 'The Eighteenth-Century Debate on the "Glorious Revolution"'. *History* 61, no. 201 (1976): 28–29.

expenses for the navy and mercenary forces overseas, imposing heavy tax burdens on English subjects. By the late 1690s, the escalating war expenditures made it necessary to initiate a financial revolution and transfer the tax burden to future generations.[1] According to statistics, although tax burdens remained heavy in the post-revolutionary era, they were more legitimate, being based on the approval of Parliament rather than the arbitrary will of monarchs and the prerogative.[2] Hence, Hume's emphasis on political authority had both domestic and international dimensions.

Hume's historical writing marks a departure from ideological interpretations of the revolution, offering a precise understanding of the reality of the new English constitution and its origins. He delved into the political principles behind historical events to carve out an approach to his own political philosophy. Hume acknowledged that at first sight, the 1688-89 affairs witnessed "only the succession," and changed only "the regal part of the government," because it "deposed one king and established a new family," effectively "put[ting] a period to their hereditary succession," by establishing William and Mary as the joint sovereigns.[3]

However, beneath this surface lay a profound shift in political principles. As Hume contends, During the Stuart period, the government was kept in a continual fever, by the contention

[1] The revolution also marked a change in England's foreign policies, with the continual increase of expenditure in national defense. Patrick O'Brien and Philip A. Hunt. 'The Rise of a Fiscal State in England, 1485-1815'. *Historical Research: The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 66, no. 160 (1993): 129–76; Jones, *War and Economy in the Age of William III and Marlborough*, 29; Israel, "Introduction", 40-43; Gibbs, 'The Revolution in Foreign Policy', 59–79.

[2] As John Brewer argued, it was "difficult to resist Necker's conclusion that the English sheep were willing to be shorn, not because of a peculiar pusillanimity—that would have been entirely out of national character—but because they regarded taxation as a legitimate aspect of parliamentary government". Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, 107.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 531. This was deemed as a piece of evidence that Hume was a conservative thinker like Burke, and intended to minimize the effect of the revolution. However, this impression is not supported when we carefully read Hume's words in his own essay. What he intended to convey here was that the revolution was not "corresponding to those refined ideas" or "philosophical origins of government". Instead, "it was only the majority of seven hundred, who determined that change for near ten millions". Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in his *Essays*, 472-3.

between the privileges of the people and the prerogatives of the crown. "If arms were dropped, the noise of disputes continued: Or if these were silenced, jealousy still corroded the heart, and threw the nation into an unnatural ferment and disorder."[1] The revolutionary settlement constrained the prerogative, reducing the significance of arbitrary royal power, and "gave such an ascendant to popular principle". In the sixty years after the revolution, England has created a "parliamentary establishment". That is to say, the initiative force of the constitution fell on the parliament, with "an uninterrupted harmony…between our princes and our parliaments". In tandem, it also enhanced the rule of law, which laid the foundation for property rights and civil liberty, and thereby set the stage for a robust commercial state. This new constitution preserved "a new plan of liberty", so that England underwent "so long and so glorious a period no nation almost can boast of", "in a manner so free, so rational, and so suitable to the dignity of human nature".[2]

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on Hume's analysis of the Glorious Revolution that provides valuable insights into the transformation of the English constitution. While Forbes and Phillipson's exploration of Hume's historical works is noteworthy, directing attention to his examination of this pivotal moment offers a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution of political principles in England. Hume adeptly illustrates how international rivalries played a significant role in propelling this transformation, reshaping the English constitution from "an inconsistent fabric with jarring and discordant parts" to a modern system that espoused "a new plan of liberty."[3]

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[1] Hume, "Of the Protestant Succession", in *Essays*, 507.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol.4, 384; Vol. 6, 510-1, 531; Hume, "Of the Protestant Succession", in *Essays*, 508. As Hoppit highlights, from the 1690s onward, the kings no longer viewed Parliament as an adversary but rather as an ally or a valuable resource, and they governed through it. This set the stage for England's rise to great power. Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?,* 7-8; Howard Nenner, 'Liberty, Law and Property: The Constitution in Retrospect from 1689', in *Liberty Secured?: Britain before and after 1688*, edited by J. R. Jones (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 88-121.

[3] Hume, *History*, Vol. 4, 384; Vol.5, 59.

Hume's examination of the constitution emphasizes the pivotal role played by the prerogative during the Glorious Revolution. Faced with escalating international competition, England sought to bolster its financial and military power. The monarchs utilized the prerogative, a legitimate power granted to them within the old constitution, to address these challenges. However, their utilization of this exceptional authority led to the enactment of controversial policies, exposing the inadequacy of the prerogative in a modern constitution. The revolutionary settlement marked the curtailment of the monarchs' prerogative and underscored the primacy of Parliament in governance. This transition eliminated the monarch's power to intervene with legal authority, a practice previously permitted by the feudal constitution. As a result, public authority and the rule of law were fortified, providing a more stable foundation for governance. This transformation was tailored to the needs of a burgeoning commercial society and contributed significantly to economic prosperity.

Hume's analysis further underscores the perspective we have previously explored: that a thriving commercial society, under stable governance, can significantly enhance the state's power. The consolidation of governmental authority was crucial not only for maintaining internal order but also for effectively mobilizing manpower and economic resources to ensure national security. With the establishment of robust political authority due to the revolutionary settlement, England was able to pursue a new way of strengthening the state's power, rather than resorting to expedient but potentially destabilizing measures. To safeguard the gains of the revolution, William III forged an alliance with the Netherlands to counter French ambitions of universal monarchy. This strategic move propelled England into a prominent role in maintaining the balance of power in Europe and marked its ascent to international influence.

Once again Hume is directly engaging with the issues raised in Hont’s work. Hume's historical analysis unveils a central theme in his political theory: the attributes of modern

commercial states. He identifies two crucial aspects of these states.[1] Firstly, they remove the arbitrary will of monarchs from governance, emphasizing the rule of law, which enables citizens to enjoy their property rights and engage in lawful activities. Secondly, the new constitution must not be weak; it must possess the strength to uphold the rule of law domestically and protect itself on the international stage. This necessitates a stable political authority capable of mobilizing resources for national security without compromising domestic freedom. In Hume's view, liberty in the modern commercial state is paramount and regarded as "the perfection of civil society." However, this liberty must coexist with stable political authority, founded on reverence for established government.[2] Hume's political philosophy seeks to elucidate the intricate relationship between liberty and public authority in a commercial state, which secures the rule of law and property rights.[3] As such, Hume's examination of the Glorious Revolution serves as an entry point to explore his political philosophy, which will be the central focus of the forthcoming two chapters.

[1] Here I disagree with Leslie Stephen's claim that Hume only presents "a meaningless collection of facts, through which ran no connecting principle", epitomizing the fact that history was "mere undecipherable maze to the eighteenth-century thinkers". Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. Second Edition. Vol. 2 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), 185.

[2] Hume, *History*, Vol. 6, 533-534. Hume's historical writing here accommodated the view of both Whigs and Tories.

[3] "What mattered in government was stability, order, and the protection of property rights. Those, then, were the things that justified the Revolution settlement and the placement of the succession upon the House of Hanover." Harris, *Hume*, 320.

Ch.4 Original Contract and Hume's Critique[1]

The preceding chapter shed light on Hume's analysis of the Glorious Revolution, showcasing that the revolution curtailed the king's prerogative and emphasized the rule of law, which was essential to maintain public liberty, property rights and commercial prosperity. In this way, it balanced the popular pursuit of liberty with the need for consolidated political authority, contributing to establishing a modern English constitution suited for a commercial era. However, it remains unclear how Hume constructs a coherent philosophical framework that helps understand this emerging commercial state.

As I will elucidate below, it is fruitful to approach Hume's discussion through his critique of the speculative principles of Whig politics, particularly the philosophical origin of civil government as elucidated by John Locke's political philosophy. The Whigs endorsed contract theory to advocate for greater liberty in the emerging modern commercial era, and their political theory significantly influenced eighteenth-century England. Hume examined their principles in various political essays,[2] arguing that their theory fostered an undue focus on the philosophical origins of government. This excessive emphasis on individual liberty, Hume contended, downplayed the importance of government authority and risked categorizing all other forms of government as "monstrous and irregular".[3] Since the Whigs deeded Locke as an intellectual patron saint who provided the most systematical elucidation to justify political authority from the perspective of philosophical origin of government,

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[1] I'm obliged to give special gratitude to Professor Li Meng at Peking University. His research on Locke's political philosophy is still the most insightful one I have ever read. See Li Meng, "Revolutionary Politics: Locke's Political Philosophy and the Crisis of Modern Natural Law", in Wu Fei ed., *Locke and A Society of Freedom* (Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing, 2013), 1-97. My friend Zhao Hongbin, now a PhD candidate at National University of Singapore, deserves my gratitude as well. My analysis of Locke's political philosophy draws insight from his understanding of the right to execute the law of nature and the theory of person.

[2] Hume subjected the speculative principles of both political factions to careful scrutiny in two essays: "Of Passive Obedience" and "Of Original Contract." Additionally, he explored related issues in various political essays, with a particular focus on topics such as the English constitution and Protestant succession. These discussions are pivotal for comprehending Hume's response to Locke. I aim to provide detailed coverage of these insights as this chapter unfolds.

[3] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays,* 472.

understanding how Hume exposes the shortcomings of Locke's theoretical system is crucial for grasping Hume's own political philosophy.

In addition, this approach also underlines that a consideration of Hume's critique helps address Hont's concerns about theorizing political authority in the context of modern commercial states. As discussed in the introductory chapter, Hont primarily focuses on the Pufendorf's contribution but cannot effectively theorize governmental authority. I contend that Hont overlooks Hume's significant contribution in this regard. Through his critique of Whig principles defending liberty in a commercial era, Hume reveals his central motif: "liberty is the perfection of civil society, but still authority must be acknowledged as essential to its very existence."[1] Against the backdrop, Hume's concern becomes clearer about the indispensability of consolidated government authority to maintain order in a civilized society centered around property rights. Hence, Hume's critique serves as an important step toward effectively theorizing public authority in the context of modern commercial states.

It is helpful to anticipate why Hume's political theory can be enlightening when interpreted within the context of modern commercial states. While it is textually valid to argue that Hume deems reverence for political authority a "common sentiment of mankind" and a reflection of historical practices across various societies,[2] Hume's primary focus is on modern commercial states, particularly modern England. Hume observed that both political parties in England, the Whigs and the Tories, felt the need to attach "a philosophical or speculative system" to their politics, a phenomenon "known only to modern times".[3] This general scenario forms the backdrop for Hume's discussion of political principles. Therefore, it is plausible to infer that when criticizing the theory of the original contract, Hume had the Whig contractarian theory in mind. The Whigs espoused Locke's theory of a mixed

[1] Hume, "Of the Origin of Government", in *Essays*, 41.
[2] In addition, Hume also refers to ancient tyrants (such as Nero) against whom it is reasonable to resist. Hume, "Of Passive Obedience", in *Essays*, 489-90.
[3] Hume, "Of Parties in General", in *Essays,* 60.

monarchy where subjects enjoy natural freedom and equality to analyze the constitution of post-revolutionary England. This context contributes to interpreting Hume's theory as a framework for understanding modern commercial states, particularly those like post-revolutionary England.

In this chapter, my analysis goes beyond existing literature by defending why it is helpful to consider Locke as Hume's theoretical target in understanding his critique of Whig principle, based on both textual evidence and contextual investigation.[1] It was widely accepted in the past that Hume's critique of contractarians was aimed at John Locke's theory.[2] However, along with the historical investigation of political theories ever since the 1970s, it has recently been noted that there is no commonly accepted view of what contract theory at large is, making it difficult to ascertain precisely what Hume's critique aims to refute.[3] To respond, I present two lines of reasoning. Firstly, the textual evidence and thematic focus on the consent principle and the original contract indicate that Hume directly engages with Locke's theory. Secondly, against the revisionist interpretation, I argue that Locke's influence was considerable in eighteenth-century England, particularly at the time when Hume composed his critique of the speculative principles of the radical Whigs. By situating Hume's arguments within the context of Locke's significant influence and the political debates of eighteenth-century England, we can better appreciate Hume's contributions to political philosophy and his concerns about political authority in a commercial era.

This chapter is structured into three distinct parts. It commences with an exposition on the significance of identifying Locke's political philosophy as a reference point when Hume

[1] I agree with Sagar's comment that "the central and most instructive comparison to be drawn in this matter is between Hume's political thought and that of John Locke". Unlike Sagar's focus on Hume's *Treatise*, this chapter will primarily concentrate on Hume's *Essays*. Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, 106.

[2] For example, G. A. Cohen, 'Hume's Critique of Locke on Contract', in *Lectures on the History of Moral and Political Philosophy*, edited by Jonathan Wolff (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 120–137; Frederick Whelan, 'Hume and Contractarianism'. *Polity* 27, no. 2 (1994): 201–24.

[3] Stephen Buckle and Dario Castiglione. 'Hume's Critique of the Contract Theory'. *History of Political Thought* 12, no. 3 (1991): 458-9.

embarks on a critical examination of speculative principles of Whig politics. Following this, it sheds light on Hume’s observation regarding the applicability of popular consent, emphasizing its suitability for primitive and barbarous societies rather than those civilized societies. Then it explores Hume’s critique of Locke’s concept of tacit consent, which is advanced to substantiate popular consent, highlighting how it tends to overstate the degree of freedom afforded to subjects. Lastly, the chapter unveils the essence of Hume’s critique, contending that Locke’s theory stems from a misunderstanding of human nature, thereby underscoring Hume’s constructive approach towards the indispensability of political authority through a reassessment of human nature.

1. Whig Principles and Hume’s Critique

This part underscores the viability and merit of examining John Locke's political philosophy as a focal point in Hume's scrutiny of the speculative principles of Whig politics. To achieve this objective, the part is divided into two sections. The first elucidates Hume’s method of investigating the "philosophical or speculative system of principles" underpinning Whig ideology, prompted by his astute observations of the character of modern politics. The second extrapolates from pertinent textual evidence, demonstrating Hume's implicit critique directed towards Locke among other thinkers. Furthermore, it seeks to contextualize Hume’s critique within the broader spectrum of eighteenth-century political debates, reaffirming Locke's significant intellectual influence on the radical Whigs. Consequently, Locke emerges as one of Hume’s primary targets in his critical examination of political theory, which aims to illuminate the emerging commercial state in post-revolutionary England.

1.1 Parties and Speculative Principles

Hume's venture into the field of political philosophy originates from a plain observation: the fervent emphasis placed by parties in post-revolutionary England on speculative principles to bolster their political positions, which Hume regarded as characteristic of modern politics. This observation motivates him to examine their speculative principles, specifically focusing on the doctrine of passive obedience and the principle of popular consent. Understanding

Hume's approach, which is attuned to political realities while maintaining the concern about speculation, necessitates a precise understanding of the interplay between principles and the political trajectories of both parties in early modern England.

As Hume observes, party opposition is a common occurrence throughout human history, yet it is quite rare for parties to seek support from speculative principles. Like his contemporaries, Hume underscores the antithesis between the Whigs and Tories as a feature of politics in eighteenth-century England, tracing their conflicts back to the seventeenth-century struggles between the Roundheads and Cavaliers. Hume's notable contribution lies in highlighting a significant difference between party politics across different eras. While the rivalry between the Roundheads and Cavaliers led to civil war in the mid-seventeenth century, their intense discord stemmed from divergent views on government rather than abstract principles.[1] However, in the eighteenth century, both the Whigs and Tories sought to justify their positions based on principles. The doctrine of passive obedience, which was once peripheral to the Cavaliers, became central to Tory ideology, esteemed as sacred and inviolable even in the face of potential tyranny.[2] In contrast, the Whigs advocated for greater liberty by founding the government on popular consent, "suppose[ing] that there is a kind of original contract, by which the subjects have tacitly reserved the power of resisting their sovereign."[3] The conflict of principles formed the crux of the political divide between the two parties in eighteenth-century Britain. Based on this observation, Hume comments that it is novel for both parties in the post-revolutionary era to be defined by their unwavering adherence to abstract speculative principles, "known only to modern times" and representing "the most extraordinary and unaccountable" development in human affairs.[4]

In addition, the mixed constitution in England exacerbates the clash of principles. While

[1] Hume, "Of Parties in Great Britain", in *Essays*, 68-9.
[2] Hume, "Of Parties in Great Britain", in *Essays*, 70.
[3] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 466.
[4] Hume, "Of Parties in General", in *Essays*, 60, 70.

nearly all sensible individuals are inclined to preserve the mixed constitution, people with different temperaments lean towards different principles. Individuals with milder dispositions, wary of sedition and civil wars, tend to support the monarchy. In contrast, those with a penchant for liberty are more inclined to support the parliament and endorse the principle of liberty. However, this constitutional rivalry in eighteenth-century England led each faction to insist that they held the sole correct interpretation of the mixed constitution.[1] As Hume puts it, "when a faction is formed upon a point of right or principle, there is no occasion, where men discover a greater obstinacy, and a more determined sense of justice and equity."[2] Intense animosity grows out of the disagreement between these two factions. The Tories denounced the Whigs as rebels, while the Whigs labelled their adversaries as advocates of political oppression. Consequently, the equilibrium between the republican and monarchical facets of the English constitution became "delicate and uncertain".[3] While the nation fluctuated between these ideologies, the parties themselves endured, bound to persist as long as England adhered to a limited monarchy. This reasoning highlights how the complexities of England's mixed constitution accentuated pre-existing political divisions and party dynamics.

The party strife observed by Hume in eighteenth-century England must be contextualized within the post-revolutionary historical milieu. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the majority factions of both parties accepted the revolutionary settlement, yet their fragile consensus fractured amidst issues of royal succession and Jacobite uprisings.[4] The Whigs,

[1] As Hume suggests, a good example was the settlement of the crown. It was accidental, but also natural additions to the principles of the court and country parties, which are "the genuine divisions in the British government". Hume, "The Parties of Great Britain", in *Essays*, 71.

[2] Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government", in *Essays*, 33.

[3] Hume, "Of the Parties of Great Britain", in *Essays*, 64-5.

[4] Thomas Slaughter, '"Abdicate" and "Contract" in the Glorious Revolution'. *The Historical Journal* 24, no. 2 (1981): 323–37; Schwoerer, *The Declaration of Rights,* 11-101, especially his concluding remarks on 100-1; Karl Botigheimer, "The Glorious Revolution and Ireland", in *The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives*, ed. by Lois Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 234-43; Mark Goldie, 'John Locke on the Glorious Revolution: A New Document'. *History of Political Thought* 42, no. 1 (2021): 74–97, esp. 81-85; Mark Goldie, 'John Locke's Circle and James II'. *The Historical Journal* 35, no. 3 (1992): 557–86; Solange Rameix, 'Say "No" to the Glorious Revolution! The Jacobites: Between Revolt and Defense of the Established Order'. *Dix-septième siècle*, no. 275 (2017): 311–21; Lois Schwoerer, 'Locke,

originally a dissenting faction, took power and cooperated with royal authority to defend against Jacobite restoration. They sought to moderate the radical theory of the original contract and worked towards reconciling themselves with monarchical authority. The Tories, closely aligned with the court and wary of disruptions to the royal succession, were inclined to support royal authority while also defending the royal authority against the Jacobites, who were overturned in the Glorious Revolution. They acknowledged the new monarchs only in a *de facto* manner and appealed to the doctrine of passive obedience. During this period, both parties grappled with the dissonance between their theoretical underpinnings and political realities.[1]

However, it is the rise of Whig supremacy that has a stronger link with Hume's critique of Whig principles. Since the 1720s, the Whigs established their overwhelming political influence, characterized by a formidable executive and an oligarchical single-party government. This created a strong tension with their original stance and led to a notable schism within the party. The court Whigs relinquished their previous advocacy of popular resistance and sought to establish a prosperous commercial order in the post-revolutionary era. In contrast, the radical Whigs adhered to their principle of advocating for greater liberty, embracing theories like civic republicanism and an adapted version of Locke's theory of the original contract, and criticized the court Whigs for abandoning revolutionary ideals.[2] Instead of framing the debate as a new antithesis of "Court vs. Country," Hume maintained

Lockean Ideas, and the Glorious Revolution'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51, no. 4 (1990): 531–48.

[1] J. H. Plumb. *The Growth of Political Stability in England: 1675-1725* (London: Macmillan, 1967), esp. 138; Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History, 1689–1832* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 43-51. On the origin of the Whig party, see Hume, *History, Vol.6*, 380-1; J. R. Jones, *The First Whigs: The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-1683* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

[2] Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England*, esp. xvii-xviii, 1-2, 10, 29-30, -65, 72, 83-6, 94-6, 134-9, 158, 186.For related debates on Plumb's argument, see Clayton Roberts, 'The Growth of Political Stability Reconsidered'. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 25, no. 2 (1993): 237–56; Norma Landau, 'Country Matters: "The Growth of Political Stability" a Quarter-Century On'. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 25, no. 2 (1993): 261–74; Stephen Baxter, 'A Comment on Clayton Roberts' Perspective'. *Albion (Boone)* 25, no. 2 (1993): 257–60; Clayton Roberts, 'A Reply to Professors Baxter and Landau'. *Albion (Boone)* 25, no. 2 (1993): 275–77; Harvey Mansfield, *Statesmanship and Party Government: A Study of Burke and Bolingbroke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

the "Whig vs. Tory" paradigm.[1] In opposition to the Whig radicals, Hume aligned with the established Whigs and aimed to develop a new approach to political philosophy.[2]

1.2 Locke and Whig Principles

Before examining Hume's contemplation regarding the Whig principle within his essay "Of the Origin of Government," it is helpful to note some textual evidence that helps strengthen the link between the Whig principle and Locke's political philosophy. Despite the absence of a direct mention of Locke in Hume's critique of the original contract, several pieces of textual evidence support the intellectual engagement.

Firstly, in the concluding section of the sixth volume of his *History*, Hume lists several illustrious figures who contributed to the Whig interpretation, "[s]uch as Rapin Thoyras, Locke, Sidney, Hoadley, &".[3] The inclusion of Locke's name is notable because he never authored any historical analysis and intentionally avoided relying on historical arguments in

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[1] William Speck's proposal to replace the traditional "Whig vs. Tory" party paradigm with a "Court vs. Country" framework has gained significant traction among scholars. However, Frank O'Gorman argues that categorizing both Tories and the opposition Whigs as representatives of "the country" presents substantial challenges. Max Skjönsberg also notes that the "Whig vs. Tory" paradigm persisted in Hume's analysis of speculative systems, since during Hume's time, "almost all Dissenters sided with the Court," aligning with the Whigs, while "all the lower clergy of the Church of England (and the non-jurors)" aligned with the opposition Tories. Beyond religious affiliations, Skjönsberg points out deep divisions between the Whigs and Tories on issues such as succession and foreign policy. Max Skjönsberg, *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 126-128, 156, 207, 233; W. A. Speck, "Whigs and Tories Dim Their Glories", in John Cannon ed., *The Whig Ascendancy: Colloquies on Hanoverian England (*London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 56-70; *Stability and Strife: England 1714–1760* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1977), 146-59, 203; O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century,* 150-9, esp. 151; see also Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714-60* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 7, 55-84, 118-45; Nicholas Rogers, 'Party Politics During the Whig Ascendancy'. *Canadian Journal of History* 18, no. 2 (1983): 253–60; J. C. D. Clark, 'The Decline of Party, 1740–1760'. *The English Historical Review* 93, no. 368 (1978): 499–527.

[2] Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, ix-xii, see also Craig Smith, 'Book Review: Max Skjönsberg, the Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain'. *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (2022): 73–77.

[3] Hume, *History*, *Vol.6*, 533. In his letters, Hume also criticized the Whig historian Paul de Rapin (usually styled Rapin-Thoyras), whose *History of England* was considered the standard work before Hume entered the field. Hume lamented, "[t]he more I advance in my undertaking, the more am I convinced that the History of England has never yet been written, not only for style, which is notorious to all the world, but also for matter; such is the ignorance and partiality of all our historians Rapin, whom I had an esteem for, is totally despicable". Hume's critique lies in Rapin's partiality, which stems from the false principles of the Whigs. Hume, *The Letters of David Hume, Vol.1*, 170, 179, 25.

his political philosophy.[1] The sole reason for Locke's inclusion in Hume's enumeration was the compatibility of Locke's political philosophy with the configuration of Whig principles. This alignment of ideologies leads to a plausible inference that Locke stands as one of the formidable intellectual adversaries in Hume's intellectual arena.[2]

Secondly, in a philosophical context, Hume's critical examination of the Whig principle in the essay "Of the Original Contract" revolves around two central points, and this theoretical construct finds its most articulate expression within Locke's body of work. In the main body of the text, Hume scrutinizes two distinct arguments. The initial inquiry revolves around whether the concept of the original contract, either in the early stages of society or at the inception of existing governments, can elucidate the moral foundation of allegiance to government within a civilized and commercial era. The subsequent analysis explores whether popular consent, particularly tacit consent, can legitimately serve as the foundation for allegiance. Both ideas resonate with key tenets of Locke's political philosophy, which develops the theory of the original contract to substantiate the principle of consent and further articulates tacit consent as a specific form. In the concluding part of this essay, Hume explicitly refers to these arguments and deems Locke "the most noted of its [partisans]."[3]

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[1] The absence of a robust historical argument in Locke's theory is a prominent theme among historians of political thought, including figures such as Laslett, Skinner, and Thompson. They highlight this aspect to underscore that Locke's ideas diverged from mainstream political arguments in the post-revolutionary era. Peter Laslett, "Introduction", 77-78; Martyn Thompson, 'Significant Silences in Locke's Two Treatises of Government: Constitutional History, Contract and Law'. *The Historical Journal* 31, no. 2 (1988): 275–94; Quentin Skinner, 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action'. *Political Theory*, 2 (1974): 277-303, esp. 286; James Coniff, 'Reason and History in early Whig thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43 (1982), 397-416.

[2] Dunn argues that "[t]he contingency of the legitimacy of any government on the right of emigration which Locke's subsequent critics, especially Hume, mocked so unmercifully". Thompson admitted that "Hume never refers to Locke by name by the anticipated objections to Hume's views and the idea of contract Hume considers, mostly have their sources in Locke's *Second Treatises*". John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treaties of Government'* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 69; Martyn Thompson, 'Hume's Critique of Locke and the "Original Contract"'. *Il Pensiero Politico* 10, no. 2 (1977): 189–201, citation from 189.

[3] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", 486-7. As Buckle and Castiglione note, "Hume's choice of terms in the quotation…indicated that it is mainly Lockean version of the theory he has principally in mind". Buckle and Castiglione, 'Hume's Critique of the Contract Theory', 470.

This reading is supported by other Hume scholars as well. Eugene Miller, as the editor of the authoritative version of *The Essays*, argues that Hume's critique specifically targets Locke's arguments. Kund Haakonssen reinforces the idea that Hume's formulation is directed, in part, against Locke's assertion that the obligation of allegiance is based on a prior obligation to keep promises.[1] Hence, it is indeed helpful to approach Hume's critique through the lens of Locke's intellectual framework.

In asserting that Locke can be viewed as both an expositor of Whig principles and an intellectual adversary to Hume, we confront a challenge posed by the prevailing currents of revisionism within Locke scholarship. Ever since Peter Laslett's groundbreaking research, the once-prevailing consensus that Locke's influence permeated the political writings and pamphleteers of the eighteenth century has been questioned, particularly regarding Hume's references to Locke's ideas in his critique of contract theory and the consent principle.[2] For instance, John Pocock argues that this view distorts historical truth, asserting that Locke's *Two Treatises* were insignificant in that context.[3] The revisionists find that most Whigs perceived Locke's ideas as too radical and unsuitable for wholehearted endorsement, and they preferred discourses of ancient constitutionalism or Reformation contract theory.[4] By

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[1] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", 487n5. 479n10.

[2] We can see a lot of this sort of argument in the works published before the 1970s. J. W. Gough, *The Social Contract: A Critical Study of Its Development* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 17, see also 126, 130, 174-177; John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Revised Edition (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 28-9. For Laslett's seminal research and its influence, see Peter Laslett, "Introduction", in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 3-122; J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform: A History of Ideology and Discourse', in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 217, 222-3, 229-230; 'Foundations and Moments', in *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, edited by A. Brett and J. Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 37–49; Richard Whatmore, "Introduction to the New Princeton Classics Edition", in Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, xiii-xvi.

[3] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 423-4; John Dunn, 'The Politics of Locke in England and America in the Eighteenth Century', in *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives*, edited by John W. Yolton (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45–80, esp. 79-80.

[4] According to their investigations, up until the 1710s, most Whigs exhibited a moderate and even conservative ideology, rather than Locke's radical theory. Goldie, 'The Roots of True Whiggism, 1688–94', 195–236; Martyn Thompson, 'The Reception of Locke's Two Treatises of Government, 1690-1705'. *Political Studies* 24, no. 2 (1976): 184–91; Harry Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1977), 71-81; Michael Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 97-118.

the mid-eighteenth century, those dissatisfied with the Whig establishment embraced divergent arguments, sharing an affinity for civic republicanism or neo-Machiavellianism.[1] In light of these considerations intellectual historians sought to downplay Locke's significance for understanding Whig principles.[2]

In response, I concur with Mark Goldie's comment that this revisionist interpretation "is salutary, but it is overstated."[3] On the one hand, since the 1690s, Locke's fame had been noticeably associated with Whig principles.[4] While "ill adapted to the casuistical punctilios of the oaths of allegiance controversy of 1689," the book *Two Treatises* gained traction among advanced Whigs and was considered a program for Whig political education. The precarious political situation, especially the looming threat of restoration, heightened concerns about the nature of governance and the perpetual specter of disorder and violence, rekindling interest in seventeenth-century discussions about political authority. Locke's *Treatises* served as a systematic defense of revolutionary resistance against absolutism, making Locke an intellectual stronghold for the revolution and the 1701 Act of Settlement, earning him the moniker of the "great oracle" of the Whigs.[5] As James Harris notes, Hume composed the essays on the speculative principles of the Whigs in the 1740s, when the Jacobite rebellion brought the issue of allegiance to the forefront once again. Viewing

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[1] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 423; "The Varieties of Whiggism", 229; 'The Machiavellian Moment Revisited', 65.

[2] For a general sketch of the attempts to decentralize Locke since 1960s, see Mark Goldie, "Introduction", in *The Reception of Locke's Politics* (London: Routledge, 1999), xx-xxx.

[3] Mark Goldie, "The English system of liberty", in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, 47-50; see also 'The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument. An Essay and an Annotated Bibliography of Pamphlets on the Allegiance Controversy'. *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, no. 83 (1980): 473–564.

[4] Goldie, "Introduction", xxx-xxxv; see also Goldie, "The English system of liberty", 48ff.

[5] Locke left us an indication in the preface that this work was dedicated to "our Great Restorer, Our present King William", whose title should be deemed as *de jure* rather than *de facto*. Locke, "The Preface", in his *Two Treatises of Government*, 137; James Farr and Clayton Roberts. 'John Locke on the Glorious Revolution: A Rediscovered Document'. *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 2 (1985): 385–98; Goldie, 'John Locke on the Glorious Revolution: A New Document', 74–97, comp. Charles Tarlton, '"The Rulers Now on Earth": Locke's Two Treatises and the Revolution of 1688'. *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 2 (1985): 279–98l; Goldie, 'The Revolution of 1689 and the Structure of Political Argument', 487-8; A systematic analysis, see J. P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles: The Politics of Party, 1689-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 21-34.

Locke's theory as Hume's major target helps us grasp Hume's intention to remind the Whigs that their victory over the Jacobites in practical politics was not a vindication of their principle that popular consent is the foundation of governmental authority.[1]

On the other hand, it is more pertinent to our discussion that since the establishment of Whig supremacy, Locke's theory has been more closely associated with the radical wing, representing a restatement of revolutionary principles that emphasized the adaptability of the English constitution. A wide spectrum of radicals embraced a radical interpretation of Locke's philosophical system, applying it to the political issues of their era to criticize Whig supremacy and restate the principle of resistance.[2] They esteemed Locke's *Treatises* as the manifesto of the revolution, asserting that all civil and political power originated from the people and that the abuse of power justified resistance.[3] To cite Goldie's comment, Locke became "a prominent and deeply contested presence after the 1760s" and his theory "became the currency of populist politics."[4] It is in this era that Hume returned to the issue of political principle, composed a new essay entitled "Of the Origin of Government" and modified his essay on the original contract.[5] Hence, it is feasible to view Locke's radical theory as Hume's target when interpreting Hume's analysis of the foundation of governmental authority.

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[1] Harris, *Hume*, 198-247.

[2] The groups included the Wilkite movement, Anglicans, and dissenters, and those who sought imperial devolution and supported the autonomy of Ireland and America, all finding resonance in Locke's ideas. Dunn, 'The Politics of Locke in England and America in the Eighteenth Century', 62; Harry Dickinson, 'The Eighteenth-Century Debate on the "Glorious Revolution"'. *History* 61, no. 201 (1976): 28–45; Lois G. Schwoerer, 'Celebrating the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1989'. *Albion (Boone)* 22, no. 1 (1990): 1–20, esp. 2-8.

[3] Harris, 'The Interpretation of Locke's Two Treatises in Britain, 1778-1956', 486–91; Hugh Trevor-Roper, "Epilogue: The Glorious Revolution", in *The Anglo-Dutch Moment,* 481-94, as well as John Morrill's essay collected in this volume, John Morrill, "The Sensible Revolution", 73-104; Schwoerer, 'Celebrating the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1989', 1–8; Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 2 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), 135.

[4] Goldie, "Introduction", xvii-lxxv; Dunn, 'The Politics of Locke in England and America in the Eighteenth Century', 60; Pocock, "The varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform", 256ff; Isaac Kramnick, 'Republican Revisionism Revisited'. *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (1982): 630-7.

[5] Harris, *Hume*, 198-247.

Based on textual evidence and contextual reconstruction, it is beneficial to consider Locke's political philosophy as the most coherent elucidation of Whig ideology when examining Hume's critique of Whig principles. This approach draws on the convergence of Hume's textual analysis and the evolution of political thought in eighteenth-century England. Such an interpretation challenges revisionist views in Locke scholarship, and emphasizes the relevance of Hume's examination of Locke, particularly in understanding the foundation of political authority in a commercial era characterized by property rights and individual liberty.[1] Locke's attempts to ground governmental authority in popular consent and justify popular resistance are explored by Hume, who discerns the radical implications carried by Locke's theory and offers an alternative approach to theorizing political authority in a commercial era.

2. Hume’s critique of Popular Consent

2.1 The Origin of Government and Popular Consent

Through the theory of the original contract, Locke argues that popular consent is the foundation of government authority, and that people have the right to withdraw their consent and dissolve the government when it betrays the purpose of its institution. Hume’s critique comes as follows. Firstly, he argues that consent only serves as the foundation of government in a primitive and uncivilized state, failing to explain the foundation of a civil government that enforces laws in a continuous and predictable manner. Secondly, Hume reminds us that the true origin of civil government in our era is a state of chaos, with the defining factors being force and violence.

Locke’s political philosophy illuminates the relationship between government authority and property right, which is the cornerstone of a commercial era. In the state of nature, the law

[1] Lockyer, "Traditions as Context in the History of Political Theory", 210.

of nature dictates a "reasoned way of life" that entails labor and property rights. Individuals are free from subordination to others, with the right to employ their natural strengths and faculties to establish property rights to preserve their lives.[1] At the same time, they are not allowed to encroach upon the rights of others, forming a common bond that unites them into a single society.[2] Any action that transgresses others' property rights would be deemed a denial of the reasoned way of life, effectively declaring a state of war with one another.[3] To restore peace, individuals are granted the right to execute the law of nature against transgressors. However, since everyone is influenced by self-interest and bias, this right leads to numerous inconveniences, rendering the state of nature an "Ill condition" for which civil government is established as a "proper Remedy."[4]

Locke further points out that popular consent is the foundation of government authority, and that the "original compact" incorporates all individuals from the state of nature into society through two distinct steps.[5] First, individuals recognize the inherent insecurity of property within the state of nature and voluntarily relinquish their natural liberty to form a community, binding themselves together in civil society.[6] Second, considering the instability of public opinion, it becomes imperative to establish a government through the consent of the majority,

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[1] Locke, *Treatises*, II.6, 9, 13. For discussion about Locke's theory of property, C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 194-262; Karl Olivecrona, 'Appropriation in the State of Nature: Locke on the Origin of Property'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, no. 2 (1974): 211–30; James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 95ff.; Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism*, 237-288.

[2] Locke, *Treatises*, II.172. For discussions about the law of nature, workmanship argument and property rights, Tully, *A Discourse on Property,* 104-124; Graedon Zorzi, 'Liberalism and Locke's Philosophical Anthropology'. *The Review of Politics* 81, no. 2 (2019): 183–205; Ian Shapiro, 'Resources, Capacities, and Ownership: The Workmanship Ideal and Distributive Justice'. *Political Theory* 19, no. 1 (1991): 47–72; James Murphy, 'The Workmanship Ideal: A Theologico-Political Chimera?' *Political Theory* 20, no. 2 (1 May 1992): 319–26.

[3] Therefore, Locke's theory delineates two distinct ways of life. Individuals can choose to uphold a communal existence by utilizing their own faculties and strengths in a peaceful manner, guided by reason and the law of nature. On the other hand, those who cannot adhere to this path are considered "wild Savage Beasts" Locke, *Treatises*, II.10-11, 181; Jishnu Guha-Majumdar, 'Lyons and Tygers and Wolves, Oh My! Human Equality and the "Dominion Covenant" in Locke's Two Treatises'. *Political Theory* 49, no. 4 (2021): 637–61.

[4] Locke, *Treatises*, II. 9, 13.

[5] Locke, *Treatises*, II. 97-99.

[6] Locke, *Treatises*, II. 123.

effectively subjecting themselves as a whole to a single governing will. This ensures that the community can function as a unified entity and endure over time.[1] Thus, the government is established to implement lawful rule over individuals capable of living a reasoned life. However, once the rulers seek to wield absolute, arbitrary power and unlawfully confiscate or destroy the property of the people, they deviate from humanity and the reasoned way of life, descending into savagery where force becomes the sole arbiter of right. In such circumstances, it is justifiable for the people to withdraw their consent, dissolve the government, and declare war against the ruler, who, despite appearing as a person, has descended into the realm of a noxious beast through these heinous acts. Hence, Locke underscores the consent principle as the cornerstone of government authority while highlighting the possibility of its forfeiture.[2]

In this way, Locke provides a well-articulated theory to elucidate the obligation of obedience to civil government. Hume acknowledges that the concepts of the original contract and the consent principle are not without merit, but he criticizes the theory based on two key points. Firstly, he argues that these two concepts cannot be incorporated into a coherent system, because the theory of popular consent only applies to the origin of primitive government in a barbarous status where people lack precise concepts such as obligation and consent. Secondly, Hume contends that the true origin of contemporary civil government is characterized by conquest and force rather than popular consent.

Hume's first counterargument is that the consent principle offers valuable insights only into the origin of government in a primitive state, rather than into civil government based on

[1] Following the intellectual tradition of natural law, these steps can be referred to as the "compact of union" (pertaining to the formation of the original community, *pactum unionis*) and the "compact of subjection" (pertaining to the establishment of a government, *pactum subjectionis*), respectively. This is a key point in the political debate over the revolution in the 1690s. Otto Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society 1500 to 1800* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1934), 118-124; Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, 76-79.

[2] As Locke maintains, in the absence of earthly judicature to adjudicate disputes among individuals, "God in Heaven is Judge." Locke, *Treatises*, II. 21, 226-7, 241-2. Locke, *Treatises*, II. 21, 241-2.

regular administration. Hume reminds us that the only scenario where popular consent plays a role is the "first origin [of government]... in the woods and deserts", representing "the most ancient rude combination of mankind." In the barbarous state of nature, where individuals were equal in both physical strength and mental faculties, the only way they would relinquish their natural liberty was through consent. This indicates that they were willing to accept laws and acquiesce to the authority of a leader, one who had "acquired his influence during the continuance of war" and maintained his authority in a peaceful era.[1] However, the chieftain's authority never emerged through the continuous enforcement of laws and regular administration, as envisioned by contractarian theorists. Instead, it arose in specific cases due to the "present exigencies of the case", and this authority relied more on persuasion than command as we see in a civilized society.[2]

In addition, Hume argues that in scenarios where consent plays a role, the concept of the original contract is largely ineffective. Complex concepts such as obligation and alienation are "far beyond the comprehension of savages," implying that the savages lack awareness of the implications of explicit promises and a sense of obligation. When these barbarians decide to relinquish their natural attributes, such as "the vigor of their limbs and the firmness of their courage," and submit to their chieftains, their choices are based on "voluntary, and hence precarious acquiescence," rather than the alienation of natural faculties based on promise and obligation, as the theory of the original contract maintains.[3] Consequently, the consent principle only portrays a unity whose political power is primarily derived from natural affection, rather than from political authority and established government, characteristic of modern politics.

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[1] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 468-9.
[2] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 468-9.
[3] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 468-9. Locke's perspective on the earliest rulers has a distinct emphasis compared to other theorists. In Chapter VI of his *Second Treatises*, Locke briefly explores the concept of an original contract in the state of nature, but he further adds that it is not the focal point of his argument. Instead, his point is that monarchical government in the savage state does not contradict his principle of consent. Locke underlines that the "[a]rgument from what has been" has no great force "to what should of right". Locke, *Treatises*, II.101-3.

Faced with this critique, theorists of the original contract represented by Locke can make a concession and adjust their focus, claiming that the theory serves to analyze the origin of civil governments rather than barbarous ones. As noted above, Hume argues that the original contract, which emphasizes popular consent, best describes a barbarous government that "preceded the use of writing and all the other civilized arts of life".[1] This period is too ancient to fall within the knowledge of the present generation, as the initial agreement has been "obliterated by a thousand changes of government and princes," to the extent that it no longer retains any authority.[2] However, contractarian theorists can defend their theory by focusing on original contract that transpired between the ruler and the people during the founding era of the existing civil government to avoid historical uncertainty. This strategic shift makes the connection between the original contract and present civil government stronger and more tangible.[3]

At first glance, this line of reasoning seems more compelling as it navigates away from the tumultuous changes of government in history and concentrates on the inception of the current constitution, implying a robust connection between the origin of civil government and present social order. However, Hume rebuts this argument, asserting that it is groundless to appeal to "so refined and philosophical a system".[4] Instead, he argues that almost all civil governments originated from conquest or usurpation—essentially, force and violence. In the inception of civil governments, conquering or seizing power always takes precedence. It is force, rather than consent or its associated elements, that serves as the cornerstone for nearly all new constitutions, including civil governments of commercial states. If one were to pinpoint a period when the popular consent was least regarded in public transactions, it

[1] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 467-8.
[2] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 470-1.
[3] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 469.
[4] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 470.

would be precisely during the establishment of a new government.[1] As Hume puts it, it is in vain to maintain that "all governments are or should be, at first, founded on popular consent, as much as the necessity of human affairs will admit."[2]

Admittedly, in some exceptional cases, we may indeed detect traces of consent, such as in elections, when the government was established. However, these are often irregular and limited, frequently "intermixed either with fraud or violence."[3] Elections can take two predominant forms: a coalition of a few influential individuals deciding for the entire populace, allowing no room for opposition, or the tumultuous expression of the multitude, following a seditious leader whose rise is attributed to imprudence or the fleeting whims of his peers. Hence, it comes as no surprise that Hume laments, "there is not a more terrible event than a total dissolution of government," and that "government commences more casually and more imperfectly."[4]

Hence, Hume underlines that the idea of popular consent serving as the foundation of government is applicable to a primitive and barbarous state rather than a civil government of modern commercial states. Additionally, when examining the founding of a current constitution, the persuasiveness of the argument diminishes, as this phase is often characterized by the dominance of military force or political maneuvering in resolving disputes.[5] Hume's analysis suggests that we need to find an alternative to popular consent as the foundation of public authority in the context of modern commercial states.

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[1] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 474.
[2] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 473. Hume deems it an Achilles' heel that the contractarians lay so much emphasis on the origin of government. "Reason, history, and experience shew us, …were one to choose a period of time, when the people's consent was the least regarded in public transactions, it would be precisely on the establishment of a new government. " Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 474.
[3] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 473-4.
[4] Hume, "Of the Origin of Government", in *Essays*, 39.
[5] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 474.

2.2 The Critique of Tacit Consent

Hume's second critique of contractarians centers around Locke's overemphasis on the freedom of choice implied by tacit consent. In addressing the issue of obligation spanning across generations, contractarians employ the concept of tacit consent, as used by Locke, to explain the binding force of the original contract on subsequent generations, who are believed to have the freedom to choose their government. However, Hume points out that this perspective exaggerates the extent of liberty and theoretically disconnects individuals from their inherent ties to their land. According to him, this framework falls short of capturing the reality of natural subjects, who should have been the focus of philosophical analysis.

Hume's critique of contractarian theorists extends to how they justify obligations not only for those who initially entered the social contract but also for their descendants. According to contractarians, the new generation might freely choose their own stance through general consent, disregarding the laws or precedents of their ancestors. Hume compares this approach to the life cycles of "silk-worms and butterflies", highlighting its incongruity with the continuity and stability essential to human society.[1] Instead, Hume proposes that, to maintain government stability and acknowledge the natural changes in society, it is more reasonable to expect each new generation to adhere to the established constitution and follow the path set by their predecessors. This stance underscores Hume's preference for continuity and stability in governance.

Locke is indeed aware of the challenge of extending obligations across generations, and he proposes the concept of tacit consent to address this issue. During their youth, as Locke admits, the individuals live under the guidance and authority of their parents, and their

[1] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 476-7.

actions and possessions are governed within the scope of parental authority.[1] Upon reaching adulthood, individuals are considered capable of freely choosing the political community to which they will belong by explicitly declaring their consent. Locke posits that while individuals are bound by any promises or agreements they have made for themselves, they cannot through any contract impose these obligations on their children or descendants.[2] This limitation of an individual in relation to subsequent generations underscores the complexity of applying the consent principle over time. To address this challenge, Locke introduced the concept of tacit consent. Unlike explicit consent that makes an individual "a perfect Member of that society,"[3] tacit consent suggests that when individuals inherit land from their parents, they would incur a moral obligation of voluntary submission under the same terms that governed their parents. This obligation extends to anyone within the jurisdiction of that government.[4] Thus, Locke's theory of tacit consent serves to perpetuate the obligatory force of the founding generation to subsequent ones, countering the potential for unrestrained freedom of choice.

Hume's response to the concept of tacit consent challenges its applicability and significance, particularly in the context of natural-born subjects versus foreigners settling in a new land. Firstly, Hume argues that tacit consent is more aptly applied to the occasion where "a foreigner settles in any country" rather than to natural-born subjects. He posits that the truest

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[1] Locke, *Treatises*, II., 118-9. It is also noteworthy that Locke's "paternal power" should be understood better as "parental power", because he reiterates that "in this power the Mother too has her share with the Father". Locke, *Treatises*, II. 58-62, 64-65, 118-9.

[2] As Locke stated, "'Tis true, that whatever Engagements or Promises any one has made for himself, he is under the Obligation of them, but cannot by any Compact whatsoever, bind his Children or Posterity." Locke, *Treatises*, II. 116.

[3] As Locke admits, the only approach available to the "subjects or Members of that Commonwealth" is "positive Engagement, and express Promise and Compact". Locke, *Treatises*, II. 122. Hartogh contends that Locke, through the introduction of the distinction between tacit and express consent, aimed to solidify the position of William and Mary as de jure rulers of the kingdom. This stands in contrast to the de facto authority suggested by the 1690 oath of allegiance, and indicates a more robust and principled foundation for their authority. G. A. den Hartogh, 'Express Consent and Full Membership in Locke'. *Political Studies* 38, no. 1 (1990): 105–15.

[4] Locke, *Treatises*, II. 73, 116, 118-9. For a recent defense of Locke's theory, see J. K. Numao, 'Locke on Consent, Membership and Emigration: A Reconsideration'. *European Journal of Political Theory* 21, no. 2 (2022): 211–29; Michael Davis, 'Locke, Simmons, and Consent: A Lawyerly Approach'. *Social Theory and Practice* 43, no. 4 (2017): 667–90.

form of tacit consent for foreigners occurs when they voluntarily choose to settle in a new country after becoming familiar with its government and laws. They must possess the necessary means to support themselves, including proficiency in language and customs. However, Hume notes that this condition is met only by a minority of people who have the capability and chance to select where they wish to live and under whom they will submit. For the majority, such as poor peasants or artisans, these conditions are not within their control, nor do they have the luxury of free choice.[1] Secondly, Hume contends that once foreigners settle in a new land, their status becomes akin to that of natural-born subjects. Despite being a minority, those who move to a foreign land typically conform to its laws and accept the authority of its ruler. Therefore, Hume suggests that the focus should be primarily on natural-born subjects, whose allegiance and submission to their government are inherent and involuntary. By the mere circumstance of birth under a specific government, individuals owe allegiance to that prince or form of government, and their personal consent or choice plays a dispensable role.[2]

In a word, Hume critiques the concept of tacit consent for its limited applicability and relevance to natural-born subjects and challenges its implied notion that individuals always have a chance to make a choice in matters of governance. Hume's general diagnosis of consent theory is that it attributes more significance to consent than it truly warrants, and underestimates the pivotal role of power in establishing and sustaining political authority.[3] As Hume notes, while consent indeed plays a role, it alone is insufficient without the backing of political force.

Hume articulates this point by considering two key scenarios: the status in a barbarous

[1] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 475.
[2] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 475-6.
[3] Hume never estimates the role of political force in the maintenance of public order. "[T]ill he could employ [political] force to reduce the refractory and disobedient, the society could scarcely be said to have attained a state of civil government". Hume, "Of Original Contract", *in Essays,* 468.

setting and that of conquest or foreign invasion. Firstly, Hume notes that most governments trace their origins to violence and usurpation, asserting that "[g]overnment commences more casually and more imperfectly". In a state of war, an individual may demonstrate his "superiority of courage and of genius", qualifying himself as a provisional magistrate. He can strengthen his authority if the state of war among tribes continues, or he can display the virtue of equity as an arbiter during peace time. This authority can be consolidated "by a mixture of force and consent", when the multitude perceives an immediate interest in supporting the authority of the magistrate and recognize the pernicious effects of disorder.[1] Secondly, even if rulers are initially perceived as usurpers or foreign conquerors, nations can, over time, come to view a ruling family as their legitimate leaders. Once the rulers successfully make the subjects accustomed to obedience, their authority could be strengthened.[2] Hence, in a civilized society, "[t]he original establishment was formed by violence, and submitted to from necessity. The subsequent administration is also supported by power, and acquiesced in by the people, not as a matter of choice, but of obligation."[3]

To summarize, Part Two examines Hume's critique of popular consent. The Whigs adopted Locke's political philosophy and argued that in a commercial society characterized by property rights and liberty, the obligation of obedience to government authority should be laid on popular consent. However, Hume criticized the theory of popular consent in two ways. Firstly, popular consent plays a certain role in the origin of a barbarous government, but it fails to describe the origin of a civilized government characterized by military force. Secondly, the theory of tacit consent, introduced by Locke to elucidate why the binding force of the original contract of civil government can extend to later generations, exaggerates the chance of choice for most subjects. Hume's critique aims to address the overemphasis on consent and voluntary submission, suggesting a reconsideration of how the obligation of

[1] Hume, "Of the Origin of Government", in *Essays*, 38-40.
[2] Hume, "Of the Origin of Government", in *Essays*, 38-9.
[3] Hume, "Of Original Contract", in *Essays*, 474-5.

submission to political authority in a commercial era is conceptualized.

3. Towards a New Theory of Human Nature and Government

3.1 Hume's Critique of Locke's Portrayal of Human Nature

Hume's next critique aims at the heart of Locke's philosophical framework: the state of nature, a concept that outlines human nature and the genesis of civil government. Hume contends that Locke's portrayal is excessively optimistic, offering a more favorable view of human nature than might be justified. This insight serves as a catalyst for Hume to reassess the radical implications of the consent principle by examining Locke's seemingly contradictory notions of human nature, particularly in his discussions on the dispensability of government and the dissolution of government. As we can see, Hume's critique adumbrates his attempt to reconsider human nature and the pivotal role of government, especially in the context of a commercial era.

A reader of Locke's *Two Treatises* is inevitably struck by the radical implication in the final chapter that the people as a whole can dissolve the civil government.[1] To fully grasp the profound nature of Locke's theory, it becomes imperative to gain a precise understanding of the challenges posed by the state of nature. A good way to understand the intricacy of Locke's portrayal of human nature is Hume's comment,

> Were *all men* possessed of so inflexible a regard to justice, that, of themselves, they would totally abstain from the properties of others; they had for ever remained in a state of absolute liberty, without subjection to any magistrate or political society: *But this is a state of perfection, of which human nature is justly deemed incapable*. Again; were all men possessed of so perfect an understanding, as always to know their own interests, no form of government had ever been submitted to, but what was

[1] James Harris deems the last chapter as "the climactic chapter". Harris, 'Treatises of Government and Treatises of Anarchy: Locke versus Filmer Revisited', 20; see also Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics & Locke's Two Treatises of Government*, 309; Richard Ashcraft, 'On the Problem of Methodology and the Nature of Political Theory'. *Political Theory* 3, no. 1 (1975): 5–25; James Tully, *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 45.

> established on consent, and was *fully canvassed by every member of the society*: But *this state of perfection is likewise much superior to human nature*.[1]

Hume's critique of Locke focuses on the understanding of human nature. Locke's political philosophy hinges on a specific version of the state of nature as an elucidation of human nature, which serves to justify the establishment of government power. To distance himself from Hobbes, Locke views the state of nature as a state of perfect freedom, where individuals can live peacefully and dispose of their possessions "as they think fit within the bounds of the Law of Nature."[2] Consequently, it must be a status where most individuals generally adhere to the law of nature, with conflicts being rare and accidental. However, this view of human nature reduces the likelihood of systematic confusion and disorder, derived from the "Ill nature, Passion, and Revenge" of the individuals who are vested with the right to execute the law of nature themselves.[3] According to Locke, civil government is established to remedy "the Inconvenience of the State of Nature."[4] Then it is plausible that Locke's understanding of human nature weakens his argument for the indispensability of government authority.

Locke's contradictory descriptions of human nature resurface in his theory of popular resistance. As mentioned above, he adopts a theory of double compact, maintaining the distinction between the "compact of union" and the derived "compact of subjection." The key to his argument of popular resistance is the existence of a collective community when

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[1] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in his *Essays*, 474, italics as my emphasis.

[2] Locke, *Treatises*, II.4, 6-7, 13.

[3] Locke, *Treatises*, II.7. This gloomy description of human nature is quite distinct from his sketch when analyzing the state of nature as a state of perfect freedom and equality, which is superior to human nature as Hume criticizes. Leo Strauss also maintains that Locke "demolished" the idyll state of nature "as his argument proceeds". As we will see in the following chapter, Hume agrees with Locke's portrayal of "Ill nature" and establishes his own intellectual framework. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 242-31.

[4] Locke, *Treatises*, II.7. This description of human nature is quite distinct from his sketch when analyzing the state of nature as a state of perfect freedom and equality, which is superior to human nature as Hume criticizes. As we will see in the following chapter Hume agrees with Locke's portrayal of "Ill nature" and establishes his own intellectual framework.

the people resist the government, preventing the withdrawal of consent from descending into chaotic upheaval and disorder.[1] However, this reasoning again weakens his argument for the necessity of government, because he notes that it is necessary to establish civil government to remedy "[t]he variety of Opinions, and contrariety of Interests, which unavoidably happen in all Collections of Men," ensuring that the community functions as a cohesive entity.[2] As Hume indicates, Locke's theory of popular resistance risks making the role of government authority dispensable.

Accordingly, Hume's critique suggests that Locke's theory of human nature underestimates the conflicting elements inherent in human nature, thereby placing the foundation of government on unstable grounds. To make the necessity of civil government explicit, it is essential to have an accurate portrayal of human nature rather than constructing a philosophical system on an overly favorable and unrealistic view of human nature. In the following section, I will explore Hume's approach in developing his political philosophy of modern commercial states.

3.2 Hume's Proposal for Political Philosophy

Despite Hume's critique of contractarians who defend the right of popular resistance, it is important to note that he does not outright reject popular resistance. Instead, he acknowledges its validity as a last resort in extraordinary cases. Hume's primary critique of contractarians lies in their tendency to overlook dangers of applying abstract philosophical theories to real-world politics, as well as their neglect of the obedience to political authority as general inclination of human nature. Hume proposes a new approach for revealing the indispensability of government authority based on a precise understanding of human nature.

[1] To cite Locke's words, in this scenario what happens is the "dissolution of government", rather than the "dissolution of society", because the people can still "act as one body". Locke, *Treatises*, II. 211-2, 243.
[2] Locke, *Treatises*, II. 97-99.

It is helpful to first delineate that the practical difference between Hume and the contractarians who adopted Locke's view. We should caution against deeming Hume's critique of contract theory and consent principle as a straightforward rejection of the right of popular resistance. Hume admits that almost all readers, even the royalists, would wish the success of resistance against Nero or Philip II, and praise the undertakers, in conformity to the feelings of the rest of mankind.[1] Instead, Hume's intention is to admit the right of popular resistance and restrict it to the "extraordinary emergencies" where the public faces "the highest danger, from violence and tyranny".[2]

Then Hume examines why the Whig principle is likely to lead to such negative consequences. He points out that the pitfall of the contractarians is that they fabricate a speculative system that deems popular consent as the sole benchmark in all cases. As Hume notes, the theory of the original contract advocates establishing public authority based on the opinions of subjects, attributing "a great deal more honour than they deserve, or even expect and desire from us."[3] It laments the people's inability to choose their own rulers, which is, in fact, "never left to them", and misleads us into blaming almost all governments that do not adhere to the consent principle as "monstrous and irregular.".[4] Consequently, this perspective is likely to encourage popular resistance and foster mutual jealousy between the people and their rulers.[5] In most cases, the doctrine provokes instability and tyranny, exacerbates the "mischiefs of civil war," and in turn makes tyrants and usurpers "ten times more fierce and unrelenting", rather than setting the "best fence against rebellion" as Locke promises.[6]

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[1] Hume, "Of Passive Obedience", in *Essays*, 489-90.

[2] Likewise, Hume maintains that "the remedy in this case, is the extraordinary one of resistance, when affairs come to that extremity, that the constitution can be defended by it alone". Hume, "Of Passive Obedience", in *Essays*, 490, 492; "Of Parties in Great Britain", in *Essays*, 70.

[3] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 478.

[4] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 472.

[5] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 478.

[6] As Tarvoc rightly notes, for Locke popular resistance is prevention from tyranny and not a last resort, as it was traditionally viewed. Hume also points out that the government is founded on opinion rather than bare force, so it is dangerous to weaken the reverence the multitude owe to authority and to instruct them beforehand that the case can ever happen, when they may be freed from their duty of allegiance". In this light, "[i]f ever, on any occasion, it were laudable to conceal truth from the populace; it must be confessed, that the doctrine of resistance affords such an example". Locke, *Treatises*, II. 226; Hume, "Of Passive

Hume comments that the complexities of human society do not allow for the precise principles of the original contract and popular consent to be applied universally, blaming the spread of the doctrine of popular resistance as "in general, so pernicious, and so destructive of civil society."[1] Though the consent of the people remains "the best and most sacred" foundation of government authority, it "has very seldom had place in any degree, and never almost in its full extent."[2] Having noted that a stubborn insistence on the consent principle can lead to significant political turbulence, Hume is prompted to deem their doctrine as derived from a "false philosophy" and sought "some other foundation of government."[3]

Hume's next task is to clarify how this practical difference is grounded in theoretical terms. He suggests that when it comes to matters of morality, such as the foundation of government authority, there is no better standard than "the common sentiments of mankind" or the "opinion of all nations and all ages".[4] While it is reasonable to appeal to popular resistance in situations of pressing necessity, he underscores the importance of examining widely held beliefs and values in shaping governance and political philosophy.[5] In light of this, Hume asserts that the chief business of philosophers is to "regard the general course of things" and focus on "the general doctrine".[6] It is quite common to notice that rulers often claim their subjects as their property and assert their independent right of sovereignty through conquest or succession. Conversely, their subjects, recognizing that they and their ancestors have been under such a government or family for a long time, tend to acquiesce and acknowledge their obligation of submission. This acceptance is akin to the ties of reverence and duty to certain parents.[7] Hume thus concludes that obedience is our duty in the common course of things and should be chiefly inculcated.[8]

Obedience", in *Essays*, 490; Hume, *History*, Vol.5, 544.

[1] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 482.
[2] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 471.
[3] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 471, 482.
[4] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 486-7.
[5] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 470, 481-2; "Of Passive Obedience", in *Essays*, 490-1.
[6] Hume, "Of Commerce", in *Essays*, 254.
[7] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 469-70.
[8] Hume, "Of Passive Obedience", in *Essays*, 490.

In prioritizing the obligation to political authority over the right of popular resistance, Hume's next step is to establish the obligation of obedience to government on an accurate evaluation of human nature. Unlike Locke's optimistic portrayal of human nature indicated by the theory of the state of nature, Hume explains that it has been a "political maxim, that every man must be supposed a knave," implying that a man should be assumed to "have no other end, in all his actions, than private interest."[1] The emphasis on the word "political" is crucial, as ordinary people rarely observe this rule strictly, making it "false in fact". However, this supposition is essential "in contriving any system of government."[2] In this way, Hume endorses Locke's bleak portrayal of human nature, which Locke condemns as an "Ill condition," to underscore the indispensability of government.[3] I will explore this issue in detail in the next chapter.

In summary, Hume's critique of contractarian theory elucidated by Locke unfolds in two main steps. Firstly, contrary to contractarianism, which centralizes the right of popular resistance, Hume advocates relegating this right to a peripheral role. He emphasizes instead the importance of obedience to government authority in ordinary circumstances. Secondly, Hume grounds this obedience in a nuanced understanding of human nature, considering its complex dimensions to argue for the necessity of government especially in a commercial era. This analysis provides a thread to Hume's constructive framework, which will be the focal point of the final chapter of this thesis.

4. Conclusion

This chapter explores Hume's critique of the philosophical or speculative framework of Whig politics, particularly as articulated by contractarian theorists such as John Locke. At

[1] Hume, "Of the Independency of Parliament", in *Essays*, 41-3.
[2] Hume, "Of the Independency of Parliament", in *Essays*, 41-3.
[3] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 474; Locke, *Treatises*, II. 9, 13.

the heart of Locke's framework lies the theory of the original contract and the principle of popular consent. The Whigs employed Locke's theory to understand public order in modern commercial states represented by post-revolutionary England, characterized by individual liberty and property rights. The radical Whigs also embraced Locke's theories of popular consent to advocate for increased civil liberties within the existing regime. Hume, however, discerns the radical implications of the consent principle and its potential to undermine public order. Consequently, he critically examines its theoretical underpinnings and seeks to propose an alternative approach to address its perceived shortcomings.

Hume astutely observes that the theory of the original contract and popular consent carries profound practical implications. The Whigs delve into the philosophical origins of government, contending that all forms of government must derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed people. Hume's observation highlights that this new criterion for assessing the legitimacy of existing regimes implies that no government, even if it effectively maintains social order and upholds established laws, is immune to allegations of misconduct due to public skepticism. Therefore, Hume critiques the theory of the original contract and consent as a "false philosophy".[1] In doing so he is exploring the philosophical space within which political legitimacy should be understood in a modern commercial state.

In contrast to Locke's contract theory, Hume proposes that when exploring moral themes, such as the obligation of obedience to civil government, philosophers should appeal to the common sentiments of human beings in ordinary situations. He emphasizes the human inclination towards peaceful order and stable governmental authority, validated by numerous historical experiences. While "liberty is the perfection of civil society," governmental authority "must be acknowledged essential" in a civilized and commercial society.[2] This

[1] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 481-2; Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life*, 272-305.

[2] The post-revolutionary constitution "admits of a partition of power among several members, whose united authority is no less, or is commonly greater than that of any monarch; but who, in the usual course of

reasoning provides a compelling response to the Whigs' assertion.

Having rejected their approach of exploring the origin of civil government, Hume instead analyzes the necessity of government by examining human nature itself. He asserts that the inherent "great weakness" in human nature requires the remedy of government, which is essential to enforce the rules of justice.[1] This is particularly applicable to modern commercial states, characterized by abundant material wealth and intensive interpersonal communication. Therefore, this chapter highlights Hume's critique of contractarian theory as represented by Locke and sets the stage for discussing Hume's own theoretical framework in the final chapter.

administration, must act by general and equal laws, that are previously known to all the members and to all their subjects." Locke's self-contradicted description of state of nature tricks readers into the belief that liberty can be gained when the government has yet to come. Hume, "Of the Origin of Government", in *Essays*, 40-1.

[1] Hume, "Of the Origin of Government", in *Essays*, 38-40.

Ch.5 Hume on Human Nature and Government

In the previous chapter, I explored Hume's critical examination of the speculative principles behind Whig politics, specifically the theory of the original contract and popular consent elucidated in Locke's system. Locke asserts that people have the right to forfeit their consent and dissolve the government if they generally suspect that the magistrates entrusted with political power fail to fulfill their responsibilities. According to Hume, these "refined ideas," which explore the "philosophical origin" of civil government to elucidate the obligation of obedience to government, not only fail to help us understand politics in post-revolutionary England but also mislead us into falsely imagining all other governments not based on popular consent as "monstrous and irregular".[1]

As opposed to Locke's approach, Hume proposes an alternative theoretical framework to understand government authority in a commercial state. Two points are worth noting. Firstly, while Hume criticizes the Whig principle by emphasizing that the obligation of obedience to government aligns with "the common sentiments of mankind" and the "opinion of all nations and all ages,"[2] his main concern is the urgency of theorizing governmental authority within the context of modern commercial states. This echoes the discussions in the previous chapters. As I argued in the introduction, when Hume discusses political authority in a large and civilized society, his primary concern is the modern commercial state. In the second chapter, I further elucidated this through his political essays, where Hume suggests that in a commercial era, such authority is crucial for safeguarding property rights, fostering economic prosperity, and bolstering national power, particularly in the face of competition from other nations. Hence, the term "civilized society" used in this chapter specifically refers to public order in the context of modern commercial states. Secondly, as we will see in this chapter, Hume emphasizes the indispensability of government for maintaining order in a civilized society. Thus, the term "civilized society" refers to public order in a commercial

[1] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 472.
[2] Hume, "Of the Original Contract", in *Essays*, 486.

era as a whole, rather than "civil society" deprived of governmental structure as understood today.

This chapter shifts the focus to Hume's theoretical speculation in the third book of *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Hume argues that a political theory of modern commercial states should prioritize the obligation of obedience to government in regular circumstances, diverging from the emphasis on exceptional situations found in Locke and other contractarians. Commercial development demands stable government and contract theory cannot provide it. Hume's analysis unfolds as follows. Firstly, he contends that a precise comprehension of the government's role should start with an elucidation of its function in rectifying the natural inclinations of human beings and maintaining order within a modern commercial state. Secondly, Hume explores the obligation of obedience to governmental authority within modern commercial states and contrasts it with the moral mechanism of a smaller, more primitive community based on convention. In doing so, Hume offers a theoretical framework for understanding government authority within the context of modern commercial states based on an accurate understanding of human nature.

In this light, my analysis builds upon Hont's endeavor to theorize the commercial state. As argued in the introduction, Hont's effort falls short in fully theorizing the modern commercial state due to his underestimation of the darker aspects of human passions and his reductionist portrayal of human nature as solely utility-seeking. He tends to separate the analysis of the civilized standards of living that emerge through "mere society" from the consideration of the presence of government. In this chapter, I argue that Hume presents a different and more persuasive reasoning. His reevaluation of human nature underscores our inherent partiality towards family and acquaintances, as well as our tendency for short-term gains at the expense of long-term benefits. Therefore, government must intervene to mitigate these inherent limitations of human nature and instill crucial moral principles. By revisiting the shortcomings inherent in human nature, Hume explains why government is not merely a

fortuitous addition to an already refined society as Hont supposes, but rather an indispensable element to maintain public order in a commercial era. The obligation of submission to government authority in a commercial state, therefore, finds its justification in this reasoning.

When exploring Hume's moral philosophy, scholars often question the feasibility of establishing universal adherence to general rules based on self-interest, as Hume suggests in his *Treatise*.[1] Barry Stroud, for example, argues that even in a civilized society, the inherent self-interest in human nature, coupled with the scarcity and instability of resources, may lead individuals to prioritize strategies that safeguard their own rights while disregarding those of others for personal gain whenever possible.[2] This dilemma echoes the free-rider problem that confounded early modern moral philosophers. To tackle this challenge, Gauthier and Haakonssen propose that Hume must instill in social members the false belief that consistently following social rules will ultimately satisfy their self-interest in the long run. This strategy implies that individuals who adhere to social rules may end up benefiting others at their own expense. The sensible knaves, who recognize the falsehood in Hume's theory, would be aware that "human society…lacks any moral foundation" and deem it advantageous to be a free-rider.[3] Conversely, Stephen Darwall suggests that Hume must introduce a sense of rule-obligation as an unavoidable internal motive wherein social rules are deemed sacred. However, this approach lacks textual support in Hume's writings.[4]

In this chapter, I aim to address the inadequacies of the proposed solutions.[5] On the one hand,

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[1] Hume admits there is "there is here an evident sophistry and reasoning in a circle". (T 3.2.1.17, SBN 483).
[2] Barry Stroud, *Hume* (London: Routledge, 1981), 204-210.
[3] David Gauthier, 'Artificial Virtues and the Sensible Knave'. *Hume Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 401–27, citations from 422; Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 36-44.
[4] Stephen Darwall, 'Motive and Obligation in Hume's Ethics'. *Nous* 27, no. 4 (1993): 437-440.
[5] Michael Gill, 'Hume's Progressive View of Human Nature'. *Hume Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 108n.31; Annette Baier, 'Artificial Virtues and the Equally Sensible Non-Knaves: A Response to Gauthier'. *Hume Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 429–39.

Hume suggests that living in a civilized and commercial state fosters mutual cooperation and enhances quality of life compared to that in those primitive societies. In this way, Hume successfully defends the thesis that self-interest can be deemed as the natural obligation for following general rules. On the other hand, Hume acknowledges that moral education alone cannot guarantee universal adherence to these rules, emphasizing the necessity of government intervention to address the "infirmity of human nature".[1] Therefore, Hume's moral philosophy aims to highlight the crucial role of government in a civilized and commercial era, in contrast to the public order based on convention in the primitive era. This perspective goes beyond merely addressing the free-rider problem, where individuals may occasionally violate laws in a civilized setting. Therefore, I agree with Frazer's insightful comment which suggests that Hume's moral philosophy primarily serves as a foundation for his political philosophy. In this light, I contend that the aforementioned scholars may have misinterpreted Hume's intentions.[2]

This chapter unfolds in three parts. The opening part examines a fundamental concept in Hume's political thought, the limited generosity of human nature, which forms a crucial thread running through his entire analysis. In addition, it introduces Hume's virtue-based moral philosophy, which helps to elucidate the motivations driving individuals to adhere to justice within a commercial society. This proves to be more persuasive than Hont's emphasis on utility-seeking in the form of commercial reciprocity. Part Two unravels the contrasting moral mechanisms at play in two types of societies. In smaller, primitive societies with limited possessions, the convention based on a common sense of interest could motivate adherence to fundamental rules. When a society expands, the convention will collapse, and it becomes necessary to establish government to mitigate the infirmity of human nature. This part casts light on the indispensability of government in a commercial era. The third part focuses on Hume's discussion of the two obligations of obedience to government. To

[1] T 3.2.7.5, SBN 536.
[2] Michael Frazer, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 65-88, esp. 67.

conclude the chapter, I will position his contribution in shaping a political philosophy that casts light on modern commercial states and reveal how it replies to Hont's thesis.

1. Hume's Understanding of Human Nature and Moral Motive

In the opening statement, Hume explains that any scientific progress, particularly a better understanding of social order, depends on an accurate and comprehensive conception of human nature.[1] In this section, I will follow his advice and examine his portrayal of human nature. His emphasis on partiality or limited generosity not only corrects Mandeville's exaggerated focus on pride in explaining "sociableness" but also highlights that the natural inclination of human beings often conflicts with the fundamental rules of a civilized society. This perspective is more convincing than Hont's utility-seeking approach, which suggests that individuals would benefit themselves by engaging in commercial activities and following social rules voluntarily. Additionally, Hume develops a moral theory based on his emphasis on motives and transforms the conflict between natural inclination and the obligation to follow social rules into a moral predicament in a commercial society.[2] This line of reasoning forms the basis for his attempt to theorize government in the subsequent parts.[3]

1.1 Limited Generosity as Human Nature

Guided by the insights of natural lawyers and Mandeville, Hume embarks on a detailed investigation of public order, carefully examining its foundation in human nature. In the

[1] T. "Introduction".8, SBN. vxii.

[2] Gill's article offers a clear and insightful exploration of the issue, positioning Hume's elucidation of virtue against the backdrop of a dispute on the origin of human sociability between Mandeville on one side, and Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, on the other. While I generally agree with this observation, I'm hesitant about Gill's reliance on theorists of natural sociability, particularly Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, to challenge Mandeville's position. I believe that Hume has a wide array of intellectual resources at his disposal that extend beyond the framework provided by these theorists. Gill, 'Hume's Progressive View of Human Nature', 87–108.

[3] The term "progress of sentiments" is crucial, see Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). Hume's analysis is primarily a nonchronological understanding, but intends to grasp why we need to join society and its origin in human nature. Gill notes that "we ask about the 'origin' of morals in the nonchronological sense, we are asking about the source of, or underlying reason for, our moral judgments". See Gill, "Hume's Progressive View of Human Nature", 101-2.

initial stages of his analysis, Hume elucidates the imperative for individuals to participate in a society.[1] He identifies an inherent contradiction within the human condition—the pursuit of "numberless wants and necessities" contrasts with the "slender means" that nature has saddled us with.[2] The harsh predicament is exacerbated by the "unnatural conjunction of infirmity, and of necessity" in the precarious pursuit of sustenance amidst a palpable vulnerability to potential predators.[3] Confronted with the exigencies of this state of necessity, individuals have to find refuge in society. As Hume rightly notes, it is "the society alone" that provides help to the defects of individuals, and grants them additional force and security which are absolutely necessary for the well-being of human beings.[4]

Though Hume argues that we are driven to join society by a quest for self-satisfaction, he rejects the notion that the natural disposition of human beings when faced with limited resources for sustenance suits us for a common life.[5] Among the proponents of self-love, Hume stands closer to Mandeville than Hobbes. Hume disagrees with Hobbes who holds that men have "no affection for any thing beyond themselves", which is dismissed as an "idle

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[1] Many scholars observe that Hume positions natural lawyers as his interlocutors. See Paul Russell, "Hume's Treatise and Hobbes's the Elements of Law." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 1 (1985): 51-63; Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, 220-254; Gauthier, 'Artificial Virtues and the Sensible Knave', 401–27; Stephen Buckle, *Natural Law and the Theory of Property* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 240-244, 256-270; James Harris, 'Hume on the Moral Obligation to Justice'. *Hume Studies* 36, no. 1 (2010): 43-5.

[2] T. 3.2.2.2, SBN. 484.

[3] T. 3.2.2.3, SBN 485.

[4] T. 3.2.2.3, SBN 485; T. 3.2.6.1, SBN 526. We can see from Hont's reasoning that the "disparities between needs and the ability to satisfy them" is a shared concern among theorists of commercial society. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 169-172.

[5] Lindsay notes that Hume's moral psychology steers a middle course between predecessors such as Mandeville and Hobbes on the one hand who saw people as motivated largely by self-interest and Shaftsbury and Hutcheson on the other hand who believed that natural benevolence plays a more important role. However, it is noteworthy that Hume aligns more with the former group, as is evident in his own words, "[a]mong the former, we may justly esteem our *selfishness* to be the most considerable." (T 3.2.2.5, SBN 486) In account of Hume's own parlance, the terms self-interest and self-love are used interchangeably. Additionally, according to notes provided by David Norton and Mary Norton, Hume references "Hobbes, La Rochefoucauld, and Mandeville, among others" when mentioning "certain philosophers." This further emphasizes Hume's inclination towards the view that individuals are primarily motivated by self-interest, aligning more with the perspectives of Hobbes and Mandeville than with the emphasis on natural benevolence proposed by Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. See David Norton and Mary Norton, "Annotations to Treatises 3.2.2", in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 543; Gill, "Hume's Progressive View of Human Nature", 87–88; Frazer, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy*, 66; Ira Lindsay, 'A Defense of Humean Property Theory'. *Legal Theory* 27, no. 1 (2021): 47.

fiction", reminiscent of mythical creatures in fables and romances, while divergent from the authentic facts of human nature.[1] Comparatively, Hume shares more common ground with Mandeville, giving weight to the concept of a "certain Fitness to society" as a counterbalance to self-love. As illuminated in Chapter One, Mandeville argues that individuals join society and seek companionship primarily for their own sake, hoping to benefit from it or aiming for some advantage they propose to themselves from it.[2] While self-love remains a priority, Mandeville adds that we also have a certain fitness for social life in a civilized society, implying that we can be nurtured and educated to adhere to social rules and norms.[3] Similarly, Hume also maintains that human beings, not inherently predisposed for social life due to limited generosity, could be shaped to conform to the requirements of such a social structure through proper discipline and education.

Not unlike Mandeville, Hume also emphasizes parental affections towards children as a prime example of ingrained passions in human nature. Hume observes that the natural attraction between the sexes fosters familial bonds. Once they have children, "a new tie" emerges in their concerns, serving as another principle of unity and prompting the family to extend into a larger society. Parents harbor strong natural affections towards their offspring, and these sentiments can smooth out any "rough corners and untoward affections," helping children recognize the benefits they can derive from society. This, according to Hume, constitutes "the first and original principle of human society."[4]

By taking this natural affection into account, Hume proposed a theory of human nature in term of "limited generosity". Hume suggests a scrutiny of common experience, asserting that it is as rare to meet with someone in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not

[1] T 3.2.2.16, SBN 494.
[2] Mandeville, *Fable*, II. 203.
[3] Mandeville, *Fable*, II. 203-205.
[4] T 3.3.2.4, SBN 486.

outweigh all the selfish ones.[1] As Hume elucidates, "our strongest attention is confin'd to ourselves; our next is extended to our relations and acquaintance; and 'tis only the weakest which reaches to strangers and indifferent persons". This is what Hume deems as the "original frame of our mind".[2]

The crux of the matter lies in the fact that individuals are not predisposed to adhere to the rules of commercial society by nature, especially those "fundamental laws of nature" concerning property rights. This inherent contradiction plays a central role in comprehending social order and interpersonal relationships.[3] Hume observes that nature permits us three types of goods for enjoyment: the internal satisfaction of our minds, the external advantages of our bodies, and the possession of acquired wealth through industry and good fortune. While the first type is impervious to theft and the second is unbeneficial for the predator, the third poses a considerable challenge. Possessions are susceptible to the violence of others, and can be transferred without suffering any loss or alteration; while at the same time, there is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one's desires and necessities.[4] To prevent the disintegration of social order, individuals must adhere to the obligation of abstaining from the possessions of others. This is why Hume regards the rules governing property rights as "fundamental laws of nature" upon which the "peace and security of human society entirely depend".[5]

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[1] T 3.2.2.5, SBN 487.

[2] T 3.2.2.8, SBN 487-8; T 3.2.2.16, SBN 494; T 3.2.3.1, SBN 586. A valuable comparison can be drawn between Hume's reasoning and Hobbes, especially regarding their perspectives on the family structure. Hobbes's theory of self-centered self-love arrives at a provocative conclusion that the family is a "Leviathan writ small" based on acquisition. In the state of nature, prior to the establishment of marital laws, maternal authority prevails. If the mother is subject to the father's authority, the child falls under the father's power; conversely, if the father is subject to the mother, the child is subject to her dominion. This form of authority, acquired through conquest, is often termed "Despotical," denoting the mastery of the despot or ruler over their subjects. In contrast, Hume takes a different stance, asserting that it is a natural sentiment for fathers to love their children. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XX. 5-10; Gilbert Meilaender, '"A Little Monarchy": Hobbes on the Family'. *Thought: Fordham University Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1978): 401–15.

[3] Hume has three "fundamental laws of nature" in mind, "the stability of possession, of its transference by consent, and of the performance of promises". (T 3.2.6.1, SBN 526).

[4] T 3.2.2.7, SBN 487.

[5] T 3.2.6.1, SBN 526.

The former analysis enables Hume to identify a discrepancy between the "original frame of our mind" and the imperatives of universal adherence to fundamental rules, offering a more compelling and thought-provoking perspective than Hont. Through his interpretation of Pufendorf, Hont suggests that social bonds in a commercial era are defined by individuals' inclination to pursue their utility and fulfill their insatiable desires in commercial activities, and this analysis eliminates the "possibility of an immediate generic link" between anthropology of sociability and the establishment of political governance.[1] From Hume's analysis, it is reasonable for us to speculate that Hume would perceive Hont's perspective as underestimating the complexity of human nature, particularly its inherent partiality towards family and friends. This partiality is so incongruent with the imperative of universal adherence to social rules that it necessitates political governance to rectify the frailties of human nature. Consequently, Hume's theory of human nature reestablishes the generic link between human nature and government authority that Hont downplayed in his focus on the evolution of commercial sociability.

1.2 Motives and Moral Sense[2]

In the preceding section, I delineated Hume's depiction of human nature, which pivots on the concept of limited generosity, a characteristic seemingly at odds with the imperative to adhere to general rules and principles of justice concerning property rights. However, unlike Mandeville, Hume refrains from asserting that morality is a mere façade of hypocrisy.

[1] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 170-1.

[2] The central issue in the discourse surrounding Hume's moral philosophy revolves around the challenge of reconciling two conflicting aspects of his theory. Scholars commonly grapple with the notion that Hume seemingly needs to reject either the fundamental thesis of his virtue-based theory, as argued by interpreters like Cohon, or to classify justice as a virtue, as posited by others such as Gauthier. As Don Garrett comments, both "lines of interpretation are desperate remedies". This dissatisfaction drives him to write a seminal article. It offers a sophisticated balance that addresses the diverse demands within Hume's moral philosophy, and is still influential after fifteen years. In my analysis, I endorse Garrett's perspective as it navigates the intricate interplay between the virtue-based theory and the conceptualization of justice as a virtue in Hume's moral framework. Rachel Cohon, 'Hume's Difficulty with the Virtue of Honesty'. *Hume Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 91–112; Gauthier, 'Artificial Virtues and the Sensible Knave', 401–27; Don Garrett, 'The First Motive to Justice: Hume's Circle Argument Squared'. *Hume Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 257–88.

Instead, Hume asserts that individuals in a civilized society genuinely harbor concerns about morality. Hume advocates for a virtue-based perspective, aiming to discern a virtuous motive that underlies the observance of general rules.[1] Hume's introduction of the moral dimension transmutes the aforementioned discrepancy between uncivilized human nature and requirements of public order. This shift in focus foreshadows the impending discussion about the obligation of obedience to government.

Diverging from Mandeville, who is accused by Hume of making strenuous efforts to "eradicate all sense of virtue from among mankind," Hume advocates for a motivational philosophy to bolster his virtue-based approach.[2] In the first chapter, we underlined Mandeville's assertion that morality in a civilized society is based on hypocrisy and dissimulation. As an expression of pride, self-liking propels social members to conform to social rules, seeking compliments from others to reinforce their self-appraisal, so there is no genuine virtuous motive behind these actions but mere hypocrisy. In contrast, Hume's moral philosophy champions a virtue-based perspective that centers on motives. He asserts that a virtuous motive must serve as the impetus for fulfilling obligations dictated by social rulers. Hume posits that moral merit is not contingent upon the action itself but rather on the motive from which the action emanates.

Another way to articulate this perspective is that, from a moral standpoint, the crucial factor is the motive embedded in human nature, superseding the mere observation of actions. He succinctly captures his sentiment, noting that actions are "only consider'd as signs of

[1] T 3.3.1.11, SBN 578-9.

[2] T 3.2.2.25, SBN 500. The distinction between Mandeville and Hume's perspectives hinges on a nuanced interpretation of the term "artifice." Baron, for instance, interprets "artifice" quite literally, as "trickery" or "cunning." This leads her to infer that Hume's recourse to artifice implies an endorsement of a noble lie—fabricated narratives employed by politicians to deceive their subjects. Consequently, the cogency of the reasoning in this paragraph is brought into question, particularly in its ability to effectively differentiate Hume from Mandeville and allow for a genuine appreciation of virtue in a broader sense. Marcia Baron, 'Hume's Noble Lie: An Account of His Artificial Virtues'. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 12, no. 3 (1982): 539–55.

motives".[1] This underscores his emphasis on the intrinsic motivations underlying human conduct as the true locus of moral evaluation,

> In short, it may be establish'd as *an undoubted maxim*, that no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality.[2] (My emphasis, referred as "Undoubted Maxim Principle")

> From this principle I conclude, that the *first virtuous motive*, which bestows a merit on any action, can never be a regard to the virtue of that action, but must be some other natural motive or principle.[3] (My emphasis, referred as "First Virtuous Motive")

These two principles convey two key points. Firstly, Hume's conative moral philosophy suggests that a specific orientation reflects a set of moral sentiments and a corresponding framework for organizing public order. The "original frame of our mind" leans towards limited generosity and fosters a moral standard that favors partiality among uncivilized individuals.[4] This inclination is reinforced by the passions and affections which "conform themselves to that partiality, and give it an additional force and influence".[5] Hence, this partiality does not only have an influence on our behavior and conduct in society, but also on "our ideas of vice and virtue".[6] In the eyes of uncivilized individuals, any violation of such partiality is deemed vicious and immoral. Thus, Hume's conative moral philosophy unveils the intricate connection between moral inclinations and the structuring of public order. It shows how the clash between the "original frame of our mind" and social norms transforms into a moral predicament, providing a nuanced understanding of the interplay between moral sentiments and the foundations of social organization.

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[1] T 3.2.1.8, SBN 479.
[2] T 3.2.1.7, SBN 479, italic type from original text.
[3] T. 3.2.1.4, SBN 478.
[4] T 3.2.2.8, SBN 488-9.
[5] T 3.2.2.8, SBN 488-9.
[6] T 3.2.2.8, SBN 488.

A second inference pertains to the motive for adhering to general rules within the context of this virtue-based approach, particularly when Hume applies these principles to commercial society. In order to uphold public order in a large and civilized society, members of society are compelled to abide by the "fundamental laws of nature". Hume emphasizes that "'tis on the strict observance of these three laws, that the peace and security of human society entirely depend", so much so that there is no possibility of establishing good correspondence among men where these are neglected.[1] Moreover, guided by the "undoubted maxim principle," Hume seeks to pinpoint an affection as the motivating force behind compliance with these rules. In his exploration, he identifies three potential candidate affections and proceeds to examine them in turn: the love of mankind, a regard for public interest, and self-love.

The first candidate Hume considers is the love of mankind, characterized as a universal affection "independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourselves".[2] Contrary to theorists of natural sociability, such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, who posit this love as the cornerstone of social order, Hume argues that "we love company in general; but 'tis as we love any other amusement". The happiness derived from such company, according to Hume, proceeds from the relation to ourselves, and that enjoyment gathers force when it is confined to a select few individuals.[3] This line of reasoning aligns with Hume's earlier analysis in Book Two of the *Treatise*, where he contends that human nature is the "object both of love and hatred", necessitating external causes to incite these passions through a dual connection of impressions and ideas. These causes, Hume argues, must be the specific qualities of individuals rather than abstract species. He thereby concludes that there are "no phenomena that point out any such kind affection", independent of their merit, and every other circumstance.[4] In addition, the love of mankind posited by proponents of

[1] T. 3.2.6.1, SBN 526.
[2] T. 3.2.1.12, SBN 481. For discussions about theorists of natural sociability, see Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 43-62; Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought', 1640-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 176-243; Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness*.
[3] T. 3.2.1.12, SBN 482.
[4] T. 2.2.1.4, SB 330; T. 3.2.1.12, SBN 481-2.

natural sociability is merely sympathy in disguise. However, sympathy is not a universal love confined solely to humanity; it also extends to all sensible creatures beyond our species.[1] In essence, it is futile to expect universal love for humankind without considering the merits of their qualities and specific circumstances.

Another contender, a regard for public interest, faces skepticism in Hume's evaluation. On the one hand, he asserts that such regard emerges subsequent to an artificial convention for the establishment of these rules. Even with the presence of a convention, Hume contends that our practical experience indicates our failure to consistently prioritize public interest when adhering to the rules of justice. According to him, this motive of respecting public interest is "too remote and too sublime to affect the generality of mankind," lacking the potency to effectively counterbalance private interest.[2] On the other hand, Hume points out instances where there is no discernible link between public interest and adherence to general rules. For example, in scenarios where an individual holds a secret loan, the failure to pay back that loan may not evidently harm the public interest. Therefore, a consideration of public interest cannot serve as a motivating factor in adhering to general rules.

The final option is self-love or concern for our private interest. At first sight, self-love may not appear as a promising candidate, as it is often seen as the very source of the problem. Hume confirms this by stating that self-love, when it acts at its liberty, instead of leading us to honest actions, is "the source of all injustice and violence."[3] Additionally, a person cannot correct these vices without restraining "the *natural* movements of that appetite".[4] As previously highlighted, when an individual's love to others bears the greatest affection to his relations and acquaintance, this must necessarily result in a clash of passions and,

[1] T. 3.2.1.12, SBN 481.
[2] T. 3.2.1.11, SBN 480-1. In addition to these two options, Hume also rejects “a regard to the interests of the party concern’d”. Given its peripheral relevance to our current discussion, I will refrain from delving into the details of this aspect at this point.
[3] T. 3.2.1.10, SBN 480.
[4] T. 3.2.1.10, SBN 480.

consequently, a conflict of actions.[1] When the passion of self-love, which inclines people to deviate from following general rules, combines with the transferable nature of goods, unrestricted self-love has the potential to act recklessly, disregarding established norms of possession and security.[2] Hence, Hume concludes that unbridled self-love cannot serve as the motive for adhering to social rules. His recognition of the inherent conflict between self-love and the adherence to general rules underscores the limitations of relying on unrestricted self-interest as a motivation of following rules in a commercial era.

After an investigation of all three candidates in detail, Hume admits that none of them are qualified. He concludes that "we have naturally *no real or universal motive* for observing the laws of equity, but the very equity and merit of that observance."[3] (Italic as my emphasis, referred as "Principle of Real or Universal Motive") We can infer that the only "real or universal" motive is not natural, but contingent on the establishment of a contrivance. In simpler terms, this motive only comes into existence when there is a deliberate arrangement based on the understanding that it is fair and meritorious for individuals to adhere to general rules in a society. However, a mere appealing to the "equity and merit of that observance" as a motive is insufficient. As Hume explains,

> "…a person may perform an action merely out of regard to its moral obligation, yet still this supposes *in human nature some distinct principles*, which are capable of producing the action, and whose moral beauty renders the action meritorious."[4] (Italic as my emphasis)

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[1] T 3.2.2.6, SBN 487.
[2] T 3.2.2.6, SBN 487.
[3] T. 3.2.2.17, SBN 483. We have two points to make. Firstly, the word "naturally" appeared in the second edition of *Treatise*, presumably as a correction to the first edition. Cohon reminds us of this addition for the first time in the paper, and Garrett appreciates this addition greatly in his interpretation of Hume and tries his best to disambiguate the term "nature". Secondly, "real or universal" is very important. Hume can admit that it is possible for us to happen to perform some actions that live up to the rule of justice out of the concern about public interest or self-love. But these motives cannot account for the full range of just acts that are performed in a large and polished society. According to him, the only candidate "real or universal" motive is the "equity and merit of that observance". Cohon, 'Hume's Difficulty with the Virtue of Honesty',108n2; Garrett, 'The First Motive to Justice', 260.
[4] T. 3.2.1.8, SBN 479.

This statement echoes the "Undoubted Maxim Principle" and the "First Virtuous Motive Principle", both of which allege that the moral merit of an action cannot be derived merely from the sense that it is moral to take that action. Hume emphasizes in the "Principle of Real or Universal Motive" that setting "the very equity and merit of that observance" as a virtuous motive is inadequate, and underlines the necessity to find another motive in human nature to produce virtuous actions, one that is "distinct from the sense of its morality".[1] This emphasis arises from the implications of "Undoubted Maxim Principle" and its inference "First Virtuous Motive Principle", which contend that the moral merit of an action cannot be derived solely from the sense that the action is moral.

The reason behind this emphasis lies in the avoidance of circular reasoning. If individuals consider it virtuous to follow rules and do so just out of the "real or universal" motive, then a reasoning in a circle ensues. In this circular framework, the belief that observing the laws is virtuous is grounded only on the virtue of the motive, and conversely, the motive is deemed virtuous only because observing the laws is believed to have merit. This circular reasoning implies that a simple regard for meritorious action lacks substantive content, leading to a scenario where there is no virtuous motive beyond a *de dicto* motive and individuals would merely be abiding by the moral imperative to observe rules without a genuine and distinct virtuous motive. It follows that "[a] virtuous motive is requisite to render an action virtuous. An action must be virtuous, before we can have a regard to its virtue. Some virtuous motive, therefore, must be antecedent to that regard."[2] In other words, the virtue of an action rests on its motive, and the latter should be judged as virtuous apart from the sense of its morality.

Upon careful examination of Hume's reasoning, two distinct choices present themselves. The first option involves acknowledging this dilemma as irresolvable and opting for only the first requirement. Consequently, one might conclude that "there is here an evident

[1] T. 3.2.1.7, SBN 479; T. 3.2.1.17, SBN 483.
[2] T. 3.2.1.4, SBN 478.

sophistry and reasoning in a circle".[1] The second option (I think this is also what Hume endorses) is that

> "Unless, therefore, we will allow, that nature has establish'd a sophistry, and render'd it necessary and unavoidable, we must allow, that the sense of justice and injustice is not deriv'd from nature, but arises artificially, tho' necessarily from education, and human conventions."[2]

Upon accepting the artificiality of justice, the subsequent attempt is to elucidate how it fulfills two key requirements within Hume's moral philosophy. The initial posits that "the only real or universal motive" for adhering to the laws is the equity and merit inherent in that observance. The second, aimed at transcending the purported "circular argument," asserts that it is imperative to identify a motive distinct from the sense of morality while also imbuing that motive with merit.

Hume's response lies in the notion that the virtuous motive inherent in human nature is restrained self-love. This insight can be gleaned from his exposition on limited generosity as a fundamental characteristic of human nature. Hume acknowledges that the prevailing character of human nature is self-love, which can be detrimental to social order.[3] However, when self-love undergoes a transformation "in a manner still more oblique and artificial," it can serve as the original motive and first obligation to observe the fundamental laws within a society.[4] As Hume reiterates,

> "*self-interest* is the *original motive* to the establishment of justice".[5]

> "*self-love*, therefore, which renders men so incommodious to each other, taking a new and more convenient direction, produces the rules of justice, and is the *first*

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[1] T. 3.2.2.17, SBN 483.
[2] T. 3.2.2.17, SBN 483.
[3] T. 3.2.1.10, SBN 480. Stroud reads this line as a piece of evidence that denies self-love as original motive to justice. See Stroud, *Hume*, 199.
[4] T 3.2.6.6, SBN 528-9.
[5] T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499, italic as my emphasis. In addition, Hume also argues that "*interest* is the *first obligation* to the performance of promises"(T 3.2.5.11, SBN 522-3).

motive of their observance."[1]

But this reading has faced criticism from commentators who argue that self-interest does not appear virtuous or morally praiseworthy by definition, so they ask for a relaxation of "first virtuous motive" principle. This prompts a closer examination of the distinction between the "Undoubted Maxim Principle" and "First Virtuous Motive".

Upon closer scrutiny, it becomes evident that these two principles focus on different things. The "Undoubted Maxim Principle" demands some motive in human nature that is "distinct from the sense of its morality" to generate virtuous actions. Self-love can fulfill this requirement since it is inherent in human nature and contributes to creating the first virtuous motive through the establishment of the convention, without necessarily being virtuous in itself. On the other hand, the "First Virtuous Motive Principle" seeks for "a natural motive or principle" as the first virtuous motive to bestow merit on those actions. To avoid circular reasoning, the term "natural" implies "non-moral" rather than "non-artificial". As this motive arises only after the convention is established, it is not established on the "original frame of our mind".[2] Hume supports this view, and the term "first" he employs has no reference to the "original" state of human nature. Through this interpretation, Hume's two principles can be reconciled: he aims to identify a first virtuous motive, with a natural affection as its original motive which is not necessarily virtuous.[3] In this way, the "real or universal motive" to observe the laws is the "very equity and merit of that observance," while still being directed towards a better satisfaction of self-love.[4] A properly "corrected and restrained" self-interest thus meets two requirements. This line of reasoning exposed the Janus-faced

[1] T 3.2.8.5, SBN 543-4, italic as my emphasis.
[2] T 3.2.2.8, SBN 488-9.
[3] This interpretation borrows from Don Garrett's analysis, see Garrett, 'The First Motive to Justice', 271-72, and his interpretation of "natural" as "non-moral" rather than "non-artificial", see related discussion on page 261-2.
[4] Commentators express skepticism about Hume's ability to sustain his emphasis on the connection between virtue and natural affections. Darwall, for instance, contends that there must be a mental quality of "rule-regulation" "in a form of practical reasoning", and "the direct object of this state, unlike that of other virtuous principles, is a kind of act". Gill also raises questions about this premise. See J. L. Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1980), 80; Darwall, 'Motive and Obligation in Hume's Ethics': 437-440; Gill, "Hume's Progressive View of Human Nature", 102-4, 107n.28.

character of this motive—it emerges artificially through education and human conventions, yet it also strives for an indirect enhancement of our self-interest in an oblique way. Hence, according to Hume, utility-seeking, highlighted by Hont as the cornerstone of sociability, is a refined manifestation of the limited generosity inherent in uncultivated human nature. It is thus a product of education within a civilized society, guided by governmental influence.

In this context, Hume's moral philosophy embraces a virtue-based approach, shedding light on the intricate interplay between nature and artifice in the comprehension of social order, and points to the importance of government. On one hand, the inherent partiality in human nature suggests a lack of a sense of justice and a motive to adhere to general rules, rendering uncivilized human nature incongruent with the requisites of a large and polished society. The establishment of a "real or universal" motive, specifically the "equity and merit of that observance" through human contrivance, becomes imperative for sustaining the order of a civilized society. On the other hand, Hume issues a caution against perceiving the civilized order as a mere artificial imposition contrary to human nature. The constraints imposed on passions are deemed "only contrary to their heedless and impetuous movement", originating "immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflection." These constraints serve the satisfaction of our self-interest in a "more oblique and artificial" manner.[1] As he claims,

> Instead of departing from our own interest, or from that of our nearest friends, by abstaining from the possessions of others, we cannot better consult both these interests, than by such a convention; because it is by that means we maintain society, which is so necessary to their well-being and subsistence, as well as to our own.[2]

[1] T 3.2.2.19, SBN 484; T 3.2.6.6, SBN 529. In contrast to Hobbes's assertion that our happiness results from "a continual progress of the desire", in particularly the recognition we receive from those in our company, which focuses on the recognition from peers, Hume replaces maintains that public order should be deemed as a gradual progression derived from the "progress of sentiment". See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xiii.8; Baier, 'Artificial Virtues and the Equally Sensible Non-Knaves', 429.

[2] T 3.2.2.9, SBN 489. "Whatever restraint they may impose on the passions of men, they are the real offspring of those passions, and are only *a more artful and more refin'd way of satisfying them*." T 3.2.6.1, SBN 526, italic as my emphasis.

In other words, the social order serves as a framework that allows us to satisfy self-interest and the concern for friends and relatives, albeit within necessary constraints. In order to explain the dual character of civilized society, Hume introduces several senses of the term "nature," with three being relevant to our ongoing discussion.[1]

In the context of "nature" being contrasted with "civil" and "artificial," the social order may be considered unnatural. But these artificial rules extend beyond merely suppressing natural affections; rather, they aim for a nuanced and improved satisfaction of love toward our family and acquaintances in an indirect manner. Hume's delineation of these senses of "nature" serves to clarify the intricate relationship between the inherent qualities of human nature and the intentional constructs of a civilized society. It underscores that social regulations are not designed to completely stifle natural inclinations but rather to channel and refine them, contributing to a more effective and sophisticated social order.

Given that the only real and universal motive to adhere to rules is an artificially cultivated sense of duty, the cultivation of this sense requires human contrivance and education to temper our natural self-love. However, the question arises: how do we foster this sense of duty? This inquiry leads to a pivotal aspect— the role of government in a civilized society. Hume contends that a shared sense of interest may suffice to maintain order in a small-scale society, but as the scale of society expands, this sense becomes less compelling. In a civilized and polished society, the presence of government becomes indispensable. Government, according to Hume, plays a crucial role in instilling a sense of honor and enforcing the laws of justice, thereby motivating individuals to adhere to general rules. This becomes the focal point of our exploration in the subsequent part.[2]

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[1] T 3.1.2.7-9, SBN 474-5.

[2] In this chapter, I carefully avoid the term "spontaneous order". Hume indeed emphasizes the "progress of sentiments", but he contends that this progression is not spontaneous; rather, "it is here forwarded by the artifice of politicians". According to Hume, it is through the interventions of politicians that we can better satisfy our natural affections. Hayek adopts a more market-centered perspective, emphasizing a non-

2. Convention and Government

As discussed above, Hume unravels the real and universal motive for adhering to general rules as an artificial one—specifically, the equity and merit of observance, derived from the natural motive of self-love. To examine the moral mechanics of a civilized society, it is instructive to draw a comparison with a smaller society characterized by fewer possessions. Through this comparison, the necessity of government in the former comes to the forefront. In this section, I aim to bolster Hume's advocacy for government in a civilized society by elucidating two key points: 1) in a small and primitive society, members can organically develop a common sense of interest and adhere to fundamental laws voluntarily, while the role of government is dispensable; 2) in a large and polished society, the common sense of interest becomes remote, exposing the frailties of human nature once more. In this scenario, it becomes imperative to establish a government that fortifies the moral sense by instilling in subjects the notion that breaching fundamental laws is dishonorable, and it ensures the strict execution of justice.

As shown below, Hume presents a logical framework for understanding two distinct states of social order. The first involves the formation of convention as the bedrock of public order, corresponding to a small and primitive society. The second centers on the "progress of the sentiments," which calls for a lawful government to address the inherent inconveniences of human nature, particularly in the context of a polished society with numerous possessions. While it is widely acknowledged that Hume emphasizes the concept of "evolution" as a fundamental principle across all developmental stages in his "conjectural history" of moral

interventionist orientation toward economic policies. To cite Christopher Berry's insightful comment, the word "spontaneous" is "not the happiest of terms". "The paradigm of a spontaneous order is market co-ordination but although the Smithian distillation 'everyman a merchant' might suggest that economic factors or the market are the key ingredient in the Scots' idea this gives it an undue emphasis. The interdependency applies to all societal institutions…The Scots are institutionalists; any spontaneity occurs interstitially. Moreover, as here stressed, the Scots are aware that the world of commerce is a temporal formation and they are correspondingly attuned to the 'stickiness' of institutions interstitially." T 3.2.2.25, SBN 500; Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 207.

order,[1] his primary focus lies in comprehending the logic of a large and polished society and underscoring the pivotal role of government, in comparison to a small society. In doing so, Hume unveils the significance of government in a civilized society through the lens of human nature. In this context, convention suffices for small societies, but formalized law becomes necessary in larger societies comprised of strangers. Thus, politicians and the state play crucial roles. If Hont had explored Hume in detail, he would have recognized that sociability, defined in terms of utility-seeking, requires a robust state to establish the conditions under which it can flourish, and as such cannot be analyzed separately from a consideration of government.

2.1 The Formation of Convention

In the earlier analysis, we saw that the society restricts unruly passions of partial love and inculcates the moral obligation to follow general rules. But before proceeding to a large and polished society, Hume displays the mechanism of a small-scale society. Hume's analysis centers around a common sense of interest, which forms in mutual communication, first among family members and then with others beyond the scope of family. Once it is formed, they will find it consistent with their own interest to follow the rules of abstaining from others' property and keeping promises. The common sense of interest will motivate them to follow the rules of justice. This is what Hume means by "convention". In this section, I will examine Hume's account of order in a small-scale society.

Commentators have noticed that Hume's constructive account of social development primarily revolves around self-interest and its redirection. As discussed above, the natural inclination of human beings, namely the partial love for family and friends, becomes

[1] Emerson and Stewart maintain that Hume's analysis is said to set in the background of conjectural history in the Scottish Enlightenment. However, as Frazer underlines, whenever it was adopted in the later ages, Hume "here offers a hypothetical history, meant less as a description of justice's actual invention than of the principles in human nature that make such an invention possible". Roger Emerson, 'Conjectural History and Scottish Philosophers'. *Historical Papers - Canadian Historical Association* (1984): 63–90; John Stewart, *Opinion and Reform in Hume's Political Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 152-193; Frazer, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy*, 69.

problematic when attached to external goods, rendering them susceptible to plunder and instability of possession. The introduction of the convention is identified as the only remedy to address this issue. "This can be done after no other manner, than by a convention enter'd into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry."[1] Here, "convention" signifies an agreement founded on the redirection of senses of interest.

To tackle the challenges of cooperation and promise-keeping, Hume relies on convention, indicating a shared sense of interest that gradually emerges among these members. As he notes, the convention is "only a general sense of common interest; which sense all the members of the society express to one another, and which induces them to regulate their conduct by certain rules".[2] Once this common sense of interest is mutually expressed and known to both, "it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour. And this may properly enough be call'd a convention or agreement betwixt us".[3] Hence, the solution lies in recognizing a shared sense of interest among peers and having confidence that their companions are inclined to adhere to general rules. Prior to the formation of the convention, individuals operate under the command of their self-interest. They harbor not only a partial affection toward their relatives and friends but also perceive their actions derived from partiality as justified. Once the convention is established, a shared sense of interest emerges. The individuals perceive this common sense of interest among their associates, akin to the sense they possess themselves, and admit that it is in their collective interest to abide by general rules and collaborate, such as practicing abstinence from others' property and honoring promises, the uncertainty regarding their willingness to cooperate is alleviated.

[1] T 3.2.2.9, SBN 489.
[2] T 3.2.2.10, SBN 490.
[3] TT 3.2.5.11, SBN 522.

In this context, Hume offers two additional explanations. Firstly, this mechanism operates effectively only in a small-scale and primitive society with limited possessions, where the family still plays a pivotal role. In the original state of nature, where individuals are partial to relatives and friends and might engage in "immorality or vice… against some other person",[1] a natural appetite between the sexes serves as a present and more obvious remedy to contrary passions and helps unite them together. When offspring are introduced into the picture, this natural affection impels parents to constrain the exercise of their power and aids in the offspring recognizing the benefits of mutual interactions.[2] It acts as a preliminary step for cooperation extending beyond the familial sphere in the burgeoning society.

Furthermore, Hume proposes that the establishment and consolidation of this order are contingent on repeated interactions. A potential concern might arise: what if certain members choose to disregard the rules, thus leaving their companions vulnerable to their decisions? Hume anticipates this possibility but deems it a manageable challenge. Hume employs the example of rowing to assert that this order is a consequence of ongoing, repeated interactions rather than isolated, one-off occurrences. The coordination between two individuals rowing a boat or the stability of possession "arises gradually, and acquires force by a slow progression".[3] In a small-scale society where possessions are scarce, the failures of cooperation bring about "repeated experience of inconveniences", yet, this vivid experience can facilitate new cooperative efforts. The sense of interest has become common to all our fellows, and gives us confidence in the future regularity of their conduct: "'tis only on the expectation of this, that our moderation and abstinence are founded."[4] Consequently, the convention acquires force gradually and the inclination to follow the rules becomes more firmly established.[5]

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[1] T 3.2.2.8, SBN 488-9.
[2] T 3.2.2.4, SBN 486. As Hume maintains, "when men, from their early education in society, have become sensible of the infinite advantages that result from it, and have besides acquir'd a new affection to company and conversation." T 3.2.2.9, SBN 489.
[3] T 3.2.2.10, SBN 490.
[4] T 3.2.2.10, SBN 490.
[5] T 3.2.2.10, SBN 490.

2.2 The Significance of Government in a Civilized Society

Having elucidated the formation of convention in a nascent community, it is crucial to recognize that this model applies only to a small-scale society where members are acquainted with each other and can sense the inclination of their companions to cooperate. However, sustaining this "common sense of interest" becomes challenging in a larger and more polished society, increasing the likelihood of the collapse of the public order. This predicament underscores the necessity of government in a large and polished society and introduces the obligation of allegiance to the government to fortify the obligation to follow social rules, grounded in his understanding of human nature.

In the preceding section, I examined the moral order of a small-scale society, and it is worth noting that Hume does not explicitly mention the role of government. As he acknowledges, civil government is not universally indispensable. In the early stages of human civilization, or what Hume terms the "barbarous and uninstructed" state upon its formation,[1] barbarous people lived in small-scale societies composed of the conjunction of many families without a formal government. Admittedly, in this primitive state, possessions and the pleasures of life were scarce and of little value, and the society operated on a subsistence economy.[2] But to maintain order in these societies, the barbarians must develop a preliminary common sense of interest in adhering to three fundamental laws related to the stability of possession. While occasional discord over property rights might have arisen, due to the limited scale and resources, such conflicts rarely escalated into catastrophic civil war or posed significant threats to social stability. The inconveniences resulting from these encroachments on

[1] Hume refers this explicitly as "the state of society without government". T 3.2.8.2, SBN 540-1. From this reasoning, Christopher Finlay is correct in noting that the society prior to government is barbarous rather than civilized, but it is it is a misunderstanding of him to view Hume's government as a "dimension added on to the society at a late stage chronologically, giving it its 'political' character and guaranteeing its civil integrity", because Hume considers government an indispensable part of commercial society, essential for the progression of the commercial order. Christopher Finlay, 'Hume's Theory of Civil Society'. *European Journal of Political Theory* 3, no. 4 (2004): 369–91, esp. 369–71, 376-78.

[2] T 3.2.8.1, SBN 539; T 3.2.8.3, SBN 541.

property rights were manageable and did not fundamentally undermine the fabric of society.[1]

Nevertheless, the mechanism of relying on a common sense of interest approaches the brink of collapse in an enlarged and refined society. As the society becomes more numerous and wealthier, the common sense of interest becomes more remote, leading to disorder and confusion following their breaching of these rules.[2] The shift in circumstances reintroduces the problem that people "prefer the present to the remote" by nature. This infirmity of human nature, or what Rachel Cohon terms "temporal myopia", suggests that the allure of immediate gains often distorts the emotional and motivational impact of long-term considerations.[3] For example, if individuals find a minor present advantage more appealing than adhering to justice, whose benefits are distant, they are less motivated to follow the rules of justice. Furthermore, the negative consequences of violating these rules are also too distant to outweigh the immediate advantage, leading to a frequent breach of equity. We are then "naturally carry'd to commit acts of injustice as well as I. Your example both pushes me forward in this way by imitation, and also affords me a new reason for any breach of equity."[4]

When people note that it is impossible to "observe those rules, in large and polish'd societies", the government, as a new invention to achieve their aims and ensure the administration of justice, becomes "absolutely necessary to mankind", and this is the origin of civil

[1] T 3.2.8.1, SBN 539. Hume contends that in a larger society, "nor do men so readily perceive, that disorder and confusion follow upon every breach of these rules, as in a more narrow and contracted society" (T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499). In my interpretation, there is no contradiction here. Hume is suggesting that in a small and nascent society, it is easier to perceive the disorders and confusions that follow each breach of rules. However, he does not argue that disorder is sufficient to completely thwart social order in general. Instead, he recognizes that disorder and confusion may be more readily perceived in smaller societies, but they do not necessarily pose an insurmountable obstacle to maintaining social order. To borrow from Locke's words, their capacity to perceive disorder serves as the best fence against violating the laws.

[2] T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499. As he notes, "[n]othing but an encrease of riches and possessions cou'd oblige men to quit" this original state. T 3.2.8.2, SBN 540-41.

[3] T 3.2.7.5-6, SBN 536-7; Rachel Cohon, 'The Shackles of Virtue: Hume on Allegiance to Government'. *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (2001): 397.

[4] T 3.2.7.5, SBN 535.

government and allegiance.[1] Here it is notable that Hume's primary concern is less about the historical origin of government, although Hume's analysis is often labeled as "conjectural history" from a small-scale society to a larger one. Hume's framework is not a historical account *per se*; rather, it is a theoretical framework that explains why government is inherently necessary for human beings. As he suggests, government's role lies in addressing the "natural weakness" of human beings.

In this line of reasoning, Hume's exploration of convention in a primitive society acts as a precursor to his discussion of public order in a more advanced and sophisticated society, where the government becomes a vital component. Since the common sense of interest weakens and cannot adequately support a larger society, the establishment of a government becomes crucial for reinforcing this common sense of interest.[2] The Scottish philosopher defends this thesis with two compelling reasons.

Firstly, the necessity for government arises to enforce rules strictly in order to overcome the inherent inconveniences of human nature. The infirmity of human nature, often described as the "narrowness of soul," leads individuals to neglect subtle distinctions, particularly when it involves distant objects. Despite being fully convinced that a remote object is beneficial, individuals often yield to the "solicitations of our passions, which always plead in favour of whatever is near and contiguous", instead of following their better judgment.[3] Given the

[1] T 3.2.7.6, SBN 537; T 3.2.8.5, SBN 543.

[2] This philosophical speculation is not a mere whimsy or a play of words; rather, it holds substantial historical and practical implications. Historically, we can infer that primitive and barbarous societies, witnessing an increase in possessions, face limitations on further enlargement. The existence of possessions alone can lead to conflicts, civil wars, or conquests if there is no government to ensure public order. Consequently, the collapse of order becomes the inevitable fate for many primitive tribes as they reach a certain level of development. Practically, if a prosperous commercial society lacks effective governance, its order is also at risk. Once individuals recognize that it is advantageous to disobey general rules, social order begins to disintegrate gradually. Both historical and practical cases shed light on what Hume means when he asserts that government is indispensable to a commercial order from the perspective of human nature. This contributes to elucidating the thesis that Hume's primary concern is not an evolutionary schema but a comparison of the logical structure of order between two different types of societies.

[3] T 3.2.7.2, SBN 535; T 3.2.7.6, SBN 537.

impracticality of changing or remolding our nature, a pragmatic solution involves altering circumstances and situations. It becomes expedient to have civil magistrates to " inforce the dictates of equity thro' the whole society".[1] Their execution of laws renders "the observance of justice the immediate interest of some particular persons, and its violation their more remote, and this arrangement places individuals under the necessity of observing the laws of justice and equity.[2] With the protective shelter provided by their governors, all members of the society gain security against each other's weaknesses. This security allows them to begin to taste at ease the benefits of society and mutual assistance.[3]

Hume's argument underscores the benefits of participating in civilized society and adhering to general rules compared to living in an original, uncultivated state driven by impetuous self-love. However, a potential challenge arises regarding the possibility of free-riding between the two extremes Hume presents: on one side, in a civilized society with government implementing justice and guaranteeing a system of general rules, people find the whole structure "infinitely advantageous to the whole";[4] on the other, without justice, the society falls into a savage and solitary condition, "infinitely worse than the worst situation that can possibly be [supposed] in society".[5] A notable gap exists between these extremes. Some individuals may perceive it as more favorable to occasionally disobey the rules, provided others continue to observe them and maintain social order. Hume also acknowledges that a single act of justice, when considered independently, is frequently contrary to public interest.[6] This gap has led some scholars to criticize Hume's philosophical speculation, arguing that it harbors irresolvable problems and collapses under its own

[1] T 3.2.7.6, SBN 537.
[2] T 3.2.7.6, SBN 537.
[3] T 3.2.7.8, SBN 537.
[4] As Hume argues, "the whole plan or scheme is highly conducive, or indeed absolutely requisite, both to the support of society, and the well-being of every individual". T 3.2.2.22, SBN 497-8.
[5] T 3.2.2.22, SBN 497-8.
[6] His example is convincing, "'tis easily conceiv'd how a man may impoverish himself by a signal instance of integrity, and have reason to wish, that with regard to that single act, the laws of justice were for a moment suspended in the universe".

weight.[1]

In response, I think this gap does not pose a challenge to Hume; rather, it echoes his reasoning and underscores the imperative role of government in consistently enforcing rules. Hume alludes to this when exploring the motives behind rule adherence, asserting that the genuine and universal motive is the equity and merit found in steadfast adherence to rules, as opposed to a superficial self-interest considered in isolation. Individuals prioritizing self-interest resemble free-riders who have not yet attained adequate education.[2] In addition, this explains why we cannot accept Hont's analysis of commercial sociability and anticipate the emergence and maintenance of a large civilized society solely through spontaneous evolution in mutual interactions without political intervention. Human beings find it challenging to factor in their interests in ongoing interactions beyond a small group. This underscores the necessity for government to address the inherent weaknesses in human nature and mitigate the potential benefits derived from free-riding in specific instances through mechanisms such as punishment and education, as will be discussed below.[3] In essence, this gap is not a challenge but an indispensable rupture that Hume's theory inherently requires.

Secondly, beyond the mere enactment and enforcement of laws, magistrates must instill in the subjects the notion that adherence to social rules in a large society serves their self-interest in an oblique and artificial manner.[4] While punishment for transgressors is a

[1] The challenge of knavish policy is initially introduced by Hume himself in his later writing, a predicament that Barry Stroud brings to light. (EPM 9.2.22, SBN 282) Hume's defense of social order hinges on the notion that its benefits society as a whole when considered as a "whole plan or scheme" of justice rather than focusing on individual acts. For related discussions, see Gauthier, 'Artificial Virtues and the Sensible Knave', 401–27; Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator*, 36-44; Darwall, 'Motive and Obligation in Hume's Ethics', 437-440.

[2] T 3.2.2.13, SBN 492.

[3] "Although Hume is standardly taken to have recognized the free rider problem only in the *Second Enquiry*, his discussion of the origin of government in the *Treatise* suggests he was aware of the problem in the earlier work". Jason Baldwin, 'Hume's Knave and the Interests of Justice'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 42, no. 3 (2004): 277–96.

[4] T 3.2.5.9, SBN 521.

necessary aspect in a large society, it serves as a last resort to maintain social order. The majority of individuals, however, comply with rules not solely out of fear of punishment but rather due to a sense of morality. Civil magistrates should also focus on fostering an esteem for justice, and an abhorrence of injustice among the populace, aiming to "govern men more easily, and preserve peace in human society".[1]

Recognizing that nothing touches us more deeply than our reputation, and that our conduct regarding the property of others greatly influences our reputation, policymakers can appeal to a more tangible aspect — the "interest of our reputation".[2] Subjects need to be ingrained with the belief that abiding by general rules is honorable and contributes positively to their reputation. As Hume argues, every member of the society should be influenced to see the adherence to these rules as a virtuous and esteemed practice. Once the interest is established and acknowledged, "the sense of morality in the observance of these rules follows *naturally*, and of itself; tho' 'tis certain, that it is also augmented by a new *artifice*".[3] Thanks to public instructions of politicians and the private education of parents, we have a sense of honor and duty in the strict regulation of our actions with regard to the properties of others.[4] As long as the convention is established, the consideration of reputation and honor indeed helps members of society regulate their conduct in adherence to the laws uniformly, rather than to weigh the costs and benefits of particular acts, which potentially threaten social order.[5] Hume reiterates this point in his *Second Enquiry*, "while they purpose to cheat with moderation and secrecy, a tempting incident occurs, nature is frail, and they give into the

[1] T 3.2.2.25, SBN 500.
[2] T 3.2.2.27, SBN 501.
[3] T 3.2.6.11, SBN 533-34.
[4] T 3.2.7.11, SBN 533-4. T 3.2.2.27, SBN 501. Apart from public praise and blame, "private education and instruction" contribute to the cultivation of esteem for justice among children from a young age. If parents recognize that possessing probity and honor proves beneficial both for themselves and others, and if they understand that "custom and education assist interest and reflection," then they are likely to instill in their children the belief that abiding by rules is an honorable practice. To cite Hume's words, "sentiments of honour…take root in their tender minds, and acquire such firmness and solidity, that they may fall little short of those principles, which are the most essential to our natures, and the most deeply radicated in our internal constitution." T 3.2.2.26, SBN 500-501.
[5] Hume is also emphatic on the sense of honor and good breading in his moral philosophy. Susato, *Hume's Sceptical Enlightenment*, 108ff.

snare; whence they can never extricate themselves, without a total loss of reputation, and the forfeiture of all future trust and confidence with mankind. "[1]

The consideration of reputation facilitates an indirect satisfaction of self-interest and strengthens the sense of morality, superseding the deliberation of self-interest in one-shot and particular cases. This inculcated moral sense operates through the mechanism of sympathy. "We partake of their uneasiness by sympathy".[2] In a large and sophisticated society, self-interest, governed by general rules and public order, may be too distant to be tangible. In such contexts, sympathy comes to rescue. Through the guidance of politicians and societal norms, individuals, as spectators, perceive actions deviating from these rules "as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one", and then deems these actions vicious. Conversely, actions in agreement with these norms will evoke pleasure and be deemed as morally virtuous. To have the sense of virtue is nothing but to "feel a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character".[3] After reflecting on the actions of others, we will extend it even to our own actions.[4] Thus, within a well-established social order, moral sentiments, facilitated by sympathy, reinforce adherence to general rules beyond mere self-interest.

It is noteworthy that Hume only acknowledges the potency of sympathy in shaping our moral sentiments while recognizing its limitations. Sympathy possesses sufficient force to influence our taste and evoke sentiments of approbation or blame, but is "too weak to control our passions".[5] According to Hume, the only way to counterbalance the uncontrolled passion of interest is through self-interest itself.[6] Thus, sympathy operates only when the

[1] EPM 9. 24, SBN 283.
[2] T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499-500.
[3] T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499; T 3.1.2.3, SBN 471; T 3.2.5.4, SBN 517.
[4] T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499-500.
[5] T 3.2.2.24, SBN 499-500.
[6] "There is no passion, therefore, capable of [controlling] the interested affection, but the very affection itself, by an alteration of its direction." T 3.2.2.13, SBN 492.

social order had been established, which is achieved through the fulfillment of self-interest. In this view, restrained self-interest remains the virtuous motive for adhering to the rules of justice in society. As long as general rules to satisfy self-interest are firmly in place, "a sentiment of morals concurs with interest, and becomes a new obligation upon mankind".[1] In a large civilized society with numerous members who are strangers satisfying their self-interest in an oblique manner, there is also a demand for a moral mechanism that facilitates this satisfaction. Self-interest remains the foundational principle, and government plays an indispensable role.[2]

This part is dedicated to a clarification that Hume's central focus lies in revealing the indispensability of government in a large society as a way to strengthen the common sense of interest, emphasizing the motive to follow fundamental rules, rather than presenting an evolutionary conjectural history. On one hand, civil magistrates are tasked with strictly enforcing written laws to address the "temporal myopia," an obvious "infirmity of human nature". On the other hand, politicians bear the responsibility of educating their subjects that adherence to fundamental rules is not only beneficial for their self-interest but also enhances their reputation, thereby reinforcing their moral sense. Hume makes it explicit that government is an indispensable mechanism to address the weakness of human nature and maintain security and public order: the "progress of the sentiments"…is here forwarded by the artifice of politicians".[3] This reasoning also counters attempts to theoretically separate civilized society and the state in a theoretical sense.[4]

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[1] T 3.2.5.12, SBN 523.

[2] In fact, in his later writings, Hume goes on to argue that the established mechanism of moral approbation can generate a form of "interested obligation" to justice. This form of obligation is characterized by "inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances, very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man". In a word, Hume suggests that the temporary pleasures that are within immediate reach, which he acknowledges as "worthless toys and gewgaws," are compromised by the disapprobation of moral conscience. This underscores the idea that a sense of internal well-being and integrity plays a crucial role in promoting justice. (EPM 9.25, SBN 283).

[3] T 3.2.2.25, SBN 500. Hume claims that the obedience of rules of property rights and performance the promise are inseparable from "[p]ublic interest, education, and the artifices of politicians". T 3.2.5.12, SBN 523.

[4] Finlay, 'Hume's Theory of Civil Society', 369–71; Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 182-3.

3. Two Obligations of Allegiance

The earlier analysis underscores the essential role of government in a civilized society. It effectively addresses the challenges posed by human nature in adhering to general rules by employing both punishment and education. Punishment serves as a deterrent against violations of societal norms, while education strengthens the common sense of interest by fostering moral notions and concerns about reputation. Hume thereby posits that government stands as an integral component of the civilized society within a large and refined society. In this part, I will explore Hume's examination of the obligation of obedience to government, which is rooted in his understanding of human nature, contending that the subjects are bound by both natural and moral obligations to obey government authority.

As we noted in the previous chapter, Hume maintains that the obligation of obedience to government in a large society is not derived from promise or consent, which is tenable only in a small-scale and primitive society.[1] In the initial stage, when possessions were scarce and formal government structures had not yet been established, primitive societies also recognized the necessity of fundamental rules such as justice and promise-keeping. These rules were deemed obligatory due to conventions and a shared sense of interest, with little necessity to appeal to government power. As possessions increased and conflicts arose between different societies, even after the battles concluded, individuals were still inclined to obey the rules established by their previous military leaders.[2] They would assemble together, choose their former military leaders as the magistrate, "determine their power, and promise them obedience". Given that the performance of promises is a fundamental law,

[1] Hume encapsulates Locke's viewpoint as one that "resolve[s] all civil allegiance into the obligation of a promise, and asserts that 'tis our own consent alone, which binds us to any submission to magistracy". T 3.2.8.3, SBN 542.

[2] Echoing his critique of contract theory in the fourth chapter, Hume suggests that civil magistrates have their origins on the battlefield. "The first rudiments of government to arise from quarrels, not among men of the same society, but among those of different societies." (T 3.2.8.1, SBN 539-40). Members of primitive society recognized the necessity of entrusting a single person with military authority to address the challenges of war, to keep them away from jeopardizing their bodies and externals goods.

"government, *upon its first establishment*, wou'd naturally be suppos'd to derive its obligation from those laws of nature, and, in particular, from that concerning the performance of promises".[1] In view of this, the obligation of obedience to civil magistrate at the initial stage is derived from the obligation to perform their promises.

The story in a large society is different. In a large and polished society, there are so many possessions on the one hand, and so many wants, real or imaginary, on the other.[2] In this scenario, the obligation of allegiance is not based on promise any more. The common sense of interest, which motived those people in a small society to follow the rules, is weakened, then it is impossible for them to observe the law by themselves, and the government serves to "preserve the old, or procure new advantages".[3] Hence, the establishment of government is geared towards ensuring the fulfillment of commitments in mutual interactions. The submission to authority contributes to the maintenance of order and concord in society,[4] yielding increased benefits and prosperity. Hence, Hume argues that the obligations of allegiance to the government and promise-keeping are "founded on like obligations of interest, each of them must have a peculiar authority, independent of the other". While civil duties are connected with our natural duties, the former are primarily devised to serve the latter's purpose.[5]

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[1] T 3.2.8.3, SBN 541. As Hume notes, "the same kind of authority naturally takes place in that civil government, which succeeds the military" In fact, the camps "are the true mothers of cities; and as war cannot be administred, by reason of the suddenness of every exigency, without some authority in a single person, the same kind of authority naturally takes place in that civil government, which succeeds the military". T 3.2.8.1, SBN 540-41; T 3.2.8.2, SBN 540-1.

[2] T 3.2.8.6, SBN 544.

[3] T 3.2.8.5, SBN 543.

[4] T 3.2.8.5, SBN 544. Hume notes this again that "[t]his interest I find to consist in the security and protection, which we enjoy in political society, and which we can never attain, when perfectly free and independent". (T 3.2.9.2, SBN 550).

[5] T 3.2.8.5, SBN 544; T 3.2.8.6, SBN 545.Hume revisits this issue later, asserting, "Tho' there was no such thing as a promise in the world, government wou'd still be necessary in all large and civiliz'd societies; and if promises had only their own proper obligation, without the separate sanction of government, they wou'd have but little efficacy in such societies. This separates the boundaries of our public and private duties, and shows that the latter are more dependent on the former, than the former on the latter." (T 3.2.8.7, SBN 546)

In addition to the natural obligation of interest, there is the moral obligation of honor and conscience as well. Hume, drawing on his insights into human nature, identifies the intimate link between natural and moral obligations. He observes a fundamental aspect of human psychology, noting that "men are mightily addicted to *general rules*, and that we often carry our maxims beyond those reasons, which first induc'd us to establish them".[1] When we perceive the allegiance to the government as a source of peace, order, and enhanced self-interest satisfaction, we tend to elevate the duty of obedience to a broad principle extending beyond its initial context. For instance, actions deemed "seditious and disloyal" against civil authorities are seen as threats to public order and detrimental to the common good.[2] Consequently, we experience a sense of discomfort when witnessing someone violating general rules, and then attach notions of vice and moral deformity to their actions. This moral obligation, intricately connected to the natural obligation of allegiance to the government, thus emerges as an additional layer of commitment.

Hume's elucidation of moral obligation, distinct from natural obligation, stands as a significant contribution to the political philosophy of the commercial state, showcasing his theoretical sophistication. On the one hand, this concept clarifies Hume's emphasis on the people's inclination to allegiance to government without contemplation under normal circumstances, as opposed to engaging in theoretical pursuits that culminate in the right of resistance. Recognizing the human tendency to adhere to general rules, Hume contends that individuals may find themselves "bound by conscience to submit to a tyrannical government against their own and the public interest",[3] even when governmental rules become arbitrary and the natural benefits of obedience diminish. This mitigates suspicions about government posing a threat to public order—a concern inherent in consent theory due to its emphasis on extraordinary occasions.

[1] T 3.2.9.3, SBN 551.
[2] T 3.2.8.7, SBN 544-5.
[3] T 3.2.9.3, SBN 551.

On the other hand, Hume's political philosophy offers insights into why resistance against absolute power can be appreciated without attaching moral deformity to it. According to Hume, when tyranny reaches a point where it is detrimental to social interests—rooted in the natural obligation of allegiance—the moral obligation, derived from the natural one and generally intertwined with our sentiments, begins to dissolve. If we no longer experience negative emotions towards acts of resistance, then resisting arbitrary and supreme power becomes justified, free from accusations of crime or injustice. This line of reasoning sheds light on Hume's commentary on Lockean political thought in connection with Whig ideology, stating, "[t]his conclusion is just, tho' the principles be erroneous; and I flatter myself, that I can establish the same conclusion on more reasonable principles."[1]

In this context, Hume's exploration of convention and evolutionary order takes a back seat to his keen interest in understanding the logic of a large commercial society as compared to a smaller, primitive one. He underscores the necessity for a new political philosophy to evaluate government authority. The expansion of society and the accumulation of possessions not only alter lifestyles but also reshape the moral underpinnings of allegiance. Consequently, there arises a need for a fresh theory of political authority that aligns with the distinctive characteristics of a civilized society.

As Hume maintains, at the outset, our obligation of allegiance to governmental power stems from the binding force of promises established by convention prior to the inception of government. However, this obligation "immediately takes root of itself, and has an original obligation and authority, independent of all contracts".[2] This dual nature results in two obligations of allegiance. The natural obligation arises from the satisfaction of our interests

[1] T 3.2.9.2, SBN 550.
[2] T 3.2.8.3, SBN 542.

in a more effective manner, while the moral obligation, derived from the former and rooted in the human inclination towards general rules, involves the infamy attached to any seditious and disloyal actions. This elucidation underscores the indispensable role of government and offers a reinterpretation of the obligation of allegiance based on Hume's nuanced understanding of human nature in the context of an evolving and expanding society.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrate that Hume places central emphasis on the crucial role of government in maintaining public order in the context of a commercial state with a reference to human nature. This perspective outlines the dual roles of government. Firstly, it is charged with upholding fundamental laws and meting out sanctions to those who transgress these laws. This function addresses the myopia of human nature that prioritizes immediate gains over long-term interests and the partiality towards family and acquaintances. Secondly, government carries the responsibility of instilling moral principles and values in its citizens, fostering a predisposition towards compliance with social norms by catering to the subjects' concern about their reputation. This two-fold role, when executed proficiently, forms the foundation of establishing a secure public order characterized by adherence to social rules, and makes for social prosperity and vitality.

Hume's analysis provides a compelling response to Hont's attempt to theorize modern commercial states. Hont tends to separate the analysis of the "civilized standards of living" that emerge through "mere society" from the consideration of the presence of government, based on the premise that human nature in a commercial society is characterized by utility-seeking or the satisfaction of physical needs. In contrast to Hont's conclusion, Hume indicates that people are willing to seek their utility with an engagement in commercial activities only when the government has been well-established to enforce the laws and social rules. From Hume's standpoint, Hont's commercial sociability in terms of utility-seeking fails adequately to explore the theoretical foundation of modern commercial state, as he

originally claims.

From Hume's perspective, Hont's effort to fully theorize the modern commercial state falls short due to his underestimation of the darker aspects of human passions. Hume addresses this gap by reevaluating human nature, highlighting our inherent partiality towards family and acquaintances and our tendency to prioritize short-term gains over long-term benefits. These inherent weaknesses of human nature necessitate the intervention of government authority, which safeguards property rights and maintains public order in a commercial era. By recovering the generic link between human nature and authority of government, Hume offers a nuanced response to Hont's ambition to theorize the modern commercial state. In this way, Hume's analysis of political authority provides a cogent reply to Hont's ambition to theorize modern commercial state with a reference to human nature.

Conclusion

Having embarked on a substantial intellectual journey, we can now revisit the initial question and offer a response to Istvan Hont. Hont rightfully dismisses notions of commercial pacifism and underscores the significance of comprehending the jealousy of trade as a central concern in theorizing the modern commercial state. He focuses on two pivotal issues: the power and the moral foundation of political institutions in modern commercial states. While recognizing the value of Hont's scholarship, this project contends that David Hume offers a compelling response to Hont's concerns. Hont himself saw Hume as a contributor to the discussions that interested him, but beyond borrowing the title "Jealousy of Trade" from him, devoted little detailed analysis to his wider political thinking. To substantiate this assertion of Hume's significance, I investigated his analysis of the modern commercial state, discerned throughout his essays, historical writings, and philosophical works, especially in the context of his dialogues with John Locke, Bernard Mandeville, and Whig historians. By synthesizing these strands of thought, I offer an elucidation of Hume's political theory that positions him as a significant theorist of modern commercial state, one who can fill the void in Hont's analysis of early modern political theory concerning the commercial state.

While Hont is insightful to note the enduring importance of the power of the state in the commercial era by drawing insights from neo-Machiavellian theorists, he overlooks the moral implications arising from the ascent of commerce. In the opening two chapters, I explore Mandeville and Hume's analysis, as they not only demonstrate how embracing economic prosperity enhances the power of the state, but also examine the ways in which the emergence of a commercial society challenges prevailing moral systems.

The first chapter explores how Bernard Mandeville theorizes "sociableness" to redefine

Hobbes's theory of human nature,[1] and illuminates his renowned maxim, "private vices, public benefits." Mandeville's concept of "sociableness" identifies key traits such as politeness, condescension, and hypocrisy as defining features of interpersonal interaction in civilized societies. This concept serves to revise Hobbes's theory of human nature associated with a regulated economy. In addition, Mandeville's motto also addresses the dilemma faced by commercial states in harnessing commercial prosperity to bolster political power while contending with the darker aspects of human nature. This chapter sets the stage for exploring the political implications of commercial prosperity and the necessity of making a compromise between moral purity and national security.

The second chapter examines how Hume refines Mandeville's analysis of the modern commercial state, particularly in comparison with ancient republics. Hume builds upon Mandeville's insights by highlighting that moral doctrines such as frugality and gallantry, deeply ingrained in the political and economic contexts of ancient republics, have diminished relevance in the modern era. This prompts the need for a fresh framework to comprehend the relationship between politics and morality in the context of modern society. Moreover, Hume diverges from Mandeville's pessimistic view of modern states' moral condition from a philosophical perspective, proposing a more pragmatic moral standard from a politician's viewpoint. By shifting focus to the middling ranks as exemplars of moral life in modern society, Hume suggests a reconciliation between the power of the state and individual happiness, contrasting with the conflict observed in ancient republics. This reconciliation is encapsulated by "an indissoluble chain linking industry, knowledge, and humanity".[2]

The last three chapters shift the focus to Hume's conception of human nature and political authority in a commercial era, against the backdrop of post-revolutionary England. This

[1] Hont esteems Hobbes as last "post Renaissance or 'new humanist' theorists of politics", because his political philosophy only explains a sovereign state with a rather regulated economy instead of luxurious commercial society. Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, 10, 17-21; *Politics in Commercial Society*, 6-8.

[2] Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts", in Hume, *Essays*, 268, 271.

serves as a response to Hont's thesis on theorizing the moral foundation of modern commercial states. While I appreciate Hont's effort to revisit eighteenth-century theorists with reference to Hobbes, his explanation of sociability through utility and physical needs as the foundation of "mere society" seems to downplay the role of the state. This is incongruent with his general aim of theorizing the commercial state. Hume's contribution lies in highlighting that a theory of the modern commercial state should be grounded in a proper understanding of human nature, without disregarding the destructive passions. By highlighting the natural inclination to "prefer the present to the remote", as well as the partiality to relatives and acquaintances rather than solely seeking utility, Hume underscores the indispensability of government and the obligation of obedience to public authority.

The third chapter explores Hume's examination of the Glorious Revolution in contrast to the Whig interpretation, serving as a guiding thread in his analysis of the modern commercial state. Hume identifies two key accomplishments of the revolution. Firstly, it curtailed the prerogative, a prominent feature of the so-called "ancient constitution" that bestowed arbitrary royal authority, ushering in an era governed by the rule of law and popular principle. Secondly, the revolution resolved longstanding tensions between the Monarch and Parliament, bolstering public authority in alignment with civil liberty rather than diminishing it. In critiquing Whig principles, Hume advocates for a political theory of the commercial state that acknowledges the necessity of public authority to uphold civil liberty. This serves as a fundamental approach to understanding Hume's perspective on the modern state, and address Hont's concern about theorizing modern commercial states.

The fourth chapter shifts focus to Hume's rejection of the "speculative principles" underpinning the Whigs politics, particularly Locke's analysis of the original contract and the consent principle. Locke considers popular consent as the ultimate source of governmental authority and emphasizes the concept of tacit consent to explain how the obligatory force of the original contract passes to later generations. In this light, the people

have the right to forfeit their consent and dissolve the government when it is found to have deviated from its responsibilities. To refute Locke's theory which carries a radical implication, Hume posits that it is inadequate to understand the obligation of obedience to government authority solely through its historical origins. Instead, he suggests a constructive analysis of the moral foundation of political authority based on an accurate account of human nature.

The final chapter elucidates how Hume's theory of human nature underpins his account of the indispensability of government to large and polished societies, and the obligation of obedience to government. Hume argues that the foundation of modern commercial states lies not in sympathy but in self-interest, manifested as "limited generosity" towards relatives and friends. It is crucial to have the civil government to remedy the weaknesses of human nature by enforcing general laws and imparting moral doctrines to bolster the moral sense among citizens. Consequently, the obligation of obedience to government authority is twofold: natural and moral. In this way, Hume's theory addresses Hont's agenda of theorizing the commercial state, revealing the indispensability of government with reference to human nature.

Hume's political theory is rich resource to address the issues raised by Istvan Hont. On the one hand, he indicates that the power of the state still holds relevance in a commercial age, while taking account of the impact of commerce on the social ethos and moral condition. In this way, he goes further than neo-Machiavellian theorists explored by Hont. On the other, Hume provides a more nuanced account of human nature, focusing on the limited generosity and partiality, rather than commercial reciprocity or utility-seeking, and this account reveals the indispensability of government in addressing the frailties of human nature. In this way, Hume develops an intellectual framework that analyzes the power and the moral foundation of modern commercial states, with historical sensitivity and philosophical coherence. Hence，David Hume's theory remains one of the most promising intellectual sites for investigating

politics in commercial society. This project is just a starting point.

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