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**Political economy in transition: From classical humanism to
commercial society - Robert Wallace of Edinburgh**

Peterson, Dean James, Ph.D.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1994

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POLITICAL ECONOMY IN TRANSITION:
FROM CLASSICAL HUMANISM TO COMMERCIAL SOCIETY -
ROBERT WALLACE OF EDINBURGH

BY

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A.B., Augustana College, 1982
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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics
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Political Economy in Transition:
From Classical Humanism to Commercial Society -
Robert Wallace of Edinburgh

Dissertation Abstract

This thesis studies the advance of economic thought in eighteenth century Scotland through an examination of the life and works of Robert Wallace. It proceeds on two distinct but interrelated levels. On one level, it focuses on the growth of positive economic theories with special emphasis on theories of economic development, such as population, public credit, specialization, and the expansion of trade. On a second level, it deals with the transition in attitudes on policy, outlining a cultural transformation from the civic ideology of Andrew Fletcher to the commercialism of Adam Smith. This level focuses is upon the development of a disposition sanctioning inequality in property distribution, thereby defending the existence of a bourgeois class.

Robert Wallace was a distinguished member of the Scottish literati. His position in the two dominant institutions of the time, the Church and the University, enabled him to influence intellectual thought and public opinion. He lectured in mathematics at the University of Edinburgh and was appointed Minister of Edinburgh for the Church of Scotland. As a member of the Edinburgh Philosophic Society, the Rankenian Club and the Select Society, Wallace joined in discourse and debate with other prominent men of letters such as Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, William Robertson, and Lord Kames.

Wallace's extensive writings provide a uniquely broad view of the ideas and values of eighteenth century Scotland. Wallace's works explore changes in both the theories and the attitudes which are the subject of this inquiry. Wallace's *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind*, which included tables depicting a geometric progression in population growth, was recognized by subsequent population theorists, including Malthus, as the seminal work in the field.

This thesis examines the progression of economic thought within a broad cultural setting reflecting a decidedly relativist approach. In the tradition of Weber, it explores the impact of protestantism on society's acceptance of commercialization. Finally, the civic humanist and jurisprudential paradigms (developed by Pocock and others) are employed to frame the ideological debate on the desirability of a commercial society.

To My Parents

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This thesis was completed with the aid of a great many individuals. I am grateful for their assistance.

Most of all, I want to thank Professor Salim Rashid. It was his suggestion to study the economic writings of Robert Wallace. He was my advisor in graduate school and was chairman of the committee overseeing this thesis. He and his family were patient and unfailingly encouraging throughout the process of completing it.

Professor Thomas Ulen and Professor Fred Gottheil served as readers on my committee. Both provided helpful comments and suggestions. Daniel Diller also read many parts of the thesis and offered numerous editorial improvements. I am indebted to them also.

This thesis relied heavily on the generous assistance of library staffs from, literally, around the world. I would like to thank Barbara Carroll and Brian Hubber at the State Library of Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia; John Howard at the Edinburgh University Library; Frederick Nash at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and staff members at the National Library of Scotland.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Maureen. She devoted a great deal of time transcribing source material, typing footnotes and proofing drafts. She was always supportive of me and the project, despite the time it took away from us. Without her, I would have never completed the work.

PREFACE

This thesis presents a portion of the thought of Robert Wallace (1696-1771). I first encountered Wallace as a first-year graduate student when writing an essay on Scottish precursors of Malthus's *Essay on Population*. Wallace is best known for his work on population and is generally regarded as the clearest anticipator of Malthus. Malthus himself regarded Wallace's *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind* as the seminal work in population theory. Because of Malthus's references to Wallace and his role in the "Hume-Wallace debate", there exists a vast amount of material on Wallace in the secondary literature. This literature, however, is devoted exclusively to the question of population. No wider study of Wallace's economic thought exists. Norah Smith has studied his literary career and Cyrus Dillon his philosophical views. And while both studies address some of Wallace's economic thought, they do not take it as their primary focus. Therefore, when it came time to select a thesis topic I decided to present Wallace's economic thought as a whole.

It is clear that a study of Wallace's economic thought is a worthy choice. First, it has not been done. Second, there exists a great deal of original material. Wallace's *Numbers of Mankind*, *Present Political State of Great Britain and Various Prospects of Mankind*, *Nature and Providence* have been reprinted by Kelley. Also, the Edinburgh University Library contains an extensive collection of Wallace's unpublished letters, notes, essays and manuscripts. Together, these resources provide great

insight into Wallace's ideas on prices, international trade, monetary policy and public credit. With the increased interest in the pre-classical period following the publication of Terence Hutchison's *Before Adam Smith*, a study of Wallace seems especially interesting.

Despite the wealth of primary source material, I thought--at first, anyway--the scope of the project to be sufficiently narrow. The source material was easy to obtain. The Kelley reprints arrived within a week of being ordered and the staff at the Edinburgh University Library graciously provided microfilm copies of their collection. All that was needed was to present Wallace's work on economics and to evaluate it relative to the contemporary literature.

Soon after beginning the project, however, it became apparent that it would be impossible to split-off Wallace's economics from the rest of his thought. The twentieth-century divisions between social sciences were not observed by Wallace. Natural and Moral Philosophy were probably the only boundaries he acknowledged. When Wallace explored economic relationships it was generally part of a larger discussion--of man and of man in society. Rarely did he consider economics in the isolated manner we do today. Wallace's thoughts on economics are intertwined with his views on political theory, ethics and theology. A study that removed economics from this broad perspective would not be reflective of his thought; it would make Wallace's writings appear random and needlessly inconsistent.

An accurate reflection of Wallace's economic ideas requires an intellectual framework that preserves the integrity of Wallace's complete thinking while highlighting the portion devoted to economic themes. Certainly, such a framework will be more complex than a simple listing of the economic topics mentioned above. It must be of sufficient dimension to capture Wallace's background, training and interests, as well as the intellectual climate that his writings were a part. At the same time, the danger of giving undue prominence to economics must be avoided. It must be remembered that Wallace considered economics in conjunction with other matters. Wallace's economics should be presented atop--or following--the broader concerns he addressed.

A framework designed to capture the entirety of Wallace's life and the Scottish Enlightenment would be needlessly long and elaborate for the task of featuring Wallace's views on economics. A better approach is to construct the minimum structure necessary to correctly present his thought. In the case of Wallace, I believe there are two sources from which to select the dimensions of this minimal structure. The first is the collection of his writings. They reflect the topics and issues about which he felt most passionate. Themes that appear repeatedly or were written upon extensively are obvious candidates for necessary dimensions. Besides distinguishing his greatest concerns they also allow us to see what motivated the positions he took on them. Paying close attention to these motivating forces reveals the connection between these thoughts and allows us to join together the

underlying tenets that define Wallace's character. The second source of dimensions for a backdrop is the set of roles Wallace played in Scottish society. Like his writings, the activities he participated in demonstrate what he believed important. Also like his writings, these roles identify the personalities and social conditions he encountered and shaped his thought. Not surprisingly, there exists a high degree of consistency between the roles and writings. Each source provides accent to the information garnered from the other and together they present a reasonably complete portrait of Wallace's sphere of intellectual curiosity. From these two sources, I have tried to abstract the themes necessary to understand Wallace's economic ideas.

Two broad areas immediately suggest themselves as necessary background from which to view Wallace's economics: political theory and philosophy. The necessary dimensions for a study of Wallace are found--as is his economics--within these two categories. Again, the separation of philosophy and political theory is somewhat artificial--a 20th century grouping. For Wallace, the philosophical propositions he held flowed continuously into the political questions he considered.

The first set of dimensions I wish to consider are those falling under the heading of philosophy. The term "philosophy" is probably too broad, but Wallace wrote on a wide list of philosophical topics: epistemology, metaphysics and ontology, cosmology, determinism, theology, ethics, aesthetics, and immortality. The impetus behind these writings was primarily

religious and I considered choosing either "religion" or "theology" as the header of this group of dimensions. However, a significant portion of his writings were apart from religious matters--so I stayed with "philosophy".

The decision to present Wallace's philosophical thought prior to his political thought reflects Wallace's own view of the relationship between the two subjects. As alluded to above, Wallace felt that political concerns rested on more fundamental philosophical positions. Accordingly, Wallace devoted the bulk of his work to matters of theology or philosophy. This is not unexpected, he was a Presbyterian minister, he served as Minister to the Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, he was President of the General Assembly and President of the SPCK. Too, the challenge to religion made by Deists and Freethinkers during the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century served to focus Wallace's attention on these basic questions.

The challenge to religion was an attribute of the faith in the progress and eventual perfectibility of mankind. This faith drew its inspiration from the gains achieved in natural philosophy. It was believed that similar gains could be achieved in moral philosophy by adopting the method of the new science. This choice of method lead to a mechanistic view of the world and had the effect of pitting reason against religion thereby sparking a host of theological battles. Under the new paradigm, God was portrayed--if He was included at all--as a clock-maker, merely observing the world playing out its predetermined fate, no

longer a source of value or ethics. The existence of heaven was denied while the eternity of the world was insisted upon. Ultimately, the progressivist view lead to the conclusion that religion was a hinderance to mankind and lead to a complete rejection of the religion of the scriptures.

Some divines of the period turned the rhetoric of improvement back on the religious challengers, using it to defend revealed religion. Against the claim that the world had existed for all eternity, they argued that mankind's learning and advancement pointed to a beginning and therefore a Creator. Like these divines, Wallace sought to defend the existence of a beneficent providence in the face of the advances in science. He applauded attempts to reconcile these advances with orthodox religious thought and he sought to convince those who regarded religion as superstition that there was a place for the teachings of the Church. However, Wallace did not accept the thesis of continuous improvement. To Wallace, the idea of progress threatened traditional explanations of evil, God, creation, free will, divine punishment, and immortality. Therefore, while these other divines actually advanced progressivist doctrine, Wallace instead, spoke as an apologist for the teachings of Augustine, Aquinas and other traditional theologians.

In the first chapter of this thesis I attempt to identify the individuals who formed the religious tradition that is contained in Wallace's writings. Against this I trace the development of the challenge to this corpus. Hopefully, an

exploration of the tension between these two intellectual traditions will allow the reader to understand Wallace's basic tenets as well as the individual writings he was responding to. Perhaps unfortunately this exploration is quite long. I felt it had to cover a period from Aristotle to the Enlightenment with quite a few pages devoted to significant individuals. All of this, I believe, is necessary for future chapters.

Despite what its title might indicate, the second chapter--Demography--follows the first chapter closely. Again, this is the area of work Wallace is best known for and it is the issue over which he and David Hume had their celebrated controversy. At first glance their polite debate seems straightforward--simply a question of numbers. The question was, Had the world's population increased or decreased since ancient times? Of course the required numbers weren't available; England's first census would not be until 1801 and the only figures from ancient times came from the classical historians or the Bible. The numbers however, were not the true focus of the debate. A closer examination of the literature associated with the population debate shows the conflict to be about political theory and theology--and to tie back to the idea of progress. The numbers were just the yardstick for these more serious questions.

These political and religious elements have generally been neglected in the history of economic thought. Economists have grouped population authors into two camps, those who supported larger populations and those who supported lower levels. The

desire for larger populations is said to be motivated by concerns of increased national product and lower wages, while the wish for smaller populations arises from a recognition of the problems associated with limited resources. This portrayal of the interests behind the population debate downplays the importance of the question in the eighteenth-century and it makes Wallace's writings on the subject incomprehensible.

In the second chapter I reformulate the space in which Wallace's population works are typically presented to reflect these political and religious themes. This expanded space shows why both Wallace and Hume felt so strongly about this issue.

At the end of the chapter I touch on another part of the Ancient/Modern debate--the question of progress in literature. Switching positions, Hume defends the superiority of the ancients, while Wallace argues modern eloquence to be superior. It is interesting that in this part of the debate, Wallace adopts the method of creative skepticism to refute Hume, just as Hume used it against Wallace in the numbers part of the debate.

In the third chapter having developed sufficiently the philosophical and political aspects of Wallace's thought, I turn to economic themes. I discuss Wallace's writings on traditional economics topics--property, prices, monetary policy, and international trade.

Finally, in the conclusion, I address the issue of the continuity, or discontinuity of the enlightenment.

A number of problems follow from the decision to adopt the

method and structure described above. Certainly it creates a problem. The many themes discussed make for a complex--perhaps unwieldy--apparatus for presenting the thought of an individual. It is my hope that this complexity will translate into richness. But there is also a set of problems that I encountered trying to execute this plan. Some of these stem from Wallace and the work; some are caused by and reflect my own inadequacies.

The problems I attribute to Wallace and his material are not new or unique to him. An exception might be the problem of his handwriting. Two centuries and the process of microfilming haven't helped, but even in its day Hume complained that he could barely read Wallace's writing. I had to transcribe Wallace's manuscripts in order to use them. Of course being able to read Wallace's writing was a technical problem and a small one compared to the larger problem of interpretation.

With the difficulty of his penmanship eliminated, Wallace remains hard to read. It took several readings before I got the intonation and emphasis close to what I believe he intended. This, no doubt, is true in any relativistic study. Attempting to understand and then present an individual's ideas in context requires knowledge of the contemporary issues and controversies. By definition, they are foreign to us. Moreover, knowledge of the principle works and ideas of the period is necessary but not sufficient. Individuals select and focus on only a subset of these. Too, their perception of the contemporary authors and their works does not necessarily align with the consensus

opinion. The peculiarity of each individual requires a back-and-forth process of reading their works and the works that concerned them. Repeated iterations of this process ultimately produce something close to their true intention.

With Wallace, the problem of identifying the authors and ideas is exacerbated by his habit of not identifying authors by name. In a few cases his references were obvious. He might include key phrases, or a quote, or the title of the particular piece he was discussing. More often he would simply paraphrase the author thereby allowing us to narrow the identity to any of several philosophers or social critics. Some insight into this habit is gained through a comment Wallace made in a letter to Hume. After criticizing some of Sir James Steuart's thoughts on the public debt, Wallace tells Hume that he does so "with great civility and without naming him."

Wallace is less readable than his better known contemporaries. Wallace was almost always reacting to events and writers and he definitely expected his reader to be familiar with these events and works. Wallace was responding to and directing his comments towards the authors of the day. Frequently, his writing takes on the quality of half of a conversation. This creates a special need to be familiar with his references and allusions. In contrast, the works of the primary figures of any age are more self-contained; they have to be. The originality that makes them "primary", forces them to present their ideas from the ground up and to demonstrate carefully that which makes

their work distinct. They may be construct straw-men, but their works are still more self-contained. They try to distance themselves while Wallace sought to be a part of the discussion.

Once able to read Wallace--once problems of penmanship and context are resolved--there is still a remaining problem within the material itself. At times, even frequently, positions Wallace takes in some works seem to contradict those in others. Discussions of such fundamental topics--such as ethics, aesthetics, population, and wealth--disagree with each other from work to work. Many of these disagreements can be eliminated if we are sensitive to the voice, posture, or role Wallace was trying to strike in any particular work and remember that these works were reactionary--directed towards a variety of authors and themes. In parts of *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* he sounds like other utopian authors lamenting society's problems and calling for reform. Yet, in *The Present Political State of Great Britain*, with some qualifications, he defends the status quo and celebrates its achievements. In *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind* he sounds like a primitivist, but in other places he condemns others who share that position. Often Wallace's apparently contradictory criticism of two sides of an argument often reflects an attempt to reach a compromise between two extremes. If the conflicts within Wallace's writings reflect facets--facets of a single whole--of his thought that match these different authors and unique settings, then a higher level of understanding is

necessary to offer a coherent explanation of how these different facets compromise and qualify each other.

I should acknowledge that any confusion or inconsistency in Wallace's work may exist only in the mind of the present author. I am unfamiliar with many of the paradigms I am appealing to in this thesis. It may be on account of my lack of study or experience with these interpretative devices that problems arise.

There is a unifying theme that provides the required perspective to reconcile Wallace's different sides and voices--the emergence of commercial society. The traditional conflict between virtue and commerce colors all of Wallace's work. It ties together the questions of progress, ancients and moderns, political theory, even theology and it is what pushed him into writing on these questions. His philosophical identification of private and public virtue lead to a fear that pursuit of personal gain and luxury would corrupt the entire society. His defense of the ancients, his response to freethinkers and the increasing absolutism in his writings all stem from this fear. Frequently his writings were directed at Mandeville, whom Wallace, like many others, he took as champion of every aspect and attribute of capitalism. Against him he promotes an agrarian republicanism appealing to ancient authors such as Cato, Lycurgus and Plato as well as more contemporary authors such as Harrington and Fletcher. Wallace did not react like Rousseau, rejecting all that was modern in the pursuit of virtue. He consistently criticized Rousseau for his belief in the "happiness of the

savage state". Between these two extremes is Wallace. And this, perhaps, is the root of his inconsistencies. Wallace was concerned about modernism and its attendant corruption. At the same time the new era offered him the hope of improvement. Not a hope for an earthly perfection, but a sincere belief that the gains in natural science might improve man's earthly condition. More central to his work, he hoped that man's moral condition might improve. Societies for the reformation of manners might alleviate much of man's distress. Inevitably the two views must clash. For this reason this thesis, despite its wanderings, takes the rise of capitalism as its anchor in its depiction of Wallace's thought.

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Chapter I

BIOGRAPHY

Born to Margaret Stewart and Reverend Matthew Wallace in 1697, Robert Wallace would become a leading intellectual figure, clergyman, and mathematician in Scotland's Age of Enlightenment. Throughout Wallace's life, formal education and the Church of Scotland played a central role, though he would come to disagree with some of the teachings of the Church. Wallace's introduction to mathematics during his time at Edinburgh University would later be the basis of many of his studies and essays.

Raised in a time when liberal thought and intellectual competitiveness were greatly important, Wallace received a respected education and held strong religious convictions. Robert attended Stirling Grammar school, where he was required to study Latin and Greek, as well as math, geography and other subjects. In 1711, Wallace entered Edinburgh University, where he excelled. He demonstrated his abilities in mathematics to Professor James Gregory II, whose teachings were based on Sir Isaac Newton's work.

In 1717, shortly after ending his formal studies, Wallace and a small group of intellectuals including William Wishart, Colin Maclaurin, Wallace's future brother-in-law George Turnbull, and John Stevenson, founded the Rankenian Society. This society, originally composed of nineteen men, debated newly published works of literature and philosophy and discussed papers and ideas produced by their own membership. Throughout his life, Wallace

would be an enthusiastic participant in intellectual discussion groups.

The Rankenian Society corresponded frequently with Britain's Bishop Berkeley, who served as one of their mentors and whose philosophy they studied with fervor. Although the group admired the work of the Bishop, Wallace had a low opinion of English intellectualism. English students, in Wallace's opinion, had possibly too much formal education and doctrine. The result of their education was often a bias, which served as an obstacle to original thought and tolerance.

After completing his basic university work, Wallace received the financial support of the Marquis of Annandale. This patronage enabled him to remain in Edinburgh. In 1720, the ailing James Gregory chose Wallace to take his place as an instructor at Edinburgh University. Wallace accepted the position, but the following year he chose to enter the clergy.

Writings of Wallace's son, George, emphasize that his father's love of study and meditation persisted throughout his young and adult life, which made the clergy an understandable calling. By the age of twenty-five, Wallace was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Dunblane. The following summer he went to Dumfriesshire to serve his first parish as a minister.

Despite his service to the Church of Scotland, Wallace expressed his reluctance to adhere to the beliefs of strict theological orthodoxy in his essay "A little treatise against imposing Creeds or Confessions of faith on ministers or private

Christians as a necessary term of Laick of Ministeriall Communion" written before 1720. In October 1724, he delivered a controversial sermon to the congregation gathered in Glasgow for William Wishart's first Communion. The sermon, entitled "Faith without works is dead," expanded Wallace's growing reputation as a free thinking member of the clergy who refused to be strictly bound by orthodoxy. Despite this reputation, Wallace remained respectable, becoming burgess and guild brother of the Burgh of Glasgow.

During the eighteenth century, the Church of Scotland was disrupted less by sectarianism than by division within its own community. Liberal thinkers like Wallace were few in number but worked to encourage a polite Scottish culture and tolerance for differing opinions. Those who chose to adhere to a more moderate version of Calvinist doctrines faced charges of heresy and were often forced out of the Church. The establishment of the Moderate Party in the Church led by Alexander Carlyle did not occur until 1752, and this should not be confused with the loosely organized effort with which Wallace was connected, even though it is referred to by the same name.

Wallace preferred to proffer sermons that defended religion through pragmatic reasoning and eloquence, as can be seen in his 1729 sermon *The Regard Due to Divine Revelation*. As a clergyman, he was distinguished by his rational sermons that eschewed attempts to play to the emotions of his parish. In 1729, Wallace's abilities were rewarded with his election to be

Moderator of the provincial Synod at Dumfries. There, he presented a sermon, later published under the title *The Record due to Divine Revelation, and to Pretences to it, considered or the Synod Sermon*, which was subsequently published in London and presented to Queen Caroline by then-Secretary of State for Scotland James Johnston. In its completed form, the *Synod Sermon* is prefaced with Wallace's intention to refute deist arguments published by Matthew Tindall. The deists considered revelations as unnecessary to understanding one's mission in life. Yet Wallace did not become a serious target of their attacks because he did not denounce the deists' argument for man's need to be God-fearing. An ardent critic of Wallace, Robert Wodrow was offended by Wallace's style in both the *Synod Sermon* and his sermon offered during William Wishart's first communion some years before.

While Wallaces' *Synod Sermon* remained controversial, it made such a positive impression on Queen Caroline that she subsequently recommended that Wallace be elected one of the Ministers of Edinburgh. Several clergy members criticized Wallace's watering down of the traditional theological orthodox messages to suit to his moderate thinking. Despite this, his accomplishments, the Queen's recommendation, and his patronage from the Earl of Ilay earned him an appointment to the highly sought after position as a Minister of the New Grayfriars at Edinburgh in 1733. With his clergy also came the responsibility and honor of governorship to Heriot's Hospital.

Robert Wallace continued to distinguish himself from most other clergy members with his philosophical studies and essays. In need of broader scholarly stimulation than the Church provided, he was a founding member of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh in 1735. The group included learned men from diverse intellectual fields. After 1751 the society would become famous as a bastion of Scottish intellectualism.

In 1736 Wallace declined to read an act of Parliament from the pulpit passed after riots that ended in the lynching of John Porteous. Porteous had been condemned to death by a court for a capital crime, but he was granted a reprieve. In response, a mob succeeded in lynching him. Parliament sentenced all those involved in the lynching to death. Wallace refused to read this statute, contending that the Church should not participate in the civil government's immoral acts. Wallace's reputation among the clergy remained strong, but his refusal to read the Porteous Riot Act caused his standing in the eyes of the British Parliament to plummet. He remained in official disfavor until 1742.

Partly due to the criticism he received from respected clergymen as a student, Wallace came to the defense of students who fell prey to the same rigidly run system that existed in the General Assembly. Wallace found himself alone in opposition to the harsh censure to which students were often subjected. Wallace was also an early critic of church patronage, from which he had benefitted. The Marquis of Annandale, who had supported Wallace, was shocked to learn of his condemnation of the

tradition.

In 1737, Wallace departed from his religious writings to produce *The Letter to the Learned Author of the Queries*. Though this essay is neither highly acclaimed nor original in theory, it marks his first attempt to write on the subject of economics. Concurrently, Wallace started the *Reveur*, a weekly paper that closely resembled other British political papers. Wallace wrote the principal essay for the paper, which lasted only a year.

Shortly after Wallace began his economic writing, he became immersed in another church conflict, this one involving a translation from the New Grayfriars to the New North Kirk in 1738. New North Kirk requested Wallace at their ministry through a petition to the Church Council. But despite its effort New North Kirk was assigned William Wishart, a recently named Minister of Edinburgh.

The Presbytery, however, translated Wallace to New North Kirk despite the Church Council's decision. This move violated a 1720 church regulation, but Wallace made the transfer, believing it to be his divine destiny.

In 1743 Wallace was elected as Moderator of the General Assembly, a post he held until 1746 when Lord Tweeddale resigned. As Moderator of the General Assembly, Wallace focused his attention on establishing the Minister's Widows and Orphans Fund. He wrote an untitled essay, now referred to as the *Morton Essay*, which estimated that populations of the ancient world were greater than those of the modern world. Wallace theorized that

modern society would face a decline in population in part because of the ages at which men died. The *Morton Essay* offered no formula for estimating the population, but it referred to Edmund Halley's table, which assigned chances of death for people throughout their prospective life span.

The essay speculated that there were several reasons for the decreasing populations and even went so far as to propose methods to counteract them.

Wallace recognized that civilian and military men alike were likely to die before their wives. Without large family inheritances, men living off of business earnings would leave little behind on which their wives and children could be supported. This factor contributed to the depleted populations, Wallace theorized. The fruits of his work, while in the Philosophical Society, were seen in the establishment of the fund.

In response to the problems created by men leaving little or no money to their widows, Wallace noted the need for some financial security to be provided to widows. If some system were established to provide for widows, Wallace proposed, people might live longer, thus contributing to population growth. Working from Edmund Halley's table, used to gauge one's chances of death throughout one's life, Wallace put forth a solution for poverty-stricken widows. If men contributed to a fund an amount based on their age and number of years left to live, Wallace wrote, then their wives and children would have a much smaller chance of

being left destitute.

Previously pushed by Rev. John Matthison of the High Church in Edinburgh, the widows' fund would eventually be calculated under a different system. Working with Dr. Alexander Webster from Tolbooth Church, Wallace gathered the information necessary to formulate a cost estimate for the assembly. Although the population figures in *An Account of the People of Scotland* were estimates, this information proved to be the first census of Scotland. Through this fund, Wallace believed the Church could guarantee ministers' widows a modest fixed income.

In 1743, Wallace and Rev. George Wishart were sent to the British Parliament to ask for the fund's acceptance. With their prominence in the eyes of the King, Wallace and Wishart were both named Royal Chaplains of Scotland in 1744. During that same year, Wallace was appointed Dean of the Chapel Royal and Chaplain in Ordinary to King George II. It is noteworthy that a Scottish clergyman both succeeded in winning over the Presbyterian Church and received accolades from King George II.

While in the Philosophical Society, Wallace also produced an essay on Christianity written from his liberal and anti-Jacobean viewpoint to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, which was published in 1746. However, with his continued interest in population enumerations, Wallace wrote his first draft of *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind in Ancient and Modern Times* in 1746. Unlike Hume's essay *Political Discourses*, Wallace's *Dissertation* maintains that population

figures in modern Europe were smaller than those of ancient times.

While the *Morton Essay*, which preceded the *Dissertation*, posed no formula for estimating populations, the *Dissertation* displayed an understanding of population dynamics, using a ratio of the total population to the fraction eligible to serve in the military. The *Dissertation* was further revised in 1747 and, with the assistance of David Hume, the book was published in 1753. Throughout the eighteenth century, prominent scholars and philosophers continued to be interested in population studies. In 1798 Malthus used Wallace's work as a reference to gain insight into population dynamics.

An admirer of other free thinkers, Wallace was familiar with David Hume's works. In 1745, Wallace came to Hume's defense when Hume's candidacy for the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh seemed in jeopardy. The review board considered Hume an infidel, mostly because of his essay *A Treatise on Human Nature*, and therefore unsuitable to teach morals. Fourteen years Wallace's junior, Hume insulted clergy in a footnote to his *Of National Characters*. Hume accused a global clergy of hypocrisy, egotism, and theological revenge. In an unpublished response, Wallace defended more modern and enlightened Protestant clergy and encouraged Hume to generalize less.

Nonetheless, Wallace and Hume continued to consult one another on essays throughout their lives. Both men were active in the rebirth of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. The

society had suffered during the rocky political times of the 1740s. In 1751, Hume was elected Joint Secretary to this group of intellectual elites, which had become known for producing medical and scientific essays. With encouragement from Colin Maclaurin, and participation by Hume, the club expanded its focus to include philosophy and literature. It also expanded its membership.

Along with Henry Home, Lord Kames, David Hume, Sir Alexander Dick, Sir David Dalrymple, Alexander Wedderburn, Professor Alexander Munro, James Burnett, William Wilkie, and John Home, Wallace was a member of the Select Society, which he joined in 1754. Early in his membership, Wallace presented a speech entitled "Of naturalising foreign Protestants," in which he advocated the naturalization of foreign Protestants, as well as foreigners of other religious persuasions, to strengthen the nation. He disagreed with those who believed that foreigners would corrupt British society.

In response to British debate about military service, Wallace favored mandatory militia service for all men. He disliked the standing army and believed the country's needs could be met by a militia system. Wallace wrote "Scheme for a militia in Britain," which he sent to the Lord Advocate for Scotland in 1756.

Wallace supported the House of Hanover. He was a member of the Revolution Club, which celebrated the glorious revolution of William and Mary. Throughout the essay entitled *The Doctrine of*

Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance Considered in 1754, Wallace contended that the revolution had brought economic improvement to Scotland.

In 1757, Wallace defended another liberal clergyman, John Home, who wrote *Douglas*, a play attacking hypocritical and overzealous ministers within the Presbyterian ministry. David Hume was the inspiration behind *Douglas*, which was written after a failed attempt to expose Scotland to a play entitled *Agis* expanding on a topic discussed in a Plutarch work. Like *Agis*, *Douglas* was deemed unsuitable for British theatre.

Formal accusations were made against John Home and Alexander Carlyle for simply seeing the play. In 1757, Wallace wrote "An Address to the Reverend of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland By a Layman of their Communion on occasion of composing acting & publishing the Tragedy called *Douglas*," in which he accuses the Church of imposing its authority to dictate what is suitable for viewing in the theatre by the whole of Scotland. Wallace wrote, in response to an article in *Scots Magazine*, that he believed it was not the Church's place to decide such matters, yet he disapproved of any clergy attending *Douglas*. He never published this letter.

In the end, Carlyle fought the prosecution's effort and won. However, the General Assembly considered legislating a censorship role in the theatre. Such legislation was fought by Wedderburn, who did not believe laymen and clergy should be punished by the Church for viewing a play considered libel by the Church.

Wedderburn and the Moderates won when a repressive measure that would discipline both lay and clergy alike for attending works condemned by the Church's Assembly was rejected.

During the late 1750s, Wallace wrote *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* in response to Reverend John Brown's pessimistic essay *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*. In this essay, Wallace again argues that Scotland's wealth remained strong and unaffected by the Revolution.

In 1759, Wallace was made a Doctor of Divinity by Edinburgh University. That same year he published *Reasons of Dissent and Protest...Against An Act of the Council of the Said Hospital, of the 14th of December 1759, granting the feu of certain lands mentioned in the said act to the Magistrates and Town-council of the city of Edinburgh* with the help of six other ministers including John Glen, George Kay, Robert Walker, Henry Lundie, John Erskine, and Robert Dick. This was part of Wallace's effort to protect the interests of Heriot's Hospital. Provost George Drummond had proposed to build government buildings on property legally owned by the hospital. Wallace protested with Thomas Heriot against feuing, or parceling, pieces of the hospital's land to the city, a dispute that began in 1737.

In his private life, Robert Wallace's marriage to Helen Turnbull produced three children. Like Robert, Helen was the child of a minister who was raised in a modest but comfortable household. Helen's father George Turnbull was a minister of

Tynningham in the Lowlands of Scotland. Of their three children, the least is known of Elizabeth, who died unmarried. Of their sons, George earned the most acclaim, as a lawyer and a writer of essays and poetry. His works include *Principles of the Law of Scotland*, books on genealogy, and memoirs of his father published in *Scots Magazine* in 1771. A highly respected figure in Edinburgh who lived until 1805, George was appointed a Commissary of Edinburgh. In 1760, Wallace presented his son George's essay entitled *System of the Principles of the Law of Scotland* to the Earl of Hardwicke. Matthew, the other son, joined the ministry serving the Church of Scotland.

Robert Wallace turned to Tweeddale for help in securing patronage that would cover Matthew's living costs. Later in 1760, Robert Wallace wrote to the Earl of Hardwicke to thank him for a recommendation for Matthew to be chaplain to the Centeur. The following year, Matthew entered the parish of Tenderden as a curate. He was presented to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury in 1763 and was formally inducted by the Chapter in the same year.

During the 1760s, Robert Wallace spent his time reading, writing, and studying, sometimes editing past publications. Of his new writings, Wallace published *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* in 1761. Several works, including "Christian piety Illustrated" and "Treatise on Taste," were revised many times but were never published. Despite his reluctance to publish many of his works, Wallace never destroyed

his writings. Other works that were never published include *Of Venery; or The Naturall Commerce of the 2 Sexes & Proposals to prevent Debauchery & Render Marriage More Happy* which addressed the positive aspects of trial marriage periods.

Becoming more cynical in his older age, Wallace wrote but never published "Conjectures Concerning the Fall of Ecclesiasticall Power, Splendor and Dignity," "Copy of a Scheme for a Militia in Brittain," "Hints on Patronage," "An Essay Shewing that Death and Vice are Necessary," "A Jeux De'Esprit or Ramantick Scheme of Ecclesiasticall polity,"(1768) "Some reflections on the expulsion of the 6 students out of the university of Oxford in the year of 1768,"(1768) and other essays on economics and church matters.

From the manner in which Wallace conducted his writing and notations, it appeared that he desired to organize his papers in preparation for his death. While he did not boast, Wallace knew his writings, would be useful to his family and friends after his death. He decided against publishing a second volume to *The Doctrine of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance Considered* because its time had past, the Revolution being several years behind him.

In a departure from his cynicism, Wallace published "Advices to all true Patriots, Or Proposals to promote the Grandeur and prosperity of Great Britain" in 1768. However, later the same year his disgust over the conditions of the Church and State were stated in his manuscript entitled "The End of Ecclestiasticall

Splendour in the church and of Regal or Monarchicall Authority in the State in all the Christian Nations in Europe." Despite his old age, Wallace continued to produce a number of manuscripts on church matters including the aforementioned "A Jeux De'Esprit."

Robert Wallace died on July 29, 1771, of an illness that followed his being caught outside in a late spring snowstorm. After Wallace's death, his son George and David Hume tried to publish *Treatise on Taste*, but failed.

Wallace's character was indicative of his time, experiences, and most of all represents Edinburgh's Golden Age. In comparison to prominent philosophers like David Hume, Robert Wallace is not well known. However, his contributions to the Church of Scotland, The Rankenian Society, The Philosophical Society, the Select Society, Heriot's Hospital, and Edinburgh University were important to the intellectual atmosphere of eighteenth century Scotland. Moreover his population studies and his efforts to establish the Widow's fund mark his as a pioneer in the field of demographic economics.

Chapter II

PHILOSOPHY

In *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* (1761), Wallace responds to a broad array of theological and philosophical theories. While he supported the traditional Christian tenets, Wallace and his orthodox beliefs came under sharp attack from various groups during the late 17th and 18th centuries--attacks that generally were founded in the study of philosophy. In addition to challenging basic religious doctrine these philosophical theories often implicitly, or explicitly, promoted a self-serving code of conduct. *Prospects* seeks to defend Christian faith and support a 'virtuous' morality.

The challenge to Christianity was a natural product of the age of reason. The universal laws of motion and mechanics discovered by Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton came to explain what had previously been considered God's handiwork. Francis Bacon rejected the deductive method of Plato and Aristotle in *Novum Organum*, replacing it with an inductive method based on experience, observation, and experimentation, a new approach that signaled the end of the age of faith.

The scientific method, however, was not designed as religion's enemy. Bacon incorporated religion in his philosophical system; Newton, a devout Christian, maintained an active role for God in the universe. But, as the inductive method was applied to moral philosophy, as the principles of observation and experiment were pushed to extremes by

materialists, and as a philosophical skepticism developed which questioned the existence of everything including man's consciousness, God himself came to be on trial.

As God and religion were attacked, the moral code they supported was undermined. With God divorced from nature's operation, man's actions were increasingly seen as subject to invariable laws of nature. And the assumption that human nature was endowed with an innate sense of right and wrong and the belief in a future state of reward and punishment was, as a result, questioned. In God's place, nature offered no morality to replace the concepts of vice and virtue.

Authors of these attacks on God and religion were called Freethinkers. "Freethinker" was a label that developed in England over the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century. It began as an expression of unbiasedness in secular affairs but came to carry a connotation of religious unbelief.¹ In *Sentiments of a Church of England Man* (1708), Jonathan Swift specialized the word when he wrote: "...the Atheists, Libertines, despisers of Religion - that is to say, all those who usually pass under the name of Freethinkers."²

Wallace saw Freethought as a threat not only to religious belief but to society as a whole. He writes,

The chief doctrines of the sober Freethinkers, are such as

¹ J. M. Robertson, *A History of Freethought; Ancient and Modern; To the Period of the French Revolution* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), I, 6.

² *Ibid.*, I, 6.

follow; they maintain that none are obliged to embrace any doctrine whatsoever, unless it be accompanied with sufficient evidence; that it is lawful for every man to examine whether the evidence is sufficient; that men ought to divest themselves of all prejudices, and never suffer the authority of any one man, or any body of men, to have an influence upon them in opposition to reason; that it cannot be dangerous to believe any doctrine whatsoever, upon an evidence which appears to be sufficient after a proper examination; that it should be safe for every member of society to profess his belief of any doctrine whatsoever, which does not destroy the sacredness of religion, give a sanction to vice and immorality, or tend naturally to disturb the peace of mankind; that all religious rites and opinions, which are not of this pernicious kind, should be tolerated; and finally, that every member of society against whom nothing of this impious or immoral nature can be objected, should be trusted and employed, both by private persons, and by the state, in proportion to his abilities and integrity, without enquiring more particularly into his religious principles and practice. In these points all, or by far the greatest part of Freethinkers, will agree; but in other respects they differ widely from one another.

No doubt, there are many Freethinkers, who profess to be friendly both to the doctrines of natural and revealed religion. They acknowledge an essential distinction between right and wrong; nay, profess to be great admirers of virtue and honesty; they acknowledge the being of God, and the infinite perfections of his nature; they confess that there is an excellent order, both in the natural and moral world; they believe a future state of rewards and punishments after death, and they admit the truth of divine revelation.

But there are others, who carry their scepticism to the most extravagant length, and discard both revealed and natural religion. Such gentlemen not only call in question all miraculous interposition, but profess a total ignorance of the nature and qualities of those beings that are superior to man. Instead of looking upon nature as the workmanship of an infinitely perfect being, and confessing that there is an admirable beauty and wisdom in the structure and disposition of the world; they consider it as the effect of chance, or of a fatal necessity, or as produced by weak and imperfect beings, without just design or skilful contrivance: instead of allowing any shining and heroic virtues, or even amiable qualities in human nature; they consider all appearances of this kind, as refinements which have not any foundation in truth, but are compounded of craft and pride, and have been invented by ambitious and cunning men. Thus they represent every thing in the order of nature in general, and in human nature in particular, in a most contemptible light; and both think and speak

dishonourable of God and of his works.³

It is clear that Wallace is responding to particular Freethinkers when he writes this, and it is this last group of "extravagant" Freethinkers to whom *Prospects* is addressed.

Augustine

To understand Wallace's theodicy it is necessary to understand the origins of traditional Christian theology. Of the facts of faith that cumulatively define Christianity, the reality of God, the divine creation of the universe, human sinfulness, and the fulfillment of God's purpose for his creation figure prominently in *Prospects*.⁴ His treatment of these subjects is based primarily on the theories developed by Augustine and later refined by Thomas Aquinas that provide the framework for modern Christian thought.

Augustine's writings played a major role in the transition from the classical period to the Middle Ages. He rejected Manichaeism and its belief in Good and Evil as ultimate entities, and instead favored a system that acknowledged only God as the ultimate source. Augustine constructed a theology that joined the philosophical systems of Neoplatonism and Stoicism with Christianity. The result combined concerns of justice and virtue

³ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 12.

⁴ John Hick, "Christianity," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), II, 105.

with the hope of otherworld happiness.⁵

Augustine's goal was wisdom, which he came to identify with Christian faith. Wisdom was to reveal the way to man's happiness. The ultimate source of wisdom was the Scriptures. Accordingly, faith, in the authority of the Scriptures--not reason, was the foundation of his theology. While philosophic concepts are used frequently in Augustine's explanation of Christian tenets, philosophy and the other sciences were subordinate.⁶

A major problem encountered by Augustine in trying to build a theology that accepts an all-embracing God as the creator of a Good material world is the presence of a finite existence and Evil. Evil seems a contradiction to the goodness of God. If God created a wholly Good world, what is Evil's source?

Augustine takes two tacks in explaining Evil's presence: the privative and the aesthetic. The privative conception holds that God created man without sin and set him in a world devoid of evil. Evil entered the world when man, endowed with free will, turned from God by rejecting a higher good with the choice of a lesser Good. So, all Evil, Augustine explains, can be traced

⁵ Raziel Abelson and Kai Nielsen, "History of Ethics," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), III, 87-88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 199.

⁷ John Hick, "The problem of Evil," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), III, 136-140.

directly or indirectly to the misuse of freedom. Pain and mental anguish are caused by moral Evil, Evil originated by human beings, or natural Evil, disease, earthquakes and so forth, the consequences of man's original fall from grace.⁸

Augustine's aesthetic concept of evil holds that the world is wholly good and what appears to be evil is viewed in too narrow a context and is a necessary element in a good universe. The universe consists of a great variety of entities with different levels of perfection. The variety attests to the infinite creativity of God. All elements contribute to the perfection of the created order, even in their death. Augustine also uses the aesthetic conception of evil to provide contrast, causing good to shine more brightly.⁹

The presence of a man, a finite being, and God, an infinite being, created another problem for Augustine's theology: How could man come to know God? To allow for this, Augustine employed Plato's duality of knowledge. According to Plato, two worlds exist--the "sensible" world and the "intelligible" world, where truth dwells. The sensible world is perceived by the mind through our senses while the intelligible world is perceived by the mind through itself. With its dimension above sense, Augustine's theory of knowledge provides for man's understanding of God and morality.

⁸ Ibid., III, 136-138.

⁹ Ibid., III, 136-140.

Augustine believed knowledge of the intelligible world to be superior to knowledge obtained through sense. Knowledge gained independently of the senses possessed the qualities of truth, such as universality and immutability. An example is mathematics. But beyond that, Augustine expanded this realm of knowledge to include moral and value judgments.

Acquired knowledge of the intelligible world parallels that of the sensible world. Corresponding to material objects in the sensible world are a set of truths that define the intelligible world and are identified with the "Divine Mind." Like sensible objects, these truths are discovered by the mind, which exists independently of them. As sunlight makes objects visible in the material world, it also illuminates elements of the intelligible world. Illumination in this case emanates from the Divine Mind. Augustine often refers to the illumination of the human mind "as the human mind's participation in the Word of God, as God's interior presence to the mind, or even as Christ dwelling in the mind and teaching it from within."¹⁰ Knowledge of morals, reason, self, and God are stored within what Augustine called *memoria*, which also collected past experience.¹¹

Along with the Divine Mind, Augustine identifies the intelligible world with "eternal," or "divine" law. Eternal law

¹⁰ R. A. Markus, "St. Augustine," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), I, 201.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I, 198-207.

is the order in which men are required to shape their actions and by which their actions are to be judged. Man's happiness and wisdom depended upon his living and thinking in harmony with the eternal law. Living by this order is virtuous. Augustine insisted that man cannot attain a virtuous life without the aid of the way revealed by Christ and God's grace.¹²

Unfortunately, the many forces in man's nature often conflict, making it difficult to achieve harmony with the eternal law. In addition, as a consequence of man's fall from grace, these forces had been disordered from their original state. As a result, man's nature was a combination of praiseworthy and blameworthy drives and desires.¹³

This view of man's forces had important consequences in Augustine's perception of man in society. With Aristotle, Augustine believed that society was natural to man and actually necessary for him to achieve his potential. This was true of man before and after his fall. It was over the political nature of man that Augustine disagreed with Aristotle. More than merely social, Aristotle held that man's nature was also political. Augustine, on the other hand, believed that politically organized society--the machinery of authority, government, and coercion--was not natural to man. To him, politically organized society was a necessary arrangement needed only to help alleviate some of

¹² Ibid., I, 198-207.

¹³ Ibid., I, 198-207.

the evils associated with man's state of depravity. Government and political power were unnecessary and nonexistent in man's state of innocence. The only duty of the state was to maintain peace for the earthly city and the heavenly city while they are on earth.¹⁴

Finally, there is the issue of how, or when, the earth came to be. The Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* was questioned on its assumption of an absolute beginning in time. What was God doing before the creation? Why did he create the world when he did? Augustine's response did not address itself to these questions; instead it took up the notion of time itself. He argued that time had no reality of its own, but ; that it had a temporal existence. Furthermore, it was senseless to talk about what happened before all events, for nothing could happen before the first event.

Aquinas

The Augustinian system remained relatively unchanged until the end of the Middle Ages when the challenge of rationalism successively forced Islamic, Judaic, and Christian doctrine to reconcile itself to the works of Aristotle. In the 12th and 13th centuries Aristotle's manuscripts were translated from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin. Their appeal to reason in place of Scripture created an acute tension between the natural philosophy of

¹⁴ Ibid., I, 198-207.

Aristotle and the Christian doctrine of the church.¹⁵

Aristotle's appeal to reason spawned a wave of Freethought throughout the west. Armed with his *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, philosophers, scholars, and even some Christian theologians attacked the basic doctrines of the Church. They proposed "that the world is eternal"; 'that there never was a first man'; 'that the intellect of man is one'; 'that the mind, which is the form of man, constituting him such, perishes with the body', 'that the acts of men are not governed by divine providence'; 'that God cannot give immortality or incorruptibility to a corruptible or mortal thing.'¹⁶

One philosopher who had a particularly large role in this challenge to orthodoxy was Averroës. Among his extensive writings Averroës composed a massive series of commentaries on Aristotle's writings which were used in the teaching of natural philosophy and had great impact on Latin thinkers in the west well into the 17th century.¹⁷ "Thousands accepted the Averroistic

¹⁵ William Durant, "The Adventure of Reason; The Freethinkers," *The Age of Faith; A History of Medieval Civilization - Christian, Islamic, and Judaic - from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325 - 1300. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), IV, 955-958. See also, J. M. Robertson, *A History of Freethought; Ancient and Modern; To the Period of the French Revolution*, 4th ed. (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), I, 333.

¹⁶ J. M. Robertson, *A History of Freethought; Ancient and Modern; To the Period of the French Revolution*, 4th ed. (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), I, 338.

¹⁷ Stuart MacClintock, "Averroës," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), I, 221.

doctrines that natural law rules the world without any interference by God; that the world is coeternal with God; that there is only one immortal soul, the 'active intellect' of the cosmos, of which the individual soul is a transitory phase or form; and that heaven and hell are tales invented to coax or terrify the populace into decency."¹⁸

Averroës's contribution to the rationalist movement earned him the scorn of the Church. His "Arabic" commentaries were banned at the University of Paris, where Thomas Aquinas taught. Thomas's reports of the flourishing Averroism among the students may have prompted Albertus Magnus to write his treatise *On the Unity of the Intellect Against Averroës*.¹⁹ Others followed Albertus in an attempt to meet the rationalist attack within a Platonic-Augustinian framework, maintaining all the while that knowledge of "truth" emanated not from the sensible world but from the intelligible world.

In contrast, some theologians, chiefly Aquinas, met the attack in Aristotelian terms. He believed that reason and religion could be harmonious. "Thomas' most extensive work, the

¹⁸ William Durant, "The Adventure of Reason; The Freethinkers," *The Age of Faith; A History of Medieval Civilization - Christian, Islamic, and Judaic - from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325 - 1300*. The Story of Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), IV, 956.

¹⁹ William Durant, "The Adventure of Reason; The Development of Scholasticism," *The Age of Faith; A History of Medieval Civilization - Christian, Islamic, and Judaic - from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325 - 1300*. The Story of Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), IV, 959.

Summa theologiae, is addressed to Christians; it is an attempt to expound and to defend--from Scripture, the Fathers, and reason--the whole body of Catholic doctrine in philosophy and theology."²⁰ His appeal to Aristotle over Augustine was not well received by his brethren. It would not be until the 14th century that his corpus was fully accepted by the Church.

Aquinas sought to construct a synthesis between the biblical faith of revealed religion and Aristotelian philosophical principles. Like Augustine, Aquinas was a theologian--not a philosopher. He based his reasoning on religious faith and used Aristotelian philosophic materials to support his theology. The result was a delicate balance between the extremes of faith and reason, which presented a unified view of nature, man, and God. It attempted to reconcile the quarrel between philosophy and religion but, as a compromise, it created resentment from both sides. Traditional theologians resented the intrusion of a pagan philosopher into the Christian fold, while philosophers objected to the subordinate role of philosophy implied by the presence of faith.²¹

Aquinas's reconciliation involved the creation of two

²⁰ William Durant, "The Adventure of Reason; Thomas Aquinas," *The Age of Faith; A History of Medieval Civilization - Christian, Islamic, and Judaic - from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325 - 1300*. The Story of Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), IV, 966.

²¹ Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Thomas Aquinas," *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., eds. Joseph Cropsey and Leo Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 271.

domains--faith and reason. Within the domain of faith, theology ruled while philosophy ruled over the domain of reason.²² By separating faith and reason Aquinas elevated the status of the sensible world. Whereas Augustine emphasized the intelligible world as the source of truth and heavily discounted knowledge achieved through the senses; Aquinas did not distinguish between phenomenology and ontology and held that all of man's knowledge is gained through, and limited to, the material world.²³

Such a different theory of knowledge forced Aquinas to adopt a nontraditional view of man and employ different ways of establishing the existence of God. For Augustine the body existed only as a tool for the soul, or mind. The two formed a composite that was man, but the soul was clearly dominant. Departing from this hierarchical relationship, Aquinas viewed man as an inseparable whole--a single substance made up of soul and body.

Aquinas's concept of the soul is used to distinguish levels of being. "There are three grades of soul: the vegetative--the power to grow; the sensitive--the power to feel; the rational--the power to reason. All life has the first, only animals and

²² Ibid., 252.

²³ Thomas Gilby, "Thomism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VIII, 119-121.

men have the second, only men have the third."²⁴ Being a part of man, the soul is real, yet it is also immaterial. And so, Aquinas determined that the soul was immortal and Divine intervention was required to create a new human soul.

"This...explains why Aquinas put so much stress on the dignity and sanctity of human reproduction, which he regarded as more than a biological function. When he claimed, in his ethics, that the begetting and raising of children is the primary purpose of married life, he was not thinking of simple sexual activity but of a human participation in God's creative function."²⁵

Having barred knowledge of God through intuition or the intelligible world, Aquinas was left to prove God's existence through natural reason. He attempted to do this in what are referred to as the "Five Ways." The first three are variations on the Cosmological argument seeking to pass from the limited or contingent nature of finite things to an ultimate First Cause.²⁶ The fourth argues that because "things are good, true, noble in various degrees; there must be a perfectly good, true, and noble

²⁴ William Durant, "The Adventure of Reason; Psychology," *The Age of Faith; A History of Medieval Civilization - Christian, Islamic, and Judaic - from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325 - 1300. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), IV, 971.

²⁵ Vernon J. Bourke, "St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VIII, 109.

²⁶ H. D. Lewis, "History of Philosophy of Religion," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VI, 276-285.

source and norm of these imperfect virtues."²⁷ The fifth way asks: "there are thousands of evidences of order in the world; even inanimate objects move in an orderly way; how could this be unless some intelligent power exists who created them?"²⁸

Outside of establishing God's existence, man's ability to know God is limited--the recurring problem of a finite man attaining knowledge of a transcendent being. Man's restriction to the sensible world precludes any knowledge of God's world. He can, however, reach some conclusions regarding God's attributes through reasoning by analogy and proportion. (Not that God was mirrored in the world He made in the way an effect normally tells us something about its cause, as God is a transcendent First Cause of all things.) Aquinas maintained "that God must be thought to have certain attributes, like goodness or power, in whatever way is necessary for Him to be the Author of those in the form in which they appear in the created world."²⁹

Like Augustine, Aquinas must defend the goodness he ascribes to God in the presence of Evil, using both the aesthetic and privation conceptions. Following the aesthetic conception, he

²⁷ William Durant, "The Adventure of Reason; Theology," *The Age of Faith; A History of Medieval Civilization - Christian, Islamic, and Judaic - from Constantine to Dante: A.D. 325 - 1300. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), IV, 969.

²⁸ Ibid., IV, 969.

²⁹ H. D. Lewis, "History of Philosophy of Religion," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VI, 281.

states that everything created by God is Good; what appears to be Evil exists in order to prevent greater evils. Aquinas's privation concept of evil similarly follows Augustine's in that man is free to act and to sin and that evil is the price man pays for this ability.

The sudden departure from Aristotelianism to Augustinianism in regard to evil reflects the ethical difference between Aquinas and Aristotle. Aquinas's treatment of moral virtues describes how a man should act in light of his rational nature and therefore appeals to natural rather than moral science. In this way Aquinas is more doctrinal than the relativistic Aristotle.³⁰

Aquinas's ethics reflect the early natural law theories of Cicero and Augustine. In Aquinas's system, three "inclinations" are associated with the three grades of soul. The inclination to conserve one's own existence is associated with the vegetative grade; the inclination to procreate and care for offspring is associated with the sensitive grade; the inclination to reason is associated with the rational grade. These inclinations are natural to man and as such are defined as good. Thus, as man is a natural being, prior to any deliberation, he is inclined toward an end or ends. As a rational being he is inclined toward ends which are specifically human, such as the knowledge of truth, political life, and consideration of the interests of others.

³⁰ Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Thomas Aquinas," *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., eds. Joseph Cropsey and Leo Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 262.

All moral laws are concluded from these inclinations.³¹

Because man is endowed with reason he is aware of his inclinations and end(s). This knowledge of the principles that govern his conduct allow him to discriminate between right and wrong and what Aquinas called conscience, or *synderesis*. Since these principles are promulgated by nature they take on the status of compulsory laws, and serve as criterium of the goodness or badness of man's actions. As compulsory laws, violation incurs retribution, either in this life or in the next. Thus, this theory clearly presupposes the existence of an all-powerful, all-seeing God as well as immortality, both of which are denied by Aristotle.³²

Aquinas's natural law doctrine exemplifies the balance he maintained between biblical faith and Aristotelian philosophy. "As a law of *nature*, the natural law shares in reason and cannot be reduced exclusively to the will of God. The actions that it commands or forbids are intrinsically good or bad; they are not good or bad simply as a result of their being commanded or forbidden by God. As a law, however, it also contains an

³¹ Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Thomas Aquinas," *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., eds. Joseph Cropsey and Leo Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 263; See also, Vernon J. Bourke, "St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VIII, 109.

³² Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Thomas Aquinas," *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., eds. Joseph Cropsey and Leo Strauss (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 268.

explicit reference to God's will, to which it owes its moving force. It stands midway between the natural right doctrine on the one hand and the strict voluntarism of the nonphilosophic religious tradition on the other."³³

Hobbes and Mandeville

Despite the remarkable success of Aquinas's synthesis of Christianity and Aristotle, the uneasy compromise between religion and philosophy faced continual threats. Thomism was pitted against Scotism and Ockhamism throughout the later Middle Ages. In the 17th and 18th century the threat came from the "self-interest" and supporting materialism of philosopher Thomas Hobbes and moralist Bernard Mandeville. Hobbes and Mandeville invoked the wrath of hundreds of critics with their egoistic view of man. Hobbes's dark portrayal of man's 'brutish' nature and its implications for society outraged Christian and non-Christian alike. Mandeville's celebration of the gains and benefits attributed to man's self-interests earned him the scorn of still another generation. Together they were the bogey-men of the 17th and 18th century as well as precursors of the 19th century's "economic man."

Hobbes's self-serving view of man appears to have been a unique product of his relationships with philosophers and their work. He served as secretary to Francis Bacon, with whom he came to share a contempt for Aristotelianism. Hobbes's readings of

³³ Ibid., p. 268.

Thucydides and Machiavelli helped shape a fear of democracy. Inspired by the Geometry of Euclid, he sought to demonstrate the fundamental axioms of society. He visited Galileo in 1636 and adopted his theory of motion as the framework for his theory of knowledge, Ethics, and Political Philosophy.³⁴

Hobbes complemented his system of Galilean mechanics with a materialistic psychology. He was a plenist--"For the *Universe*, being the Aggregate of all Bodies, there is no real part thereof that is not also *Body*; nor any thing properly a *Body*, that is not also a part of (that Aggregate of all *Bodies*) the *Universe*."³⁵ Knowledge is gained, he believed, only through the pressure of external bodies on sense organs and then transmitted to the brain and heart by nerves. Without movement there is no sensation and, hence, no knowledge. This theory is aimed directly at the Aristotelian conception which it seeks to replace.

But the Philosophy-schooles, through all the Universities of Christendome, grounded upon certain Texts of Aristotle, teach another doctrine; and say, For the cause of *Vision*, that the thing seen, sendith forth on every side a *visible species* (in English) a *visible shew, apparition, or aspect, or a being seen*; the receiving whereof into the Eye, is *Seeing*. ... Nay for the cause of *Understanding* also, they say the thing Understood sendeth forth *intelligible species*, that is, an *intelligible being seen*; which comming into the

³⁴ Ariel and William Durant, "English Philosophy; Thomas Hobbes," *The Age of Louis XIV; A History of European Civilization in the Period of Pascal, Moliere, Cromwell, Milton, Peter the Great, Newton, and Spinoza: 1648-1715. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), VIII, 549. See also, R. S. Peters, "Thomas Hobbes," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), IV, 30.

³⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. K. R. Minogue (1914; rpt. New York: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1979), p. 210.

Understanding, makes us Understand.³⁶

To make his mechanical theory consistent with his materialistic psychology, Hobbes had to explain the nature of thought in terms of motion. To do this he employed Newton's first law of motion to define, or defend, the presence of "imagination," "memory," and "experience."

When a Body is once in motion, it moveth (unless something else hinder it) eternally; and whatsoever hindreth it, cannot in an instant, but in time, and by degrees quite extinguish it: And as wee see in the water, though the wind cease, the waves give not over rolling for a long time after; so also it happeneth in that motion, which is made in the internall parts of man, the, when he Sees, Dreams, &c. For after the object is removed, or the eye shut, wee still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. And this is it, the Latines call *Imagination*, from the image made in seeing; and apply the same, though improperly, to all the other senses. But the Greeks call it *Fancy*; which signifies *appearance*, and is as proper to one sense, as to another. IMAGINATION therefore is nothing but *decaying sense*; and is found in men, and many other living Creatures, as well sleeping, as waking.

...This *decaying sense*, when wee would express the thing it self, (I mean *fancy* it self,) wee call *Imagination*, as I said before: But when we would express the *decay*, and signifie that the Sense is fading, old, and past, it is called *Memory*. So that *Imagination* and *Memory*, are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath divers names.

Much memory, or memory of many things, is called *Experience*. Again, *Imagination* being only of those things which have been formerly perceived by Sense, either all at once, or by parts at severall times...³⁷

Hobbes's theory of the passions provides the motivation for conscious thought. Passions are divided into two categories, appetite and aversion, which correspond to pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are defined by the heart's reaction to the

³⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

impact of external stimuli. If the action of the heart is helped, the stimuli is felt as pleasure; if the heart is impinged, the stimuli is judged as pain. "In the case of pleasure, the spirits--which were thought of as vaporous substances flowing through the tubes of the nerves--are guided, by the help of the nerves, to preserve and augment the motion. When this endeavor tends toward things known by experience to be pleasant, it is called appetite; when it shuns what is painful, it is called aversion."³⁸ Thus, the passions are the beginning of all human activity.

Hobbes attached no moral quality to any of man's activities. To him "Good" and "Bad" were merely labels men assigned to what felt pleasant or painful. "For these words of Good, Evill, and Contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: There being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common Rule of Good and Evill, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the Person of the man (where there is no Common-wealth;) or, (in a Common-wealth,) from the Person that representeth it; or from an Arbitrator or Judge, whom men disagreeing shall consent set up, and make his sentence the Rule thereof."³⁹

Hobbes's mechanistic view precludes free will, which served

³⁸ R. S. Peters, "Thomas Hobbes," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), IV, 38.

³⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. K. R. Minogue (1914; rpt. New York: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1979), p. 24.

to embroil Hobbes in a bitter controversy with Bishop Bramball which lasted until Bramball's death.⁴⁰

Liberty and Necessity are consistent: As in the water, that hath not only liberty, but a necessity of descending by the Channel; so likewise in the Actions which men voluntarily doe: which, because they proceed from their will, proceed from liberty; and yet, because every act of mans will, and every desire, and inclination proceedeth from some cause, and that from another cause, in a continuall chaine, (whose first link is in the hand of God the first of all causes,) they proceed from necessity. So that to him that could see the connexion of those causes, the necessity of all mens voluntary action, would appeare manifest.⁴¹

Hobbes's mechanistic/materialistic view of man and nature leads to the more famous, or rather, notorious aspect of his writings--his theory of ethics and political philosophy. Hobbes's intention was to 1) place moral and political on a scientific basis and 2) contribute to the establishment of civic peace and to the disposing of mankind toward fulfilling their civic duties. He agreed with Bacon and Machiavelli that the classics (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero) had failed to lead men toward peace because they aimed too high. Like Machiavelli, Hobbes advocated "a conscious lowering of the standards of political life, taking as goals of political life not the perfection of man but those lower goals actually pursued by most men and most societies most of the time. Political schemes framed in accordance with men's lower but more powerful

⁴⁰ R. S. Peters, "Thomas Hobbes," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), IV, 32.

⁴¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. K. R. Minogue (1914; rpt. New York: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1979), p. 111.

motives [were] much more likely to be realized than the utopias of the classics."⁴² Unlike Machiavelli, he sought to develop a system of natural law based not on reason, but on passion, which would determine the purposes of civil society.⁴³

Hobbes could not appeal to any *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum* on which to base his system of natural law--his materialism prevented his using the traditional "intelligible" conceptions. Instead, Hobbes's scientific approach involved stripping man down to his original "state of nature" so that his common elements were revealed. Upon these basic elements, a stable civil society could be constructed. Hobbes concluded that man was not political or social by nature. In man's presocial condition,

there was no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continually fear, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.⁴⁴

Hobbes saw modern society as a rational reconciliation between the opposing "qualities of man-kind, that concern ... living together in Peace, and Unity."⁴⁵ These qualities were

⁴² Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 396-7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 396-7.

⁴⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. K. R. Minogue (1914; rpt. New York: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1979), pp. 64-65.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

divided into two groups: those that incline men to obey a common power, and those that incline men towards "Contention, Enmity, and War." The forces that dispose men towards a common power included: the Desire of Ease and sensual delight (man's hopes to abandon the protection achieved through his own labor), the Fear of Death and Wounds, the Desire of Knowledge and the Arts of Peace, and the Fear of Oppression (causes man to seek the aid of society to ensure his life and liberty). The forces within man that were contrary to society included: "the perpetuall and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in Death," "Competition of Riches, Honour, Command," the ambition of Military command, and the Desire of Praise. Government served a necessary purpose in halting those passions that were contrary to civil society and in preventing society from degenerating into Civil War.

The style of government Hobbes emerged with was absolute monarchy, which he felt was essential for peace and national unity. Mankind entered into this government by collectively agreeing to a social contract. Man, driven by his fear of death, would rationally submit to an absolute sovereign in order to guarantee his safety. Hobbes envisioned the Great Leviathan as absorbing and directing all human activity. Even religion was to act as an instrument of the state. The Church, removed from the role of external authority, was to aid the government in manipulating opinion in order to reduce the necessity and area of

force.⁴⁶

* * *

Much of Hobbes's thought finds its way into the 18th century through the writings of Bernard Mandeville. Mandeville's debt to Hobbes's *Leviathan* is clear; characters in his *Dialogues* discuss it. He adopts its language of appetites and passions, and he uses its sensationist psychology as the basis from which to forward his own views and critiques of society. Like Hobbes, Mandeville saw man as self-serving, with passion being his sole motive force. He denied the existence of an absolute standard of morality. In the later editions of *Fable*, where his ideology finds its most complete expression, Mandeville employs Hobbes's "state of nature" method to determine man's true nature and to find the form of society which best complements that nature.

Despite the similarities between Mandeville's and Hobbes's thought, their writings were fundamentally different. First, using the same method, Mandeville reached different conclusions than Hobbes did. More pronounced however, is the fact that Mandeville's writings departed from those of Hobbes--and philosophers in general--in their scope and emphasis. The Mandevillian corpus does not present a systematic philosophy; its tenor is common rather than academic. In all his work he pushed

⁴⁶ Ariel and William Durant, "English Philosophy; Thomas Hobbes," *The Age of Louis XIV; A History of European Civilization in the Period of Pascal, Moliere, Cromwell, Milton, Peter the Great, Newton, and Spinoza: 1648-1715. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), VIII, 554.

a single consistent theme: "Private Vices, Public Benefits."

Of course, Mandeville's aim wasn't as high as Hobbes's. He wasn't set on replacing Plato and Aristotle in the universities. He wasn't trying to improve mankind like Hobbes was. Mandeville was a moralist--a social critic--not a philosopher. His writings lampooned the educated, the theologians, and the social reformers; and he directed his works to a different, less rarefied, audience. Systematic thought was simply not required for his critiques.

In *The Grumbling Hive*, Mandeville introduced the paradoxical theme that would become the subtitle for *Fable: Public Vices, Private Benefits*. Mandeville's hive prospered so long as the bees "endeavored to supply each other's Lust and Vanity"; however, when honesty was introduced amongst the bees, the hive suffered economic ruin. The necessary link between vice and prosperity implied the converse relationship between virtue and ruin. Politicians, philosophers, theologians, educators, and social reformers were all pursuing activities inconsistent with their goals. Moreover, these same people were not pursuing society's well-being; they were after their own benefit. Mandeville's satire exposed this hypocrisy and inconsistency.⁴⁷

What made Mandeville's theme so controversial was how completely it contrasted with the then prevalent ideology. The patriotism which marked the period following the 'Glorious

⁴⁷ Malcolm Jack, *Corruption and Progress; The Eighteenth-Century Debate* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), p. 22.

Revolution' produced a fusion of civic and Christian virtue.⁴⁸ The result was a connecting of "religious and moral conduct in private life with patriotic, public spirited and publicly beneficial conduct."⁴⁹ This fusion was reflected in the call for a reformation in manners by Defoe and Swift. Steele, with help from Addison and Swift, took up the same charge in *The Tatler*. Societies for the Reformation of Manners were formed to curtail vice and The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was formed to extirpate vice and immorality and to educate the youth in virtue and piety.⁵⁰ Mandeville's thesis denied the harmony of values accepted by his contemporaries and severed the link between religion and morality.⁵¹

Among Mandeville's early literary efforts was a translation of a set of verse fables by Fontaine. The fables Mandeville chose to translate and his versions of them suggest his affinity for questioning the 'private virtue, public virtue' ideology. He would "debunk vain pretensions to wisdom or virtue and ... illustrate connections between low, even vicious activities and those which are respectable and admirable."⁵² Later, in *The*

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁹ M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 158-160.

⁵² Ibid., p. 28.

Grumbling Hive, Mandeville would suggest the connection between private vice and public welfare. However, it was not until *The Female Tatler* that Mandeville presented a more complete alternate ideology.

In *The Female Tatler*, Mandeville's satirical response to Steele's *Tatler*, Mandeville explicitly states his theory of man and society. He denies that man is naturally sociable. Like Hobbes, he believes that man pursues his own self-interest, but departing from Hobbes, he sees this as contributing to society. Man's hedonism creates wealth and employment.

to be always Clean, and wear Cloaths that are Sumptuously Fashionable, to have Pompous Equipages, and be well attended, to live in Stately Dwellings, adorn'd with Rich and Modish Furniture, both for use and Magnificence, to Eat and Drink Deliciously, Treat Profusely, and have a plentiful Variety of what either Art or Nature can contribute, not only to the Ease and Comfort only, but likewise the Joy and Splendor of Life, is without doubt to be very Useful and Beneficial to the Publick.⁵³

Man's vice (greed, vanity, pride, selfishness, lust, luxury, envy) is not only depicted as conducive to society's benefit, but Mandeville believed it necessary. Without it, society reverts to a primitive mess.

As Mandeville presents his psychology of man and its paradoxical benefits to society, he simultaneously lampoons those who idealize human nature. He has nothing but contempt for utopian schemes.⁵⁴ He disagreed with Christian Stoics on whether

⁵³ Ibid., p. 42.

⁵⁴ Malcolm Jack, *Corruption and Progress; The Eighteenth-Century Debate* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), p. 31.

man's passions could ever be controlled by reason. And he openly wondered whether Latinate graduates of theology had contributed anything to the benefit of society.

Mandeville thought too much was ascribed to the excellency of man's genius. Instead, he attributed improvement in society and the arts to length of time and the experience of Generations.⁵⁵ From man's initial 'state of nature,' society's institutions evolve through a process of trial and error rather than beginning suddenly with a social contract as Hobbes had held. In *Fable*, Mandeville uses the "Skillful Politician" as a device or instrument embodying this evolutionary process. By appealing to, or flattering one of man's passions (pride in particular), the skillful politicians are able to make men fit for society.

The Chief Thing, therefore, which Lawgivers and other wise Men, that have laboured for the Establishment of Society, have endeavour'd, has been to make the People they were to govern, believe, that it was more beneficial for every Body to conquer than indulge his Appetites, and much better to mind the Publick than what seem'd his private Interest. As this has always been a very difficult Task, so no Wit or Eloquence has been left untried to compass it; and the Moralists and Philosophers of all Ages employed their utmost Skill to prove the Truth of so useful an Assertion.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ F. A. Hayek, "Lecture on a Master Mind; Dr. Bernard Mandeville," in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol 52, (1966), (London: The Oxford University Press), p. 136; See also, Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye (1824; rpt. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988), II, 141-142.

⁵⁶ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye (1824; rpt. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988), I, 42.

The Lawgivers associated man's virtue with capacities which distinguished man from animals, thereby taking advantage of man's desire of racial superiority.⁵⁷

To introduce, moreover, an Emulation amongst Men, they divided the whole Species into two Classes, vastly differing from one another: The one consisted of abject, low-minded People, that always hunting after immediate Enjoyment, were wholly incapable of Self-denial, and without regard to the good of others, had no higher Aim than their private Advantage; such as being enslave by Voluptuousness, yielded without Resistance to every gross desire, and made no use of the Rational Faculties but to heighten their Sensual Pleasure.⁵⁸

And being men themselves, the politicians too serve only their own ends. Thus, "[s]ociety and morality are set up by clever, selfish, vicious, cynical superior beings manipulating selfish, vicious, but susceptible and gullible, inferiors. It is a trick played on fools by knaves."⁵⁹

Despite its affront to traditional ideology and morality, *Fable's* success had to wait until the 1723 addition of "An Essay on Charity, and Charity-schools."⁶⁰ Phillip Harth points out that with this essay, Mandeville had assaulted an institution which

⁵⁷ Arthur Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 174.

⁵⁸ Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye (1824; rpt. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988), I, 43.

⁵⁹ M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 53.

⁶⁰ M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 122; See also Phillip Harth, "Introduction," in *The Fable of the Bees* by Bernard Mandeville, ed. Phillip Harth, (Penguin Books, Inc., 1970), p. 35.

the British public "had made a financial as well as an emotional investment."⁶¹ Mandeville, like many other mercantilist writers, saw a large population as causing low wages, and, as a result, increased exports. For this reason he advocated abandoning the schools and 'bringing up the poor in ignorance.' His attack on Charity-schools triggered reactions to the specific essay as well as the greater work.⁶²

Shaftesbury

Much of Mandeville's writings were directed toward Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). Shaftesbury, contrasted with Hobbes's egoistic conceptions, believed man to be naturally virtuous. In addition to self-interest, which he does acknowledge to exist naturally within man, he believed that there also exists a moral sense within man—a sense above the traditional five senses. The "moral sense" is a consciousness of the feelings of the larger society. On this basis he argued that there is an ultimate identity between self-interest and public interest.⁶³ Shaftesbury believed that the very existence of a commonwealth proved the sociability of

⁶¹ Phillip Harth, "Introduction," in *The Fable of the Bees* by Bernard Mandeville, ed. Phillip Harth, (Penguin Books, Inc., 1970), p. 35.

⁶² M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 122.

⁶³ Stanley Grean, *Shaftesbury's Philosophy or Religion and Ethics: A Study in Enthusiasm* (New York: Ohio University Press, 1967), p. 180.

mankind. Mandeville found Shaftesbury's response to Hobbes to be hopeless preaching. Shaftesbury's appeal to altruism and simplicity was a great contrast to Mandeville's amoral nature and his defense of luxury as the motivating force of industry and society.

Just as man has a natural sense of virtue, he also has a sense of beauty. For Shaftesbury the taste for good is synonymous with beauty. They are both individual components of "good taste" and serve to guide man in conduct and in art. His incorporation of aesthetics within philosophy began a line of inquiry which would continue throughout the eighteenth century.

Shaftesbury's ethical views inevitably led him to be a great advocate of religious toleration. Because man is naturally virtuous, he wrote, there is no necessary role for religion. At the same time, Shaftesbury was worried about the effect of religion on morality. He felt the worship of God to be deceitful and the dogma of heaven and hell to be a cowardly manner to affect human conduct. However, the lack of virtue so evident in daily life made him reconsider. In the end, Shaftesbury defended the established church.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ William Durant, "English Philosophy; Shaftesbury: 1671-1713," *The Age of Louis XIV; A History of European Civilization in the Period of Pascal, Moliere, Cromwell, Milton, Peter the Great, Newton, and Spinoza: 1648-1715. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), VIII, 591.

Berkeley

George Berkeley (1685-1753) also defended religion and the church in its support of morality. Just as Shaftesbury attacked Hobbes's psychological egoism, Berkeley attacked Hobbes's heir, Mandeville. Berkeley thought Mandeville's challenge to morality as having no absolute foundation, combined with his encouragement of private vice, extremely dangerous to society. His criticism of Mandeville was part of a general criticism of the philosophical alliance between the Deists and the materialists, whose common metaphysical view gave rise to atheism and vice. "He felt the irreligious rationalism of the deists was buttressed by an implicit appeal to the reality of matter."⁶⁵ Berkeley's *Alciphron, or The Minute Philosopher*, was a defense of religion against these Freethinkers.

Berkeley's refutation of Mandeville is hardly a restatement of Shaftesbury's ethical theories. Despite their common defense of religion, Berkeley has complaints with certain aspects of Shaftesbury's writings. Besides being critical of his theory of "moral sense" and the identification of morality with aesthetics, Berkeley found fault with Shaftesbury's tolerance. The natural virtuousness of man within Shaftesbury's ethics meant that God and Good were independent. This independence eliminated the need for a divine source.

Berkeley hoped to destroy the underpinnings of Deism and by

⁶⁵ Gerald R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 108.

attacking materialism, simultaneously defend the centrality of God.

As.... the doctrine of matter, or corporeal substance [has been] the main pillar and support of skepticism, so likewise upon the same faith have been raised all the impious schemes of atheism and irreligion. ... How great a friend material substance hath been to atheists in all ages, were needless to relate. All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it, that when this cornerstone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground; insomuch that it is no longer worth while to bestow a particular consideration on the absurdities of every wretched sect of atheists.⁶⁶

His alternative is an integrated system of philosophical and ethical idealism within which God is central.

Whereas Plato had granted independent existence to the Forms, Berkeley held that only the mind and its perceptions have an independent existence. That which we call "matter" is only an experience within the mind. Berkeley did not deny that matter existed; he argued against its existence as *independent of the mind's perception*. To account for the similarity of perception between different men, Berkeley appeals to a Divine Mind as the source of man's perceptions. Perceptions are derived from the single Divine Mind and are therefore identical within the minds of men.

⁶⁶ George Berkeley, "Principles of Human Knowledge," No 92, in *New Theory of Vision*, p. 159; quoted in "English Philosophy; George Berkeley: 1685-1753," *The Age of Louis XIV; A History of European Civilization in the Period of Pascal, Moliere, Cromwell, Milton, Peter the Great, Newton, and Spinoza: 1648-1715. The Story of Civilization*. William Durant (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), VIII, 593.

The Divine Mind is also the source of man's morality. His will is man's law. Man's imperfect knowledge prevents him from foreseeing where particular decisions lead. Instead of judging the consequences, his actions are to comply with general rules derived through reason and experience. Malicious acts and intentions are to be avoided and benevolent acts are to be performed when situations present themselves. Man commits a sin when he acts inconsistently with God's will. Berkeley holds that ultimately God's will prevails. These sins, however, do have an effect on the world. The hurt and misery experienced by mankind is the product of sin.⁶⁷

Hume

In the first book of *A Treatise of Human Nature* and in *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* Hume attempts to "explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty and the nature of our ideas."⁶⁸ He claimed that previous attempts to establish the foundation of human reason were without coherence or evidence, creating a common prejudice against all metaphysical

⁶⁷ A.D. Ritchie, "Morals, Politics and Economics," in *George Berkeley, A Reappraisal* (New York: Manchester University Press, Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), Ch. 7.

⁶⁸ Hume *An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature* in David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p.184; Charles W. Hendel, "Introduction," in David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. xlii; and David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (1888; rpt Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. xv.

reasoning and disgracing philosophy itself.⁶⁹ This 'antient philosophy' served only as "shelter to superstition and a cover to absurdity and error."⁷⁰ All of science--Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion--depends on our understanding of humans. Improvements in this area will improve the sciences, especially Natural Religion, "as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them; and consequently we ourselves are not only the beings, that reason, but also one of the objects, concerning which we reason."⁷¹ Ultimately, Hume's attack is not upon metaphysics itself but upon religion.

Hume was a strict empiricist. Locke and Berkeley preceded Hume in this method but allow rationalistic elements into their theories. Hume's conclusions regarding ideas and human nature are to be limited to only those 'authorized by experience.' It is with the hope of success comparable to Newton's that he adopts

⁶⁹ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (1888; rpt Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. xiii-xiv.

⁷⁰ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p.25.

⁷¹ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (1888; rpt Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. xv.

his experimental method.⁷² *Treatise* is intended to conclude with a level of knowledge of the operation and principles of the mind equal to man's recent understanding of the laws and forces by which the planets are governed.⁷³ It was to be a science of man.

Like the earlier British empiricists, Hume rejected the possibility of innate ideas. Man's knowledge and reasoning of fact rests on inference derived from the contiguity, priority and constant conjunction between bodies--attributes perceived as causal and constant over time. And because the conformity of nature cannot be proven, it is custom, he concludes--not reason--which guides life. Our idea of "necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature, where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the other. These two circumstances form the whole of that necessity which we ascribe to matter. Beyond the constant *conjunction* of similar objects and the consequent *inference* from one to the

⁷² "Newton's doctrines were taught in Edinburgh, around the time when Hume was a student, by two successive professors of Mathematics, James Gregory and Colin Maclaurin." D. G. C. MacNabb, "Hume," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), IV, p.75. Both Maclaurin and Gregory were correspondents of Wallace. See E.U.L. La.II.96.

Hume's desire for success is discussed in Charles Hendel's introduction to David Hume's *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), pp. vii-viii.

⁷³ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. 24.

other, we have no notion of any necessary connection"⁷⁴

The concluding section dealing with *Treatise's* Part III, "Of Knowledge and Probability" considers the reasoning of animals. Because of the great similarity between man and beasts, any system of knowledge that claims to account for the actions of the human mind must also account for those of beasts. Hume criticizes philosophers whose epistemological hypotheses are insufficient in covering not only animals but children and common people as well. Testing his system against this standard will be the decisive trial for Hume's system.

In order to meet this criterion, Hume's system must explain two sources of animal action: 1) actions which seem consistent with an animal's sagacity and experience; and 2) actions which are extraordinary, called instinctual. It is the former inferential system Hume accepts. To accommodate the latter actions, Hume suggests that these operations are equivalent to man's process of reason. Man's reasoning is an instinct.

But our wonder will perhaps cease or diminish when we consider that the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power that acts in us unknown to ourselves, and in its chief operations is not directed by any such relation or comparison of ideas as are the proper objects of our intellectual faculties. Though the instinct be different, yet still it is an instinct which teaches a man to avoid the fire, as much as that which teaches a bird, with such exactness, the art of incubation and the whole economy and order of its nursery.

This naturalistic conclusion seems odd, though, in the face of

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

Hume's avowed empirical approach.⁷⁵

Hume's discussion of causation and necessity begins as a discussion of physical matter. However, in a chapter entitled "Liberty and Necessity," he extends the discussion to the debate over determinism and indeterminism. Hume claims this ancient debate turns upon words alone. All that was needed to put an end to the controversy was to carefully define the terms.

Necessity, with respect to free will, retains the same definition as was developed when considering matter--constant conjunction and consequent inference. Hume argues that these attributes apply equally to the operations of the mind and man's actions.

It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public-spirit--these passions, mixed in various degree and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind.⁷⁶

He compares historical records collected by the moral philosopher to a series of experiments made by the natural philosopher. Each seeks the underlying principles of their subject.

⁷⁵ Charles W. Hendel, "Introduction," in David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. xlii.

⁷⁶ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. 93.

To deny this regularity in man's actions is impossible. The experience gained through life serves as the basis for our conduct. Without uniformity in human action, society could not function. Given this, man uses the assumptions regarding man's actions as he does the assumptions regarding matter. And, while Hume grants that human actions are less regular than the actions of physical matter, he insists that this uncertainty of action arises from the complex mix of contrary causes. "The human body is a mighty complicated machine."⁷⁷

Hume's definition of liberty is superficial--it is, he says, the "power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will."⁷⁸ By this he is referring to the absence of physical constraints; everyone who is not a prisoner in chains has liberty. In an extensive footnote, Hume categorically rejects any possibility of liberty in the indeterministic sense of the word.⁷⁹ This feeling of liberty is merely a false sensation. A spectator's ability, an ability that grows as the spectator becomes better acquainted with knowledge of circumstance, to infer the actions of an agent, demonstrates the necessity of an agent's actions.

Hume closes the discussion of liberty and necessity with a brief consideration of its religious and moral implications. He

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 104.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

claims that his views support--indeed are necessary to, rather than undermine--orthodox religion and morality. Only under the doctrine of necessity can a person be judged Good or Evil based on their actions. Were acts independent of the person's will we would have no indication of the person's internal character, passions, and affections.⁸⁰ Therefore, when we punish and reward certain actions we implicitly accept the doctrine of necessity.

Anticipating at least one objection to his liberty and necessity definitions, Hume attempts to respond to the interpretation of necessity as fatalism which ultimately implies that either all evil is merely a part of an overall benevolent system or all Evil is attributable to God. While Hume says both interpretations are absurd he expends little effort to refute either thesis. As for the idea that Evil is a necessary part of a system which is Good, he merely offers that this may be an attractive intellectual construct, but actually does little for the individual faced with 'bad' outcomes. And, as for the other thesis, Hume dodges the question by claiming that man's knowledge is too limited to address the question.

In "On Miracles" Hume challenges revealed religion. The two-part section was originally omitted from *Treatise* for fear that it would provoke religious animus and therefore detract from

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 108.

the work.⁸¹ In the first part, Hume claims to have arrived at an argument which he hopes will "silence the most arrogant bigotry"⁸² and "superstitious delusion."⁸³ Hume retains his philosophical empiricist stance here.⁸⁴ He notes that the authority of the Scriptures or tradition is founded merely on the testimony of the Apostles. Testimony is accepted, in general, due to the "usual conformity of facts to the report of witnesses."⁸⁵ What defines a miracle is the violation of 'laws of nature' defined from, Hume says, unalterable experience. Therefore, the testimony of a miracle always involves a tension. Hume suggests that this tension be resolved by adopting that position which has the greatest probability.

When anyone tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other, and according to the superiority which I discover I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater

⁸¹ Prior to their publication Hume had lent the two sections to Wallace. In an undated letter, Hume asked that Wallace return the two "pamphlets." (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96^{1b}).

⁸² David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. 117.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 118.

⁸⁴ Charles W. Hendel, "Introduction," in David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. xliii.

⁸⁵ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. 119.

miracle.

The conclusion from the first part of 'Miracles' was that if the testimony of a miracle was sufficient, either by the status of the witness or by the number of witnesses, we may accept a miracle as fact. The second part of the section challenges even this. Hume reviews a number of miracles recorded throughout history⁸⁶ and finds no testimony sufficient to refute the laws of nature which oppose the miracle. For Hume, this eliminates the possibility of basing religion on experience or reason. Forcing him to conclude that the acceptance of religion must itself be a miracle. And what began then as a challenge to revealed religion ends as an attack on natural religion.

Hume continues his attack on natural religion in "Of a Particular Providence and of a future state."⁸⁷ What is at stake here is not just the question of the existence of God and an afterlife; but more important is the question of morality and the basis for, and stability of, society. In this chapter Hume rejects the existence of a Providence and a future state but argues that this does not threaten the moral underpinnings of society. He claims that any foundation of society must be consistent with the principles he discussed if they are allowed

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 132.

⁸⁷ The themes introduced in this chapter are enlarged upon in David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1947).

to be solid and satisfactory.⁸⁸

Hume begins the chapter by summarizing the argument advanced by proponents of natural religion. "They paint in the most magnificent colors the order, beauty, and wise arrangement of the universe, and then ask if such a glorious display of intelligence could proceed from the fortuitous concourse of atoms, or if chance could produce what the greatest genius can never sufficiently admire."⁸⁹ It is this style of argument on which the viability of the advocates of natural religion rests. Hume says that it works so long as one is careful to ascribe to the cause only what is exactly sufficient to produce the effect. To assign more is to "indulge the license of conjecture and arbitrarily suppose the existence of qualities and energies without reason or authority."⁹⁰ According to Hume, defenders of natural religion employ false analogies in their arguments that support the existence of God. Typically found is the habit of concluding, from the order of the universe, that the authors of the system are gods that possess power, intelligence, and benevolence.⁹¹ This back-and-forth between cause and effect is sound when the subject of the reasoning is familiar--such is the case with man.

⁸⁸ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1955), p. 145.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 145.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 146.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 146.

However, this is not the case with God. If a God exists, he is known to us strictly through his works in nature, and no comparable member is available from which to observe and draw an analogy. Thus, conclusions regarding any Deity must derive solely from what can be observed here on earth. On this basis, Hume finds no way to support the existence of God or of a future state.

Kames

Henry Home's (Lord Kames, 1696-1782), *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, as the title suggests, is a response to the general challenge to religion and morality - specifically to Hume's skepticism.⁹² Its intention is "to prepare the way, for a proof of the existence and perfections of the Deity, which is the chief aim in this undertaking."⁹³ *Essays* matches Hume's *Enquiry* topic for topic and chapter for chapter. Both works undoubtedly reflect the debate between their

⁹² Arthur E. McGuinness, *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 37. This section relies on "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion" in McGuinness' *Henry Home, Lord Kames*.

⁹³ Arthur E. McGuinness, *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 37.

authors.⁹⁴ Moreover, the two maintained extensive correspondence, and their exchanges show that Hume sought advice on *Enquiry* from Kames.⁹⁵

Kames's response follows from the Scottish school of moral sentiments or common sense which combines the theory of internal sense, from Shaftesbury, with the neo-Platonic doctrine of innate ideas.⁹⁶ To this Kames adds the principle of uniformitarianism under which he draws inference regarding mankind from his own introspection. Such appeals to moral sentiments were typical of the period and really the only reply the age offered to the questions of David Hume until the later appearance of Immanuel Kant.⁹⁷

Beginning with a fairly traditional argument, Kames attempts to prove the existence of God. Because man does not have the ability to cause himself, there must exist a first cause, or a

⁹⁴ Hume, Kames and Wallace were all members of the Select Society, The Rankenian Club, and the Philosophical Society, where speculative issues were discussed. See Arthur E. McGuinness, *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 19, and Roger Emerson, "The Social composition of enlightened Scotland: the select society of Edinburgh, 1754-1764," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Banbury, Oxfordshire: The Voltaire Foundation, 1973), CXIV.

⁹⁵ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1957), p. 45.

⁹⁶ Arthur E. McGuinness, *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 36.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

God.⁹⁸ This is typical of the argument Hume was responding to in *Enquiry*. Hume believed this type of argument assigned qualities to a force unwarranted by experience and employed false analogies. To this Kames responds "happily for man, where reason fails him, perception and feeling come to his assistance."⁹⁹ Along with this traditional approach, Kames thought he had arrived at an argument for natural religion which overrode Hume's critique. Based on an account of a Greenlander who argued for the existence of an artisan superior to man, Kames concluded that if such an argument came from a savage then the perception of a Deity must proceed from an internal cause, common to all men, which he called the Sense of the Deity. Kames complained that Hume ignored the Greenlander argument, and that it was immune to Hume's strictures on natural religion.¹⁰⁰

To Hume's charge that the presence of Evil in the world implies a Deity with only limited powers, Kames responds that the appearance of Evil is merely a delusion. What we believe to be Evil is actually Good. "Our discoveries ascertain us more and more of the benevolence of the Deity, by unfolding beautiful final cause without number; while the appearances of evil intention gradually vanish, like a mist, after the sun breaks

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁰⁰ Elmer Sprague, "Henry Home," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), IV, 61.

out."¹⁰¹

The existence of an all powerful, beneficent God led Kames to join Hume, Hobbes and Spinoza in concluding that necessity rules all human actions.¹⁰² Kames's argument for necessity is built entirely upon the assumption of causal relationships through all of nature - moral as well as physical. Liberty,

as opposed to moral necessity, must signify a power in the mind, of acting without or against motive; that is to say, a power of acting without any view, purpose or design, and even of acting in contradiction to our own desires and aversions, or to all our principles of action; which power, besides that no man was ever conscious of it, seems to be an absurdity altogether inconsistent with a rational nature.¹⁰³

God then, merely allows man to believe that he is free, while in fact, he has no control over his behavior. The sense of freedom is explained merely as a mistake, a misperception similar to those misperceptions man makes within his physical world.¹⁰⁴

Man's actions are directed by an internal moral sense--the voice of God. "This instinctive feeling of right and wrong, produces all of man's notions of duty, obligation, ought, and should."¹⁰⁵ In addition to virtue, moral sense is also the source of the perception of beauty. The pain or pleasure experienced

¹⁰¹ Arthur E. McGuinness, *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 55.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁰³ Henry Home, *Lord Kames, Essays*; quoted in Arthur E. McGuinness', *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 48.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

determines the moral character of the action or object.¹⁰⁶ The 'goodness' of an act (or the beauty of an object) varies depending upon how well it conforms to its objective (or is fitted to its use). Evil acts are those which fail to conform. Both must be seen in conjunction with the final causality of the system. But such a fatalistic view makes it difficult to allow for the possibility of an act not conforming.

The French Philosophes

The term *philosophe* generally applies to more than just the French philosophers of the Enlightenment. Gay, Becker and Bury go to lengths to include philosophers from England, Germany, the Americas and elsewhere under this label. There is indeed much need for a universal term to cover the commonality within this family of philosophers. Unfortunately, the word *philosophe* carries an anti-religious connotation with it that does not accurately reflect the sentiments of each nation. Only in France does the Enlightenment carry the extreme distrust of religion as a fundamental feature.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ Ernst Cassirer, "Religion," *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelin and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964). We will follow Durant's pattern of using the French term *philosophe* to convey this anti-Christian connotation; See also Ariel and William Durant, "The Aetheists," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX.

France's more skeptical view of religion stemmed from the long history of abuse committed by the Catholic Church in France. Financially, its religious wars, extensive landholdings and tax exempt status created a heavy burden. Understandably, this created a resentment of the Church's dogma and, inevitably, true religion. As a result, the new philosophy of the *philosophes* was more concerned with man's condition than with grand intellectual constructs.

For sources, the *philosophes* appealed to Bacon and Montaigne. Along with the worldly approach to philosophy, they borrowed Bacon's inductive method as the basis of their empiricism as well as his faith in enlightened education. From Montaigne, they borrowed belief that man could understand all the universe by virtue of his reason alone; a view that had earned him the title of "Libertine" and "Freethinker." Theirs was a humanistic philosophy, not the supernaturalism of Augustine.

To a large degree, all discussions of religion and theology in the eighteenth century returned to a certain central point: the problem of original sin and the fall of man. During the Renaissance, the "Augustinian view of the radical corruption of human nature and its inability to attain divinity by its own efforts"¹⁰⁸ was challenged by a more humanistic theology. The goal was to renovate religion within the bounds of humanity. The

¹⁰⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelin and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 139. This section relies heavily on Cassirer's, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*.

problem of reconciling man and God "was no longer looked for exclusively in an act of divine grace; it was supposed to take place amid the activity of the human spirit and its process of self-development."¹⁰⁹ A consequence of this process was that it allowed man an autonomy of the will. However, during the Reformation this view was rejected as religious skepticism. Nothing was more dangerous to religion than a belief that man had any power to "effect the least thing either against or in cooperation with divine grace."¹¹⁰

The questions of self-determination of reason and the autonomy of the moral will rose again in the eighteenth century. And whereas the consequences of original sin were challenged before, now the challenge is directly to the Augustinianism concept. In France, during the 17th century, Pascal had "proven" that man's dualism of human nature can be resolved only in the mystery of the fall.

Elevated above all other beings, he is also degraded below all; man is sublime and abject, great and wretched, strong and powerless, all in one. His consciousness always places before him a goal he can never reach, and his existence is torn between his incessant striving beyond himself and his constant relapses beneath himself. We cannot escape this conflict which we find in every single phenomenon of human nature, and there is no other way to explain it than to transfer it from the phenomena to their intelligible origin, from the facts to their principle.¹¹¹

In response, Voltaire reluctantly employed "common sense"

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 143.

arguments similar to Leibniz and Shaftesbury to reject the doctrine of original sin. Any attempt to refute the doctrine had to also account for the presence of evil. While the philosophical optimism of Leibniz and Shaftesbury concludes that everything that happens is for the best, Voltaire is scornful; "we must admit that evil exists and not add to the horror of life the absurd bigotry of denying them."¹¹² He is, however, unable to discover a sound doctrine on which to refute Pascal and adopts the optimistic attitude. "We cannot avoid evil and we cannot eradicate it. We should let the physical and moral world take their course and so adjust ourselves that we can keep up a constant struggle against the world; for from this struggle arises that happiness of which man alone is capable."¹¹³

While Voltaire retained an acknowledgement of God in his writings, other *philosophes* were more critical. Jean Meslier (1678-1733), a priest, left at his death a record of his loss of faith. In the manuscript he questioned miracles, free will, and immortality. He became convinced that God was wicked, entirely capricious in the favors he bestowed and the source of all evil. Religion was merely a cloak hiding the true interests of Church and State. He questioned whether religion helps to promote morality.

But is it true that this dogma render men...more virtuous? The nations where this fiction is established, are they remarkable for the morality of their conduct?

¹¹² Ibid., p. 146.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 148.

...To disabuse us...it is sufficient to open the eyes and to consider what are the morals of the most religious people. We see haughty tyrants, courtiers, countless extortioner, unscrupulous magistrates, impostors, adulterers, libertines, prostitutes, thieves, and rogues of all kinds, who have never doubted the existence of a vindictive God, or the punishments of hell, or the joys of Paradise.¹¹⁴

According to Meslier, man should turn exclusively to reason based on sense as a guide to life.¹¹⁵

More scandalous than Meslier's rejection of orthodoxy was the materialism of Julian Offroy de La Mettrie (1709-1751). The physician-turned-philosopher delivered his infamous *L'Homme machine* in 1748. In it, La Mettrie reduced the human body and all of its actions to physical and chemical reactions. Animals too were machines with no significant difference between the two; both were a product of evolution.

The ethical implications of La Mettrie's materialism was egoistic hedonism. So long as no action harmed another, man should pursue sensual delights, for pleasure was the supreme good and self-interest the supreme virtue. And because every individual's acts are strictly a function of heredity and their

¹¹⁴ Jean Meslier, *Superstition in All Ages, or Last Will and Testament*, sec. cxli, p. 30; quoted in "The Aetheists; Jean Meslier: 1678-1733," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy*. The Story of Civilization. Ariel and William Durant (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX, 615.

¹¹⁵ Ariel and William Durant, "The Aetheists; Jean Meslier: 1678-1733," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy*. The Story of Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX, 611-615.

environment, they cannot legitimately be punished for any crimes.¹¹⁶

Despite--or perhaps fueled by--the angry reaction to orthodox religion, the general philosophical mood of 18th century *philosophes* was optimistic. The prospect of a society where the Church and Government had only limited authority fostered a progressivist faith in man's ability to advance his own condition and happiness. The ability of man to improve his own state is a marked departure from the classical "cyclical" or Christian "other-world" view. Classical theory held that history was the record of endless societal degeneration and recovery. The Christian view was future oriented. As enunciated by Augustine, "Christ the Lord still lived and would come again; then the earthly city would be destroyed and all the faithful be gathered with God in the heavenly city, there to dwell in perfection forever."¹¹⁷ Focused on the future and the "City of God", it ignored the prospect of improvement on earth. The modern idea of progress was a modification/bastardization of the Christian conception. "In place of a heaven outside of time, the *philosophes* offered the idea of the perfectibility of man on earth. In place of providence and the atonement, they offered the concerted efforts of mankind itself. In place of the

¹¹⁶ Ibid., IX, 617-622.

¹¹⁷ Carl Becker, "Progress," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, reprinted in *The Idea of Progress since the Renaissance*, ed. W. Warren Wagar (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969), p. 11.

judgment of God, they offered the opinion of posterity."¹¹⁸
History was characterized by a gradual progressive increase of
goodness and happiness, marred only by occasional minor
deviations.¹¹⁹ As conceived by the *philosophes*, the idea of
progress, utopianism, and revolutionary perfection became a
species of theodicy.¹²⁰

Education was to be progress's vehicle. If man was to
elevate his own position, he would need training. The religious
oriented teaching of the Jesuits was thrown out; vocational
training was brought in. However, education was not to be
universal; only the privileged would participate. The masses
were required to provide the brute labor of progress. To educate
them would only make them discontented with their class. By
educating the privileged, the *philosophes* hoped to create
enlightened despots--leaders that would listen to their advice
and affect their reforms.¹²¹

The *philosophes* believed that education would provide the
base to morality, replacing religion. They believed that man was

¹¹⁸ Warren W. Wager, *The Idea of Progress since the Renaissance* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969), p. 28.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

¹²¹ Ariel and William Durant, "The Triumph of the Philosophes; Education and Progress," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX, 773-776.

naturally good and that educating him properly would return him to his natural state. Education would enlarge man's perspective sufficiently to pursue the good of the group. The *philosophes* held that man was primarily motivated by self-love, but that education would provide a balance between egoism and altruism.¹²²

* * *

A leading member of the *philosophes* was Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis (1698 - 1759). The scientist and philosopher was elected to the Académie des Sciences in 1723 and to the Royal Society in 1728. He was a leader of the Lapland expedition in 1736. King Frederick II of Prussia appointed him to the presidency of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, serving from 1746-1759. Maupertuis joined with the other *philosophes* in advocating experimentalism. On matters of philosophy and religion however, he did not share the optimism nor the anti-religious fervor of his fellow *philosophes*, maintaining God's existence and continued regulation of nature.¹²³

Maupertuis is probably best known for his "principle of least action," "whenever any change occurs in nature, the quantity of action employed for this is always the smallest

¹²² Ariel and William Durant, "The Triumph of the Philosophes; The New Morality," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy*. The Story of Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX, 776-780.

¹²³ Aram Vartanian, "Pierre-Louis Moreau De Maupertuis," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), V, 219-221.

possible." The principle was clarified progressively by Euler, Lagrange, Hamilton, and others.¹²⁴ When the 'principle' was mistakenly attributed to Leibniz, Voltaire, jealous of Maupertuis's position within Frederick's court, made great fun of Maupertuis's work in his *Diatribes of Dr. Akakia, Physician and Ordinary to the Pope*, which made the two bitter enemies. Ultimately, the principle of least action proved to Maupertuis, the rational order of the universe and the existence of a rational God.¹²⁵

Despite his part in quantum theory and his leading role in promoting experimentalism among the *philosophes*, Maupertuis, like Berkeley, was deeply suspicious of mechanistic/materialistic metaphysical views. These were an effort to drive God from the universe and supplant His position with man.¹²⁶ Like Diderot, his view was organic; anti-atomic. In *Essai sur la formation des etres organises* (1754) he added to materialism the qualities of Leibniz's monads, intelligence and sensibility, in defense of God's role.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

¹²⁵ Ariel and William Durant, "The Scientific Advance; Physics," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX, 514.

¹²⁶ L. Gossman, "Berkeley, Hume and Maupertuis," *French Studies; A Quarterly Review*, Vol 14, No 3, (July 1960), p. 308.

¹²⁷ Paul Hazard, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century From Montesquieu to Lessing* (Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 304, 382.

From the dual nature of particles, Maupertuis also sought to explain structural change in plants and animals.¹²⁸ "Maupertuis's *Systeme de la Nature* not only classed apes and men as allied species, but anticipated in outline Darwin's theory of the evolution of new species through the environmental selection of fortuitous variations favorable to survival."¹²⁹

In *Essai de Philosophie morale*, Maupertuis attempted to place Leibniz's optimistic arguments on sound scientific footings. Through a combination of empirical psychology and mathematics, he hoped to eliminate the vagueness of the question of the primacy of pleasure or pain in human existence (Both Jeremy Bentham and Eduard Von Hartmann were indebted to Maupertuis for their conception of a "balance of pain and pleasure."). The primacy of pleasure or pain is assumed to reflect the dominance of good or evil in human existence as well as the dominance of good or evil in the universe as a whole. The whole question of goodness or evil of human life involves a belief in outside forces on which man's well-being is dependent and therefore reflects directly on the nature of God. In Maupertuis's calculation, pleasure and pain are reduced to two

¹²⁸ Aram Vartanian, "Pierre-Louis Moreau De Maupertuis," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), V, 220.

¹²⁹ Ariel and William Durant, "The Scientific Advance; Zoology," *The Age of Voltaire; A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy. The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), IX, 578.

factors--intensity and duration which, in turn, reduce to a single quantitative value. Thus, Maupertuis's calculus of sensation and feeling can define the pleasurable and painful conditions of life. Ironically, Maupertuis determines that the sum of evils exceeds the sum of goods in an ordinary life, and ultimately leads to pessimism, not optimism. Kant, in his *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Quantities into Philosophy*, would later reject Maupertuis's eudaemonism as a basis of morality.¹³⁰

Wallace

Since the Aristotelian view of the world first challenged the Platonic view in the 9th and 10th centuries, various philosophers, theologians, and moralists had amassed criticisms of God, religion, and morality. Wallace's principle goal is to refute the Freethinkers, not to develop a complete and consistent philosophical system. His concern is over the implications of freethinker doctrines for humanity. For this reason, *Prospects*, as is generally true of his other writings, is more practically focused. However, as the Freethinker's challenge to religion has its roots in philosophy and metaphysical views, their philosophical foundation, Wallace claims, is unsteady. Wallace's targets's positions generally reflect naturalistic (both

¹³⁰ L. E. Loemker, "Pessimism and Optimism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VI, 114.

optimistic and pessimistic) metaphysical views while Wallace is generally an idealist. It is through his discussions of the Freethinker's philosophical components that we are able to identify his own philosophical stand.

Idealism

If there is one central position within Wallace's philosophy it is the inseparability of ethics and metaphysics. Any philosophical position contains numerous overlapping and interconnected views which make such a selection somewhat random. But Wallace's ultimate concern over the nature of man, the nature of society, and for Great Britain,¹³¹ combined with his traditional Christian theology, force this combination to the forefront. Moreover, this centrality is defined by Wallace's abhorrence of the rival naturalistic or mechanical position that denies the existence of moral order within the universe.

Wallace believes a boundary to existence defined merely by empirical reality is too limited. He feels a system that holds man to be simply another species within an all inclusive nature driven solely by cause and effect fails to include--what is for him--ultimate reality. For Wallace, ultimate reality begins with the basic rationality of man and the universe, which presupposes

¹³¹ These interests are named in Robert Wallace's *Meditations on Seneca's Epistles* (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), p. 5. Similar interests are named in Wallace's *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969); also in *Wallace's Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969).

a Mind or Spirit.

Man and the universe are the creation of this Mind. And because they are a part of the same whole, there is a correspondence in how they function. Under this assumption, Wallace is able to employ the analogy between man and God that Hume dismissed. He takes as accepted the rationality of God and imputes this same quality to man and to nature.

Among accurate and dispassionate men, it has never been reckoned blameable to maintain, that even God cannot work contradictions, such as making a part greater than its whole, or causing a thing both to exist and not to exist at the same time. Power, bounded in reality as well as in idea, is not understood to have contradictions for its object. I infer, that nature cannot form a rational creature, or a creature capable of comparing objects, and if seeing them as they are, capable also of seeing a part to be greater than the whole, or perceiving that a thing may both exist and not exist at one and the same time. These perceptions are directly inconsistent with reason, and in one instant a being cannot possibly be both rational and irrational.¹³²

The Mind or Spirit expresses itself through man's intelligence and soul. Accordingly, Wallace is distrustful of sense, which is limited to the empirical world. However, man's knowledge may approach an appreciation of himself, nature and God. This knowledge is obtained through an inward search of our soul or spirit.

We conceive [spirits] as images of ourselves, or as having a resemblance to our own spirits, and are endued with the same kind of faculties. By heightening these faculties as much as is possible, and removing all imperfections, we rise to a conception of the Deity. We are indeed more intimately acquainted with our own spirits; we are inwardly conscious of their existence, and of their powers, faculties, and

¹³² Robert Wallace, *A Treatise on Taste* (National Library of Scotland, Manuscript No. 183-189), p. 48.

affections. But notwithstanding this inward consciousness, we are far from being able to unfold the nature of that active being we call ourself; we cannot explain how it performs its various operations. Of the operations themselves, we are inwardly conscious, but the nature of the being itself, abstracted from its operations, is a profound mystery.¹³³

A doctrine that promotes the existence of an all-encompassing rational Mind, which seems to preclude disorder, will be asked to account for the daily experience of mankind, which seems at odds with rationality. This "Problem of Evil" is taken up by Wallace in his vindication of God in *Prospects* 8 - 10. One path taken in this defense builds upon the Platonic distinction between appearance and reality. This is a recurring theme in his work. Beginning with an objection to naturalism based on the necessity of a knowing subject in all discussions of knowledge and perception, Wallace develops a hierarchy of existence. Above the empirical reality of sense exists a transcendental reality. Knowledge of this transcendental reality is gained through man's "consciousness of being" or "soul" or "inward principle of activity."

Yet bodies are only passive: they yield blindly to that force which is impressed: they have no inward principle of activity by which their motions can be concealed. They are also the objects of our senses, and we can make a thousand experiments upon their substance. Yet we are not able to trace the manner in which they operate on many occasions. How much less is it to be expected that we should be able to explain the secret springs of action, in a spirit which is neither visible to the eye, nor is the object of any other external sense, nor stands in need of a foreign impulse, but is endued with an inward principle of activity.

¹³³ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 232.

If there is any such thing as a substance in the creation, this invisible being is most certainly a substance. The soul of man, or that which each of us calls ourself, which notwithstanding all the changes in our bodies, or alteration in our methods of thinking, remains the same identical self, as long as we preserve our consciousness, is certainly of a dignity far superior to the whole system of matter. This system, how large, how glorious soever, is wholly insensible to its own existence. Its existence cannot be of any advantage to itself. It has been raised up, and is preserved for the sake of those spiritual beings which are made capable of perceiving it. The system of matter is indeed real. When spirits perceive a body by any of their senses, they do not perceive nothing, but something that is real; yet if a comparison can be allowed, the existence of a spirit may justly be said to be more real. Compared with this, the existence of bodies is of a less substantial, and more shadowy nature. Consciousness of being, is the most certain sign of real existence.¹³⁴

While Wallace generally accepts the extramental existence of matter, as in the passage above, he vacillates between subjective idealism and Platonism. In his "Observations on Seneca's Epistles," however, he embraces Berkeley's view: "As to the nature of the soul I know nothing, but it is the most substantial of all created beings; body is only an idea but Spirit is a real being..."¹³⁵ Yet this view is criticized in *Prospects*, as well as its logical extreme, Solipsism.¹³⁶ Wallace is complimentary of Berkeley's metaphysics. He claims that his "Lordship's"

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 230.

¹³⁵ A. D. Smith, *Meditations on Seneca's Epistles written purely on the principles of Stoicism and abstracted from all Modern notions of Divinity*, (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), p. 62.

¹³⁶ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 184.

doctrines have never been refuted.¹³⁷ Hume's views, on the other hand, are dismissed as clever paradoxes, not worthy of serious refutation.¹³⁸

More important than the metaphysical and epistemological components of Wallace's idealism is its moral tone. For him, there exists objective value within the cosmos. There is truth-- a set of ideals in the universe. And through reason one can come closer to understanding the ultimate reality. Happiness comes by ordering one's life to be consistent with these ideals and one's conduct may be evaluated against a universal standard.

Wallace's ideals are not limited to ethics. Along with Shaftesbury, he believes that there exist separate but analogous standards for aesthetics. The first part of Wallace's *Treatise on Taste* contains the clearest statement of the objective existence of ethical and aesthetical standards in nature. Delineating these standards is the objective of the work.

Questions over beauty and proper conduct arise because "reason is not always consulted; nature is not constantly followed."¹³⁹ All this could be avoided as nature provides fixed principles of sentiment and conduct. A standard exists in nature by which man can judge beauty. "I am persuaded, that a standard exists, independent of fashion, on custom, on prejudice, and on

¹³⁷ Robert Wallace, *A Treatise on Taste* (National Library of Scotland, Manuscript No. 183-189), p. 6.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

passion, according to which we ought to judge of the various objects exhibited before us."¹⁴⁰ This standard of beauty is paralleled by another standard by which to evaluate conduct.

A similar analogy is agreeable to the moral form of man, which, being a determinate cause productive of invariable effects, shows certain actions to fit human nature, and others to misbecome it.

A propriety is discoverable in conduct, in art in almost every matter. Piety and virtue themselves may be said, in a very proper sense, to consist in congruity of sentiments, of words, and of actions, to the relations in which individuals stand to God, to themselves, and to one another. This forms the highest species of symmetry, and is largely treated by Moralists and by Divines.¹⁴¹

Wallace is adamant about the existence of an absolute standard. He goes out of his way to reject any notion of relativism in either beauty or conduct. "Must we conclude, that Beauty and deformity are perfectly arbitrary and capricious, & that taste is totally destitute of a solid and immutable foundation, or has not a real and fixed standard?"¹⁴² No, answers Wallace,

Every thing has annexed to it, a particular agreeableness or disagreeableness, which it is naturally formed to produce. The pleasure of the uneasiness is original and immediate. We are not taught by prompters, and learn not from instruction, to feel or to acknowledge it. Nature is our only guide. The satisfaction or pain is directly excited by the objects on their first perception, and a person, in whom a contrary sentiment is created, is generally reckoned something unnatural or monstrous.

These original feelings, expected with the utmost assurance, are the foundation of desire, of aversion, of choice, and of rejection, materials upon which men deliberate and reason; independent of custom & on education,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 52.

which often have an influence in modifying nature, yet do not form, but suppose her, and are recognized in complex no less than in simple cases, and an immediate pleasure or an immediate pain, greater or less, is naturally annexed to the perceiving of most other objects, as well as those of the external sense.¹⁴³

Man is aware of the beauty of an object or the virtue of an act by means of sense. Within every individual there exists a uniform sense of what is beautiful and what is virtuous. Objects and actions have a quality attached to them which presses upon its corresponding sense in man.¹⁴⁴ The perception of beauty and virtue is not revealed through consciousness; nor is it a matter of judgment. The relative beauty or virtue of an object or action can be measured simply by the amount of pleasure created. The pleasure or displeasure associated with it has its origin in the inherent qualities of the object/action. Actions and objects are ranked merely by the amount of pleasure and the intensity and duration that accompanies. Seeking the pleasure born by "good" acts makes man naturally virtuous.

Obviously, all men do not agree on what is beautiful or virtuous. Men long for riches, grandeur, authority, and fame, which Wallace admits are pleasant to the external senses.¹⁴⁵ Yet he believes that objects and actions contain an attribute which

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Wallace, *a little treatise on virtue & merit in the spirit of the Earl of Shaftesbury it contains many just reflections*. (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.620¹⁹), p. 13.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Wallace, *A Treatise on Taste* (National Library of Scotland, Manuscript No. 183-189), p. 66.

conveys its goodness and that every man has a sense which is sensitive to this quality and perceives it uniformly. The difference, Wallace explains, is a perversion of man's original nature and can be attributed to the influence of human institutions.

Custom and habit, unassisted by other causes, and independent of their operation, make a powerfull impression by their own force, and have a mighty influence in altering our original feelings or apprehensions. Objects, repeatedly presented to observation, become familiar by being frequently viewed. Hence a more intimate acquaintance may be said to be gained with their nature; and circumstances or qualities, which strike not at first sight, disclosing themselves by time and be various opportunities afforded to observe them, are fully perceived after many different surveys. A more thorough knowledge, being thereby acquired, may naturally be supposed to show that they posses neither Good nor Evil in the degree primarily apprehended in them. The manner indeed, in which custom and habit operate on the mind, & change men's sentiments, it is perhaps impossible to determine. But the fact is certain, that they both reconcile to many things, which are originally disagreeable, or at least lessen the disgust arising from them, and diminish the high relish created at first by pleasant objects. For this reason, that the original impressions made by introducing different customs among different orders of in different countries, may give rise to a difference of tastes in different individuals, and even in the same persons at different times.¹⁴⁶

While the sense of taste does admit to alteration, there are, however, limits to their modification.

This sense cannot be totally defaced by the greatest negligence, by the worst education, and by the worst vicious habits. The worst of men cannot eradicate these natural impressions, or wholly destroy a regard to virtue in the mind. All who can or do compare things together, must

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

perceive this essential and eternal difference in things.¹⁴⁷

If all men do not agree on what is the nature of "Good" then the problem remains of how to establish what the ideals are. Wallace admits that this is a formidable problem. The standard will be found in nature. He claims that, in general, it is possible for an individual to distinguish between what is natural and what is not.

We must study nature; endeavour to find out the standard that is in her; search after the agreeable to her: and seek that which independent of all prejudices and foolish customs or improper associations, is most delightfull according to her original, pure, simple, and most common dictates. In other words we must enquire, what it is that pleases at first, that pleases longest, that pleases most men, that pleases them in circumstances most proper for judging, and that is able afterwards to stand the trial of reason; and bear the test of experience.¹⁴⁸

Acts whose character are in doubt must be judged by how they are received by most men and that which is preferred by most men is to be judged as more refined. Judges should be "fully acquainted with the subject."¹⁴⁹ They should not be uninstructed nor uncivilized--those whose original, natural taste has been debauched. At the same time they should not be too polished. The uncultivated are probably the best judges because their taste is simple and not yet depraved. They will select that which will

¹⁴⁷ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 265.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Wallace, *A Treatise on Taste* (National Library of Scotland, Manuscript No. 183-189), p. 69.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

"yield a higher pleasure to greater numbers of men."¹⁵⁰ Thus, what began as an ideal is now an average, or consensus. How this differs from custom is unclear.

The final appeal to a consensus conception of value based on pleasure leads to a reversal in the causality in defining virtue. Originally, virtue was held to inhere in the act itself. The pleasure associated was caused by the act and varied with the virtuousness of the act. Under the consensus approach, virtue is defined by the pleasure it causes; the more the pleasure, the more virtuous the act.

There is no necessary conflict between these definitions. Under Wallace's idealistic view, the cosmos is a unified, rational, coherent entity under which the objectiveness of value, psychological hedonism and universalistic hedonism are coincident. A person acting in his own interest, seeking that which naturally promotes happiness, is, at the same time, promoting the interests of society.

The objective and the hedonistic definitions of virtue appear together in Wallace's essay, "a little treatise on virtue and merit in the spirit of the Earl of Shaftesbury." Beauty and virtue are again identified as that which carries "a secret pleasure, a charm along with it."¹⁵¹ He claims that "no action

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁵¹ Robert Wallace, *a little treatise on virtue & merit in the spirit of the Earl of Shaftesbury it contains many just reflections.* (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.620¹⁹), p. 13.

can be called good but what tends in some degree to the happiness of some being, and every action as it tends to that may be reckoned so far good and in proportion to the happiness it tends to produce it is proportionally good."¹⁵²

Wallace's twin definition of virtue serves as the basis of his condemnation of luxury. This position marks the most significant break from the tradition leading to Classical Economics which builds from Mandeville and ultimately becomes most clearly articulated by Bentham. Wallace's belief in objective value and its consistency with societal satisfaction is fundamentally at odds with a market system.

Luxury carries with it a quality which is received as painful, or is contrary to human nature. While Wallace was forced to admit that luxury may increase pleasure by providing variety, he holds that luxury, generally, is immediately displeasing. An example offered by Wallace suggests that luxury goods often are more intricate than their more simple counterparts. Intricacy causes a confusion and perplexity within the brain, and anything creating apprehension in this manner is unpleasant.

In addition to adding little, if anything, to the immediate pleasure gained from an object or act, luxury has dangerous consequences that threaten the individual and the whole of society. "Not only does it cost more than its real worth, but,

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 3.

by occasioning a continued and great expense, disables its votaries from purchasing enjoyments of higher value, and, by being carried to excess, has an unhappy influence in hurting the health, and lessening the vigour both of the body and of mind."¹⁵³ Society is threatened when people are allowed to pursue elegance and magnificence while others live in total neglect. Luxury steals energies away from more productive activities. Instead of wasting time with luxury, Wallace advocates "draining marshes, cultivating wastes, improving heaths, planting trees, making enclosures, peopling deserts, and in this way raising vast stores of grain and cattle, would contribute more both to the beauty and to the strength of a country."¹⁵⁴

Wallace believes excessive luxury is the culprit behind the fall of Rome, and in his "Reflections on Seneca's *Epistles*," he joins with Seneca in complaining of luxury's effects.¹⁵⁵ He extends his criticism of luxury to his own day, in his comments on Seneca's 90th Epistle, "On the Part Played by Philosophy in the Progress of Man." Like Rome, the glory of Great Britain is spoiled by the effects of luxury. "There can be no question but Great Britain supporting 30 millions without luxury would be

¹⁵³ Robert Wallace, *A Treatise on Taste* (National Library of Scotland, Manuscript No. 183-189), p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁵ A. D. Smith, *Meditations on Seneca's Epistles written purely on the principles of Stoicism and abstracted from all Modern notions of Divinity*, (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), p. 89.

stronger & much happier than the same Great Britain supporting only 10 millions as att present tho with much greater elegance & magnificence."¹⁵⁶

Prospects

Wallace's ethical - philosophical views make it easy to understand the first four chapters in his *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*. The first four *Prospects* are a reaction against the pessimistic ethical naturalism of Hobbes and Mandeville as well as the optimistic naturalism of the French *Philosophes*. The first *Prospect*, "A General View of the Imperfections of Human Society, and of the Sources from whence they flow," begins with a paradox. Why, asks Wallace, has mankind never attained the grandeur and happiness one might expect given man's intellectual abilities and the rich resources available to him? Although he acknowledges that man has enjoyed periods of magnificence and refinement and that mankind has made great advances, Wallace concludes that man has never risen to a level consistent with his capacity. After surveying man's resources and talents, Wallace illustrates his claim with a few examples of man's shortcomings: the inadequacy of the earth's population, the lack of progress in the sciences,¹⁵⁷ and the moral disorders, all of which combine to prevent the "true grandeur and

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁵⁷ See footnote on Maupertuis footnote in *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, George Wallace (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 17.

real felicity of mankind. Thus, human society has never arrived at the perfection of which, from the preparations of a wise providence, it seems capable."¹⁵⁸

Given these shortcomings, Wallace asks whether "we can at least form consistent ideas of much higher improvements and enjoyments."¹⁵⁹ Writers from all ages have attempted to form such improvements. But many find these schemes romantic and inconsistent with man's constitution. "According to such philosophers [read Hobbes], the disorders of human appetites and passions render all approaches to perfection in human society wholly impracticable."¹⁶⁰

Whether such schemes of higher improvements are indeed inconsistent with man's nature is to be settled in *Prospects* III and IV. And regardless of the decision, Wallace claims we will benefit from the inquiry by gaining a "more intimate acquaintance with the human affections and passions. We shall see farther into the nature of society, and penetrate deeper into the methods of the divine providence."¹⁶¹

Before mapping out his own model of a perfect society in the second *Prospect*, Wallace reveals his own prejudice in the matter. To him, it is obvious that many of the social institutions which

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 25.

man has constructed are inconsistent with the attainment of a perfect state. Political struggles stemming from ambitious kings and the wars that follow destroy people and the means to support them. Poverty prevents many of those who would marry and create families from doing so. Debauchery discourages marriage and propagation. And private property prevents proper cultivation of the earth. "As the complete culture of the earth requires vigorous endeavours, idleness must be banished, universal industry must be introduced and preserved, labour must be properly and equitably distributed; every one must be obliged to do his part, and the earth must be cultivated by the united labours of all its inhabitants in concert, and carrying on a joint design."¹⁶² Thus, products of society, not man, are hindering man's progress.¹⁶³

Prospect II, "The model of a perfect Government not for a single Nation only, but for the whole Earth," presents a Utopian vision of society based on More's *Utopia*. Current society differs from this ideal because the weaknesses and errors allowed by man in his early stages have taken root and corrupted all of civilization. Unaware of the consequences of monarchy, man voluntarily submitted to princes and magistrates and now it has become impossible to achieve the equity that would have been

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁶³ The use of population as a political barometer is repeated in *Numbers of Mankind*. Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2nd ed. (1809; rpt New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969).

possible "if mankind had been properly instructed."¹⁶⁴

Wallace envisions a communistic society. He maps out several principles which will characterize his ideal society which is to be communistic. First, there is to be no private property. The labour required for cultivating the earth will be distributed "equitably." A council will designate the trade one is employed in on the basis of the "strength of their bodies, and to their particular geniuses and dispositions of mind, as far as they could be discovered."¹⁶⁵ Since all participate in the required labour there will be sufficient time each day for study and contemplation.

As long as men live under a government like this "and have abundance of room and provisions, they will encrease and multiply. Under a government framed according to the preceding model, they must multiply much faster than under the happiest government that ever was actually established."¹⁶⁶ Such a government is proper for mankind and consistent with his advance and improvement. Those governments actually formed have provided poorly for mankind. All members of society deserve equally to have an agreeable life and nobler enjoyments. Yet great numbers serve as slaves and beasts of burden to the rich and live in

¹⁶⁴ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 35.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

conditions of squalor, disease and hunger.¹⁶⁷

Having formed an ideal society, Wallace returns to the original question: Is a utopian society consistent with man's appetites and passions? Wallace breaks the question into two parts: first, whether a government of this type could be formed, and second, whether it would be stable. Outside of 'miraculous interposition,' Wallace considers two ways to establish a government of the type laid out in *Prospect II*. The first is from within the current structure. Just as Lycurgus persuaded the Lacedemonians, a grand revolution might give rise to a spirit of patriotism which could cause a nation to sacrifice all private interests to the public good.¹⁶⁸ The second alternative is to establish a colony in a previously uninhabited land and establish a government in the form discussed. Thus, Wallace believes it is possible to establish an ideal government, but he does admit that the probability of this happening is small and that the modern statesman need not be concerned.

Another alternative Wallace considers again comes from God but differs from miraculous intervention. If it is God's intent that an equitable government be formed, He may promote this goal not all at once with a miracle, but rather by "natural methods."¹⁶⁹ Making the analogy to the development of a human

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁶⁹ It is not clear how Wallace distinguishes between miraculous and "natural" Divine intervention.

being or the growth of a plant, Wallace argues that this means will produce the desired effect in the proper season.¹⁷⁰

Having demonstrated the possibility of establishing a government in the mold of that outlined in the second *Prospect*, Wallace addresses the question of stability. The contention is that man's appetites and passions will undue the 'ideal' government. That "[t]he selfish passions of mankind, and their natural love of superiority, though laid asleep at a particular conjuncture, would soon be roused up again, and becoming as restless as ever, would prevail over the weaker efforts of patriotism and a public spirit."¹⁷¹

The particular passions, Wallace says that threaten the proposed equality are:

1. Emulation, envy, a desire of distinction, or, as it may be expressed, the love of pre-heminence, power, or domination; all which may be reduced to the same principle, and is called ambition.

2. The love of ease or sensual pleasure.

3. The love of liberty.

4. Interfering passions and appetites, which excite violent struggles by men's fixing their affections on the same objects, which can only be enjoyed by one or by a few.

These are the only principles in human nature which seem contrary to an equal distribution of labour among mankind, and to their equal enjoyment of the advantages which flow from it.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 70.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Wallace examines each of these traits of human nature and determines that they pose no threat to the Utopian government. He does not deny that humans possess these traits. The trouble has been the social environment within which these traits have existed. Corrupt institutions and bad education have led to perverse conceptions of worth. Under a perfect government, these traits would encourage more noble pursuits. Energies put into competing interests under a regime based on private property would be focused towards common goals. On this basis, Wallace concludes that "[u]pon the whole, if such a constitution is once firmly established, it will suffer as little from the reigning passions of mankind as any other government, and may be fully as durable."¹⁷³

Moreover, the ideal society enjoys two benefits over any other political system: the elimination of inequality among mankind, the benefits of which are generally misplaced and misused, and the proper education of youth.¹⁷⁴

How happy would be the consequences of such an excellent government! Every discouragement to marriage would be effectually removed. Wise regulations would be established to gratify the natural passion of love, in an easy and agreeable manner. No false maxims which corrupt taste in this grand concern would be in vogue; nor any temptation from interest to mislead the choice. Poverty being effectually banished, and every one upon an equal footing, the numerous impediments arising from an inequality of rank, estates, or other circumstances, would be wholly removed. In this situation, according to the original blessing and command, mankind would be fruitful, and multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it. By the help of such vast numbers

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 96.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

living without anxiety, and in a goodly correspondence, they would be able to cultivate every spot that was habitable in the manner most suitable to its nature. By their united labours, they would raise the most magnificent works, and add innumerable beauties to the face of the earth. Knowledge would increase wonderfully by experiments made at leisure, and with exactness, in all places of the earth; which would be freely communicated every where, and be regularly transmitted to posterity. An unconceivable progress would be made in discovering the laws of nature. There would be proportionable advances in all sorts of useful, ingenious, and agreeable arts. Every one might have the means of being a philosopher if he pleased. A happy emulation or love of glory; an insatiable curiosity; the love of truth, and an ardent thirst after knowledge, would render men more ingenious, and more successful in making useful discoveries, that either their present wants and necessities, or their love of gain. Scarcely can any thing be supposed so difficult to be discovered or effected, that it would not yield to the united efforts of mankind in such a favourable situation. In short, the whole earth would become a paradise, and mankind be universally wise and happy.¹⁷⁵

After expending so much energy in defending the Utopian system against the charge of being inconsistent with human nature in his third *Prospect*, Wallace distances himself from the ideal in the fourth *Prospect*, "The preceding Model of Government, tho' consistent with the Human Passions and Appetites, is upon the whole inconsistent with the Circumstances of Mankind upon the Earth." There is much in the system that appeals to Wallace. He continues to place a lot of the blame for society's vices and disadvantages on private property. And for a short time period he believes that the model system would bring happiness to mankind.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 104.

Unfortunately, despite the appealing features of the Utopian plan and the happiness it would generate in the short-run, the Utopian vision of government and society is not stable. While the model is stable with respect to the nature of man, it is inconsistent with his physical environment.

Under a perfect government, the inconveniencies of having a family would be so intirely removed, children would be so well taken care of, and every thing become so favourable to populousness, that though some sickly seasons or dreadful plagues in particular climates might cut off multitudes, yet in general, mankind would encrease so prodigiously, that the earth would at last be overstocked, and become unable to support its numerous inhabitants.¹⁷⁶

Barring continual gains in the earth's fertility and assuming the earth to be constant in size, the earth could not even provide room for man's bodies. Furthermore, the more perfect the government established the sooner the earth would become overstocked.

Eventually the overcrowding would force mankind to adopt policies to limit population growth. Marriage would be restrained, women would be cloistered, priests would be prevented from marrying, sanction would be given to the unnatural institution of eunuchs, infanticide would be practiced, and a maximum age may be determined by the state.¹⁷⁷

Wallace believes policies like these, to contradict the wise order of man's natural passions and appetites that have been instilled in him, answer the best ends for the individual and the

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 118.

species.¹⁷⁸ Disputes over the policies which regulate population would culminate in violence and war. "Force, and arms, must at last decide their quarrels, and the deaths of such as fall in battle, leave sufficient provisions for the survivors, and make room for others to be born."¹⁷⁹

Against this projection Wallace wonders if the present distresses of mankind may not be viewed as natural--resulting from man's abuse of liberty--compared to the unnatural customs required of an over-populated society. He sees the vice, bad taste, and viciousness, amplified by bad government and education, as the natural consequence of man's depravity. Perhaps these are the means by which Providence not only punishes vice but simultaneously prevents the earth from overpopulation, thus sparing man from the necessity of killing his own numbers.

Wallace concludes that God has established bounds and limits within his creation and that a certain proportionality will be maintained. In this view it is more appropriate for God to allow vice ("the abuse of liberty") than to allow mankind to multiply until the earth becomes overstocked. God then, uses the vices of mankind to prevent the "establishment of governments which are by no means suitable to the present circumstances of the earth."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 125.

Wallace's attack on Utopianism is necessary for his theodicy. His positions on determinism, evil, cosmology, and the nature of God all hinge on his being able to refute the viability of a utopian alternative. Utopianism is very much a rival to orthodoxy. If a utopia, like that of More or Plato, is achievable and sustainable, then doubt is cast upon God. After all, what is the character of a God that allows, perhaps wills, men to live in a state less than they are able to achieve. If mankind can institute the ideal depicted by the various authors, if they can enjoy a felicity and complete satisfaction like that of dreams, what is to be the role of religion? This is the initial paradox, how is it that man, with all his abilities, is where he is. The explanation is the rest of *Prospects*; before presenting it he had to dismiss the alternative.

Origins of Man

Wallace's third and fourth *Prospects* also provide insight into his cosmological position.¹⁰¹ Consistent with his orthodox Christian outlook, Wallace promotes the doctrine of special creation (creation *ex nihilo*). Special creation holds that the earth and the life on it were intentionally created by an outside agent. Obviously, for Wallace, the outside agent is God. Through a miracle, God introduced man into the world, one

¹⁰¹ Wallace's cosmological theories are elaborated upon in his *Numbers of Mankind*, and other documents associated with its development. Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2nd ed. (1809; rpt New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969).

original pair from which all mankind have sprung, in full maturity, innocent, but with fully formed consciousness. Wallace claims that the skeptics cannot successfully forward an alternative theory explaining the present order of the world, insisting that 'supernatural interposition' was necessary. He explicitly rejects evolution as unnatural.

[I]t is ridiculous and absurd to represent the beginning of mankind so extremely low as some have affected to describe it, or to imagine mankind, when they made their first appearance, to have been produced by a big-bellied oak, or formed by the heat of the sun out of a warm and slimy soil.¹⁸²

The creationist hypothesis is consistent with idealism. Both theories suppose an entity outside and above the sphere of nature that imposes its will upon nature. Both also suppose a special relationship between man and God, that man's ability to reason sets him apart from the rest of creation, bringing him closer to God. Evolutionism, on the other hand, is consistent with naturalism, thereby posing another threat to idealism. Evolutionism denies the outside force and the sense of purpose of special creation. Life is the result of purely natural and mechanical causes and, thus, is very deterministic. As a result, evolutionism has the effect of lowering man to the level of all other animals.

* * *

Wallace's brief cosmological discussion is part of his

¹⁸² Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 62.

consideration of the possibility of establishing a utopian society. Before contemplating how such a system might be established in the future, he steps back to present his version of the origin of society and how it had arrived at its current non-utopian state. He uses this 'history' to criticize Hobbes's and Rousseau's "state of nature" theories.

In the beginning, man was "formed entirely innocent, of the best dispositions, with understandings clear and distinct, with wills perfectly complying with the will of God, and with appetites and passions wholly under the command of reason."¹⁸³ Had man continued in this state of innocence, discussions of civil government and its origins would be irrelevant. In his original state of innocence man had no need for government. According to Wallace, government was established after man had fallen into a state of degeneracy. Man's innocence and wisdom were lost very early, long before civil government was erected.¹⁸⁴ Though we have little exact knowledge of the first state of mankind or how vice and depravity entered the world, "experience teaches us that they degenerated afterwards."¹⁸⁵ Even if government had been formed in man's original state of innocence, it would not answer the needs of a vicious and depraved world. In a depraved world, want of experience, man's first attempts at

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 64.

civil government must have been crude. Weak and crude maxims would be introduced, preventing a perfect government founded on equality.

Refraining from his objections to hypothesizing on any original state of man, Wallace questions whether Hobbes's state of nature theory necessarily implies private property.

It may, however, be allowed, if any such thing existed as that *state of nature* which some poets and philosophers have imagined, when man like other animals ranged thro' the fields without civil government; that, at the expiration of this state, mankind, instead of appropriating particular possessions to individuals, might have been led, by some lucky accidents, to have established societies, on the foundation of an original contract, mutually to assist and defend each particular member, in labouring for the general good of the community, in order to share mutually in the profits of every one's labour, and that such societies, though rude and imperfect at the beginning, might have laid the foundation of governments similar in many respects to that projected by Sir Thomas More, and might have gradually given a turn to men's inclinations and humours, which would have as effectually prevented the establishment of private property, as the violent inclination towards property has hitherto prevented the establishment of a constitution founded on a perfect equality.¹⁸⁶

He acknowledges that the idea of private property is comfortable to modern man, but maintains that this view is not natural to man. Quite the contrary, to appropriate to individuals what had been common to all is unnatural. An equitable distribution of labor and goods seems more natural to Wallace.

In his attribution of evil to the enactment of private property, Wallace joins with Rousseau. Were men to labor in common, sharing equally in the fruits, mankind would be on better

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

footing than they have been.¹⁸⁷ However, Wallace believes Rousseau to have gone too far. To him, the state depicted in *sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inegalité parmi les hommes*, is frightful and shocking. Rousseau's picture of man, naked, stupid, without desire for knowledge, language or society; living on the spontaneous fruits of the earth, propagating their kind through casual rencounters, horrifies Wallace. Worse yet, Rousseau insists that this is the state God intended for man, and that man's first attempt to reason marked his departure from innocence to depravity.

Existence of God

In his fifth *Prospect*, "A View of the Beauty, Wisdom, and Magnificence of Nature," Wallace presents a slightly modified version of Aquinas's fourth and fifth argument for God's existence. To Wallace, the beauty, order and purposefulness of the universe requires a Creator with "infinite wisdom, goodness, and energy."¹⁸⁸ The physical features of the earth, the varieties of plant and animal life, and the heavenly bodies all point to an 'infinitely perfect author.' Even the works of man which pale next to those of God reflect His genius.

What sets Wallace's argument apart from the traditional version is his attempt to respond to Hume's objection. Hume had argued that when reasoning from effect to cause, we could not

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 161.

accept the existence of those causes which had traits in excess of what the effects warranted. On this basis, Hume rejected the existence of an all powerful, beneficent God. When surveying the beauty of animal life, Wallace marvels at the deep skill with which the "animal oeconomy" appears to be adjusted. Increasing the wonder is the fact that "every thing proceeds from causes, which, in appearance, are unequal to the effects."¹⁰⁹ Their breeding and feeding demonstrates a regularity that requires instruction above their abilities. He attributes these instinctual processes to the direction of God, an assessment which requires outside qualities above those involved in a purely mechanistic universe.

Man vs. Animals

In addition to the argument for the existence of God, the fifth *Prospect* also offers insight into Wallace's conception of man's nature. Wallace's idealism supposes a separation between Nature and man's nature. This separation is necessary to his system of ethics. Some unique faculty allows man to perceive beauty and goodness. According to Wallace, what sets man apart from the rest of Nature is his ability to reason. Unlike Hobbes, who had explained thought in terms of Newton's law of motion, where memory and imagination were merely decaying echoes of original sensation, Wallace attributes thought to a higher link between man and God. It is through reason that man is able to

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 142.

perceive the grandeur of God's universe.

How far inferior, ...are all the other animals to man, and how divine is that reason with which he is endued! ... The transactions of all nations in all the regions of this earth, during all past ages, may be treasured up in its memory.

But it is not by the power of sensation, nor by the strength of imagination or memory, that men chiefly discover their superiority to the other animals, and prove the extent of their genius and understanding. Their pre-eminence consists chiefly in the power of reasoning, reflecting, and comparing. By these faculties, they discern the various relations, that the various objects with which they are surrounded, bear to one another; the various uses for which these objects serve; the most excellent ends which rational creatures ought to propose, and the manner in which they may best promote these ends. Hence, the capacity of discerning the beauty of the works of nature and art, of which other animals seem wholly destitute. Hence that capacity of science, that taste of arts, that love of order, that regard for virtue, that disapprobation of vice, that contempt of baseness, those ideas of superior invisible beings; especially the idea of the infinitely perfect author of nature, all which are natural to mankind.¹⁹⁰

Through reason, man is able to solve the most mysterious problems, invent useful machines, and discover the most profound theorems. Painter, poets, sculptors, and all the other artists inspire virtue and wisdom while subduing every unmanly passion. While all these things celebrate the genius of human reason they also point to the perfection of God. "For human art is nothing but a ray of the divine, is originally derived from the father of lights from whom every good and perfect gift cometh down."¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 143-145.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 160.

Happiness and Misery

Despite man's ability to reason, he cannot know everything about God--his ends and means. This lack of knowledge is a constant source of anxiety for mankind. Whereas the fifth *Prospect* was an uplifting review of the wonders of God, anxiety and confusion set the tone for the sixth *Prospect*, "A View of the Distresses of Mankind, and of the Brute Animals." What is to be the 'final issue' of God's work? What is the source of man's afflictions? Why is life so short? What is to happen after death? These concerns make it difficult to see the ways of God. The question of life, death and the hereafter is of special concern to Wallace. To him, the shortness of life is inconsistent with the splendor of God's creation, which is man. Just when men have arrived at a high level of knowledge and wisdom, they are brought to 'dissolution.' Wallace notes that many authors have attempted to explain this tragedy. A modern member of this company is the 'celebrated' Mr. Maupertuis in his *Essay de Philosophie Morale*, "who seems fond of indulging the most melancholy thought."¹⁹² In the remaining *Prospects*, Wallace hopes to show Maupertuis's calculations in error and solve the doubts of anxious minds.

In *Prospect* seven, "A Comparison of the Happiness and Misery within our View, Shewing, in Answer to Mr. Maupertuis, that the first is superior," Wallace challenges the results of

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 177.

Maupertuis's pleasure/pain calculus. Along the way he takes a swipe at certain philosophers, "or such as have pretended to the name."¹⁹³

Some say that we can know nothing [Hume].

Some question whether anything in the universe really exists or not [Berkeley].

Some say that no man has reason to believe, that there is any being really existing in the universe but himself [Solipsists].

Some maintain that man is wholly selfish, and that no man can be interested in the welfare of any living creature but himself [Mandeville].

Some assert that there is no essential distinction between vice and virtue; that there is in reality, no native worth nor dignity in the one, no vileness nor deformity in the other: this distinction depending entirely on education and fashion [Hobbes].

Some maintain that ignorance is better than knowledge; that contemplation is by no means suitable to any animal; that arts and sciences are extremely pernicious, and that a savage and solitary state, is much better for mankind than any society which has hitherto established [Rousseau].

Some ascribe the formation of the world and all things in it, to chance [Lucretius].

Some say that all rational beings, are wholly destitute of any liberty in acting, and that all events are linked together by the most invincible necessity, that rational creatures are nothing but curious machines exactly resembling clocks [Kames/La Mettrie].¹⁹⁴

Reviewing this list of 'philosophical paradoxes,' Wallace is not surprised to find Maupertuis's bold claim that there is more misery than happiness in human life. Wallace grants that there

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 183-186.

are many calamities in the world, and that it is easy to become confused by what we observe in nature. However, Maupertuis's calculation necessarily implies an evil system which only serves to prejudice man against God. For the comfort of mankind it is necessary to show Maupertuis's calculation erroneous.¹⁹⁵ Wallace is quick to point out that pain could exceed pleasure and not reflect a malicious God. It could be that the pain man experiences stems entirely from his own vices, his abuse of liberty. Nonetheless, Wallace feels it would be helpful--especially in later parts of the book--to prove that happiness exceeds pain.

Before taking up comparisons of particular pains and pleasures, Wallace answers three of Maupertuis's general 'proofs' that human life contains more misery than pleasure. The first is Maupertuis's claim that men wish to possess objects other than they have, or "desire a greater, more than a smaller good,"¹⁹⁶ and that they are unhappy until they are obtained, "that all the moments of our life are unhappy, from the time in which we desire any object, till the time in which this desire is accomplished."¹⁹⁷ Wallace admits that man's desires are infinite, but he disagrees that this renders man unhappy. Desire does not

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

¹⁹⁷ Maupertuis; quoted in *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, Robert Wallace (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 193.

prevent man from enjoying other pleasures. Even those afflicted with disease can reflect on better times, the beauty of nature and their future hopes. Thus, man's comprehensive view, which was the source of his infinite desires, provides great happiness.

Maupertuis's second general proof argues that man's diversions evidence his wretched condition. "All the diversions of mankind prove the wretchedness of their condition. In the most common actions; such as taking a bottle, or smoaking a pipe, one only seeks to relieve himself from the misery of life."¹⁹⁸ Wallace believed Maupertuis's thesis to be clever but not solid. He claims that we eat, drink and do thousands of different things to increase our enjoyment. This does not suppose us unhappy. The bounty of nature disposes man toward 'a keener relish of pleasure.' If Maupertuis's reasoning is followed, the fact that we do anything means that we are unhappy.

The last general argument Wallace addresses comes in response to Maupertuis's challenge to find any man who would choose to live his life over again exactly as he lived it. An inability to find anyone leads Maupertuis to conclude that man is unhappy. Wallace is not sure whether he could find an individual who would make this choice or not, however, he is not sure of what may be inferred from this test. A great number of people may choose not to live their lives over in anticipation of their

¹⁹⁸ Maupertuis; quoted in *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, Robert Wallace (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 194.

future life. Some may be so fearful of death that they would choose to live their lives over again merely to avoid death. Still others may choose not to relive their lives due to a natural love of rest.

The best reason Wallace offers in explanation of why individuals may choose not to repeat their lives scene by scene is variety.

Is there not a certain delicacy in human nature which rejects the repetition of the same objects, though highly agreeable in the first enjoyment? Is not the love of variety a natural principle of the human frame? Who does not take delight in an alternation of pleasures'.¹⁹⁹

The asterisk denotes a footnote from Seneca's 24th Epistle, "On Despising Death." The passage quoted by Wallace contains Seneca's advice to neither love nor hate life too much. Seneca says that some men despise life and some find it irksome.

'Others also are moved by a satiety of doing and seeing the same things, and not so much by a hatred of life as because they are cloy with it. We slip into this condition, while philosophy itself pushes us on, and we say: "How long must I endure the same things?" ... There are many who think that living is not painful, but superfluous.'²⁰⁰

Thus, the principle of variety may explain a choice not to repeat one's life better than the conjecture that the life is typically more painful than pleasant.

¹⁹⁹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 198.

²⁰⁰ Seneca, *AD LUCILIIUM EPISTULAE MORALES*, trans. Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), I, p. 181.

Following this general discussion Wallace pursues the matter at a finer level, dividing pleasure and pain into two groups, "the bodily, which may be called sensations, as they arise from the senses; and the spiritual, arising from reason and reflection."²⁰¹ Initially, Wallace seems willing to concede the domain of sensation to Maupertuis.

In favour of Mr. Maupertuis it must be confessed, that bodily pleasure is confined within more narrow limits than bodily pain. Thus, (1). The pleasures of the body are diminished, but the pains are increased by their duration. (2). The too frequent use of the objects which cause pleasure, puts an end to the pleasure, and is followed by many pains and infirmities; but the continued application of painful objects, in place of rendering them agreeable, produces a greater degree of pain. Again, (3). Exquisite pleasure can only be produced by some parts of the body, while all the parts are capable of giving exquisite pain. And, (4). Though bodily pleasure can only be continued during a short time at once, the hour of death is the only boundary of bodily pain.²⁰²

Despite these just observations, Wallace still maintains that, in general, mankind enjoys more pleasure than pain. Few are exposed to hunger and cold, few are afflicted with severe sickness, and few languish in prison. Thus, upon the whole, for the body, the balance seems on the side of pleasure.

On the spiritual side, Wallace faces a more arduous task. "It is from this quarter chiefly, that writers of a gloomy complexion can draw the strongest arguments in defence of their

²⁰¹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 201.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 201.

opinion."²⁰³ Wallace breaks down the spiritual maladies into different groups in order to better compare them. There are the 'evils arising from the uncertainty of human affairs,' the 'evils of pride and ambition,' the 'grief for the loss of those comforts of possessions,' the 'evils of envy and revenge,' and the 'evils of folly and depravity.'²⁰⁴ Wallace responds to each of these groups, acknowledging that they exist, but arguing that the great body of mankind escapes them. For them, "there is a general tranquility and security which prevails among men."²⁰⁵ On the whole mankind is hopeful and confident; they are moderate in their desires, and employ themselves in friendship and in innocent, beneficent actions. On top of this is the pleasure gained from the pursuit of virtue, truth and knowledge. These pleasures do not diminish with time or rapidity. "Thus, after making every reasonable allowance for the weaknesses and vices of mankind, there is enough to convince us that our reason and reflection, as well as our senses, are sources of much greater pleasure than pain."²⁰⁶

In the end, Wallace rejects the possibility of using mathematical or metaphysical evidence to establish whether pleasure or pain dominate man's life. Only moral evidence can

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 204.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 203-211.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 205.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 213.

settle the question. Men must look within themselves, to their feelings, sentiments, and dispositions to judge their lives. When they do so, they will see the argument for pleasure will appear stronger. This, in turn, supports the belief in a good and wise providence.

Liberty and Necessity

In *Prospect VIII*, "Of Liberty and Necessity," Wallace extends the pleasure/pain debate to the controversy over liberty and necessity. Wallace is not so much concerned with man himself as he is with the implications on God and morality. With these issues at stake, the debate over man's pleasures and pains 'is of much less consequence.' In this *Prospect*, and the following two, Wallace pursues each side of the debate with the ultimate objective of proving the existence of God and his perfection. Any such proof is required to account for the evils existing within the world. Wallace's account is modeled after Leibniz's conception of evil which entails three separate theories: the privative, the aesthetic, and a legalistic moral theory.²⁰⁷

In the first of these three *Prospects*, Wallace establishes some definitions and sets out the arguments for liberty and those for necessity. Wallace wants to stay clear of the argument over predestination between the Arminians and the Calvinists. He also wants to avoid getting bogged down in a detailed debate over

²⁰⁷ L. E. Loemker, "Pessimism and Optimism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), VI, 117.

terms. "This might give occasion to a logomachy."²⁰⁸ The two sides are 'plainly contradictory.' "'The one, that it was possible in nature, that many things might have happened differently from what they have done; or, that the world might have been different in many respects from what it actually is.' The other; 'that this is, and ever was impossible.'"²⁰⁹

In presenting the case for fatalism, Wallace makes extensive use of Kames's *Essays*. Lengthy extracts from Kames's "Of Liberty and Necessity" are used to voice the extreme position Wallace wishes to refute. The irony, of course, is that both Wallace and Kames are driven to their opposing positions by their common desire to promote morality.

For Kames all actions flow exclusively from man's motives. "If we do not desire to accomplish an event, we cannot possible act in order to bring it about. Desire and action, are then intimately connected."²¹⁰ Without this intimate connection (liberty), there is no basis for social interaction. "Promises, oaths, vows, would be vain; for nothing can ever bind or fix one

²⁰⁸ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 222.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

²¹⁰ Lord Kames; quoted in *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, Robert Wallace (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 226.

who is influenced by no motive."²¹¹ Moreover, if decisions are completely capricious and arbitrary, then social institutions such as education, religion, and law make no sense. "To exhort, to instruct, to promise, to threaten, would be to no purpose. In short, such a creature, if such could exist, would be a most bizzare and unaccountable being; a mere absurdity in nature, whose existence could serve no end."²¹² It is evident then, that society assumes necessity in its very structure.

Taken by itself, the link between action and will does not necessarily imply fatalism. Modern determinism holds that man's actions are determined, but not by outside forces. Instead, actions are self-determined. This compromise position between the extremes of fatalism and indeterminism allows society to influence the character of an individual and, therefore, his actions while maintaining the man's freedom and responsibility of action. What makes Kames's position fatalistic is his insistence that man has absolutely no control over his actions. Man's desires are not under his own control, and neither therefore, are his actions. Kames's adherence to the universality of causality derives from his belief that order in the universe demanded final causality, which precludes free will.²¹³

²¹¹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 226.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 227.

²¹³ Arthur E. McGuinness, *Henry Home, Lord Kames* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 47.

Kames's choice of machine as a metaphor for man in *Essays* draws Wallace's first reaction. To Wallace, Kames's thesis reduces man to the equivalent of a clock:

rational creatures, whether higher or lower, can only be excited to action, by motives arising in a constant succession from a series of perceptions; in receiving which, though it must be confessed they are entirely passive, yet these perception have an irresistible influence to raise desire or aversion, which, again, as necessarily determine the choice, and direct the pursuits of these rational creatures, as the weights or springs determine the motions in a piece of clock-work.²¹⁴

Worse yet, says Wallace, is the implication of this theory on the nature of God. As he sees it, Kames's view not only denies the freedom of choice to man, but it also includes God himself.

According to Kames, because God is perfect, created a perfect world, and can only make the best decisions, and no other entity exercises true choice, it follows that God too is a part of an uncontrollable necessity. "Nothing could ever have happened but in the precise manner in which it has actually happened."²¹⁵

Kames's view of man and God is completely inconceivable to Wallace and fundamentally at odds with his idealistic conception of the universe. Fatalism is an immediate corollary to naturalism. For the naturalist, man is just another part of nature, and like everything else, subject to the principles of cause and effect. Wallace, no doubt, would similarly dismiss the

²¹⁴ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), pp. 223-224.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Stoic indifference to fate. In his "Observations on Seneca's Epistles," Wallace comments that "Seneca has not entered fully enough into the Dispute about fate & predestination for he does not advert to that part of the Controversy that we cannot think will or determine but as fate or necessity shall direct."²¹⁶

Wallace's idealism contains a hierarchy of existence where the spiritual dominates the material. The spiritual level is not governed by physical laws. Physical laws are the creation of God and manipulated by Him as man's condition warrants. Man's spiritual component contains God's gift of free choice.

According to Wallace, within man's mind there exists an "inward principle of activity." It is by virtue of this inward principle of activity that man has free choice and is thus able to make uncaused choices. Without a causal basis, man's choices are not predictable as Hume claimed. Wallace does not claim that man's actions are solely attributable to this principle. Man's actions are influenced by outside forces and experiences, however they are not completely determined by them; man is more than a passive reactor to external forces and past experience. With this synthesis, Wallace provides a basis for moral freedom and responsibility while simultaneously allowing for the role of human institutions.

Wallace employs several defenses of his free will position.

²¹⁶ A. D. Smith, *Meditations on Seneca's Epistles written purely on the principles of Stoicism and abstracted from all Modern notions of Divinity*, (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), p. 17.

The first argument he offers is man's universal sense of freedom. This belief should not be pronounced delusive on the basis of metaphysical arguments.²¹⁷ Complementing the sense of freedom is the sense of guilt. Guilt carries with it the prerequisite of choice. "For as no man can be guilty who does not determine himself, but is wholly determined by others so no man who knows this, can ever believe himself guilty."²¹⁸

Similar to the sense of guilt is society's system of punishment. "Liberty is the only foundation of guilt, and of a just condemnation by a human judge. ...Whenever a man is deprived of his liberty and put under external force, he is deemed to be innocent."²¹⁹ Thus, in instituting a legal system, society assumes liberty, not necessity, as Kames claimed. Wallace's dual source of impetus, the inner principle of activity and external forces, protects him against Kames's objection that liberty leads to moral anarchy, leaving room for the conditioning of man's motives by education, religion and other socializing forces. Divine punishment also implies a freedom to act. To the extent that punishment of vice is not causal, consequences are "inflicted juridically...by a divine tribunal."²²⁰

²¹⁷ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 229.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Wallace's last argument for liberty relies on the fatalist's inability to explain the foundation of prayer. Prayer supposes that all events are not fixed and implies freedom, not only for men, but for God also. Man's prayers are deserved by God; that claims Wallace, is acknowledged in all times and nations. It is only natural--indeed it is impossible not--to feel an extreme gratitude and express adoration for the author of the universe. Such adoration is not offered to a common mechanism; workmanship is admired but only the artist is praised. We do not pray to God for those things we consider absolutely fixed like the sun or the moon. We pray because we believe that prayers are useful. Those who support absolute necessity maintain that prayer is an inevitable chain of events. Wallace does not answer this except to say that this is absurd, and counters that if that were true, prayer would be futile. The fatalist would, of course, agree.²²¹

The upshot of this discussion is Wallace's conclusion that the doctrine of absolute necessity undermines government and religion. It calls into question the legitimacy of the legal system and eliminates the role of God in man's life. All of this is quite contrary to the absolutism implicit in Wallace's idealism. According to Wallace, man has the ability to differentiate between vicious and virtuous acts, so that while man may choose not to be virtuous, he acknowledges this within himself. This acknowledgment--guilt--demonstrates their liberty.

²²¹ Ibid., pp. 255-268.

Moreover, vicious people do not blame their circumstances, they know their actions flow from their own choices. On this basis we know there are the works of God; and separate from these are the works of man. In this way, Wallace's discussion of free will serves as prelude to his discussion of evil.

God and Evil

In *Prospect IX*, "A Vindication of Providence, on the supposition of the Freedom of rational beings," Wallace continues his attack on Kames's fatalism. He begins by criticizing Kames's reliance on the aesthetic conception of evil. Evil does exist, he claims. To hold that man's earthly universe is infinitely perfect, and that any discomfort supports a higher good, Wallace believes to be 'mysterious and attended with difficulties. The often rough and uncertain existence of man's life hardly seems to indicate an efficient manner by which to affect an infinitely perfect system. "Had an infinitely perfect being equally adjusted all the parts, and made no allowances for liberty in rational creatures, 'tis presumable he would have come to his end by shorter and more direct methods."²²²

Having removed the aesthetic conception of evil, originally crafted to support the notion of an all-powerful, beneficent God, Wallace needs to vindicate God on a different basis. The implication of the real existence of evil combined with absolute necessity creates doubt as to the nature of God. Without man's

²²² Ibid., p. 304.

free will, everything, including evil, is attributable to God. Wallace offers what he believes to be a simpler explanation than those 'metaphysical doctors.' As he stated in the previous *Prospect*, Wallace believes man to possess free will. This allows him to separate the works of man from those of God. Ultimately, Wallace aims to show all maladies to be a result of man's vice and folly.

Most of man's distress can be directly traced to his depravity. Mankind abuses its God-given liberty and chooses vice despite the 'natural affection' implanted within all men, resulting in reduced life expectancy. "From the abuse of our liberty, flows intemperance, debauchery, luxury; by which the human body is rendered sickly and infirm; human life is greatly shortened, and death becomes more frequent and more painful."²²³ Wars, too, stem from man's poor judgment.

How many evils flow from pride, enormous ambition, a superstitious and an enthusiastic zeal? Hence cruel wars, the rage and madness of conquerors, enmity on account of different opinions in religion, barbarous persecutions for conscience sake, by which the world has been so deeply distressed, and mankind have been excited to fury in destroying one another.²²⁴

Wallace admits that all of man's hardship cannot be immediately traced to man's vices. The only problem for the supporters of liberty comes from the apparent faults and blemishes within nature. It is clear to Wallace that man had no

²²³ Ibid., p. 300.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 301.

role in forming the universe. Nor does man play a role in determining the weather. And while the universe is, on the whole, beautiful and friendly to man, both of these natural entities are sources of anxiety for man. Harsh weather and inclement regions cause man's existence to be less than perfect, which, to Wallace, seems an indictment of God.

It is not as though Wallace believes man to deserve a perfect world. A perfect world would be inappropriate for a depraved species which, he reasons, is also the decision of God. Because man is the principal inhabitant of the world, conditions are matched to his circumstances. Thus, a depraved race gets a depraved world. For this reason "the great Creator and Governor has adjusted the frame of nature in such a manner, that by the disposition of the air and clouds, and by the contexture of various bodies on the surface, or within the bosom of the earth, he can chastise and punish the vices of rational creatures, and give check to their follies."²²⁵ Unfortunately the punishment is borne by all the world; innocent and guilty suffer alike.

Wallace cautions the reader to remember that the evils of which man complains are small compared to the benefits of nature--so small that they may be eliminated or moderated by man himself. He suggests that many of the physical evils man experiences are deemed evil only through man's ignorance of their true value. Further studies would promote understanding of the

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 279.

interconnections of the ultimate ends of the great Creator. Were all men to come together in industry, prudence, and virtue, and were to "regulate commerce every where according to the exact rules of justice and benevolence,"²²⁶ they would arrive at methods to remedy the physical harm caused by nature. Weather, rivers and the seas would no longer threaten.

One evil that cannot be eliminated is death. This is not due to God's inattention; the limited extent of the earth combined with the 'prolific virtue' of animals requires that some must perish so that others may be born. However, the pain and suffering of aging and death can be moderated. Reduced vice would alleviate the anxiety associated with death. This, not death itself, is the real source of man's unhappiness, and it is due solely to man's abuse of God's gift of liberty. Had man not chosen vice over virtue he would have enjoyed superior life on earth.

Even by a very imperfect use of their reason and liberty, they have cultivated and adorned this globe, built houses, erected cities, united themselves in families, formed themselves into societies, framed laws, founded government, modelled religion, divided the earth into nations, established commerce, made many discoveries in science, invented numerous arts, contrived many useful and curious instruments and machines, and wonderfully polished and improved their natural genius and understanding. Had they behaved better, they might have made much greater improvements, become far more happy, rendered the earth a much more convenient and agreeable habitation, and either have prevented or remedied so many of the evils which they have felt, that the few remaining would only have served to give a higher relish of the blessings and advantages of

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 289.

life.²²⁷

Thus, moral disorders explain the paradox introduced in the first *Prospect*.

Prospect ten, "A Vindication of Providence, on the Scheme of Necessity" seeks to defend the magnificence of God to those who deny free will. Wallace notes that support for this view comes from different corners. There are those who arrive at this position via their metaphysical beliefs, while others support this view by virtue of their theological position of predestination. Some deny predestination but are puzzled by the apparent contradiction of an all-powerful, omniscient God and the continuing presence of evil. Ironically, Wallace uses the aesthetic conception of evil in his defense of God, which is the same conception of evil used by Kames, the one he criticized throughout the preceding two *Prospects*.

He begins by demonstrating that God must be good in nature. From the principle established in the seventh *Prospect* that happiness exceeds misery, he asserts that God must be Good. God, having the power to form whatever system he wanted, could have chosen a superior quantity of evil. By equating intelligence with Goodness, Wallace claims that an all-knowing God precludes the creation of evil. From this he concludes that God must have chosen this particular system, and because God is Good it must be the ultimate system.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 299.

What remains is to reveal how this system--with its apparent evil--is superior to other envisioned systems. He credits moral and natural evil with an ultimate 'excellent purpose.' Once the advantages associated with the alleged imperfections are determined, we will forgive the evil. The first advantage of evil cited by Wallace is variety. Only through variety can man judge art and beauty. Similarly, contrast is required to distinguish magnificence and elegance from bad taste. It is necessary to appraise the workmanship of an artist. In tragedy, poetry, and satire, the virtuous and the vicious are required to convey the author's lesson.²²⁸

In addition to the benefit of variety provided by evil, man gains by the presence of evil through the opportunity it provides to overcome its influence. The highest pleasures are obtained "by difficulties, dangers, and more arduous adventures."²²⁹ Nations also benefit from adversity. In times of peace they grow indolent and sleepy. At these times their enjoyments are inferior. "In short, the highest virtues and joys of human life suppose evil, and without this bitter ingredient, could never have made their appearance."²³⁰ Thus, the disorders called evil

²²⁸ Each part of this discussion (contrast, variety, grandeur, elegance, poetry, tragedy, art) derive from Wallace's "Treatise on Taste."

²²⁹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 323.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

are required for the most perfect order.

Having pursued the vindication of God from both sides of the 'liberty and necessity' controversy, Wallace leaves it to the world to choose the system it prefers. Either way, he is convinced that he has successfully defended the 'righteous providence.'

Immortality

In the preceding six *Prospects* Wallace established the existence and perfection of God. In *Prospect* eleven, "Proof of a future State of Mankind after Death, on the Principles of Reason and Philosophy," he wants to defend the existence of heaven and of man's immortality. A future state is necessary to support his stand on free will. Within the defense he also discusses miracles. Notions of heaven and miracles were highly suspect within the Enlightenment. God's role, for the most part, had been reduced to that of First Mover. Answering this trend, Wallace takes up the perennial question: What becomes of man after death, and why is life so short?

Wallace is greatly influenced on the subject of death by the works of Seneca. Death is one of the dominant topics in all of Seneca's philosophical works. His essay "On the Shortness of Life," and epistles "Old Age," "Suicide," and "Immortality," all focus on the process of dying, a future existence, and the ethical considerations in suicide. Seneca sees death as a final release from the discomforts of life and defends suicide as the highest expression of human freedom. Seneca is uncertain as to

the future existence of man's soul. The main goal of his writings is to reduce that anxiety associated with death.²³¹

Wallace's "Meditations on Seneca's Epistles" reflects Seneca's obsession with death. Again and again it returns to the themes of old age and death. Principally written during the 1750s when Wallace was in his 60s, it shows the author's concern over his own future existence. "[E]ver since I was fifty I have looked upon my self as dying or one who was to live but a few years: methinks I am rather an inhabitant of the future world than of this; I am unconcerned about every thing in life but my family & acting well."²³² Unlike Seneca, Wallace cannot condone suicide (although he is less critical than his contemporaries) and is certain of the immortality of the soul.

Wallace presents three different appeals ("proofs") to the existence of heaven. These 'proofs' do not depend on revealed religion. Nature will point to the immortality of man. "It will appear that it is the visible intention of providence to render the human species immortal."²³³

²³¹ Anna Lydia Motto, "Seneca on Death and Immortality," *The Classical Journal*, Vol 50, No 4, pp. 187-189.

²³² A. D. Smith, *Meditations on Seneca's Epistles written purely on the principles of Stoicism and abstracted from all Modern notions of Divinity*, (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), 12th Epistle.

²³³ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 342.

The first proof stems from Wallace's idealistic conception of the universe as a unified whole. Wallace claims that all men pant after immortality; the universalism of this desire implies its existence. Were this desire not meant to be fulfilled the universe would not be unified. Every other natural desire of man has provision for its regular satisfaction. Hunger, the passion between men and women, the love of knowledge, glory, honor and fame all have their answer in nature. Can we not, from analogy, argue that the natural taste for immortality is to be answered?

Wallace notes that 'skeptical philosophers' (Mandeville) may deny that the desire for knowledge, morality, virtue, honor, fame and immortality have their source in nature. Instead, they claim that all of these are the work of preceptor, priest and politician, nothing more than romantic notions and manipulations. Immortality, they say, has little effect on man's conduct. Man is concerned only with his present life, not with the future. Wallace chooses not to answer these objections here saying only that "the desire of immortality is on the same footing as ... virtue and religion, which are generally allowed to be natural to mankind."²³⁴

Wallace's second argument for heaven also derives from the unified rationality/consistency of creation. He again returns to the initial paradox from the first *Prospect*. Man has never attained the amount of pleasure he is capable of. When we judge

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 355.

society, we must examine the numbers of which it consists, the improvements to knowledge, their taste in life and manner, and their moral improvements. Using this criteria we must conclude that human society has fallen far short of its potential. To Wallace, this shortfall indicates that God must have "some more extensive scheme in view, and the affairs of men must run on in a series, and extend themselves to a future life."²³⁵

Wallace's last proof of future life incorporates his belief in free will and miracles. Wallace does believe in miracles. God uses miracles to correct imbalances between pleasure and pain on earth. However, it is seldom necessary for God to 'interpose.' Wallace thinks divines have abused the 'Doctrine of Divine aid,' creating a laziness amongst mankind.²³⁶ Because miracles are few, virtue and guilt cannot be correctly accounted for on earth. Under free will, virtue and guilt are the products of man's actions and choices. Leaving virtue unrewarded and guilt unpunished would be tantamount to abandoning man. For this reason, liberty supposes a future state after death.²³⁷

Conclusion

Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence ends

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 366.

²³⁶ A. D. Smith, *Meditations on Seneca's Epistles written purely on the principles of Stoicism and abstracted from all Modern notions of Divinity*, (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), 31st Epistle.

²³⁷ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 380.

with an appeal to extreme Freethinkers "that deny or speak doubtfully of the being or of the perfections of God, and would destroy the force of moral obligation."²³⁰ Throughout history man has gone from one extreme to another in his thought. At this time, thought runs to the extreme of skepticism. Numerous arguments have been posed to the Freethinkers against their beliefs, but with little effect. In this last *Prospect*, "Advices to certain Freethinkers," Wallace suggests another approach to dissuade them. Rather than arguing each contested part, he offers to examine the consequences of the opposing sides - Deistic and Theistic. As their writings threaten themselves and society, perhaps this approach will convince Freethinkers to abandon their position.

If any of them are disposed to believe that there is not any sincere virtue in the world; that all mankind are knaves, and ought never to be trusted but when their own interest is concerned, or when they can gratify a favourite appetite or passion; or that mankind are so entirely selfish, and so wholly void of benevolence, that whatever resembles real virtue, thorough friendship, or public spirit, is nothing but pride, hypocrisy or affection, and was introduced by politicians, on purpose to subdue mankind, and to manage particular person, not for their own advantage, but that of others; or that all our boasted notions of virtue, equity, and a public spirit, which have made so great a noise, and have been so highly celebrated in the world, have arisen wholly from education and political contrivance, without any foundation in nature; that they have been preserved by custom and fashion, and supported either by enthusiasts who have been deceived, or by cunning priests or law-givers who knew the mystery, but were laying the world under unnecessary restraints for their own advantage.²³¹

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 393.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 394.

Wallace admonishes them to conceal such thoughts. Freethinkers such as these encourage mankind to indulge in knavery. Virtue and merit, he insists, are not a function of custom and fashion; every being has the ability to discern virtue from vice. He laments that writers who have demonstrated high levels of genius such as Shaftesbury have created systems which allow suspicion of God and morality.

Attacks on heaven and its attendant system of equitable rewards, create dread and torment over the prospect of death. The questioning of God or His perfections also torments the soul. Isn't it better to praise the perfection and beauty of the universe? "Religion is the best thing in the world."²⁴⁰

[I]t must be confessed, that the doctrine of a perfectly good, just, wise, and powerful governour of the universe, and of just and equitable rewards and punishments in a state after death, according to men's behavior in this present life, add greatly to the force of virtue, are absolutely necessary for supporting it under all its trials, and for giving full comfort to virtuous men. What a pity is it therefore, that those wholesome and sublime doctrines, with which some admirable authors are stored, should be mixed with such doubts and suspicions, as tend only to weaken the influence of reason, and strengthen the party of appetite and passion; and that persons who meant so well to mankind, should have been so much mistaken about the method of doing them service.

F I N I S.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 387.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 406.

Chapter III

POPULATION

Beginning at least as early as the classical period and continuing through the twentieth century, man has been concerned with the relationship between his numbers and society's welfare. The longstanding concern over the question of population has been reflected in his political debates, writings, government policies and laws. Over time and across countries, opinions of the value of a large and growing population have shifted back and forth between those advocating an increasing population and those fearing the consequences of greater numbers.¹

A country's attitude toward population often has depended upon the prevailing political and social situation or the perceived trend in population.² Early writers and policymakers had relatively simple views of population. During periods of war they identified the state's strength with its numbers, and advocated increase. In peaceful times, when the attention of the state turned to subsistence, theories and policies reflected the

¹ See E.P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate; The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967); Kenneth Smith, *The Malthusian Controversy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951); and Charles Emil Stangeland, *Pre-Malthusian Doctrines of Population: A Study in the History of Economic Theory* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1904).

² E.P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate; The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p.3.

relationship between population growth, and scarce resources.³ Later writers expanded on these theories to include the effects of trade, immigration, disease, religious vows, and a whole catalogue of population causes and effects.

Population theory in eighteenth century England was divided into two groups, the optimists and the pessimists. Optimist theory dominated opinion at the beginning of the century. An extension of seventeenth century theory, eighteenth century optimism continued to show the influence of mercantilism and a concern over the depopulating effects of war and disease. Optimists accepted the desirability of a large population, equating populousness with national strength. Like all population writers, they discussed determinates of population growth. They supported policies designed to enhance population growth. And while they recognized the necessary relationship between the food supply and population numbers, they saw the possibility of man's reaching the limit set by the food supply as remote and theoretical. Implicit in their arguments was an assumption that total production would increase at least in proportion to population and that large numbers would bring no serious consequences.⁴

³ Charles Emil Stangeland, *Pre-Malthusian Doctrines of Population: A Study in the History of Economic Theory* (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1904), p.14.

⁴ E.P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate; The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), chs, 3, 5.

By the end of the century, pessimist theory dominated. Increased attention to unemployment and poverty coupled with a growing philosophical acceptance of economic individualism brought challenges to the optimist platform. Pessimists held that overpopulation was imminent, if not a present reality. Their writings often included tables illustrating a geometric progression of numbers and focused on the consequences of an excess population. They saw population as an almost inevitable trend towards a surplus of numbers, unless checked by famine, disease or war. If not checked, excess population produced unemployment, poverty, crime and civil unrest.⁵

Robert Wallace is regarded as one of the clearest anticipators of Malthus. His *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind* (1753) and *Various Prospects of Mankind* (1761) are regarded as prime examples of pessimist literature. Hutchinson lists Wallace among the forerunners of Malthus, "for his *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind* (1753) and *Various Prospects of Mankind* (1761) present several pessimistic elements."⁶ D.V. Glass claims that Malthus derived "the immediate inspiration for his *Essay*" from *Prospects*.⁷ Bonar also

⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

⁶ Ibid., p. 137.

⁷ D.V. Glass, *Numbering the people; The eighteenth-century population controversy and the development of census and vital statistics in Britain* (Westmead: D.C. Heath Ltd, 1973), p. 38.

regards Wallace as an anticipator of Malthus,⁸ Kenneth Smith goes so far as to state that Wallace served as Malthus's mentor,⁹ and that between Wallace and Townsend, there was little for Malthus to add.¹⁰ Reflecting upon the degree to which Wallace and Townsend anticipate Malthus, Smith finds the tremendous success of Malthus's *Essay*, when contrasted with the less celebrated works of Wallace and Townsend, to be paradoxical.¹¹

It is clear that Wallace's works contain the important elements of Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. The geometric increase of mankind, the concept of checks, the limited supply of subsistence, the inevitable failure of utopian societies and the attendant misery all can be found in either *Numbers of Mankind* or *Various Prospects*. However, to categorize Wallace exclusively as a pessimist is misleading. In most of his writings, Wallace voices the optimist's platform--not the pessimist's. Likewise, to label him as a perfect anticipator of Malthus, differing only in the remoteness of over-population, is fallacious. Wallace attaches none of Malthus's politically conservative conclusions to his theories and is addressing an entirely different political debate.

⁸ James Bonar, *Malthus and His Work* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 32.

⁹ Kenneth Smith, *The Malthusian Controversy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 282.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

The narrow depiction of Wallace as a pessimist and Malthus anticipator is a product of: 1) the optimist/pessimist rubric, 2) the search for "pre-Malthusian" authors--a search that begins with the Malthusian population controversy with its unique setting and imposes this structure on earlier periods and authors, and 3) the 20th century perspective of the modern scholars who have studied the 18th century population debate.

The optimist/pessimist rubric is useful in surveying centuries of population theorists. By contrasting writings from the two groups, a survey can highlight the transition of thought. The rubric reveals the lack of originality in Malthus's *Essay*. It helps trace the development of the population question and how sensitive population theory has been to contemporary social conditions. However, as a paradigm for analyzing any particular author's thought, its value is limited. When used in the study of an individual writer, the dichotomy forces the writer into one camp or the other--regardless of how well he fits. It also fails to account for any transitional role the author may have played. The dichotomy creates ideal types which tend to collapse associated political, philosophical and religious thought into the two camps. Thus, authors are not merely cast as optimists or pessimists, they are confined to either the optimist - mercantilist - republican - religious camp or the pessimist - classical political economy - liberal - secular camp.

Such a reduced space is inadequate for analyzing either the period or Wallace. England in the 18th century was a place of

great change. Wallace's writing was very much a function of--and a response to--the controversies of this period (just as Malthus's writing was a product of his own time). In *Numbers* and in *Prospects*, Wallace is not writing principally about population. His comments on population come out of his questioning of the new social and economic order, philosophic discussions, and defending the existence of God and a life hereafter. In order to more correctly reflect the thought of Wallace and the environment within which the population controversy took place, a broader, more continuous framework is needed.

To a large extent the problems of narrow perspectives and of pigeonholing are inherent in secondary literature. Any scholarly attempt to simultaneously present a broad survey of the evolution of a theory and make a balanced representation of all the participating writer's thought would be prohibitive. The reader wanting a quick outline of the development of an idea would find such a work long and messy, while the reader interested in a particular facet of the development process would be disappointed regardless of the work's level of detail. Thus, the narrowness of the discussion, at least in the secondary literature, is understandable.

Unfortunately, the narrowness forces a choice of themes. Generally, authors of the secondary literature choose the dominant themes from the period when the topic was at its zenith--in this case the late 18th and early 19th century--the age of

'Malthusianism.'

Malthus's *Essay* was part of the revolutionary debate in England that followed the French Revolution. It was a political piece, with a radically conservative conclusion. In the first edition, Malthus argued that the Poor Laws, instead of being helpful to the poor, actually worsened the problem, and that mankind was interminably condemned to vice and misery. Later editions retained the conservatism and focused on adding more 'proofs' to the conclusion. From this model, when modern historians seek out pre-Malthusian population writers, the search seeks those who match Malthus's views--in all aspects. Those writers are sought who employed geometric rates of growth, were against poor relief, discussed checks, were conservative, and were anti-utopian. This method of tracing the development of an idea is biased. It does not attempt to trace the true course of the idea's formation. It starts with an idea and its supporting structure and then imposes that structure and/or themes on earlier periods and authors.

Wallace as a Pessimist

Contemporary Opinion

To depict Wallace as a pessimist and as an anticipator of Malthus is natural. In his attack on William Godwin's utopian society, Malthus himself listed Wallace, along with Smith and Hume, among those having already explained the principles of population. And he singled out Wallace as the foremost theorist. His only complaint with Wallace is that he did not apply the

principles with the "proper weight, or in the most forcible point of view."¹² Defending his belief in the continual improvement of society, Godwin devoted an entire essay to refuting Wallace's contention that common property would result in excessive population and therefore threaten his new order.¹³

Contemporaries of Malthus were quick to point out Malthus's debt to Wallace. In a letter entitled "On the originality of Mr. Malthus's principal argument," William Hazlitt expresses his inability to comprehend "how otherwise such a miserable reptile performance should ever have crawled to that height of reputation," and predicts the end of Malthus's "reign as lord of the ascendant."¹⁴ Having completed his personal attack on Malthus, Hazlitt settles down to the question of originality.

[I]t seems Mr. Malthus's essay was a *discovery*. There are those whom I have heard place him by the side of Sir Isaac Newton, as both equally great, the one in natural, the other in political philosophy. Mr. Malthus was not the first who found the secret. Whatever some of his ignorant admirers may pretend, Mr. Malthus will not say that this was the case. He has himself given us a list of authors, some of whom he had read before, and some since the first publication of his *Essay*, who fully understood and clearly stated his principle. Among these Wallace is the chief. He has

¹² Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, Mr. Condorcet, and Other Writers*, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976), p. 18.

¹³ Peter H. Marshall, *William Godwin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 112.

¹⁴ William Hazlitt, *A Reply to the 'Essay on Population' by the Rev. T.R. Malthus; In a Series of Letters; To which are added Extracts from the 'Essay'; With Notes* (1807; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), pp.18-20.

not only stated the general principle with the utmost force and precision, ... but what is most remarkable, he has brought this very argument forward as an answer to the same schemes of imaginary improvement, which the author of the Essay on population first employed it to overturn.¹⁵

Hazlitt includes eleven pages of Wallace's fourth "Prospect" to demonstrate the closeness of the two authors' works. "Here then we have not only the same argument stated; but stated in the same connection and brought to bear on the very same subject to which it is applied by the author of the Essay. The principle and the consequences deduced from it are exactly the same."¹⁶

Modern Opinion

When modern historians of economic thought present the evolution of population theory up to Malthus, they generally feature certain portions of Wallace's writings. They emphasize the table illustrating the geometric increase of mankind and the checks preventing the increase described in *Numbers of Mankind*. From *Various Prospects* they focus on the ultimate failure of utopian societies due to the pressure of population. These extracts are included in sections which show the shift to a pessimistic view of population growth or which demonstrate how completely Malthus had been anticipated. Wallace's works are coupled with those of Hale and Townsend or are paired with Malthus's to show the similarities of their thought.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

Geometric Increase

Wallace opens *Numbers of Mankind* with a discussion of man's potential rate of growth. Beginning with an original pair, Wallace estimates the size of a population over successive generations. He assumes that individuals live 100 years and that within 33 and 1/3 years couples have six children of which four survive. These assumptions yield a doubling period of 33 and 1/3 years.

Periods of the scheme.	Years of the scheme.	The sum of all who are alive at the respective years or periods.
-----	-----	-----
0	1	2
1	33	6
2	66	12
3	100	24
4	133	48
5	166	96
6	200	192
7	233	384
8	266	768
9	300	1536
10	333	3072
11	366	6144
12	400	12,288
13	433	24,576
*	*	*
*	*	*
*	*	*
36	1200	206,158,430,208
37	1233	412,316,860,416 ¹⁷

Discussions of doubling periods and geometric growth rates were frequently incorporated into works by writers wary of an

¹⁷ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), pp. 3-7.

increasing population. A law of increase was necessary to support their contention that numbers pushed against subsistence. In an essay published in 1682, Petty uses the studies done by Graunt to calculate various rates of doubling for different populations. Using a doubling period of 360 years he determines that population of the earth "will within the next 2000 years so increase as to give one Head for every two Acres of Land in the *Habitable* part of the *Earth*. And then, according to the *Prediction of the Scriptures*, there must be *Wars* and great *Slaughter*, &c."¹⁸

In projecting the population of London and England into the future. Petty uses a doubling period of 40 years. He determines that by 1842 the population of London will be 10,718,880, "according to the present, *Laws and Practice of Marriages*."

{Annis.}	{Burials}	{People in London}	{People in England}
1565	2568	77040	5526929
1605	5135		
1642	11883		
1682	22331	669930	7369230
1722	44662		
1762	89324		
1802	178648	5359440	9825650
1842	357296	10718880	10917389

"Wherefore it is Certain and Necessary that the *Growth* of the City must stop before the said Year 1840."¹⁹

¹⁸ William Petty, *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. Charles Henry Hull (Fairfield: Augustus M. Kelley, 1986), p. 464.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

Hale calculates a 34 year doubling period, assuming 6 children per couple with 2 surviving to maturity. After discussing various checks that maintain an equilibrium of numbers in the animal world, he lists the various 'corrective' to man's population growth. One of these correctives is war.²⁰

Wars seem to be in a manner a Natural Consequence of the over-plentitude and redundancy of the Number of Men in the World: And so by a kind of congruity and consequence, morally necessary when the World grows too full of Inhabitants, that there is not room one by another; or that the common Supplies which the World should afford to Mankind begin to be too few, to strait, or too narrow for the Numbers of Men; that natural propension of Self-love, and natural principle of Self-preservation will necessarily break out into Wars and Internecions, to make room for those that find themselves straitned or inconvenienced..."²¹

Accepting that the population of North America doubles every 25 years, while that of Europe requires 500 years, Joseph Townsend attributed the difference in growth rates to the availability of food. As long as the supply of food is plentiful (as in America) the population will soon double. "In a fully peopled country, to say, that no one shall suffer want is absurd. ... It is indeed possible to banish hunger, ... but then you must determine the proportion that shall marry, because you will

²⁰ These assumptions yield a stationary population. See: Kenneth Smith, *The Malthusian Controversy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 13.

²¹ Matthew Hale, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind*, 1677; quoted in Kenneth Smith, *The Malthusian Controversy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 14.

have no other way to limit the number of your people."²²

Townsend's method for determining the proportion that shall marry is to leave the decision to each individual, in the absence of any welfare measures.

The similarity between Wallace's growth assumptions and accompanying table and the writings of those population theorists concerned with a surplus population help to explain Wallace's depiction in the secondary literature as a pessimist. Seeking to demonstrate the lack of originality of Malthus's geometrical progression, survey authors have grouped together all who discussed a natural increase in human populations as anticipators of Malthus. In discussing the emergence of the 'Malthusian' Principle, Schumpeter notes:

the theory sprang fully developed from the brain of Botero in 1589, and that Malthus really did no more than repeat it, except that he adopted particular mathematical laws for the operation...population was to increase 'in geometric ratio or progression'--that is, in a divergent geometric series--'food in arithmetic ratio or progression'. But the 'law of geometric progression', though not in Botero's work, was suggested by Petty in his *Essay concerning the Multiplication of Mankind* (1686), by Susmilch (1740), by R. Wallace (1753), and by Ortes (1774).²³

In a chapter entitled "The Development of Pessimistic Doctrine before Malthus", Hutchinson notes that concern about the

²² Joseph Townsend, *Journey Through Spain*; quoted in *The Malthusian Controversy*, Kenneth Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 32.

²³ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, ed. Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 255-56.

negative effect of population increase on the social and economic order led to several new theories which were quite contrary to the optimist doctrine. One of these theories was the power of increase.²⁴ Like Schumpeter, Hutchinson lists the Botero and the 17th century English writers Graunt, Petty, and Hale, as employing the concept of doubling rates and geometric increase. 18th century contributors employing this element of the classical pessimist doctrine include Maurice de Saxe, Sussmilch, Hume, Wallace, Smith, Thomas Short, Townsend, Franklin, Stiles, Paley, Ortes, Mandeville, and Cantillon.²⁵

Checks

Moderns also point to Wallace's discussion of checks to population growth as having anticipated Malthus. Wallace grouped the checks on man's increase into physical and moral causes. Physical causes included: climate, seasonality, plagues, famines, earthquakes, and inundations of the sea.²⁶ Moral causes included: difference of religion and of religious or moral institutions; different customs with respect to servants and the maintenance of the poor; different rules of succession to estates and the right of primogeniture; the little encouragement given to marriage in

²⁴ E.P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate; The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), ch. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-114.

²⁶ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 12.

modern times; the great number of soldiers in the standing armies of Europe; too extensive trade; neglect of agriculture; the different extent of ancient and modern governments; the ruin of the ancient states by the greater monarchies, especially by the Roman Empire; and last of all, the loss of that ancient simplicity which had long prevailed.²⁷ In addition, Wallace states five maxims of population: that there shall always be found a greater number of inhabitants in proportion to the plenty of provisions, that a better climate produces greater numbers, that the number of people depends upon the political maxims and institutions concerning the division of lands, that population is affected by the degree to which government encourages marriage, and that to render a nation populous fishing and agriculture must be cherished.²⁸

Presenting extensive listings of population checks was common for optimists and pessimists alike. Populationists sought to discover and remove obstacles to increase. Sceptics argued either that by preventing overpopulation these checks were regrettable or useful, or that checks came into operation when overpopulation was imminent or at hand.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., p. 84.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-20.

²⁹ E.P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate; The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 123.

Despite this neutrality with respect to optimists and pessimists, discussions of population checks are generally found in chapters devoted to the pessimistic anticipators of Malthus. In "Part I: Influences on Malthus," the Norton Critical Edition of Malthus's *Essay*, selections from Hume, Wallace, Smith, Condorcet, and Godwin are presented. The Wallace selection is entirely from *Numbers*, nothing is selected from *Prospects*. The selection contains the five maxims listed above and three paragraphs from the conclusion of *Numbers*.

Kenneth Smith's review of Wallace's contributions is much more complete. Extracts from both *Numbers* and *Prospects* appear in his summary of Wallace's work. The portion from *Numbers* includes, first, the geometric increase, and second, a complete review of Wallace's physical and moral checks to population as well as the five population maxims. The impression created in these treatments is that Wallace's population checks and maxims make him a pessimistic anticipator of Malthus.

Utopian Demise

Just as Hazlitt argued, modern scholars regard Wallace's dismissal of utopian societies in *Various Prospects*, as having completely anticipated Malthus's arguments against the utopian societies of Godwin and Condorcet. What is more, they credit Wallace with aiming his critic against the Poor Laws. In a section tracing growing ideas about personal responsibility and restraint as part of the pessimistic doctrine, Hutchinson contends that the pessimists' distrust of the economic and

demographic effects of poor relief led them to doubt the feasibility of the various egalitarian and utopian proposals current in the latter part of the 18th century. To support his contention, he cites Wallace's *Prospects* and Townsend's *Dissertation on the Poor Laws*.

Wallace and Townsend in particular were skeptical of such proposals. According to Wallace's criticism of various utopian schemes:

Under a perfect government the inconveniences of having a family would be so entirely removed, children would be so well taken care of, and every thing become so favourable to populousness, that though some sickly seasons or dreadful plagues in particular climates might cut off multitudes, yet in general, mankind, would increase so prodigiously that the earth would at last be overstocked, and become unable to support its numerous inhabitants.

The end result, as he saw it, was that the growth of numbers would bring the utopian society to war or to the adoption of unnatural customs. He concluded that the proposals of More and others made attractive reading but that they were "airy systems" that were impractical because of the vices of mankind and the artificial stimulation of population growth.

Townsend, an equally strong pessimist and equally skeptical of egalitarian proposals for the alleviation of want,....³⁰

In "Application to the Poor Laws" Kenneth Smith traces the evolution of an idea that would allow public opinion to accept the abolition of Outdoor Relief to the able-bodied, part of Laissez Faire mentality.

So we see the case building up. Public Provision for the poor is ruinous to the rich and degrading to the poor. It hinders the exercise of charity which engenders the most beautiful sentiments in all concerned. It is unnatural and anti-Christian. What more is needed? But one more nail in the coffin--the Principle of Population!

Wallace had announced it; Townsend had developed it in some degree; Malthus perfected it, and to him must go the credit. The poor laws were ruinous,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 135.

degrading, unnatural, anti-Christian--and USELESS. They could not achieve their object.³¹

Wallace as a Optimist

Despite the many pessimistic elements noted above, Wallace retains much of the optimist platform. His views on population are a mixture of old and new and are not obviously consistent. A more continuous space would allow a better appreciation of Wallace's role in the development of population theory and its transition from optimism to pessimism. In addition, a higher dimension space, by incorporating the social, political, and economic controversies related to the population debate, would reveal how close Malthus and Wallace were on metaphysical aspects of population theory.

Despite the many pessimistic elements of Wallace's works, he generally writes in the spirit of an optimist. He implicitly accepts the value of a large population. In *Numbers, Prospects*, and in *Characteristics*, he identifies population levels with national strength. He promotes policies designed to encourage population growth. With the exception of the theoretical discussion of a Utopian society within *Prospects*, Wallace does not consider seriously the problem of over-population. Interestingly, over the course of these works and in his proposed

³¹ Kenneth Smith, *The Malthusian Controversy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 300.

Advice to all true Patriots,³² Wallace's definition of national wealth changes, leading him to a more qualified optimism.

In his earliest work concerning population levels, *Numbers of Mankind*, Wallace voices the traditional optimist claim: that a country's wealth is measured by the number of its citizens. While Wallace takes this principle as self-evident and does not offer any defense of this criteria, his phrasing seems to reflect the concern for war apparent in the writings of many other optimists.

...a country is surely most powerful, when it has abundance of people to consume its grain and its cattle at home, and when its lands are cultivated to the full. Till all countries are peopled in this manner, the earth is not replenished with that number of inhabitants which it is able to maintain.

However, a latitude must here be allowed. For a scheme, if carried to its utmost extent, would be an hinderance to mutual commerce. And if the whole earth were cultivated to the full, and every country had a number of inhabitants sufficient to consume its own product, many would perish at particular times by bad crops and by famines: but a danger so distant needs not alarm, as, from the present condition of the world, there is not the least reason to fear that the earth shall be cultivated to the full, or that every country shall be plentifully stored with inhabitants.³³

The importance Wallace ascribes to high population levels leads naturally to a long list of policy recommendations designed to promote population growth. Most of the policy recommendations

³² Contained within Wallace's letter to Hume, written sometime in 1767. Hume replied to Wallace on December 15th of that year. Hume's reply is contained in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Grieg (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1976), I, p 173.

³³ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 150.

deal with agriculture and the price of basic provisions. Encouragement of agriculture will lead to lower food prices, which will encourage marriage and families. Reform of lease laws will improve cultivation, further reducing food prices. He recommends a scheme for establishing a life insurance pool amongst a large group of married men to provide for the widows and children of those who 'happen to die at an early time of life.' This, he reasons, will also act as an encouragement to marry. Overall, he rails for a return to simpler tastes, as the desire for luxuries adds to the expense of life, and robs workers from agriculture.

In *Characteristics of Great Britain*, Wallace continues to see a large and growing population as an asset. However, the relationship between a society's numbers and its wealth is different than in either *Numbers* or *Prospects*. In both *Numbers* and *Prospects*, Wallace voices the nationalistic view of population, equating numbers with wealth. In *Characteristics*, the identity is replaced by a causal relationship--greater wealth begets greater numbers. In "Of the Riches of North Britain," Wallace states this altered view:

Superior industry adds first to a country's stock and increases its wealth through increased labour. After this it gradually increases the number of the people, by furnishing better means of subsistence, and by encouraging marriage. Because the population has grown slower than its wealth, Scotland is not only richer, but richer in

proportion to its inhabitants.³⁴

The last part is significant; it signals a revision of Wallace's definition of national wealth. Rather than viewing a nation's wealth as the sum of its citizen's wealth, the wealth of a nation is measured by per capita wealth.

We may conclude with certainty, that the wealth of any country is increased, when the number of the people has increased, when the fields and gardens are better cultivated, and produce better kinds, and a greater quantity of fruits; when the country breeds more numerous stores, and better kinds of cattle; when the houses are more magnificent, and more richly furnished; when the people are better cloathed, and their tables are more elegant; when their ware-houses are filled with a more valuable quantity of goods.³⁵

In his proposal for "Advice to all true patriots," written only a few years before his death, Wallace still retains his pro-population position. He advocates government policies designed to promote agriculture and encourage population growth. He continues to hold the low prices and plenty of provisions in ancient Greece and Rome as an ideal that he seeks to imitate with the "culture of Britain." To carry agriculture to its full extent in Great Britain, he advises that development of America and Asia should be discouraged and agriculture should be promoted over trade. He also calls for taxation of luxuries and bachelors and encouragement of immigration.

³⁴ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 113.

³⁵ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 113.

Despite the continued themes of simplicity, agriculture and greater numbers, the surviving portions of *Advices*, embrace the principles of markets and classical economics (and its attendant conservatism) much more than any of Wallace's earlier works. This is perhaps best evidenced in Wallace's treatment of the poor. He supported Britain's Poor Laws. In "Of providing for the poor," presumably a section intended to be contained within *Advices*, however, he expresses concern that aid to the poor might elevate, not reduce, their numbers.

Many laws and work houses & foundations have been made for maintaining the poor: it is a Question with me whether this is an advantage whether it does not excite to idleness & must in creases the number of the poor & whether Great jobs are not carried on under the pretense of managing for the poor & on the whole whether it might be a great saving to leave the poor to the occasionall supplies of those who know their necessities and all who are really necessitous might not be well enough taken care of in this manner: this ought to be seriously considered³⁶

Little is left for Malthus to add here.

A Suggested Space

That Wallace does not fit neatly into either the optimist or the pessimist camp (or that he fits into both) suggests that the optimist/pessimist dichotomy is inappropriate for the purpose of understanding Wallace's writings on population. In a somewhat flippant manner Glass argues that the 18th century population debate "derived far more from a desire to demonstrate the historical truth of the Bible, a nostalgia for misconceived and

³⁶ Robert Wallace, "Of prices and dearth of provisions in different numbers referring to one another" (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.620¹¹), p. 12.

over-glorified antiquity, and a distaste for the growing importance of manufacture and commerce."³⁷ However ridiculous these motivations may seem, they go a long way towards explaining the intellectual climate in which Wallace was writing and suggest a superior overarching perspective from which to examine Wallace's works--the ideas of progress and decline. An interpretation of Wallace's writings recast around the several controversies spawned by the debate over progress and decay better reflects the context of the larger works they are contained within and shows his writings to be more consistent than does the simple optimist/pessimist perspective.

The most important benefit of recasting Wallace's population writings around the debate over progress is the importance and scope it brings to the population question--a question that very much transcended demographics.³⁸ Mossner claims that to understand why Hume--and this extends equally to Wallace--believed the question of population to be so curious and so important requires an understanding of its relation to the Ancient-Modern controversy which helped give rise to the larger theory of progress.³⁹ Of the infinite number of controversies

³⁷ D.V. Glass, "The Population Controversy in Eighteenth-Century England," *Population Studies*, vol VI, No 1, (July 1952), p. 87.

³⁸ Ernest Campbell Mossner makes this very clear in his article, "Hume and the Ancient-Modern Controversy, 1725-1752: A Study in Creative Scepticism," *The University of Texas Studies in English*, vol 28, (1949).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

surrounding the idea of progress, the Ancient-Modern debate, the Population debate, the Luxury debate, and the implications of the new science, are the most central to Wallace's works. To truly understand what Wallace was responding to, what he was trying to communicate, and really thinking requires an understanding of these debates.

Wallace believed society to be in decay. Given the philosophical position presented in the previous chapter this is hardly surprising. In the famous "Hume-Wallace debate," he sided with the ancients while Hume argued on behalf of the moderns. As was noted in the previous chapter, Wallace often exhibited a primitivist attitude leading him fear the effects of expanding commerce and luxury goods. His wariness of commercial society was further reinforced by his civic republican political ideology. Finally, the gains the science and inevitable attacks on religion push him to advocate more orthodox views than he would have had otherwise and to challenge the 18th century faith in man's reason and ability to deliver himself to a better state. A reexamination of the 'optimist/pessimist' components of Wallace's writings on population mentioned earlier in the chapter, framed, not by the optimist/pessimist framework, but by the controversies mentioned above, will provide a fairer and more consistent reflection of his thought.

The Hume-Wallace Debate

Wallace's first major work and the one that deals most directly with the question of population is his *A Dissertation on*

the *Numbers of Mankind* (1753).⁴⁰ *Numbers's* publication follows the 1752 publication of Hume's *Political Discourses* that contained the essay "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations." These two works, Wallace's response to Hume, which appears as an appendix to *Numbers*, and the extensive correspondence between the two concerning these works, make up the Hume-Wallace debate.⁴¹ It is within this friendly debate that Wallace introduced his tables of geometric increase and his theories on the checks to population growth.

The Hume-Wallace debate was not focused on population levels. The debate was broader. It was a discussion of political theory, political history, political philosophy, and comparative politics. Most immediately, it was a comparison of civilizations and cultures--modern Europe versus ancient Greece and Rome. Wallace argued for the superiority of ancient civilization, while Hume supported the modern. The debate addressed the question of societal decay or progress. Wallace maintained the traditional belief that society had declined over

⁴⁰ An earlier version of this work was presented to the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh prior to 1746.

⁴¹ The relationship between Hume and Wallace will not be discussed here. For an account of their relationship see: Ernest Campbell's *The Life of David Hume* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980). It should be noted that Hume had written extensively on matters concerning the Ancient-Modern debate prior to the Hume-Wallace debate, and probably would have written his essay without Wallace's initial volley. See: Ernest Campbell's "Hume, And the Ancient-Modern Controversy, 1725-1752: A Study in Creative Scepticism," *The University of Texas Studies in English*, vol. 28, 1949.

the ages, while Hume rejected this theory. Ultimately, the debate focused on those factors that bring about historical change.

When considering the possible sources of change, both authors begin by adopting the source categories defined by Montesquieu in *The Persian Letters*: physical causes and moral causes.⁴² Physical causes include climate as well as disease and longevity. For the most part, Hume and Wallace largely dismiss physical causes as sources of change. More attention is given to moral causes which include men's manners, the nature of government and public affairs, and the material provisions of a society. Both authors believed the debate to be important because at issue were the fundamental institutions of society. Wallace believed these institutions were responsible for man's decline; Hume believed that they were part of man's progress.

It is within the context of evaluating the effects of political institutions, that population entered the debate--as an indicator. Both authors agreed that larger numbers indicate superior institutions--a large and thriving population evidences a prosperous and well-governed polity.⁴³ In *Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations*, Hume states that "if everything else be

⁴² See: Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*, letter CXIII, "Usbek to Rhedi, at Venice," trans. George R. Healy (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill company, Inc., 1964).

⁴³ Federick Rosen, "The Principle of Population As Political Theory: Godwin's Of Population and the Malthusian Controversy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol 31, no 1, (January - March 1970), pp. 41.

equal, it seems natural to expect, that, wherever there are most happiness and virtue, and the wisest institutions, there will also be most people."⁴⁴ Similarly, in *Numbers of Mankind*, Wallace states that "the question concerning the number of mankind in ancient and modern times, under ancient or modern governments, is not to be considered as a matter of mere curiosity, but of the greatest importance; since it must be a strong presumption in favour of the customs or policy of any government, if, *cæteris paribus*, it is able to raise up and maintain a greater number of people."⁴⁵

The Hume-Wallace political debate is not 'pre-Malthusian.' Both authors explicitly favor measures that promote population growth. Malthus, of course, opposed encouraging greater populations. Moreover, whereas Hume and Wallace assigned a pivotal role to the change of human institutions, Malthus believed they had no affect at all. "[T]he truth is, that though human institutions appear to be the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief to mankind, yet in reality they are light and superficial, they are mere feathers that float on the surface, in comparison with those deeper seated causes of impurity that corrupt the springs and render turbid the whole stream of human

⁴⁴ Eugene Rotwein, ed. *David Hume Writings on Economics* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970) p. 112.

⁴⁵ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 14.

life."⁴⁶

As anticipators of the 'Malthusian Controversy,' Hume and Wallace are more closely alligned with Godwin. Godwin considered his work to be in keeping with the traditional pursuit of political science, "enquiring how mankind in society, by every means that can be devised, may be made happy."⁴⁷ In *Political Justice*, he said institutions were very important. And in his response to Malthus's *Essay, Of Population*, he attempted to demonstrate that republics encouraged the increase of population, but had no population problem.⁴⁸ Malthus too, had arrived at a utopian conclusion and method. This political science *raison d' etre* was what distinguished Godwin from Malthus and what similarly distinguishes Hume and Wallace from Malthus. Hume and Wallace were engaged in a debate over comparative politics--within the same tradition of political science subscribed to by Godwin. Malthus's contribution was in the nature of political economy, what Frederick Rosen describes as

⁴⁶ Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society, with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, Mr. Condorcet, and Other Writers*, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976), p. 66.

⁴⁷ William Godwin; quoted in "The Principle of Population As Political Theory: Godwin's Of Population and the Malthusian Controversy," Federick Rosen, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol 31, no 1, (January - March 1970), p. 37.

⁴⁸ Federick Rosen, "The Principle of Population As Political Theory: Godwin's Of Population and the Malthusian Controversy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol 31, no 1, (January - March 1970), p. 38.

utopian theory:

In place of speculations about the future of mankind. Malthus developed a theory of economic and political progress based on the simple and constant operation of two variables: ratios of population increase and food production. From the operation of these variables, all of man's social relations, his past achievements as well as his future prospects, could be measured.⁴⁹

While Hume and Wallace agree on the importance and objective of their debate, each adopted a different method to support their case. Hume approached the controversy as a modernist, employing "the method of Newton, the method of science, the method of Creative Scepticism."⁵⁰ His essay examines two questions: 1) whether it is probable that ancient societies were more populous than modern societies, and 2) whether, in fact, ancient societies were more populous. After reviewing factors such as the institution of slavery, forms of government, wars, property rights, and commerce, Hume concludes that it is unlikely that the ancient civilizations could have supported more numbers than modern nations. And he regards the facts recorded by ancient authors as too uncertain to be trusted.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁵⁰ Ernest Campbell Mossner makes this very clear in his article, "Hume and the Ancient-Modern Controversy, 1725-1752: A Study in Creative Scepticism," *The University of Texas Studies in English*, vol 28, (1949), pp. 141-142.

⁵¹ Ernest Campbell Mossner makes this very clear in his article, "Hume and the Ancient-Modern Controversy, 1725-1752: A Study in Creative Scepticism," *The University of Texas Studies in English*, vol 28, (1949).

In contrast, Wallace, begins, *a priori*, with the conviction that ancient populations were greater than modern populations--
a

belief founded on his readings of the classical historians.

In this Dissertation I have endeavoured to prove that the antient world in its most flourishing times was much more populous than the modern. I formed this opinion long ago from reading the classics, & from the accounts given of antient times by these authors.⁵²

Wallace kept a notebook that he used in composing *Numbers*. The notebook is filled with dates and figures taken from the works of authors such as Colummella, Varro, Cato, Strabo, Tacitus, Horace, Demosthenes, Xenophon, Seneca, Plutarch, Polybus, and many others. Accompanying the figures are written comments by Wallace regarding "the Declining of the World," "the Superiority of antient manners," and "Superior Laws."⁵³ The ancient authors on which Wallace took notes generally maintained that mankind was in decline. They, along with Ovid, Lucretius and others, are cited throughout Wallace's works.

To explain the incredible population levels reported by the ancient authors, as well as the sparse population of the modern world, Wallace needed to demonstrate that mankind had the potential to expand its numbers quickly. This is where his table of geometric growth and theories about checks to growth came in.

⁵² Robert Wallace, draft of letter to Montesquieu (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹).

⁵³ Wallace's "Commonplace book" (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96⁴).

The table demonstrates how quickly man's numbers might increase, and, by implication, "how much the increase of mankind is prevented by the various causes which confine their number within such narrow limits."⁵⁴ The growth potential, combined with the checks to that growth, challenges any assumption of a necessary, continual increase of man's numbers, revealing that man "may have been more numerous in some preceding, than in some subsequent ages."⁵⁵

Physical Decay

As mentioned, in trying to determine the source of historical change, both Wallace and Hume focused on moral rather than physical causes. In *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind*, Wallace, however, does state that better climate and soil, *ceteris paribus*, lead to greater numbers.⁵⁶ Similarly, physical changes such as, alterations in the temperature of the air, the heat of the sun, or the nourishing virtue of the earth, may prevent generation or cut off greater numbers in all the different periods of life.⁵⁷ All of this notwithstanding, he believes that the climate of the earth has not changed over the ages, and he concludes that causes of this type are not

⁵⁴ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 9.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

sufficient to explain "so great a decay of people."⁵⁸ Hume also believes that better soil and climate are conducive to population growth, but dismisses the possibility of climate change and excludes physical causes from the discussion.⁵⁹

The exclusion of the physical dimension of historical change was a marked departure from traditional discussions. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid described the climate's decline as the earth moved from the Golden to the subsequent Silver and Iron ages. During the Golden age,

spring was everlasting, and gentle zephyrs with warm breath played with the flowers that sprang unplanted. Anon the earth, untilled, brought forth her stores of grain, and the fields, though unfallowed, grew white with the heavy, bearded wheat. Streams of milk and streams of sweet nectar flowed, and yellow honey was distilled from the verdant oak.⁶⁰

But in the Silver age, the bounds of old-time spring were shortened, and "through winter, summer, variable autumn, and brief spring completed the year in four seasons. Then first the parched air glared white with burning heat, and icicles hung down congealed by freezing winds."⁶¹ Montesquieu too, focused on physical conditions. His sociological study of legal and political institutions explored the differences in external

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

⁵⁹ Ernest Campbell Mossner, "Hume and the Ancient-Modern Controversy, 1725-1752: A Study in Creative Scepticism," *The University of Texas Studies in English*, vol 28, (1949), pp. 139-153.

⁶⁰ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, vol. I, (1946; Cambridge: Harvard University Press), pp. 19-11.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 11.

conditions. He "made much of the differences of climate and attempted to describe how different climates promote different customs, habits, economic arrangements, and religions."⁶² In the *Persian Letters*, he complains of decay and pestilence, and the associated depopulation. He worries that if the depopulation continues, "the earth will be a desert in a thousand years."⁶³

Apparently this ancestry was too hard to overcome, for despite their declarations, physical change was part of the Hume-Wallace controversy. This is particularly true for Wallace, but Hume too seems prejudiced towards including the physical dimension--at least the theoretical consideration--in his essay. Wallace worried that his case for the ancients was threatened by a theory that the climate of the world is improving--that the earth could more easily sustain large populations now than it could in the past.

Near the end of "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations," Hume attempts to discredit the ancient historians by showing that their testimony is inconsistent with their claims of huge populations. One of the ways he does this is by reciting passages from the works of different ancient historians regarding the climate. He quotes Diodorus, Ovid, Varro, and Strabo, all of whom reported extremely harsh and cold weather conditions in

⁶² Maurice Cranston, "Montesquieu, Baron de," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), V, 370.

⁶³ Montesquieu, trans. George R. Healy, *The Persian Letters* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), p. 188.

ancient times.⁶⁴ To this he adds the report of L'Abbe du Bos who reports that that "Italy is warmer at present than it was in ancient times."⁶⁵ If all of this were true, says Hume, the modern era would enjoy a great advantage in supporting numbers. It is almost certain that Hume did not believe any of these reports; they were merely included to demonstrate how implausible the other claims of the ancients were.

Wallace, however, took Hume's comments seriously. When the published version of *Numbers* appeared in 1753, a full section of the "Additional Observations," was devoted to the climate issue. Between the time of publication of Hume's essay and the publication of his own work, Wallace engaged the help of two professors from Edinburgh college: Kenneth McKenzie, Professor

⁶⁴ "The observation of this ingenious critic may be extended to other European climates. Who could discover the mild climate of France in Diodorus Siculus's description of Gaul? 'As it is a northern climate', says he, 'it is infested with cold to an extreme degree. In cloudy weather, instead of rain there fall great snows; and in clear weather it there freezes so excessive hard, that the rivers acquire bridges of their own substance, over which, not only single travellers may pass, but large armies, accompanied with all their baggage and loaded wagons. And there being many rivers in Gaul, the Rhone, the Rhine, &c., almost all of them are frozen over;....'

"North of the Cevennes, says Strabo, Gaul produces not figs and olives: And the vines, which have been planted, bear not grapes, that will ripen.

"Ovid positively maintains, with all the serious affirmation of prose, that the Euxine sea was frozen over every winter in his time; and he appeals to Roman governours, whom he names, for the truth of his assertions. This seldom or never happens at present in the latitude of Tomi, whither Ovid was banished."

David Hume, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations," *David Hume Writings on Economics*, ed. Eugene Rotwein (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970) pp. 171-172.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 170.

of Civil Law, and Charles Macky, professor of History. In August, 1752, Wallace wrote to Mckenzie and to Macky⁶⁶ requesting information regarding current climate conditions in the hopes of demonstrating that conditions had not improved as he believed Hume maintained.

Secondly as Mr Hume observes that many countries in Europe are hotter at present or rather less cold than they were anciently, particularly that the Tyber no more freezes att Rome than the Nile att Cairo; that the rivers in France the Rhone, the Rhine &c do not Freeze as in the time of Diodorus Siculus when whole armies with their baggage passed over on the ice, that the Euxine sea never freezes in the Latitude of Tomi as in the days of Ovid, Please to let me know what your opinions is of this, & whether according to modern relations from travellers or others all these things do not happen att some times att present & have not happened within these two hundred years by past & what books give account of these frosts & colds

Please also to let me know whether France att present produces figs & olives & ripe grapes north of the Cevennes, which Mr Hume thinks they did not produce antiently⁶⁷

McKenzie's response offered no help for Wallace's position. He repeats many of Hume's assertions and adds other references supporting the claim that the climate was harsher in ancient times.

I am still a greater Stranger to your Second Question. Abbe du Bos was The First who observed to me The Odds betwixt those Climates you mention in antient Times and now. But long before that I remember to have wondered at a Passage I met with either in Herodian or Dion Cassius narrating The History of The Emperer Severus's War in The North of England. That Severus lost many Thousand Soldiers in The vast Bogs in that Countrey, though we hear of little of that kind now. I cannot now point The place, but I doubt not

⁶⁶ Wallace's letter to Macky is missing. However, Macky's response to Wallace indicates that Wallace had made the same request of Macky as he did of McKenzie.

⁶⁷ Kenneth McKenzie, Letter to Robert Wallace, August 17, 1752 (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹).

your finding it in Hoseley's Britannia Romana at The End of which The Author has collected all The Passages of the Roman Historians realting to The History of Britain. I remember also to have heard some Gentleman tell a story which in some sort crosses Abbe du Bos his Observation, though, if true, it shows That Time makes Change in Climates. My Author was at an Entertainment with The late Czar Peter The Great where The Conversation turned on America and on The Titles of the different European Princes to The Dominion of that Country and The Czar put in his claim, and said He had a better Right than any of The rest, as America was peopled from his Countrey, and, consequently, The Natives were his Subjects, and, when it was objected by some of The Company That The Cold must necessarily have hindered Men from passing those frozen Seas which are interjected, The Czar answered That long ago The Cold was not nigh so intense as now, That The Ice increased every year & never melted, and Therefore some Thousand Years ago Men might easily enough passed from The North East parts of Asia to America and so flit South-ward and plenish that whole Continent. I won't say you'll find any comparisons on betwixt past and present Times; But I believe you'll find pretty accurate Observations on The Climate of The Countries joining The Euxine Sea in Busbequius's Epistles and Fournafort's Travels, and I fancy you'll find Something of it in Xenophon's Anabasis Cyri and, possibly, it may be worth While to look into The Acta Petropolitana where there are some very accurate Observations on The Geography of The Northern Part of Asia comparing it's present Condition with Herodot's Account of it. But I looked into these Acts so cursorily that I do not now remember if The Author meddled with any Thing further than The Dimensions of The Countrey & Distances of The Places. I can as little inform you at Present of The Produce of The different Provinces of France. But I believe I can point you out an accurate Account of them in Baulainvillier's Etat present de la France, and very probably, if Salmasius's Observations on Solinus's Poly:Histor were carefully looked, Something might be had on the antient Condition of that Countrey, and it might be worth While to turn over Pliny's Natural History on that Subject. But, as I give all from Memory, I dare promise Nothing. I am sorry I can give you no more Satisfaction to your Questions. If I could, you might depend upon my taking Pains. But in this Place I can do Nothing. I doubt not you have observed a Passage in Tacitus, Suetion, Dion or Pliny, I know not which, whence we learn That The Emperor Claudius allowed The Gauls to plant Vines of which they had none before, and I think in The Life of Probus The Emperor it is told That he gave The like Permission to The Germans. I know not How far North France produces Figs. But I believe Oyl grows no where but in The Southermost Parts, and, I believe, even there in no great quantity; For I remember to

have read That they import a great Deal from The Greek Islands. I believe Fournefort relates this.⁶⁰

Macky's response, however, was more to Wallace's liking as it contains information that contradicted Hume's thesis.

Next, as to the greater mildness or warmth in several countrys in modern than in ancient ages, I never persued my travels with a view to find out the difference, and at present have none by me. Only every body knows that in all countries, an extraordinary vigourous winter now & then happens, perhaps once in half a century, which might give occasion to extravagant relations afterwards. I remember an excessive cold winter is mentioned in history to have happened I think about the year of Christ 680, at which time the Euphrates was frozen so hard as to bear loaded waggons &c for 30 days. And in the beginning of viog the frost was so severe as to kill almost all the vines in France. I felt that vigorous season at Gromengen, & the eldest Dutchmen then alive agreed, they had never felt any thing near to it, if our Ovid had been there & outlived the cold, we should have had a fine picture of it.

I imagine Mr Hume would gain nothing tho he could prove that Gaul anciently did not produce figs, olives & ripe grapes north of the Cevennes. The culture of fruits having during many ages of the world made very slow progress from one nation to another. When peaches were first propagated in Italy & France, it surprised the world that they could be brought to perfection out of Persia. Olives indeed are reckoned better in Langeudor & Provence than anywhere else perhaps in Europe; but the provinces of Burgundy & Champagne produce the richest wines in France, not to mention vineyards which produce tolerable good wine much further north, and as for figgs, I have eat them very good 100 miles north of Edins.

The Empr Probous who reigned, if I remember right, about 30 years before Deocletien, is mentioned in history as the first who planted vines in Hungary his native country, and about this time or soon after, it is generally believed that vines began to be propagated in France, Germany, Spain &c. So that we cannot justly argue from the not planting certain fruits, that they would not grow or be brought to maturity in a country. In **** I know several places where when I was a boy they only sowed black oats, from a silly conceit that white oats would not thrive, and now the use of the black is entirely laid aside, since agriculture begins to

⁶⁰ Kenneth McKenzie, Letter to Robert Wallace, September 1, 1752 (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹).

make a little progress.⁶⁹

To this letter was attached a postscript written from a different location.

What I wrote you from Hankhead was only from my memory, without either books or papers; so committed a double mistake **** with regard to the date of that cold winter, & the freezing of the Euphrates. It was in the year 821 in the reign of Michael Balbus Empr of the East, when one Thomas a Renegado from the Christians & made General of the Saracerns army, besieged Constantinople, but was obliged in Dec to raise the siege by reason of the rigorous season that winter. Calvisius ad ann. 821 says "Hiems saevissima fuit hoc anno, adeo ut Fluvii Europae glacie constricti plaustra onusta plusquam tricenis diebis ferrent." His authority is Aimoinus a writer of tolerable good reputation; but I have him not by me.

By what lapses memories I have from Fluvii Europae **** slid into Fluvius Euphrates, I cannot concieve; yet I still incline to think that I found in some old Chronicle writer that severed freezing applyed to the Euphrates.

What I mentioned of peaches, commonly reckoned Indigence of Persia, but gradually transplanted thence into less mild and at last into cold Climates such as Scotland, I have from no other authority but conversation many years ago.

And as to figs, so far as I remember, your only question in your former, was, if they ripen'd in Britain or came to maturity so as to be eat fresh. For I don't remember if the preserving figgs that are the growth of Britain has been attempted with us. And whether or not it could be done with success I cannot tell.⁷⁰

Wallace was very pleased with the information provided by Macky and thanked him in a subsequent letter.

I got several good hints from your last letter as I generally quote my authorites for what I say please to mark the authority for what is in your letter that the Euphates was frozen anno 680 & that the world was surprised that peaches could be brought to perfection out of Persia, & whether the figs which you say you have eaten good 100 miles north of Edinburgh are only fit to be eaten fresh or if they will keep like the figs which are brought from foreign

⁶⁹ Charles Macky, Letter to Robert Wallace, September 27, 1752 (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

parts.⁷¹

Much of Macky's letter finds its way verbatim into Wallace's additional observations. With the arguments from Macky, Wallace thought that he had sufficiently countered the theory that the world was warmer, better cultivated, and necessarily better peopled now than it was in the past.

Wallace's *Numbers of Mankind*, and the correspondence behind its construction, show that he identified a successful, well-functioning society with a large and growing population. Because he believed society to be in decline, he introduced his tables of geometric growth and the checks to growth to support his contention that ancient societies enjoyed larger populations than existed in his own time. Thus, in presenting his position on population, he employed tools frequently used by pessimists. At the same time, his disposition toward a growing population was similar to that of the optimists. However, his motivation came from a political debate outside the optimist/pessimist rubric. This debate--the comparison between ancient and modern society--fits more comfortably within the extensive debate over the progress of man.

* * *

An exception to Wallace's belief in decay is the fourth book, "Rhetorical Composition," of his *Treatise on Taste*. The book is largely a response to Hume's essay "Of Eloquence," from

⁷¹ Robert Wallace, Letter to Charles Macky, November 6, 1752 (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹).

Essays: Moral and Political published in 1742. The lengthy opening and the four chapters regarding eloquence are part of the ongoing Ancient/Modern debate between the two. Switching sides for this part of the debate, Hume argues on the side of the ancients while Wallace, argues for the moderns.

Hume's thesis in "Of Eloquence" is that while the moderns may be superior in philosophy, "we are still, notwithstanding all our refinements, much inferior in eloquence."⁷² Whereas ancients revealed oratory above all other abilities, Hume asserts that moderns place too much esteem on poetry and philosophy. He cites the fact that few come to hear members of Parliament debate compared to the throngs that are reported to have gathered to hear Demosthenes as evidence of the decline. He marvels at the ancients's ability to excite sentiment and their vehemence of thought and expression--actions which would be considered too violent in the modern "senate, bar, or pulpit."⁷³ The decline in eloquence is not explained as a decline in genius. To some degree Hume sees modern laws, statutes, and precedents as restricting eloquence in court. To some degree modern common sense compensates for the persuasive power of ancient passionate addresses. The main reason for the decline in eloquence according to Hume is lack of a model for the young to emulate.

⁷² David Hume, "Of Eloquence," *Essays Moral Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), p. 98.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

He is confident that "British Ciceros" would have appeared had Britain been exposed to true genius.

Modern eloquence, explains Hume, is marked by its argumentative and rational style, while the ancient is sublime and passionate. The judgement of which style is superior should be left to a common audience, which Hume is certain would side with the ancient style were they familiar with it. He advocates that orators adopt the energy and force of the writings of Bolingbroke. Lastly, if modern orators cannot elevate their style to the level of the ancients, Hume asks that they at least improve the order and method of their discourses, and remove the defect of "extemporary discourses." Even this will improve their persuasiveness.

Wallace, now in the role of the sceptic, rejects Hume's method of determining superior eloquence. "Few critical observations, made in that Gentleman's writings," says Wallace, "appear more exceptionable."⁷⁴ Nowhere else are the ignorant allowed to judge genius. Their taste in books is wretched. Their taste in theatre is coarse. All they value is a loud voice and a bold manner. They admire the jargon and cant of fanatics while the "unfeigned piety & pure morals"⁷⁵ of clergymen are ignored. For Wallace, superior eloquence is that which pleases the masters of the subject, whose tastes are refined by

⁷⁴ Robert Wallace, *A Treatise on Taste* (National Library of Scotland, Manuscript No. 183-189), p. 373.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

education.

He acknowledges the common perception, that ancient oratory was carried to a greater height than in modern times. And while he disagrees with the ranking, he does admit to the excellence of ancient eloquence. He claims the ancient's style of government gave them an advantage in producing great orations. When government is conducted by large assemblies, rhetorical skills are more valuable than bribery and secret applications-- approaches which are so effective on small bodies. The importance of eloquence in ancient days provided a great incentive to study and master the rules of rhetoric. Men put great effort into their speeches and "seldom ventured to rise without much preparation."⁷⁶

In Britain, Wallace sees the influence of eloquence diminished by corruption and the lack of attention devoted to speech writing. Were we to compare Demosthenes or Cicero-- without preparation--to modern speakers, we might decide in favor of the latter.

Mansfield & Pitt are justly celebrated, but we should be better able to form a Comparison, had these distinguished noblemen employed their eloquence and their genius in Reducing into regular Compositions some of those masterly performances, by which we know violent emotions were irresistibly awakened in their Hearers. The height, to which eloquence may be carried in Writing, is finely exemplified in a Discourse pronounced at Dijon in 1750, which dragged its Sublime author from obscurity, and there on the name of Rousseau a lustre, that probably will not be soon, if ever, extinguished. Read his excellent performance, and you will discover that a little republic, situated at the foot of the Alps, can boast, in a humble

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 395.

Citizen, of a vast genius from whom Demosthenes or Cicero would not perhaps have appeared able to bear the prize.⁷⁷

In addition to giving modern writers and speakers more credit, Wallace also calls the abilities of the ancients into question. Just as Hume questioned Wallace's use of figures from ancient authors, Wallace doubts some of the reports of ancient eloquence. He does not doubt that these orations were not powerful and full of passion, but he discounts reports that they were irresistible. He notes that even the greatest eloquence cannot sway a select audience of superior knowledge from deciding issues on the basis of the arguments presented.

Despite some of its disadvantages, claims Wallace, there still exists within Britain, powerful motives which excite men to study oratory. "[A]nd in Great Britain three Grand stages are erected, on which abundant opportunities are afforded of displaying superior excellency in it."⁷⁸ Those stages: the Bar, the Senate, and the Pulpit, are the subjects of the next three chapters. In "Eloquence of the Bar," and in "Eloquence of the Senate," Wallace argues that both places promote eloquence finer than that presented to the people. In "Eloquence of the Pulpit," Wallace credits the moderns with a superior advantage in eloquence. "In most European nations a particular order is established on purpose to exhort mankind, in addresses calculated for their improvement, to purity of manners and to piety towards

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 396-397.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 402.

God, and among that learned and numerous body one should naturally expect many illustrious examples of a just, a pathetic, and a sublime oratory."⁷⁹ Unfortunately, Wallace laments, notwithstanding the advantages of education and leisure that the clergy enjoy, few of their discourses command attention. Here again is the complaint Wallace hints at in the beginning of the book. He is critical of members of the clergy for the loose construction of their sermons, for their failure to match their addresses to their audiences, and for sacrificing their message in order to attract great crowds. Wallace asserts that sermons should inculcate a piety to God; they should separate right and wrong, never varnishing vice, but instead pull off every disguise that covers its deformity.⁸⁰ From the poor a clergyman will "inculcate industry, honesty, and contentment. From the Rich,...humility, humanity, and generosity towards their inferiors."⁸¹ Nor are a clergyman's sermons limited to religious matters. "His province extends to every obligation which man owes in society, and the officies, which we are bound to perform to the public, are often more important than those dependent on private relations."⁸²

A Speaker, who, qualified by nature to exercise this Divine art, employs his Eloquence to Reform others, and whose efforts are Crowned with any success, discharges an

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 407.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 410.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 410.

⁸² Ibid., p. 412.

office usefull to the world as well as honourable to himself. The happiness of mankind depends chiefly on the purity of their minds and the rectitude of their Conduct, and those are shallow and bungling politicians who imagine the morals of a people little important to their felicity. A man, whose views are accurate as well as extensive, and whose heart is sincere, impressed with a contrary Sentiment, cannot help being deeply affected at the thought of those punny notions which are generally prevalent in modern times, concerning money and Commerce, grandeur & power, as if they were the only objects worthy either of political Consideration or of public pursuit. To render a nation cultivated, rich, learned, powerfull, & victorious, must be owned to be a mighty Achievement, but it is still greater to render a people virtuous: Without virtue society cannot, no more than individuals, attain to Happiness: And a fine Taste in Morals is the noblest boon, which can be bestowed on any of the Sons of Adam.⁸³

Political Ideology / The Luxury Debate

Much of Wallace's preference for the ancients over the moderns can be explained by his primitivism. There was however, another theoretical basis for his distaste for modern society. He drew inspiration from the 'Commonwealth' or 'Real Whig' cannon founded on the 17th century writings of Milton, Harrington and Sidney. "The Whigs cherished ideas about checks on government from within and without, about individual freedoms and about ranks in society."⁸⁴ They believed in the natural rights of all men, in all countries, and that a strict separation between the legislative and executive branches of government was necessary for the preservation of these rights and liberties. Their belief

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 414-415.

⁸⁴ Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman. Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 7.

in individual rights carried into religious matters where they supported freedom of thought and greater toleration.

The Whigs's desire for a balance-of-powers in government was often matched by a desire for egalitarian property and distribution policies. Great inequalities in property or wealth were thought to threaten the "balance of the state."⁸⁵ Writers like John Brown saw luxury as a threat to the very survival of the nation. This fostered a fear of luxury and indulgence, and lead some--Francis Hutheson for example--to support agrarian laws to limit the acquisition of wealth.⁸⁶

The Whigs also pushed for greater equality of education, arguing that the whole community gained if all ranks of mankind were educated. Not necessarily egalitarian in objective, Locke and Shaftesbury both believed that the nature of the individual was the product of his education and environment. "The third earl of Shaftesbury modified this theory by the belief that a moral sense within man would enable him--if not prevented by adverse circumstance or environment--to discover the laws of nature and to attain virtue."⁸⁷

It is easy to see the republican influence in Wallace's writings. He wrote on the destructive effects of tyranny and monarchies on commerce and the arts. He employed Harrington's

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

concept of rota within *Various Prospects*. His ideal government was not confined to any one country, but extended to the entire world. Like other commonwealthmen he favored rich people serving in government, because they would be above bribes. Following early commonwealthmen such as Robert Molesworth and John Toland, he advocated greater toleration of Catholics, Jews, Mohammedans, and atheists. Wallace praised George Buchanon and Andrew Fletcher. Fletcher's writings in particular seemed to have influenced Wallace's thoughts on the 'Militia Question', on slavery, and the damaging effects of luxury. Finally, Wallace continually appealed for a return to agrarian society, sharing the fears of John Brown, but maintaining respect for the British Constitution.

Despite Wallace's deep respect for the British Constitution, there was at least one component of British policy of which he was critical--the British education system. Wallace thought that this system was extremely careless and negligent in educating its children. Like Shaftesbury, Wallace saw education and environment as important factors in determining a person's behavior. Ignorance, he believed, led to violence, cruelty, and oppression. This, in turn, would lead to greater ignorance, creating a self-reinforcing downward cycle. Breaking the cycle would help the nation as well as the individual. To Wallace it was preferable to teach the majority of children to read and write in an effort to promote 'Industry and profitable Labour', than to allow poor children to be "left to either starve, or be

obliged to go up and down begging, and contract all those Habits of Idleness and Vice."⁸⁸ Only through the combined efforts of all members of society, contributing to the best of their ability, would mankind "be able to cultivate and subdue this Earth with greater Advantage."⁸⁹

Wallace's general criticism of the government's education policy was almost always accompanied by a specific response to Mandeville. Wallace's most direct comment on Mandeville came in a sermon entitled "Ignorance and Superstition a Source of Violence and Cruelty, and in particular the cause of the present Rebellion," which was delivered to the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, in 1745.

And as this notable Author has published an *Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools*, in which Charity-Schools are not only represented to be useless, but pernicious, it may not perhaps be improper to take some Notice of his Arguments.

According to this notable Author, human Society cannot be supported without Ignorance, at least, cannot be supported in that Grandeur and Magnificence, or arrive at that Opulence in which we see it at present. For, as in order to this Magnificence, a great deal of hard Work, and, as he calls it, dirty Labour must be performed, if all Mankind were blessed with a clear Knowledge, and extensive Views of the Works of God and Men, none would be found to undergo this hard Labour. Or, if any thro' Necessity were obliged to it, they must undertake it with a great deal of Sorrow and Regrate, and be miserable in Proportion to their Knowledge, which instead of making them happy, would rather serve to discover the Meanness of their Condition and Employment, and fill their Minds with a sensible Uneasiness and deep Concern. From all which he argues, that Ignorance is of no small Advantage in Society,

⁸⁸ Robert Wallace, "Ignorance and Superstition a Source of Violence and Cruelty, and in particular the Cause of the present Rebellion," a sermon in Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 23.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 19.

that a certain Portion of it is even necessary; and the less the poorer Sort know, it is the better, both for themselves and others: And on the whole he concludes, that Charity-Schools, as they propagate Knowledge too much, are useless, if not a Plague to Society.⁹⁰

The extreme contrast between Mandeville and Wallace on the effects of education are directly attributable to their views on property and distribution. Mandeville, the early champion of laissez-faire, promoted a hands-off government policy. He believed society benefited when everyone was left to pursue their own ends; thus, luxury would spur society on. Wallace, on the other hand, advocated something close to a command economy. He was against private property and wanted all of society to share equally in the burdens and benefits of society. Only when men worked in common would society achieve its potential. This potential, of course, was to be simple and agrarian. It would contain little luxury and be full of leisure as Aristotle had envisioned it.

The Debate Between Science and Religion

In *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Ernst Cassirer states that the real achievement of natural science in our perception of the universe lies not in the objective content that science has made accessible to the human mind, but rather in the new function of its own self-knowledge. During the Renaissance, the classical and medieval conception of the world crumbles. In

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 18-19. Wallace cites the 1714, 3rd edition of *The Fable of the Bees, or private Vices publick Benefits, with an Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools, &c.*

the Middle Ages, knowledge is oriented around God, the soul, and the world. Knowledge of nature is limited to the finite objects of sense. Opposing this realm of nature is the realm of grace, which is understood not through sense and reason, but through the power of revelation. The two realms are compatible though the realm of nature is subordinate.⁹¹

In medieval thought there remains, in theory as well as in practice, side by side with divine law a relatively independent sphere of natural law accessible to and dominated by human reason. But "natural law" can never be more than the point of departure for "divine law", which alone is capable of restoring the original knowledge lost through the fall of man."⁹²

During the Renaissance, Philosophy destroys this dualistic view of creation and the creator. Nature is no longer seen as merely created; it is now seen as a creative process pervaded with Divine power. Nature is elevated to the sphere of the Divine. Alongside revelation, truth is revealed in God's work. "But it is understandable only to those who know nature's handwriting and can decipher her text."⁹³ Newton's work provided the proof of this interpretation of nature. Newton had established and clearly expressed the cosmic law. It was a victory of the power of human knowledge. This is how the whole eighteenth century understood and esteemed Newton's achievement.

⁹¹ Ernst Cassirer, this section is based on chapter 2, "Nature and Natural Science." in *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

⁹² Ibid., p. 40.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 43.

Eighteenth century thought is permeated by the conviction "that in the history of humanity the time had arrived to deprive nature of its carefully guarded secrets, to leave it no longer in the dark to be marveled at as an incomprehensible mystery but to bring it under the bright light of reason and analyze it with all its fundamental forces."⁹⁴

To do this, theology and physics needed to be separated once and for all. This was not easily accomplished; defenders of orthodoxy still proclaimed the authority of the Scripture on matters of pure natural science--that the genuine science of nature was contained within the mosaic story of creation whose basic features were not to be tampered with. Geology took the lead in severing theology and science "by breaking down the framework of the Biblical story of creation."⁹⁵

Many undertook to reconcile Christian faith with the new science. In 1680 Thomas Burnet, in *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, attempted to confirm the objective truth of the Biblical account of creation.

The book undertook to trace the natural history of the earth as the counterpart--the parallel plot--of the natural history of mankind. The creation, the deluge, and the final consumption by fire of the present earth are the leading events in God's great drama, as Burnet calls it; and all are explained, largely in Cartesian terms, by the operation of natural forces--such as gravity and the law of motion.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

⁹⁶ Ernest Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 11, no. 1, (January 1950), p. 55.

Burnet's basic assumption of natural law carrying out the will of Providence was widely accepted in its day. It was nobler, these fellow physico-theologians asserted, for God to act through great immutable laws than to intervene like a fussy schoolmaster on every petty occasion.⁹⁷

Burnet's next work, *Archaeologiae Philosophicae; sive Doctrina Antiqua de Rerum Originibus*, created great controversy. Like *Theory of the Earth*, it sought to demonstrate the consistency between Scripture and geology. His task took him into man's antediluvian world, forcing him to confront the problem of man's origin and life before the fall. He concluded that "no philosophic man could accept the story of man's making and of his Fall as literally true. The story was made up by Moses, most likely, to frighten a childish, primitive people into obedience to the moral code promulgated by the great legislator."⁹⁸ Instead, he held that the "true generation of mankind is to be found in the gradual increase of evil habits and customs, and is something like the moral decay of nations because of "luxury" described by classical historians."⁹⁹ Finally, through an allegorical interpretation, Burnet replaced the individual days of creation with whole periods to which any length of time could be attributed.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 60.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

Unlike Burnet, Newton himself was convinced of the literal truth of the Bible and the consistency between it and the science with which he was so closely associated. He believed that his studies demonstrated the power and wonder of God--ironically his methodology would later be used by his successors to deny God's existence. Newton's antiallegorical interpretation of the Bible was contrary to the interpretation made by Burnet and many other Renaissance authors. In a letter to Burnet, Newton explained that the "first days of creation were much longer because the earth was rotating more slowly. As the earth was gradually accelerated under steady force, it finally reached its present velocity, at which point the force was withdrawn, leaving it to rotate forever at the rate of three hundred and sixty-five revolutions per year."¹⁰⁰

Another notable reaction against Burnet came from James Keill, an eminent mathematician and friend of Newton. Keill thought Burnet and the other world-makers had attempted to exceed what human reason could accomplish. He believed that man has the ability to determine the nature of laws currently operating within our universe. However, he asserted that thinkers must take into account theological causes, as well as efficient causes when explaining the origin and nature of the universe. "[t]he beginning and end, and the miraculous dispensations of God in the

¹⁰⁰ Richard Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, Inc., 1958), pp. 199-200.

universe are not to be measured by our deduction; they are within the scope of authoritative revelation."¹⁰¹

Just as Wallace's population writings transcended demographics, reflecting his political views, they also reflected his orthodox religious beliefs. Wallace's use of the tables of geometric growth stemmed not only from a need to defend ancient vs. modern civilizations, but also from a desire to defend orthodox religion from the growing challenge of scientific knowledge. Just as he used the tables to demonstrate the possibility that ancient societies could have been more populous, he also used them to defend the mosaic tradition of creation. This defense proceeded at two levels. First, he wished to respond to Lucretius's evolutionary theory of development. He believed the Biblical account of creation, using the tables to project possible populations from Noah. Second, he wished to dispute the growing perception that the world was a regular operating mechanism independent of its creator. This last battle leads directly to Wallace's discussion of utopian demise which appears contradictory to his other--rather pro-populationistic, position.

In the battle between those who supported evolutionary theory of creation and those who supported the Biblical account, Lucretius, the first century B.C. Roman philosopher, was a frequent target and model. Lauded by Voltaire as the leader

¹⁰¹ Ernest Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 11, no. 1, (January 1950), p. 63.

against enthusiasm and superstition, he was also seen as the enemy to Divine Providence and Religion itself.¹⁰² The naturalist and gradualist qualities of his atomistic physics, denied the existence of a supreme intelligent power, immortality, and divine intervention.¹⁰³ Lucretius's philosophical position obviously was at odds with that of Wallace. Wallace frequently invoked Lucretius in his discussions and sought to refute him with his tables.

Wallace began *Numbers* by challenging the belief that the earth had existed from the beginning of time and defending the belief that all of mankind had sprung from an original pair. He triumphantly notes, that even Lucretius, acknowledged the beginning of man on earth.¹⁰⁴ Later, in *Prospects*, when defending analogy between God and man, he continues to rail against

¹⁰² George Depue Hadzsits, *Lucretius and His Influence* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 318.

¹⁰³ Philip Merlan, "Lucretius-Primitivist or Progressivist?", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol XI, no 3, pp. 364-368.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 1. translated:

Besides, if there has been no first birth-time for earth and heaven and they have been always everlasting, why have not other poets also sung other things beyond the Theban War and the ruin of Troy? Into what place have so many deeds of men so often fallen, and are nowhere set glorious amongst the eternal monuments of fame? But as I think the universe is young, and our world is new, and it is not long since the beginning. Lucretius. *De Rerum Natura*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), Book V, p. 363. Wallace comments: "Thus even the irreligious poet, contemplating the appearances on the earth."

Lucretius.

Such is the character of the divinity by the Epicureans,

Omnis enim per se Divum natura neceffe est
Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab nostris rebus, fejunctaque longe;
Nam privata dolore omni, privata periculis,
Ipfa suis pollens viribus nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.¹⁰⁵
T. Lucret. Lib. I.

In this description some of the lines are natural and just, but upon the whole, there appears so much stateliness and indifference about all inferior natures, as robs the Deity of the most amiable of his perfections, and deprives us of all hope of his assistance in our greatest distresses. The representations given of God in sacred Scripture, are far more natural and comfortable.¹⁰⁶

Thus, the tables were part of Wallace's attempt to defend the scriptural account of man's origin against the evolutionist's challenge. The tables demonstrated the potential growth from an original pair. "Thus we may see to what a prodigious multitude mankind must have increased in 1200 years; and that, according to this rate, they must have overstocked the earth long before the deluge."¹⁰⁷ He believes that principle would operate even more

¹⁰⁵ translation:

For the very nature of divinity must necessarily enjoy immortal life in the deepest peace, far removed and separated from our troubles; for without any pain, without danger, itself mighty by its own resources, needing us not at all, it is neither propitiated with services nor touched by wrath. Lucretius. *De Rerum Natura*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), Book II, p. 131.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), pp. 375-376.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 8.

strongly after the deluge "as it appears from sacred history, that there were than at least three couples for multiplying, the three sons of Noah and their wives, instead of one; which is the supposition in the Tables. On which account the inhabitants of the earth must have increased much quicker than they are supposed in the Tables; and the earth might have been well peopled in times which we account very ancient."¹⁰⁸ He further notes that "[i]f we consider the longevity of the partriachs, both before and after the deluge, mentioned in sacred scripture, the argument for the more speedy increase of the world will appear stronger."¹⁰⁹

Wallace admired the attempts of Burnet , Keill and Newton to reconcile the scriptural account of creation with the new science. But he believed that Burnet had made mistakes in his interpretation. In particular, he disagreed with the Bishop's attempt to ascribe the earth's irregular features and seasons to the deluge by claiming that prior to the flood the earth had been smooth and a "perpetual spring." But he very much admired Burnet's goal. He said the "worthy gentleman had united the

¹⁰⁸ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind*, 2ed., Kelley Reprint (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 11.

character of the philosopher to that of the divine."¹¹⁰ Likewise, he praised Keill--"the celebrated mathematician." He supported Keill's view that the earth's features and seasons are to mankind's benefit. His work, along with other natural philosophers following "the great Sir Isaac Newton" had allowed us to unfold the wise designs of nature.

When constructing *Numbers*, Wallace kept a notebook--a commonplace book.¹¹¹ In it, along with notes from Colummella, Varro, Cato, and a host of ancient historians, there are "Chronological Dates from Sir Isaac Newton." The notes are taken from either Newton's *Short Chronicle from the First memory of things in Europe to the Conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great* or *The Chronology of Antient Kingdomes Amended*.¹¹² "Newton devoted a considerable effort throughout his life to such activities ... trying to reconstruct the chronology of ancient times by combining astronomical methods with clues from the Bible, and attempting to interpret the prophecies of Daniel."¹¹³ Wallace appears to have been using Newton's work to construct his

¹¹⁰ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 283.

¹¹¹ Robert Wallace, "Commonplace book" (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96').

¹¹² Copies of *Short Chronology* were printed in 1725. Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest. A Biography of Isaac Newton*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 807.

¹¹³ Dudley Shapere, "Isaac Newton," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967; rpt. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972), V, 489-491.

own chronology from the references contained within the Bible. This chronology would then be used to provide credence to the ancient authors and writings.

Just as Wallace accepted the chronological data from Newton, he accepted the "laws" of nature he and the other natural philosophers had established over the preceding hundred years. He did not, however, accept these laws as immutable. To do so, would have been to perceive the universe as a clock. In Wallace's mind, this would deny the existence of an active, benevolent, and just God. Instead, he, like Burnet, saw God not only as the original source of these laws, but as their continuing master, altering them gradually to affect his desired outcomes. For Wallace, God's prevention of utopian societies is an example of how God uses laws to achieve justice. God uses the existing forms of education and government and their attendant distresses to 1) punish vice, and, 2) set bounds to the increase of mankind, thus preventing the earth from becoming overstocked. He adjusts man's affections and passions to the socially optimal mix.

Like many of his contemporaries, Wallace's philosophy was a product of diverse and sometimes contradictory influences. The apparent conflict between the accepted perception of Wallace as an anticipator of Malthus and his generally pro-population writings is resolved when his work is viewed in the correct space--a space denied by overly simple dichotomies. Once his work is placed in a discussion of fuller dimension, one

sufficiently broad to incorporate his religious and political perspectives, a greater consistency becomes clear.

Chapter IV

ECONOMICS

To understand Wallace's economic theory--the positive aspects of his economic writings--it must be remembered that his theory was influenced by extremely strong normative prejudices. These prejudices were, for the most part, the product of the philosophical views discussed in chapter one and the conception of national wealth discussed in chapter two. These prejudices revealed themselves in his disapproving appraisal of the budding commercial society that was the subject of his economic theory. The conflict between his ethical perspective on the new economic order and the theory of that order was central to Wallace's economic thought, and was what distinguished him from the classical economists that followed.

Wallace's normative perspective on commercial society was perhaps the only thing that prevented him from becoming a more prominent contributor to the transition from mercantile to classical thought. Even with his critical assessment of commercial society, Wallace's political economy was as good as, or superior to, that of his contemporaries and immediate successors.

Not surprisingly, the style of political economy desired by Wallace was quite communitarian. Its features found their fullest expression in his *Various Prospects* though they were evident in all his works. Of all these features the subject to which Wallace most frequently returned was private property.

Wallace believed that private property was inconsistent with any notion of a perfect government. As he saw it, private property was limiting and inefficient. To Wallace, property rights allowed "poor, lazy, foolish, or obstinate proprietors"¹ to hinder the proper cultivation of land. And he doubted whether private agreements would ever produce the grand works and designs that man was capable of.

Wallace claimed that private property was not the most obvious, or most natural, arrangement.

The idea of appropriating particular tracts of earth, which were originally common to the whole species, though easy and natural to us, may supposed rather to have appeared unnatural at the beginning. Nothing therefore hinders us to conceive that men might have been originally led to a model of society, without any establishment of property.²

He maintained that society's decision to adopt the convention of property was purely chance and that the decision could as easily been in favor of possessions held in common.

[S]o far is it from appearing to have been necessary at the first constitution of society, that it seems rather to have been owing to accidents that it was first thought of, or that mankind consented to make such an experiment. Being ignorant and destitute of experience in what is called the state of nature, feeling the evils of their defenceless and indigent condition; having abundance of room in these early days, and not foreseeing the evils to which the establishment of property would give occasion, they unfortunately had their first recourse to this expedient, instead of agreeing to an equitable distribution of labour, and to a community of goods. But if we consider their circumstances at that time, before any particular spots of the earth had been appropriated by individuals, the establishment of property does not appear to

¹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

be the most natural and obvious scheme of promoting peace and union. Instead of dividing the lands among particular persons, might they not have consented to labour them in common, and share equally of the fruits? They would have found this rather more easy; and if they had fallen into this tract at the beginning, and made some essays of this kind, though rude and imperfect, they might have been taught by experience to correct their errors, and possibly might at last have set their affairs upon a better footing than ever they have been hitherto.³

The decision to adopt the convention of private property has lead to great distress. By removing property, he claimed, man could "prevent hardships, banish discord and restore the golden age."⁴

In his outline to *Advice to all true Patriots* Wallace returned to the question of property. As he had in *Various Prospects*, Wallace criticized Rousseau's *sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inegalite parmi les hommes*. Wallace joined with Rousseau in arguing against private property. However, Wallace did not advocate Rousseau's belief that a "savage state" was preferable to that offered by modern civilization. In *Advice*, Wallace abandoned the problem of property saying that the question of whether we should have property or not is impossible to solve and that even if private property was decided against, it would be impossible to remove after so many years.⁵

³ Ibid., pp. 109-111.

⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

⁵ Robert Wallace, Letter to David Hume. (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96), p. 1.

The most probable motivation for Wallace's concern over property was its impact upon the distribution of society's output. As he saw it, the bulk of mankind were condemned to severe labour in order to procure the most basic necessities of life.⁶ He wanted a more "proper and equitable" distribution of the labour for cultivating the earth and for supporting the members of society. In *Various Prospects* he quotes from More's *Utopia*:

That there should be not private property. That every one should work for the public, and be supported by the public. That all should be supported buy the public. That all should be on a level, and that the fruits of every one's labour should be common for the comfortable subsistance of all the members of the society. And, lastly, that every one should be obliged to so something, yet none should be burdened with severe labour.⁷

A particular distribution question addressed by Wallace was the "extent of farms." The question was whether one large farm was preferable to ten smaller farms. Wallace felt that ten families of farmers on the same land was better. More people would be living on the ground, all of them employed--a great advantage. Also, ten farmers could not be as rich as the single farmer and therefore would have to be more industrious. Besides, said Wallace, large farms offer

less encouragement to servants to marry; for they must be servants forever since there are few small farms to accommodate them: & many unmarried servants, prevent populousness Great farms are therfore ruinous in many

⁶ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1761; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

respects luxury & high & delicate living are the cause of all misscheif & will Destroy the people."

Without private property and with a more equitable distribution scheme, Wallace felt that society would be able to achieve its potential. Through common effort, man would be able to cultivate the earth to a level not obtainable through private efforts. Through united effort man could reach the perfection in works and design both for ornament and use. Unfortunately, lamented Wallace such a society was not to be. "[I]nstead of agreeing to such schemes, they have been fatally diverted to false pursuits by a corruption of taste, and have been woefully engaged in opposing and destroying one another."⁹

* * *

In his "Of Refinement in the Arts" and "Of Commerce", both from *Political Discourses*, Hume reacted to the prevailing positions regarding commercial society and the associated ethical question of luxury. Hume believed that commercial society, and luxury, must be judged upon its implications for human welfare or on its utility. From this position he attempted to mediate the two prevailing positions. On one side, there was the "moral" stand taken by Wallace; on the other, there were the "libertine" notions of those like Mandeville. According to Hume, those of

⁹ Robert Wallace, "Of prices and dearth of provisions in different numbers referring to one another" (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.620¹¹), p. 20.

⁹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence*, (1761; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 7.

"severe morals" saw even the most innocent or moderate luxuries as the root of evil, while the libertines saw even the most excessive forms of luxury as a social blessing.¹⁰

With regard to these [positions] he takes a threefold position: (1) far from being reprehensible, the ages of "refinement", i.e. "innocent" luxury, are in fact the "happiest and most virtuous", (2) where luxury is excessive, it must be recognised as "the source of many ills", but (3) even vicious luxury is preferable to a society entirely without luxury.¹¹

Hume used three arguments to defend the societal benefits of commerce. First, he attempted to show that luxury, or refinement was conducive to individual happiness. Happiness, he held, consisted of pleasure, action, liveliness, and indolence. The first three of these were the causes of labor and were activated and rewarded by the expansion of trade and industry. Second, he held that economic growth was linked to the growth of intellectual and general cultural refinement by an indissoluble chain.

As [Hume] points out, owing to the improvement of tastes and the growth of knowledge which accompany economic development, individuals increasingly seek each other out to enjoy the give-and-take that springs from the sharing of a common fund of experience and from the growing sense of belonging to a common social tradition. "they flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture."¹²

¹⁰ Eugene Rotwein, *David Hume Writings on Economics*, ed. Eugene Rotwein (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), pp. xci - xcii.

¹¹ Ibid., p. xcii.

¹² Ibid., p. xcix.

Lastly, he argued that commerce was beneficial from the political point of view. Responding to the common perception that luxury destroys liberty, Hume tried to demonstrate that just the reverse was true.

[H]e emphasises the point that it was the growth of economic decentralisation and individualism associated with this revolution that was primarily responsible for the growth of political liberty and parliamentary government. Thus, after directing attention to the manner in which the feudal hierarchy inevitably bred general subserviance, he stresses the political effect of the emancipation of the peasant and, in particular, the influence on the authority of the Commons of the new merchant class, "the middling rank of men". As he states in explaining the liberating implications of the latter's class interest and ideology, these are "the firmest basis of political liberty", for they "submit not to slavery like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannising over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign. They covet equal laws, which may sure their property, and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratic tyranny."¹³

Hume's view of luxury was at odds with Wallace's on all points. A view of happiness as "pleasure, action, liveliness, and indolence" obviously did not match the Stoic-influenced perspective of Wallace, who viewed happiness as completely dependent on the purity of mind and conduct.¹⁴ In his "Meditations on Seneca's Epistles", Wallace reflected on some of the 'pleasures' of his youth. "I remember when I was young and was Studying Mathematicks. I spent a whole Queen's birth day by my self & in that day I found out a Demonstration for all the

¹³ Ibid., pp. ci-cii.

¹⁴ Robert Wallace, "A Treatise on Taste." (National Library of Scotland, manuscript no. 183-189), p. 415.

operations in vulgar factions, I am certain I was much happier than other young men of my age who were seeing the shows of the day."¹⁵ Furthermore, to Wallace, self-gratification was not necessary to spur men's labour. He believed that all men should recognize the benefit of everyone working towards a common goal.

It is, indeed, natural for men to love ease, and to wish that others may rather be obliged to hard labour. Yet it is no less true, that mankind will undergo the greatest toils, submit to the most severe labours, and will encounter the most imminent dangers from a sense of duty, for the sake of honour and glory, or from a prospect of more lasting advantages. Now the Utopians would have the most powerful motives of this kind, to excite them to fulfil their daily tasks with cheerfulness.

The contempt which would follow on idleness, and a refusal to do their duty; the love of their country, and constitution; the plenty which they would enjoy; the example of industry, that would be every where before their eyes, and that perfect equality which would take place, must be powerful arguments to engage them to diligence. They would sweeten their labours and prevent murmuring; and what is chiefly to be considered, all being employed, and idleness may easily be endured, and are only proper exercises for preserving the health of their bodies, and the vigour of their minds.¹⁶

Wallace also disagreed with Hume's proposition that economic growth and intellectual growth are mutually reinforcing. He thought that a simple life provided the greatest potential for intellectual achievement. According to Wallace, a society devoted to improving the minds of its citizens would divide its work amongst its members so that members would need to work only three to six hours a day. The rest of the people's time would

¹⁵ Robert Wallace, "Meditations on Seneca's Epistles." (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), p. 18.

¹⁶ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), pp. 85-86.

then be allocated to study and contemplation.¹⁷

Wallace was also on the other side of Hume's thesis of people gathering to the cities for social intercourse and their desire to show their splendor. Like many of his contemporaries, Wallace believed cities to be one of the major sources of sin and debauchery. And he resented the impact on the price of foodstuffs of rural workers moving to the cities in search of higher wages. Regarding the showing of taste, Wallace castigated himself for desiring anything above his simplest needs.

I agree with Seneca that he is not poor who has little but he who Desires more, but I confess the necessaries of life I mean things to which a man has been accustomed are desirable it is not easy not to desire them or not to feel the want of them, for my own part I could want many things & live on less than I have or am likely to have but I would desire a little more for my family because I see they desire it, but if they were contented with less I would be satisfied too: I have not yet strength of mind to bear poverty I mean to want the things that are commonly thought necessary for a man of my rank in the world, but this is not so much for my self as my family, I fear I shall never be able to bear the poverty of my children & therefore I wish they may never fall into poverty: it is much better to prevent poverty by prudence & industry than expect to struggle with it & especially to see one's family struggling with it tho they bear it nobly; I have not philosophy for this & this poverty will probably make me melancholy when ever it shall happen.¹⁸

On the relationship between economic liberty and political liberty, Wallace agreed that political liberty and commercial society were complementary. He noted that trade "never flourished so much under any absolute Monarchy as under the

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁸ Robert Wallace, "Meditations on Seneca's Epistles." (State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection), pp. 5-6.

Limited Governments of Tyre, Athens, Syracuse, Carthage, Venice, Florence, Genoa, Holland & England."¹⁹ At the same time, Wallace still held the traditional enlightenment appreciation for benevolent despotism. A free government offers the highest probability of economic progress, but it is not a necessary condition. "If an absolute Monarch is endued with an extraordinary genius he may accomplish mighty works."²⁰

Wallace differed with Hume on the direction of causality between economic progress and political liberty. Whereas Hume used the growth of commercial society to explain the transition from feudal to parliamentary government, Wallace saw the growth of commerce as a product of a "limited government." To Wallace, the uncertainty of property and due process dampened the industry of its citizens. Subjection to a monarch cramps the genius of man, debases his spirit, and diminishes the vigor of his enterprise. Under a monarchy, property is precarious and subjects feel the weighty hand of their governors. "He is every moment liable on the most unjust or frivolous grounds to be carried out of his house & to be shut up in the Bastille without any possibility of Legal verdicts."²¹ "There is no Legall Redress & whether he is oppressed or not he is constantly exposed to the

¹⁹ Robert Wallace, "Some observations on the influence of freedom in a government to promote commerce and arts; and the bad influence of despotism in commerce and arts." (Edinburgh University Library, La.II.620, previously unpublished), p.6.

²⁰ Ibid., p.2

²¹ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

greatest oppression."²² In contrast, the limited government of England was a government of laws & not men.²³ "[I]f any subject be injured there is an established method of redress the law is open to every one the law determining the crime and prescribes the punishment every man knows how he may best use, the Government is not att any particular time only (as some have been willing to affirm of the Present Despotick Monarchies of Europe) but allwayes."²⁴

Having reversed the direction of causality between commerce and political liberty, Wallace was left with the problem of how to explain the change from a feudal to a mixed government. The topic was to have been addressed in his *Advice to all true Patriots*, the plan of which Wallace discussed in his letter to Hume. In the letter, Wallace complained about the absolute power of monarchs and the old feudal system of Nobles and Barons. He said only that "Europe grew weary of them" and that he cannot account for the adoption of a government that makes so many happy and free. England, he claimed, and perhaps England alone, had best divided the power between the Kings and the people.²⁵

Of course Wallace did believe that luxury was a threat to liberty. He ended *Numbers* with an opinion on Mandeville's notion

²² Ibid., p. 12.

²³ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁵ Robert Wallace, "To David Hume." (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96), p.1.

of wealth and progress.

Philosophers have been advising, and divines calling upon mankind to cultivate frugality, temperance, simplicity, contentment with a little, and a patience of labour, demonstrating, that these humble virtues are the only means by which they can expect to secure solid, lasting, and independent felicity. They have painted their charms in the most lively colours; described in the most inviting manner, that inward peace and tranquillity of mind, which is the inseparable attendant on these sober virtues; and taught, that it is in this way alone that men can enjoy happiness, freedom, and independence. Such has been the language of philosophy; such has been the language of religion.

But the cultivation of these virtues not only makes individuals happy; from what has been maintained in the preceding dissertation, it appears, further, to be the surest way of rendering the earth populous, and making society flourish. It was simplicity of taste, frugality, patience of labour, and the contentment with a little, which made the world so populous in ancient times. The decay of these virtues, and the introduction of a corrupted and luxurious taste, have contributed in a great measure to diminish the numbers of mankind in modern days.

From hence we may conclude, that it is not the prevalency of luxury, but of simplicity of taste among private citizens, which makes the public flourish: and what private vices are far from being, what a notable writer has employed the whole force of his genius to demonstrate them to be, public benefits. Indeed 'tis ridiculous to condemn elegance and refinement of every kind. If displayed in public works, and things of a durable nature, they contribute to promote the happiness, as well as the grandeur of society, and will be no hindrance to populousness. But if displayed in every the least trifle in private life, and employed to satisfy the ridiculous taste and whimsical fancies of each particular citizen, they must contribute in a great degree to diminish the number of mankind, as the constant labour, great expence, and vast number of hands, by which this luxury is maintained, must make the necessaries of life scarce and dear.²⁶

Prices

Wallace's most direct exposition on the functioning of the market is contained in his essay "Of Prices and Dearth of

²⁶ Robert Wallace, *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind In Ancient and Modern Times*, 2ed., (1809; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), pp. 161-163.

Provisions in different number referring to one another." The essay was probably written in 1767²⁷, and was to have been included within his *Advice to all true patriots or proposals to promote the Grandeur of Great Britain*. Both the essay and the larger work were intended as policy pieces.

The essay addressed the Corn Laws. In presenting his position on various components of the Corn Laws, Wallace demonstrated a command of the benefits of competition, of partial equilibrium analysis, and of the self-regulating nature of general equilibrium analysis. The ease with which Wallace proceeded through the analysis and the familiarity he seemed to expect from his readers again calls into question the originality of Adam Smith's contribution to the understanding of the market process.²⁸

Despite Wallace's familiarity with the workings of the market and his conscious use of economic reasoning when justifying policy, he did not have faith in unassisted markets. When addressing issues from a purely microeconomic perspective, Wallace was generally (usually) very "classical" in his language, approach, and conclusions. His descriptions of the functioning market were as good as Smith's. However, Wallace's macroeconomic

²⁷ Wallace refers to the essay in a letter to Hume. Hume responded to the letter on 12/15/1767. J. Y. T. Griegg, ed., *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), II, 173-174.

²⁸ This question is dealt with directly in Salim Rashid's "Smith, Steuart, and Mercantilism: Comment," *Southern Economic Journal* (January, 1986), pp. 843-852.

view was at odds with classical micro underpinnings. Thus, when he addressed micro issues that connected directly to his non-classical macro view, he abandoned free functioning markets in favor of regulation.

Classical Microeconomics

In *Wealth of Nations*, Smith surveyed the disadvantages occasioned by the lack of perfect liberty. His biggest concern was with the exclusive privileges of corporations. Corporation laws reduced competition by placing tariffs on foreign goods as well as non-local domestically produced goods. He contended that protected markets were allowed to continue due to the ease with which merchants and artisans could enter into combinations, or cartels--an advantage not enjoyed by farmers and laborers being 'dispersed in distant places.'

People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the publick, or in some contrivance to raise prices. It is impossible indeed to prevent such meetings, by any law which either could be executed, or would be consistent with liberty and justice. But though the law cannot hinder people of the same trade from sometimes assembling together, it ought to do nothing to facilitate such assemblies; much less render them necessary.²⁹

On this basis, Smith argued against the registration of trade members for the purpose of regulation, and taxation. He reasoned that this would only serve to better connect these individuals. Instead, he suggested that free competition would eliminate the

²⁹ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, eds. R. H. Campbell, A. S. Skinner, and W. B. Todd (1976; rpt. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979), I, 145.

need for regulation and penalties.

In a section entitled "Of Hoarding up Provisions and Keeping them out of the mercat," contained within "Of Prices," Wallace expressed a suspicion of merchants similar to that of Smith and an implicit appreciation of the public benefit achieved from a large number of small autonomous suppliers.

That such a thing is possible has been suspected & supposed for centuries past. It is not indeed easy to conceive how farmers, Corn faitors Corn merchants, butchers, Grasiers & Deelers in provisions of other kinds should combine for this purpose; Yet if they be rich if they have much money & Credit to buy & can afford to by long out of their money I imagine this can be done in a good degree nay in a high degree; there is no necessity of any formall meeting of thousands for this purpose these people often see one another accidentally & in the prosecution of their bussiness, they may conferr many wayes & give the word to one another & the notice given may run among they very quickly: I doubt not but something of this kind actually happens & increases prices & has done so att this time

Nor do I see how it is possible to prevent this by a law & it will allwayes be possible to evade all laws of this kind. I do not see how it is possible to prevent middle men in selling provisions or to prevent provisions from being sold again & again: graziers farmers &c can not be obliged to bring all their goods Directly to the mercats of London or other great cities: and there must be many rich merchants who have vast quantities of goods in their possession³⁰

Wallace's suspicion of monopolies extended into his partial equilibrium analysis. Most of this analysis was devoted to explaining market prices. Whether or not Wallace recognized the inelasticity of demand for foodstuffs is unclear. He did however, emphasize the supply of foodstuffs more than the demand.

Tho the prices are regulated not by the number of sellers but the quantity to be sold & the number of buyers Yet even when

³⁰ Robert Wallace, "Of prices and dearth of provisions in different numbers referring to one another." (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.620¹¹, pp. 5-8.

there is but equall quantity to be sold, its being in very few or very many hands will have an influence in some respect³¹

Wallace discussed the effects of good and bad weather on the market price of foodstuffs. He devoted a large amount of time to the effects of competing uses for grain. Grain used by "Brewers, Distillers and Innholders", or used to feed horses and cattle reduce the quantity available for human consumption, thereby raising the price. He recommended the use of oxen that graze on grass in favor of horses which require corn.

The production of luxuries also was seen as threatening food supplies. Workers whose time is spent producing luxury goods do not produce grain. Worse yet luxury goods were associated with idleness. Wallace pointed out that idleness, and increasing idleness causes scarcity and dear prices.

Wallace also discussed the effect luxury good production had on demand. Workers who leave their farms in favor of manufacturing no longer produce their own requirement of grain and bring a surplus to market. The switch to manufacturing results in a decrease in market supply and an increase in market demand.

The increase of manufactures in trading towns and village [is] one great cause of the dearth of provisions as there is a much greater Demand for providing in these towns³²

Wallace's discussion of the effects of seasons and foodstuff prices led to a discussion of the dynamics between markets. He

³¹ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

³² Ibid., p. 27.

followed the effects of a draught to the current livestock market and to the future market.

No doubt a very dry or wet or bad season may have great influence in raising or suiting prices according to the scarcity or plenty

In particular there may be little grass this may oblige the graziers to kill or sell their cattle att a low price because they have not meat to feed them: it will take some time before they can be recriuted & come to their former number perhaps the scarcity or dearness of cattle & fleshes att present may be partly owing to this & to the Death of the Horned cattle some years ago³³

He understood the complementary relationship between goods.

Butter & cheese have been dearer of late than usual: if we are too fond of grazing one would think we should have great plenty both of butter & cheese, & till this is the case we can scarce be thought to have pastures sufficient: our people do not seem to be encreasing but it is probable tea being come so much into fashion we consume more butter than usual for our breakfasts so the dearness of butter proceeds from our Luxury³⁴

And he even noted the effect of substitution between two grains.

The increase of wheat is owing it is said to the bounty on exportation and this is partly true: but may we not imagine that tho there was much less wheat & wheat was dearer yet this was not so much felt because the bulk of the people use more ry barley & oats³⁵

This understanding of the interconnectedness of markets led Wallace toward a consideration of general equilibrium.

The opening section of "Of Prices and Dearth of Provisions" presents a simple, two-sector, two-good, freely competitive, self-adjusting market model. In this model, Wallace demonstrated an appreciation of the automatic equilibrating mechanism of a

³³ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

competitive market driven by individual self-interest to maximize profits. From the analysis, he concludes that these forces should be left to decide the prices and quantities without government intervention.

It is said that many fine arable grounds have been turned into pasturage; that 80000 or 100000 acres have been turned into pasture grounds within these 20 years past: it depends on our knowledge how many quarters of grain may be produced on these acres & whether we want grains or fleshes most: to determine whether we have too little or too great a part of our land in tillage or pasturage we certainly have land enough for both & it does not seem to be agreed whether we have too little in tillage or in pasturage: at present the fleshes are dear this points out that we have not too much in pasturage: it ought to be considered whether our people or rather our common laborers whether in tillage or manufactures live most on fleshes or grains & whether it be best for them in generall or the Different classes of our labouring people to have cheap grains or cheap fleshes but how can we know this or who will or can make the inquiry or survey: I do not see that either by a survey or without a survey it will be possible to regulate this by law & that our farmers and graziers must be left to themselves in this matter: There are naturall bounds both to tillage & grazing for if either our grains or our cattle encrease beyond Limits they must fall in their prices & this will bring both farmer & graziers to betake themselves to that culture which is most profitable.³⁶

In this quote, Wallace did not consider a true general equilibrium. He did not present a theory of the interrelationships between all the parts of the economy. The money supply, output level, price level, and interest rate are not present. Nor did he speculate upon the long run equilibrium or stability of an integrated system. Yet this essay, when viewed in the context of his discussion of monetary policy does impart the feeling that he did see the economy as a system--as a

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-3.

self-coordinating whole.

While Wallace may have contemplated and appreciated the self-adjusting forces within a private, competitive economy, he certainly did not approve of it, or them. Without defining a nation's wealth as the sum of wealth of the members who compose it, and unable to accept prices as reflective of real value, Wallace did not believe in the complementarity of the pursuit of private gain and socially desirable ends. He flatly rejected Mandeville's and earlier economist's praise of the effects of luxury. Instead he agreed with Johnson--the happiness of society depends on virtue.

Statist Microeconomics

Despite Wallace's command of the theory of markets, his view of the economy did not begin with an assumption of free, competitive markets. This was particularly true of the markets for foodstuffs. Wallace believed that the price of people's subsistence was too important to be solely determined by market forces. He desired low prices for foodstuffs to keep the cost of maintaining a family and the price of labor low. Markets could not be counted on to provide stable, low prices; market prices were too erratic. On this basis he supported government intervention. He recommended that export subsidies on grain be suspended when prices rose above a certain level.

[G]rain is a thing that ought to be kept cheap for the sake of our manufactures;...instead of giving a bounty they ought not to be suffered to export at all when grain & above a moderate price to be regulated by law: for the first thing a government ought to take care of is to have plenty of food for their labouring people: it is a dangerous thing to encourage or

even allow exportation except in certain cases.³⁷

Wallace's call for intervention in the grain markets was not unusual. Economists such as Boisguilbert, Franklin, Smith, Burke, and later, even Bentham also supported intervention in the grain markets. Many advocated the establishment of public stocks of corn, to act as buffers against shortages. For these other economists the support of government action in these markets was an exception to their general support for free markets.³⁸

This was not the case for Wallace. Despite his command of the theory of markets, his natural inclination was towards a regulated economy. Thus, his call for intervention in food markets was not an exception to his general view--it was indicative of his general view. When listing the failures of English society, Wallace discussed the defects in manners and education which were better regulated by "Ancient law-givers."³⁹ Further,

[t]hey have left the instruction of youth, and the distribution of trades and employments, to parents, or to every one's own fancy. To great regard is shown to the rank, or the riches of the parent. Too much indulgence is given to inclination and humour. The people in general are not laid under such proper and wholesome restraints, as are equally profitable to themselves, and are necessary to make them cooperate towards the general good. The ancients did too little in this way, but the moderns much less; and now, under the

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

³⁸ Terence Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith. The Emergence of Political Economy, 1622-1776* (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1988), pp. 113-114.

³⁹ Robert Wallace, *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 92.

very best governments, rich men are allowed to spend their time and their money, to do something or nothing, to marry, or to abstain from marriage...."⁴⁰

Much of Wallace's rejection of a market-based system stems from the problem of imperfect competition. As noted above Wallace was very concerned with the possibility of individuals attempting to corner markets. His language suggests the influence of scholastic writers.

Medieval writers were concerned about attempts to deliberately create monopoly situations. "Everywhere measures were taken against engrossers (*accapareurs*), forestallers, (*recoupeurs*), and regraters (*regrattiers*) who tried to accumulate stocks, to prevent supplies from reaching the market, or to form corners in order to drive prices up."⁴¹

Despite Wallace's recognition of the problems of imperfect competition, it would be a mistake to ascribe all of his suspicion of markets to market failure. Even in a world characterized by perfectly competitive markets, Wallace would not have been an advocate of *laissez-faire*. It was not that he doubted the market's ability to generate full employment--as was the case with Steuart.⁴² Wallace's problem with markets was essentially moral. His idealism lead him to objectively define the goods that society should devote its resources to produce. To him, market determined allocations produced the wrong goods--

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 93-94.

⁴¹ David D. Friedman, "In defense of Thomas Aquinas and the just price," *History of Political Economy*. Vol. 20, No. 3 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), pp. 238-39.

⁴² This question is dealt with directly in Salim Rashid's "Smith, Steuart, and Mercantilism: Comment," *Southern Economic Journal* (January, 1986), p. 844.

luxury goods--sources of decay. He wanted low food prices and would intervene to keep factors of production devoted to food production. He believed foodstuffs were too expensive--unlike the simple times of the ancients. Therefore, while Wallace advocated market determination regarding allocation within the food industry, he did not support market determined allocation at the societal level. Wallace liked market determined prices, but he wanted to define what markets existed.

Wallace's desire to steer resources towards certain industries is consistent not only with his moral perspective, but also with his definition of national wealth. Wallace wanted a large, growing population and a simple agrarian lifestyle. His desire to the production of food and to withhold them from the production of luxury goods, was aimed at this goal. Unlike Smith, and subsequent economists, Wallace did not view wealth as the sum of individual wealth. Nor did he trust individuals to decide what goods were best for them. Without these classical tenets, Wallace was unable to see any possibility for harmony between self-interest and the good of society.

It is not clear whether the contribution of classical thought is the recognition of how markets allocate and distribute inputs and outputs. Judging from the writings of Wallace and other precursors of Smith, this may have been well known.⁴³ The problem was accepting the results of the market process. Perhaps

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 843-852.

the real change that marks the advent of the classical period is the change in perception of wealth and what is good. One cannot adopt a completely free-market mentality until one views a nation's wealth as the sum of the individual's wealth and the fact that individuals themselves are the best judge of their well-being. This is Smith's true contribution.

Addendum

Little of Wallace's book *Advices to all true Patriots, or Proposals to promote the Grandeur and prosperity of Great Britain* exists today. Just how much of the work was completed is unclear. The section on prices referred to above survived. Unfortunately, Wallace's thoughts on taxation have not. We do have the contents of the proposed work. Wallace included them in a letter to Hume. From the contents it is clear that Wallace intended to make use of market forces to steer the economy in the direction he desired.

Taxes should be laid on Luxuries rather than on necessaries.
p.251

Of such taxes as not only immediately raise the prices of such things as are taxed but of other things Depending on them.

p.254

Of taxes on Land, houses and windows. p.257

Of taxing Salaries & perquisites of offices. p.259

Of taxes which affect the morals or Liberties of the Subjects
p.259

Of taxes on Vices. p.260

Of a tax on Bachelours. p.260⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Wallace, "To David Hume" (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96, previously unpublished), p.4.

Monetary Theory

The first subject Wallace addressed in *Characteristics of the Present State of Great Britain* was banking policy. The first chapter, "Of Banks, and of Paper-credit," is largely a response to monetary issues raised by Hume in his *Political Discourses*. Both Hume and Wallace were theoretical and practical metallists. They disagreed however over what type of banking scheme should be adopted. Wallace advocated a fractional reserve system; Hume wished to restrict the money supply to the quantity of gold and silver.

Hume was a strict quantity theorist, believing that private banks and paper money were inherently inflationary.⁴⁵ Any increase in the money supply led to a proportionate increase in the price level. Accordingly, he argued for a 100 percent reserve banking system. Because no profit would accrue from the bank's dealings, it would be run at public expence."⁴⁶ This system was to be modelled after the French.

It is not to be doubted, but the great plenty of bullion in France is, in a great measure, owing to the want of paper-credit. The French have no banks: Merchant bills do not there circulate as with us: Usury or lending on interest is not directly permitted; so that many have large sums in their coffers: Great quantities of plate are used in private houses; and all the churches are full of it. By this means, provisions and labour still remain cheaper among them, than in

⁴⁵ David Glasner, "On some classical monetary controversies," *History of Political Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, Summer 1989), p. 206.

⁴⁶ Clifton B. Luttrell, "Thomas Jefferson on Money and Banking: Disciple of David Hume and Forerunner of Some Modern Monetary Views," *History of Political Economy*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, Summer 1975), p. 161.

nations that are not half so rich in gold and silver. The advantages of this situation, in point of trade as well as in great public emergencies, are too evident to be disputed.⁴⁷

Hume accepted the classical proposition that a given good would have the same gold price in all countries as a necessary equilibrium condition.⁴⁸ Thus, in response to increased domestic prices, caused by an increase in the money supply, the trade balance of a country would deteriorate causing specie to leave the country until prices fell to international levels. This was Hume's price-specie-flow-mechanism.

[S]uppose, that all the money of GREAT BRITAIN were multiplied fivefold in a night, must not the contrary effect follow? Must not all labour and commodities rise to such an exorbitant height, that no neighbouring nations could afford to buy from us; which their commodities, on the other hand, became comparatively so cheap, that, in spite of all the laws which could be formed, they would be run in upon us, and our money flow out; till we fall to a level with foreigners, and lose that great superiority of riches, which had laid us under such disadvantages?⁴⁹

Simultaneously, Hume held that, in the short-run, prices would not change, and that the country experiencing an increase in its money supply would experience an increase in output as

⁴⁷ David Hume, *David Hume Writings on Economics*, ed. Eugene Rotwein (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 69.

⁴⁸ Charles E. Staley, "Hume and Viner on the international adjustment mechanism," *History of Political Economy*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, Summer 1976), p. 252.

⁴⁹ David Hume, *David Hume Writings on Economics*, ed. Eugene Rotwein (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 63.

well.⁵⁰ This effect, however, was confined to increases of gold and/or silver only, it would not result from an increase in paper money.

Hume's neutrality of money applied equally to interest rates. In his essay "On Interest," he stated that changes in the money supply had no effect on interest rates.

Wallace rejected Hume's neutral view of money, his application of the quantity theory, as well as the need for public banking. After a perfunctory discussion of the benefits and uses of money as compared to barter, Wallace set out the benefits of a private, fractional reserve banking system. Wallace felt that the public banking system advocated by Hume opened the system to more abuse than a private system. Citing Berkeley's *Querist* as his inspiration on the point, Wallace charged that a public banking system, under a monarchy exposes the country to the risk that the monarch will seize the deposits.⁵¹

⁵⁰ This inconsistency is discussed in David Glasner, "On some classical monetary controversies," *History of Political*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, Summer 1989), p. 206.

⁵¹ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 22. Wallace cites the 303d query. "303 Whether it be possible for a national bank to subsist and maintain its credit under a French government?" Also, T. E. Jessop and A. A. Luce, eds., *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne*, Vol. 6 (1953; rpt. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD, 1964), p. 130.

Wallace favored a fractional reserve system over Hume's 100% reserves. To prevent the overissue that concerned Hume, he insisted on full convertibility of paper money and that the quantity of paper money issued be held equal to the sum of a country's "coin, bullion, lands, goods, and good debts, to which there is convenient access."⁵² In his preface to *Paper Currency and Banking*, McCulloch criticized Hume for not recognizing the difference between convertible and inconvertible paper money.

[H]e had no clear idea of the fundamental distinction between paper money and bank-notes payable on demand at the pleasure of the holders. The former may sink far below the value of the sums they profess to represent; and being legal tender, will most likely expell coin from circulation. But no such consequences can follow from the issue of bank-notes, such as were then circulated in all parts of Great Britain. They were fully equivalent to the gold which might be obtained in exchange for them the moment it was required.⁵³

Certainly a system characterized by unrestricted issue of inconvertible currency is more susceptible to inflation than that proposed by Wallace. On this basis, McCulloch ranked Wallace's work above Hume's.

Exactly how Wallace intended to limit the amount of paper money to the amount of the country's assets is unclear. He often stated that the system needing to be regulated. He said that banks were to be "settled by public authority under right

⁵² Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 20.

⁵³ John R. McCulloch, ed. *A Select Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts and Other Publications on Paper Currency and Banking* (1857; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1966), p. viii.

regulations."⁵⁴ Other times however, he implied that the system would be self-regulating. "Nor can there be any limit [of credit], while the borrowers from these banks can give good security, and the managers take care to issue no more notes, than, by their experience they have learned, they can answer, according to the ordinary course of demand."⁵⁵

Wallace addressed four objections to private, fractional reserve banking systems. The first is that such banks may sustain runs. Wallace acknowledges that runs are possible, but trusts that banks "may be so well constituted and managed, as to prevent them in times to come."⁵⁶ The second objection is that a banking system similar to the type he recommends could not be "depended upon during civil wars, or when a foreign enemy is in the heart of the country."⁵⁷ To this, Wallace responds by pointing out that in such a situation, the banking system will not be the most important concern.

Wallace addresses the second two objections, both from Hume, in greater detail. In "Of the balance of Trade," Hume had written, as an application of his PSFM, that paper money drives

⁵⁴ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), pp. 18, 28.

⁵⁵ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 19.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

'real money' from the economy. Wallace reproduced part of Hume's essay in Great Britain:

Suppose that there are 12 millions of paper, which circulate in the kingdom as money, (for we are not to imagine, that all our enormous funds are employed in that shape) and suppose the real cash of the kingdom to be 18 millions: Hence is a state which is found by experience to be able to hold a stock of 30 millions. I say, if it be able to hold it, it must of necessity have acquired it in gold in silver, had we not obstructed the entrance of these metals by this new invention of paper. Whence would it have acquired that sum? From all the kingdoms of the world. But why? Because, if you remove these 12 millions, money in this state is below its level, compared with our neighbours; and we must immediately draw from all of them, till we be full and saturate, so to speak, and can hold no more. By our present politics, we are as careful to stuff the nation with this fine commodity of bank-bills and chequer-notes, as if we were afraid of being overburthened with the precious metals.⁵⁰

In response, Wallace argues that paper money serves all the domestic purposes that 'real money' does, and, that so long as proper regulations are observed, the proportion of paper money to gold and silver is unimportant. Also, he acknowledges that paper money will not be accepted in foreign trade but that this too is unimportant. "It is of no consequence that foreign nations will not take our Bank-notes. They will take our goods, which are produced by the circulation of these notes among ourselves."⁵⁹

Hume's last objection--to Wallace a more plausible objection--was that the issue of paper money would cause prices

⁵⁰ David Hume, *David Hume Writings on Economics*, ed. Eugene Rotwein (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), pp. 68-69.

⁵⁹ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 20.

to rise, including labor costs, which would make Britain uncompetitive in international trade. If labor costs rise in response to the issue of paper money, which Wallace agrees may happen (though not for the reasons Hume sets out), this would not necessarily disadvantage Britain in trade. Differences in productivity may allow British workers to be paid more, by the day, and yet be cheaper to employ, by the piece. He claims that Englishmen are better fed, can work harder and do more in the same time.⁶⁰

A more important response to Hume's objections, and what lead Wallace to disagree with Hume's banking scheme, was his belief that Hume was wrong about the effect of money on the economy. Wallace simply did not think money to be neutral. He believed an increase in the quantity of money would increase real output--not prices.

Wallace shows that he understands the price/money relationship implicit in the quantity theorem. For a given level of output, a fixed supply of money will generate a constant price level.⁶¹

Let us suppose, that there is a certain quantity of money and of commodities in any country. The quantity of money may be said to represent the commodities, and to determine the prices of them. The prices of particular commodities may vary in different circumstances; but, if the sums of the money and of the commodities continue much the same, the prices, on the

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶¹ Wallace does not consider velocity as variable.

whole, cannot much alter.⁶²

On this Wallace and Hume agree.

However, the two disagree on the significance of this relationship. Hume used the relationship to explain the adjustment process following a change in the money supply and, to explain why the price level increased in Scotland. He argued that an increase in the supply of money would result in a proportionate increase in the price level. This was a long run view too. His argument seems to indicate a perception of the economy as a stationary state. Wallace, in contrast, is concerned with growth. If prices are constant, an increase in output requires an increase in the money supply. Continuing from above:

In such a case, if no more money comes into the country, unless the dispositions of the people are remarkably changed by some extraordinary accident or revolution, it will be very difficult to carry on a great deal of more work on a sudden, or speedily to increase the sum of commodities.⁶³

He sees the economy as growth constrained by fixed money supply recommendations like those of Hume.

It may be that Hume's concern over recent increases in Scotland's price level can be traced to real events and not monetary causes. In "Of Money", Hume paid particular attention to changes in the prices of foodstuffs. He took note of corn

⁶² Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 17.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

prices in France, comparing them to English prices. He compared English prices to prices in Roman times. Wallace suggested that the changes in foodstuffs were caused by poor growing seasons-- not changes in the money supply.

Besides; it is not upon the quantity of current specie alone, that prices depend; they rather depend on the proportion between the number of buyers, and that of sellers. If there are more buyers than sellers, the prices rise, and rise in proportion to the greater number of buyers. When the demand is lessened, or the sellers exceed the buyers, the prices fall; if the demand is much lessened, they fall greatly. Again, this proportion between buyers and sellers depends on a thousand accidents, that make one sort of goods more necessary, fashionable, or saleable, than another. Thus, when money abounds most, the prices of *some* things fall very low; and when it is very scarce, the prices of *other* things are high. The most necessary things, such as corn and cattle, will depend least upon fashion. Yet these depend upon it in *some* measure. At some times, and in some nations, greater quantities of those necessary commodities are consumed than in others. But corn, and other things that are most necessary, depend oftner upon worse and better crops and seasons, and upon the proportion between the crops of different countries.⁶⁴

In *Wealth of Nations*, Smith made similar comments on Hume's essay.

The increase of paper money, it has been said, by augmenting the quantity, and consequently diminishing the value of the whole currency, necessarily augments the money price of commodities. But as the quantity of gold and silver, which is taken for the currency, is always equal to the quantity of paper which is added to it, paper money does not necessarily increase the quantity of the whole currency. From the beginning of the last century to the present time, provisions never were cheaper in Scotland than in 1759, though, from the circulation of ten and five shilling bank notes, there was then more paper money in Scotland and that in England, is the same now as before the great multiplication of banking companies in Scotland. Corn is, upon most occasions, fully as cheap in England as in France; though there is a great deal of paper money in England, and scarce any in France. In 1751 and in 1752, when Mr. Hume published his *Political Discourses*, and soon after the great multiplication of paper money in

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

Scotland, there was a very sensible rise in the price of provisions, owing, probably, to the badness of the seasons, and not to the multiplication of paper money.⁶⁵

* * *

An interesting aspect of the debate between Hume and Wallace over monetary systems is their switch of roles. In *Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations* Hume employed the method of Creative Scepticism to refute Wallace's contention that population levels were in decline. Now, in *Great Britain*, Wallace, as he had in "Rhetorical Composition" from *Treatise*, played the sceptic. In *Populousness*, Hume decided in favor of the modern world on the basis of the superior happiness and welfare it delivered to its citizens. He looked around and observed that all was not so bad.⁶⁶ In "Of Banks, and of Paper-credit" Wallace used the same criteria to make the case for a modern fractional reserve banking system. He too looked around and saw the benefits of the new system. "In fact, we see that nations have prospered by setting up Banks. This is true of Holland, of Genoa, and of other places; and it will be found true both of England and Scotland."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Eds., R. H. Campbell, A. S. Skinner, and W. B. Todd (1976; rpt. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979), I, 324-325.

⁶⁶ Ernest Campbell Mossner, "Hume, and The Ancient-Modern Controversy, 1725-1752: A Study in Creative Scepticism," *The University of Texas Studies in English*, Vol. 28, (1949), p. 139.

⁶⁷ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 21.

International Trade

Wallace's thoughts on international trade are contained in his *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* and his *Advice to all true patriots or proposals to promote the Grandeur of Great Britain* which he outlined in a letter to Hume.

In *Characteristics*, Wallace responded to complaints made about the development of both Scotland and England subsequent to the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688. It was alleged by some that a series of mismanagements since the Revolution had produced poverty, a lack of silver and gold, high taxes, and a great increase in the national debt. Others claimed that Britain had lost its "genius" and "capacity." This second group maintained the loss was attributable to Britain's luxury and effeminacy of manners which derived from the "restraints laid on royal prerogative, from the new dignity and power acquired by our parliaments, and from the accession of liberty gained by our people at the Revolution."⁶⁸ Both groups--those that complained of poverty and those that complained of the ill-effect of riches--connected Britain's ruin with the revolution.

Wallace's goal in *Characteristics*, was to reassure "friends of the constitution" and "give a more just and a more agreeable prospect of the present state of Britain, than is to be seen in

⁶⁸ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. ii.

many late writings."⁶⁹ He intended to refute these disagreeable writings by examining matters that "relate to our paper-credit, to our taxes, to the public debts, to our luxury, to our effeminacy, and to a variety of other political subjects."⁷⁰

While supporting the liberty gained by the Revolution and maintaining the right of the people of Great Britain to point out errors in the administration, Wallace felt that some writers had gone too far. He thought it was dangerous for government to "neglect altogether the compositions which are published without regard to the strain in which they are written."⁷¹ Such writings tend to sour the minds of people and prejudice them against the truth. Later, in *Advice to all true Patriots*, a work designed to "raise a spirit of true patriotism," Wallace showed sympathy for efforts to curb "false opinions."

reviewing the system of the Law which ought to be done with great caution - of explaining all laws especially those of greater important which seem to be dubious & concerning which judges and lawyers seem to have Different views, or which do not seem to be absolutely fixed particularly all laws against sedition of editions writing granting warrants for apprehending emprisoning & searching the papers of writers or printers suspected of being the authors or publishers of writings said to be seditious - the Author is sensible this is Dangerous Ground but tho he is according to his genuine principles on the side of Liberty and the people against tyranny in ministers yet he is extremely modest & does not write as a lawyer but a plain honest man & allows that the

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. i.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. viii. (emphasis added)

⁷¹ Ibid., p. vii.

Government ought to be well served against seditions.⁷²

Wallace did not agree with every element of British policy. It is clear from his other works that there were many areas which he would have reformed. *Characteristics* was a patriotic work. It sought to defend the balance-of-powers established with the revolution of 1688 against the charges that these political changes were a burden to Great Britain. He later confided to Hume that *Characteristics* had been misinterpreted as supporting the current ministry, not as simply supporting the constitution.

My "Characteristics" tho never intended by me, I have been told were att that time thought by some in power to be written on their side & that even this Did some service to my Son in England but this perhaps was a mistake.⁷³

Wallace contended that both Scotland and England had prospered in the period since the Revolution. "Scotland is much richer than it was at the Revolution, by the increase of agriculture, manufactures, and trade."⁷⁴ And in England,

[a]ll the signs which indicate an increase in riches are visible in England. Its agriculture is much advanced, the value of land is raised, the interest of money is reduced, the quantity of shipping of all kinds, and the Royal Navy in particular, prodigiously augmented. Numerous stately buildings have been raised, and all things appear grand and magnificent. From which it might be expected, the minds of the English would be easy upon this point, and not be perpetually haunted with the dreadful spectres of poverty and

⁷² Robert Wallace, Letter to David Hume (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹), p. 3.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁴ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), p. 114.

ruin.⁷⁵

A large portion of *Characteristics* was devoted to the role of trade in British development and to the larger question of whether trade was "good." Two of the particular works Wallace responded to were Charles Davenant's "That foreign Trade is beneficial to England" and *An essay on the causes of the decline of the foreign trade, consequently of the value of the lands, of Britain, and on the means to restore both*, which Wallace attributed to Sir Matthew Decker.⁷⁶ Davenant's piece argued that riches and trade were highest in England immediately prior to the Revolution, and that both had declined afterwards. Similarly, Decker's piece maintained that trade had declined in England causing domestic conditions to deteriorate.

In response, Wallace found himself in the odd position of defending foreign trade. As a rule, Wallace was against international trade, favoring instead, emphasis on purely domestic development. He believed trade and luxury were closely associated, making trade source of contamination.

It may be added, that our gains by domestic industry, and by the improvement of our lands and stock of cattle, are of the most solid kind. They are more truly profitable than gains to the same nominal extent by foreign trade. The labours, by which we procure them, are more healthful; they keep our countrymen at home, keep our people more innocent, promote better morals, preserve simplicity of manners, prevent luxury,

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 138.

⁷⁶ McCulloch attributed the essay to a Mr. Richardson despite the fact that Adam Smith, as well as Wallace, believed Decker to be the author. See: John R. McCulloch, ed., *A Select Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on Commerce* (1859; rpt; Augustus Kelley, Publishers, 1966), pp. viii-ix.

and are less uncertain and precarious. Foreign trade, no doubt, may be very profitable. In some cases, it may bring quicker gains. But our merchants, and many others of our countrymen, value foreign trade too highly, when they lay it down as a position, that a nation cannot become rich and powerful without a great and increasing foreign trade.⁷⁷

Wallace's preference for agriculture over trade remained constant through *Advices*. In the outline of the proposed work, his thoughts on trade and agriculture are clear.

Of Agriculture p. 92

Agriculture is of the greatest importance

Agriculture is a more certain mean of riches than trade

The great profits from Agriculture. p.94

Agriculture cannot be carried to the full extent in Great Britain without a great number of new inhabitants or foreign trade p.95

Agriculture was in the greatest honour in the most antient ages and while the Antient Simplicity remained in the world p.96

And even after wards among the Greeks and Romans and the rich Persians. p.97

It was only after Elegance and magnificence became more common and great profits were made by trade that agriculture was less honoured p.97

It is a loss when there is too violent a turn to trade p.98

This is in some measure the case of Britain att present

An illustration of this point. p.99

In what trade consists and in what it is disstinguished from labour p.101

We have too few who labour and too many merchants & traders p.103

A nation may have too much forreign trade & too many hands employed in it p.107

Too much foreign trade and much Luxury hinders the speedy improvement of our Lands. p.110⁷⁸

Now, in response to Davenant and Decker, Wallace was forced to develop a compromise position that would dispell Davenant's

⁷⁷ Robert Wallace, *Characteristics of the Present Political State of Great Britain* (1758; rpt; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969, p. 140.

⁷⁸ Robert Wallace, Letter to David Hume (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹), p. 6.

and Decker's criticism while preserving his own anti-trade views. In reaching this compromise position, Wallace employed the criteria he had used along with Hume in the "Hume-Wallace" debate. The question, said Wallace, was not how much money trade brings to a nation; the issue is how conducive is it to the happiness of the people.⁷⁹ With this criteria, Wallace acknowledged four benefits to foreign trade. First, was the advantage of security. An island society, without standing army or militia requires foreign trade to support a good navy. Second, communications and exploration are furthered. Third, "If it be managed with wisdom, it may be a more speedy mean of acquiring wealth than domestic commerce alone."⁸⁰ Forth, trade is the only means to gold and silver for a country without mines. He also noted that a small country with limited resources must trade to feed and cloath its inhabitants--of course, this did not apply to either Scotland or England.

Wallace was extremely wary of taking this compromise position. Anytime he made an allowance for trade he immediately reminded the reader that he was hardly an enthusiastic supporter of free trade.

What absurd and ridiculous notions are we apt to conceive concerning luxury! In one sense, almost every thing may be reckoned luxury. In another, there is much less than is commonly believed. Defining luxury to be too elegant or refined, or a too sumptuous, method of living, in a moral sense it is always bad; for it is a great corrupter both of mens genius and virtue. In a political sense, it is also bad,

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 136.

as, upon the whole, it renders a people weak in consequence of their vices. God forbid, that I should endeavor to lessen the horrors, which wise and good men have most justly conceived of it, or that I should not prefer the innocence and virtue of a nation to its riches. Not only ought a virtuous man to detest luxury, but, abstracting from morals, a sound politician, who considers only the strength of nations, ought to pass the very same judgement. For virtue, by rendering a people more honest and valiant, makes them stronger either for attack, or for defence; though it does not always render them opulent. It is only a high degree of virtue that can secure good morals and great riches at the same time; yet it always tends to preserve a nation longer, and render it more secure. On the other hand, luxury enervates a people. Yet, where it runs through all ranks, it can only be supported by superior riches.⁰¹

The last part of this quote reveals Wallace's concern over the distributional effects of trade. Increasing riches was not sufficient to Wallace. The benefits had to be shared evenly.

Neither government nor trade ought to be managed with the sole view of procuring vast riches to a few, at the expence of grinding the faces of the poor, and of rendering the labouring people, who are the great body of a nation, miserable. The systems of too many, both merchants and landed gentlemen, tend to no other purpose. While such gentlemen swim in luxury, and have more than heart could wish, they grudge a small pittance to the lower classes of mankind. We ought to propose more equitable and more merciful schemes. By considering things in this light, we may see, how much the policy of England is preferable to that of France.⁰²

Wallace spent comparatively little time on the specifics of Davenant's and Decker's essays. He briefly noted that the conditions Davenant complained of at the time his essay was written, 1697, had reversed during the new century. To Decker's charge that foreign trade had decreased, causing shop-keepers to extend greater amounts of credit, increased bankruptcies, greater

⁰¹ Ibid., p. 134.

⁰² Ibid., p. 38.

amounts of rent in arrears, consolidation of farms, and increased poors rates, Wallace replied that these were natural consequences of increased riches.

When trade is increasing, and a nation is enriched by it, this proves a strong temptation to many to launch out into too extensive schemes, and to venture farther than their stocks will bear. And, as unlucky adventures must often happen, this must necessarily give occasion to more frequent bankruptcies, than will happen in poorer countries where there is little trade. In poor countries there will be but few and small debts; for little credit will be given. In general, therefore, as more people deal in trade, there will be more frequent bankruptcies; and, as the trade is greater, they will be for greater sums. Yet this trade will enrich the country, and these bankruptcies will be of little detriment upon the whole.⁸³

To the charge that increased riches threw people off the land, Wallace replied that greater wealth and commerce will draw some from more barren towns, but will make up for the loss with greater numbers of "merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and manufacturers."⁸⁴

Besides the issues mentioned above, Decker pointed to the decline in the wool industry as an indication of the overall decay of foreign trade. Manufacturing of clothing was down according to Decker, and workers in that industry were reduced to poverty. Wallace replied that the decline of one industry does not imply anything about trade upon the whole. "All the branches of [trade] cannot flourish equally at all times."⁸⁵ The decline

⁸³ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 143.

of the English clothing industry, he said, may have been the result of foreign commercial policy. He believed European rivals were encouraging their own manufactures. Lastly, wrote Wallace, "trade is very variable in its nature."⁸⁶ "Particular causes" make some industries languish at times.

Unfortunately, Wallace did not pursue these particular causes. However, the issue of location did appear elsewhere in *Characteristics*. Within his critique of Hume's monetary theory, Wallace examined the "fluids" equilibrium model advanced by Hume.

Mr. Hume seems to be no less mistaken in the limits which he assigns to *trade*, than in his opinion of Banking. According to his maxims, trade gives check to itself; and there is a limit, beyond which it cannot be increased. Poorer nations, that is, nations with less money or foreign commerce, can work cheaper than those, that are richer; and must, therefore, carry away their trade.⁸⁷

He argued that the issue was not daily wages but rather cost per unit. More productive English workers may be more productive than their competition and thus produce goods at a lower cost. "An Englishman must, no doubt, be better fed, and earns higher wages *by the day*; but he will work many things *by the piece*, as cheap, or cheaper than a Frenchman. He works harder, and can do more work in the same time."⁸⁸ From this, Wallace concluded that there need not be any equilibrium from trade and that a rich nation could always maintain its superiority over a poorer. He

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

also concluded that there were other principles besides wages and prices that account for trade, "and for its shifting seat from one nation to another."⁸⁹ As before, he did not expand on these principles--although no one has done particularly well at elucidating such principles any time since Wallace.

What is more important than the particular effects of trade on domestic land prices or its impact on the money supply or even the direction of trade, is Wallace's growing view of wealth and his implicit acceptance of a profitability rationale for trade. Wallace's response to Davanent and Decker left him with an optimal level of trade, and therefore, an optimal level of luxury. This forced him to reconcile his two distinct views of national wealth. According to Wallace's population definition, a nation's wealth is defined purely in terms of raw numbers. At the same time Wallace frequently defined wealth in per capita terms. When tracing the effects of greater industry--the taste for improvements in manufactures and agriculture--he noted that the first effect would be an increase in the riches of the country. "After this, it gradually increases the number of people, by furnishing better means of subsistence, and by encouraging marriage."⁹⁰ However, as people multiply faster than riches, a country will not only grow richer, but richer in proportion to its inhabitants. Wallace did not abandon he

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

population definition altogether. As before, he prefaced his remarks by observing that a "great increase in riches, by increasing luxury, may prove a hindrance to marriages, and may prevent a proportionable augmentation of people."⁹¹ But he no longer viewed the growth of commercial society from an entirely primitivist perspective.

When presenting possible explanations for the decline of the woolen industry, Wallace remarked that individual producers, "intent on gain, give up a less profitable branch of trade, and prefer a more profitable."⁹² The easy, natural manner by which he presented this explanation carried a sanction that he may not have intended. At another point within *Characteristics*, Wallace considered the disadvantages of foreign trade. He said that trade was a disadvantage only if it was more profitable to bestow our energy on domestic industry. He added to this point, the claim that it was generally more profitable to invest in domestic industry, probably intending to further support his agrarian system. However, the rationale for engaging in domestic or foreign industry had changed. It was profit maximization--not moral purity.

In *Advice to all true Patriots*, Wallace continued to employ the profit rationale when deciding what to produce. In this same piece Wallace argued that government need not regulate the

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 113.

⁹² Ibid., p. 113.

quantity of land devoted to grains vs. livestock, that the system was self-regulating. When considering trade flows, he used the same logic--even for trade with the French.

[The author] shews what trade is best for Britain speaks of foreign and Domestick trade &c &c &c of our East India trade, Spittle field weavers & manufacturing silks: thinks if we can buy silks cheaper from the french we ought to do it & employ silk weavers &c in more profitable work but only gradually & so as to provide well for them in the mean time.⁹³

What emerges from Wallace's discussion of trade is a view of the evolution of the concept of national wealth. His early writings were quite typical of "Mercantilist" and, perhaps, Scholastic thought. However, in his later efforts, Wallace came to view of wealth in a manner which was much closer to the axioms suggested by Smith in *Wealth of Nations*:

- A1. Individuals wish to maximize wealth.
- A2. Individuals know better than government how to maximize their own wealth.
- A3. National wealth is the sum of individual wealth.
- A4. In international affairs, nations are to be treated as individuals.⁹⁴

* * *

It is interesting too, to note that Wallace sounded more "classical" when he considered economic matters from a narrow perspective. When Wallace discussed trade and wealth and their

⁹³ Robert Wallace, Letter to David Hume (Edinburgh University Library, manuscript no. La.II.96¹), p. 7.

⁹⁴ Salim Rashid, "Political Free Trade?: The *Lectures on Jurisprudence and the Wealth of Nations*." Faculty Working Paper no. 89-1537. College of Commerce and Business Administration, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, pp. 1-2.

relationship with society, political and moral concerns pushed him towards more conservative conclusions and policies. When he viewed these same topics strictly from an positive economic standpoint, his analysis was more liberal.⁹⁵ This again suggests that the key to the transition from "Mercantile" to "Classical" economic thought was not a problem of "tools," but rather of value--specifically, the definition of societal welfare.

⁹⁵ See: Salim Rashid, "The Pragmatic Imagery of Free Trade 1660-1760" University of Illinois Working Paper.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have tried to present the economic thought of Robert Wallace from what Bernard Bailyn would call an "interior view"--from the vantage point of Wallace's writings and those of his contemporaries within the Scottish Enlightenment.¹ I wanted the framework of my interpretation to come from Wallace himself and from the period he wrote within. Therefore, no restrictions were placed on this framework; it was not confined to economic matters alone. I wanted the framework to be complete--to reflect all the issues Wallace believed were important. I reasoned that by identifying the issues that were central to Wallace, I would simultaneously uncover the influences and motivations behind his writings. These underlying influences and motives might be missed if the study were to focus exclusively on Economics. I hoped that this broad approach would enable me to explain, not merely present, Wallace's economic ideas.

In the case of the Scottish Enlightenment, the interior view consists of many facets and reflects the works of many authors. Scottish works from the period suggest an interpretive space with dimensions for political thought, religious ideas, moral and aesthetic views, the new "scientific" perspective, as well as

¹ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), p. iv.

reflections on commercial society. The list of authors who greatly influenced the perspective and ultimately the ideas of the middle- to late-eighteenth-century Scots is quite long. An extensive list of ancient Greek and Roman authors, historians for the most part, appear frequently in discussions of political theory. They are joined by sixteenth-, seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century writers such as Milton, Sydney, Harrington and Fletcher. Implicit and explicit appeals to Augustine and Aquinas are made on religious matters. Their orthodox views are hotly contested by a variety of philosophers and social critics. Hobbes and Mandeville, along with the French *philosophes* represent only a portion of those reacting against traditional theological positions. These same names appear along with Steele, Addison and Shaftesbury on matters of morality. Newton, of course, is synonymous with the scientific method of investigation. His impact was enormous and his name was associated with all manner of inquiry. The growth of commercial society and its implications are discussed by many writers. Those concerned with its corrupting influence often cite ancient accounts of the fall of Rome. Those focused on the increased wealth generated by the change, point to the literature of progress and improvement. Finally, occupying a less prominent portion of the literature, the theories of early economists such as Mun, Decker, Davenant and Berkeley are discussed.

Together, these works help define the general context Wallace wrote within. Wallace's own writings confirm the

appropriateness of the dimensions suggested by the period. The authors and topics mentioned above also appear in his works. However, as is the case with any individual writer, there is a particular emphasis to Wallace's reading of these authors--a particular view. In the case of Wallace, religious views dominate his overall perspective. His religious views became more orthodox as he grew older, fostering an increasingly critical assessment of many of the prominent aspects of the enlightenment. His orthodox religious views are joined by a "Whiggish" political outlook. They combine to produce a set of proposals for government reform. Some of the reforms are modifications to the existing political structure, such as the educational system or the army. Others are more fundamental, discussing the legitimacy of property or suffrage. At the same time, Wallace's Whig stance compels him to defend the system of government--to celebrate the gains associated with the Glorious Revolution. Intertwined with these two important dimensions of Wallace's thought are his views on the emerging commercial society. Much of his opposition is based on his religious views, but it is equally inspired by his reading of Greek and Roman literature, Seneca in particular. It was this opposition to commercial society that produced the many arguments with Hume and his repeated attacks on Mandeville. It was from this religious/political/social values perspective that Wallace viewed economic issues and it provides insight into his views on those issues.

By taking the time to construct the underlying perspective by which Wallace came to economic discussions, I hope I have presented an account of Wallace's economic ideas that is true to the context in which they were formed. I also hope that these ideas appear more consistent and more logically connected than an initial reading of his works might suggest. A by-product of this approach is a smoother portrayal of the development of economic thought than is generally given. There is a tendency in Economics to present the Scottish Enlightenment as an historical discontinuity--to accept Adam Smith as the founder of the discipline, and to ignore any history prior to 1776. This study demonstrates that there is a history prior to 1776 and that it is grounded in the process of intellectual development that has been continuously evolving for centuries.

Within economic literature, this study belongs within the growing body of work dedicated to defining the pre-classical period of economic thought. Perhaps, because of its reliance on interpretive paradigms developed outside the discipline, it will have a broader-based appeal.

This is not to say this study is complete, or even successful. But that is no reflection on the method proposed. If anything, it is evidence of a further need to adopt it. There are serious shortcomings with this work. While I believe Wallace's theological views are well represented, the political dimension of his outlook is under-represented. More attention should have been given to his "Whiggishness" and the tradition of

Civic Republicanism. Significant individuals are under-represented too. The connection between Wallace and Shaftesbury or Kames is discussed only briefly. Likewise, Berkeley's influence on Wallace is only partially explored. These are particular, well-defined problems. They are joined by a general incompleteness of knowledge of the period and place that prevents me from appreciating many of the subtleties and nuances of the literature. This can only be remedied by a return to the original source material. Hopefully, after such a return, I will complete this study.

THE END

Appendix

A
Treatise
on
Taste

By

Robert Wallace D.D. late a
Chaplain to the King, and a
Minister of the New North Church
of Edinburgh.

Published,
According to the Author's orders,

by
George Wallace esq.¹

¹ Obtained from the National Library of Scotland. Order
No. 183-189. Previously unpublished.

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A Treatise on Taste

Most men, at least among those who are raised above the Vulgar, are fond of being reckoned to possess a good Taste, but are greatly ignorant of that in which it consists, or which is really conformable to it. Even In Criticism and in Philosophy, authority and fashion maintain an extensive dominion, as well as in life and in manners: Vast numbers, precipitate and Servile, embrace without examination every foolish notion which they find sanctified by age or supported by particular names; and multitudes still greater comply with all the idle modes that come into Vogue among those, whom, on any ground, they are taught to esteem fine people. Reason is not always consulted, nature is not constantly followed. Hence truth and learning suffer, and untoward effects are produced even on virtue and on happiness. Persons, destitute of fixed principles, and unfurnished with right rules, must not only be capricious and unsteady in their Sentiments and in their conduct, but often feel much tumult and violent uneasiness in their minds.

The materials of which man is composed, limited in their powers, and determinate in their operations, are not pliable into every form which whim requires for its repose. Every individual belongs to a certain Species, essentially distinguished by a peculiar constitution: The faculties and the Dispositions, originally implanted in our breasts, cannot be entirely corrupted: And nature, resist and expell her as you please, is often experienced to make her undutifull Children abundantly sensible of their Subjection and her empire. In her, therefore, I am perswaded, that a standard exists, independent on fashion, on Custom, on prejudice, and on passion, according to which we ought to Judge of the various objects exhibited before us.

To ascertain that standard, to establish its reality, to prove its independence, and by a few general rules to assist |2| others in forming opinions agreeable to it in particular Cases, is my principall design in the following Treatise. In discerning it A just taste can alone consist, and my observations, derived from a long experience and from considerable attention, I would fain hope, may contribute something toward promoting an accuracy in that Species of discernment.

An eminent divine said very properly, that he liked not too subtile a theology: Neither can a man, whose understanding is solid, be fond of a Subtile Criticism, which affects a mighty profoundness, but conveys nothing substantial to the mind, and, instead of new and important discoveries, presents only uncouth terms and unusual phrases more obscure and less elegant than those employed by former critics. Good sense is always resolvable into intelligible propositions and the ideas of a Writer, who is not able to make his thoughts easily understood, I believe, will generally be found confused and inaccurate. Every thing introduced in my work shall, as much as possible, be both reduced to plain principles and expressed in perspicuous

language: Its extensive usefulness must depend not a little on these circumstances: And I shall begin on that account with an explanation of Terms.

Taste, its primitive Signification,

Taste, in its primitive signification, relates to the palate, and expresses the relish perceived from that which we eat or drink. A thing, which yields neither a pleasant nor an unpleasant sensation, is said to be tasteless.

Its metaphorical Sense,

It is applied, in a metaphorical sense, to visible, audible, tangible, intellectual, and other objects, and to the pleasure or disgust arising from any perceptions or feelings, acquired by means either of our external senses, or of our internal faculties.

The expression is also referred to the mind or being by which objects are viewed, and is then used for the power by which that relish, pleasure, or disgust is perceived.

Different from Consciousness

In all of its senses, it differs from the inward consciousness, which men have either of their existence, or of their affections, passions, dispositions, inclinations and resolutions. |3| Those indeed are accompanied with immediate feelings, agreeable or disagreeable; but the pleasure or the pain, afforded by them, is not of the species proper to taste. Its objects are particular things, presented to be surveyed, whose comeliness or deformity is submitted to contemplation. The delight, felt on listening to melodious sounds, on looking at beautiful figures, on beholding elegant colours, or on seeing characters justly represented, belongs to this faculty. Even dispositions and passions, erected into objects of perception, may be contemplated by a reflex sense in the same light: But that internal sentiment, which was mentioned, rests on itself; agreeableness or disagreeableness is not a part or quality, in this feeling, which is taken into consideration; and we refer not the term to that satisfaction which we experience on being conscious of virtuous affection.

Light in which views objects,

In speaking of Taste things are not considered either in a moral or in an interested view, but in a light merely sensitive. Virtuousness and viciousness, profitableness and unprofitableness, are qualities totally different from those related to it, and the only Circumstance, immediately regarded by it in objects, is their agreeableness or disagreeableness to be beheld or perceived.

Pleasures derived from it different from those of knowledge

The pleasures derived from Taste, and those arising from knowledge, are materially different. Skill in profound and important Sciences, distinct and lively perceptions of truth, accurate and enlarged views of the Connections of things, yield

to the mind refined satisfaction, independent of every consideration of advantage or prospect of utility: but the gratification bestowed by them is not the feeling peculiar to Taste. A person distinguished by this faculty derives his enjoyment from the immediate perception of beauty or grace in particular objects present to his view: A philosopher, or man of deep knowledge, takes delight in general truths, the chief subjects of his contemplation, and in contemplating them abstracts as much as possible from particular objects.

Defined

It is therefore the province of Taste, to pronounce on the agreeable or the beautiful, and the disagreeable or the ugly |4| in things: The word is commonly taken in a favourable Sense, and it may be defined "a faculty of forming just opinions, and of having a proper relish of the merit, or beauties & defects, of its objects."

All individuals, it is certain, possess not that sense or power in a degree equally acute or precisely the same. Some men's feelings are much duller than those of others, and an object, which to one yields a lively sensation, is altogether insipid to another, or makes only a faint impression upon his mind or organs.

Faculty improvable.

It is also indisputable, that this power admits of improvement, or that most men are capable of becoming more accurate Judges, than they are at first, of the objects about which it is conversant. Unless both propositions are supposed to be true, a Treatise on Taste would be useless, as every man would then have at all times the same relish of every thing.

A fine Taste

The diversity, observed among individuals in this respect, is extremely remarkable in some cases. Hence good, delicate, or fine Tastes, are distinguished from bad, gross, or coarse ones and this distinction, may be referred either to the different degrees of acuteness in which the faculty exists in different men, or to the nature of the objects about which it is employed.

denominated either from its acuteness,

In the primary Sense assigned to the word, some are said to have a Taste much more exquisite than others: They are not only reckoned nicer Judges of that which is delicious in eating and in drinking, but are also acknowledged to be more capable of directing the arrangement and the Succession of dishes and an entertainment in the manner best adapted to gratify the palate.

Or from its objects.

This superior delicacy, remarkable in some men, is also applied to the word taken in its metaphorical sense, and discovers itself then either in Judgement or in Execution. By

the first a man of Taste is capable of discerning, in both an easy and a lively manner, that which is agreeable or disagreeable in objects: By the second he is assisted to perform with grace or to execute in a manner which yeilds pleasure to others. Thus, one, who is able either to remark in nature. |5| Beauties that are overlooked by others, to Judge, with greater certainty and with more quickness than they, of the excellency of works of art, or to perform with more dexterity himself, is said to have a finer Taste: We speak of a finer Taste, as, well as of a finer eye or of a finer hand, in painting; and a finer Taste; as well as a finer Ear, is applied to music.

A Taste, perfect in its kind, is generally intituled to approbation: Yet fine Tastes are not equally admirable in all Cases, and a nice relish in some objects must be owned to be more excellent than in others.

The perceptions, acquired by our external Senses, are essentially different from one another: but each Sense, or the organ, which ministers to its gratification, is capable of affording an immediate pleasure. Certain sounds give rapture to the Ear. The eye is charmed with certain colours and figures, certain tastes are delicious to the palate, certain odours are gratefull to the Smell, and there is a Smoothness of a softness pleasant to the touch, which other feelings are painfull or disagreeable. The degrees of delight, afforded in different cases by the same Sense, can easily be compared with one another; The drone of a Bagpipe, for instance, the Sweetness of a Flute, and the sprightliness of a fiddle: and among these objects we can generally pronounce, with considerable assurance, which of them yeilds a satisfaction higher or lower than the rest. {Thus, The Art, which, from paper and ink only, produce the picture of a Man, may justly be affirmed, on account of the unlikeliness of the materials employed by it, to excell, in one respect, that which works the same Effect in colours: The exactness however of the Resemblances, the Liveliness of the Images, and the glow as well as the variety of Tints, exhibited on Canvas, are sources of inferior delight; and Prints are generally allowed to be an order much inferior on the whole to paintings.) more difficulty is found in forming a comparison between pleasures peculiar to one sense, and those derived from another; The pleasures of the Ear, for example, and those of the Eye. Here it must always be easier to determine in particular cases, than to decide, in general terms, on the Superiority or inferiority of an entire species: Nevertheless Philosophers are commonly agreed in affirming the pleasures derived from some of the Senses to be more refined and more liberall than those yeilded by others. To the Grosser kind are referred those derived from tasting, from touching, and from smelling: The Eyes and the Ears are inlets to others esteemed more delicate.

The pleasures derived from the Eye & the Ear more refined than those of tasting, touching & smelling.

This distinction is asserted by some Critics to rise at

least in part, from the difference of the ways in which the Objects |6| proper to these different Senses are perceived. "Those belonging to the first Class, tasting, smelling, and touching, are conceived, they say, to be close by the Organs of sense, or to approach immediately to them, and it is observed that we are even conscious of the immediateness of the impression made there; but objects, of Sight and of hearing are understood to be at a distance, and we are not sensible of any immediate impression caused by them."² Were the Supposition, on which this Solution is founded, universally acknowledged to be just, still the connection between a greater or less distance from an Organ, or a stronger or feebler impression made upon it, and a higher or inferior refinement in pleasure, could not be allowed to be extremely clear. In the comparison instituted by these Critics, single acts of Sensation, apart by themselves, and detached from others, can alone be taken into consideration, or opposed to each other: Refinement, in this agreement refers to degree, or higher and lower, and means intenseness - or height; and it will not be generally Granted that corporeal pleasures, in which greater or Stronger impulses are supposed to be felt at the Organs of Sense, are in every instance less exquisite on that account. To many Physiologists a contrary inference will appear more Philosophical. But the fact itself on which the account is founded, instead of being universally admitted, has been contested by other Metaphysicians as well as by Bishop Berkeley; a Philosopher, whose fortune is singular in one respect, that his System has often been attempted to be confuted, but hitherto the attempt has never been made by any Writer, who, in his confutations, did not discover himself fundamentally ignorant of his Lordship's doctrine. The Observation also is too metaphysical to be accepted as the foundation of that real distinction which has been mentioned: and we have sufficient Grounds, independent of it, for explaining after another manner the delicacy and the subordination of the Gratifications received from these different Senses.

The pleasures, furnished by Taste, by touch, and by Smell |7| cannot reasonably be affirmed to be altogether unworthy of attention. In the garniture of a Table, and in the refreshment of perfumes, there is an elegance which is real: It has been studied in all Cultivated Ages, and is almost inseparable from the Polite Arts. Delicacy in these articles is not wholly incompatible with innocence, and entertainments, in which the former is displayed, may be conducted in a manner, which, without violating the latter will at once recreate the Senses and contribute to health. The Science therefore, which presides over them, cannot be entirely condemned: Yet other arts must be owned to be both more liberall and more worthy of culture; and men of Genius, instead of contributing their assistance to add importance to mean or beastly Gratifications, will sincerely

² Elements of Criticism, Introduction.

regreat, that Cookery, Perfumery, and their Sister arts engross at present an attention, as well as demand a labour, which reflect no honour on the age.

The improvements invented by Luxury for gratifying the Taste, the Smell, and the Touch, in a manner superior to the simple and easy provision made by nature, either add little to the intenseness of the gratification by any combination which art can contrive, or the delight afforded in these cases has been found by experience dangerous in its consequences. Not only does it cost more than its intrinsic worth, but, by occasioning a continued and great Expence, disables its Votaries from purchasing enjoyments of higher value, and, by being carried to excess, has an unhappy influence in hurting the health, and lessening the vigour both of body and of mind. Wise men, in forming their opinions, proceed on rational Grounds, and in their comparisons, like exact Calculators, take duration and number and effects and all circumstances into their estimates. The satisfactions afforded by the three gross Senses, being momentary, exhausting, or flat, lead to lassitude, aversion, dissoluteness, and pain; and men devoted to such sensuality, losing a proper relish of other enjoyments, forfeit much happenings which they might otherways obtain. Hence it is that the pleasures dependant on taste, on touch, & on Smell, are deservedly reckoned inferior in rank: They have accordingly been highly rated by the Gross and the Sensual only |8| and an inordinate relish discovered for them is little approved.

The pleasures, conveyed by the Eye and the Ear, are of a very different quality. In them art, removing out of view disagreeable objects, and adding various combinations of agreeable ones, can considerably improve on nature, and men are not exposed, either by acquiring a high relish of them, or by carrying them to great refinement, to any dangerous or despicable Sensuality. Their enjoyment violates no obligation, and men are not incapacitated or averted by it from other pleasures: On the contrary, a delicate taste in these rather helps to refine and to augment other delights, and, connected as it is with virtue, adds dignity to a Character. Hence the satisfactions, derived from hearing and from seeing, are justly accounted more liberal and more pure: And those arts, which lead to the most refined enjoyment of them, are peculiarly dignified by the name of **Fine**.

Painting, Statuary, Sculpture, Architecture, music, poetry, and Oratory, are, in a distinguished manner, honoured with this denomination, and one, who is either a skillfull performer or an exquisite Judge in them, is peculiarly applauded as a man of Taste. The expression, "A fine Taste," is even appropriated in more sort to these, which are often esteemed its particular Subjects. Nevertheless, the delight afforded by them appears to profound Philosophers, greatly inferior to that which their Intellects receive from the perception of Truth, and from chains of reasoning in the deep and accurate Sciences: And it must be acknowledged that a Taste in morality, or a relish of its

Beauties, is preferable to that of every other excellence. A person, who is forcibly Struck with the graces of honest and Noble behaviour, is but intitled to the accounted a man of Taste, and one, who is little affected by the Charms of Virtue, or who perceives not the deformity of Vice, may justly be pronounced to have this faculty in a corrupted state. Indeed, want of a relish in Morals is a greater defect than a bad taste in any the finest art in the world.

It will likewise be confessed by every ingenious virtuoso, |9| that a lively Sense of moral beauty is a necessary preparative for forming a good Judgement even in several of the fine Arts, particularly in poetical, Rhetorical, and Historical composition. Without it one will not be able either to set affections and Conduct in a Just light, or to reap the highest pleasure striking from pictures of manners and of Characters; and it is absolutely necessary for arriving at the utmost skill in those which hold the chief Rank among them. An Epic or a Tragic poet, who is devoid of a just taste in this principall Subject, will attempt in vain to represent human passions with propriety and with truth, or to draw his Heros to advantage and with dignity: His representations, derived from feelings to which himself is a Stranger, will not touch the heart or give a proper exercise to the passions: A right Judgement will rarely be formed without it concerning designs and actions, and an Historian, who is not himself possess of Sound notions, will be incapable of making either a valuable Selection of a right use of Examples which occur in Story. Without it an Orator will hardly be able to display the Genuine amiableness of disinterested Conduct, and must not expect to excite to noble deeds: Nay, the painter, the Statuary, or the musician will never attain to the real Sublime in their different arts. The point, at which an artist aims who pretends to Taste, is to mould objects into a form which will render them agreeable to perceive: A Spectator or a hearer, who aspires to it, wishes for a faculty of Judging, with readiness and with truth, of the beauty or the aptitude actually bestowed upon them: Both therefore must be acquainted with the Causes on which agreeableness & ugliness depend, and their discernment in ethical pulchritude or ethical deformity, qualities which possess a mighty power in that respect, ought to be vivid and acute.

A good or a bad Taste may be displayed almost in every thing; Yet their principall Subjects are reducible to four Classes: First, Objects presented by the external Senses, under which a second Species may be comprehended; to wit, [10] Imitations or resemblances of these objects, exhibited in painting, in Statuary, and in other imitative arts employed to recall their images to memory: Thirdly, descriptions or representations of them, and of their circumstances or relations, given by Historians, by Poets, or by Orators: And, Fourthly, Historical, Poetical, and Rhetorical accounts, pictures, & delineations of the passions, actions, and Characters of men.

In treating this Subject, I propose not to explain those

arts in which Taste chiefly exerts itself, or to examine minutely that which ought to be deemed a Good or a bad Taste in any of them. My argument is not particular, but general: The Observations therefore, which I shall make, will mostly be of the latter kind; but they will also be illustrated by examples, and, being applicable to many particular Cases, will serve, I hope, both to throw light on the nature of this Sense, and to elucidate that which ought to be most highly relished in several among the elegant arts.

With this view I shall enquire, first, into the principles of Taste.

Secondly, into its foundation; and into the influence, which Education, Custom, and Habit possess in altering or Corrupting it.

Thirdly, into that which is intitled to be reckoned a Just or good Taste; and into the fundamental rules of Judging and performing with it.

Fourthly, Into the method of acquiring, preserving, and improving this faculty.

Fifthly, Into the advantages of a good Taste.

Sixthly, I shall make some particular observations, on Composition and its different Species. |11|

Part. I

Book. I

The Principles of Taste

Principles of Taste.

Those circumstances or properties, which render objects distinguished by them, immediatly agreeable or immediatly disagreeable to perceive, I call principles of Taste. The works of nature, those productions of art, and any actions of men, which afford delight or excite aversion in contemplation, possess in every instance some qualities, to which, in the one case, the complacent feeling owes its origin, or which, in the other, cause a contrary sentiment to arise in the mind. It will be proper therefore, first of all, to enumerate these principles: A disquisition which resolves intirely into an enquiry after facts, discoverable by an attentive observation of the Effects produced on the perception of particular objects in all their variety of appearances and of kinds. To me they seem chiefly to be

1. Grandeur,
2. Novelty,
3. Variety,
4. Uniformity, Proportion, and Order,
5. Propriety, Congruity, or Symmetry,
6. Similitude and Resemblance, or Contrast and Dissimilitude.

Chapter I.

Grandeur.

Grandeur in objects of Sense

Greatness or Grandeur is found by experience to be one principal source of the pleasures of Taste: Objects, marked by that quality, are beheld with delight. Hence the admiration felt in contemplating the wide circumference of the heavens, the ample arch of the Rainbow, and the rising or setting Sun traversing to Regions beyond the utmost limits of our Terraqueous Globe. Hence a mighty Swollen River, an open extended Country, or a spacious Ocean, affords a prospect highly agreeable. Hence huge mountains, Vast Edificies, lofty Towers, Stately Trees, large animals, flowing Robes, and |12| elevated Thrones, are beheld with satisfaction. Even individuals, which, in their separate State, are little noticed, become remarkable, collected into multitudes: A requirement or an army disposed in order, a mob or a crowd mingling in confusion, Drovers of Cattle and Flights of Birds, are not viewed without pleasure: And a like impression is exacted by power, by motion, and by every other quality to which greatness is applicable, as well as by bulk, by altitude, and by number. A brisk velocity which causes not giddiness, and every thing that seems bigg with force, or which expresses a mighty energy, agitates the mind, and gives it a pleasant exercise: The ascent of a rocket, the flight of an eagle, The course of a Bomb, a meteor darting from the Clouds, and Cataract precipitated from a great height, a rock tumbling from a high mountain.

{Every thing, even the least which is presented to the senses or to the imagination, is accompanied with a certain emotion, intense and observed, or faint and unnoted in proportion to the greatness or the smallness of its cause, and the spirits must be highly agitated by that compounded sentiment, which is excited by any vastly great magnitude, and which is composed of all the different movements given them by each particular part of which that vast magnitude consists.}

Objects which are Grand, and those which mark a mighty energy, are particularly formed to engage attention, and this property enables them in perception to produce remarkable Effects. 1.) In their presence little notice is bestowed on small objects even conspicuous for Grace: The colours, with which a mackarel's skin or a Goldfinch's plumage is variegated, are extremely elegant, But with most beholders the former would pass unheeded on sight of the hugeness of a Whale; and an Ostrich would leave few Eyes fixed on the latter. 2.) Vastness, in things distinguished by it, seizes, affects, and fills the mind perhaps more than any other Circumstance discoverable in them, and greatness or Energy always makes men proportionally indifferent about other qualities, or less struck by them. In several of the Examples which have been given, the pleasure that is felt arises from other sources as well as from Grandeur, but a little reflection will show its influence to be vastly Superior in producing the Effect. 3.) Magnitude covers blemishes in many cases, and even atones for want of beauty: In grand Structures,

in spacious Gardens, in long poems, & in extensive Histories, we forgive defects, which would be unpardonable in smaller works. And, 4.) the powerfull influence, which all magnificent objects have in throwing an astonishing delight over the Senses and the imagination, renders them peculiarly adapted to please in discription.

The most glorious Spectacle, exposed to human |13| Sight, is that of the heavens, in a clear night, bespangled with Stars: But it is neither the Spherical figure of those luminaries, for to a Spectator they seem to be points, nor the regularity of their motions, for these are not instantaneously discernible by the Eye, nor their Shining and twinkling light, but their prodigious number, and the amplitude of the Sphere to which they are referred, that renders the prospect passingly delightfull.

One Taste or one Smell may be stronger than another, but the feelings belonging to these Senses are not properly susceptible of magnitude. However degree is applied to Sounds and emotions analogous to the former are also caused by their greatness. Cannons firing, boisterous Winds, roaring Seas, loud Huzzas, and rolling thunders, being accompanied with Terror, strike the soul with an agreeable amazement.

Solos are finely adapted to sweetness and to melody, with which the proportions and the Correspondence, maintained in music among different notes & varied parts, are perceived there; and a few Instruments in chosen symphony are better suited than a great many, to excite Mirth, Greif, and every passion, which marks an attachment to particular and known objects, and which is tintured with tenderness or with Joy: But sublime harmony can only be reached by a numerous band, and a full orchestra is alone able to inspire that extatic rapture and devotion, allied to admiration and to dread, whose objects are not individual or defined, which exalts men to Seraphs, and raises them to heaven.

in objects of imagination

Grandeur operates on things conceived by imagination as well as on those presented to Sense, and its operation in that case is constantly affected, more or less, by the Vivacity or the dullness of the conception.

The idea formed of a Golden hill, of which no Archetype was ever seen in nature, is extremely faint, and all its modifications partake of that languidness. A telescope, directed to the Heavens, discovers worlds beyond worlds in along Succession: Their number is found continually to increase with the magnifying power of those Glasses: and fancy is thereby assisted in extending its views to that |14| infinity of Bodies, which astronomers believe to be dispersed thro' the immensity of Space. An infinite Series,³ or the perpetuity of its progress, especially a regular one, whether ascending or descending, is always delightfull: And the contemplation of that immense

³ Elem. of Criticism, Ch. 8.

multitude of Globes beyond Globes, to which thought can set no bounds, filling the mind with an enchanting astonishment, and setting the magnificence of the mundane System in a most striking light, must ever be supremely transporting.

in sentiments and in action

The quality, which we are considering, is not referred to those things only which strike the senses and the imagination. Its influence extends to moral objects, and indeed is strongly felt in all Cases to which it applies. There is a grandeur in Sentiment, a Sublimity of thought, a magnanimity in behaviour and a heroism in Conduct, which commands admiration, and becomes itself a delightful object of Contemplation. |15|

Cato, informed imperfectly of a misfortune which had befallen Marcus his Son, instantly asks, "has he forsook his Post? Has he given way? Did he look tamely on, and let them pass?" And being acquainted, that, after a desperate onset, in which his valour had been signally displayed, he had a last fallen, oppressed by multitudes, says, "Thanks to the Gods, my Boy has done his duty."⁴ Words, which, pronounced with dignity, always make an astonishing impression.

The manners and the Sentiments, attributed by Lucan to that Patriot and to his Sect, are intitled to alike denomination.⁵

Some Critics, to account for the application of the Expressions, Grandeur and Elevation, to actions and to thoughts, imaging a mysterious resemblance or connection to Subsist between emotions and the Sensible objects which excite them. "Sounds, by being high or low, they say, raise, as it were, or bring down the mind: A wall or a pillar that declines is supposed to produce a painful feeling, as of a tottering and falling within: A spectator, who sees force exerted without him, they represent feeling something like this external exertion operate within his mind: A large object swells the heart, and makes the beholder endeavour to enlarge his bulk; An elevated one makes him stretch upwards, and, as it were, stand erect or a tiptoe. And actions or Sentiments, we are told, which raise in the Soul emotions resembling those produced by great or elevated, little or low,

⁴ Cato, act.4. Sc. 4.

⁵ Hi mores, hac duri immota Catonis
Secta fuit. Servare modum, finemque tenene,
Naturinque sequi, partrique impendere vitam,
Sc sibe, sed toti genitum se drederemundo.
Huic epulae, viccisse famem; magnique Benates,
submorisse hyemem tecto; pretiofaque vestis
Hertam membra super omani more quiritis
Induxise togam; venerisque huic mascionis usus
Brogenies. Urbe pater est, urbique marilas.
Lucan.II.380

objects, are thence denominated Grand & Sublime, or the Contrary.⁶ |16|

The Subtilty, displayed in such explanations as suppose the bulk of man to be influenced in their conduct, and even in their language, by principles of which they are generally ignorant, seems excessive. It is not easy to discover any likeness which can subsist between a pure perception existing in intellect only, and a sensible being, or to perceive the similitude between a bulky or elevated object, and a grand or magnanimous Sentiment which indicates Generosity, Courage, or firmness of mind. The feeling, excited by an extraordinary display of disinterested virtue, is intirely different from that felt on beholding any object of Sense: And the figure here used is more naturally explicable after another manner.

The Causes for which actions & sentiments are denominated Grand or Sublime

Moral qualities and rational powers are susceptible, as well as hardness, softness, light, colour, acidity, or bitterness, both of degrees and of comparison, and one virtue or one Talent is capable of being compared with another, whether of the same or of a different Species. On forming a Scale, like the Painter's balance imagined by de Piles, for measuring them as we estimate heat, by the Thermomiter, or weigh air by the Toricellian Tube, little difficulty would be found, in most cases, in determining one action to indicate, one Sentiment to express, or one person to enjoy either, in a degree higher or lower, more or less, than another. A modern magistrate {who, regardless of popular clamour, acquits an innocent man} discharges a duty to Society, but his official integrity cannot be placed on a level with that Stern probity which, rendering a Roman father inexorable even to paternal affection, impelled him to sacrifice to public liberty a beloved Son who had entered into a conspiracy to recall Tarquin.⁷ Hepler's proficiency and discoveries in mathematics and in astronomy are memorable, yet no man, in a capacity to Judge, compares his Genius with that of Newton. To give a Shilling to a Beggar bespeaks something of a heart which feels for distress, but this Charitable act marks not a Generosity equal to that, which, engaging Damon to pledge himself to die instead of his friend, and Phintias, at the Expence of |17| Life, to be faithfull to his honour, obliged even a Dionysius with tears of Wonder, to sollicit to be admitted a partner in their union:⁸ And abilities sufficient to form a diligent merchant are not comparable to those Talents which are required to conduct a

⁶ Elem. of Crit. ch:2. p.6. ch.4.

⁷ Lib. II. 5.

⁸ Cic. de Off.III.10.

numerous army. Hence the Epithets, great and little, are not improperly applied to Virtues and to parts, to actions and to sentiments, as well as to other things. In one sense all ethical Excellencies are similar in kind, as moral affection must always be found in them, and they are more easily compared among themselves on that account. But those which discover disregard of self and contempt of death; Liberality, fortitude, disinterestedness; being rarely beheld in certain degrees, are reckoned peculiarly great or elevated on arriving at these heights, Grandeur, and Sublimity, which is a species of it are only greatness and elevation found in an extraordinary pitch. Even intellectual powers are hardly allowed these Epithets, unless they be both something Vast or Gigantic, and be deeply tinctured with a moral cast, Or in their turn be nearly allied to those amiable qualities which possess it; And I imagine that we call Talents, as well as sentiments or actions, Grand or Sublime, because they either are of great importance to the happiness of mankind, seem to proceed from a mighty energy, indicated vast Strength of body or uncommon vigour of mind, or flow from a Superior degree of Virtue.

Shining parts therefore, but especially illustrious virtue, are the genuine Sources of figurative Grandeur and figurative Sublimity, not the great riches, the high rank, the exalted authority, or the mighty Conquests of those by whom [18] actions are performed or sentiments are uttered. Must we not be surprised then to find it asserted by a late Writer, "That, notwithstanding, we warmly espouse his Interest, accompany him in his exploits, and are anxious for his Success: That the Splendor and enthusiasm of the Hero, transfused into the Readers, elevate their minds far above the Rules of Justice, and render them in a great measure insensible of the wrong that is done: and even that the bias, which inclines men to think in this manner, is not a wrong, but an original principle in Human nature."⁹

Sentiments, entertained by inaccurate & heedless readers are little worthy of notice: But all, on whose imagination facts related by Historians form full, distinct, and lively impressions, commonly view them in that light, whether favourable or detestable, which they deserve; and men's principles are hardly ever so much perverted, that Cruelty and Wickedness do not appear to them remarkable blemishes even in a Conqueror, or render him, from the Constitution of nature, little and contemptible in their Eyes.

Every attentive reader, with abhorrence and with execrations, stops Alexander in his Victorious carrier, on finding the Barbarian, after the Gallant defence of Tyre, not satiated with the Blood of six thousand Tyrians, whom, with a relentless cruelty, he put to the Sword, Sacrifice on the Cross two thousand

⁹ Elem. of Crit. ch.IV.

innocent Victims to Glut his implacable rage.¹⁰ Do we approve, or can we hear without detestation, of William the Conqueror spreading dessionation over all the fine Country between the Humber and the Tees, murdering a hundred thousand harmless people in cold blood, burning their Houses, destroying their property, and wasteing their Lands?¹¹ Riches, authority, valour, Success, possess a just |19| Claim to be reasonable value: Men, dazzled by their Splendor misled by Education, and moved by Interest, are even apt to overrate them, and meanly to flatter their possessors. Nevertheless these external advantages, powerfull as they are, cannot bring us really to admire the folly, the Barbarity, or the injustice of those who enjoy them. Rational Creatures and such I take mankind to be, Judge of Sentiments and of behaviour from their intrinsic Characters; and I cannot discover in human nature any principle, that leads us to deem either the former or the latter, Grand and magnanimous, mearly on account of the high rank or great wealth of the persons who utter or perform them. Not to mention the Enormities of Caligula or of Heliogabulus, do we applaud their meanness or even their frolics? And is not our disapprobation rather inflamed on account of that very dignity, to which, we reflect, their behaviour was peculiarly unsuitable? In these and like cases admiration can never be real, but is always affected, and as in fact it is bestowed on the living only, or on the memories of persons connected with those from whom we have expectations, whom we fear, or in whose favour we happen to be prejudiced, it is thereby proved not to flow from nature, but to be a wrong bias, and a Corruption of her purity. No feeling, inclination, or disposition, which is not original to man or part of his primary frame, is justly intitled to be reckoned natural to his constitution. That, which flows from a prostitution of the affections originally implanted in his breast, and which is to be imputed to his own folly or depravity, ought not to be numbered among the Principles of his nature, but to be deemed a perversion of them.

Grandeur, taken in its figurative Sense, is applicable to actions and to Sentiments which touch the heart; real or sensible Grandeur to images and to expressions which strike the imagination: and it is observable that |20| the heart is much more easily affected than the imagination is struck. A single action or sentiment, which marks heroism or magnanimity; may act on the passions with irresistible power, and give high pleasure; but a single image or expression, however lively or forcible, can hardly rise to the Sublime. If quickly succeeded by another different intendency, its influence must immediatly be destroyed; and a variety or Succession of images is necessary to produce a strong impression on the fancy.

¹⁰ Quint. Curt. 1.4. C.5. - Arian.

¹¹ Hume.

Chapter 2.^d
Novelty.

A young mathematician, on finding it demonstrated, that the Sum of a Series of numbers, supposed to be infinite, is a finite and even a determinable quantity, Or that two lines originally distant perhaps less than an Inch, which continually approach nearer and nearer to each other, tho' produced to infinity, would never meet, is agreeably struck: The wonderfulness of these conclusions so unlike to any with which he was hitherto acquainted, and so contrary to first thought, fills his mind with delight.

To a Company confined, on a wet day, who sit, their Conversation stagnating and their amusements exhausted, yawning in a large Room, the Door unexpectedly opens, and a new Comer is introduced. His appearance gives a sudden movement to their Spirits, and diffuses a General gladness.

Remote provinces, it is remarked, are uncommonly Hospitable. The facts and the views expected from Strangers, being of a Complexion very different from those occurrences, which, with an unvaried rotation, return in the Country Week after Week, render their Conversation particularly acceptable.

Novelty delights as well as Grandeur, and is |21| another Source of the pleasures of Taste.¹² The same Objects, contemplated or possessed long, become familiar & Stale: Even enjoyments, frequently repeated, create Satiety: new ones, {awakening the soul, exciting the spirits, and enlivening the minds,} afford relief. Hence the satisfaction arising from Succession, from motion, and from a view of things which are uncommon, which are unexpected, and which excite Surprise. Even the obscurity of night after the brightness of a long day, and the rigours of Winter succeeding the Bloom and the Glow of Summer, are not wholly disagreeable. FAir weather and a pure Other, preceded by much wet & by lowering Skies, are doubly pleasant, and rain itself, after a continued drought, is not disrelished. We rejoice in the return of the different Seasons, especially of the Spring, in which al the Beauties of nature are displayed with this additional Charm.

Motions, which either Cause Giddiness from their rapidity, or from their Slowness make only a faint impression, are rather unpleasant; but gentle motions, such as that of ascending smoke, of purling brooks, and of bubling fountains, are agreeable. We are also delighted in many Cases with violent ones, as great falls of Water, and the Continual Current of rapid rivers: And artificial are pleasing as well as natural motions; The objects, beheld in these Cases, are always similar, sometimes the same, but the newness, continually occasioned by the motion, gives pleasure.

¹² Ovid. Epist.cx Ponti III.4.51.

Walter, describing a beautiful Cascade, and its surrounding scenery with which Anson met in his range at Quibo, says, "Whil'st the Commodore, with those accompanying him, were attentively viewing this place, and were remarking the different blendings of the water, the Rocks, and the Wood, there came in sight, as it were still to heighten and animate the prospect, a prodigious flight of mackaws, which, hovering over the Spot, and often wheeling and playing on the Wing about it, afforded a most brilliant appearance by the Glittering of the |22| Sun on their variegated Plumage; so that some of the Spectators cannot refrain from a kind of Transport, when they recount the Complicated beauties which occurred in this extraordinary Waterfall".¹³ That flight of mackaws, unexpectedly presented to the reader, affords much amusement even to his imagination. The real Spectacle, with all its accompaniments, would indeed be transporting.

The fondness, which men have for changing their places of abode, for travelling into foreign Countries, for seeing strange sights, and for looking at extraordinary productions, proceeds from the same principle. Things, dissimilar to any which they have seen, men are curious to behold: Foreign animals & exotic plants attract multitudes of Gazers.

Hence, too, the delight found in Historical accounts & poetical representations of uncommon or unexpected adventures, and in general in new Theories, in new Hypothesis, and in new Discoveries.

In composition novelty is a strong recommendation: Facts, incidents, observations, a manner, which are new, render Writings entertaining, and pieces, not possessed of that Charm, are inspired.

Hence men grow nicer with age. The taste of those, who have read and seen and thought much, naturally approaches, even during their Vigour, to fastidiousness, and their delicacy, which, by part ignorance, is sometimes denominated dullness, causes Works, that are highly relished by young people, to whom almost every object is new and amusing, to meet from them with a cold Reception, or to afford them little pleasure.

Chapter III.^d Variety.

Not only is pleasure derived from the same or different objects beheld in Succession: a variety, also, presented together, is highly agreeable, and we shall find, that this principle extends to the Gratifications yielded by all our Senses.

The brisk hues of many flowers, the elegant feathers of |23| several birds, the Speckled Skins of some beasts; the Pink and the Tulip, the parroquet and the Peacock, the Leopard and the Panther, all are pleasant to view.

A Whitish complexion which appears healthfull,

¹³ Anson's voyage B.2. Ch. 8

notwithstanding its uniformity, is generally preferred to a Coarse ruddiness: But a fair Countenance, on which delicate tints are finely mingled, is still more charming.

Colours and figures properly varied are dilightfull. The variegated resplendency of the Sky in a fine evening, the gay Streaks of the Rainbow, the Changefull brightness of the northern lights, form to the Eye a glorious Spectacle.

A Spacious field of a plain surface, and an uniform verdure, is pleasant; but, diversified with Hills a Valleys, meadows and growing Corn, cattle feeding and men travelling, natural Wood and plantations of Trees, houses and Churches, Cities and Villages, Obelisks and Spires, it becomes more enchanting: and the addition of Lakes or ponds, firths & Rivers, Bays or arms of the Sea, Ships sailling and Birds flying, every thing in short which increases the variety, heightens the pleasure.

Even in regular figures, It is this circumstance, as much as regularity, which renders them particularly striking an equilateral triangle pleases: but three sided figures, in which variety is introduced without destroying their regularity too much, are still more beautifull. In a Scalene uniformity is intirely lost: but an Isosceles, in which the equal sides are made longer than the base without being disproportioned to it, is more agreeable than an equiangular triangle, which is rendered less sprightly by its preciseness.

A Square is a finer figure than a Trapezium: But a rectangle, whose longer sides neither approach too near nor recede too far from the proportion of equality with the Shorter, is more beautifull than a Square. Letters are commonly folded by Genteel people in the Shape of Oblongs. One in the other figure is rediculous. The same Observations apply to playing Cards and a number of other |24| objects. An oblong Window is more elegant, as well as more Convenient than a Square one.

Its continued and equable curvature, a Species of regularity, Contributes greatly to the beauty of the Circle; Yet a Superior elegance is found in an elipsis, in which, by the inequality of the Diameters, the Variety is more encreassed than the equality of the Inflexion is diminished.

The Pyramids, erected at the Gate of Murray house in Edinz, are light, airy, elegant objects, but wrought into Solids, bounded by four equilateral triangles, each equal to their present bases, would have been aukward, Clumsy ponderous masses. No man, who has taste, thinks of erecting a Pyramid in the dull, heavy, Squat form of a Tetraedron.

A nice Eye finds more delight in a pyramid than in a Cone or a Prism, in a Cone than in a Cylinder, in an oval or Spheroid than in a Sphere, unless a proper proportion be not preserved between the diameter; and Waving are more beautifull than strait lines.

Among regular rectilinear figures, the beauty is always proportionable to the Variety or greater number of Sides. The Hexagon and the Octagon are each more beautifull than the Square; and the principle is general, unless the sides be multiplied to a

number, which causes confusion or prevents distinctness of view.

The Charm, possessed by Variety, discovers itself in cases still stronger than the former; for diversity is often pleasant even without regularity. In many works both of nature and of art, objects, placed with little regard to rule or order, are found highly delightfull, as is visible in Landscapes, and in Natural prospects. Even the Confused mingling of falling Snow forms an attractive Spectacle.

To the other Senses it is also agreeable, as well as to the Sight. The Ear is delighted with variety of Sounds, the palate rejoices in change of Tastes, diversity of Scents is regaling to the organs of Smelling, and nature is every where Stoned with objects to |25| Gratify this Taste.

Artists, too, in their productions, must pay a regard to it. It is this which causes them, deviating from the right line, to introduce incurved and serpentine lines in Gardens, in Architecture, in Dress, in furniture, in vases, and in Toys. In elegant Houses, the apartments are not all either equal in Size, alike in Shape, similarly furnished, or painted with the same Colour. In fine dancing Lines and motions must be properly varied, and straight ones are seldom admitted. Chefs, on account of its different movements, and of the endless contrivance of which it is Susceptible, is more amusing than draughts. The Reverses of fortune, and the Changes of which they are capable, contribute, perhaps, as much as any other Circumstances, to create an Extraordinary fondness for Games of Chance, at least among those who make not money their Object. and it is the amusement which variety yeilds, that excited Curiosity for Shows and processions, in which colours and figures are displayed and diversified in long and elegant Successions. The painted Glass, with which King's College Chappel is illuminated at Cambridge, bestows on that magnificent temple a Splendour peculiarly Glorious.

In the fine arts this principle has great influence. A just Statuary never disposes the limbs or the arms of a Statue both in the same posture. In a Sandscape a Painter draws no two objects perfectly alike, But all kinds of diversity, consistent with nature, are introduced.

Hence also is to be derived no small part of the pleasure, which arises from Histories, Romances, Novells, Tragedies, and Comedies, that represent various adventures, humours, passions, and Characters.

One of the great beauties of language consists in a rich choice & diversified arrangements of words & of Sentences. |26|

Chap. IV.

Uniformity - proportion - order.

Many objects, amidst great differences observable in their appearances, are still found constantly fashioned after one form. Things are divided by nature into tribes: All the individuals, belonging to each Class, resemble one another in certain

Characteristical respects, and that sameness is even pleasing. Those, which want the Configuration expected in their kind, are reckoned monstrous, and in some instances most Eyes shudder to behold them.

This pleasure or aversion is experienced in artificial as well as in natural productions. A House, a Garden, a History, a Room, possesses each a fashion or a Cast peculiar to itself: All their parts ought to be marked by this Character: any, remarkable disconformable to it, displeaseth: And objects, exactly similar, are often required to be more than once presented by art to view.

The parts, of which magnitudes are composed, may vary in dimension, both more and less, than is consistent with Grace. Things, greatly disproportioned, are ugly: A huge nose, long feet, a Gaping mouth, a little head, short legs, or a narrow brow. Beauty is a quality bounded by extremes, which must not be overleaped.

That variety, therefore, which is one of the principles of Taste, must be restrained within proper limits, and is checked by love of uniformity, of proportion, and of order. The first consists in a Repetition or a Continuation of like objects, and is more or less exact, as that resemblance in all Circumstances is greater or less. The second refers properly to magnitude or quantity, and Expresses the relation subsisting between different objects considered in that respect. The third, implying an arrangement in which regularity is observed, signifies a manner in which things or parts, that [27] are related, are disposed, or succeed each other.

Their influence in matters of Taste is universally allowed. Every Spectator, who compares a Grecian Odeifice with an irregular building, or Genteel furniture with an improper assortment, will perceive, that uniformity is sometimes agreeable, and a person is always dissatisfied to find a dissimilar object in a place at which he ought to meet with a like one. Coarse cloth buttons, mixed among rich Gold ones, would deform any suit. A Blind Window, broken panes, a high Shoulder and a low, and want of an arm, make an ugly appearance. N.P. A best or perfect proportion, to which every other is inferior, undoubtedly exists in all cases, at least in idea, and, lying in a mean, has actually been nearly approached in many. Its standard however is exceedingly difficult, both to be precisely ascertained, and to be reduced to General rules; But its operation is easily conceivable on surveying attentively elegant and clumsy workmanship, the antinous, for instance, or the Venus, and a block cut by a modern Statuory.

A Room, in which Chairs, Tables, Screens, Carpets, &c are all in confusion, makes a very different appearance after each piece is set in its proper place. The same notes whose Sublimity transports in Handel's Musick, alternated in a different way, would form complete discord, and thoughts and Sentences, which, in a pleading of Patric Or a Tragedy of Voltaire, constitute fine sense and a pathetic fable, might be rendered by

transposition, ridiculous or nonsensical.

{A celebrated metaphysician, who resolves the Bonds which or which direct thought in its progress, connect Ideas into three and whose abstruse philosophy, founded on relation or association, is frequently illustrated by relieving examples, observes, that in our arrangement of Bodies we place those which are resembling in contiguity to each other, or at least in correspondent points of view,¹⁴ because, the double connexion, established by contiguity & by resemblance, smooths the way for Fancy in its passage between them, and the transition, being agreeable to Custom and forwarded by it, renders that position natural and pleasing to the right. Even the common actions of mankind, I doubt not, are sometimes resolvible into general principles which strike and lead the Imaginations; yet solutions, remarkable for subtilty, are often more amusing than solid, and their very abstractness almost always prevents them from affording a lively conviction to profound reasoners themselves.)

Uniformity, proportion, and order, each in its own way, set bounds to variety, prevent it from running in to deformity and Confusion, and distinctness; the Principal effects, for which they are valuable. Confusion distracts the mind, and is accompanied with uneasiness.

Vast encomiums indeed have been lavished on Simplicity. It has been recommended as the true Standard of fine Taste, and must be owned in many Cases to possess great [28] advantages, In Conduct, in manners, in behaviour, simplicity, opposed to falshood, to Affectation, to ceremony, and even to the idle forms of that which is sometimes denominated Good breeding, is highly agreeable to all people of true Sense: A Simple taste, satisfied with plain things which can be purchased with little Cost, is a very happy one in several respects: and a like observation applies in a thousand other instances. Yet if we go deep into the question, it may be doubted, whether Simplicity is not in general more immediately connected with use and fitness than with Beauty and pleasure. Variety is Gratefull to all the Senses, and affords delight even in Cases in which another accounts it ought not to be indulged. A luxurious Table, poignant Sauces, rich wines, and a sumptuous apparatus, are expensive, & perhaps hurtfull to health; Yet it cannot be denied, that by their exquisite relish and beautifull appearance, they yeild to Sense an higher immediate gratification, than a homely board and Simpler fare. The same observation is applicable, in different degrees, to all the Senses. The utmost, which simplicity reaches, is to give no disgust: the immediate pleasure yeilded by it is often faint, and variety is both more lively and more striking. Ornaments, it is true, may be crouded, and may distract the mind: but avoid Confusion, preserve distinctness or perspicuity, be carefull to prevent the impression of that which is principal from being weakened by the mixture of things that

¹⁴ Treatise of Human Nature, III.2.3.

are trifling, and you can hardly exceed in Variety, and will perceive it always a high, if not the highest, ingredient in pleasure.

Intricacy, which seems to be confusion produced, in an extreme degree, by a Crowd of objects, ought to be avoided. No doubt, it gives an opportunity of indulging that natural inclination, which men have to activity. The pleasure, which arises from many diversions, is enhanced by a certain difficulty found in pursuing them. We often take delight in explaining |29| Enigmas, in solving Problems, and in investigating truths hard to be discovered. Every exercise of Genius, giving employment to the rational faculties, is agreeable. Intricacy, however, implying a considerable degree of obscurity, appears not to be a proper source of Taste, and love of it ought not to be admitted among the original principles of human nature: Objects, in which this quality is remarkable, cause perplexity, sometimes perturbation, at least till satisfaction is obtained. Everything which either is unintelligible or cannot be easily apprehended, is unpleasant. Any fondness entertained for intricacy, is not for its own sake, but proceeds from love of novelty and of Variety, and we endeavour to rid ourselves, as soon as possible, of the perturbed State into which our minds are thrown by it; a Proof that it is really disagreeable. You often perceive people, who cannot expound riddles, become peevish and angry; and alike feeling is produced by Labyrinths, and all objects, which are impossible or difficult to be unravelled. In truth, the only pleasure, arising from Intricacy, seems to Consist in affording an opportunity to get rid of it. |30|

Gothic buildings are commonly overloaded with ornaments, and rendered intricate by their irregularity. In most cases greatness seems the Chief, if not only, quality which makes them esteemed, and on a little Scale you generally find them look deformed and ugly.

II.^d

It is from the Combination of Order and of variety two different principles, that Beauty arises; a perception which is principally derived from this source. One Single colour may be elegant, or one simple Sound may be Sweet; but in the fine arts the Consideration of Pulchritude, taken in that limited Sense, is of little use. There attention must chiefly be had to a proper jUnction of different powers, and to a happy mixture of uniformity and of diversity. In few Cases is much beauty attainable without both. N.L. In strict Speech, objects, whose component parts, in perception, are clearly distinguished, are alone denominated beautifull, because it is in them only that both excellencies are united: and a Confusion or obscurity and sameness are found in others. For instance, an unbounded prospect, if I may use an inaccurate expression, is ever

pleasing.¹⁵ Yet all its parts are not equally delightfull. From the Top of a mountain, rising amidst a Cultivated Country, you will perceive the feilds and the woods, the Rivers and the other objects, which are near, or which surround its bottom, to enjoy that quality called Beauty; for their Colours and their lineaments are vivid and defined. But stretch your view to a distance which passes the limits of distinct [31] vision, and you find those, situated between this Boundary and the Horizon, lost in darkness and in mist, and, both their proportions and their dissimilarities being unperceived, possess little of that Charm.

It is in the fine arts as in machinery. The highest beauty depends on the greatest variety comprehended under the fewest and most simple rules; a maxim which seems to be very General.

A machine, the fewer and simple its Springs and its Weights, and the greater the variety of movements derived from them, is esteemed the more beautifull.

Transfer that observation to the Solar System: Imagine the Sun in its Center, and the Planets revolving about him; day and night, Summer and Winter, Spring and Autumn, all the Celestial appearances, various & intricate as at first they seem, explained, in an easy manner, from two motions, a diurnal and an annual performed by the Earth round her own axis, and round that luminary, and you will find Capernicus's symple hypothesis present to imagination a Spectacle infinitely more delightfull than Ptolemey's unweildy mobile or the perplexed leyeles of Tycho.

The Beauty of General Theorems consists in Comprehending many different Cases under one Law. Mathematical propositions possess this Charm in a remarkable degree. The Thirty second demonstrated in Euclid's first book is justly admired, that the three angles in a right lined triangle are equal to two right ones: For what? Because of its generality. Its truth is not limited either to right angled, to obtuse angled, to acute angled, to large, or to little triangles, But applies to all Sorts, draw their Sides, and from their angles, long or short, great or small, regular or irregular, as you please, and the angle of a triangle, whose points are placed at the Dog-star, at the Sun, and [32] at Greenwich, are not a second greater than those of the least diagram which can be drawn on paper. This Circumstance renders the proposition pleasant to Contemplate.

A Physical Principle, such as electricity or Gravitation, is chiefly relished for its extensive operation, and for being applicable to a numerous train of natural Phenomena. Count those which Newton resolved into gravity: The eliptical figure of the Planetary orbits; the different velocities with which these Bodies move in different parts of their Courses, the Constant proportion observed between the lengths of their periods and their distances from the Sun, the conical rotation of the terrestrial axis, the oblate form of the Earth's body, the flux

¹⁵ Elem. of crit. 8.

and the reflux of the Sea, &c. His principles will then appear ineffably beautifull.

In fine music we find a variety of notes, high and low, short and long, Sharp and flat; but, amidst all their diversity, in order to render them melodious, they must be happily combined, and reduced, or, as it were, confined under some fixed Rule. N.d. In Diction and in Poetry, number and rythm consist in an intermixture of long & short Syllables, modulated according to an established Law, and sweetness or majesty is augmented by an artfull junction of different sounds in the words employed in Language.¹⁶ Hence hexameter, pentameter, Sapphic, blank, or other Species of verse. N.d. The same is the Case in Gardening, Architecture, Painting, Poetry, indeed in every fine art.

In proper Speech, the word Beauty is applicable to objects of Sight only, and the Eye is the sole Judge of it: But in a figurative Sense it is applied to other Subjects. We Speak of a Beautifull theorem, a beautifull History, a beautifull Poem, and even a beautifull action, and give this appellation to good music as well as to a delightfull prospect - But the Beauty of Utility,¹⁷ a phrase with which I have sometimes met, is an extremely forced metaphor. Every person, who would either Judge or perform with Taste, must be able both |33| to distinguish the usefull from the beautifull, and to discern the Occasions on which a Chief regard ought to be shown to the one, from those on which it may be paid to the other. Beauty however and utility are qualities entirely different, and objects, destitute of the former, will not acquire it by possessing the Latter.

{Usefulness, Convenience, Fitness influence our Opinions of things; but it is our judgements concerning this intrinsic worth or value, not our sentiments concerning that superficial quality formed pulchritude or deformity, which are alone affected by them.} Few medicines more salutary than Rhuburb or Glauber saults, Yet no man either thinks or Denominates their Taste beautifull; and the Beauty of utility is an Expression little less vitious than a loud smell or a blue taste. An old Gothic Tower may be proper for defence, a dwelling House may be commodious, and a tree is usefull, which bears good fruit.¹⁸ But if none of the three are beautifull to appearance, by no transition of Ideas, or transferring the Beauty of the Effect to the Cause, can that epithet be bestowed upon them without a very strained trope.

Chapter V. Propriety, -Congruity, -Symmetry

¹⁶ Distinctio, et oqualuim, et sope variorum intervallorum pev cussio, numerum conficit - Cic de Orat.II.

¹⁷ Elem. of Crit. Chap.3.^d

¹⁸ Elem. of Crit. Chap.3.^d

Propriety, congruity, and Symmetry serve, no less than uniformity, order, and proportion, to restrain variety within proper limits, but prescribe rules to it in another manner. Hence a fifth principle, which demands that things be rightly adjusted to one another.

Objects viewed by themselves, from the Constitution of nature, are originally agreeable or disagreeable: and in some, considered in relation, is perceived a Congruity, by which they appear suited to one another, while others, perhaps originally beautiful, displease on being brought together in order to be seen at once, or to form parts of the same piece.

A big hat, made for a large man, looks antic on a little boy. Ovid, who was inclined to libertinism and attentive to dress, directs his Gallant to take care that his Clothes fit, |34| particularly, that his shoes be not Wide.¹⁹ Every thing ought to answer the purpose for which it is designed; a Coincidence which constitutes fitness. We are pleased with objects which possess this quality; want of it raises disgust; and our satisfaction is generally proportionable to the degree in which we find it in their Construction. A Chimney Sweeper, ascending with his broom in white silk flowered with Silver would be a spectacle shockingly absurd.

The ends proposed by rational and even by Brute creatures, in order to be approved, must themselves partake of that aptitude; and in most cases right reason points out those which mankind ought to pursue. Good Sense requires, that attempts, which must be unsuccessful, ought to be forborne. A person, who should think seriously of leaping from Dover to Calais, would be suspected of insanity. A Correspondence ought constantly to be observed between efforts and abilities; and an unsuitableness is directly perceived as soon as they are discovered to be incommensurable.

Rectitude in the ends pursued, and fitness in the means employed to obtain them, the principall Sources of this perfection, are delightfull to Contemplate. (A thing observed to be improper is always of offensive to perceive, and that which is perfectly proper can never displease.)

A similar analogy is agreeable to the moral frame of man, which, being a determinate Cause productive of invariable effects, shows certain actions to fit human nature, and others to misbecome it. |35|

A propriety is discoverable in conduct, in art, in almost every matter. Piety and virtue themselves may be said, in a very proper sense, to consist in congruity of Sentiments, of words,

¹⁹ Set bone conveniens, et sine tæbe toga:
Linguae ne rigeat: carsanit oribigine derves:
N'ce vagus in lasca justibi pelle natet.
Art. am.I.514.-Hor.Sat.13.31.

and of actions, to the relations in which individuals stand to God, to themselves, and to one another. This forms the highest Species of Symmetry, and is largely treated by Moralists and by Divines. But in most other affairs also, on trivial as well as important occasions, Congruity ought to be maintained. A man ought to Speak and to behave in a manner suitable not only to his nature, but to the place which he holds in Society. It is pedantry indeed, which cannot act or Converse out of a particular line; In an admirall to be always Sailing Ships, in a General to be fighting Battles, in a Counsellor to be reporting Cases at Law, or in a Physician to be making Prescriptions for the Sick: Nevertheless, some things are peculiarly becoming in particular professions, and fitness must not be disregarded by any. In some Characters actions are incongruous, which give less disgust in others. Intemperance is not equally offensive in a player as in a Clergyman. A Garb, suitable to one Station, to one Sex, or to one age, is indecent for another: At London a Justice of the Coif, in Brocade and in lace would be contemned; Jewels in the Ears even of a Collonel of the Guards would be ridiculous; and an old Beau is a laughable Spectacle every where. A harmony is observable even in Oress, and its different parts ought all to be adapted to one another. A Coat in tatters corresponds not to Dresden ruffles, or a load of Diamonds to a Gown of Woolsey.

Houses, and the Inclosures, the Gardens, and the furniture belonging to them, ought to be suited both to one another, and to the different uses for which they are respectively intend |36| intended; and both they, and the money spent in them should tally with the Estates of their owners.

Gaiety is agreeable to some occasions; Gravity to others. On a Church a different architecture ought to be employed from that displayed on a palace. History requires one manner; Poetry another, and an Orator must Conduct himself differently both from a Historian and from a poet: Ludicrous Images ought not to be introduced in serious Compositions, nor things grave and serious in works intended for Burlesque.

{Every action too ought to be performed at its proper Season: A matter, which is ill timed, gives displeasure. In that point common Sense discovers a propriety and an impropriety, not less than in other articles. A Different behaviour is demanded at a funeral and at a wedding, in church and at a ball, in private company and in public assemblies. "To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven."²⁰ Cleanliness is agreeable, nastiness is offensive; and a man is commended for being at pains to remove impurities from his person, from his clothes, & from his house: But the Fashion, which prevails among polite people all over Britain, of picking the Teeth and of working with water immediately after meals, is extremely indelicate. A Stomach need not be affectedly squeamish

²⁰ Eccles. III.1.

to turn at that dirty operation. To go to stool in presence of the company would hardly be more nauseous.)

But it would be endless to mention every Case which can be imagined, or to adjust particular rules to each. All things, which are related, ought to be connected with propriety, and a Taste in it, as well as in other articles, is undoubtedly capable of improvement. In many instances incongruity can only be discovered by experience, by acquaintance, and by time; but in others propriety or impropriety strikes a first sight and objects appear either more agreeable or more disgusting, as they are remarkable in one way or in the other.

Chapter VI. Similitude and Dissimilitude

No monster, says Boileau, is so deformed, no Serpent so loathsome,²¹ which pleases not in an artfull picture. We feel a delight in observing similitudes and Dissimilitudes. These indeed are opposite Sources of pleasure; but a satisfaction is indisputably afforded by both, and that, which we derive from one, hinders us not from reaping a Gratification produced by a Contrary Cause. N.d. |37|

A famous Philosopher, on metaphysical arguments, asserts, that no things perfectly like can possibly exist; and in the Gardens of Hanover, even two leaves possessed of that quality, he tells us, could not be found after a dilligent search made by Princess Sophia. Nevertheless, an uniformity as well as regularity is remarkable in nature, and those numerous resemblances, which are found among her works, suggest a gratefull idea of Steadiness and of order in her operations:²² Commonness however often causes them to be less taken notice of, at least by the Vulgar, than her dissimilarities, unless unexpectedness renders them particularly attractive. Likeness, discovered between a Son and a father, pleases; but, observed between the Countenance of a man, and that of an Wolf or of a hare, affords much amusement.

dissimilitude

We feel a pleasure both in comparing and in contrasting natural productions, but among them, instances of opposition are often more striking than those of similitude.

Among things dissimilar in their appearances we may mark night and day, light and darkness, the bloom of Spring and maturity of autumn, the heat of Summer and the rigours of Winter, an air clear and Serene or cloudy and agitated with wind, a boisterous ocean {rolling its furious Waves and docking them against the rocks and the shores, and a plain Sea appearing with

²¹ L? art.poet.3.1.

²² Above C.4.

a clear and smooth surface;) high mountains and deep valleys, barren deserts and cultivated fields. "Everything is beautiful in its Season". The contrast, presented in these instances, is delightful: "God also has set the one over against the other".

²³ Deformity itself may add a lustre to beauty. The antient Chaos has given place to an orderly universe: But much delight is still afforded by Contrarieties, ²⁴ and we find objects, which either possess no original comeliness, or are less pleasing, contribute to heighten the pleasure perceived from such as are more agreeable. |38|

In works of art.

In many arts imitation is one great source of pleasure. - Hence chiefly is derived the delight felt from beholding pictures and statues, which express in a happy Style exact likenesses of visible objects; or mark in a strong manner Dispositions and passions of the mind, as they appear in the features of the face or Gestures of the body. Hence part of the Entertainment received from reading just descriptions of external objects, from observing Sentiments & Characters naturally represented in Poetry or in Romance, from seeing fine action on the Stage, and even from staring at apish mimicry.

In all these Cases, the likeness, borne by the Representation to the Original, (gives a degree of satisfaction, and is the immediate Cause which excites this sentiment: Other Causes however may co-operate in inspiring it. The Art, by which the resemblance is produced, often is a just subject of Wonder, and the ingenuity and the elegance, discovered in it, must necessarily have a considerable influence in heightning or diminishing the pleasure afforded by its productions. The Horse and the Cart, in *Strange's retour du marche'*, appear to move, and we are delighted there to see Motion imitated in black and white: But, on looking at *Burgognone's battles*, a beholder must be transported at imagining himself almost to hear the Trumpet sound. In the one case both a bolder effect is wrought, and a superior beauty is displayed, than in the other. The nature, too, of that, which is copied, is an important article in the affair: A handsome woman makes a pleasanter portrait than a deformed Hag. But still a pleasure is constantly found in perceiving resemblance. Even a Toad, naturally painted is not altogether shocking. The agreeableness of the original adds to the Enjoyment derived from the likeness of the Copy. If the thing represented is disagreeable,) the exactness of the resemblance, mingling with an admiration of the art by which it

²³ Eccles. VII.14.

²⁴ Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia sicces,
Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondera.
Metam. I.19

is affected, lessens the disgust: and the pleasure, derived from imitation in the Case of objects equally agreeable, is always proportionable to the perfection to which similarity is carried, unless this idea be wholly destroyed. A Copy, which is believed to be an original, can make no other impression than would be produced by the original, till the deception is discovered, on which its exactness must raise a high admiration.

contrasts

The dissimilitudes, observable in nature, please in Copies, at least as much as her resemblances. In most cases art only imitates her, and Contrast, which does no more here than present likeness of two objects instead of one is also a fertile source of pleasure. We [39] like to see dissimilarities among natural objects distinctly marked, or their differences set in opposition to one another. This exposition not only gives delight, but makes us more fully acquainted with things, and may be said even to Convey a Species of instruction.

In artificial works, similitudes and Contrasts are chiefly introduced in order to excite lively ideas of other objects. Those by which resemblance is expressed, a picture, for instance, or a Statue, look no farther than their originals, and are not intended to afford more instruction than is implied in producing the same feelings which would be excited by these: But such as mark dissimilitudes, besides double likenesses, are designed also to display opposition or differences between the originals represented by each Copy. More extrinsic instruction therefore seems naturally deriveable in the later case, which resembles reasoning, than in the former, as comparisons, by which Judgement and Taste are highly improved, are there made, or an opportunity is given to make them.

Their principal uses

The instruction, indeed, received from resemblance and from Contrast, is seldom accurate or precise, unless representation be employed, like diagrams in Geometry, or Patterns among tradesmen, rather to Serve for a kind of language than to answer the purposes of Comparison: The perceptions, excited by them in other Cases, are not clear and full, but imperfect & obscure perhaps illusive and false. Hence they seem calculated more to entertain the imagination than to enlighten the understanding, or to give vivid rather than exact views, and are better suited to Poetry and to Oratory than to Philosophy or to argumentation.

Comparisons therefore and Contrasts must chiefly [40] be usefull in cases, in which images uncommonly lively are required to be excited. Hence their influence on Sentiments, on passions, and on opinions, is not inconsiderable. By presenting images which cause objects to strike the fancy in a Just light, or used with Judgement, they do service; otherwise they have a bad effect. Hogarth's march to Trinckley discovers a rich vein of humour: his rake's Progress, his harlot's progress, and his modern apprentice, deliver fine lectures on wisdom.

comparisons and Contrast serve also to magnify and to diminish objects: The former, either by comparing them to things Grand and noble, or by contrasting them with those that are little & mean: The latter, by comparing them to things little, or by contrasting them with such as are great. One, who would add dignity to an object, must not compare it to a thing that is low.

In works of art violent Contrasts ought to be avoided: Objects, which raise opposite feelings, may be introduced in succession, but ought not to be united, or to appear at the same moment: a piece of music, for instance, must not be at variance with itself, but be consistent in all its parts, and each must tend to inspire only one passion or Disposition; Chearfulness, Joy, Melancholy, Sorrow, fear, or Confidence. The mind cannot {entertain different sentiments in the same instant,} feel or be affected by them all at one time, {or even pass in a moment from one affection to another entirely dissimilar.} If a discordant passion is attempted to be excited, it must be in another part of the performance, {or at least be naturally produced in connexion by means of a relation that will cause an easy transition to it from those which precede.} The Eyes are not less delicate than the Ears: a great variety of objects, |41| different in many respects, may be admitted in a Landscape, but their dissimilarity must not be excessive or unnatural. Nature abhorrs jarring prospects; and consistency must be observed in all imitations of her. In a picture it would be absurd to introduce Lions and Bears running up and down the streets of London or the fields of Middlesex.

The occasions, on which Contrast or resemblance ought to be studied, must commonly be determined from particular Circumstances rather than by General rules. In many Cases a Beauty may be reached either from the one or from the other. A Garden, for example, in the neighbourhood of a Great City, some Critics tell us, ought to have an air of solitude and of tranquility in opposition to the Tumult and the bristle of the Town.²⁵ On this Idea the Towers and the spires, as well as the Houses and other buildings of the City, ought to be kept out of view, by Hedges, by Walls, and by Trees. The Walks should be retired and shady. All methods must be employed to prevent noise. Another plan, however, perhaps not equally good, may be formed in a Contrary taste. May not the prospect of a large Town, and the imagination of its hurry, add to the delight, which, amidst real security and great stillness, a Garden affords, no less than the distant apprehension of danger, in which others are observed, gives a lively relish of our own safety? On this design instead of concealing the Town from sight, we must lay it open to view, may direct Walks to terminate on its principal Oedifices, and make Vistas of the most frequented Scenes in the neighbourhood. For, those, who seek at their

²⁵ Elem. of Crit. Chap.8

villas a temporary relief from the fatigue |42| of business and the noise of Town, The first plan seems most proper: Perhaps, the second is better adapted to all whose residence is fixed in the Country.

cause of the magnifying & diminishing power of Comparisons & Contrasts

The power, possessed by comparisons, of magnifying and of diminishing objects, is generally acknowledged, and some Critics, not satisfied with remarking the fact, have started a question concerning the manner in which they operate on the mind, and the Causes from which their force is derived. "A man, "they say, "who sees for the first time a very large animal placed beside a very small one of the same Species, is surprised at the Spectacle, and being prone to gratify this emotion, which, like others, magnifies its object, conceives the difference to be the greatest that can be, and sees, or seems to see, the one animal extremely little, but the other extremely large. With this, which is denominated the passion for Gratifying Surprise another inclination affirmed also to exist, is said to cooperate; a propensity in the mind to compleat every work that is begun, and we are told, that, in the Co-operation of these two principles, Surprise acts first, and carries our opinion of resemblance or contrast beyond the truth, but that the second, or the propensity to compleat begun works, goes farther, and, being bent on Gratification, forces on the mind a Conviction that the likeness or dissimilitude is compleat."²⁶

It were to be wished, that Philosophers, before they account for a Phenomenon, would recollect the noted story of the little fish and the full bowl. In the present question the principles, brought to explain the difficulty, can hardly be admitted or even understood, and, representing human nature not in that |43| fair and steady light in which Justice and consistency require rational creatures to be described, merits a notice for which an apology should otherways be wanted. A man, who is inclosing a field, feels an uneasiness on being obliged to Stop at the middle, because time and labour and money will be all lost, unless the inclosure be compleated: But, instead of feeling a violent inclination to compleat every work that is begun, it happens often, in our conceptions as well as in our actions, that we both begin and proceed with great reluctance. Laborious Works soon become unpleasant; We grow tired of them, and in most cases, it is not passion, but reason, which, imposing a restraint on our fondness for variety, prevails on us to finish our undertaking. Changeableness²⁷, rather than constancy, is our Character, and we indulge that humour with much freedom, at least in matters in which little less is to be the Consequence. Games, Diversions,

²⁶ Elem: of Crit. Ch.8. - Ch: 2.p.5

²⁷ above-2.3.-N.13.

Tunes, Books; all are frequently abandoned before their Conclusion, and we fly from amusement and employment to another. These examples are not indeed exactly parallel to that put by our Ritic; But they are stronger, as the end proposed in comparison is obtained as soon as its objects are jointly presented to view. - No more remains then to be performed: In that instant their likeness or dissimilitude must strike: the work is done: the perception is perfectly compleat; and it is impossible for either of them, on being viewed in company, to make an appearance different from that which it would bear by itself. Visible objects are painted on the |44| bottom of Eye, and the Ideas excited by them are Supposed to depend intirely on these pictures, the things immediatly beheld, which are invariable. A very large animal therefore and a very small one, continuing in the same Situation, must constantly appear each of the same size, be they viewed seperatly or presented together: The rules of optics permitt it not to be otherways; and it is hard, if not impossible, to conceive how, consistently with these, an object, placed at the same distance, can seem larger at one time that at another, unless some Change be made on the external organ.

Affection and passion, in many Cases, influence our opinions as well as our Conduct (and we often believe and act conformably to our Wishes and our Desires, rather than according to Truth and to Justice.) Yet more authority than they possess is attributed to these principles by some Writers, and we find it even asserted, that an innate propensity "is all we have to Convince us that the operations of nature are uniform".²⁸ (Not a word either of observation and of experience, or of our Faculty of comparing objects and of deducing inferences from facts discovered by the most strange work is thereby made of human Nature. All in it, even opinion and belief, are represented to depend almost entirely on instinct, emotion, propensity, passion; and much less Power, than is really enjoyed by reason, is allowed to it. Human nature, imperfect as it is, is not that absurd capricious composition which it is sometimes described by philosophers, and) conviction, which is not an arbitrary Effect, depends not on inclination or on propensity, but on evidence or on experience. No doubt, Those who attend not to the different degrees of proof, by which probable & improbable, common and unusual, facts ought to be Vouched, or who, from inexperience and indiscernment, are not apt to suspect narrations of inaccuracy, or of falshood, must be more credulous than men accustomed to scepticis in and to scrutiny, and lend an easy Credit, on very slender grounds; to monstrous Fables and extraordinary Tales: But still it is Testimony, stronger or weaker, by which, even in the Case of Prodigies, their minds are determined. (Mankind, in all ages, have very generally believed, and it is their reasonable Beleif, that there are invisible Powers which interest themselves in human Affairs. Stories related concerning those

²⁸ Elem. of Crit.Ch.2^d. p.5.

Beings, their appearances and their interpositions, are not always examined with care, but being told with gravity by persons whose veracity is not doubted by their hearers, and being also conformable to the System commonly received in the world, are adopted in many cases in which they ought to be rejected with contempt: Nevertheless it is human testimony, such as its is, on which those who believe in them rely, and we do not, merely from love of wonder or from an emotion of dread, impose on ourselves a "through conviction contrary to reason":²⁹ A strange |45| Expression Surely, That a Conviction may be thorough, yet contrary to reason. In numbers, of which our Ideas are more precise, our conceptions are not modified by passion, and we shall find that Comparison makes no alteration in them. Compare a man, who has ten Children and ten thousand £ annuum, with another who has a large a family and only a hundred a year; the Comparison will convey a more lively sense of the opulence of the one, and of the poverty of the other, than should arise either from considering them singly, or from comparing them to persons whose Circumstances were nearer an equality to theirs. Nevertheless, you would not be tempted to think either of their Estates less or greater than it really is. - We have no propensity to complete the contrast, and to render it as great as possible, or to confound 10,000 with 100,000 or a million - Surprise, instead of disposing men to believe in things which they do not see, often renders them suspicious, and averse from Crediting that which is really before them: and it is not so uncommon to behold very large and very small animals together, that we should be enabled, either from astonishment, or from any other propensity, to new-model our opinions, far less the Sight of our Eyes, for its Gratification.

Were the account, given by these Critics, of the operation of Comparison, just, all Representations, all Descriptions, which were possessed of force sufficient barely to recall the objects intended to be Represented by them, ought to be equally powerfull; a Supposition contrary to experience. Thomson's head in Westminster Abbey may make me recollect the Countenance of that excellent Poet, but I will not be compelled, by any emotion or propensity caused by his Bust, to imagine its resemblance more or less perfect than it is in reality. Even his own presence, in Comparison or in contrast, would not produce |46| that effect, and I should still recognize both its likenesses and its defects.

The force possessed by comparison and by Contrast, like many other articles in the Constitution of man, cannot perhaps be clearly explained; but surely it depends not on principles, such as those which have been mentioned: and were it necessary to account for the Phenomenon, one would rather say, that it arises from the distinction, remarkable between the Impressions made by Objects which are actually present to Sense and feeling, and those Ideas, of which we are Conscious on recalling things to

²⁹ Ibidem.

memory, or anticipating them by imagination. This distinction ³⁰ will be obvious on the least attention. A man, whose Leg is broken, or who is in love, is very differently affected from one who only thinks of that Sensation or passion. The latter perceptions are much duller and fainter than the former. Hence the difference between two animals presented together, being part of the complex impression excited by their real presence, must, as well as their colours or their Shapes, be more striking and more forcible, than it would be if one, or both of them, was out of sight. Now, objects, which are compared, are thereby presented to one united view: and the magnifying or diminishing power, possessed by Comparisons, probably lies in their affording a distinct & vivid impression of that difference. Accordingly, it bears a constant proportion to the vivacity of this perception, and real contrasts are more powerfull than verbal or descriptive ones. The mind, too, by viewing objects together, is led to attend to more Circumstances in each, and to take notice of a greater number of particulars in which they differ, than it does on considering them seperatly. {All their parts are them compared with each other, & the degrees in which every one rises above or falls below that correspondent to it are marked.} In the one case therefore a superior Compleatness, fullness, and amplitude, or a greater defectiveness, littleness, and contractedness, is derived to them than in the other. |47|

Chap. VII

Principles of Taste - Their combination - Their immutability

Principles of Taste

Grandeur, novelty, variety, uniformity, congruity, similitude, & dissimilitude, are the chief Principles of Taste; and on them, or a Skillfull combination of them, depends the measure of satisfaction afforded by any works, either of Nature or of art. The relish perceived on these is always proportionable to the number & proper assemblage of the others. The greater number of powers, possessed of most force, acts, or is most skillfully united, in any Composition, the pleasure perceived in contemplating it must be more or less lively. N.d. A Glow of colours, even thrown together without order is amusing in a certain degree: But let an able painter dispose them into different forms; let there figures imitate natural objects; let their resemblance be striking; let the design, represented by them, be Grand or Sublime, let a happy invention be discovered both in itself, and in the execution; let their disposition be just and artfull; let a strict propriety be observed in all their lineaments; let their parts be adjusted with perfect symmetry; a picture shall then be produced which will be more or less agreeable and affecting, according as it abounds or is deficient in these excellencies; N.d. A garden, in which beautifull tints

³⁰ Hume's essay, of the Origin of Ideas.

and elegant forms are presented to the Eye, in which the Ears are ravished with the melodious singing of Birds, in which the smell is refreshed with fragrant Odours, and in which an aromatic air is inhaled, must be more delightfull than one, in which are found only some of these entertainments. (The various impressions, exist by several different concurrent causes, which agree in general in producing effects separately pleasant incorporating and mingling and running together easily from the close connexion established among them be their nearness or contiguity, forward and invigorate and enliven each other's operation.)

Their combination

These principles, therefore; ought chiefly to be considered in the fine arts; They must, however, be combined with discretion. Every quality, which forms a principle of Taste, is in General, agreeable; but does not please in [48] all Circumstances. Certain limits are fixed, which, being transgressed, under objects disagreeable, and that, which Shakespeare calls the modesty of nature,³¹ must never be offended. Grandeur may be excessive; an inclination for novelty may become fantastic; variety may end in confusion & perplexity; simplicity and regularity may grow naked and insipid; congruity and propriety may degenerate into stiffness and formality; Comparisons & Contrasts, if unnatural, improper, or unreasonable will raise disgust; and the dissatisfaction, produced in these cases, will be increased, if the grand, new, or surprising objects, presented to view, cause terror: The pain then excited must always be proportionable to the danger which is threatened or apprehended.³² A good taste, therefore, will be eminently displayed here; both in selecting and in combining the principles which ought to be united in particular cases; and the agreeable or disagreeable effects, produced by a proper selection & a judicious combination, or the contrary, are almost infallible.

Their immutability

Among accurate and dispassionate men, it has never been reckoned blameable to maintain, that even God cannot work contradictions, such as making a part greater than its whole, or causing a thing both to exist and not to exist at the same time: Power, bounded in reality as well as in idea, is not understood to have contradictions for its object. I infer, that nature cannot form a rational creature, or a creature capable of comparing objects, and if seeing them as they are, capable also of seeing a part to be greater than the whole, or perceiving that a thing may both exist and not exist at one and the same time. These perceptions are directly inconsistent with reason, and in one instant a being cannot possibly be both rational and

³¹ Hamlet III. 4.

³² Elem. of Crit. VI.

irrational.

No creature, therefor, endued with this faculty, can perceive it to be itself better or fitter for men to hate & destroy than |48| in all Circumstances. Certain limits are fixed, which, being transgressed, render Objects disagreeable, and that, which Shakespeare calls the modesty of nature,³³ must never be offended. Grandeur may be excessive; an inclination for novelty may become fantastic; Variety may end in confusion & perplexity; Simplicity and regularity may grow naked and insipid; Congruity and propriety may degenerate into stiffness and formality; Comparisons & Contrasts, if unnatural, improper, or unseasonable, will raise disgust; and the dissatisfaction, produced in these cases, will be increased, if the grand, new, or surprising objects, presented to view, cause terror: The pain then excited must always be proportionable to the danger which is threatened or apprehended.³⁴ A good taste, therefore, will be eminently displayed here, both in selecting and in combining the principles which ought to be united in particular cases; and the agreeable or disagreeable effects, produced by a proper selection & a judicious combination, or the contrary, are almost infallible.

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No creature, therefore, endued with this faculty, can perceive it to be in itself better or fitter for men to hate & destroy |49| than to love and do good to one another. {The passions, and the actions corresponding to them, being in themselves essentially different, must necessarily carry different aspects, and excite opposite sentiments; And} It is absurd to suppose an animal, which cannot be happy without Society which on that account must gain the love of its fellows, and which is apprized of the means necessary to obtain both, not to behold it to be proper to discover good will, or to behave affectionatly towards them. Virtue is an object in itself

³³ Hamlet III. 4.

³⁴ Elem. of Crit. VI.

amiable and agreeable; Vice an odious & disagreeable one: A being, that sees things as they are, cannot possibly see them in another light: And the inhuman sentiments, sometimes discovered by individuals, are not, more than profligate actions, a Proof of the contrary. If any rational being takes delight in causing pain to any sensible creature, the giving of pain cannot be his direct and immediate object, or more than an indirect and immediate object, or more than an indirect and oblique view, and he must primarily and originally intend to Seize, to possess, to prevent, to punish, to resent, or to gratify, in consequence either of Interfering interests, of some injury received or dreaded, or of an appetite unconnected with reason and uncontroled by it. In truth, one, who knows & considers pain, might be understood to delight in giving it to himself, as easily as in giving it to another. An animal, wholly incapable of considering and of Comparing, may, from instinct or appetite, immediatly rejoice in devouring his prey; but a rational creature, in consequence of reason, cannot be of such a Constitution.

If we carry this method of reasoning to Subjects of Taste, we must reject the absurd, as well as the useless hypothesis embraced by some Critics, That men might have been formed with Senses and faculties to perceive every thing in a manner different from that in which they view or feel it at present: For instance, to admire littleness rather than Grandeur; to delight in the constant sight of the same Objects, rather than in novelty & Change; to hate variety as much as now they are fond of it; to imagine disorder, irregularity, & disproportion as agreeable, as, according to their present frame, they find Order, uniformity, and proportion; to like similitude in all cases [50] in which they are delighted with contrast, and to prefer dissimilitude as at present they do likeness. Some questions no doubt are abstruse, and it is not to be expected that we shall ever be able fully to unfold the wonderfulness and the curiousness, with which our natures are made: But suppositions, totally repugnant to experience, and contrary to all probability, ought never to be entertained; And in moral disquisitions, we cannot, consistently with right reason, assume them, more than in Natural Philosophy. Perhaps, we are not intitled to pronounce concerning other objects with equal assurance, as concerning the amiableness and the beauty of virtue, or hatefulness and deformity of vice; Yet we have the highest probability, that both cases are perfectly analogous, and that it is not from any arbitrary connection, we delight in greatness, and those other qualities, which, according to our present Constitution, are agreeable.

Book II.^a

The foundation of Taste, and the influence, which Education, Custom, and habit, possess in altering it.

Chap. I.

Taste founded in Nature

All objects naturally excite particular original perceptions.

Men are endued by nature with various Senses by which they perceive a multiplicity of objects; and we have reason to believe that the perceptions excited in their minds, by which things are known to them, and are distinguished from each other, are perfectly alike in all individuals in the same Circumstances. Sugar in every mouth raises that Sensation denominated Sweetness: An Arabian topaz conveys to every Eye a strong impression of a bright yellow: The noise of Thunder appears grumbling in every Ear: and the Case is the same in compounded as in simple ideas. A Complex |51| Object is not more than an assemblage of all the particulars of which it consists, Or which are discoverable in it. A Tree creates in all men a perception of a tale vegetable, growing from a Root fixed in the Earth, and rising in an wooden stem, divided into Branches, and covered in their Seasons with leaves, with blossom and with fruits according to its kind. A Stately Edifice, or a Ship in motion, causes each an Idea peculiar to itself; and we may be assured, that in all Cases, in which an Object produces not that precise Sensation or feeling which is natural and proper to it, the diversity proceeds either from a Change in the State of the Organs of the persons who perceive it, or from an alteration in the thing itself that is perceived. Even a Clown can tell, that every thing seems yellow to a jaundiced Eye. A man, who is deaf, must be insensible to the Sound of Cannon: And a person, whose nerves are deadened by a Palsay, cannot possibly acquire those lively impressions which others receive from Objects of Touch. A non parelle in perfection possesses a pleasant quickness; But let it rot, and its taste becomes musty. A Lady, whose elegant form awakens a powerfull approbation of her extraordinary Charms, invaded by disease or by age, becomes an altered figure, and commands no more the same admiration. These differences serve to support, instead of disproving the General proposition; for different Effects ought to be produced in different Circumstances and by different Causes.

Agreeableness and disagreeableness, Beauty and deformity, perceptions totally different from Colour, figure, Size, Solidity, hardness, Softness, fluidity, and those other Ideas thro' which Objects are immediatly perceived, are accessary modes in which these images strike beholders, or additional qualities belonging to Objects. A fine Tint, elegant Shapes, an unpleasant relish, and an ugly form, are intelligible Expressions; and it is observable, that Impressions of the last sort seem not at first constantly distinguished by the likeness or the uniformity |52| which is generally supposed to mark the other species, Or to Subsist among all the Pictures formed by the same Objects in different minds. Honey is always sweet; but we cannot absolutly pronounce that its sweetness is pleasant to every palate: The Stones of Cairngorum are exceedingly brilliant, but impartial men will not perhaps Grant them the same Beauty which they are

generally thought to possess by the peasants born at the foot of that mountain. Elegance and magnificence are found by most Spectators in Hopeton-house, Yet an untutored Highlander may prefer, to that beautiful Structure, the Gloomy dungeon which he has been accustomed to behold with prejudice & with awe on account of the Residence of his chief. Every reader does not equally enjoy the humour of Butler & drollery of Swift, admire the Poetry of Gray and the Correctness of Boileau, or relish the grace of Raphael and the Strength of Reubens. Must we conclude, that Beauty and deformity are perfectly arbitrary and Capricious, & that Taste is totally destitute of a Solid and immutable foundation, or has not a real and fixed Standard?

immediatly agreeable or disagreeable

Among the Objects perceived by Sense we observe some fitted to yield pleasure: others are disagreeable, and give disgust: few are perfectly indifferent. Tastes, Smells, Colour, figures, Sounds, all are very generally possessed of that aptitude: A grateful Sensation is directly produced by some of them; others naturally afford an unpleasant feeling. An instance will hardly be found, after even a laborious Search, of a single person, to whom the scent of a Rose, and the Relish of an Orange, are not at first delightful, or the Smell of a Pione, and a Draught of Tar water, are not offensive. A Circle or an equilateral triangle are instantly seen to be more beautiful than a triangle or a figure totally irregular, and the form of a Pyramid than that of a Block new from the Quarry. No man compares the drone of a Bagpipe to the Sound of a flute, the Prickyness of a Thistle to the Smoothness of Velvet, Or the hardness of a Stone to the softness of Eider-down. Every thing has [53] annexed to it, a particular agreeableness or disagreeableness, which it is naturally formed to produce. The pleasure or the uneasiness is original and immediate.: We are not taught by Prompters, and learn not from instruction, to feel or to acknowledge it: Nature is our only Guide: The Satisfaction or pain is directly excited by the Objects on their first perception; and a person, in whom a Contrary sentiment is created, is generally reckoned something unnatural or monstrous.

These original feelings, expected with the utmost assurance, are the foundation of desire, of aversion, of choice, and of Rejection; materials upon which men deliberate and reason; independent on Custom & on education, which often have an influence in modifying nature, Yet do not form, but suppose, her; and are recognized in Complex no less than in simple Cases: and an immediate pleasure or an immediate pain, greater or less, is naturally annexed to the perceiving of most other Objects, as well as those of the external Sense.

The Terrace at Windsor, for instance, or the Castle of Edinb, The Hospital at Greenwich, or the Cathedral of St. Pauls, compound sensible objects, conspire, with the consciousness of every Spectator, to prove, that wide and diversified prospects, elegant and magnificent buildings are inherently calculated to

give delight to the Eye; and every ear, if not ravished, is at least pleased with a delicate Tune or a pretty Song, sung by a fine voice and a beautifull woman.

To ourselves, considered as Objects of Conception, we are not indifferent, but feel a complacency and Self love, & every man's preservation and prosperity are highly agreeable to his mind. Other beings, capable of Happiness or of Misery, are regarded by us with benevolence; We form good wishes for them, rejoice in their felicity, and take a Sympathy in their distress. The former principle indeed is stronger than the latter; but both are real affections, originally implanted in the human breast; and it is impossible for us to be altogether unconcerned about our fellow Creatures. |54|

Virtue is perceived, the moment its nature is apprehended, to be amiable and excellent, and becomes in many Cases a delightfull object of Contemplation as well as of pursuit: But vice, as soon as it is understood, appears odious & deformed.

Riches, too, Grandeur, power, authority, applause & fame, nature herself teaches us, as soon as we form these complex ideas, to value and esteem in a certain Degree.

In general, both Our appetites and passions; our actions & behaviour, considered in relation either to ourselves or to others, are conceived in their own nature to be accompanied with a Congruity or incongruity, a Propriety or impropriety, a dignity or meanness: Every object of Sense, viewed by itself, is either agreeable or disagreeable, and a certain correspondence is required among those which are contemplated in Conjunction: All things must be properly adjusted to one another, in order to satisfy the mind or please a Spectator:

which form a Standard of Taste

and these original ideas or feelings, which things are naturally formed to produce, constitute a real standard, to which men are continually appealing, and which, in their determinations and in their conduct, says a foundation both of Censure and of approbation. In many cases Custom is not thought a sufficient justification; something is acknowledged to be independent on it, and to be founded in nature.

It must however be confessed, that there is not only a great variety, but often contrarities and Contradictions, in Tastes and Opinions. Hence some Sceptical Philosophers, observing individuals at different times and in different Circumstances to differ about most things, even such as are important, both from themselves and from others, have been led to maintain, that men's Sentiments concerning the agreeable and the disagreeable, and even their apprehensions of right and wrong, arise intirely from passion, Habit, education, and accidents. On this supposition, disquisitions concerning Taste would be useless; |55| all enquiries after its degrees or kinds, a Good, a better, or a best in it, would be vain; and attempts to form or to Correct it would be fruitless, as no original differences are then imagined to Subsist among Objects, or certain rules and fixed Standard are

believed to exist in nature, by which it can be adjusted. A System, so improbable and so absurd that it can hardly be admitted in its full extent by any man, not being worthy of a Serious discussion, I reject without examination; and, instead of a Confutation, shall endeavour to explain the Sources of that diversity, which, notwithstanding the immutable Standard that hath been mentioned, is often found in Tastes.

Chap. II.^d

Changes to which Natural Taste is Subject.-
-Their Causes.-

1.

Equality among objects

The original pleasure, stamped by nature on different objects, is nearly equal in many cases, and any difference which is found between them, being scarcely perceptible, renders it often hard to pronounce, which is most agreeable

A Pine apple and a melon have both an exquisite flavour, and a great superiority is not perhaps remarkable in either. Hence not only different men, but the same persons in different Circumstances, may easily be led to prefer one of them to the other. |56|

{Virgil in his Georgics, and Horace in an Epode, gives a description of the Country, and of the Pleasures of a Life spent there.} The execution in both Poets is fine, and it is difficult to decide between merits so nearly ballanced.

Boileau and Pope are both excellent, and one would not be chargeable with bad Taste, who should at one time like the French, at another prefer the English Poet.

This equality is one principall Source of diversity of Sentiments, especially in figures, in Colours, in Sounds, in Smells, and in Tastes. Between things, which intrinsically are nearly equall, a small matter may cast the ballance.

2.

Inequalities in the liveliness of the feelings excited by nature in different men.

The Senses and the faculties seem not to be equally lively and acute in all men. Hence considerable differences may also be found in the strength or quickness, even of those originals likings and aversions entertained by individuals, which proceed from nature, and which are prior to all instruction. Those produced by the same objects, notwithstanding their general resemblance, must often exist in different degrees in different person.

Music is agreeable to every Ear, but conveys not to some that ravishing delight or those tender emotions, which it affords to others, over whom its power is naturally irresistible, commanding their attention, melting their hearts, and dissolving into Tears.

To few a fine painting appears not a pleasant Sight, but the Rapture with which many behold pictures is extreme. Visible objects, or such as are expressible by them, are alone adapted to be Represented in Colours; and strong likenesses drawn on Canvas for sensible things, exciting vivid images in all who are acquainted with their originals, generally afford them considerable pleasure: But the language of the pencil is a Species of Hieroglyphic: and invisible Subjects; Passions, designs, fables; which, in that Stile, |57| must often be unintelligible or obscure, can be fully relished by those only who are endued with vivacity sufficient to apprehend intuitively its emblems and their meaning.

His original difference, observable in different Constitution, must occasion no small diversity in men's pursuits as well as in their Sentiments. One man likes port, another is fond of Claret; Yet, if Portugal Wine is alone set before them, the difference in their Tastes may not be observed, or cause any difference in their behaviour, as it is probable that neither will reject a beverage which is supposed agreeable to both: But at an entertainment, at which both Liquors are presented, that difference will soon be discovered, and each will take the kind most gratefull to his palate. differences in trivial things have little influence on the affairs of the world: But if different men, from their natural habitudes or original Constitutions, be differently affected by the Ideas of pleasure, Riches, magnificence, dominion, and fame, these important Objects, which produce strong attachments, exciting to different pursuits, raising violent animosities, and inspiring much emulation, may make remarkable discoveries of great diversities both in their Sentiments & in their Conduct.

3.

Custom &, habit

An American plant, at first nauseous almost to every stomach, is rendered by use extremely pleasant: The half of Europe is enslaved to Tobacco, & multitudes habituated to such a leaf, which form a strong emetic, cannot want it without pain.

A man, accustomed to two elegant Courses of fifteen or twenty dainties each, is awkward and uneasy in finding his Table reduced to three or four plain dishes; But a few months, proving that his health is not |58| impaired by the Reduction, and that even his Simple fare possesses a good relish, convince him that the difference between the Enjoyments, found in his Sumptuous repasts and in his frugal meals, is much smaller than his imagination had figured it.

Custom and habit, unassisted by other Causes, and independent of their operation, make a powerfull impression by their own force, and have a mighty influence in altering our original feelings or apprehensions. Objects, repeatedly presented to Observation, become familiar by being frequently viewed. Hence a more intimate acquaintance may be said to be gained with their nature; and Circumstances or qualities, which

strike not at first sight, disclosing themselves by time and by various opportunities afforded to observe them, are fully perceived after many different Surveys. A more thorough knowledge, being thereby acquired, may naturally be supposed to shew that they possess neither Good nor Evil in the degree primarily apprehended in them. The manner indeed, in which Custom and Habit operate on the mind, & change men's Sentiments, it is perhaps impossible to determine: But the fact is certain, that they both reconcile to many things, which are originally disagreeable, or at least lessen the disgust arising from them, and diminish the high relish created at first by pleasant objects. For this reason, that the original impressions made by objects be supposed the same in all men, a thousand accidents, by introducing different Customs among different Orders or in different Countries, may give rise to a difference of Tastes in different individuals, and even in the same persons at different times.

4.

Association of Ideas

Nearly allied to Custom is that principle called by Philosophers association of Ideas, by which we [58.1] impaired by the Reduction, and that was his simple Fare possesses a good Relish, convince him that the Difference between the Enjoyments, found in his sumptuous Repasts and in his frugal Meals, is much smaller than his Imagination had figured it.

Custom and Habit, unassisted by other Causes, make a powerful Impression by their own Force, and have a mighty Influence in altering our original Feelings or Apprehensions. Action is much facilitated by them, and they assist greatly towards the apt performance of it. A young Gentleman, at going to School, finds not a little Difficulty at first in making those modulated Steps which are taught him by his dancing Master: His Limb's accustomed to particular Movements, resist any sudden Change of that which may be termed their present State, and having acquired a Stiffness, are not pliable to new ones: But this Difficulty is gradually removed by Practice, and the Minuet or even the Rigadoon becomes at last perfectly easy.

A like Facility is acquired by Habit in using things external to the Body. Long Apprenticeships must be served to most Arts before their Professors can handle their Tools: But by degrees an Ad- [58.2] dress is attained even in those which seem hardest to learn. A wealthy citizen, who has not been used to wear a Sword, is a good deal incommoded on equipping himself with one for a Mayor's Feast or for the Drawing Room. Even new Clothes carry something of a Pedantic Air, and you do not directly find yourself at home in them.

The Operations of the Mind are subject to an Influence analogous to that which operates on the Body. A novice in Geometry is slow at tracing the Lines and the Angles, the Figures and the Properties proposed to his Contemplation: But objects repeatedly presented to Observation become familiar; Their Parts,

their Conformation, and their Qualities are clearly discerned, and indeed are only discovered full, by frequent Surveys. Custom facilitates Conception as well as action. Objects, like to those which have been often beheld by us, glide smoothly into the Mind, and are readily apprehended by it.

Custom, removing their Obscurity and our Ignorance, helps to bring us acquainted with things, and being a Species of Experience, conveys a Knowledge of their Natures, of their Excellencies, and of their Defects, both more complete and more accurate, than |58.3| can well be attained without its aid.

(Ideas, attracting attention from repetition, come at last to make a strong impression, and acquire a firmness & a vivacity, which take a fast hold of the soul, and are qualities extremely agreeable in its perceptions.)

"Shun the Man that', singular, "says Acasto,³⁵ "his Mind's unsound; his Spleen o'erweighs his Brains". Every prudent Person, out of Regard to himself, is obliged at least to affect a Deference for the Opinions and the Usages of others. One, who either in his Deportment or in his Sentiments differs remarkably from the World, publishing a Conceit of himself and a Contempt of Men, affirms himself to be wiser than they are, and we naturally form an Aversion at such as either in their Behaviour or in their Discourses discover that they despise us. Hence Custom and Fashion impose a Restraint and even a sort of Necessity on Mankind, as the Character and the Fortune of the few, who venture on Singularitys, are exposed considerably to suffer from the superior Weight of the many who always conform to the common or fashionable Modes. Men are thereby necessitated to submit to Objects upon whose Construction they might possible improve, because their Improvements would only be deemed Marks of the Imbecillity of their Inventors, unless they were extremely substantial, and bid fair on that Account to |58.4| be generally adopted.

In these Instances you will discover a Foundation in Nature herself for an Influence of Custom and Habit over Judgement and Taste in some Cases. The Ease, with which any Operation either of the Mind or of the Body is performed, is in itself agreeable to the Agent, and existing in the Spectator, an Idea of his Satisfaction as well as Elegance, is also pleasant to perceive: But on seeing Actions effected with Difficulty we feel a Pain resembling that suffered by those whose Nerves strain in doing them.

A man who happens to be unfortunately yoked in Marriage, if he has good Sense, resolves to make the best of a bad Bargain, and by Exerting a Controll on his Passions, struggles to render his Condition as light as possible. Wise people, knowing that they must submit to Necessity, are engaged to reconcile their Minds to objects from which they find it impossible to obtain a Deliverance. On that Account they endeavour both to banish from

³⁵ Orphan, III.

their Thoughts all the Circumstances which are disagreeable |58.5| in them, and to bring their Imaginations to rest as steadily as possible on those which are agreeable: And their continual Efforts, producing a Forgetfulness of the former or an inattention to them and a Tendency towards the latter, can hardly be entirely destitute of Success, or not lead and influence their Sentiments in some Degree.

The intimate Acquaintance, too, which is gained with Objects often presented to View, must naturally satisfy and alter our Ideas or Opinions of them. Circumstances or Qualities, which strike not at first Sight disclosing themselves after various Opportunities afforded to observe the farther Experience which is thereby acquired of the Nature, and Effects of the things, may discover in many cases that they possess, not either Good or evil in the degree primarily apprehended in them, (and the complex sentiment produced after all their component parts are distinctly discerned, being compounded of several simple perceptions which were not originally supposed to enter either their or its composition, must constantly vary and become on the whole more or less agreeable or disagreeable in proportion to the number and importance of the agreeable or disagreeable ingredients which are ultimately found to compose it.)

(Custom and Habit, limiting the forms and appearances of things, deprive man of full opportunities of comparing them; a principal source both of narrow prejudices and of bad taste. The judgements of those, who behold attentively & coolly great varieties of different objects which admit of a mutual comparison, are commonly right. N.d. The deformity cities whose buildings and streets and lanes and alleys are irregularities, narrow, & dark, strikes not their inhabitants in that lively & forcible manner in which strangers perceive their inconveniences. People are apt to be even proud of the country or of the town in which they have happened to be born or have resided, and it is remarkable that the attachment & conceit, entertained for Men, are often increased from opposition by their bleakness & their ugliness.)

An unpleasant Shock if given to the Mind at Sight of any who in trivial articles act after a Fa- |58.6| shion different from that which is generally prevalent. Not only the Folly or the Impudence discovered by the inward Uneasiness or conscious Disapprobation, as well as the bodily Constraint or pain, which are ingenious Spirit must naturally imagine to be felt by them, are offensive Spectacles.

These Examples of the Effects, produced by Custom and by Habit, amount in part for that dominion which is possessed by them, (and even shew that in many cases their authority is not arbitrary, but derivable from natural causes.) The manner indeed, in which they operate on the Mind, and change Men's, Sentiments, it is perhaps impossible to explain from principles applicable in all cases. But the Fact is certain, That they reconcile to many things which are originally disagreeable, or at least lessen the Disgust arising from them, and diminish the high Relish created

at first by pleasant Objects. For this Reason, tho the original Impressions made by Objects be supposed the same in all Men, a thousand Accidents, by introducing different Countries, may give Rise to a difference of Tastes in different Individuals, and even in the same Persons at |59| {at different Times.

4.

Association of Ideas.

Nearly allied to Custom is that Principle called by Philosophers Association of Ideas, by which we connect Objects with one another, and are often brought gradually to conceive very differently of their nature.

An imaginary value is frequently put by us on things, and we detract from their real excellence, on account of their Connections with others which we have learned either to admire or to despise. {Shemtone's pastoral Ballad and his Rival elegance may naturally influence our sentiments on the other productions of that amiable poet. Even the trash left by Swift wants not admirers.} Men are apt, without regard to Grace or to Convenience, to fancy a Superior elegance in the Dresses and in the manners of persons of great riches or of high rank. {Sumptuous apparel, magnificent houses, splendid equipages, luxurious tables, graceful deportment, contain in them substantial advantages; but their dazzling power prevents inattentive beholders from making those distinctions which are essentially founded in truth and in nature, and observing many things really valuable enjoyed by the rich and the powerful, we rashly draw a general conclusion in favour of all fashions indiscriminately which prevail among great.} Hence our opinions, are continually fluctuating. Modes, which in their day commanded admiration, are reckoned antic as soon as new ones are substituted in their place; and the influence, which fortune and Rank have in establishing prejudices in favour of Dress and of behaviour, is also applicable to Houses, to Gardens, to furniture, and even to things of importance in life.

This respect, however, which is shown to the powerfull and to the opulent, a species of servility, I should be loth to call a natural or original principle in fabric, but should rather impute to early prejudices, improper education, depraved Conceptions, and Interested views; And cannot believe with some Critics,³⁶ that Alexander's Courtiers imitated his wryneck, because his Grandeur made them think it a real beauty: It was just art and flattery, employed to Gain upon a vain man, whose favour reflected a Consequence on themselves, and who could be highly |60| Serviceable or hurtfull to them. The base and Stupid adulation, offered to the Great, flows all from the same corrupted Source.

5.

³⁶ Elem. of Crit. Ch:II. p.1.S.4

Utility and inutility

Utility is different from beauty, and from every quality which is immediatly perceived as soon as objects are presented to view. It is discovered chiefly by experience; and the Ideas excited by it & its contrary, forming a powerfull association, have a Considerable influence in raising desires and aversions, as well as in determining the Judgement. A Sensible man values everything that is usefull, convenient, or necessary; a Connection, which, on the re-appearance of objects known to possess that important reccommendation, producing a strong inclination to words them, may in consequence either heighten the original pleasure, or diminish the original disgust, felt at first perceiving of them: In utility, again, or inconveniences, appearing after acquaintance or trial, may either increase the original aversion, Or, if the first impression was agreeable, lessen this original pleasure. All the qualities, both good and bad, found in objects to which men are accustomed, are instantly reassembled by memory on subsequent perceptions of them: A habit is thereby acquired of Judging in a Complex view; and the opinion ultimatly formed concerning their value, after they are thoroughly known or have been considered in that manner, passes, by an easy and quick transition, even to the relish or dissatisfaction with which things are beheld.

To a farmer Dunghills themselves are not wholly disagreeable; for he finds them profitable in agriculture; and thinks with satisfaction on the rich Crops which they are calculated to produce.

Among Wines, too, some are observed to become by use more agreeable than others far more |61| pleasant on the first trial, because in Liquor. Taste is not the only Circumstance that is regarded. We attend also to their effects on the Stomach, on the head, and on the Spirits; and, instituting a fair Calculation of the Sum of their comparative excellencies, founded both on the nature and on the duration of the pleasures yeilded by the, pronounce one Sort, on account of its superior enlivening power or durable agreeableness, to be on the whole preferable to another, which at first gives greater delight to the palate. Thus, for a Single glass most people prefer Canary to Claret; but speak of bottles, and contrary taste will be found to prevail, because Claret is a lighter Wine, and we can drink it with relish longer than Canary, which soon Cloys the Stomach, and renders us heavy. For the same reason, we eat simple food with pleasure, longer than sweet meats, or dishes which taste strong of Sugar or of Honey.

Houses, also, furniture, and Dresses, besides their original beauty or outward deformity, are often accompanied with disadvantages or advantages, which weakening, augmenting, or over balancing the pleasure of disgust arising from their external appearance, may have a considerable effect on the Taste or Opinion formed about them. In a house all the parts ought to be proportionable; Yet a Stair, of which the Steps were immoderately

high, would look ugly. This Circumstance might not, however, be instantly remarked by the Eye, or their improper height be directly perceived to be a real defect, and their disproportion, perhaps, might rather appear at first inspection in this light. Utility and inconveniency, are not only discovered slowly, but, being influenced in many Cases by Custom and by fashion, must, on that account also, give occasion to a diversity of Tastes and |62| of Sentiments in different men, notwithstanding the agreement or identity of their original feelings and apprehensions.

6.

Inattention & precipitancy

An opinion supposes, or at least ought always to be preceded by an exact Survey and complete knowledge. It is not therefore accurate perhaps to number precipitancy and inattention among the Causes, which occasion diversity in Tastes; Yet their influence is considerable. A person, who views an Object only in a Cursory manner, can hardly be acquainted with all its parts, or their Symmetry and their relations, and must often overlook both beauties and defects, or they cannot convey that forcible impression which is made by longer time and a narrower inspection; and things are sometimes obscured or lost at first in their own greatness. The Cathedral of St. Basil's is universally allowed to be a Grand Odifice. It is also uncommonly elegant: Yet its beauty strikes not immediatly every Spectator, and it is sometimes pronounced a heavy Building: But look at it often; view it from different Stations; and you will find it conspicuous almost in every other respect as well as for Greatness.

Novelty, too, serves to cover faults, which are remarked on a thorough acquaintance. Thus, Books frequently pass, nay sometimes please, on a first reading, but a second, exposing their faults, discovers them to be intollerable; and men, to whom Beauties or defects are pointed out, will generally be found to agree in Sentiment on considering them with attention. Tastes are often different in appearance more than in reality. It may happen, that a man shall read Young without taking notice of some very |63| fine lines in his Universal passion. (can't find this insert) but shew him them, desire him to note them, and few readers will not both acknowledge and be charmed with their Beauty.

Chap. III^d.

Limits, beyond which Education and Custom
cannot go in altering natural Taste.

Custom and Education, their Influence

The foregoing principles account, in some measure, for that diversity which prevails in the opinions and the pursuits of mankind, and shew how Habit, Custom, association of Ideas, and notions of utility, counteracting their original feelings, and

causing these, notwithstanding their General agreement, to assume a variety of forms, may introduce a multitude of different Tastes. We shall find nevertheless, on examination, that there are certain limits beyond which custom & education cannot carry us, and that in several Cases they are not able to produce a different Sentiment from that which is original and untaught.

on objects of Sight

Among all the Senses their power seems most extensive over objects of Sight. people, accustomed from their infancy to particular Dresses, and used to annex Ideas of Honour or superiority to them, become prejudiced in their favour: Every nation is conceited of its own fashions: Strange Garbs, tho' more decent and more commodious, appear odd & ridiculous; and it is only by looking at them frequently, that their superior propriety is gradually discerned, and that men are able at length to prefer them to those with which they were first acquainted.

In infancy, in Childhood, and even in early |64| Youth, reason is weak from want of exercise, and of a large experience of Objects. During those Seasons men, ignorant of that which constitutes real perfection, or which renders things truly estimable, are more easily engaged to value trifles, and habit makes a more powerfull impression, than in cautious and instructed years, especially if the competition is not between beauty and deformity, but only between that which is more and that which is less gracefull: In these Cases it is less difficult to mislead the Taste of the unexperienced: but as men enlarge their Ideas, take a more accurate Survey of things, obtain better opportunities of seeing different objects and of Comparing them, they become more and more reconciled to nature, overcome their prejudices, and acquire a juster taste and discernment of figures and of Colours.

It is in figures and Colours, of which hardly any is altogether ugly, that Education and Custom possess their greatest force. You may observe them every day make painfull and ridiculous forms of saluting and of accosting to seem proper, and reccommend many ungracefull motions and Gestures. Their Empire however is not unbounded nor or able wholly to destroy the natural Sense of Grace even in visible objects. Sometimes they may engage a person, between two Beauties, to prefer the least, but will hardly make him fancy beauty in that which is absolutely monstrous. Thus, acquaintance will gradually reconcile one to extremely indifferent looks in either a man or a woman, whom he has known a considerable time, and finds worthy of esteem: But some grins are so horrible, some features so disgusting, some shapes so distorted, that they can never please. |65|

on Sounds, on Tastes, & on Smells

Their influence on Taste appears also great. Over sounds, their dominion seems much more circumscribed: and perhaps it is still less in Smells, which, in some instances, no habit can render agreeable, tho' men, obliged by necessity, Submit to them.

On Touch

A person, who has nerves, must feel. No Custom, which does not deaden these, can overcome or sweeten the pain of the Gout, of the Gravel, and of many other diseases. Yet long habit, as well as elevated Spirits, enable persons afflicted by them to bear their attacks with more patience. In these Cases a man, besides the bodily uneasiness which he feels, is often apprehensive that his suffering will be tedious or mortal, especially the first time he is Seized with a distemper, and is thereby rendered less able to resist its violence: But after two or three trials, finding the illness not dangerous, or not last so long as he expected, his Spirits revive; he anticipates the happy moment at which he shall be relieved; and, the painfull Sensation continues perhaps equally acute, his mind opens more to amusements which divert his attention from it, and he begins to be less disturbed on the whole.

On opinion and belief

In matters of opinion or belief, Education & Custom are of vast importance, Their influence on the understanding being much greater than on the Senses. Feelings are not easily changed; but it is not difficult to impose on credulity: and |66| to perswade men, especially at an early age, of a thousand falsities. Propositions, indeed, which are either self evident or demonstrated, cannot be disbelieved; but in matters, in which moral evidence can only be attained, and which admitt of much debate, Or in which truth and argument may be involved in perplexity and mist, lasiness and inattention, confidence in parents and in Instructors, regard to the Sentiments of friends and of Country men, respect for fashion, and aw of establishments, mislead our minds, and pervert our notions; and from these Sources many unjust conceptions are formed by mankind in arts, in Sciences, in religion, in morals, and in politicks. Almost any assertion of which the contrary is not intuitively evident or demonstrably certain, nay Gross absurdities, both can be, and are digested on these Subjects.

On moral principles

Moral principles likewise are susceptible of much variety and Corruption. A love of virtue, and a desire after the happiness of their fellow Creatures, are deeply imprinted on the minds of men, and cannot be utterly extirpated till reason and their feelings are intirely gone: But many other things also are agreeable to human nature. It is impossible not to like and to wish for those which are pleasant to our external Senses: We are fond, too, of Riches, of Grandeur, of Authority, and of fame. Hence inclination may oppose inclination, and the violence, with which some objects are pursued, may considerably abate our Estimation of others or eagerness after them. Moral beauty indeed must always retain its native Charms, and even a depraved man cannot be totally lost to that ingenuous Sense, or avoid

seeing virtuous behaviour to possess a Superior dignity: His conduct however may |67| not be conformable to his conviction. Avarice, ambition, sensuality, may weaken our benevolent principles, and various passions, mingled together in various degrees of Strength, may not only give rise to very different opinions, but even introduce and establish unjust or cruel maxims, and check that ardour which is naturally delightfull in the exercise of kind and moral affection.

It is impossible to determine with an absolute assurance, whether the original feelings, proper to human nature, are equally lively in all men; and is also difficult in many Cases to discover that particular Object by which the strongest impression is made on the mind: but is it easy to imagine, how inequalities in their vigour or acuteness may arise among individuals from differences in their situations, and is certain from experience, that virtue, benevolence, riches, and honours, as well as other objects, excite very different Sentiments not only in different men, but in the same men at different times. Few can gratify all their desires: choices must be made: preferences must be given: and the passion, that predominates, must always rule. Hence the variety of Characters and of Pursuits found in the world. Mankind sacrifice their Taste of some objects to their fondness of others; pleasure to avarice, ease for fame, tranquility to ambition, every thing for love; and from a violent attachment to sensual Gratifications or to visionary Enjoyments, forfeit even their integrity and their Reputation. These Sacrifices, it is true, sometimes cost them dear: The sense of that which they pursue must be supposed to be stronger, at the |68| particular instant in which a preference is given it, than their inclination for that which they abandon; yet their minds, distracted by opposite desires, are not able in all cases to make their election, nor to forsake an object to which they are attached, without a conclusive struggle and great uneasiness.

Amidst all the differences however which arise from Custom, from habit, and from associations of Ideas, nature continues to be nature still, and her power remains supreme. Hence her influence, amidst all the untoward Effects wrought by Education, by habit, and by passion, is often felt. The impressions stamped by her are strong: In some matters they can never be totally effaced: and in most Cases it is possible for man, unless they be placed in Circumstances extremely unfortunate, to distinguish that which is natural from its contrary, and to correct those false opinions which arise from wrong associations. Her pure suggestions constitute the only solid foundation of good taste.

Book III.

A Just

or Good taste, What? - fundamental rules of Judging
or performing with it.

Chap. I.st

A Good Taste - Properties of things agreeable

to it.

In every thing we ought to follow original and undepraved nature, and should never suffer ourselves to be led blindfold by custom, except perhaps in matters that are perfectly trivial, in which singularity would be folly, and ought to be avoided on the account.

good taste

A Good taste really consists in an habitude or faculty |69| of perceiving easily and exactly that which is conformable to her genuine dictates, and in separating it from all false refinements and absurd additions made in consequence of the weakness, prejudices, foolish Customs, and irregular passions of mankind: and a man is not only intitled to be deemed wiser in proportion to his Capacity in this Species of discernment, and better as in practice he conforms to the standard of nature, but ought also to be acknowledged to have a politer and finer Taste in proportion as he Judges more readily and more unerringly of this standard, and has a more lively and a more sure perception of natural beauties & Graces.

Properties of things conformable to it.

Would we therefore discover, in any Subject, that which is intitled to be reckoned according to the best Taste? We must study nature; endeavour to find out the standard that is in her; Search after the agreeable to her: and seek that which independent on all prejudices and foolish Customs or improper associations, is most delightfull according to her original, pure, simple, and most common dictates. In other words we must enquire, what it is that pleases at first, That pleases longest, That pleases most men, That pleases them in Circumstances most proper for Judging, and that is able afterwards to stand the Trial of reason; and bear the Test of experience?

Originality

The constitutional aptitudes possessed by things which fit them to act in particular manners on one another, give us ground to affirm, that the pleasure, afforded by an object which is agreeable when first presented to the mind, is original and derived from nature.

Lastingness

But pleasures, flowing even from the uncorrupted source, are not always lasting: Some things, which strike greatly at first, lose |70| in a little all their influence or power to please, and a high entertainment is often received at last from that which gives not directly much delight. There must, therefore, be a weakness in every enjoyment which is found soon to vanish, and duration, as well as originality, is a capital article to which regard must here be paid.

Gen'. approbation.

An Object, which, in a competition, is found upon enquiry to please the greatest number of those who contemplate it, all other Circumstances supposed equal, may be pronounced, on this plain criterion, most agreeable to nature. That therefore, which pleases most men, must also be considered, and the common or General taste is really preferable in many Cases to Modes & to Sentiments which are sometimes reckoned more refined.

Competent Judges.

All men are not indeed placed in Situations that render them able to Judge. You would not Submit Correlli's merit or that of Handel, to such as are incapable to hear or relish their music. Those, whose voices ought chiefly to be minded, are men found in a condition proper for Judging. They must be fully acquainted with the Subject on which they are called to decide, and their primitive feelings on that Subject must not be vitiated. Neither the sensual and the debauched, nor the uncivilized and the uninstructed, are fittest to be consulted on the matter. Natural taste is perverted in persons devoted to Sensuality or corrupted by debauchery. Their sensitive power is impaired by immoderate indulgence, and their fancies, never being questioned or Controuled, are greatly disordered. In the uncultivated that Sense is in many Cases more simple and less depraved than in those who are more polished: Their Sentiments therefore may often help to discover that which is according to pure nature: Yet liable to prejudices, ignorant of [71] arts, unacquainted with Science, without sufficient experience and a perfect knowledge of that which is most excellent, they must fall into frequent errors, and upon the whole we cannot depend with equal assurance on their opinion, as on the Judgement of persons of Superior knowledge & of greater experience, especially if these have also employed their reason on thinking deeply and accurately on the Subject of Enquiry. For after all an appeal must ultimately be made to right reason,

Right reason

and that Taste ought ever to be reckoned best, which is able to stand trial at her tribunal.

In one sense the vulgar maxim, "That tastes are not to be disputed," is undoubtedly just feelings, which are actually perceived, must always be real, and reason does not frame, but Judge of them: Her Province is to compare: and it is by an accurate comparison only, that we can arrive at a solid determination concerning that which is, according to the best Taste in any Subject.

Simple objects

A Judicative power therefore must here be exercised: Objects must be carefully inspected & compared; and among those, which are simple, or of which full conceptions are readily acquired, it is seldom difficult to determine that which is most

agreeable. A regular Curve or an equilateral triangle can be pronounced with much assurance to be a more beautiful figure, and we can predict with certainty that at first sight it will yield a higher pleasure to greater numbers of men, than any confused irregular figure with unequal sides and angles. Pink is a Colour almost universally approved: the Smell of a jonquil is undoubtedly preferable to that of tallow: and every man would rather touch a soft and smooth than a hard and rugged Surface. In these and like Cases the justest taste is really that which is most |72| common. He, who should prefer wormwood to an apricot, or who should wish to render his neighbour miserable rather than happy, would deservedly, as well as generally, be reckoned to have a bad taste.

Complex objects

It is not equally easy to find the true standard in things, which are compounded, and which admit of Variety. Here the Complicatedness of the Objects, and the number of parts of which they consist, render it more difficult to attain distinct Conceptions and a thorough knowledge of them, without which³⁷ a right Judgement cannot be formed. Most men are able to perceive beauty or to spy faults in a single sentence, but few can pronounce on the Disposition, conduct and proportions of an extensive composition.

You will however observe, that in works, on which art is employed, a particular end is always proposed to be attained, and an incongruity, which is highly displeasing, is constantly remarked in any parts or strokes which are perceived not to correspond to that end. That point therefore must be principally regarded both in executing & in Judging, and must be endeavoured to be discovered, in all complex cases.

In those, in which pleasure is the only or immediate object, he is intitled to be pronounced to possess the best Taste, who, out of the same materials, can produce a work which conveys the highest and most lasting pleasure to most men, or who is most able to discern the superior perfection of productions possessed of this power, because the purpose, for which the work is formed, is then obtained in its utmost degree. In punch, for instance, his Taste ought to be preferred, who, by a happy mixture of the ingredients employed on that liquor, makes a Bowl which gives to most palates the greatest delight for the longest time.

But in most cases something farther than |72| mere pleasure is aimed at, and this other object is commonly the chief and primary end proposed. A principal regard therefore must be paid to it, and it must be kept constantly in view: Every stroke which is given ought to contribute towards obtaining that end, and none, which does not promote it, is intitled to approbation. Hence the most excellent artist here is he who, at the same time that his work communicates the greatest immediate delight, gains

³⁷ II.c.???.6.

his other ends in the highest degree consistent with all of them: and in General that Composition must in every kind be esteemed best, which answers both these purposes of pleasure and of utility, in the case of most people in the highest degree and for the longest time. A Picture, for instance, which, besides an arrangement of Colours beautifull to Sight, presents the exactest likeness, or excites the liveliest image, of any person, object, fact, humour, or Disposition, intended to be expressed. A like observation applies to the other imitative arts.

Among different works, too, which are all executed on the same design, you often observe one piece claim an indisputable superiority to the rest: Strange's prints, for instances, compared with those of a Coarse Ingraver. This superior excellency, it is plain, must proceed from a better Style or a hapier manner hit in some cases than in others. The ways in which the same end may be accomplished, like the roads leading to the same place, are often numerous and unpleasant, as well as agreeable: A Bungling artist, like a stupid traveller, from inability or from ignorance, takes that which is disagreeable; but a good taste always prefers the best. Hence in works of Art great attention ought to be bestowed on gratifying those principles that were formerly explained³⁰, which are |74| implanted in the human breast, and are original as well as plentiful Sources of pleasure. A master artist ought to introduce in his productions an air of Grandeur, of novelty, and of variety, as much as his Subject admits. Must confine himself within the bounds of Order, proportion, and propriety; Ought to Study resemblance in some Cases, and should form Contrasts in others; in short, do every thing to Satisfy those feelings or desires and expectations which are natural. Nature must ever be his standard. Art can excite only by imitating her, and by adapting its Plans to her original propensities: and the more an artist unites all these Sources of pleasure, his workmanship will be in a better taste.

Chap. II. General Maxims

The forgoing observations are General only: It will not however be improper both to go a little farther into a detail of different Cases, which require to be governed by different Rules, and to give a few particular Examples of a Good or a bad Taste. Some light will thereby be thrown on our Subject, and we shall be prepared by it for studying nature and art with advantage.

1.

In things designed for use, conveniency ought to be preferred to Ornament.

³⁰ B.I.

First then I observe, that in works chiefly intended for use conveniency ought to be preferred to Ornament, for this is according to nature.

Thus in houses strength ought to be preferred to every beauty which is inconsistent with firmness, & the apartments ought not, either by their spaciousness, by their smallness, by their lightness, by their Darkness, by their nearness, or by their distances, to be rendered [75] incommodious.

In furniture, and in Utensils, such a finery or Slenderness, as makes them unfit for Service, ought to be avoided. Almost every one has experienced the uneasiness of Sitting on a Craizy Chair, and you must sometimes have observed an awkward restraint imposed by a fine Carpet.

Wearing Apparell, intended for warmness or coolness or other purposes, ought not to be made inconvenient for the sake of Romp. A thing designed for show, a Pong, for instance, or a necklace, may be richly adorned, but that elegance and that splendour, which are inconsistent with use, are in a wrong Taste.

2.

Ornaments ought not to be bestowed on objects to w^{ch}. they are incongruous

Things, which are beautifull, can often be purchased at no higher expence than others which are ugly and not more usefull; and Ornament ought not to be neglected even in those which are chiefly designed for use, provided they be proper to be adorned. Almost every Work is susceptible of beauty; but in some cases ornament is altogether incongruous, and plainness is greatly preferrable.

On Subjects, which admitt of them, embellishments ought to be bestowed with Judgement, and Good sense requires that a particular regard be always paid to the nature and Dignity, or meanness of the pieces proposed to be ornamented. A man, whose feelings are acute, will be shocked to find a Stable for Horses, or a House for dogs, decked as much as a library or a Drawing Room, in which persons, perhaps, endowed with the greatest understanding or distinguished by the Highest delicacy, are often to pass their time. The disproportion and the impropriety [76] remarkable there are offensive. Objects which raise disgusting Ideas, however necessary, should not by a profusion of Decorations, entice Spectators to Survey them.

it ought never to be Crouded

Even in cases, in which Ornaments add Grace, they ought to be Sparingly employed. A thing overloaded with them becomes ridiculous or heavy, and creates satiety and displeasure.³⁹ The mind cannot attend to an excessive variety at one time, and many things, which, viewed seperatly, are beautifull, distract and

³⁹ Cic. de Orat. II. - Above II. 2 Below P.II.B.I.7.

Confound attention on being Joined together of placed near one another.

That which is less estimable ought in all cases to be relinquished for that which is more. Pomp & show ought never to be purchased either at the Expence of more valuable Enjoyments, or with the breach of any obligation imposed on mankind; and utility is far preferable to Ornament. it is a good rule, therefore, both for individuals and for Communities to prefer that which is necessary to that which is Ornamental, and things, which are usefull, ought to be provided before aiming at things which are showy. Cleanliness, and even neatness, are attainable in most stations, & are indispensibly expected from all who are not oppressed by extreme penury: But a man, whose Table is furnished with coarse food and little of it, ought not to soar above them, and in him it would be absurd to affect elegance or Grandeur.

No doubt, it would be agreeable to a more humane taste than prevails in the World, if men, living in good correspondence, bent their united efforts to procure first necessaries for all, than ornaments to every part. But this amicable co-operation cannot be expected in the present condition of Society, |77| and it is often lawfull for individuals to obtain Ornaments for themselves, rather than necessaries for their neighbours: Yet a good taste, forbidding a total neglect of Others or in concern about their Wellfare, requires individuals in many Cases to prefer the necessities of their fellow creatures to private elegance or magnificence.

The world is apt to run into extremes. The Lacodemonians left their timber rough, and would not use the Plane: In Great Britain we not only plane our Wood, but use dog's skin; Our Tables must be mirrors; we carve with an extraordinary nicety, and the Ceiling of our Rooms are cut in Stucco into a thousand figures. The same fantastical taste as displayed by us in Dress: We cover our Cloaths with embroidery, and wear fine lace on our Limen: Holes are made in our Ears, and such, as cannot afford Diamonds, bore them even for lumps of paste. I do not deny, that these are real beauties, and perhaps allowable in some instances; but am naturally led by them to remark that ornaments can never be intirely approved, which are not worth the time and the money bestowed on purchasing them. A market is enough to show that a manufacture is profitable in commerce, but will not always vindicate the Taste which finds sale to a Commodity; and it is not sufficient to justify a work, that it possesses beauties, or has uses. If its uses are trifling, if its beauties are of an inferior kind, if many things more usefull & more beautifull may be got at the same Cost, those ought to be preferred. Orrories, Globes, Maps, Barometers, Telescopes, Microscopes, Thermometers; These, and other usefull and Curious machines, are preferable to the finest Trinkets of Paris or of Dresden. In truth, |78| many ornaments and fashions, common in modern times, are mere trifles, fitter to amuse Children than to be adopted by men.

3.

Works; designed chiefly to display art, ought not to be made of cast by materials

In all Works, in which beauty & elegance are chiefly intended, and the fineness of the art is more important than the richness of the matter, the Substance on which it is displayed ought not to be costly. The more common and the Cheaper that substance be, provided it be durable and proper for the purpose, the better. A statue of brass or of marble is in a Juster taste than one wrought in Silver or in Gold. The art is in danger of being lost among persons, who, paying great regard to gorgeousness of materials, can hardly be supposed sufficiently to value or attend to it. This was one principal cause of the declension of the fine arts among the antients:⁴⁰ and it is much to be lamented that many things, intended to manifest magnificence among the great at present, Instead of displaying a Superior Genius or a better Taste, serve only to discover their Riches and the improper manner in which they employ them.

4.

Perishable materials are unworthy of much art.

It is absurd to lavish much art on perishable materials, Or to display great Pomp or Vast expence on that which is suddenly to disappear, & requires to be frequently renewed: and I am sometimes inclined to ascribe to Good sense a Phanomenon, which, being Generally attributed to an other Cause, is often quoted against an ingenious people. Chinese ware is an unfit Conservitor of fine painting, and excellent statues ought not to made of Glass or of porcelain.

To proclaim a remarkable Victory by the firing |79| of Cannon is not perhaps improper: but use full Odifices, which are to last for ages, and which require durable Substances on that account, are nobler monuments to national Glory or personal merit than military Parades and splendid illuminations. Cornnwall's monument will better preserve the remembrance of that Gallant Captain, and Blenkeim house was properer tribute to the Great Officer who gained that famous Battle, than any temporary pageantry employed to Grace his Obsequies. And were there no other argument against luxurious repasts and Sumptuous Tables, it would be sufficient that the Splendor of the Dinner must be over in a moment, and that the regular apparatus of the Dishes must immediately end in Confusion and Destruction.

5.

In works, w^{ch}. are intirely artificial, art ought to be visibly displayed

⁴⁰ Plin. nat. his. 35.

Works, such as Houses, Temples, bridges, utensils, machines, and the like, which are intirely artificial, are obviously distinguished from Gardens, Plantations, Parks, Ponds, and others in which nature furnishes the Example: and this distinction demands particular attention. In the former, are must prevail, and be visibly displayed: Citys, for instance, ought to be built with great regularity; The Streets should be adjusted by the line; all their parts should indicate a happy Contrivance; and nothing should appear the result of Carelessness or of Chance.

but in those, w^{ch}. imitate nature, she ought to be copied. But in the latter, the Copy which is given ought to be followed, and the Beauty of Art consists in adhering to this Pattern. That which is unnatural ought never to be seen in imitations of nature. She must not be forced, but humoured; and we ought to design conformably to her views and Genius: Care only |80| must be taken that probability be not transgressed in improving her. Every thing which is disagreeable ought to be removed out of View, and all possible additions ought to be made to her original Charms: but the embellishments given her must not be affected, or shock imagination and belief. A Hedge of holly or of thorns, pruned into a regular shape, grows thicker, and perhaps its Trimness, which is a temporary variety, causes it not to look less beautifull than one more luxuriant. Trees scattered in a careless manner, as it were by her own venerable hands, are more delightfull than disposed in Right lines and Sharp angles: It must not however be absolutely forbidden to plant them in Rows, by which an agreeable prospect or a refreshing shade may sometimes be afforded; But it is monstrous to Clipp them into the Shapes of Cocks and hens and other living Creatures.

Alexander's project of Cutting the mountain Athos into the form of a man, with a Town in one hand and a River in the other, indicates a wrong taste as well as a wild imagination: To raise mounts, or to fill up Vallies, seems liable to a like Censure. Such attempts are generally foolish, and, exciting derision oftner than delight, ought to be sparingly made. N.d. Statues of men and figures of animals, judiciously chosen & properly disposed, may add much beauty to Gardens and to fields: But their postures and Offices ought all to be proper, and it is fantastic to employ them in Spouting water, or in performing feats unsuitable to their kind. N.d. Pieces of Water, bounded by waving and irregular banks, are more pleasant on that account, and their air ought to be rendered natural as much as is consistent with other possibilities; Yet, collected in circular or regular basons, and surrounded with elegant figures, they cannot always be blamed. It |81| is a prudish delicacy, which condemns every appearance of art in things natural. Not only Culture and improvement would thereby be confined within too narrow bounds, but much deformity would be the necessary Consequence of a strict adherence to that Whimsical principle.

Nature herself requires sometimes to be corrected, and ought to be presented in her most pleasing attire: Even exotic

productions are in some sort unnatural to Climates, in which they require extraordinary Care: But ought we to want the pleasure and the Variety afforded from tending and beholding them? And is not rude nature often deformed by Slime and Weeds and other Objects offensive to more than one Sense.

Chap III. Houses and Gardens

An extreme fickleness is observable in men's Tastes. They are continually changing modes, not in Dress, in furniture, in equipages, and in inferior articles only; but important matters, in which perhaps they are more their own masters, are not exempted from the influence of the same humour. This changeableness cannot be denied to be attended with some advantages in Society. It awakens attention, encreases ingenuity, Sharpens invention, and Contributes to the advancement of art. In industry, too, and labour are promoted by it, and the vanity as well as the Luxury of the Rich, induceing them to an ostentatious prodigality, becomes Subservient to the Support of the poor.

In few cases, however, are these advantages sufficient to justify this inconstancy. The dominion exercised by fashion is exceedingly Capricious: The Changes made by it are often for the worse; and new modes are frequently introduced instead of others which are |82| are better. No doubt, human art is imperfect; and improvements, which are valuable, and which are made at fit times, ought never to be dispised. But man, having once hit on that which it is wanted, ought to rest contented, and useless for unimportant alterations, deserve not to be incouraged. An attention to small matters, such as the Cock of a Hat, or the Cut of a Sleeve, introduces a weakness and an unmanliness in thought & in Sentiment, and leads men to bestow an unmerited Consequence on mean objects. It is therefore both a false and a foolish inclination, which is constantly seeking after Change. For its gratification much labour is wantonly consumed, which might be both more nobly and more profitably directed; and it would be happy for mankind, did they employ their industry to add rather to the necessaries than to the Ornaments of Life. Draining marshes, cultivating wastes, improving heaths, planting Trees, making enclosures, peopling desarts, and in this way raising Vast Stores of Grain and of Cattle, would contribute more both to the beauty and to the strength of a Country, than the prettiest toy that can be imagined: and a wise nation, as long as its lands, the ultimate Source of all plenitude, are not fertilized to the utmost pitch, need never regret the decay of any manufactures which administer only to luxury.

In Cloaths, in furniture, and in things which break or decay, and which must be frequently renewed, perhaps inconstancy is less reprehensible: but a steady taste ought to be maintained in Works of a durable nature, and in their form particular pains ought to be taken to discover perfection, that we may arrive at

last, in these important articles, at something which is stable, and which ought to continue to please. Yet the fashion Changes in architecture as well as in Dress: We are never long |83| satisfied even with our Houses or with our Gardens: If the first possess or alter: not the original plan, the Son or the Grandson seldom fails to do it. Perhaps it is not with them, as with Books and pictures and statues, possible to fix a standard, by which all, that pretend to merit ought invariably to be Constructed: Something nevertheless may be done towards arriving at this point. In those, belonging to men of inferior Rank, beauty & elegance ought not to be neglected: Conveniency however must chiefly be considered by their Fortunes. But in magnificent Edifices, in Grand Gardens, and in extensive parks, designed for the residence of eminent personages, and intended to remain delightfull Spectacles to late posterity, more is required; and peculiar care ought to be bestowed on finishing them at first on the best plan. That, being once executed in the finest taste, dissatisfaction may not continually excite to Change, and something fixed and perfect, the production of former times, may be exhibited during a long Succession of ages. This Stability can never be expected, if any thing whimsical or Capricious appears in their construction: Their parts, their disposition, their manner; all admitted into them ought to be founded in nature and in good sense; for nothing else can be firm: and, after arriving at a just taste or a right standard, we ought to Stop there, and ought never to Change merely for the sake of novelty: The only alterations, which ought then to be made, must be inconsiderable, or such as are necessary to correct something, which, on a Compleater examination is discovered to be unnatural, & can be reformed at a small expence. All others must either be for the worse, or be attended with a Charge to which the improvement would not be adequate. The Subject is worthy of attention. Elegant Structures & beautifull Gardens not only furnish a variety of lasting entertainments to their owners, but adorn a Country, promote the fine arts, and add to the pleasure of every Spectator. A Taste therefore in Gardening and in architecture ought |84| especially to be fixed, and, tho' it is impossible to determine every thing that relates to them, some general rules may be laid down, which ought to be observed in all grand works of this kind.

Grand houses

The climate occurs first to be considered, and great regard must be had to this Circumstance. In a cold northern latitude, exposed to fierce and penetrating winds, a house ought not to be built as in the softer Climes of Greece and of Asia.

"The relation between an Edifice and the Ground it stands on, is of the most intimate kind, and therefore the Situation of

a Great house," we are sometimes told,⁴¹ "ought to be lofty": A Species of argument, (hardly more conclusive than that of the Historian Major, who says, "no Country abounds in Rabbits more than Britain; for the British are a People of a high Mind, and prone to War.") A little Hut, inhabited by a humble labourer, is not less intimately connected with the Spot on which it is built, than a Superb structure belonging to a Rich Duke; yet few people are subtle enough to discover, that a poor man, on account of the lowness of his Circumstances, ought either to be low in stature or to live in a hollow. Solid reasonings proceed not on arbitrary principles: and in placing a House four Circumstances being really material, to wit, Conveniency, healthfulness, beauty, and Grandeur, must principally be regarded. Fine water and other obvious accommodations need not be mentioned, because necessity will hardly permitt them to be overlooked. A site ought to be chosen that enjoys a free and healthfull air, is properly sheltered against storms, affords a good Soil for Gardens and for inclosures, and, commanding a Prospect as extensive as other Conveniencies admit, possesses also those advantages which are connected with the neighborhood of flowing Rivers and lesser Streams, deep vales and lofty banks, natural Cascades and impending Rocks. A high Situation is disagreeable as well as incommodious in several respects and seems more proper for a watch tower or a Castle [85] than for a Palace or for residence in a peaceable Country.

"Edefices in the Gothic Stile," we are also told,⁴² Suit "Situations, which abound in Wild and Grand Objects". A Good House however ought in all Cases to be built in that Taste which is in itself best: and this undoubtedly is Grecian. An elegant structure in a wild Country, producing a happy effect by Contrast, must be more striking on that account, & will show the busy hand of man as much as Gardens finished with Exquisite art, which yet are allowed⁴³ to be very suitable to desart and hilly places; But an irregular fabric is totally lost or little noticed amidst surrounding Rocks and monstrous mountains.

A house ought not to be built in the form of a Court: That form, refusing admittance to the light of the Sun, and excluding the inner appartments from a view of the field, renders them dark and Gloomy, is connected with dampness, and has a melancholy look.

In Shape it ought not to be cubical: A Cube is among the heaviest of all the regular figures.

Its space, or the area on which it is founded, ought neither to be too narrow, nor to approach too near to a square. Imagination will quickly perceive both extremes: A proper medium

⁴¹ Elem. of Crit. Ch. X.

⁴² Elem. of Crit. Ch. 24.

⁴³ Elem. of Crit. ch.8.

must be observed; and no House should be so broad as renders it impossible to throw a good light into all its parts. Rooms, excluded intirely from a prospect of the fields, and lighted only from the roof, are liable to many disadvantages.

The height, to which an edifice ought to be raised, depends on its length, to which it must be proportionable. A House of a large front must not be too low: for this makes it appear heavy. Besides the Ground floor, it ought to contain two, or rather, three other stories. But neither ought it to be too high: Here commodiousness forms a Check even to Symmetry. A Gothic Tower is not disagreeable |86| to the Eye; but a dwelling House, built in that form, displeases because the upper appartments are rendered inconvenient by their distance from the Ground, their elevation makes access to them tedious and fatiguing, and a look from the high Windows to the area below, produces giddiness and fear. Nevertheless, in order to preserve proportion, stories ought not to be sunk below Ground: liable to damp and Closeness, these stifled places may justly be denominated barbarous inventions: their appearance is not agreeable; and no advantage can be reaped from them, which may not easily be attained by other humane and happy Contrivances.

A flat Roof appears not to possess any lightness or Spring, but looks a ponderous load pressing down the Walls. That part therefore of a Grand house ought always to be raised at least something above the Walls; and may be variously adorned with Turrets and Pillars, which make a beautifull appearance. An elevated work, in a pyramidal for, will have an happy effect: Lord Baron employs one for connecting the two Divisions of the Palace imagined in his Essay on Edifices; Even the Chimneys may be made Subservient to this purpose: These ought not to be erected on the Corners or on the Gables, but on the Top or about the middle.

In the Windows the least irregularity is intollerable. They ought all to be disposed in Rows, directly above one another, of the same breadth; and I do not see why the highest tire should not be as long as those below it.

Except where the windows and Doors and Chimneys are placed, the Walls ought to be intirely solid, without Cupboards or presses, that the Edifice may be both firmer and warmer.

Private Doors, designed for the necessary uses of a family, ought be concealed as much as possible; but the Grand entry should be conspicuous, by a flight of Steps leading immediatly to the first story above the Ground floor.

The vestibule; into which we enter, ought to be large, suitable to the Grandeur of the House, and proper to give a |87| favourable impression of its elegance: but, not being furnished like the other Rooms, it should neither by its largeness suggest a notion of emptiness, nor by its magnificence diminish the greatness of the apartments that ought principally to strike the Eye. N.d. All the Rooms in a great House ought to be high pitched, which makes them both more healthfull and appear more Grand: None, not even Closets, ought to be under twelve or

thirteen feet. No certain limits are, or indeed can be fixed for their length, breadth, and height, and many different proportions are agreeable as well as convenient. But in general a Room ought to be longer than it is broad, as a rectangle is more beautiful than a square; and its height ought to be less than its breadth. The vertical turn, which the Eye assumes in looking to the Ceiling, renders the former a deceitful article in every Chamber; and a Room, as high or higher than it is broad, is found by experience not to have the best appearance. A long Gallery, being proper for Pictures, for Balls, for Grand entertainments, and for several healthful Exercises within Doors, better than one of any other shape, ought not to be omitted among the apartments of a Great House: and the respect, which ought ever to be shown to these sources whence Instruction and entertainment flow, demands that the Library, notwithstanding the dirt which its furniture is apt to Contract, be one of the most elegant and most magnificent of all.

A great House besides noble paintings, mathematical Instruments, natural rarities, and artificial Curiosities, should be furnished with all accommodations for healthful Exercises, fitted with for summer and for Winter, and for fair as well as for foul weather.

Gardens,

A Splendid Edifice, in the middle of a confused undressed insular field, appears naked and unfinished: But Gardens, Plantations, and Parks, laid out with art, surrounding a Palace, set off the Beauty of the structure. Every window ought, if possible, in consistence with regularity |88| to have a view of some agreeable object, and the whole inclosures beheld from the Top of the House, shew design.

Extent, verdure, Trees, Water, Vales, flowers, and flowering Shrubs, the principall Circumstances on which agreeableness depends here, are powerfull Causes: and a fine taste in this species is conspicuously displayed in Combining them with Congruity. Every Decoration Suits not indiscriminately every Spott, and they must not be mingled in confusion or without Judgement in any.

A Spacious green is pleasant to behold, but soon becomes stale from uniformity; and, in order to please long, must be ingeniously diversified. Its natural Ornaments are stately Trees; Embellishments which can generally be commanded everywhere.

These two, Spaciousness of Green and Greatness of Trees, are the Chief articles, which Constitute magnificence and Beauty in pleasure Grounds. Oaks, therefore, Elms, Beeches, Planes, Walnuts, Maples, Hornbeams, Ashes, Cedars, Chesnuts, Limes, and all others remarkable for loftiness and for Sire, ought to be Cherished with fondness: But dispose them not in Woods or thickets, which, intercepting the Prospect both of Trees and of Grass, obstruct their great Charm, the Sweet Variety caused by their perpetual intermixture. On plain Ground, or in an

extensive park, they ought to be planted thin; and let them be dispersed over it without regularity or order, sometimes in little tufts, at others in single Trees, with an easy negligence, at unequal distances, and in careless manner.

The different figures, the diversified Colours, the mingling motions, and above all the blending Cries of Deer, Sheep, Horses, and Cattle, feeding in security, among rich pasture, on a verdant field, add much liveliness to its appearance.

Woods and Thickets are finely adapted to adorn [89] high Banks, or to cover sides of Hills; the places most proper for planting them. In that inclined Situation, presenting themselves in full view at once, they afford in all Seasons, especially in autumn, a noble Spectacle.

You must have observed, that a Solitary tree, rising amidst an open field either of Grass or of Corn, is a delightful Sight: Perhaps no simple Object possesses more Sweetness. A few, set near one another, have also a fine effect. Three or four ought to be scattered in every inclosure: Not to insist on the relief, even the shade, yielded by their boughs, is a valuable conveniency.

Vales being naturally romantic places, this natural air ought to be preserved, or heightened, amidst all their improvements; and rural wildness ought chiefly to be studied, in those especially which are embellished by nature with Rivulets and Rocks: It should however be that sort of wildness, which is not allied to Barbarity, but connected with Beauty; for all the parts, in a confined scene, are distinctly perceived:⁴⁴ and they furnish happy Subjects for it. Any Caves or Grottos which are designed, haunts of Retirement and abodes of meditation, ought to be formed there. Trees, growing among Rocks or overhanging brooks, objects which are often found in Vallies, excite an impression uncommonly pleasing: and art can do much towards rearing them even in that inhospitable soil. Wild roses, foxglove, and some flowers, which vivid hues and large Size render attractive, especially those of red tints, inspire like Sentiments. A Spectator, standing below, feels a tranquil Satisfaction in looking up to them.

Cabbages, cale, artichokes, carrots, turnips, pease, asparagus, or Spinnage, Herbs and Roots for arete's pot, are not exposed in the Royal Garden of Pheacia: Homer's taste was more delicate; and in that Orchard ⁴⁵ we meet not a single vegetable, offensive either to Sight, to Smell, [90] or to imagination. The Garden of Alcinous is not⁴⁶ a Kitchen one, but filled with vines and with Trees, whose branches, adorned with Blossoms, or loaded

⁴⁴ B.I.4.

⁴⁵ Footnote is in Greek

⁴⁶ Elem. of Crit. 24.

with Fruit, are delightfull to view.⁴⁷ In Gardens the qualities, properly denominated Beauty and Grace, ought to be principally regarded, because Culture and elegance are constantly expected in them. Fruit trees and flowering Shrubs are their just Ornaments: They are also the places, in which statues and Temples ought mostly to appear: and Walks and flowers must always be found in them. Their beauty, indeed that of all Grounds allotted for pleasure, depends greatly on the neatness in which they are kept: Deformities quickly over run them, unless a proper attention is bestowed on their preservation.

The forgoing Rules are General only. In adjusting Plans for particular places, regard must also be paid to the face of the Grounds proposed to be beautified.

A Crowded scene is ever disgusting; but in a wide circle all sorts of Beauties may find place without being liable to that objection. Objects, intended to form one piece by themselves, and to be presented to Sight together, as it were in a Landscape, should be rightly suited to one another: In extensive fields different Scenes, which cannot well be united, may be permitted to be seen in Succession. Under these limitations Spacious Greens, large Plantations, little Plumps, thick Groves, scattered Trees, Serpentine Walks, streight avenues, Pieces of Water, Orchyards of fruit, Plots of flowers; all the Charms in short which nature affords or art can Supply, may be separated and arranged, mingled and united, in a Taste proper to render the whole more Grand and more Beautifull. Nothing should be excluded, which is not absurd, or inconsistent with nature. Pillars therefore and obelisks, as well as elegant Bridges and artificial Rocks, may be [91] brought to adorn them.

Ruins, calling to remembrance the Havock effected by time and the destruction of ages, diffuse a pleasing thoughtfulness over the mind, and in a moral view are extremely proper to be presented to Sight. The Great, amidst Pomp, dissipation, and pride, unconscious of distress and forgetfull of it, stand in need of memorials adapted to excite serious and humane thoughts in their breasts. Ruins need not however be counterfeited in order to inspire these Sentiments.

It is delightfull, at various openings, to be surprised with the unexpected Prospect of distant mountains, Cities, Castles, Spires, Lades, Rivers, Islands, arms of the Sea, and other remarkable objects: Vistos therefore ought to be formed from every quarter: but, besides these accidental Glances, as many different objects as can be obtained should be presented to view, at places properly Chosen, in circumferences of which the Eye is the Center. A Vain and absurd Expectation, it savours of stiffness to exclude all appearance of art from Works which can only be rendered perfect by man; or to imagine that such a variety of beauties ought not to be collected together as may suggest the idea of his Judicious interposition.

⁴⁷ Od. VII. II2-130.

Elegant buildings ought, as much as is consistent with other Conveniences, to be exposed to Passangers both in full views, by strait avenues, and in side Glances, by various openings among the Trees: and Palaces, Libraries, Paintings, Gardens and Inclosures, ought to be open to every honest man, especially to Curious Travellers and ingenious artists, in order to promote a good Taste, and add to the entertainment of all who pass by them or live in their neighbourhood. It is inconsistent with Grandeur, as well as with Hospitality, for great men either to Shut up their |92| Houses and Parks, or to suffer their Servants to take money for admittance. By allowing easy access to them, their owners display their opulence in a better manner, than by the highest luxury of expensiver tables, by vast Retinues of idle Servants, or by numerous steeds of useless Horses, by which immense quantities of Provisions, that might feed men, are wantonly consumed, and many active hands are withdrawn from usefull labour.

Chap. 4.
Diversions - Salutation - Titles

Diversions

Nothing perhaps is thought either to admitt or to require regulation less than Diversions; Yet in them there must be a foundation of a Right and a wrong Taste, as well as in other things. Many amusements, which can hardly be accounted criminal, are certainly contrary to Good Sense, and the standard, to which they ought to be conformed, depends in all cases on the different Ends proposed to be gained by them.

The word diversion signifies something distinct from business, and pursued voluntarily for pleasure and Recreation after fatigue or languour of body or of mind. Long application wastes the Spirits, and destroys the health: a proper relaxation is necessary to preserve both: The attention requires to be unbent; and man, exhausted by intense thought, or worn out by severe toil, stands in need of rest and of amusement. Hence the Entertainments denominated Games, and those other pastimes, which have been transmitted in great variety from age to age. It is a pity, that more care had not been bestowed on introducing right ones. To those, which, on entering into life, we find already in fashion, we immediatly |93| betake ourselves, because in Childhood and in Youth we know no better, and a new one cannot be invented without trouble: Yet many of those, which are greatly prized, must be confessed to be silly; some of them are even hurtfull; and better surely might be established.

The persons, for whose benefit diversions are intended are divisibile into two Classes: Those, who are given to Contemplation or are obliged to a Sedantary life, and labour less with the body than with the mind; and those, who are accustomed to bodily toil, or are frequently fatigued by it. Children and youth might be formed

proper for Children & Youth

into a third Order; but it is obvious that agility and strength, spirit and humanity, are the objects to which their entertainments ought chiefly to be directed. Fitted therefore for hardening their Constitutions, for rendering them nimble, and for giving them an easy command of their Limbs, They ought also to be ingeniously contrived to inspire Courage, honour, openness, generosity, and kindness; and, as much as possible, to convey usefull instruction by stealth, in that imperceptible manner suggested by Rousseau in his admirable Emile. In these views their Exercises ought generally to be taken in the open air, and, besides others which are common, perhaps, much of the mechanical part of the art of War might be rendered familiar to them in their Early days.

for studious & sedantary people

Thoughtfull & Sedentary men require relaxation of mind and motion of body: These articles, therefore, ought principally to be regarded in their Diversions, that their attention may be unbent, their blood may be made to Circulate, and their nerves may not suffer a total relaxation. Hence their pastimes ought to be exceedingly amusing, and deep study or serious reflection ought to be the last quality esteemed a reccommendation in them. Walking, Riding, Dancing, tennice, Cricket, |94| the like are recreations proper for such people; and they ought carefully to remember to flee from home. Cards, Dyce, and all amusements which are taken within doors, they ought to shun: In Chess particularly, that enchanting, but serious pastime, which of all Games wears the most profound Countenance, they ought never to indulge: and even whist ought to be avoided by them. Hunting, fowling, and fishing, no doubt, are healthfull, sometimes profitable exercises, and it is not only lawfull, but necessary, for man to kill the Brutes for food. I must however be confessed, that many modes in which sport is taken are barbarous; and the Chace, whatever pleasure it may afford, being intended to terrify, run down, and destroy a poor timorous distressed animal, cannot be considered to yeild a pure unmixed pleasure, but is like war, which, however just and necessary, must often give pain to a Generous and compassionate temper.

for the laborious

Labour requires intermission; and rest and amusement, rather than exercise, ought to be the objects of the diversions of persons inured to it: Bodily exertion and a brisk Circulation are not their ends. Their relaxations demand not the open air, but may be advantageously taken within doors, unless their Business confines them to home; and it is enough if they banish serious thought and anxious care, or inspire a hearty cheerfullness and pleasant Ideas. A Game at Cards, therefore, a Hit at Backgammond, or a round of Ranelagh, may safely be recommended to them, and they ought rather to enjoy mirth and to laugh heartily at a Witty Comedy, than to indulge Grief or to

shed tears at deep Trajedy.

The distinctions, which have been mentioned, seem almost unknown in the world, and the views, which ought to be pursued in different Cases, are generally overlooked [95] or disregarded. Some, whose Sinews, one would think must be continually strained by hard work, engage nevertheless in violent exercises as seen as their hours are past, and others whose bodies are wholly enervated by indolence, become vaporish, listless, and unactive, can with difficulty be persuaded, even by their Physicians, to move their limbs or to venture on horseback. We find public diversions instituted in an almost unbounded variety, and people invited day after day to attend them. Hence recreation and health are forgotten to be the purposes for which they are really designed: and men are led to imagine, that amusement and shows, not business & labour, must be the occupations of their lives, or a principal object of their Pursuits.

House Games seem at best only pardonable, even in the moderate use of them, and are also much fitter for others than those who mostly play at them: But that pernicious Custom, which universally prevails, of devoting much time to Cards, has certainly an unhappy effect on the minds and Sentiments, principals and manners, of the age; and a wise man can hardly help regretting that rational Creatures, capable of lofty Conceptions and of noble designs, should find themselves at so great a loss to spend their hours in a more commendable way.

Perhaps, too, a person, who bestows a serious consideration on the Subject, will perceive it to be not a little dangerous, instead of leaving people, the richer sort particularly, who stand least in need of direction, to find out private entertainments at home or in meetings of their friends, to tempt them by proclaiming a perpetual round of publick places, to which access can be obtained for money. An excessive attention is thereby raised to them; they are erected into important objects; and mankind, seduced by them from their necessary or usefull employments, [96] are made to neglect their familys and affairs. Idle and relaxed Habits are thence contracted: business and application become gradually hatefull; and men acquire a violent turn for dissipation, as if life were meant for nothing but to be a Scene of amusement.

A bad taste is often discovered in those publick entertainments: Some of them are foolish; others are even Criminal. It cannot be denied, that by tumbling xxxxxxxxxx by xxxxxxxxxx⁴⁸ Comas by Legeldemain, Johnston and Astly by Horsemanship, had often the pleasure to excite laughter, or Surprise, or both. But consider that the only merit, discoverable in these absurd pranks, consists in the difficulty of the operation; that they are not recommended by any utility; that much time must be wasted in acquiring dexterity in them; that those who practise them, notwithstanding the money which

⁴⁸ [Xs are Wallace's - Ed.]

they gain, are nevertheless useless in Society; that many usefull arts might be learned with less labour than these rediculous exercises; and, instead of thinking that they ought to be encouraged, you will rather bestow applause on the political Wisdom of our ancestors, who endeavoured to repress the number and the idleness of these performances.

lawfull

If useless and capricious Exercises either of body or of mind deserve not to be encouraged, such as are really criminal must be altogether unpardonable: We find however several, liable to this Reproach, exhibited among amusements and Crouded by Spectators. Under the latter class I reckon the artificial distorting of the human body, practised by posture masters, the Doughty rencounters of Prize-fighters, bullbaiting, with other entertainments of the bear Garden, Cock matches, Goose races, and the like.⁴⁹ One would be |97| sorry to lend a Sanction to the notions of rigid padants of false Devotees, or of austere Philosophers, yet good sense ought to prevail in Diversions as well as in other things, and a generous nature will not easily forbear affirming all those, in which without necessity we torment or kill poor helpless animals, to derive their Credit from Savage manners and an unpolished Taste.

Salutation

It is difficult to trace the various accidents or Causes, to which forms of salutation, or the different modes of showing respect by Gestures of the Body, used in the world, owe their original, but easy to see that they must be greatly regulated by Custom; and it would be absurd to affect singularity in trifles. It were however to be wished, that men would gradually correct every thing ceremonious or inconvenient even in Saluting and accosting one another. These forms ought to be simple and gracefull, neither difficult to be learnt, nor painfull in the performance.

The method of expressing regard to intimates, to friends, and to others, whom we love with sincerity and with warmth, after a long absence, nature points out, to be receiving them into our arms, embracing them with Kisses, and Clasping their hands. Bowing the body gently, or moving the hand easily, after applying it to the mouth, giving no trouble, may Serve for tokens of regard in common Cases: but uncovering the head, & kneeling or prostrating on the Ground, are troublesome: Nor ought it to be reckoned want of respect to any earthly potentate, if the most solemn form used in adoration were appropriated to the Great Sovereign of the Universe.

Titles

Rules, similar to the preceeding, should be observed in

⁴⁹ Shaftsbury III.5.1.

giving Titles.

The Greeks and the Romans, in their politest times, (The Romans borrowed titles of honour and servile expressions of respect from the Court of the Great King. Perhaps we be under no other obligation to the Genius & Customs of Asia than those which are embodied in our forms of Obsequiousness & adulation) [98.1] used to swollen appellations, but in their discourse and in their Letters distinguished one another by their plain names. Cicero and Brutus did not address each other by the appellation of Worshipfull, high and mighty; nor did Aristotle write "to the most puissant Alexander "Monrach of all Asia." They wrote simply "Cicero to Brutus, and "Brutus to Cicero," "Aristotle to Alexander" and "Alexander to Aristotle". The flattering epithets of Honourable and Right Honourable, Reverand and Right Reverand, His Excellency, His Lordship, His Grace, his Eminence, His Highness, His majesty, were not then known. Swollen Titles were introduced only under the Roman monarchy. It was Despotism, which destroyed the independant Spirit that prevailed remarkably under the Commonwealth, and which had a fatal influence on every thing generous and noble, That also rendered servile addresses fashionable in conversation and in Writing. These modes have long been common in the Eastern and other despotic Governments, to which servility and adulation, in Language as well as in other matters, are not unsuitable. But in Great Britain, in which Law and the Constitution render every individual free, all expressions, manners and forms, which preceeded originally from Slavery, which carry an appearance of meanness, which Serve only to impress an awe of magistracy [98.2] and of opulence, and which tend to inflame those baneful Prejudices that power and wealth are apt to inspire concerning the profound Deference with which they ought constantly to be approached, ought to be laid aside. The sycophantish rations, often addressed by both Houses to the principal Servant of the State, are entirely unworthy of the lofty Sentiments with which their Breasts ought to be filled concerning their own supreme Authority. I like not even the term, Subjects:

capitals

In England the Sovereign, no less than every other Member of that liberal Community, is subjected to the Laws. The Prosperity, the Liberty, the Happiness of the People, are intalligible Expressions; but the Dignity, the Honour, and the Glory of the Crown, an unphilosophical as well as equivocal Phrase calculated to mislead both the King and the Nation, ought to be banished our political Dialect. Instead of the suppliant Stile, in which boards of Administration and even Courts of Law are usually approached, and which is utterly incongruous to the Strict Obligations imposed on both, every Application made to thence for Justice ought to conclude with asserting, "It is therefore my Right to obtain, and I require your Lordships, to grant, to find, to declare, &c".

Stars, Garters, Knighthood, Degrees, increase the Influence

of those in whom is lodged the Power of conforming them: But are not all Titles, Marks, and Badges, stamped either on the learned, on the brave, or on others, which are merely |99| merely honorary, greatly liable to prostitution? Is it not their inherent nature to foster a mean vanity in mankind? and do they not procure to their possessors that respect which ought alone to be derived from real merit, a solid distinction which deserves encouragement? Judges, magistrates, Peers, and the like personages, who constitute particular Orders invested with substantial political priviledges, or who enjoy departments in Government, must necessarily be known by fixed names; but the appellation, by which they are distinguished, ought simply to express their office, rather than their Dignity. We may shew abundance of Respect to Superiors and a sufficient regard for one another, without an unmeaning or abject style and behaviour. In this Island indeed, History proves that Pompeous Titles and flattering addresses, offered even to the highest, afford a feeble defence in some Circumstances. It is not necessary therefore to Shew much Zeal in correcting them; and I shall never reckon myself obliged, before bestowing a Title, to examine, whether the person, to whom I give it, deserves the appellation:

Book IV.

Aquisition and advantages of a Good Taste.

fine Taste, is it acquirable?

Is a fine Taste a gift bestowed by nature on a few select Spirits, or an acquisition which can be attained by pains? Are its seeds implanted in all mankind, or in some only? and does its delicacy depend chiefly on an original & exquisite texture of the external and internal Senses, or on Culture and opportunities? These questions are important, but seem to admitt of an obvious answer; and, without denying original feelings |100| to constitute its foundation, we may affirm with considerable assurance, that the faculty, at least in its metaphorical Signification, is highly improveable in most Cases, both in quickness and in other respects, and that a fine Taste depends greatly, if not principally, on discipline & on Cultivation.⁵⁰

In Great Britain few men can be deceived in small beer, because they generally drink much and long of that liquor; but wine is a greater rarity, of which, therefore, they are not equally nice Judges. In Childhood meats and Drinks are disliked, which, in time, and from experience, are found agreeable. Is it not reasonable to Infer that justness of Taste, even in its gross Sense, depends not intirely on the state of our corporeal Organs, and is not always proportionable to the degree of acuteness which these possess? Impressions, early or hastily taken, are often discovered to be erroneus, and truer opinions are frequently

⁵⁰ Shaftesbury, III.3.2.

formed by persons whose nerves are blunt, than by those whose Organization is uncommonly fine.

The World is full of Beauties: But Children, wanting attention, and without instruction, take notice only of a few of those Graces which constitute the Objects of Taste: They discover themselves however, from their earliest years, to possess the seeds of this power; and as they extend their Observations, and view nature & art with more curious Eyes, they come gradually to discern a greater number of Beauties.

Few things are altogether ugly; but some excellencies, being obvious, strike more easily than others, which it requires a carefull inspection to perceive.

Much depends in all cases on knowledge and on reason, or that faculty by which rational Creatures compare the various objects they behold, and observe their minute differences. By comparison we become better acquainted with things; remark excellencies, & Discover [101] blemishes, arrive gradually at General Ideas, which growing familiar, are directly recollected and applied on particular appearances; and, learning to perceive Beauties & Defects with greater quickness and with a livelier relish, are enabled at last both to distinguish with more facility, & to Judge with more exactness, than we do at first. A man, who has never been out of England, or who has seen few good pictures, will not probably possess the discernment that he would acquire among those Charming pieces with which the Netherlands and Italy abound: and even Minx & Hamilton would tell you, that their Tastes were greatly improved by being at Antwerp and at Rome. Their Eyes however remain still the same; and it is only the power of applying them, or their discernment, which receives improvement: Opportunities are afforded them of Comparing Hands and manners, of noting the particulars in which they differ, and, in these differences, of discovering the Causes of that superior Charm which is perceived in some objects above others.

(The very principles on which the approbation and the pleasure perceived from objects of Taste depend; Propriety, Congruity, Order, Uniformity, Proportion, Symmetry, Novelty, Variety; are Matters of Judgement and of Reason, (Powers which it will universally be allowed are highly improvable) rather than articles of Intuition or of Feeling merely. Even in the case of those in which excellence is chiefly owing to Degree; Grandeur, Variety, Uniformity, Similitude, and Dissimilitude; the exact ratio in which these ingredients ought to be intermixed, or precise degree in which each quality ought to be found in any production, depending mostly, if not entirely, on one of the others, to wit, on Propriety, which unquestionably is an immediate object of the discursive Faculty, must always be not only controlled and regulated by it, but lest ascertained and discovered from experience and by comparison.)

Children and Youths relish Compositions, which give them disgust at a Riper age: a person, whose faculties are arrived at maturity, and continue in the same state during a long period, after being habituated to elegant and masterly works, is often

amazed, on reviewing his early companions, that he could give any quarter to performances which he perused with pleasure in former times; and we find high eulogies bestowed, a hundred or two hundred years ago, on books through which it is hardly possible to wade at present.

Artists, or those who can execute in taste, feel not perhaps intenser delight, but generally possess, in their several arts, a nicer Judgement than others: For what? Because their acquaintance is more familiar, their attention is closer, their observations are more minute; and |102| they are necessarily led in Execution, to be carefull to introduce in their productions all the Beauties, of which these are susceptible, and to banish every defect which they can discover. Boileau or Pope, Milton or Gray, Horace or Ovid, could have given juster opinions, and suggested more usefull advices about a Poem, than a person totally incapable of making verses.

No doubt, original differences exist among individuals in the Organs and senses and faculties which pertain to taste, as well as in stature, in weight, and in form. A greater sensibility, or a superior aptitude both to Judge and to improve, is found in some than in others: And in the former taste is capable of arriving at perfection which the latter must in vain hope to attain. It is probable however that much less depends on those Circumstances, And much more on others, especially on our own endeavours than is commonly believed. And as it may well be presumed that no men are so fortunate in their original constitution as not greatly to stand in need of Culture, it is reasonable also to suppose that there are scarcely any incapable of acquiring a fine Taste, if placed in proper Circumstances, and rightly educated with a view to the acquisition.

Chap. I.

Method of acquiring, preserving, & improving a Good Taste

He who w^d acquire or improve his Taste,

Taste is improveable in the same manner as other powers; by attention and by observation, by study and by reflection, by instruction and by exercise, by experience and by habit.

must divide himself of prejudices

1.

An attentive observer, on looking about him, will find in the world opinions predominant almost on every Subject. In Religion and in Politichs, the most momentuous Themes, a number of mean, Childish, false tenets, have |103| derived from antiquity, fear, tyrranny, Interest, and other impure Sources, a Credit which is either altogether unsuspected, or deemed peculiarly unquestionable, in most Countries; and the Porch and the academy, regions sacred to truth, and designed for inquiry, which ought to be occupied by an unreserved freedom, are not wholly exempted from the like timidity or Corrupt Subjection.

These received maxims, being early instilled into young minds, or dictatorially inculcated on credulous disciples, (before than are either acquainted with the objects of which their teachers speak, or capable of forming just sentiments concerning their merit,) cannot but have much influence in leading their thoughts; and, keeping their spirits in Bondage, as well as checking inquisitiveness and reasoning, naturally tend to retain men in ignorance, and even to bestow authority on error. Hence an universal scepticism, or doubt of every proposition, is taught by Des Cartes to be absolutely necessary to precede all Philosophical Disquisitions: and in matters of taste the Precept, recommended by this ingenious Theorist, will be found no less usefull than in other Cases. Not to insist on the high, I might almost say the unbounded, admiration, which is very generally entertained of some ages, nations, individuals, and their Works, while others are regarded with a disdainfull Scorn, or vouchsafed only a faint approbation; an unmerited estimation may also be acquired from accidental Causes to very indifferent performances.

Elevated Rank and great opulence, objects attractive and dazzling, are not only sufficient to command notice, an important article, to pieces which proceed from persons, rendered already eminent by fortune, but often to obtain a favourable reception to their jejune productions. All the theological Erudition, displayed by Henry the Eighth from a devoted attachment to the angelic Doctor, in assorting the seven Sacraments against Martin Luther, I strongly suspect, allures not at present to his scholastic volume a dozen of readers in fifty years; Yet that [104] Polemical Treatise procured, in its day, much adulation to its royal author, and, assisted by a Dedication full of Zeal, purchased, from an accomplished Pontif, to the doughty Defender of the Romish faith, a pious title still worthy to adorn the English Crown.

Power, which is able in most Cases to insure a certain portion of Reputation or of Courtship to its distinguished favourites, may easily exalt, high above his real value, a Writer or an artist, whom agreeable manners, conformable Sentiments, intimate acquaintance, servile behaviour, or any qualities different from intrinsic excellency in his performances, recommend personally to Patronage; (and Effects of that Influence, if its operation has once been considerable, may be strongly felt long after both its primary sources and its immediate Objects cease to exist.) People in inferior stations receive, with an humble and surprising acquiescence, sentiments dictated by their overbearing Superiors; and an apprehension of resentment from those, whose pride will be hurt to find their opinions contested with freedom or treated with despite, frequently restrains liberty of Judgement or of discourse.

Those, too, who cannot command respect for their decisions and for their works by Rank or by office, may attain it by other practices. A few individuals, with little Taste and slender talents, establishing a union among themselves, may arrive collectively at a weight, which, disunited and single, they

could never reach: Potent factions may be formed in the Republic of Letters as well as in parties of administration: And their partisans, by a forward dilligence in extolling each others productions and abilities, (by an incessant Industry in bringing them much into general view, and by artful Publications continually proclaiming their superior merit,) may do much to mislead or overawe the unwary and the fearfull. An authority, founded solely on such litterary associations or Political leagues, must, it is true, in most instances, be temporary only, and men, discovering them to possess no solid pretensions to that Credit which they have usurped, will generally return, sooner or latter, to their senses and to sober reason: [note on insert page] allayed no doubt by a generous pity for the deluded [105] their influence however may render it fashionable, perhaps prudent and beneficial, for a Considerable time, to applaud, without discrimination, even paultry performances which issue from particular quarters: and wise or modest men, instead of attempting to drown those loud Huzzas, amid the impetuoussness and noise of which their feeble voices would be faintly heard, are commonly contented with enjoying in secret that conscious satisfaction, which, amidst general illusion, an inlightened understanding experiences from just perceptions and Genuine truth.

In those or likeways the public may be greatly mislead at first, and a false Taste, having once been introduced, not only may, but very probably will continue long to prevail; (much Time being necessary to extirpate established Errorr. An extensive reputation therefore maintained in distant nations, during many ages, and among different professions, tho it affords) a strong presumption of litterary excellence, must not be deemed a proof or a a Criterion absolutly infallible. He who would acquire or preserve a fine Taste, besides being carefull in general, to improve his reason and to obtain usefull knowledge, must be at particular pains to purify his mind, &c to divest himself of all prejudices. Not that he ought to assume a presumptuous Conceit, and, entertaining or fostering a hearty Contempt of antient opinions, fail in Sending a willing ear to the Suggestions of superior Wisdom: but he ought to ly open to Conviction, assume a bold and independant tone, SEarch after merit and truth, resolve to acknowledge them only; and remember, that in matter of Taste no regard ought to be had to great names or interested leaders. Had these Rules been steadily observed, many Productions, which have risen to fame, would never have obtained the eulogies that have been blindly lavished upon them. An art of puffing is not always reckoned unworthy of being practised even be the learned, and you cannot be at any loss to find Glaring examples of it in the present age. Could those [106.1] silly painted pieces, published under the name of Ossian, destitute as they are of incidents to engage, of Circumstances to interest, of variety to amuse, of passion to move, and of discription to please, have met with one hundredth part even of that praise which was for some time bestowed upon them, could they have ventured, in a learned

nation, to lay claim to a traditionary antiquity of fifteen hundred years, Or been asserted by some, who would be mightily offended at being suspected of believing in other marvels, to possess a probable Title to that incredible age, without uncommon pains taken to extoll them, as well as an extraordinary concurrence of favourable Circumstances, intirely distinct from intrinsic merit.

2.

must Judge for himself

He, who aspires to taste, ought to resolve not to follow implicitly the dictates of others. A True artist, or real Connoisseur, must both judge and feel for himself: and a person, who pronounces merely on the opinions of others, or who echoes their Sentiments only, ought to pass for no body in questions of Taste. His suffrage, in numbering voices and in forming judgment ***** sound, not intitled to be regarded in the least. N.d. If an uncommon deference were to the decisions of any men, this claim ought assuredly to be confined to those who listen to nature, who Judge for themselves and who are not overborne by the authority of others: And I affirm, However, surprising, the assertion may appear, it is safer in many cases to place more confidence in persons who have had little literature, if their understanding be solid, than in those, who have read many books, and who have got an academical Education. Such kind of learning if it is not accompanied with a Considerable portion of Genius and with very good sense, is often worse than Ignorance, and either helps to Corrupt the Judgement of many is perverted by some false hypothesis that prevails in the age in which they live. |106.2| in which they live, and the deep Impression, early infixed on their susceptible Minds, produces by its Liveliness a rooted Belief, which not only maintains an infectious Influence over their sentiments during their whole Lives, but can never be entirely eradicated. These men, if they had been left to themselves, would have judged well; but their Genius, |107| men, if they had been left to themselves, would have judged well; but their Genius being debased by prejudices and by a false erudition, they are incapable of relishing that which is according to nature.

3.

must study nature

That, which is natural, is alone fitted to be thoroughly agreeable. He must therefore endeavour to Gain an intimate acquaintance with nature, the Sovereign arbitress of pleasure, and must make himself perfectly master of her appearances; otherways he shall want materials, and will not be able either to design after her with truth, to Judge of likeness done for her, Or to reap a full measure of delight from their Contemplation.

A Poet, for instance, who would describe, or a painter who would draw, and a Reader or Spectator who would form an opinion of a Representation of the rising or Setting Sun, a Cultivated

Country, a Tempestuous Ocean, or any Sensible Object, must acquire an exact idea of that Phaenomenon: He must contemplate it in a studious manner, and must be attentive to all the Circumstances, with which it is accompanied, or which Characterize it. A person, who bestows only a transient view on an object, must overlook many of its lineaments; and, not being himself sensible, or deeply impressed by them, must be incapable of Representing them in that lively manner which can alone produce a strong impression on others. Swift's painting are particularly remarkable for excellencies derived from this source: Read his humorous description of a City Shower or of the morning, indeed any of his Works, and you will perceive, from many Striking touches⁵¹ given to these pieces by his faithfull pencil, that his Eye and his Observation have been surprisingly keen and uncommonly accurate. |108|

Artificial beauty consists chiefly in a Judicious imitation of nature. He therefore, who would acquire a proper Sentiment of either, must not make an acquaintance with the material universe only: He must also enter minutly into the moral world, and study manners and Characters, together with the different actions or external Symptoms by which they express and distinguish themselves. One must not expect to paint, with vivacity and with Justness, objects which he has never beheld. Would Plautus have hit upon those inimitable strokes which mark his miser, without having attentively surveyed that Character? Or would Hoggarth have imagined those happy touches in his march to Finckley, without an accurate observation of real life? The fine wit, in which the Rape of the Lock abounds, is principally founded on unexpected illusions made to little Circumstances which are particularly striking in it⁵² This, an ingenious Writer, in an Essay on the life and Writings of Homer, endeavours to shew to have been one of the peculiar advantages enjoyed by that Bard; and if his reasoning be just, we may conclude that it must be very difficult, if not altogether impossible, for a modern Poet to Represent an ancient Greek or Roman Hero with propriety and with truth. His work languid and Cold can at best be a stiff

⁵¹ Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,
Dead Cats, and turnip tops, come tumbling down the flood.
City-shower

⁵² Sol thro' white Curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
and ope'd those Eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lap dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sheepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the Belt, the Slipper knock'd the Ground,
& the press'd watch returned a Silver found.

C. 1. 13.

He said, when shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue.

C. 1. 115.

Copy of manners and of Customs, which are known both to himself and to his readers from description only, and into which they will not readily enter, because the originals cannot be familiar to them.

The knowledge of nature, required both in a workman and in a Critic, ought to extend to every Subject attempted by him. A person will endeavour in vain either to describe an affection, or to draw a Character, which arises from inward temper, who has not felt the passion or experienced [109] the disposition within himself. A poet, for instance, whose breast has never known love: How can he paint that delicate sentiment, of which his own conceptions must be very imperfect. Without feeling or experience, an important point both in execution and in criticism, an artist will absurdly fail in these cases, and one will neither execute nor judge in a just and accurate manner.

4.

Must mark the circumstances w^{ch} are naturally pleasing or naturally disagreeable in objects,

The Pulchritude, derived from art, depends much on a proper choice and happy combination of things, which are either agreeable in themselves or adapted to bestow charms on others. Exact ideas therefore are not the only perception, which must here be acquired. One, who aspires to taste, must mark the circumstances which are naturally pleasing or naturally disgusting in objects, that he may be enabled to select and to assemble beauties, to avoid and to banish deformities, and to perceive excellencies or defects in both respects and he must be contented with a careless survey, but must observe with great attention, and examine their appearances at different times, in order to discover those pleasures which are highest and most durable: He will not otherways arrive at just apprehensions of beauty and of ugliness. He must study, therefore, that which is conformable to real truth, to good sense, and to pure virtue; principles, without which excellence is attainable in few cases. confused, incorrect, flimsy, performances, are often relished by minds, ignorant, feeble, superficial, like themselves: but informed, strong, intelligent spirits, possessing a full and clear anticipation of the subject heated in them, instantly perceive every inaccuracy, weakness, and deformities, and the contemptuous opinion entertained by good judges, being generally well founded, seldom fails ultimately to prevail.

5.

Must observe the resemblances & the differences of objects,

In all sorts of objects, and among artists of every kind, when compared together, there are striking [110] resemblances in which they agree; and remarkable differences by which they are distinguished: and much absurdly, as well as delight, is deriveable from injudicious or apt introduction in composition.

Those resemblances, therefore, which are found among different objects, must be carefully noted otherwise one will not be able to judge which will furnish most powerfull likeness in comparisons. He must also attend to those contrasts & oppositions, by which different artists, and their works, or different objects, are distinguished from one another. Store of images, the materials of wit will thus be treasured in the memory: and a nice taste consists much in a lively discerning of these resemblances and differences.

6.

Must listen to able instructors,

But mere observation is not sufficient. The world is now old, and good judges have lived in former times. He must not therefore dispise instruction, But, with the ardour and with impartiality, study those rules which have been delivered by others of approved reputation; must reflect upon them in silence, within his own mind, and consider their foundation and good sense and in right reason. An books especially, that have proceeded from persons, who have themselves excelled in the art of which they treat, particular attention ought to be bestowed. Is not a superior degree of good information to be expected from a treatise on architecture, by Inigos Jones, or from a poem on the art of war by the Prussian monarch. Both flowed from the hands of masters: and what instruction, as well as delight, would not have been found in a essay on poetry written by the incomparable from the author of the Georgics.

7.

Must contemplate & compare particular objects & works,

But general rules are not sufficient. Let a person be told, that these is a distinction between stiffness and correctness, regulating and formality, or that which is grand & that which is prodigious; between wildness, of |111| imagination, and fruitfulness of invention; between fullness and tumidity, copiousness and tediousness, poverty and simplicity of thought and of stile; between depth and obscurity, perspicuity or a full enumeration, and a dull repetition; between languor and softness, the bold or the sublime and the feeble or the extravagant, delicate raillery or just ridicule; and scurrilous satire and low buffoonry: these general distinctions, or rather expressions, are proper to be both introduced and explained, but, without particular applications, will avail little to form, and to enable one either to execute or to judge with a fine taste.

He, who would acquire or refine that elegant faculty, must have recourse to particular examples; he must study art and detail; he must learn the principles and the ends of that particular one in which he desires to be eminently skilled; and in it he must be much conversant with works executed in the best manner, and which discover the boldest and most sublime genius.

He must read Virgil and Horace, Tacitus and Livy, Demosthenes and Cicero, Shakespeare and Milton, Corneilla and Voltaire, Congreve and Molliere, Shaftsbury and Swift: He must study the paintings of Raphael and Reubens look at the transfiguration and the taking from the Cross, the Appollo belvedere and the Venus de Medicis, the statues of Leonardo da Vinci and those of Michael angelo, the Hospital and Greenwich and the Church in Walbrook; and compare them with one another, and with the productions of other hands. Experience & comparison will make him both feel the effects which different manners produced, and discover the causes of these Effects. He will thereby acquire a ready faculty of observing beauties and defects; he will be instantly captivated with the former, and disgusted with the latter; and his judgement or taste will be gradually improved.

Our ideas commonly reciprocate to our experience & a man, who has never beheld exquisite workmanship, will not probably reach or elevate his imagination to it in [112] practice, more than clown, who has never been in polite company or seen a splendid banquet, can be supposed to possess the tone, or to order an entertainment after the fashion, usual in high life. The writings of authors, whose minds are uncommonly vigorous; but who live in barbarous times, are always found to be delayed by the reigning barbarism and composition, as well as other arts arrive at perfection only by slow degrees. A person therefore who aspires to a fine taste, in chusing his examples, ought chiefly to converse among the best models. In that way his genius will be carried to a greater height, and he will attain at last a truer judgement; his conceptions of that which is fair and excellent in every kind, will both be raised to more sublimity, and become more distinct; than they can possibly do by the study of works, which are marked by fewer faults, but reach mediocrity only.

8.

Must judge by the immediate impression made by objects in his breast,

Every direction, given for acquiring or improving taste, aims ultimately, at teaching a practical facility of discerning, with assurance, excellency or demerit in particular examples. That, which is excellent, is alone in titles to be finally approved: Our first thoughts are often erroneus and in many instances, before they be passed, ought to undergo a strict reflex scrutiny: but do not the immediate impressions, made by objects, constitute a sure foundation, on which solid judgements may be built in some cases.

Few beverages more gratefull to studious people than tea, and we judge of its flavour directly by the sensation excited in the mouth by that refreshing infusion: The effect, produced on the ear or on the passions by a solo, determines both the fineness of the melody, and the dexterity of the player: and in such cases a full acquiescence is commonly reposed in Verdicts,

pronounced after mature attention, by those whose organs are discovered from observation to the healthfull and acute. But |113| would you decide on the goodness of a quadrant, or the accuracy of a map, from its external appearance of illuminations? No more, I suppose, than on Peruvian bark, on gun powder, or on any drug which is often sophisticated, and whose power can only be ascertained by experiment.

The excellency of every just work depends chiefly on its aptitude to answer the particular purpose for which it is designed; and in many cases something, which is discoverable only after a minute examination, is intended to be obtained: In these cases true verdicts cannot be given, till it appear on enquiry, whether the performances are really possessed of those less obvious properties which ought to be found in them: and the immediate impressions made by objects must principally be regarded in estimating pieces, composed in order to leave a deep sentiment on the soul, or whose ultimate end is the inspiring of that a particular vivid emotion.

Beauty of figure, energy of the style, congruity of colouring, sweetness of sound, exactness of resemblance; these and like excellencies cause their force to be immediatly felt by all, whose discernment is sufficiently quick from nature, and is duely cultivated by exercise: but in the course of production, such as historical pieces, philosophical treatise, rhetorical discourses, and even poetical discriptions of real objects, in which merit is inseparable from truth of facts, justness of reasoning, completeness of parts, and correctness of imitation, qualities which must be scrutinized at leisure, an intire reliance cannot safely be had in the delight immediatly yielded by them; and, at pronouncing judgement concerning their value, we must consider the matter contained in them as well as their form and composition.

Infallible verdicts cannot always be pronounced immediately even on diction and on composition: a |114| literary production ought generally to be attentively perused several times before forming a decisive opinion upon its pretensions in these respects. Natural, lively, forcible, expression enjoys charme sufficient to please the bulk of readers; yet may disgust persons of correct taste, who, require something further. Spratt, a spirited Writer, was greatly prized in former days, and is still applauded by some : but is an equal value now set on his manner by all? Language ought to be strictly gramatical; words ought to be nicely arranged; and neatness, delivered from every redundancy ought uniformly to be preserved in speech: and a style, in order to be perfectly agreeable must possess other beauties, as well as vivacity, simplicity, and strength. Defects in arrangement, and in like particulars, are not readily perceived by ordinary readers and, in some cases, escape at first the notice even of those whose discernment is highly refined by culture. Hence chiefly it is, that opposite sentiments are often entertained with much possitiveness by different men concerning the same performances; but the decision of such, as are really intitiled

to be characterised critics,⁵³ aspires alone to be esteemed a standard: and that complete knowledge which is essential to right judgement, can only be attained even by these superior spirits after a thorough acquaintance. The very novelty of a production is apt to distract the mind in some degree, and men, surprised, perhaps confounded, by a piece at first view of it, are not rarely incapable then of bestowing a due attention on facts and principles, elocution and order, and those other circumstances which ought to be taken into consideration at passing a critical sentence on any performance.

Cases in w^{ch} the exciting of a particurlar strong feeling is itself their ultimate aim

In the case of writings which are addressed either to the imagination or to the heart, and which are designed to present lively images to the former, or to infuse strong affections into the latter, we ought rather to consult our [115] feelings than to judge by rules: and we are fully authorised to assert a piece, which excites not the picture or the sentiment proposed to be raised by it, to be contemptible or faulty.

A man, whose thoughts are incessantly wandering to other objects, or whose spirits are disturbed by any violent, passion may be little touched even by a performance which is excellent in its kind: and his insensibility may be owing to his own indisposition, not to any real imperfections in the works submitted to his consideration. We must observe therefore, at forming our opinion from the impression of feeling immediately produced on the soul, that the mind be perfectly serene and attentive; that the organs, internal as well as external, be in a sound state, or thoroughly capable of discharging their natural offices; and that we be not placed in circumstances obstructive or unfavourable to their operation. The effects produced on a single reader, or a single spectator, who may be either constitutionally or accidently incapable, is sometimes entitled to be little minded: but such an incapacity can hardly be incident to any considerable number or to a whole mixed assembly: and a discriptive or pathetic piece, which pleases or moves few readers or auditors, cannot easily be supposed to possess much intrinsic worth. (In poetry, and rhetoric too, descriptions and characters, as well as wit and passion, ought to possess a real force and to make a vigorous impression, otherwise they cannot be lively and just; and a work, which is unable to subdue a slight discomposure or to overcome a certain degree of inattention, must be feeble.)

Merit therefore and applause ought resolutely to be denied to fables, poems, discriptions, and pictures, which, intending to raise mirth, grief, pity, contempt, indignation, or admiration, excite not their proper effects: and he, who would improve his taste or preserve it pure, must neither permitt others to tell

⁵³ Hume's essay, Of the Standard of Taste.

him, nor mind their |116| confidence in affirming, that, according to the rules established in the republic of criticism, he ought to laugh, weep, pity, condemn, disdain, or admire. Superficial & conceited critics may assert that dictatorial strain; but no good judge will submit to their decision: and a poet or an orator, who, amidst a contrary purpose, suffers a numerous auditory to remain cool, failing in the execution of his design, assuredly deserves not the reputation of a master.

It cannot however be affirmed conversely, that a production, which excites an affection in a certain degree, is always intitled to be deemed excellent. Some objects are naturally tender and uncommonly affecting, and some hearts are extremely susceptible and easily moved. A person, who has undergone many misfortunes, will often command sympathy and even draw tears, by a tale both simple in incidents and coarse in narration. Enter a hovel inhabited by poverty and rags. Cast a look on the young children, whom perhaps you find there, starving of cold and clamorous for bread: hear the mother relate, in the most vulgar terms, the hardships with which her family has contended, and your compassion must irresistibly be awakened. Even snowy weather is able alone to pierce some feeling souls, who are led during its severity, to reflect on the deep distress in which avoided indigence must then be found. A number of romances might be cited, which are truly despicable, yet, amid a perfect vapidness, afford amusement, excite sentiments, and produce passion. One tender stroke may move pity, an accidental Sally may cause laughter, and both passages may really merit praise; but ought a volume to be applauded, or, amidst the variety of excellent productions |117| which along life is not sufficient, ought time to be misemployed for their sake? No work is intitled to much admiration, unless, in most of its parts, it be artfully conducted.

9.

and must both praise & Condemn with discernment,

A man ought, on all occasions, to be faithful both to truth, and to himself, and should never condemn or applaud by the lump. Few works are altogether perfect: faults are discoverable even in those least liable to censure: and beauties are sometimes found in extremely despicable performances.

Perhaps no poet intitled to equal admiration with the Roman epic; but ought Virgil, describing the repast made by the Trojans on the Coast of Lybia to have mentioned the butcherly office performed there of skinning the bucks shot by Æneas? It suggests ideas, big with horror, to take notice that their flesh was put

still warm and trembling on the spit.⁵⁴ These coarse and shocking acts were unnecessary and indelicate, especially in so magnificent, to be brought immediatly into view.

The line, which concluded the history engraved on Aneas's shield, and represents that prince lifting on his shoulder the fame and the fates of his posterity is a poor conceit.⁵⁵

A man who would preserve his taste incorrupted, should invariably allow every part of every work that just portion of praise or dispraise, which it really deserves; otherways blemishes & Defects, covered by a false varnish or by improper associations, may come to be accounted Beauties & Graces. [118]

Can it be expected, in any human production, that all its parts be perfect? Man and nature are not always equal to themselves, and justice, as well, as accuracy, requires that distinctions, which are founded in truth, be carefully and impartially made: Milton and Shakespear abound with faults: Horace and Boileau are not without them: Exquisite Lines are discoverable in Lucan; and a person, whom patience and curiosity can carry to the end of Ossian, will find two or three tollerable images even in these jingling volumes.

Chap. II^d
Advantages of a Good Taste
1.

A fine Taste,

A good taste and a good judgement are intimatly connected: (The Greeks and the Romans appear not to have distinguished;) a distinction however is conceivable, between them. Judgement is a perception, which arises from reasoning and experience, supposes premises to be compared, and implying the idea of a Conclusion drawn concerning their agreement or difference, proceeds more slowly on this account: Taste acts almost instantaneously, on immediate intuition; and signifies an ability to discern easily and quickly that which is beautifull or sublime in any object of sense or of understanding. Hence one advantage of a good taste: a man who wants it must often be at a loss to act readily, in that becoming way which emergencies require.

Promotes an elegant ease & good breeds,

Its use, therefore, is discoverable even in common affairs; and without it we can hardly be masters of that which in vulgar

⁵⁴ Illi se prodo adcingunt, dapibusque futuris;
Torgora diripiunt costis, & viscera nudant:
Pars in frusta secant, verubusque trementia figunt
AE.I.

⁵⁵ Adtollens humero famaque & fata nepotum.
AE.8.

discourse is denominated good breeding. There will be something awkward in the appearance, formal in the address, constrained in the manners, and stiff in the conversation of one who is not blest |119| with this delicate sense. amidst all the politeness which he may intend, he will not reach that gracefull ease and disengaged air, which add such powerfull charm to every thing they accompany. A well bred man must act from habit: a person, who is obliged to take time to consider of the way in which he ought to perform, must often, from slowness, act out of season, and will generally behave very indifferently.

2.

Teaches to dispose of time, of labour, and of money in a proper way,

A monarch, whose kingdom was extensive and whose people were numerous, used to bestow an hour or two every day by himself in killing flies.⁵⁶

Another of the monsters, who governed that vast empire, employed servants, at a great expence, to catch ten thousand mice, and ordered them to be all at once presented alive before him.

{Among the entertainments, exhibited at Leon by Alphonsus the eighth king of Castille in celebration of the Naptials of Jarcias Ramirez being of Navarre, some blind men, armed with andgels, were engaged against a Boar, and, as the grunts of the adversary were their only guides in the conflict, it often happened that, instead of the stag, the combatants hit one another: A pretty amusement, everyway worthy of royal spectators!

Even in the eighteenth Century, in which rights of mankind and the obligations of government are tolerably understood, a sovereign of England blushes not to waste time and to consume treasure on those childish Plans termed installations; and the sacred office prostitutes itself to act a farcical part in such ludicrous interludes!)

Without a good taste one will not dispose either of his time, of his labour, or of his money, to the best advantage. A great scholar may devour a multitude of books, and compose huge volumes, with little profit to himself or to the public: A noble Lord may be gorgeously dressed without hue elegance: a rich man may throw away vast sums on houses & gardens, on equipage and a table; but if he is directed by whim, if he is under the guidance of caprice, if his designs are illplanned, instead of pleasing, they will often be offensive even to the vulgar. Works, as costly as can be imagined, raised by the publick or by private persons, may be monuments of the barbarity both |120| of the age in which they are erected, and of the hands to which they owe their existence.

⁵⁶ Luet. Comit. 3.

Affords many delicate enjoyments,

Sensual delights, being immediately connected with the support of human kind, are wisely suited on that account to all sorts of men: But a good taste is the foundation of many enjoyments different from those of sense; and even that portion of it, which is the pure gift of nature, is no small source of pleasure. We are formed to be delighted with novelty, order, proportion, congruity, variety, grandeur, similitude, & dissimilitude in the objects which surround us, and an inexhaustible provision is made every where for the gratification of this passion. An extensive prospect, a romantic scene, a limpid river, an impending rock, an ancient oak, a tall ash, a variegated carnation, the bleat of sheep, the low of cattle, the symphony of birds; these and innumerable other beauties, exhibited in the heavens and on the earth, yield a serene and elegant rapture to an ingenious mind: and every man feels naturally a degree of satisfaction in perceiving imitations of them presented by art: but in proportion as he cultivates his taste, his relish both of natural and of artificial beauty becomes more lively. Hence those endowed with a taste in the fine arts, possess a fund of entertainment, of which the proper part of mankind are incapable. To them an expressive painting, an animated statue, a noble building, overpowering music, a correct history, an eloquent oration or an excellent poem, affords a repast highly delightful.

Inferior indeed to those derived from pure intellect,

The pleasures of taste must indeed be owned to be inferior to those derived from pure intellect, and a profound skill in morality, in politics, in physics, or in mathematics, being more solid and more useful, is greatly preferable [121] to the higher refinement of that faculty. In the former a faintness or languidness is perceived on comparison more than in the latter.

Few problems appear more, at first sight, to be insolvable than that which aspires to measure the matter and the density of the sun and of the planets: Yet an English astronomer, finding that the attractive force possessed by all bodies is constantly proportionable, at equal distances, to their solid contents, hit on a simple method of ascertaining both, by an easy computation founded on the different length which the Earth, Jupiter, Saturn, and their satellites fall in a given time from Tangents of their orbits, compared with the several distances at which these falls are made from the central or attracting substances.

Expose a plate of crystal to the sun; and you will observe part of his rays, reflected by the glass, throw a luminous image on the ceiling or wall of your room, and others of the beams, passing through that medium, form alike appearance on an opposite quarter: would you think it possible. The rule, according to which the reflexion and the transmission are performed in all

cases could not conceal itself from his piercing genius; and he discovered, that the subtile particles, of which light is composed, are reflected and transmitted alternately, as it were in fits, that divide the surface on which it acts into many little chequered rings or spaces, and that these ***** proceed continually around, at intervals which are in an arithmetical progression.

The rainbow, you know, is parted into streaks, painted red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, & violet; and each tint occupies a portion of the right line, which measures the breadth of that arch, distinct from all the others. A prism, too, exposed to the sun, shows, by its refractive power a surface, on which these seven |122| original colours are clearly marked, and each stripe, separated from the rest, possess a proper part of the broadness of the prismatic picture. Would you imagine any harmony to subsist between these colours, or their breadth and the seven notes of music? That penetrating philosopher found, that the spaces occupied by each streak, bear to one another the same proportion as the different divisions of a chord on which are proportioned the seven notes of music, or, in other words, that a line, equal in length to the breadth of the rainbow, and divided into analogous parts, would give seven lines which would serve to mark these sounds.

A man, ignorant of mathematics, can hardly form a conception of the pleasure which an attentive scholar receives on learning such wonderful truths. That, which Sir Isaac himself felt on discovering them, would be extatic. The pure intellectual delight, which mathematical reasonings affords to those who enter deeply into them, is vastly intenser than that which a connoisseur enjoys from any common object of taste: and a like observation applies, perhaps indeed in a degree something inferior, to accurate argument in other sciences. Lively enjoyments however spring from both sources; and, if a philosopher, who lights on a deep theory or solves an intricate problem, cries in an exultation of joy GREEK, an artist or a connoisseur is also transported with the view of masterly workmanship.

"Mathematical and metaphysical reasonings," we are told,⁵⁷ "have no tendency to improve social intercourse, and are not applicable to the common affairs of life: But a just taste in the fine arts, derived from rational principles, prepares us finely for acting in the social state with dignity and propriety; tends to improve the heart not less than the understanding: sweetens and harmonizes the temper; is a strong antidote to turbulence of passion |123| and violence of pursuit; procures so much mental enjoyment, that, in order to be occupied, a man is not tempted to precipitate himself into hunting, gaming, drinking in youth, or to deliver himself over to ambition in manhood, or to surrender to avarice in old age has a fine effect in

⁵⁷ Elem. of Crit. Introd.

invigorating the social affections, as well as in moderating the selfish passions and is a great support to morality." "No occupation," it is affirmed, "attacks a man more to his duty than that of cultivating a taste in the fine arts: a just relish of what is beautiful, proper, elegant, and ornamental in writing or painting, in architecture or gardening, is a fine preparation," we are assured, "for the same just relish of these qualities in character and behaviors." Is not an influence attributed, in this comparison, to the fine arts superior to that which fairly belongs to them? And is not profound speculation here charged with producing, on our benevolent dispositions malignant effects which cannot reasonable be supposed to proceed from it?

I grant, that the elegant arts furnish both the innocent and agreeable entertainments to fill vacant hours, afford relief to the mind without obliging us to have recourse to a total inactivity, and lead not to dissolutness nor dissipation, but, being more refined than sensual delights rather give check to debauchery: The delicate pleasures that flow from them, may be enjoyed both oftener and longer without fatigue or satiety, expose not equally to a criminal excess, and are more highly relished as the faculties advance to maturity. Nevertheless, it is not easy to perceive how a nice taste in architecture, in gardening, or in any fine art, which is not immediatly connected with morals, should have a greater influence, than a taste for mathematics, to promote morality? Assign a solid reason, why a mathematician must be a worse man than an architect, [124] a musician, or a painter of landscapes; or should be more tempted, than these artists, to gaming, drinking, avarice, or an enormous ambition. The observation is not justified by experience, and reason seems rather to contradict it.

The mathematical sciences afford continually illustrates examples of order, harmony, and proportion, qualities which captivate the souls, and which, on being often presented to view, bid fair to transfuse themselves gradually into the affections: the most elevated conceptions, which the human mind can reach, are sometimes inspired by their contemplation: and an entire satisfaction cannot be attained on some of the most important as well as most sublime truths without metaphysical disquisition: The fine arts may engross a man thoughts, any encroach on his time, and may render him negligent of the common offices of humanity, no less abstruse studies.

In truth, it is the moral poet, the moral historian, the moral orator, the moral painter only; he, who is employed in contemplating and exciting the noble and magnanimous affections of the human heart; It is only the musician of the sublimer kind, whose strains tend to inspire heroism or compassion; that will either become himself, or render other, more virtuous by his studies. Any object, which engages attention much, whatever be its nature, even tho innocent in itself, if it is not directly of the moral kind, can never be conceived immediatly to promote virtue.

Is intimately connected with happiness in other respects,

But, abstracting from the pleasures derived from a relish in the fine arts or from a love of the deep sciences, it may be affirmed in another respect, that happiness in all cases, depends on acting with a good taste. Nature cannot be controul'd! He, who swerves from her dictates, and who seeks his enjoyment in objects |125| which, according to her intentions, are not fitted to bestow it mistakes the true road to felicity, and will at length find himself bewildered in the pursuit of good. It is here especially, that judgement must direct taste: we must not yield to first impressions, nor instantly pursue every pleasure which offers itself; but examine and compare that we may find out where nature has placed the chief delight. Perhaps this exercise ought to be called judgement rather than taste; but the judgement exercised here must end at last in exciting a quick relish of that which is best, without which we shall never pursue it steadily, because we shall not pursue it with pleasure. If our taste is not reconciled to that which our judgement pronounces good, if our nature recoils, we shall never be able to follow it with constancy but, in a secret agreement with our inclination, shall fall on a thousand refinements to elude the dictates of a sounder understanding.

(A just taste resembles a right disposition, and, by performing the offices or supplying the want of it, may in many cases render much assistance to government, and by cooperating with the laws, be useful to the public as well as to individuals. Diffuse a violent disgust at nausous objects, inspire a strong aversion to offensive action, and magistracy will not meet with that difficulty which is often found at present, in enforcing observance of regulations of police and rules of conduct. Men naturally led by those feelings, would submit from choice to restraints and even to trouble without which their nerves must be continually checked with spectacles disagreeable to behold.)

And is promotive of virtue,

Hence virtue itself, which is the chieff source of happiness, depends much on a good taste, or at least is greatly connected with this faculty. Not only does it lay claim to regard on account of divine or human authority and as accompanied with the greatest advantage in this or a future world; but offers itself to our choice as that in which a perfect fitness is conceived, which, of all things, is in itself most beautifull, and which yields the noblest immediate enjoyment. In truth, unless we see it in this light, and have never pursue it steadily: But, if our taste is truely just, we shall prefer it to all the beauties in the world.

Virtue indeed is not the only beauty. Riches, dominion, titles, splendour; these offer themselves rivals to her. Walking through the grand houses and magnificent gardens of |126| the

great, their lofty apartments, their superb furniture, their stately parks, and their enchanting scenery, impress our minds with admiration and with awe. Their possessions we thoughtlessly imagine, must be extremely happy. And our imaginations are more dazzled by the wealth & magnificence themselves, than attentive either to the means by which they are originally acquired, or to the uses made of them. Opulence and grandeur, which are honestly purchased, and which are not confined to gratify the single pleasure, or administer to the private advantages of their owners, little used, with a generous hospitality, to diffuse joy among all who behold them are not enemies but allies to virtue, & enable her to extend her influence & to make greater numbers happy. But if they are originally acquired by cruelty or injustice, are afterwards secured by base and ignoble compliances, violation of honesty or forfeiture of patriotism, or are employed to sicked & unworthy purposes, they lose their original value, occasion inward remorse, and become incapable of rendering their possessors happy. Virtue adds glory to everything to which she is united, and, in opposition to her, every object loses its grace and dignity. Nevertheless, many, thru want of proper culture and of due attention, are insensible of her charms, and it is much to be lamented, that not the gross sensualist and abandoned debauchee only, but even the deep mathematician and the elegant connoisseur, are often found to give the preference to her rivals: which the nicest inspectors of beauty, disdaining to be captivated by inferior forms, chiefly admire and pursue the higher grace of just behavior and virtuous conduct; for this can alone give a sincere and lasting enjoyment. Thus, the finest taste, and a taste for virtue, are at length found to coincide.

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