

THE BLOOMSBURY COMPANION TO HUME

EDITED BY
ALAN BAILEY AND
DAN O'BRIEN

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CONTENTS

List of Contributors	vii
Abbreviations for Works Written by Hume	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
David Hume – A Timeline	xiii
 INTRODUCTION	 1
1. HUME’S LIFE, INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT AND RECEPTION	20
Emilio Mazza	
2. HUME’S EMPIRICIST INNER EPISTEMOLOGY: A REASSESSMENT OF THE COPY PRINCIPLE	38
Tom Seppalainen and Angela Coventry	
3. HUME’S ‘SCEPTICISM’ ABOUT INDUCTION	57
Peter Millican	
4. THE PSYCHOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY OF HUME’S ACCOUNT OF PROBABLE REASONING	104
Lorne Falkenstein	
5. CAUSATION AND NECESSARY CONNECTION	131
Helen Beebee	
6. HUME ON SCEPTICISM AND THE MORAL SCIENCES	146
Alan Bailey	
7. THE SELF AND PERSONAL IDENTITY	167
Harold Noonan	
8. ‘ALL MY HOPES VANISH’: HUME ON THE MIND	181
Galen Strawson	
9. ACTION, REASON AND THE PASSIONS	199
Constantine Sandis	

CONTENTS

10. FREE WILL	214
James A. Harris	
11. HUME ON MIRACLES	227
Duncan Pritchard and Alasdair Richmond	
12. DAVID HUME AND THE ARGUMENT TO DESIGN	245
Andrew Pyle	
13. PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF	265
David O'Connor	
14. HUME'S SENTIMENTALIST ACCOUNT OF MORAL JUDGEMENT	279
Julia Driver	
15. HUME AND THE VIRTUES	288
Dan O'Brien	
16. HUME'S HUMAN NATURE	303
Russell Hardin	
17. HUME AND FEMINISM	319
Lívia Guimarães	
18. HUME ON ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	332
Margaret Schabas	
19. 'OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE': DECISIONS, RULES AND CRITICAL ARGUMENT	349
M. W. Rowe	
20. HUME ON HISTORY	364
Timothy M. Costelloe	
21. HUME'S LEGACY AND THE IDEA OF BRITISH EMPIRICISM	377
Paul Russell	
Bibliography	396
Index of Names	437
Index of Topics	441

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Bailey
Visiting Lecturer in Philosophy
School of Law, Social Sciences and
Communications
University of Wolverhampton
UK

Helen Beebee
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Birmingham
UK

Timothy M. Costelloe
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
College of William and Mary
USA

Angela Coventry
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Portland State University
USA

Julia Driver
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Washington University in St Louis
USA

Lorne Falkenstein
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Western Ontario
Canada

Lívia Guimarães
Lecturer in Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
Brazil

Russell Hardin
Professor of Politics
Department of Politics
New York University
USA

James Harris
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
St Andrews University
UK

Emilio Mazza
Associate Professor
Institute of Human Sciences, Language and
Environment
Università IULM, Milan
Italy

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Millican
Gilbert Ryle Fellow and Professor of
Philosophy
Hertford College
University of Oxford
UK

Harold Noonan
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Nottingham
UK

Dan O'Brien
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy
Department of History, Philosophy and
Religion
Oxford Brookes University
UK

David O'Connor
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Seton Hall University
USA

Duncan Pritchard
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Edinburgh
UK

Andrew Pyle
Reader in Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Bristol
UK

Alasdair Richmond
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy

Department of Philosophy
University of Edinburgh
UK

M. W. Rowe
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of East Anglia
UK

Paul Russell
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of British Columbia
Canada

Constantine Sandis
Reader in Philosophy
Department of History, Philosophy and
Religion
Oxford Brookes University
UK

Margaret Schabas
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of British Columbia
Canada

Tom Seppalainen
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Portland State University
USA

Galen Strawson
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Reading
UK

ABBREVIATIONS FOR WORKS WRITTEN BY HUME

Abs *An Abstract of a Book lately Published; Entitled, A Treatise of Human Nature*
Cited by paragraph and page number from the texts included in the editions of THN listed below.

DIS *A Dissertation on the Passions*
Cited by section and paragraph number from *A Dissertation on the Passions; The Natural History of Religion*, The Clarendon Edition of the Works of David Hume, ed. T.L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007). Hence DIS 1.2 = Section 1, paragraph 2.

DNR *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, ed. N. Kemp Smith, 2nd edn with supplement (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1947).
Cited by part and page number (e.g. DNR 1.135 = Part 1, page 135).

E *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. E.F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987).
Cited by page number.

EHU *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. T.L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
Cited by section and paragraph number, and supplemented by the corresponding page number in *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd edn with text revised and notes by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Hence EHU 5.1 / 40 = Section 5, paragraph 1 in the Beauchamp edition and page 40 in the Selby-Bigge edition.

EPM *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. T.L. Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
Cited by section and paragraph number, and supplemented by the corresponding page number in *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd edn with text revised and notes by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon

ABBREVIATIONS FOR WORKS WRITTEN BY HUME

Press, 1975). Hence EPM 2.2 / 176–7 = Section 2, paragraph 2 in the Beauchamp edition and pages 176–7 in the Selby-Bigge edition.

H *The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, ed. W.B. Todd, 6 vols (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1983).
Cited by volume and page number (e.g. H1.155 = Volume 1, page 155).

LDH *Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Greig, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).
Cited by volume, page number, and letter number (e.g. LDH 1.11–12, 5 = Volume 1, pages 11–12, letter 5).

LFG *A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh*, ed. E.C. Mossner and J.V. Price (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967).
Cited by page number.

MOL *My Own Life*.
Usually cited by page number from Volume 1 of LDH above.

NHR *The Natural History of Religion*.
Cited by page or, where applicable, part and page number from *Dialogues and Natural History of Religion*, Oxford World's Classics, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Hence NHR 134 = page 134; NHR 1.135 = Part 1, page 135.

NLH *New Letters of David Hume*, eds. R. Klibansky and E.C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).
Cited by page and letter number (e.g. NLH 5–6, 3 = pages 5–6, letter 3).

THN *A Treatise of Human Nature*, eds. D.F. Norton and M.J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
Cited by book, part, section and paragraph number, and supplemented by the corresponding page number in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd edn with text revised and notes by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). Hence THN 1.4.7.1 / 263 = Book 1, part 4, section 7, paragraph 1 in the Norton edition and page 263 in the Selby-Bigge edition.

References to the Appendix of the *Treatise* make use of the abbreviation App. and are then given by paragraph and page number (e.g. THN App. 1 / 623 = paragraph 1 of the Appendix in the Norton edition and page 623 in the Selby-Bigge edition).

References to the editorial material of the Oxford Philosophical Texts or Clarendon Critical Edition versions of the Norton edition are by page number and the abbreviations THN-P and THN-C respectively.

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Special thanks to our copy editor, Marilyn Holme, for coaxing and prodding the book to completion; a far from easy task particularly given, in the final months, the looming festive season. We are immensely grateful to her and to Sarah Douglas at Continuum for commissioning the project. Thanks are due as usual to the Edwardian Tea Room in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery for refreshments and scholarly ambience, and Birmingham Central Library provided from its stacks a range of books and journals that would have done credit to a major university library. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the following colleagues at Oxford Brookes University, the University of Wolverhampton and Keele University: Stephen Boulter, Mark Cain, Beverley Clack, Geraldine Coggins, Meena Dhanda, Giuseppina D'Oro, Cécile Hatier, William Pawlett and Constantine Sandis.

A.B. and D. O'B.

Much of my work on this book has been timetabled around the ongoing DIY house project that Lucy and I are undertaking. This is something that I am sure Hume would appreciate. If not hands-on, he was certainly no slouch when it came to the upkeep of the home. When the '[p]laister broke down in the kitchen' in his house in James's Court, Edinburgh, he tells us that:

[his repairman] having thus got into the house, went about teizing Lady Wallace [Hume's tenant], and telling her, that this and the other thing was wrong, and ought to be mended. She told him, as she informs me, that everything was perfectly right, and she wou'd trouble the Landlord for nothing. Yet the Fellow had the Impudence to come to me, and tell me that he was sent by Lady Wallace to desire that some Stone Pavement under the Coal Bunker should be repair'd. I, having a perfect Confidence in Lady Wallace's Discretion, directed him to repair it, as she desir'd. Having got this Authority, which cannot be good as it was obtain'd by a Lye, he not only pav'd the Bunker anew, but rais'd a great deal of the other Pavement of the Kitchen and laid it anew, nay, from his own head, took on him to white-wash the Kitchen: For all which, he brought me in an account of 30 Shillings. (NLH 115, 206)

The contributors to this book may have explored Hume's contributions to metaphysics, morality, religion and epistemology, but I have sympathetic appreciation of his knowledge of

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

that great human pursuit of house-building. And my deepest gratitude goes to Lucy my fellow plasterer, drywaller, spark and plumber and to Dylan who is still ‘patiently’ waiting for the kitchen to be finished. The skirting boards will be attached next week . . .

D. O’B.

Particular thanks on my behalf go to Ross Singleton for his longstanding friendship and our many lengthy conversations about religion, philosophy and international politics. Linda Dai has patiently coped with my tendency to introduce comments about Hume into a quite excessive number of contexts, and her backing and encouragement have played a crucial role in allowing me to complete my contribution to this volume. I also wish to thank my mother Dorothy Bailey for her support during the writing and editing process.

A.B.

DAVID HUME – A TIMELINE

1702	Death of William III and the accession of Queen Anne	
1704	Battle of Blenheim; Isaac Newton, <i>Opticks</i>	
1707	Union of England and Scotland	
1711		Hume born in Edinburgh
1712	Thomas Newcomen's steam engine	
1713	George Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</i> ; Anthony Collins, <i>Discourse of Free-Thinking</i>	Hume's father dies
1714	Death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I	
	Bernard Mandeville, <i>Fable of the Bees</i>	
1715	Jacobite rebellion in Scotland; death of Louis XIV; Louis XV becomes King of France at the age of five	
1718	Inoculation for smallpox introduced in England	
1720	Collapse of the South Sea Bubble; Edmond Halley becomes Astronomer Royal at Greenwich	
1722	Robert Walpole becomes the equivalent of a modern British Prime Minister	Hume and his brother John enrol as students at the University of Edinburgh
1725	Work starts on Grosvenor Square, London; Francis Hutcheson, <i>The Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue</i>	
1726	Jonathan Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	Hume begins a legal education

DAVID HUME – A TIMELINE

1727	Death of George I and the accession of George II; Isaac Newton dies Robert Greene, <i>Principles of the Philosophy of the Expansive and Contractive Forces</i>	
1728	John Gay, <i>Beggar's Opera</i>	
1729		Hume abandons the idea of becoming a lawyer; his 'new Scene of Thought'
1733	Alexander Pope, <i>Essay on Man</i>	
1734	Voltaire, <i>Lettres philosophiques (Lettres anglaises)</i>	Hume travels to London; takes up employment in Bristol as a merchant's clerk; resigns or is dismissed; relocates to France and works on the <i>Treatise</i>
1735	John Harrison's chronometer; William Hogarth, <i>Rake's Progress</i>	Hume moves from Rheims to La Flèche
1736	Joseph Butler, <i>Analogy of Religion</i>	
1737		Returns from France to London
1739		Publication of Books One and Two of <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i>
1740	Start of the War of Austrian Succession; Frederick II (Frederick the Great) becomes King of Prussia George Turnbull, <i>Principles of Moral Philosophy</i>	Book Three of the <i>Treatise</i>
1741	Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i>	Volume I of <i>Essays, Moral and Political</i> published in Edinburgh
1742	Walpole falls from power; Handel's <i>Messiah</i> premieres in Dublin	
1745	Second Jacobite rebellion; von Kleist discovers the ability of the Leyden jar to store electrical charge	Hume fails to secure the Chair of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at Edinburgh; becomes tutor in England to the Marquess of Annandale Hume's mother dies
1746	Jacobite army is decisively defeated at Culloden	Hume's appointment as a tutor comes to an acrimonious end Hume becomes Secretary to Lieutenant-General James St Clair; accompanies St Clair on a military expedition attacking the coast of Brittany

DAVID HUME – A TIMELINE

1748	War of Austrian Succession concludes; Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle Excavations begin at Pompeii; Montesquieu, <i>L'Esprit des lois</i> ; La Mettrie, <i>L'Homme machine</i>	Travels with St Clair on a diplomatic mission to Vienna and Turin Publication of <i>Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding</i>
1749	Buffon, first volumes of <i>Histoire naturelle</i> ; David Hartley, <i>Observations on Man</i> ; Henry Fielding, <i>Tom Jones</i>	Returns to Scotland and resides with his brother and sister at the family home in Ninewells
1751	Diderot and d'Alembert, Volume I of <i>L'Encyclopédie</i> Adam Smith becomes Professor of Logic at the University of Glasgow	Hume moves to Edinburgh and is later joined by his sister Katherine Publication of <i>An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals</i>
1752	Adoption in Britain of the Gregorian calendar	Hume is unsuccessful in his candidacy for a chair at the University of Glasgow Elected Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh
1753	British Museum founded	
1754		Publication of Volume I of <i>The History of Great Britain</i>
1755	Lisbon earthquake; Samuel Johnson, <i>Dictionary of the English Language</i>	
1756	Seven Years' War	
1757	Robert Clive and the East India Company are victorious at the Battle of Plassey Edmund Burke, <i>A Philosophical Enquiry</i>	Hume resigns from his post as Librarian
1758		<i>Philosophical Essays</i> published under the new name of <i>An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding</i>
1759	Laurence Sterne, <i>Tristram Shandy</i> ; William Wilberforce is born	
1761	The Bridgewater Canal opens from Worsley to Manchester	Madame de Boufflers's initial letter to Hume
1762	Catherine II becomes Empress of Russia; Sarah Scott's novel of a female utopian community, <i>A Description of Millenium Hall</i>	
1763	Seven Years' War concludes; Peace of Paris Catherine Macaulay, first volume of her <i>History of England</i>	Hume accompanies Lord Hertford to Paris and takes on the duties of Secretary to the British Embassy Hume and Madame de Boufflers meet for the first time

DAVID HUME – A TIMELINE

1764	Thomas Reid, <i>Inquiry into the Human Mind</i> ; Horace Walpole, <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> Mozart's Symphony No. 1 composed in London during the family's European tour	
1765	Matthew Boulton finishes building the Soho Manufactory in Birmingham	Hume is officially confirmed as Secretary shortly before his post comes to an end
1766	Immanuel Kant, <i>Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics</i>	Hume returns to London, accompanied by Jean-Jacques Rousseau; Rousseau accuses Hume of being part of a conspiracy against him <i>A Concise and Genuine Account of the Dispute between Mr. Hume and Mr. Rousseau</i> Hume spends the final months of the year in Ninewells and Edinburgh
1767	James Craig's plan for New Town, Edinburgh is adopted; Royal Crescent, Bath, started	Travels to London to take up the office of Under-Secretary of State in the Northern Department
1768	James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific	Hume retires from public office
1769	Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley open their Etruria factory near Stoke-on-Trent James Watt's steam engine, James Hargreaves' spinning jenny, and Richard Arkwright's water frame are patented Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, is born in Dublin	Hume returns to Edinburgh
1770	The future Louis XVI marries Marie Antoinette; Baron d'Holbach, <i>Système de la nature</i>	Hume has a house built for himself in Edinburgh's New Town; rumours reach Paris that Hume might be about to marry Nancy Orde
1771	Tobias Smollet, <i>Humphry Clinker</i>	Hume and his sister move into the new house – St Andrew Square, off St David Street
1773	Boston Tea Party Hester Chapone, <i>Letters on the Improvement of the Mind</i> ; Oliver Goldsmith, <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>	

DAVID HUME – A TIMELINE

1774	Death of Louis XV; Louis XVI becomes King of France Joseph Priestley discovers ‘dephlogisticated air’ (oxygen)	
1775	John Wilkinson’s cannon-boring machine; Jane Austen born	The ‘Advertisement’ repudiating the <i>Treatise</i>
1776	Declaration of American Independence Edward Gibbon, <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i> ; Adam Smith, <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> ; Thomas Paine, <i>Common Sense</i> ; Jeremy Bentham, <i>Fragment on Government</i>	Hume dies in Edinburgh
1777		Publication of <i>Life of David Hume, written by Himself</i>
1779	World’s first iron bridge is completed across the River Severn at Coalbrookdale	Publication of the <i>Dialogues concerning Natural Religion</i>
1782	Atheism openly avowed in print in Britain for the first time – Matthew Turner, <i>Answer to Dr Priestley’s Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever</i>	
1783	Peace of Versailles establishes independence of American colonies	
1785	Edmund Cartwright patents his power loom	
1787	Founding in Britain of the Committee for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade	
1789	French Revolution	

INTRODUCTION

In 2005 the British Broadcasting Corporation ran a poll asking Radio Four listeners to say whom they regarded as the greatest philosopher of all time. Such familiar philosophical luminaries as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Kant all featured prominently in the subsequent voting, and Marx's immense influence within the political arena saw him, rather predictably, taking first place. However, the pre-eminent British philosopher, and the philosopher with the second highest overall number of votes, was David Hume.

In his own lifetime Hume certainly possessed a substantial reputation as a public intellectual. In some respects, though, it would be more appropriate to talk in terms of his notoriety rather than his reputation. His supposedly sceptical epistemological views and the manner in which his writings seemed to develop a series of pointed criticisms of religious belief attracted vituperative criticism from many of his contemporaries. It is also a striking fact that much of his fame sprang from his ostensibly non-philosophical writings. Until his death in 1776 Hume enjoyed a great deal of influence as a writer on matters of economics. Moreover, sales of his *History of England* made him independently wealthy and brought him to the attention of far more readers than were interested in works of

metaphysics and epistemology. There is, in fact, an overwhelming case for saying that no other eighteenth-century writer's account of English history came close to matching the intellectual quality and non-partisan nature of Hume's own narrative, and in this particular case those genuine merits were, for once, rewarded by the approbation of substantial sections of the public.

Hume's current reputation is, therefore, something that stands in need of explanation. How has an eighteenth-century Scottish intellectual and writer who enjoyed his greatest success amongst his contemporaries as a historian, economist and writer of polite essays arrived at the status and, in the eyes of the editors of this volume, the wholly deserved status of being viewed as the greatest British philosopher?

In many respects the answer lies in the very features of his philosophical writings that saw them subjected to so much criticism when Hume was alive. Epistemological scepticism, even of a radical variety, is no longer seen as constituting any kind of threat to morality and social order; so it is now possible to respond to the sceptical arguments deployed within Hume's writings as providing us with a series of fascinating puzzles that may succeed in pointing us towards important

INTRODUCTION

truths about the nature of philosophy or the incoherence of certain aspects of our self-conception as inquirers and agents without those arguments constituting instruments of intellectual self-annihilation. Moreover, once this fear of sceptical conclusions has been dissipated, it becomes psychologically easier to acknowledge the inadequacy of so many of the standard supposed refutations of sceptical arguments. Hume's own recognition of the power of these arguments accordingly comes to be seen as compelling evidence of his own intellectual integrity and powers of analysis.

This issue of intellectual integrity also has a bearing on present-day reactions to Hume's criticisms of religion. Britain in the eighteenth century was an overwhelmingly Christian country, where overt expressions of disbelief could still attract substantial prison sentences and books regarded as attacking Christianity were frequently subjected to determined campaigns of suppression. Today, in contrast, there is substantial evidence that between 30 and 40 per cent of the British population do not believe in God or any Higher Power analogous to a person. And although the United States signally lags behind almost all Western European states in this regard, agnosticism and atheism are making some inroads even in that hitherto hostile environment. There is, accordingly, a far more receptive audience in the current climate for arguments challenging the metaphysical underpinnings of a religious world-view and the complacent supposition that religious convictions constitute crucial support for moral behaviour and an appreciation of the value of life. Hume's writings provide such arguments in abundance, and his critiques of the argument to design and the credibility of testimony to alleged miracles still constitute some of the most trenchant attacks ever launched on

these staples of theistic apologetics. Just as significantly, however, Hume's evident willingness to question religious dogma at a time when the social and cultural pressure towards internalizing such beliefs was so strong marks him out as a person who was prepared to be guided by argument and the available evidence instead of suppressing his critical faculties at the behest of superstition and the power-structures of religious authority. In this respect, Hume amply meets the essential requirement that a true philosopher, a philosopher of genuine integrity, must answer only to the autonomous demands of the reflective intellect.

It also seems to be the case that once Hume's epistemological and irreligious views are no longer predominantly seen as views that need to be repudiated as aggressively as possible, other valuable aspects of his philosophical outlook become increasingly easy to recognize. Given the disappointing results of attempts at *a priori* metaphysics, Hume's denunciations of the application of *a priori* reasoning outside the sphere of issues of 'quantity and number' (EHU 12.27 / 163) seem amply vindicated by the historical record. Thus philosophical inquiry needs an alternative methodology if it is not simply to repeat past errors in ever more complex forms. And Hume's 'experimental' method, with its commitment to being guided by experience, seems to meet this need.

There might perhaps be some worries that this approach actually amounts to a simple repudiation of philosophy in favour of the investigative methods of the sciences. In Hume's hands, however, it constitutes not an abandonment of philosophy but a confirmation that at least some philosophical conundrums can be satisfactorily dissolved by paying due attention to the empirical facts. Confronted, for example, by the question

‘What obligation do we have to obey this or indeed any government?’, we might initially be at a loss to know how to proceed. Science, we have been repeatedly told, cannot answer normative questions. Conceptual analysis, it is tempting to suppose, can at best clarify the sense of the question, and a priori reasoning of a non-mathematical kind cannot be relied upon to yield anything more substantial than vacuous tautologies. Hume’s account of human nature, in contrast, allows us to see this question as an idle one. There may indeed be scope for choosing which government to follow. But our psychological properties mean that some institutions of government will inevitably arise in all circumstances that are ever likely to persist for a significant length of time. Moreover, once these institutions have arisen, their success in securing high levels of obedience is equally inevitable irrespective of our normative speculations.

It would be remiss, however, of any account of Hume’s well-merited appeal to present-day philosophers and anyone interested in understanding the place of human beings in the world to ignore the question of Hume’s personal character. Although this has frequently been traduced by defenders of religion and people who mistakenly suppose that seriousness of purpose must be evidenced by tortuous writing, pompous pretentiousness and a complete absence of humour, it is clear from the record of Hume’s life that he was a benevolent man of amiable temperament, a good and loyal friend, and a master of comic self-deprecation and subtle word-play. If one were planning a fantasy dinner party, it is difficult to imagine any philosopher in history who would make a more winning and entertaining guest or a more congenial host, though it would probably be advisable, given his reported skill at

whist, to avoid challenging him to any card games involving large sums of money. In a sense, of course, Hume’s personal virtues do not add to the importance of his intellectual achievements. But they do confirm one important thing, namely that the philosophical outlook embraced by Hume is one that is entirely compatible with a flourishing human life that combines generous concern for the well-being of other people with ample enjoyment of a full range of social and intellectual satisfactions.

This combination of the power of Hume’s thought and the engaging quality of his personality has undoubtedly helped in bringing together the contributors to this volume. As editors, we were repeatedly pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm expressed for this project by potential contributors, and we hope that the finished anthology succeeds both in illuminating Hume’s own achievements and in suitably showcasing the commitment to Humean scholarship manifested by all the authors represented in the following pages.

Emilio Mazza opens the volume by drawing us into Hume’s world, one far from the ivory tower – a world of business, military expeditions, international diplomacy and Parisian ladies. But *Le Bon David* always sought refuge from this heady world in work, in friendships and in his pursuit of literary fame, his ‘ruling passion’. His academic legacy and fame, however, are perhaps rather fortunate given that he would have been happy to stay at home in the borders of Scotland, if his brother had not married, or to join the army if he had discovered its pleasures and camaraderie at a younger age. Mazza’s evocative biography illuminates a life of travel and friendships with a portrait of a cheery, avuncular man toddling around Edinburgh, being dragged out of a

INTRODUCTION

bog, saving a man from execution after that man's unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide in Paris, and having deep and sometimes stormy relationships with the literati of his day including, amongst many others, Adam Smith, Rousseau, d'Alembert and Laurence Sterne. We come away with the impression that Hume had a good life – one with much friendship, fame and fortune – and if one can ever say this, Hume also had a good death. To the end he was in good spirits, reading his beloved classics, and revising his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*.

Tom Seppalainen and Angela Coventry take a 'fresh look' at Hume's theory of ideas and impressions. The notion of liveliness or vivacity that distinguishes mere ideas from beliefs – beliefs being vivid ideas – is usually taken to be a phenomenological one and various interpretations of the nature of vivacity are considered. It has been characterized in terms of qualitative feel although Seppalainen and Coventry argue that thinking of perceptions in this way ignores their intentional content and the way perceptions seem to be of the world. An improvement, then, is to read the phenomenology of perception not in terms akin to those describing the intensity of colour in a picture, but in terms of 'presentedness' (or, according to another intentional reading of Hume, in terms of verisimilitude and the feeling of reality). Experience *presents* the world to one. Seppalainen and Coventry applaud such intentional readings, but they argue that Hume does not use vivacity to refer to the phenomenological qualities of individual perceptions, but rather to sequences of ideas and impressions. Only patterns of change can be vivid in the requisite sense. Our very notion of the existence of the external world depends on the constant and coherent flux of our perceptions and, they argue, such flux

is the source of the vivacity of our experience, of its intentional content, and of the believability of our ideas. This account is contrasted with Descartes's theory of ideas and with interpreters of Hume who see him as a proto-logical positivist.

Peter Millican turns to Hume's account of inductive reasoning and his 'famous argument' to the conclusion that we have no warrant for our beliefs about unobserved matters of fact. Millican spells out the steps of Hume's argument as articulated in the *Treatise*, the *Abstract* and the first *Enquiry*. All beliefs concerning matters of fact are grounded in causal reasoning but, Hume argues, knowledge of causal relations cannot be acquired a priori, nor can it be gained via inductive reasoning. In place of such support Hume provides an account of belief grounded in custom or habit. However convincing Hume's arguments may be, there is undoubted tension between his seemingly sceptical conclusions and his embrace of inductive science, his 'experimental' approach to the study of human nature, and his empirical approach to history. Some interpreters of Hume take him just to be concerned with a psychological description of thinkers and not with issues concerning justification and warrant. Millican, however, argues that Hume is interested in normative questions; it is important to be clear, though, on the target of Hume's scepticism – and that is Locke's conception of reason, what Millican calls his perceptual model. Such scepticism, however, does not engender what has come to be called 'The *problem* of induction'. The purpose of Hume's form of 'mitigated' scepticism is not, as with Descartes, to prompt us to discover a sure path to certain knowledge, but rather to instil in us a suitable level of modesty and caution concerning our epistemic practices. Furthermore, Hume's naturalistic account

provides an explanation of how human beings can – and actually do – reason inductively and this, given the impossibility of any rational foundations for such reasoning, provides us with all the support we require for our causal inferences.

Lorne Falkenstein further explores Hume's account of causal reasoning and the 'system' of the *Treatise*. It is constant conjunctions in experience that impel the imagination to form beliefs concerning causes and effects. Habits of thought guide our reasoning and not rational argument or judgement. As discussed by Coventry and Seppalainen, beliefs are seen as vivacious ideas, and Falkenstein stresses that Hume does not think of vivacity in terms of the intensity of an image. Beliefs, rather, amount to dispositions of the mind (for example, to incline one to act in certain ways and to focus one's attention). Beliefs, then, are the product of the principle of association of causation, although Falkenstein also suggests how Hume might have included the relations of contiguity and resemblance in his account of reasoning.

If, however, belief formation is just a matter of habit, how can it be so that some ways of forming beliefs are seen as better than others? Hume suggests that we follow certain general rules, those that are learnt from past experience, such as, like objects in like circumstances will have like effects. Particular inferences we make can be assessed against such general rules. This is Hume's logic of causal inference.

Such rules can also be extended to cover probable reasoning. It is not the case that we have uniform experience, but this does not lead to our rejecting such general rules. Instead, in cases where like causes do not seem to lead to like effects we come to believe – again via habit grounded in past experience – that there is some hidden cause

that is disrupting the usually apparent regularity of nature. And Hume's account of the vivacity of belief can show how the strength of our beliefs depends on the uniformity of our experience. This account does not depend on a mathematical calculation of probabilities, but rather on associationist psychological processes of vivacity transfer. Falkenstein concludes by showing how Hume takes his scepticism as supporting his 'system' and his account of empirical reasoning.

Helen Beebe heads into stormy water – into Hume's account of causation, a hotly debated topic: the so-called New Hume Debate focusing on the question of whether Hume takes there to be real causal powers in nature – oomphs pushing billiard balls around tables – or whether he thinks that there are really only constant conjunctions and regular brute patterns in the world. Beebe investigates this question, concentrating on three claims to which Hume seems to be committed. First, Hume suggests that we project causal connections onto the world, connections that are not really there. Second, the concept of causation includes the notion of necessity. We think of causal connections as those that are necessarily connected together: the red ball *must* move off in that direction given that it was struck in that way by the white ball. And third, causal talk is objective in that we can talk correctly of causes and we can sometimes make false causal claims about the world. These commitments seem to be inconsistent since it is not obvious how causal talk can be objective when Hume does not think that there are *really* causal connections in nature and that they are projections of our cognitive processes. Beebe discusses various ways to resolve this (perhaps only apparent) inconsistency. The traditional interpretation of Hume claims that causation is just constant conjunction. The sceptical

INTRODUCTION

realist, in contrast, sees Hume as accepting that there are causal powers in nature; it is just that we cannot come to have knowledge of them. The projectivist interpretation adopts a non-cognitivist stance: our claims concerning causal relations are subject to norms, but these norms are constituted not by features of the world independent of our judgements concerning its causal structure – by real causal powers in nature – but by certain ‘rules’ which we have come to appreciate concerning how we judge of causes and effects, rules that enable us to override errant judgements in particular cases.

A clue to the correct interpretation can be found in Beebee’s claim that Hume is driven by his opposition to the Cartesian Image of God Hypothesis. There are two aspects to this hypothesis: we are, as the Bible says, made in God’s image, and we have epistemic abilities in line with such an origin. The nature of reality is accessible to human reason – we can come, through a priori reasoning, to have knowledge of the world and specifically of its causal structure. Beebee notes certain aspects of this picture in the sceptical realist approach and thus argues that this cannot be the correct interpretation of Hume. Of the remaining options, Beebee favours projectivism over the traditional interpretation.

Alan Bailey then undertakes an examination of the equally vexed issue of the prospects for providing a unified account of Hume’s philosophical outlook that satisfactorily accommodates both his ambitions to construct a science of human nature and the sceptical elements of his thought. If Hume’s putative scepticism actually amounted to nothing more than a modest epistemological fallibilism, as some recent commentators have supposed, there would be no real tension to overcome here. Bailey argues, however, that Hume’s scepticism is a much more

radical position than mere fallibilism. In Bailey’s judgement, this scepticism is better interpreted as a stance that does not endorse any beliefs as possessing a positive degree of epistemic justification except for beliefs about very simple necessary truths that can be grasped without going through any process of inference and beliefs about the content of our present ideas and impressions.

It is clear, however, that if such scepticism is an integral component of Hume’s thought, then it co-exists with Hume’s assent to a detailed and carefully constructed account of human nature that is supposed to be both true and useful. Even a moment’s reflection on the *Treatise’s* subtitle, which is *Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, indicates that it would be a disastrous misreading of Hume’s views to construe him as simply a destructive sceptic.

Bailey’s solution to this interpretative conundrum is to claim that Hume views radically epistemological scepticism and properly conducted empirical inquiries as mutually supportive. Hume thinks that sceptical arguments are indeed successful in placing us in a position where only our acceptance of the view that scarcely any of our beliefs are rationally justified can allow us to deny, without being guilty of bad faith, that such sceptical arguments provide rationally compelling grounds for that assessment of our beliefs. However, Bailey argues that Hume does not see this as posing any threat to the ability of our belief-forming mechanisms to generate and sustain in existence all the beliefs we need to guide our actions. Nor indeed does Hume view it as undermining our capacity to assent to relatively sophisticated scientific theories. Where such theories are constructed using systematized and reflective versions of common sense methods

of inquiry and are accordingly supported by experience and experiment, sceptical discoveries are incapable of preventing us from giving our assent. And where those theories are not supported by experience and experiment, Hume can, as an empiricist, rejoice in their destruction. Thus Bailey holds that Hume sees scepticism and the proper experimental method of inquiry working in tandem. Sceptical arguments curb the power of the imagination to generate beliefs that are not the products of the observed correlations that give rise to causal inferences. And the experience-based beliefs towards which we accordingly gravitate generate a plausible picture of the workings of the human mind that makes it even more difficult for us to represent ourselves as capable of arriving at many beliefs that genuinely qualify as rationally justified.

Harold Noonan and Galen Strawson both explore what Hume calls the labyrinth of personal identity. Noonan considers various arguments in Hume against the Cartesian conception of personal identity, against, that is, the existence of an enduring self, identical from moment to moment and from day to day. Hume's empiricism demands that we have an impression of such an entity, but this we do not have – all we find, on introspection, is a bundle of variously related perceptions. Hume's 'master-argument' establishes that all perceptions are logically capable of an independent existence. There is thus no need for the 'unintelligible chimera of substance' (THN 1.4.3.7 / 222) in which properties must inhere. This is so for physical things, such as wax – contra Descartes, wax for Hume is just a collection of properties – and for human beings: we do not require an enduring soul underlying our ever-changing properties. Hume thus criticizes a supposition of both materialists and immaterialists,

that is, that the soul or mind is a substance, be it physical or non-physical.

All we can do is provide an account of what causes us to have the mistaken belief that there are enduring selves. Such an account includes certain identity-ascribing mechanisms of the imagination – those grounded in the principles of association of resemblance and causation – mechanisms that generate belief in the self as well as in the continued existence of the external world and of bodies.

Hume, however, is dissatisfied with his conclusion. He thinks that he is committed to two inconsistent principles: that distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any connection between them. Perplexingly, however, these principles are not inconsistent, and uncovering why Hume claims them to be so is a key difficulty for interpreters of Hume's views on the soul and the self. Noonan suggests that Hume realizes that his account does not explain our continuing belief in personal identity. One can accept Hume's empiricist conclusions with respect to the external world and give up the notion that there is a substance or substrata underlying the properties of bodies, but we cannot accept this with respect to the self. Why not? Hume did not know.

Galen Strawson has a distinct account of why Hume's 'hopes vanish'. Hume discovers – late in the day, in the *Appendix* to the *Treatise* – that his whole empiricist philosophy depends on a conception of the mind that his empiricism does not allow him to have. His genetic account of our belief in an enduring self relies on the principles of association – it relies on the assumption that we have a 'Principle-Governed Mind'. This explains our belief in the self as well as our belief in the external world and in causation.

INTRODUCTION

But such a conception of the mind goes beyond a loose association of distinct perceptions. In order to legitimately ground one's philosophy in such an account of the mind it is required either that there is an observable real connection between the perceptions that make up the mind or grounds for claiming that such perceptions inhere in some kind of soul-substance. But Hume has argued against both possibilities.

A possible response here is to take Hume as sheltering in his scepticism: the essence of the mind is unknowable to us and thus it cannot be this – the lack of knowledge of the Principle-Governed Mind – that leads him to despair. But, Strawson argues, such agnosticism cannot do the trick. Hume does need to, and does, assume a certain notion of the mind – a rule-governed one. He can perhaps remain agnostic about just how it works, but he cannot be agnostic about its very existence – and its very existence is what is incompatible with Hume's empiricism. Strawson claims that Hume's despair is a result of his acknowledgement of this deep inconsistency in his philosophy.

Constantine Sandis explores Hume's account of action and in so doing considers how reason, the will and the passions are related. Hume's account of action is an empirical one: we acquire knowledge of a person's reasons for acting from careful observation of human behaviour. This 'science of man' grounds Hume's *History of England* and the study of this work highlights how Hume sees character as playing a key motivating role in our behaviour. Further, the historian is best placed to uncover the truth about human nature since he does not aspire to the detached perspective of the philosopher, nor is he too close to his subjects and thus prone to bias or the distorting influence of his particular interests and circumstances.

Sandis also turns to interpretations of Hume's famous claim that '[r]eason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions' (THN 2.2.3.4 / 414) and argues that the received Humean theory of motivation is unfounded. This is the view that an agent cannot be motivated by belief alone, but only by a belief along with an appropriately related desire. Sandis claims, though, that such an account is not to be found in Hume. It is also suggested that Hume does not equate belief and opinions with judgement. Ideas and beliefs are distinguished by their vivacity, and the vivacity of judgements should be seen as lying somewhere between that of ideas and beliefs. This is relevant to Hume's account of morality: Hume does not talk of moral judgements but, on Sandis's account, this still allows Hume to have an account of moral beliefs and of their motivational force.

James Harris turns to liberty and necessity, and to what Hume calls 'the most contentious question of metaphysics, the most contentious science' (EHU 8.23 / 95). Hume is often thought to be an advocate of an early version of what is now called compatibilism, and it has been claimed that there is nothing distinctive about his position. Locke and Hobbes had also discussed this question and suggested compatibilist answers. Harris, however, argues that Hume is not just rehashing their arguments.

Importantly, it is claimed, Hume is not a determinist in the modern sense, unlike, for example, Hobbes. Determinism is a metaphysical stance and Hume eschews metaphysical questions. His claim is not that we have reason to think that the laws of nature cannot change – that they are determined; everyday experience, rather, leads us to expect that people behave in regular ways and we interact with them in light of these regularities.

Harris also notes various changes in emphasis between the *Treatise* discussion of this topic and that of the *Enquiry*. In the latter, Hume more squarely targets metaphysicians. Once we clarify the nature of liberty and necessity, long-running metaphysical and, in particular, religious disputes concerning God's prescience and responsibility for evil will be undermined. Philosophy should 'return, with suitable modesty, to her true and proper province, the examination of common life' (EHU 8.36 / 103). Hume's discussion of liberty and necessity is not a case of Hume engaging in metaphysical debate, the question then arising of whether his contribution is original or not – he is, rather, agnostic about all such issues, his discussion reflecting his empiricist attitude to questions concerning the regularity of human behaviour and morality.

At this point the contributors turn to the subject of Hume's views on the truth and utility of religious beliefs. In his own era he was interpreted as attacking Christianity and all forms of theistic belief. However, his arguments were frequently dismissed as inconsequential sophistries motivated not by a concern for the truth but by a desire to secure personal notoriety and increase the sales of his books. Such an assessment of the force of his arguments and his motivation for advancing them is now wholly discredited. Yet the recognition that he wrote on this particular topic in good faith and with a commitment to seeking the truth and promoting human well-being has led some present-day commentators to suggest that he was actually a defender of some philosophically purified form of theism that might even be compatible with the truth of Christianity. Such an interpretation seems to be based on nothing more substantial than his invariable courtesy when debating matters of religion and an almost inexcusable failure to recognize

the extent to which he and other irreligious thinkers of his time were forced to engage in misdirection and linguistic contortions in order to avoid social ostracism and the official suppression of their writings. The authors of the three chapters in this anthology that focus primarily on Hume and religion are therefore unanimous in presenting him as a rigorous and intellectually honest thinker who deploys a formidable set of arguments against any form of religious outlook based on the truth of theism or even a robust form of deism.

Duncan Pritchard and Alasdair Richmond investigate Hume's notorious arguments on the topic of the credibility of testimony concerning miracles. They are careful to locate these arguments within the broader framework of Hume's reservations about our ability to justify expectations about the future in a rational, non-circular manner and his pragmatic response to those sceptical worries. Although causal reasoning cannot be supplied with a non-circular argumentative defence, it remains the case that human beings find such reasoning persuasive and continue to use it, even after exposure to sceptical arguments, as a touchstone for assessing whether particular beliefs are ones they are content to endorse or ones that are no more than mere foolishness. Consequently Pritchard and Richmond construe Hume as attempting to show that no testimony about the occurrence of miraculous events capable of serving as the foundations of a system of religion has ever met the standards of doxastic acceptability that normally prevail in less contentious cases when we are weighing human testimony concerning an alleged event against the implications of our observations of past natural regularities.

Pritchard and Richmond reject the supposition that any form of a priori conceptual

INTRODUCTION

argument forms part of Hume's case against belief in miracles, and they also maintain that it is a mistake to construe him as arguing that the kind of regularity in experience that would need to be interrupted in order for an event to qualify as a plausible candidate for being a miracle would be so well entrenched and confirmed that no possible amount of human testimony could render it appropriate to believe that an interruption had occurred. They emphasize that for Hume it is always a contingent matter whether the testimony offered is weighty enough to overcome the initial presumption that a hitherto well-confirmed natural regularity with no previously known exceptions has not abruptly come to an end. Nevertheless the standards of doxastic acceptability we embrace in practical contexts when we are making judgements in a careful and reflective manner are such that this testimony needs to overcome an exceptionally high hurdle. Unless the plausibility that this testimony is mistaken or deliberately deceitful is even lower than the extremely low plausibility that attaches to the supposition that a pervasive and well-tested regularity that has previously manifested itself throughout all human history has been breached at a particular time and place, it is not appropriate for us to accept that this testimony is correct. And although testimony of this quality is at least conceivable, Pritchard and Richmond hold that even when we assess Hume's arguments from the perspective of Bayesian reasoning or the non-reductionist view that testimony can possess some independent credibility that does not ultimately derive from non-testimonial sources, it is apparent that Hume manages to present a strong case for the conclusion that such exemplary testimony has never yet been forthcoming in the case of any allegedly miraculous event presented

as confirmation of the truth of religious doctrines or teachings.

If Hume is right to maintain that reports of alleged miracles fail to offer any genuine support for the bold claims advanced by religions about the ultimate nature of reality, where might such support be found? Hume's religious contemporaries placed great confidence in the probative value of the design argument, and Hume undertook a detailed examination of this argument in his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, which were published posthumously in 1779.

Andrew Pyle accordingly presents in his chapter an overview of the complex discussion that occurs between Hume's principal characters in the *Dialogues*, and he arrives at the conclusion that this work was intended to show that the design argument cannot legitimately support theistic conclusions and that a naturalistic explanation of the orderly nature of the universe is, when judged by everyday standards of good causal reasoning, more acceptable than a theistic one. An interpretation of the *Dialogues* along these lines might initially be thought to overlook Hume's repeated suggestions that our intellectual faculties are wholly inadequate when confronted by the task of arriving at satisfactory conclusions about such rarefied matters of inquiry. Those pronouncements appear to give very strong support to the conclusion that Hume holds that the only legitimate response to questions about the ultimate origins of the universe is a stance of complete neutrality and suspension of judgement. However, Pyle draws an important distinction between a commitment to a particular hypothesis as more probable than all competing hypotheses with equivalently detailed content and a comparative judgement that a particular hypothesis is more likely to be

true than some specified rival hypothesis. He accepts that Hume is indeed inclined to maintain that no detailed hypothesis that we can formulate about the ultimate origins of the universe and the order it displays is worthy of endorsement as an explanation that is more likely to be true than false. But he maintains that Hume takes the view that the empirical evidence, inadequate as it is in terms of favouring a particular determinate theory as *the* most likely theory, does at least marginally favour a naturalistic account of the universe as more plausible than the world-view represented by theism and conventional deism.

As Hume was only too well aware, the apparent paucity of good empirical evidence for theism or conventional deism has not prevented the emergence of popular theistic religions with vast numbers of nominal adherents. How can the widespread prevalence of this form of belief be explained if it is not a response to evidence; and even if theistic religions potentially lack the virtue of offering a true description of the universe and our place within it, could it be the case that the existence of such religions is a vital bulwark of morality and an expression of the highest and most sublime aspects of human nature?

David O'Connor investigates the account Hume provides of the psychological origins of religious belief, and he contends that this account is a strongly deflationary one. Not only does Hume describe in the *Natural History of Religion* a set of psychological mechanisms that explain how religions can arise and sustain themselves even if their core metaphysical and historical claims are both unwarranted and untrue, but he also presents some of those mechanisms as dependent on such unedifying aspects of human nature as ignorance, fear and servile self-abasement.

O'Connor emphasizes the role Hume allocates in his causal story to the human disposition to anthropomorphize phenomena. People living in relatively sophisticated societies, where information about the genuine hidden causes of otherwise puzzling phenomena is fairly widespread, often engage in what we might term playful anthropomorphism as an amusement or a deliberately chosen form of metaphor. O'Connor argues that Hume contrasts such playful anthropomorphism with a literal-minded anthropomorphism that characteristically emerges when people have little or no grasp of the true aetiology of striking or potentially dangerous phenomena. In those circumstances the human proclivity to think in terms of otherwise unexplained phenomena as arising from agency and intention exerts itself with full force; and as no observable agents can be detected with the appropriate intentions and purposes, the idea develops of multiple invisible and intelligent powers that have a concern with human affairs. Such speculative notions are, of course, theoretically distinguishable from actual beliefs. But O'Connor locates the mechanism that takes people from a spontaneous conception of invisible and intelligent powers to belief in the existence of such powers in human fear and an acutely distressing sense of vulnerability. Once those lively and pervasive passions are engaged, a mere picture of the world is transformed into a set of beliefs that guide people's actions. In particular, people attempt to relieve their helplessness and sense of vulnerability by treating these hidden agents as susceptible to manipulation by flattery and supplication.

Ironically many theists would probably be happy to endorse this or some similar account of the origins of polytheism. O'Connor, however, argues that Hume's account of the psychological genesis of theistic religion is every

INTRODUCTION

bit as subversive as his explanation of polytheism. Hume, in O'Connor's judgement, rejects as wholly inconclusive the supposed evidence for theism from miracle reports and such arguments as the cosmological argument and the design argument. And the emergence of theism from a background of antecedent polytheism is explained by Hume in terms of an attempt by people to ingratiate themselves with a particular invisible power by assigning to that agent ever more impressive attributes and abilities in much the same way that one might seek to curry favour with a murderous human despot by eulogizing his or her non-existent qualities of wisdom, justice and benevolence. This practice of base flattery inevitably corrupts over time even the judgement of the original flatterers, and Hume sees its impact on the beliefs of other people in society, especially when aided by education and religious instruction, as even more profound and pernicious. In this manner, some previously negligible deity of comparable status to a petty human princeling is potentially exalted over many generations, without any assistance from cogent truth-oriented reasoning, into the supposedly omnipotent, infinitely perfect and wholly just creator of the entire universe.

Of a piece with his attitude towards, and arguments against, religion Hume provides a secular moral theory, one in which there is no place for God. Julia Driver turns to this account and its grounding in the natural emotional responses we have to the happiness and suffering of those around us. As O'Brien and Hardin also go on to discuss in subsequent chapters, such emotional responses have their source in our sympathy with others – sympathy, for Hume, seen as the capacity we have to share the emotions of our fellows. And, when the actions of a person lead us to feel pleasure, via sympathy with

those affected by that action, we are drawn to feel a certain moral sentiment of approbation. The feeling of such a moral sentiment constitutes, for Hume, a moral judgement.

Given that moral judgements depend on our emotional responses to others, they must be, at least in some sense, subjective since they are not independent of our natural human responses to each other. Driver, however, explores how moral judgements can nevertheless possess a kind of objectivity in that moral truths are independent of an individual's particular responses to a certain action. Such objectivity is supplied by our ability to adopt the general point of view. We can 'correct' our sometimes misguided moral judgements because we are able to adopt a perspective divorced from our own, a perspective encompassing the 'narrow circle' of those affected by a certain action and not biased by our own concerns or interests. Can, then, a moral judgement be true or false? Driver argues that it can, the ultimate grounding for the truth of a moral judgement lying in the utility of the actions that we judge to be virtuous from the general point of view.

Dan O'Brien continues to explore Hume's account of morality, focusing on his conception of virtue and vice. Virtues for Hume are those character traits that are useful and agreeable to ourselves and to others, and thus people manifest many different kinds of virtue and many different vices. Hume denies that all virtues are innate and God-given and highlights the importance of artificial virtues, traits that people in societies have developed in order to aid the social interactions within those communities. We come to be able to see certain traits as virtuous through sympathizing with the effects that a person's behaviour has on those around them. Benevolence is virtuous because I resonate to the pleasure

that the benevolent person's actions bring to his friends and acquaintances. Reason, however, also plays a role here, but only in helping us to appreciate what sentiments we should feel if we are to be impartial in the requisite way.

O'Brien goes on to explore how Hume subverts the religious conception of virtue or what Hume calls the 'monkish virtues'; elevating pride to his first natural virtue, a due sense of pride being agreeable to ourselves and ultimately useful in our social engagements. That many traits are useful and agreeable is uncontroversial, but a distinction is also usually drawn between traits that have a moral dimension and those that do not: benevolence and compassion are of the former kind; dexterity and wit, the latter. Hume, however, thinks that distinctions hereabouts are not at all sharp and that moral virtues are not different in kind from other beneficial ways of behaving.

Russell Hardin moves the discussion away from questions concerning the nature of moral judgement and what constitutes a good character to a consideration of Hume's analysis of how self-interest can give rise to social conventions and organizations that promote public benefits. Hardin views Hume as deliberately eschewing the attempt to show that moral principles are true or rationally justified in favour of a scientific investigation into how beings who are predominantly motivated by self-interest nevertheless create institutions and social practices that serve the collective good. Numerous philosophers have implausibly purported to show that altruistic behaviour is a fundamental dictate of reason or a requirement imposed upon us by some divine lawgiver, but Hume is seen by Hardin as adopting the radically different and substantially more illuminating approach of explicating how

behaviour that serves the interests of other people is primarily a product of psychological mirroring and the conventions that arise when self-interested agents of limited power are attempting to maximize their own benefits from repeated interactions with other similarly self-interested agents.

Hardin describes psychological mirroring as an automatic response that people show to the actions and emotional states of other people. It is readily observable that human beings have a strong tendency to mimic the behaviour of the people around them. However, it also seems to be the case that most of us find other people's observed emotional states similarly infectious. Observing a person showing clear signs of distress or fear tends to give rise to analogous emotional states in the spectator. And behaviour manifesting joy and gladness has at least some tendency to raise the spirits of a person who observes such behaviour. Hardin credits Hume with being one of the first thinkers to explore in any detail the implications of this phenomenon for human actions and choices. Given the existence of psychological mirroring, the psychological states of other people cannot be a matter of complete indifference to us. No matter how self-interested we happen to be, our own lives are more satisfactory, all other things being equal, when the people around us are also faring well. And this responsiveness to the psychological states of other people is what Hardin identifies as lying at the core of the Humean principle of sympathy.

Sympathy alone, however, is an inadequate explanation for the range of circumstances in which people seem to accept some check on their self-interest so that the interests of other people can be safeguarded or promoted. Hardin accordingly attaches great importance to Hume's exploration of the way in which

INTRODUCTION

repeated interaction between people comes to shape social behaviour in ways that see collective benefits emerging from self-interest. Even a purely self-interested agent needs to return favours if he or she is to have much chance of securing the co-operation in the future of people who are aware of past performances. And if we advance to a more sophisticated level, justice, in the sense of social stability and good order, is something that we all have some interest in promoting even if the institutions and habits that maintain stability and order sometimes prove inconvenient to us on particular occasions. Hardin accordingly presents Hume as someone who succeeds in setting before us a detailed account of the self-interested strategies that lead to the evolution of some of the most salient social practices and forms of organization that serve to enhance our collective well-being.

One important aspect of any human society is the relationship between the sexes, and Hume's views on this relationship and on gendered differences have aroused considerable controversy. Some commentators have accused him of acquiescing in and even actively seeking to defend sexist forms of discrimination and oppression. Other readers of his writings have, in contrast, seen him as someone who seeks to enhance the status of women and also wishes to see some of the values and psychological characteristics traditionally associated with women disseminated more widely throughout society.

Lívia Guimarães mounts a strong defence of the view that it is the latter reading of Hume's position that offers the more illuminating perspective on his attitude towards women and conventional distinctions between masculine and feminine characteristics. She helpfully reminds us of Hume's many close relationships with women throughout his life, relationships often

based on mutual respect and shared intellectual interests rather than transient sexual or romantic passion – although it is also clear from her account that such passion was certainly not wholly alien to Hume's character. Even more importantly Guimarães identifies Hume's writings as showing a great willingness to deconstruct gender dichotomies. In his *History of England*, female characters are frequently portrayed as active agents endowed with energies, drives and reasoning abilities that are at least equivalent to anything possessed by the men surrounding them. And Guimarães argues that when Hume is explicitly engaged in the study of human nature at a more theoretical level, his emphasis on human beings as embodied mammalian animals responding to the influence of concrete conditions including social circumstances and personal relationships means that he avoids the trap of constructing an idealized account of our nature that uncritically sees its essence as lying in such allegedly masculine virtues as pure rationality and the suppression of the passions. Moreover, Hume's account of human reason and inference further subverts traditional gender categories by presenting such reasoning as founded in associations of ideas, our passions and the faculty of sympathy.

Guimarães also notes that when Hume is working within traditional gendered categories, he usually speaks in favour of the wider diffusion of supposedly feminine characteristics. Such virtues as tenderness, benevolence and mildness are not simply seen by Hume as appropriate for women. Instead he argues that society, as a whole, would benefit from these virtues being more widespread amongst men as well. Hume readily acknowledges that the martial virtues of aggression, fierceness and intransigence have

utility in primitive societies, where violence is needed to maintain order and to repel invasion and despotic oppression. But in more civilized societies Hume sees other virtues as more effective at promoting the general well-being, and Guimarães draws our attention to the fact that Hume frequently indicates that these less abrasive virtues are best spread throughout society by increasing the opportunity for women to exert their influence on men. Guimarães therefore concludes her chapter with the striking suggestion that Hume can be seen both as sketching out an ideal society that would constitute a feminist utopia and as recommending a greater emphasis on supposedly feminine virtues and attributes as an effective means of improving existing societies.

Margaret Schabas investigates Hume's economic thought. Schabas points out that Hume differs from most present-day economists by emphasizing the greater value to the individual of mental well-being rather than material wealth. Nevertheless Hume's interest in all aspects of human nature and the social forces that shape people's lives meant that he corresponded and published quite extensively on matters of economic policy and theory. Indeed Schabas argues that the circulation and influence in the eighteenth century of Hume's economic essays entitles him to be seen as one of the foremost economists of his era. His pre-eminence amongst British theorists was eventually to be usurped by his friend Adam Smith. Schabas reminds us, however, that this was not to happen until the 1790s, despite the publication of Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776 and Hume's death in that same year.

Schabas concentrates in her chapter on Hume's response to the conspicuous rise in the wealth of Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She draws

our attention to the care that Hume took to investigate this phenomenon by seeking out the best available data and using his extensive acquaintance with classical authors to compare Europe with the civilizations of the ancient world. Moreover, Schabas maintains that Hume was right to explain this rise in wealth by invoking the combined impact of division of labour and the increased supply of silver coinage made possible by the mines of the New World.

Hume also emerges as equally astute in his reflections on the consequences of such additional wealth for human happiness and welfare. Unlike conservative critics of wealth and luxury who saw and often still affect to see such things as harbingers of moral decay, Hume held that the modern commercial world and the opportunities that it generated had an improving effect on civil society and people's characters. Schabas presents him as arguing that trade and manufacturing promoted civility, gave a new impetus to learning and human ingenuity, and enhanced liberty and equality. Hume saw these benign influences as most readily impinging on those located in the middle ranks of society, but a flourishing middle class helped to bind all of society together in ways that ultimately benefited everyone. So although Hume was fully prepared to disparage the rapacious acquisition of expensive trinkets, Schabas locates in his writings an ingenious account of how wealth indirectly promotes human happiness. Hume's predisposition towards Stoic values meant that he viewed material possessions in themselves as being of little consequence once the necessities of life had been supplied, but the process of acquiring wealth through trade and participation in manufacturing served the crucial role of giving people the opportunity to gain personal satisfaction and a sense of purpose from the exertion

INTRODUCTION

of their mental and physical powers in an undertaking that was immediately appealing to them. As might be expected with Hume, this confidence in the ameliorative powers of the commercial world is hedged around with substantial reservations. Schabas indicates that these reservations presciently included worries about the destructive power of public debt in the hands of politicians and the prediction that the American colonies and China would eventually eclipse Britain and other European nations in terms of trade and manufacturing output. But Schabas amply succeeds in showing that Hume's case for supposing that commerce and the pursuit of wealth can often improve people's dispositions and moral character remains a useful antidote to the unthinking prejudice that morality and personal development are best promoted by austerity and the eschewal of luxury.

Mark Rowe, in contrast, is less sanguine about the merits of Hume's account of a standard of taste in matters of aesthetic judgement. Rowe argues that Hume is concerned to reconcile a form of subjectivism about aesthetic taste with the supposition that some aesthetic judgements can be mistaken. The subjectivism is a product of Hume's commitment to the view that aesthetic qualities are projected onto the world rather than discovered in the world. But the need to find some room for the concept of an error in aesthetic judgement arises from Hume's conviction that some judgements of aesthetic merit would be as perverse and as obviously illegitimate as some patently false pronouncements about physical objects and such qualities as size and shape.

A part of the answer to Hume's dilemma lies in the concept of a qualified judge, and Rowe enumerates the attributes that Hume regards as essential if someone is to be viewed

as such a judge. The thought here is that aesthetic pronouncements issuing from people who lack those attributes can be dismissed in much the same way as the colour judgements of someone known to be suffering from a fever or viewing an object in non-standard lighting conditions carry no weight with us in respect of our assessments of the object's real colour. This, however, raises the question of whose judgement is to be accepted if and when people who count as qualified judges disagree. In some specific instances Hume is perfectly content to say that the disagreement is irresolvable. But Rowe points out that Hume is not always so accommodating: sometimes he seeks a standard of taste that can override or correct the judgement of qualified judges.

Rowe maintains that all Hume's attempts at explaining how such corrections can be given legitimacy are unsuccessful. Hume sometimes appeals to rules of composition, but Rowe powerfully argues that these rules, on a Humean account, can be nothing more than inductive generalizations that summarize the characteristics displayed by works that people usually find pleasing and beautiful. Thus they lack the normative force that Hume requires. Similarly, Rowe rejects Hume's alternative appeal to a consensus amongst qualified judges. Even if majority opinion were against your personal verdict, would it make sense for you, as a person with the attributes requisite for being a qualified judge, to treat your judgements as wrong simply because you are in a minority? Finding yourself in a minority might well give you grounds for reviewing your reactions to a particular work or artistic performance again. But being in a minority of qualified judges is not constitutive of being wrong in your aesthetic judgement. Rowe concludes that although Hume rightly sees the need to

accommodate critical discussion when considering questions of aesthetic merit, his view of what constitutes argument in that arena is too impoverished to explain how genuine debate can take place and real discoveries can be made.

Timothy Costelloe introduces us to Hume's conception of 'philosophical' or 'true' history, and his analysis of what Hume means by such history helps to bind together Hume's more explicitly philosophical works and his *History of England*. Some of Hume's more malicious critics have accused him of effectively abandoning philosophy after the poor reception afforded the *Treatise* in order to pursue money and popular fame through the alternative means of writing a best-selling history. However, Costelloe brings into focus numerous important continuities between the philosophical project pursued in the *Treatise* and Hume's aspirations for his *History*.

Costelloe argues that Hume sees 'philosophical' history as an attempt to combine responsiveness to evidence, rather than the promptings of partiality or the imagination, with a reconstruction of the past that sustains the reader's interest and gives him or her a lively sense of the truth of the events portrayed. A mere propagandist concentrates only on the second of these two tasks; but if the author makes no attempt to select events and shape the narrative in a way that will appeal to the reader's imagination and powers of empathy, then the resulting work will be entirely unreadable. Thus a writer of the kind of history that Hume views as worthy of a philosophical author needs to have the skills to weigh testimony carefully, a passion for the pursuit of the truth that promotes impartiality and overrides any temptation to flatter influential patrons, and the capacity to keep the imagination in check so that fanciful associative links do not crowd out

conclusions supported by real evidence. At the same time the writer requires many of the skills of the poet or dramatist: the truth must be shaped and ordered so that a reader readily enters into the narrative and engages with the character and situation of the personages presented to him.

Costelloe emphasizes that Hume sees history written in this manner as serving the crucially important function of laying out the past before us so that it can serve as a guide to future conduct. Firstly, it allows distant past events to be used by the scientist of human nature as a means of confirming or refuting hypotheses about our mental mechanisms and dispositions. Thus it provides the philosopher, in his role as a psychological anatomist, with the data he needs to guide and refine his conclusions. However, it also serves the second function of improving our moral judgements. People and events close to us in time and space are frequently assessed through a prism of partiality that prevents us from seeing how they strike other people, and important potential consequences have often not yet had a chance to manifest themselves. In contrast, if we are reading a historical narration of events that took place many years ago that involved people not intimately connected to us, we have an opportunity to arrive at less biased and better-informed moral judgements, a habit that can then be transferred to situations in which our own interests are at stake. Thus Costelloe maintains that Hume regarded his philosophical and historical investigations as seamlessly intertwined. Just as abstruse philosophy is depicted in the first section of the *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* as guiding us to a better understanding of human nature and easy philosophy is portrayed as inspiring us to act virtuously, so too 'philosophical' history continues the task of laying

INTRODUCTION

bare the hidden mechanisms of human action while simultaneously depicting virtuous and vicious characters in such a light that we sympathize with the former and are repelled by the latter.

Paul Russell brings the volume to a conclusion with a discussion of changing trends in the interpretation of Hume's philosophical position. Russell distinguishes between the interpretation of a philosopher's position and the legacy of that position. Interpretation is a matter of arriving at an understanding of a philosopher's original aims and intentions, whereas the legacy is constituted by the reception of his or her views and their fruitfulness over time. The various competing interpretations that might arise form part of that reception, but there need be no correlation between the dynamism of the interpretative framework and its philosophical fecundity. Similarly, a sensitive and well-balanced interpretation might reveal itself over time to be nothing more than the accurate signposting of a barren philosophical cul-de-sac, whereas an interpretation that is little more than a caricature of a philosopher's actual project might fortuitously inspire subsequent philosophical developments of great value and independent interest. Russell, however, warns against the error of supposing that an important and interesting legacy confirms the accuracy of the interpretation that generated it. He also points out that if we complacently allow an interpretation of a philosopher's views to go unchallenged because it is linked to a valuable legacy, we are in danger of forgoing important philosophical developments that might arise from reflection on some plausible alternative interpretation.

In the specific case of Hume, Russell argues that much of the fruitfulness of his legacy up to this point has arisen from a

pattern of interpretation that stresses his radical empiricism and his affinities with Locke and Berkeley. Critics of empiricism have seen Hume as providing the valuable service of exposing how radical empiricism ultimately collapses into incoherence, whereas philosophers of empiricist sympathies have often purported to find in Hume the inspiration for developing what they hoped would be a successful version of empiricism that eschewed all *a priori* metaphysical speculations. Russell is not inclined to deny that this interpretative tradition has inspired much important philosophical work, but he does deny that it offers the resources required to construct an accurate interpretation of the underlying nature of Hume's philosophical stance.

The difficulty that Russell identifies is that it has become increasingly clear that the empiricist elements of Hume's thought co-exist with a naturalistic programme that involves the construction of an intricate science of human nature that purports to be based on experience and experiment. However, the interpretation of Hume as a radical empiricist seems to have sceptical implications that are inconsistent with the development of such a science. Yet if we water down the empiricism in order to make it more compatible with the positive side of Hume's philosophy, it remains the case that Hume's philosophical writings appear to contain an array of explicitly sceptical arguments that do not need to be embedded within a framework of radical empiricism in order to pose a serious challenge to his naturalistic project.

Russell strikingly sums up the situation as generating the worry that Hume's philosophical outlook is ultimately broken-backed. The sceptical aspect of his philosophy, which seems to be clearly present even if it is not to be construed as generated by a radical form

of empiricism, does not initially appear to cohere well with Hume's science of human nature. Russell accordingly maintains that the way forward is to place Hume's philosophical writings in a new interpretative framework, one that sees Hume not as part of a triumvirate of British Empiricists or a follower of Newton or Hutcheson but as someone who is actively attacking the metaphysical and moral foundations of Christianity as a member of a partially concealed tradition of 'speculative' atheism. In Russell's judgement, recognition of Hume's irreligious intentions as manifested even within the *Treatise* provides the key to an account of Hume's writings that can reconcile his sceptical

arguments with the more positive aspects of his philosophical position. Whether Russell is right to imply that this is both necessary and sufficient to permit such a reconciliation is not yet clear. However, other work by Russell has certainly undermined the supposition that the contents of the *Treatise* lack a substantial connection to issues of religion. And it can safely be asserted that solving the puzzle of how to harmonize the sceptical and positive sides of Hume's philosophy is now widely acknowledged to be one of the principal tasks that needs to be accomplished if we are ever to possess a truly satisfactory interpretation of all the essential elements of Hume's philosophical perspective.

1

HUME'S LIFE, INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT AND RECEPTION

Emilio Mazza

These are a few particulars, which may perhaps appear trifling, but to me no particulars seem trifling that relate to so great a man (W. Cullen to J. Hunter, 17 September 1776)¹

1. 'WAKE-MINDED'

'Our Davie's a fine good-natured crater, but uncommon wake-minded', Hume's mother is supposed to have said in a piece of familial assessment.² And with regard to Hume's religious principles, his brother John ventured the opinion: 'My brother Davie is a good enough sort of man, *but rather narrow minded*'.³ This latter judgement echoes in its choice of words Hume's own recollection that in Paris they 'used to laugh at me for my narrow way of thinking in these particulars' (LDH 2.273, 484), and his description of Rousseau – 'a very agreeable, amiable Man; but a great Humourist' (LDH 2.13, 303; see LDH 2.130, 381) – indicates that Hume shared with his brother a partiality for verbal sallies that combined initial restrained praise with a less commendatory ending. We seem too to find in the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, a riposte on Hume's part to his mother's assessment of his character: 'any remarkable defect

in . . . understanding, dignity of mind, would bereave even a very good-natured, honest man of this honourable appellation. Who did ever say, except by way of irony, that such a one was a man of great virtue, but an egregious blockhead?' (EPM App. 4.2 / 314).⁴

Young Hume was troubled by a 'weakness' of spirits; later on he would see a significant relationship between 'delicacy' and 'weakness' of the mind (LDH 1.17, 3; 1.397, 214). The first as well as the last edition of his *Essays* open with 'Of delicacy of taste and passion', and only in 1772 does Hume stop claiming a 'very considerable connexion' between these delicacies in the original frame of the mind (E 603). His mother's supposed saying has been discussed for 150 years by those who seek to defend the reputation of 'one of the greatest philosophers of any age, and the best friend to mankind', as d'Holbach calls Hume, without contradicting a woman of 'singular merit', as Hume calls his mother.⁵

At the end of his *Life* Hume celebrates himself as 'a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour', and his temper as 'naturally cheerful and sanguine' and not 'very irascible' (MOL, LDH 1.1–3). In

1757, somewhat between jest and earnest, Hume says he is a 'good-natured man of a bad character' (LDH 1.264, 139) and also (if the text be Hume's) a 'very good man, the constant purpose of whose life is to do mischief'.⁶ The history of his writings shows him as a man of 'superior genius', a quality that he does not even recognize in d'Alembert, who was simply a man of 'superior parts', even though after Paris Hume considered him 'with some few exceptions (for there must always be some exceptions) . . . a better model of a virtuous and philosophical character' (LDH 2.110, 363).

2. MY OWN (UNSUCCESSFUL) WRITINGS

In 1734, when he begins 'to despair of ever recovering' from his 'Disease of the Learned', Hume wrote 'a kind of History of my Life' (LDH 1.13, 3; 1.17, 3); in 1776, when his life is really 'despaired of', he writes 'the History of my own Life' or *My own Life* (LDH 2.318, 522A; LDH 2.323, 525). This short 'funeral oration of myself', Hume says, contains 'little more than the History of my Writings', since 'almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits' (MOL, LDH 1.7). The rhythm of the *Life* is the alternation of learning and business, expectations and disappointments, which recalls that of action and repose in the 'Refinement in the Arts' (E 270). Every disappointment is overcome by character, 'command of temper' and 'cheerful humour' (MOL, LDH 1.7). Hume's *Life* is also a history of the reception of his writings, where he commonly distinguishes between immediate and gradual success. The want of it is chiefly measured by the standard of silence. The *Treatise* and the first volume of the *History*

are the most 'unfortunate' books, and the *Political Discourses* a work 'successful on the first publication' and 'well received abroad and at home'. The more sustained success begins in the 1750s, when Hume discovers symptoms of a 'rising reputation', including, for example, a 'railing' reaction of the clergy (MOL, LDH 1.2–4).

3. 'NEVER TO REPLY TO ANY BODY'

In about 20 years (1739–61) Hume publishes almost every kind of writing: a *Treatise*, its *Appendix* and *Abstract*; a *Letter* to a friend and a *True Account* of the conduct of another friend, the *Essays*, the *Philosophical Essays* and the *Enquiries*; the *Discourses* and the *Dissertations*; the *History*, the *Natural History* and a *Dialogue*. He also receives almost every kind of answer. In 1766 he observes: 'I could cover the Floor of a large Room with Books and Pamphlets wrote against me, to none of which I ever made the least Reply, . . . from my Desire of Ease and Tranquillity' (LDH 2.92, 351).

With regard to the years 1749–51, in 1776 Hume declares he has 'fixed' and 'inflexibly maintained' a resolution 'never to reply to any body' (MOL, LDH 1.3). He starts asserting this resolution in the second half of the 1750s, as a reaction to the 'Warburtonian School', but in 1760 he declares that he formed it 'in the beginning of my Life, that is, of my literary Life' (LDH 1.320, 172), which seems therefore to begin with a commitment to refuse any literary controversy. Like many official claims, however, this is not completely reliable even though it does contain a substantial admixture of truth. He often replies indirectly to his critics in his writings, and sometimes he is even driven to the expedient

of explaining that he is giving an answer and that it should be extended to different adversaries, as in the 1775 'Advertisement' to the *Enquiries* (LDH 2.301, 509).

In 1757 someone suggests that he has deliberately 'so larded his Work with Irreligion' that the first volume of the *History* 'might sell',⁷ and Hume observes that the few 'Strokes of Irreligion' are of 'small Importance', even though they are likely 'to encrease the sale' (LDH 1.250, 132; 1.256, 136). A few months later he allows that he would accept the challenge to defend *The Natural History of Religion* against Warburton's criticisms were he attacking his 'principal Topics'. As he tells the bookseller: 'The Hopes of getting an Answer, might probably engage [Warburton] to give us something farther of the same kind; which at least saves you the Expence of advertising' (LDH 1.265–67, 140).

Concerning his no-reply resolution, in 1758 Hume still maintains that he 'shall probably uphold it to the End of [his] life'. The *Concise and Genuine Account* of his dispute with Rousseau recalls that Hume 'hath seen his writings frequently censured with bitterness . . . without ever giving an answer to his adversaries', yet, in the case of the Rousseau imbroglio, the 'circumstances' were such as to draw Hume into a scandal, 'in spite of his inclinations'. Consistent with them, he authorizes the editors to declare 'that he will never take the pen again on the subject'.⁸

4. NOT UNFIT FOR BUSINESS: 'THE ARMY IS TOO LATE'

Like Lucian in *De mercede conductis* and *Apologia pro mercede conductis*, which Hume first quotes in 1751–2, he takes satisfaction

both in the fact that he has never 'preferred a request to one great Man, or even . . . [made] advances of friendship to any of them' and in the fact that he has nevertheless found himself on good terms with such people in his personal affairs, public business, and while composing his *History* (MOL, LDH 1.5–6; LDH 1.113, 63; 1.295, 156; 1.355, 191; 1.427–28, 232; 2.188, 422). As a man now beyond middle age working for the Northern Department, he finds that 'to a Man of a literary turn, who has no great undertaking in view, . . . public Business is the best Ressource of his declining Years. Learning requires the Ardor of Youth' (LDH 2.385, 137). Thirty-three years before, in spring 1734, trying to leave his distemper behind and working on the *Treatise*, he found 'two things very good, Business & Diversion', and resolved 'to seek out a more active life', laying 'aside for some time' his pretensions in learning (LDH 1.17, 3; MOL, LDH 1.1).

In 1767 the Earl of Rochford remembers that Hume is 'unfit for business', and Hume himself has already admitted that the office of secretary requires 'a Talent for speaking in public to which I was never accusomd' (LDH 1.519, 289).⁹ However, Hume's essay 'Of Eloquence' (1742) attacks, following Swift and La Bruyère, the 'antient Prejudice industriously propagated by the Dunces in all Countries, *That a Man of Genius is unfit for Business*' (E 621), and the first *Enquiry* (1748) claims that the accuracy of abstruse philosophy is 'subservient' to every art or profession: the politician, the lawyer and the army general may take advantage from it (EHU 1.9 / 10). In part, at least, this sounds like a defence of those aspects of his life and career that were not directly connected to his literary and philosophical pursuits, for at various times he found himself taking on the roles of clerk for a merchant in Bristol

(1734), companion and tutor of a marquess near St Albans (1745–6), secretary to a general and judge-advocate in Lorient (1746–7), secretary and aide-de-camp to the same general in Vienna and Turin (1748), library-keeper in Edinburgh (1752–7), secretary to the Embassy and Chargé des affaires in Paris (1763–6), and Under-Secretary of State for the Northern Department in London (1767–8). He also considers (but ultimately rejects) the ‘not agreeable’ life of the ‘Travelling Tutor’ (LDH 1.18, 3; 1.17–8, 24; 1.35–6, 14; 1.57–8, 24; NLH 26, 10), even though he is often ‘mortally sick at sea’ (LDH 2.206, 432; 1.214, 105; also see LDH 1.114, 64; 2.95, 352) and claims that ‘Shortness . . . is almost the only agreeable Circumstance that can be in a Voyage’ (LDH 1.105, 56).

Every time he is enjoying his solitude Hume receives an ‘invitation’ he cannot refuse (MOL, LDH 1.2, 4, 5–6). According to the correspondence, his life is a permanent yearning for (philosophical) retreat and leisure, continuously thwarted by external circumstances, leading him into some practical business: ‘I lived several years happy with my brother at Ninewells, and had not his marriage changed a little the state of the family, I believe I should have lived and died there’, he says in 1759 about his own ‘reluctance to change places’, even though in 1763 he has ‘so often changed’ his places of abode that he comes to think that ‘as far as regards happiness, there is no great difference among them’ (LDH 1.295, 156; 1.415, 224; see also LDH 1.243, 128; 1.246, 130; 1.531, 295; 2.189, 423). With regard to the years spent with General St Clair, the *Life* claims that ‘these were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life’ (MOL, LDH 1.2–3), even though 15 years before he has allowed: ‘I have frequently, in the course of my life, met with interruptions, from business and

dissipation; yet always returned to my closet with pleasure’ (LDH 1.451, 244).

In 1746 Hume receives an ‘unexpected’ invitation from St Clair to go with him as secretary in his military expedition, which was planned to be an attack on French Canada but came to its conclusion on the coast of Brittany (MOL, LDH 1.2; LDH 1.382, 206; 1.92, 51; NLH 24, 10). He arranges his ‘Departure for America’ (‘Such a Romantic Adventure, & such a Hurry’) with one box of books and one of paper in his trunk (LDH 1.90, 50).¹⁰ Being asked whether he ‘would incline to enter the Service’, he answers that at his years he could not ‘accept of a lower commission than a company’ (LDH 1.94, 52). One year after he says that for the ‘Army [it] is too late’ (NLH 26, 10). The expedition is a ‘failure’, but it gives rise on Hume’s part to a beautiful letter to his brother, a brief journal or *hypomnema*, a piece on ‘The descent on the coast of Brittany in 1746’, and possibly an article (LDH 1.99, 54; 1.94–8, 53). The expedition also shapes Hume’s opinions about soldiers. Major Alexander Forbes, for example, is described as ‘a Man of the greatest Sense, Honour, Modesty, Mildness & Equality of Temper in the World’: ‘His Learning was very great for a man of any Profession, but a Prodigy for a Soldier. His Bravery had been try’d & was unquestion’d’. When Forbes kills himself as a result of anxiety and fear that he may have been guilty of a dereliction of duty, Hume maintains that in the course of dying from his self-administered injuries, he expressed a ‘steady Contempt of Life’ and ‘determin’d philosophical Principles’. And after Hume has seen his friend die in front of him, it is probably Hume who also undertakes the official duty of recording that one Dougal Steuart was made Captain ‘in room of Alex^r Forbes deceased’ (LDH 1.97, 53).¹¹

In 1734 Hume had compared the soldier's courage to the devotee's devotion (LDH 1.21, 4). In 1748 he publishes 'Of National Characters', where a few pages could be entitled 'The Soldier and the Priest'. It is a double reaction to his academic and military adventures in Edinburgh and Lorient. In 1743 Hume reads Leechman's sermon on prayer, and sends him some remarks on argument and style, together with 22 small faults that the author does not even take into consideration. The sermon, Hume concludes, unavoidably makes his religious author 'a rank Atheist' (NLH 10–14, 6). Despite his youthful claim that 'there is nothing to be learnt from a Professor, which is not to be met with in Books',¹² in 1744 Hume attempts in vain to become professor at the University of Edinburgh, and declares himself extremely surprised that the 'accusation of Heresy, Deism, Scepticism, Atheism &c' is supported by the 'Authority of Mr Hutcheson & even Mr Leechman' (LDH 1.58, 24).

In 1741 Leechman published another sermon on the character of the priest. 'Of National Character' is also an answer to him. Leechman claims we can never clearly 'unvail' to mankind their 'hidden hypocrisy', nor justly contempt the devout worshippers by calling the outward displays of their inward devotion 'solemn grimaces, and hypocritical airs';¹³ Hume replies that the clergymen 'promote the spirit of superstition, by a continued grimace and hypocrisy' and this 'dissimulation often destroys' their 'candor' (E 200n). Hume denounces their conceited ambition, professional faction and persecuting spirit. In contrast, soldiers are 'lavish and generous, as well as brave', 'candid, honest, and undesigning'. Since 'company' is their sphere they can acquire 'good breeding and an openness of behaviour' and a 'considerable share' of politeness (E 199). Even

though soldiers have their exceptions, Hume passed his St Clair years 'agreeably, and in good company' (MOL, LDH 1.2–3): reliable officers, learned physicians, whist-players and humorous people who dedicate themselves to the 'service of the Ladys'. Among priests, on the contrary, 'gaiety, much less the excesses of pleasure, is not permitted' (E 201n). He is 'in the Army' and he calls it 'our Family' (LDH 1.97, 53; 1.132, 64).¹⁴ With these 'friends or confidants' – he says with Quintilian and Svetonius, or more simply with Voiture – he can be free '*in seriis et in jocis, – amici omnium horarum*' (in grave and jocular manners, – friends of all hours) (LDH 1.102, 56).

In 1747, when St Clair invites Hume to go over to Flanders with him (LDH 1.108–9, 61), he has 'a great curiosity to see a real campaign', notwithstanding his fears of the 'expense' and looking ridiculous as a result of 'living in a Camp, without any Character & without any thing to do' (NLH 23, 9). Nothing could be 'more useful' to his 'historical projects'. Hume looks forward to picking up a great 'military knowledge', by 'living in the General's family, and being introduced frequently to the Duke's' (ibid.). In 1748 he attends St Clair in his mission to Vienna and Turin, notwithstanding an 'infinite regret' for leaving 'stores of study & plans of thinking' (LDH 1.109, 61; 1.111, 62). In accordance with the opinions of Lucian, Bayle, Addison and the *Guardian*, and following the advice contained in a volume by Polybius, which he keeps in his hand (LDH 1.100, 54), he is looking for 'an opportunity of seeing Courts & Camps':

this knowledge may even turn to account to me, as a man of letters, which I confess has always been the sole object of my ambition. I have long had an intention,

in my riper years, of composing some History; . . . some greater experience of the Operations of the Field, & the Intrigues of the Cabinet, will be requisite, in order to enable me to speak with judgement upon these subjects (LDH 1.109, 61).

St Clair arrives in Turin on 8 May, Hume and St Clair's nephew, Sir Harry Erskine, about eight days later; on 29 November 1748 they all set out.¹⁵ The result of the mission is a 'long epistle', which he calls a 'sort of Journal of our Travels' (LDH 1.114, 64; 1.132, 64). Before the departure Hume optimistically contrasts his situation with that of the 'severe' Lord Marchmont, who, 'entirely employed in the severer studies', suddenly opens his eyes on a 'fair nymph' aged just 16 and marries her in a few days: 'they say many small fevers prevent a great one. Heaven be praised, that I have always liked the persons & company of the fair sex: For by that means, I hope to escape such ridiculous passions' (LDH 1.110, 61). Ten days after his arrival he is already 'troubled' by an 'indisposition' connected with the 'pretty women' of Turin. After two months he declares an 'attachment' for a Countess of 24.¹⁶ The Turin-based Madame Duvernay anticipates the Parisian Madame de Boufflers and their extrovert public reputations stand somewhat in tension with Hume's claim that he, like Mandeville's perfect sociable benevolent man,¹⁷ took a 'particular pleasure in the company of modest women' and had therefore no reason to be 'displeased with the reception I met with from them' (MOL, LDH 1.7). In summer 1764 he reminds his reverend friend Jardine that 'A Man in Vogue will always have something to pretend to with the fair Sex', and Jardine banters: 'An inordinate Love of the fair Sex . . . is one of those Sins,

that always, even from your earliest Years, did most easily beset you' (LDH 1.438, 237; 2.353, App. C. V).

In Turin Hume becomes bored and sick. Admiral John Forbes called him 'the sleeping philosopher', someone says he was 'affected by a most violent Fever', some other that he 'received Extreme Unction in a dangerous illness'. He hangs around with Lord Charlemont and reads Montesquieu's *Esprit* (LDH 1.133, 65).¹⁸ Consistent with his *Treatise*, and in the name of 'sympathy', he enjoys the pleasure and beauty of extended, fertile, cultivated plains. He wishes to make 'a short Tour thro' some of the chief Cities of Italy', but apparently the Duke of Newcastle rejects the request.¹⁹ He does the accounts (as he did in Bristol) and examines the Sardinian documents in the Commissary's office.²⁰ He writes St Clair's official letters and copies them into a letter book. He probably suggests passages for St Clair's letters (like the observation of the historians that 'Britain has commonly lost by Treaties what she gain'd by Arms') and certainly receives suggestions for his future writings: 'Of the Balance of Power' discusses the peace of Aix la Chapelle, and the dying Hume is still remembering those inconceivably 'good terms' that France had granted to Britain.²¹

Hume's experience in Turin resumes that begun in Lorient and prepares the way for his 1760s appointments in Paris and London. General St Clair, Lord Hertford and his brother General Conway all wanted Hume with them. St Clair 'positively refused to accept of a Secretary from the Ministry', and Hume goes 'along with him'; some 15 years later in 1763 Hertford is 'resolved never to see, or do business with his Secretary, and therefore desired [Hume] should attend him' (LDH 1.111, 62; 1.421, 228). In March 1767 Hume is 'deeply immersed in study', when Hertford surprisingly urged him to 'accept of

the office of Depute-Secretary of State under his brother'. He cannot refuse and sees himself 'embarked for some time in state affairs'. Yet, he says, 'I foresaw also that a place was offered me of credit and confidence; that it connected me with General Conway' (LDH 2.123, 374; also see 1.511, 282). Hume says he feels like a 'banished man in a strange country'. He is not 'hurry'd with Business' and commonly attends on the Secretary 'from ten to three'. He has 'no more Business than would be requisite for [his] Amusement' in London (LDH 2.123, 374; 2.127, 377).

Hume is not only employed in 'cyphering and decyphering': during his public activities he does not forget his opinions. When the burden of diplomatic work at the embassy in Paris is falling entirely upon him (LDH 511–12, 282–3), and friends start calling him 'a man of Business' (LDH 1.421n, 228),²² he saves from prison and death an Englishman who attempted to kill himself in the Seine. Marischal Keith congratulates Hume: 'you have done many good works in your Ministerial functions, I am sure it was one to save a poor fellow from the gallows, who chose rather to drown than starve'.²³ And Diderot has the complete story:

They fished him out alive. They brought him to the Grand Châtelet, and the Ambassador had to interpose his authority to prevent them from putting him to death. Some days ago Mr. Hume told us that no political negotiation had been more intriguing than this affaire and that he had been obliged to go twenty times to see the first president before he could make him understand that there was no article, in any of the treaties between France and England, that forbade an Englishman from drowning himself in the Seine under penalty of being hanged. And he added that, if his compatriot had unfortunately

been jailed, he would have risked ignominiously losing his life for having or not having drowned himself.²⁴

It was the time of extravagant requests, like that of the 'Apulien Philosopher' Vincenzo Maria Gaudio (1722–74). In January 1764 he wrote to Hume asking him two questions 'for the good of human kind': 'How many and which physical and moral causes produce the variety and contrariety of opinions among men?'; 'How to reduce the sum of evils and increase that of goods?'.²⁵

When he is Under-Secretary in London, 'degenerated into a petty Statesman' and 'entirely occupied in Politics' (LDH 2.128, 379), he meets another extravagant case: 'one Giraldi, an Italian Physician'. Giraldi, who is in London and needs protection in Italy, addresses himself to Hume; Hume reporting to Lord Shelburne:

[He] seems to me a man of sense and learning, and whose orthodoxy has of consequence been brought under great and I suppose just suspicions. . . . It seems a Cardinal, in his absence, fell in love with his wife, and has taken her into keeping; and on the physician expressing some displeasure at this treatment, his Eminence, who has great credit in the Holy See, has threatend to have him put into the Inquisition He has addressed himself to me, on the supposition, no doubt, that I woud sympathize with his cause. I conjure therefore your Lordship, *if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, if there be anything comely or of good report*, to save the poor heretic from the flames . . . his case wou'd puzzle Rhadamanthus himself: as a cuckold, he ought to go to heaven; as a heretic to hell. But, without joking, his case is worthy of compassion; and I recommend it to your Lordship's humanity.²⁶

Some 'fresh intelligence' discovers to Hume that Giraldi 'lives in intimacy with Gemino, no great sign of his orthodoxy'. His project was to retire to the Island of Capri, which Giraldi 'represents as an earthly paradise', and – Hume concludes – 'indeed the only paradise he ever expects to go to'.²⁷

5. MY OWN FORTUNE

'Money – says the *Concise Account* – is not universally the chief object with mankind; vanity weighs farther with some men'.²⁸ Not entirely exempt from vanity, Hume never abandons the money that belongs to him 'of right', like the quarter salary from the Annandale Estate and the half-pay military pension from the Treasury: after more than 15 years he is still fighting for it. But he is also ready to retract his application at the Advocates' Library, retain the office and give a friend a bond of annuity for the salary. In 1747 he calls himself 'a good Oeconomist' (NLH 26, 10). Riches are valuable 'at all times, and to all men' (E 276), and in his short *Life* he spends some words celebrating his income.

He says he was 'of a good family', but 'not rich'. As a younger brother, his 'fortune' was 'very slender' and therefore unsuitable to his literary plan of life. So he laid down a rule: 'to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune'. In 1745 his Annandale appointments made a 'considerable accession to [his] small fortune'; in 1746–8 the St Clair appointments earned him a 'fortune' that he calls 'independent'. He wanted 'to maintain unimpaired [his] independency' and he is now 'master of near a thousand pounds'. In the 1750s the Faculty of Advocates gave him 'little or no emolument' but the 'command

of a large library'. At the beginning of the 1760s 'the copy-money given [him] by the booksellers, much exceeded any thing formerly known in England' and Hume is 'not only independent, but opulent'. In 1766 the Parisian Secretary returned to Edinburgh, 'not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income' than he left it. He was now 'desirous of trying what superfluity could produce'. In 1769 the London Under-Secretary returned to Edinburgh 'very opulent' (he 'possessed a revenue of 1000 l. a year') and with the double prospect of long enjoying his 'ease' and of seeing the increase of his 'reputation' (MOL, LDH 1.1–6). Thanks to Hertford's family he really was, as he once wrote from Paris, 'in the high Road to Riches' and 'in the high Road to Dignities' (NLH 78, 38; LDH 1.421, 228).

6. STRIKE OUT STERNE: FASHION IN PARIS

Hume was in Paris, Reims and La Flèche in the 1730s, Paris in 1748 and Paris again in the 1760s. He constantly saw himself through the French looking-glass: the first philosophical readings and the successful French translations of his writings (in 1761 the *Essais Philosophiques* earn themselves a place in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*), the Embassy, the Court, the Great Ladies (Madame de Boufflers) and the *Philosophes* (Rousseau). In 1745 Hume first expresses the slightly melancholy intention of retiring to the South of France (NLH 17, 7). In the *Life* he remembers living in Paris as a 'real satisfaction': 'I thought once of settling there for life' (MOL, LDH 1.6). Everyone affects to consider him 'one of the greatest geniuses in the world' (LDH 1.410, 223), since in

Paris, unlike London, a man of letters 'meets immediatly with Regard & Attention' (LDH 1.497, 272).

'Anglomania was the manner of the place', Charlemont observes, and 'Hume's Fashion' was 'truely ridiculous': 'no Lady's Toilet was compleat without Hume's attendante'. Walpole is more concise: 'Mr. Hume is fashion itself'.²⁹ Indeed, he was more celebrated for his name rather than his writings, for his economical, historical and anti-religious writings rather than his philosophical opinions, and for his general opinions instead of his precise arguments. The French *mode* entailed 'excessive civilities' (MOL, LDH 1.6), but what was 'at first oppressive' in two months ultimately sat 'more easy', especially as he gradually recovered the 'facility' of speaking the language (LDH 1.417, 225; 1.414, 224; 1.498–9, 272).³⁰ The *Life* sums up: 'Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris'. And Hume reports, in a remark that he was later to strike out, that 'Dr Sterne told me, that he saw I was [celebrated in town] in the same manner that he himself had been in London: But he added, that his Vogue lasted only one Winter' (MOL, LDH 1.6).³¹

In 1762 Sterne does not worship the French goddesses, but, he says, he has 'converted many unto Shandeism'. In 1764 he preached a sermon deemed 'offensive' (he calls it 'innocent') at the Embassy Chapel. Hertford has just furnished the new and 'magnificent' Hôtel de Brancas, which gave 'the subject of conversation to the polite circles of Paris, for a fortnight at least'.³² Sterne preaches on the Book of Kings and Hezekiah, who foolishly showed all the precious things that were in his house; even his wives and concubines, adds the preacher. Behind 'urbanity or the etiquette of courts',

Sterne unveils Hezekiah-Hertford's 'vanity' and 'ostentation'. Later on, at Hertford's table, Sterne had a dispute with Hume (a 'little pleasant sparring', he says). In his sermon Sterne had celebrated integrity and miracles, and blamed pride and hypocrisy. At dinner 'David was disposed to make a little merry with the Parson; and, in return, the Parson was equally disposed to make a little mirth with the Infidel'. Sterne concludes: 'it is this amiable turn of character, that has given more consequence and force to his scepticism, than all the arguments of his sophistry'.³³

At the end of 1765 Sterne publishes his *Sermons* with a probably less 'unlucky' and offensive version of 'Hezekiah'. He is ready to 'quarrel' with Hume by calling him a 'deist', if he will not add his name to the 'most splendid list' of subscribers. The *Sermons* came out, but Hume's name was not in the list. In 1767 Hume recalls the 'usual extravagance' of Sterne's productions (NLH 160, 80), and in the *Sentimental Journey* Sterne plays with Hume the historian, his 'excellent heart' and bad knowledge of French. When Sterne dies, Hume subscribes five guineas for his widow.³⁴ In 1773 Hume detects in Brydone's *Tour through Sicily and Malta* 'some Levities, too much in the Shandean Style', which he advises the author to 'obliterate'. He also says that *Tristram Shandy* is 'the best Book, that has been writ by any Englishman these thirty Years . . . , bad as it is' (LDH 2.269, 482). Three years later he first writes and then strikes Sterne's name out of his *Life*.

7. LIFELONG LUCIAN AND THE IRISH SKYTHS

'Lucien est votre auteur favori, et . . . je l'aime bien autant que vous' ('Lucian is your

favourite author, and . . . I love him as much as you do'), Morellet reminds Hume in 1766.³⁵ Lucian follows Hume throughout his literary career. In 1742 he allows that 'some Dialogues' of Lucian are among the few excellent pieces of pleasantry in ancient literature (E 134). The explosion of Lucian occurs in the second half of the 1740s. 'The Sceptic' (1753 version) suggests that we can improve our mental disposition by reading the 'entertaining moralists' and engaging with the 'imagination of Lucian', if nature has endowed us with a 'favourable' temper (E 179n). Moreover, the moral *Enquiry* assesses Lucian as 'licentious with regard to pleasure' but a 'very moral writer' in other respects, and accordingly regards it as highly significant that he 'cannot, sometimes, talk of virtue, so much boasted, without betraying symptoms of spleen and irony'. In Great Britain, adds Lucianic Hume, such a 'continued ostentation' of public spirit and benevolence inclines men of the world 'to discover a sullen incredulity on the head of those moral endowments' (EPM 6.21 / 242).

In the first *Enquiry*, where he laments the 'harsh winds of calumny and persecution' directed against philosophy, Hume bitterly observes: 'it does not always happen, that every Alexander meets with a Lucian, ready to expose and detect his impostures' (EHU 11.2 / 132–3; EHU 10.23 / 121). In all antiquity, says the 'Populousness of ancient nations', there is not a philosopher 'less superstitious' than Lucian (and Cicero). The 'agreeable' Lucian, says the *Natural History*, had 'employed the whole force of his wit and satire against the national religion' (E 463n; NHR 12.174).

Morellet is not the only translator of Lucian with whom Hume was acquainted. In Turin he met Edward Murphy (1707–77). Murphy's repeated 'grand query' to Hume concerns a cypher he invented, and the use of

cyphers was part of Hume's official duties in both Turin and Paris. Murphy was also the editor of *The Select Dialogues of Lucian*, first printed in 1744. In 1767 Hume compares him to the 'Royal philosopher Anacharsis'. Murphy usually calls himself 'Ô Murraghoo Rex', *Anacharsis* is one of Lucian's dialogues and the name of a character in *Scythia sive hospes*.

In 1765 Hume had refused to go to Ireland with Hertford: the Dubliners and the Londoners did not want the Scottish philosopher to make such a visit. Hertford had prepared him an apartment in the Castle of Dublin, but Hume thought it 'not worth while': 'It is like Stepping out of Light into Darkness to exchange Paris for Dublin' (LDH, 1.514, 285). In Ireland the philosopher and historian was 'excessively disliked'. It will be 'an Age or two at least' before the Irish can perceive his doctrines, and 'perhaps an age or two more' before they can relish them, writes Chaplain Trail: 'I could almost as soon promise Antichrist himself a welcome Reception'.³⁶

Possibly alluding to Hume's account of the 'most barbarous' cruelty allegedly perpetrated by the Irish during the 'universal massacre' of the English in 1641, where '[n]o age, no sex, no condition was spared' (H 5.55, 341), Murphy says in June 1767 that Hume considers the Irish 'Savages' because they 'eat Human Flesh when [they] can get it good'. The native Irish, adds Murphy, are 'prov'd by History to be Scythians by Descent, or rather . . . Skyths, which word has been corrupted into Scots'.³⁷ In a swift Lucianic style Murphy invites Hume to Ireland, ensuring him he will be treated 'as safe, as kindly . . . as ever [he] was in Paris, or Edenburgh':

We do not devour Strangers who visit us
as Friends; not even such as, we know,