Self-Love and the Artificiality of the Civil Society:
Hobbes, Mandeville, and Hume

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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Abstract

This study attempts to provide a balanced understanding of “civil society” over and against the non-political, economic view by probing into Hume’s political thought through the tradition of Hobbes and Mandeville, and demonstrating the theoretical similarities as well as differences between their analysis of human nature, of the principles sustaining civil society, and of the political-economic mechanisms underlying the rise of the modern state. Rather than reading Hume as a theorist of “commercial sociability” highlighting the spontaneity of economic activities while Hobbes and Mandeville theorists of “unsociability” stressing the role of political power, all of them are seen as theorists of unsocial or political sociability shedding light on the artificiality of the civil society. On the one hand, unsocial or political sociability means men’s self-love with a society-regarding feature, which is a combination of the desire for bodily self-preservation and pride. It both gives men a desire for associating with each other and prevents them from sustaining large and lasting society. On the other hand, civil society, whose establishment is the only solution to the problem caused by the society-regarding self-love, should be understood as a synthesis of political society, civilised society, and economic (bourgeois) society. As an artifice instead of an autonomous sphere constituted by socio-economic relations, it is safeguarded by coercive political power, supported by institutions and practices redirecting men’s sense of morality and honour, and born in the process of modern state

building. It is undeniable that from Hobbes to Mandeville and Hume the connotation of “artifice” underwent some changes, for Hobbes grounded civil society upon the juridical relationship of artificial person, Mandeville upon the discipline of man’s artificial self, while Hume upon the various conventions of artificial virtues. Correspondingly, the meaning of “civil” became richer than “political”. But all of them held that politics is an original and indispensable dimension of human life; that political power is the ultimate foundation of civil society; and that the state’s desire of power provided the rise of modern commercial society with the crucial political-historical impetus. These ideas will remind us of the complexity of the foundation of civil society in human nature, and the significance of the political aspect of modern civil society.

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Contents

Abbreviations

Thomas Hobbes

EL=Elements of Law Natural and Politics, ed. by Ferdinand Tonnies, London: Cass, 1969. References give section and paragraph number in the form i.2.

DC=On the Citizen (De Cive), ed. and tr. by Richard Tuck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. References give section and paragraph number in the form i.2.

L=Leviathan, ed. by Richard Tuck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. References give section and paragraph number in the form i.2.

Bernard de Mandeville

FB=The Fable of the Bees, ed. by F. B. Kaye, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1924. References give page number from this edition.

EOH=An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War, ed. by M. M. Goldsmith, London: Cass, 1971. References give page number from this edition.

David Hume

THN=A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. by David Fate Norton & Mary Norton, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. References give book, part, section and paragraph number, as well as page number from the edition by H.R.

Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) in the form 3.2.1.8, SBN479.

EMPL=Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. ed. by Eugene F. Miller, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998. References give essay title and page number from this edition.

HOE=The History of England, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983. References give volume and page number from this edition.

EPM=An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. by Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. References give section and paragraph number in the form 1.3.

Introduction

Civil Society and Sociability: Commercial or Political?

In 21st-century political language, “civil society” usually means a set of intermediate associations which are neither the family nor the state,[1] though various users put stress on various aspects of this concept. As a non-familial realm, civil society is constituted by voluntary engagements between free and equal individuals rather than by household-based affections; meanwhile, as non-political, it operates with autonomous order and principles which are independent from the commands of the state. A most typical example of it is the modern market economy.

But the history of such a usage is much shorter than the history of this very idea. In early modern western political thought, civil society used to be understood as the synonym of the state or the political society as a whole. For instance, Hobbes famously equalised the state with *societas civilis.*[2] The definite distinction between civil society and the state emerged no earlier than in the works of Hegel and Marx. Hegel depicted civil society as a “a system of needs” and “a system of all-round interdependence”, which is in fact a sphere of modern market economy secured by the police and supported by the corporations, where every individual seeks the satisfaction of his own interest

[1] “Civil Society”, in Garrett B. Brown et al (eds.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018; “Civil Society”, in John Scott (ed.), *A Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
[2] *DC*, v.9.

by working for and exchanging with others.[3] Meanwhile, since the interdependence-based universality in civil society is merely implicit, the state, as an "ethical whole", is necessitated for the actualisation of true universality and concrete freedom.[4] Hegel's understanding of the state is criticised by Marx while his distinction between civil society and the state preserved. For Marx, civil society "embraces the whole material intercourses of individuals" and "the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage", while modern bourgeois society is its full developed form.[5] This is similar to Hegel's idea. Yet Marx denied the actuality of the Hegelian ethical state by claiming that it is the civil society, the economic base, that determines the state and other superstructure.[6] Despite Marx's materialism and his expectation of the withering away of the state are not widely accepted but within the socialist school, it is Marx that thoroughly de-politicised "civil society" and greatly influenced the way in which we understand it today.

However, as is argued by many scholars, we should not overestimate the originality of Hegel and Marx, for both were deeply inspired by the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers. On the one hand, Scottish thinkers (Ferguson for example) plot civil society onto a temporal graph, and broadened this concept (in comparison with its traditional connotation) to depict the material, cultural,

[3] G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. by Allen Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, §182, §189.
[4] Ibid, §258.
[5] Karl Marx & Frederich Engels, *The German Ideology, Part I*, ed. by C. J. Arthur, London : Lawrence & Wishart, 1974, p82.
[6] Ibid, p83.

as well as political civilisation of certain societies generally. The historical progress of civilisation, furthermore, was often attributed to economic factors, especially modes of subsistence.[7] On the other hand, the Scottish thinkers shed light on the "invisible" mechanism underlying market exchange. According to Hume and Smith, the division of labour not only causes improvement of productivity, but also creates universal economic interdependence, which forms a "system of natural liberty" that need not to be interfered by the government.[8] Thus we may attribute the ground-breaking contribution to the Scottish philosophers, for they decisively differentiated the social-economical from the political and discovered the autonomy and spontaneity of the former, though some scholars trace this differentiation further back to Locke's understanding of the government as the fence to the existing system of property.[9]

The above historiography is quite prevalent in literatures on civil society.[10] And interestingly, it is supported and deepened by recent studies in the history

[7] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. by Fania Oz-Salzverger, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

[8] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. by R. R. Campbell & A. S. Skinner, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981, IV.ix.51; cf. David Hume, *EMPL*, "Of Money", "Of Interest", "Of the Balance of Trade", "Of the Jealousy of Trade".

[9] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. by Peter Laslett, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[10] E.g. Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1977; S. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, ch7; Manfred Riedel, "'State' and 'Civil Society': Linguistic Context and Historical Origin", in his *Between Tradition and Revolution: The Hegelian Transformation of Political Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp129-158; John Keane, "Despotism and Democracy: The Origins and Development of the Distinction between Civil Society and the State 1750-1850", in John Keane ed., *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, London: Verso, 1988, pp35-71; Jean L. Cohen & Andrew Ataro, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992; Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, NY: The Free Press, 1992; Charles Taylor, "Invoking Civil Society", in his *Philosophical Arguments*, Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1995, pp204-225; Christopher Berry, *The Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997; "Creating Space for Civil Society: Conceptual Cartography in the Scottish Enlightenment", *Giornale di Storia Costituzionale*, Vol. 20 (2010), pp49-60; John Ehrenberg, *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea*, NY: New York University Press, 1999; Fania Oz-Salzberger, "Civil Society in the Scottish Enlightenment", in S. Kaviraj & S. Khilnani eds., *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp58-83. Some of these studies, such as works of Dumont, Seligman, Cohen and Ataro, also regard Mandeville as the forerunner of Hume and Smith who discovered the autonomy of socio-economic activities.

of political thought, especially Istvan Hont and his followers' studies on the Scottish Enlightenment, which explains the conceptual transformation of civil society from the perspective of the early modern debate about "sociability". (As a 17th- and 18th-century word, "sociability" means the human ability to form, sustain and preserve society).[11] According to Hont and his followers, there used to be two modes of sociability before Hume and Smith. One is the Aristotelean-Hutchesonian model of "high sociability" grounding society on men's natural friendship and benevolence. It was criticised by thinkers such as Hobbes and Mandeville, for the natural love of fellows is either non-existent or insufficient for sustaining society larger than family. The other is the Hobbesian(-Mandevillean) model of "unsociability", according to which human beings are dominated by self-love, especially pride, thus social conflict is inevitable unless oppressed by the political power.[12] In this context, to imagine a society besides family and the state is impossible.

Such a dichotomy, nevertheless, was overcome by Hume and Smith's theory of "commercial society". For Hont, commercial society, namely the society in which division of labour is fully developed and "every man lives by

[11] Istvan Hont, "Unsocial Sociability: Eighteenth Century Perspectives", *Intellectual History Archive*, intellectual-history:438, <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/intellectualhistory> [28/06/2021].

[12] Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society: Jean-Jacque Rousseau and Adam Smith*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015, ch1; Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind: Sociability and the Theory of the State from Hobbes to Smith*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018, ch1. For Hont, the contrast between "high sociability" and "unsociability" is an approximation to that between Stoicism and Epicureanism. (*Politics in Commercial Society*, p15). For broad discussion about Stoicism and Epicureanism in early modern political thought, see Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012; Tim Stuart-Buttle, *From Moral Theology to Moral Philosophy: Cicero and from Locke to Hume*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019; Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; Neven Leddy & Avis S. Liftschitz, *Epicurus in the Enlightenment*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.

exchanging, or becomes in some measure a *merchant*",[13] should not be seen as merely the fourth and latest stage of civilisation after hunting, shepherding, and agriculture, but an alternative model of sociability. Because, in Smith's explanation of the foundation of society, it was claimed that "Society may subsist among different men, as among different *merchants*, from a sense of utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation."[14] In Hont's opinion, Smith suggested that the relationship amongst men-as-merchants is of paradigmatic significance. Given the weakness of individual human beings, to preserve men's life and satisfy men's needs, they cannot but depend on each other; to sustain industry and trade, they cannot but establish justice. Thus with no need of natural affections or political coercion, men's desire for preservation and interest leads to mutual commerce and orderly society, whereas government is erected posteriorly for the further security of justice. Hont thereby terms men's utilitarian desire or self-interest as "commercial sociability".[15] And, as Hont's followers argue, though "commercial

[13] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, I.iv.1, emphasis added.
[14] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie., Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982, II.ii.3.1, emphasis added.
[15] Istvan Hont, "Unsocial Sociability"; "Commercial Society and Political Theory in the Eighteenth Century: The Problem of Authority in David Hume and Adam Smith", in W. Melching et al (eds.), *Main Trends in Cultural History: Ten Essays*, Amsterdam & Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994, p60. Hont traces this model further back to Pufendorf. See Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and Nation-State in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005, ch1. Robin Douglass criticises Hont's usage of this term for confounding "the social bonds that characterise commercial society" and "the origin of human sociability". ("Theorising Commercial Society: Rousseau, Smith and Hont", *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Oct., 2018), pp501-511.) Such a confusion probably results from the literal connection between the two pieces of Smith's text (cf. Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, p9). But Hont preserves (and exploits) this ambiguity purposely, and later we will see the insights as well as difficulties it brings about.

society" is not Hume's own words, Hume's theory of justice and "natural society" could be reasonably read as a theory of "commercial sociability".[16]

The model of "commercial sociability" therefore afforded three main elements of the modern theory of civil society. Firstly, human beings are motivated by self-interest, the desire for bodily preservation and material utility. This does not preclude the existence of natural affections and benevolence, yet those are not so powerful in large-scale social interactions as self-interest. And unlike pride, the mental desire for outplaying others, self-interest does not cause zero-sum competition and conflict.[17] Secondly, to gratify their self-interest, human beings spontaneously commerce with each other and establish social order on the basis of reciprocal utility. (This order, grounded on economic relations, can be enhanced by "social" relations constituted by mutual sympathy.)[18] Government is necessitated in a relatively late stage, whose main function is to provide "external" protection for the existing natural society. Thus "the theory of society and the theory of the state now had to be separated even

[16] Christopher Finlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy: Human Nature and Commercial Sociability in* A Treatise of Human Nature, London & NY: Continuum, 2007; Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, pp54-63.

[17] Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, pp10ff. Hont on this point agrees with Hirschman that aggressive "passions" can be tamed by "interests". See Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977; cf. Pierre Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; David Wootton, *Power, Pleasure and Profit: Insatiable Appetites from Machiavelli to Madison*, Cambridge, MA & London: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018. The difference between pride and self-interest is sharpened by Paul Sagar, thus he no longer reads Rousseau as a theorist of commercial sociability like Hont used to do. *The Opinion of Mankind*, pp39-46, pp155ff.

[18] Christopher Finlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, pp86-124; Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, pp49-54; "Smith and Rousseau, after Mandeville and Hume", *Political Theory*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2018), pp29-58. In this sense, the Hontian interpretation concedes Hutchesons's influence on Hume and Smith, though does not see this influence as decisive. Cf. James Harris's model of "sympathetic sociability", in his "A Compleat Chain of Reasoning: Hume's Project in 'A Treatise of Human Nature'", *Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society*, New Series, Vol. 109 (2009), pp129-148. About the debate on the relation between Hume and Hutcheson, see David Fate Norton, *David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982; James Moore, "Hume and Hutcheson", in M. P. Stewart & J. W. Wright eds., *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994, pp23-53.

more sharply",[19] and the role of society is stronger while that of government weaker.[20] Thirdly, conceptually and historically speaking, commercial society in the narrow sense, namely the society of modern market economy, is the most typical or representative expression of the principle of commercial sociability.[21] In a nutshell, according to the Hontian interpretation, Hume and Smith had already broken with the traditional "political society" and presented a prototype of the Hegelian-Marxian theory in their analysis of commercial society. The Hontian story thus contributes to the mainstream narrative of the "metamorphosis" of civil society, that to a considerable extent, it is Hume and Smith that shaped our non-political, especially economic, understanding of civil society.

Such a story, nevertheless, is not beyond controversy. From a more historical perspective, it is questionable whether the model of "commercial sociability" is entirely consistent with the ideas of the Scottish thinkers, or more precisely, the ideas of Hume. This is not because of the absence of "commercial society" in Hume's language, but because of the very complexity of Hume's theory. Rather than highlighting the naturalness and spontaneity of the economy-based social order, Hume regarded justice as an artificial virtue, and

[19] Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, pp182-183.

[20] Christopher Finlay, "Hume's Theory of Civil Society", *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No.4 (2004), pp369-391, esp. p380. Moreover, according to Sagar, men's desire of utility is determined by their imagination or opinion of utility, thus the latter is the true foundation of social order. Even the state is still necessary in large-scale society, it should be "a state without sovereignty". "Lying behind 'government' there is no final, philosophically identifiable, and stable foundation of 'sovereign' authority, but only the constant and contested changing swirl of opinion." Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, p10. As Hont himself regards modern commercial state as a combination of commercial society and popular sovereignty (Istvan Hont, "Commercial Society and Political Theory in the Eighteenth Century"), Sagar downplays the importance of sovereignty by developing the theory of commercial sociability.

[21] Christopher Finlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, p5.

insisted that civil society is an artifice upheld by a series of artificial institutions including justice, politeness, and government. This makes Hume (to some extent) an outlier in the Scottish Enlightenment, criticised by both Hutcheson and Smith,[22] differentiated from both the position of "high sociability" and that of "commercial sociability", but closer to the tradition of Hobbes and Mandeville, though what ideas Hobbes and Mandeville exactly held also requires clarification. In fact, such a Hobbesian-Mandevillean argument is not a contingency derived from Hume's technically over-complicated moral language, but an outcome of his systematic reflection on human nature, moral and social order, and political economy. Hume's civil society, able to be "commercial" (in the sense of mode of subsistence), is nonetheless inherently artificial and political.[23]

From a more theoretical perspective, it is also questionable whether the presently main-current understanding of civil society, the non-political, economic view, is the most productive one. Focusing narrowly on self-interest, it may underestimate other powerful motivations underlying large-scale social interaction. Stressing on the spontaneous order of economic exchange, it may oversimplify the difficulties of sustaining large society and the multiple mechanisms that are necessary for such a task. Regarding commercial society

[22] Letter from David Hume to Francis Hutcheson, 17 September 1739, *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. by J. Y. T. Greig, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, Vol. I, pp32-35; Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, II.ii.3. Paul Sagar notices Hume's difference from Smith on this point and regards Hume's moral theory as inferior to Smith's. See Paul Sagar, "Beyond Sympathy: Smith's Rejection of Hume's Moral Theory", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2017), pp681-705.

[23] Mikko Tolonen therefore terms Hume's theory as a model of "political sociability". See his *Mandeville and Hume: Anatomists of Civil Society*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013. We will discuss Tolonen's insights and shortcomings later.

as an embodiment of “commercial sociability” inherent in human nature, it may overlook the political-historical background within which modern market economy emerged. This one-sided view, theoretically speaking, can be balanced by taking Hobbes’s and Mandeville’s insights seriously. And if their version of civil society is already out of date, we can still benefit from Hume who subtly integrated the old-fashioned “political” theory with a more “modern” analysis of the “commercial” society. A Re-reading of Hume in the light of Hobbes and Mandeville, therefore, will not only provide us with a more adequate appreciation of Hume’s thought, but also an enriched understanding of civil society, its foundation in human nature, its mechanisms of operation, and its political and historical precondition.

The Society-Regarding Self-Love

The characteristic of civil society depends on the feature of men’s sociability. Thus the difference between the “commercial” and “political” versions of civil society corresponds with the difference between men’s material and mental desires, namely between self-interest and pride. Hont places Hobbes and Mandeville within the camp of “pride theory”, and therefore see them as theorists of “unsociability” standing opposite to Hume and Smith. His student Paul Sagar furthermore attempts to prove the insignificance of pride in Hume’s and Smith’s theories. According to Sagar, pride for Hume is far from the dominant passion of individuals but merely one of the four main indirect passions. Smith also refused to attribute men’s restless desire for wealth to

vanity. Additionally, the disruptive effects of pride is neutralised by the mechanism of sympathy. The spectators sympathising with the subject's pleasure in his wealth, virtues or other goods give him love and esteem, instead of envy and jealousy, hence there is no conflict inherent in human nature causing unsociability and necessitating political power.[24] But this viewpoint is not a proper understanding of Hume, for it underestimates the role of pride in shaping our self-consciousness, the way in which it combines with self-interest, and its potential for causing conflicts.[25]

Seeing pride as one of the four main indirect passions, Hume nonetheless stressed "the mind has a much stronger propensity to pride than to humility",[26] and that the idea of self is produced by the passion of pride.[27] For Hume, it is pride, the passion taking the self as its object and something related to the self as its cause, that constitutes our understanding of ourselves as characterised, embodied, social persons. Specifically, since "which of all others produces most

[24] Paul Sagar, "Smith and Rousseau, after Mandeville and Hume", *Political Theory*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2018), pp44-45.
[25] In fact, Sagar's reading of Smith is also opposite to many other scholars', e.g. Ryan Hanley, "Commerce and Corruption: Rousseau's Diagnosis and Adam Smith's Cure," *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2008), pp137-158; Bert Kerkhof, "A Fatal Attraction? Smith's 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' and Mandeville's 'Fable'", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1995), pp216-233; Dennis Rasmussen, *The Problem and Promise of Commercial Society: Adam Smith's Response to Rousseau*, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008, ch.2; Thomas Horne, "Envy and Commercial Society: Mandeville and Smith on 'Private Vices, Public Benefits'", *Political Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Nov., 1981), pp551-569; Robin Douglass, "Morality and Sociability in Commercial Society: Smith, Rousseau, -and Mandeville", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 79 (2017), pp597-620; and even Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, p92.
[26] *THN*, 2.2.10.4, SBN390.
[27] *THN*, 2.1.2.4, SBN278. Scholars interpret this argument in various ways. Pride may turn our attention to ourselves, though it also makes us open to the opinions of others (Robert Henderson, "David Hume on Personal Identity and Indirect Passions", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Apr., 1990), pp33-44; Pauline Chazan, "Pride, Virtue, and Self-Hood: A Reconstruction of Hume", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1992), pp45-64); pride may let us concern our past and future actions, thus construct our identity through time (Jane McIntyre, "Personal Identity and the Passions"); pride may determine what characters are of importance for making us who we are (Donald Ainslie, "Scepticism about Persons in Book II of Hume's *Treatise*", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Jul., 1999), pp469-492); pride may also let us recognise our (moral) agency (Jennifer Welchman, "Self-Love and Personal Identity in Hume's *Treatise*", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Apr., 2015), pp33-55; A. Oksenberg Rorty, "'Pride Produces the Idea of Self': Hume on Moral Agency", *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (1990), pp255-269; Susan Purviance, "The Moral Self and the Indirect Passions", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Nov., 1997), pp195-212; A. E. Pitson, *Hume's Philosophy of the Self*, London: Routledge, 2002).

commonly the passion of pride, is that of property",[28] pride may intertwine with our self-interest and lead to restless desire for riches. In other words, the desire for material good, rather than neatly differentiated from the desire for mental good, might to a considerable extent be derived from the latter. And besides the principle of sympathy, pride is also influenced by the principle of comparison, which makes people take pride in their particularity and superiority to others, and also want to be seconded by the praises of others. So pride is on the one hand a society-regarding passion that makes the existence and opinions of others necessary for one's own self-understanding, yet on the other hand self-centred and conflict-causing, because the gratification of one's pride usually puts others in a disagreeable comparison. "The proud never can endure the proud".[29]

Hume's idea of pride is in many aspects similar to the one we find in Mandeville, as Mikko Tolonen has reminded us in his critique of the Hontian interpretation. Mandeville, especially in his later works, clearly identified self-liking (a technical synonym for pride but without its moral connotation) as an original human passion that cannot be reduced to self-love (in the narrow sense, namely the bodily desire of self-preservation), and considered self-liking as a moment constituting our self-evaluation.[30] Yet Tolonen does not entirely negate the distinction between Hobbes, Mandeville, and Hume, but re-organises it as

[28] *THN*, 2.1.10.1, SBN309.
[29] *THN*, 3.3.2.7, SBN596.
[30] Cf. Jerrold Siegel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp111-138.

a split between “Hobbes and the early Mandeville”, on the one hand, and “the late Mandeville and Hume”, on the other. In this way he overturns the Hontian model by placing Hobbes and the early Mandeville within the “selfishness” camp, who reduced human motives completely to bodily self-preservation.[31] For Tolonen, it is the material selfishness, rather than the society-regarding passion of pride, that causes men’s unsociability. Thus Tolonen, while overcoming the shortcomings of the Hontian model, in turn misses the similarity between Hobbes and the two later thinkers. In fact, none of the three regarded selfishness, self-preservation or self-interest as the unique or main motivation of human beings.[32] According to Hobbes and Mandeville (in both his early and late phase), human beings are motivated by the desire for self-preservation as well as by pride, namely the desire that comes from the mental pleasure of contemplating one’s own power, or of having precedence over others.[33] Since pride cannot make sense without comparing oneself with others, and cannot give full gratification but when it is seconded by the recognition of others; human beings must live together with others, yet they must more often than not displease each other due to the very competitiveness of such a self-centred passion. As is effectively summarised by Hobbes, “wanting is one thing, ability another. For even those who arrogantly reject the equal conditions without

[31] Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, ch1.
[32] About the intellectual history of “selfishness” “self-love” and “egoism”, see Christian Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism, and Selfish Hypothesis: Key Debates from Eighteenth-Century British Moral Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019, “Introduction”. On Hobbes and egoism, see Bernard Gert, *Hobbes: Prince of Peace*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, ch2.
[33] L, vi.39; *FB*, I, passim.

which society is not possible, still want it".[34]

Taking the role of pride into consideration, there is no substantial or paradigmatic difference between Hobbes, Mandeville and Hume's theory of sociability. This is not to deny that pride may take various forms, as A. O. Lovejoy has insightfully pointed out. Pride as self-esteem or due pride in one's own qualities is less society-regarding than pride as approbativeness and emulation. Also, pride as emulation is more comparative and competitive than self-esteem and approbativeness, for the former requires one's obvious superiority over others.[35] Properly speaking, Hume's definition of pride is more extensive than Hobbes's and Mandeville's, since he paid more attention to self-esteem or due pride.[36] Yet the society-regarding and competitive forms can be found in Hume's theory as well as in Hobbes's and Mandeville's. As a consequence, none of them should be simply classified as theorist of "self-interest" or "unsociability". Rather, all of them believed in some "unsocial sociability", for pride both makes men desire society and prevents them from sustaining large and lasting society.[37] It is such a dilemma of the society-regarding self-love that all of them endeavoured to overcome.

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[34] *DC*, i.2, annotation.

[35] A. O. Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature*, Baltimore: The John–Hopkins University Press, 1961, "Lecture III".

[36] Cf. Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's* Treatise, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991; Jacqueline Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, ch6; Christian Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism, and Selfish Hypothesis*, pp185ff.

[37] Hont regards "unsocial sociability" as a synonym of Kant's "commercial sociability", for both refer to the social relation in which "everybody is just a means for others, a utility and not a value in itself." See Istvan Hont, "Unsocial Sociability". But we should not overlook that Kant's unsocial sociability includes not only self-interest but also "the desire for honour, power" and "enviously competitive vanity". That is why Kant, unlike Hont, took Hobbes as a typical theorist of "unsocial sociability". (Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose", in *Political Writings*, ed. by Hans Reiss, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp44-45.)

The Artificiality of Civil Society

The problem of society-regarding self-love, inherent in human nature, calls for artificial solutions at multiple levels. It is heatedly debated what institutions or mechanisms certain thinker exactly made use of. According to the Hontian interpretation, by artifice Hume principally meant justice, which is, albeit not instinctive, an outcome of spontaneous and unintended evolution independent from the political power. Thus the artificiality of justice does not undermine the fundamental principle of "commercial sociability". But Tolonen criticises this reading because it overlooks the fact that Hume's conception of civil society "is grounded on government."[38] It is noteworthy that, for Tolonen, the political aspect of civil society lies not only in the fact that in large society justice is ineffective unless enforced by government. Since self-interest is not the only cause of social conflict, pride, as another and more typical sort of society-regarding self-love, also requires regulation. Tolonen argues that on this point we can find an important agreement between Hume and (the late) Mandeville which is often ignored by interpreters. Hume claimed that "in like manner, therefore, as we establish the *laws of nature*, in order to secure property in society, and prevent the opposition of self-interest; we establish the *rules of good-breeding*, in order to present the opposition of men's pride, and render conversation agreeable and inoffensive".[39] Such a double correlation between justice (laws of nature) and self-interest, politeness (rules of good-breeding)

[38] Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume,* p21.
[39] *THN,* 3.3.2.10, SBN597.

and pride, corresponds with Mandeville's project of regulating self-love (self-preservation) by government and cultivating self-liking by politeness. For both Hume and Mandeville, politeness is a redirection of pride. Given that direct expression of pride is troublesome, everyone gradually learns to praise the dexterity of disguising pride, thus gratifying this passion secretly. According to Tolonen, Hume and Mandeville's attention to politeness is of great significance. On the one hand, it further demonstrates the weakness of the "commercial sociability" model. Tolonen correctly highlights that politeness, as an indispensable support for civil society, is another "key *political* term", for it co-exists with a "top-down system in which a political structure is considered fundamental in all aspects of life".[40] On the other hand, as a social convention, politeness emerges from historical evolution and works independent from coercive power. Hence Hume and the late Mandeville diverged from the Hobbesian idea that civil society is upheld merely by political coercion and enriched the meaning of "artifice".

Tolonen clearly demonstrates the similarity between Hume and Mandeville, but his hard double correlation is not without problems. On the one hand, identifying justice and government rigidly as the solution to the conflict caused by self-interest, Tolonen's model cannot well capture government's contribution to the regulation of pride. In fact, as we have seen, Hume's self-interest should not be equalised to bare self-preservation, neither is its content self-evident, for

[40] Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, p21, italics added.

it can be shaped by and combined with pride and turn into some “real and imagined” wants, especially in large and polished society. Thus conflicts in large society are derived from pride no less than from self-interest. Correspondingly, government for Hume, like for Hobbes and Mandeville, is not limited to working against the purely material desires, but serves as the foundational defence of social order generally against various forms of society-regarding self-love.

On the other hand, identifying politeness as the solution to conflict caused by pride, Tolonen also overlooks that pride can be channelled by substantial norms of virtue and vice, honour and shame, and therefore neglects the role of morality-regarding motives in shaping human beings internally and supporting social order externally.[41] Politeness, or taking pride in the disguise of pride, is a second-order redirection of pride. Yet pride can be regulated more directly when people take pride in virtuous actions, or actions beneficial for the public. Hume considered virtue as the “most obvious cause” of pride, while pride in virtues is an important motive of men’s virtuous behaviours.[42] Albeit moral motives are not the first origin of justice, politeness and other general rules, yet in large and civilised societies men with “a certain discipline and education” are indeed motivated by their regard of morality and honour. Especially when men are lacking the natural virtuous motives, sense of obligation and shame can

[41] Tolonen says, “I do not think that Hume puts any relevant weight on the idea of morally-motivated rule following.” It seems that for Tolonen Hume’s moral philosophy has little to do with his social and political theory. *Mandeville and Hume*, p14.

[42] *THN*, 2.1.7.2, SBN295. Cf. Phillip Reed, “Motivating Hume’s Natural Virtues”, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 42, No. S1 (2012), PP134-147; “The Alliance of Virtue and Vanity in Hume’s Moral Theory”, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 93 (2012), pp595-614.

motivate them to disguise their defects by performing the corresponding virtuous actions.[43] In other words, pride is not specifically related to politeness but underlies various moral actions, and therefore supports social order in a more general way. Hume's idea about the role of pride in motivating virtuous actions is similar to Mandeville's (in all his phases) as well. In his early works, Mandeville had already paid attention to the cultivation of pride by public moral education. Mandeville observed that human beings committed to the norms of moral values will counterfeit virtuous actions due to their desire for honour and fear of shame. Thus for Mandeville, "the Moral Virtues are the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride".[44] Even Hobbes was not entirely ignorant of such a use of pride, for he pointed out the function of "laws of honour and a public rate of worth"[45] in directing men's pride to obedience and peace. In Hobbes's opinion, as long as "that the road to honours does not lie through criticism of the current regime nor through factions and popular favour, but through the opposite, … there would be more ambition to obey than to oppose."[46] Though Hobbes underlined the dependence of "a public rate of worth" upon the sovereignty, and explained men's moral commitment by a juridical theory of representation, rather than in socio-psychological categories, he did not attribute men's observance of social order simply to the fear of oppressive coercive power. In fact, for all of the three thinkers, the artificiality of

[43] E.g. *THN*, 3.2.1.9, SBN479; 3.2.2.25, SBN500; *EPM*, SBN203.
[44] *FB*, I, p37.
[45] *L*, xviii.15.
[46] *DC*, xiii.12.

civil society corresponds to some of the artificial aspects that are present *within* each individual, alike the self-discipline that results from the individual's commitment to the norms of morality and honour.[47] Either through socio-psychological mechanisms or juridical constructions, it is men's "artificial virtue" (in Hume's term), "artificial self" (in Mandeville's term) or "artificial person" (in Hobbes's term) that upholds the artificial social order.

Therefore, for Hobbes, Mandeville as well as Hume, civil society is sustained by a set of interlocked artificial mechanisms. It is undeniable that there are significant differences between their analysis of those mechanisms. For instance, Hobbes was not so optimistic about the malleability and educability of pride, thus he assigned a more crucial role to sovereignty and did not mention the institution of politeness. Mandeville was more influenced by the Augustinian moral language, and negated the true virtuousness of men's actions motivated by self-loving passions. Neither Hobbes nor Mandeville believe that justice could be established without the existence of coercive power. Nevertheless, all of them agreed, that a large and polished society is fundamentally secured by a coercive power enforcing justice; that a sense of morality and honour motivates men to act in accordance with public benefits; and that political authority plays an indispensable role in supporting the norms of morality and honour.[48] Only when taking these similarities into serious

[47] Though, there are lots of debates about whether Mandeville believed in the possibility of real (instead of counterfeit) virtues, and whether for Hume actions motivated by moral motives were really virtuous. See our relevant discussion in chapter 2 and 3.

[48] Cf. Jeffery Church, "Selfish and Moral Politics: David Hume on Stability and Cohesion in the Modern State", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 1(Feb., 2007), pp169–81.

consideration can the connections between their systems be clarified.

Civil Society and Modern State Building

The government has structural influence over justice, politeness, and moral education. Yet if we turn from the static perspective to the historical and dynamic, the role of politics in shaping civil society can be more clearly demonstrated. Here by “politics” we mean not only the formal or institutional existence of the government, but also its practice and policy in actual history in a more substantial sense. Notwithstanding justice and politeness are necessitated by human nature in the general sense, large and polished civil societies grounded on the emancipation and cultivation of men’s self-interest and pride is the outcome of modern state-building. In fact, the historical characteristics of modern society were keenly captured by both Mandeville and Hume, even though they were still implicit in Hobbes’s analysis of the role of trade in civilising men and supporting the state. For Mandeville, the maxim “private vices, public benefits” is best demonstrated in populous, opulent and warlike states rather than small, simple and peace-loving body politics. Hume furthermore transformed Mandeville’s distinction between small and large societies to that between ancient and modern societies. While ancient nations were founded on the frugality and public-spiritedness of the citizens, modern states can neither survive nor become “great” without prosperous industry and commerce, which depends on the stimulation provided by luxury and emulation. The cultivation of men’s self-love is of crucial importance for not only the

stability of domestic peace but also the power of the state in the face of international competition. In this sense, the rise of commercial society is not simply the natural and necessary result determined by human nature. Rather, to understand it we must take its political-historical background into consideration.

Interestingly, it is Hont, to whose model of "commercial sociability" we want to make revision, that suggests us to recover the vision of "political economy" which sheds lights on the interaction between politics and economy, or the *political* significance of economy.[49] The formation and extension of "civil commerce" are attended with the states' increasing pursuit of power over domestic and foreign rivals, which must be supported by sufficient human and material resources. For both Mandeville and Hume, therefore, the importance of economy lies not precisely in its contribution to social order which makes political power less central, but in its contribution to the political power itself. Instead of distinguishing civil society from the state, the economy has become "an affair of state". The rising status of commerce is at bottom seen as a political phenomenon serving political aims.[50]

According to Hont, Hume was "dismissive of those who failed to grasp the logic of reciprocity underlying all commerce", and wished "to understand how the logic of commerce actually played itself out when superimposed upon the

[49] Mikko Tolonen criticises Hont for putting attention narrowly to political economy while overlooking Hume's theory of human nature. See *Mandeville and Hume*, pp18-19. This critique does not do justice to Hont, for the model of "commercial sociability" is exactly a theory of human nature. And, Tolonen does not recognise that Hont's study of political economy could, paradoxically, complement the theory of "political sociability".
[50] Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, pp10-21.

logic of war".[51] But theoretically speaking, to hold on the perspective of "political" economy displaying the embedding of economy in politics, it is necessary to weaken the thesis of "commercial sociability" which implies the naturalness and autonomy of economic intercourses, because, as John Dunn and Ryan Patrick Hanley have pointed out, it would be problematic "whether in the long run politics in commercial society is ultimately either necessary or possible" if the latter thesis works through.[52] In other words, "market, … had its own laws, and laws which differed sharply from those of politics", thus there are fundamental tensions between the two.[53] Hont himself does not recognise the tension between reading Hume as a defender of "commercial sociability" and at the same time as a Mandevillean political economist putting the state first.[54] In other words, he fails to recognise the latter reading, which points out the "political-military roots of modern economic development", may represent a revision of the former more commercial reading.[55] If we understand Tolonen's "political

[51] Ibid, p6.

[52] John Dunn, "From Applied Theology to Social Analysis: The Break Between John Locke and the Scottish Enlightenment", in Istvan Hont & Michael Ignatieff eds., *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp119-136; Ryan Patrick Hanley, "On the Place of Politics in Commercial Society", in Maria Pia Paganelli et al eds., *Adam Smith and Rousseau: Ethics, Politics, and Economics*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018, pp16-31.

[53] Istcan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, p187.

[54] And as Finlay's and Sagar's development of Hont's study focuses one-sidedly on "commercial sociability", the political dimension of Hume's anatomy of civil society is further overlooked. This is not to say Hume's political economy is entirely ignored. Rather, Hume scholars continually discuss about themes such as the metaphysical and moral foundation of political economy, the problem of public debts, international commerce, money, and foreign policy. E.g. John Berdell, *International Trade and Economic Growth in Open Economies: The Classical Dynamics of Hume, Smith, Ricardo and Malthus*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2002; Carl Wennerlind, "David Hume as a Political Economist", in Alexander Dow & Sheila Dow eds., *A History of Scottish Economic Thought*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp46-70; Carl Wennerlind &Margaret Schabas eds., *David Hume's Political Economy*, London & NY: Routledge, 2008; Arie Arnon, *Monetary Theory and Policy from Hume and Smith to Wicksell: Money, Credit, and the Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011; Jia Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's* History of England, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017; Estrella Trincado, *The Birth of Economic Rhetoric: Communication, Arts, and Economic Stimulus in David Hume and Adam Smith*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. Nonetheless, most of these works concentrate on specific economic topics rather than considering Hume's political economy generally in the perspective of his analysis of civil society.

[55] Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, p150.

sociability" as a revision of the Hontian "commercial sociability" thesis, such a revision can be complemented and deepened, paradoxically, by developing Hont's own insights about the emulations of trade, even though some further efforts may still be needed in order to integrate Hume's theory of human nature and his political economy.

In a nutshell, from Hume's viewpoint, civil society is multi-dimensional and dynamic. It is grounded on men's self-love (in the general sense), especially self-interest and pride and the interaction between them; it is upheld by a set of interlocked artificial conventions, including justice, politeness and government, which demands not only men's behavioural obedience but also their sense of morality and honour; it is also an offspring of the process of modern state-building. To understand Hume the anatomist of civil society, accordingly, we should focus neither on specific passions nor on specific institutions, but investigate his whole conception of the complex and dynamic mechanisms of civilisation. Therefore, the Hontian "commercial sociability" model must be revised by stressing the role of pride and politics, while Tolonen's "political sociability" theory needs to be developed by connecting pride to moral virtues and putting the growth of commercial society within a vision of the role of the modern state. In this way, with the help of Hume's insights, we may have a better understanding of the political dimension of modern civil society.

Overview of Chapters

This thesis aims to shed light on Hobbes, Mandeville and Hume's analysis

of civil society, including its foundation in human nature, the artificial mechanisms sustaining its order, and the political-historical condition within which it emerges.

Chapter 1 is devoted to Hobbes, who first presented the paradox of society-regarding self-love through his theory of the state of nature, and provided his solution, the civil society, in his theory of absolute sovereignty. I start from an exploration of Hobbes's analysis of human nature, especially the passion of self-preservation and pride. Pointing out the dependence of these passions on social interactions (*societate mutua*), I reject the interpretation of Hobbes as a theorist of unsociability, selfishness and egoism, while I emphasise his understanding of the state of nature as an outcome of the inherent paradox between the self-centredness and the society-regarding feature of these passions. Then I demonstrate how Hobbes overcomes this problem by developing a theory a civil society, namely a political unity with common power. Civil society, as an artifice, is established through the artificial person of the sovereign as well as the artificial person of the subjects, which supposes a split of personality (in the juridical sense) in both the sovereign and the subjects. Finally I look at men's life in Hobbes's civil society, including their industry and commercial activities. I conclude that Hobbes's civil society is also a society with a civilised lifestyle and various socio-economic activities, but that still remains a "political" society at bottom.

Chapter 2 examines Mandeville's development of Hobbes's analysis by

clarifying the former's notorious maxim "private vices, public benefits". Here this maxim is resolved into three theses, namely the "fear thesis", the "pride thesis", and the "luxury thesis". In discussing the "fear thesis", I show Mandeville's Hobbesian understanding of men's society-regarding self-love and his Hobbesian explanation of the origin of civil society, namely the fear of the government. By exploring the "pride thesis", I shed light on Mandeville's revision to Hobbes's theory of pride and self-understanding. It allows Mandeville to explain the origin of moral virtues and politeness, indispensable pillars of civil society, with men's artificial self, which is shaped by pride. By turning to the "luxury thesis", I wish to emphasise that for Mandeville, modern large society is especially driven by the economic mechanism of luxury, of which the foundation is the combination of men's self-love and self-liking (pride). This mechanism both contributes to the greatness of the state, and requires a transformation of the role of political power. In sum, since artifice means more than the sovereign's command and the subjects' obedience, the centre of men's life in civil society moves more and more towards "civil commerce" and economic activities. Nevertheless, Mandeville agrees with Hobbes on the artificial and political features of civil society.

The next two chapters investigate Hume's ideas about the same themes. Chapter 3 focuses on the fundamental principles of Hume's civil society. Examining the self-loving passions from the perspective of Hume's theory of self-identity, I clarify how pride constitutes men's characterised, embodied,

social self, and how the principles of sympathy and comparison inherent in pride give rise to men's society-regarding self-love. This provides the foundation for Hume's social and political thought. Then I move to Hume's theory of men's state of nature and the origin of justice. Adhering to the artificiality of justice, Hume made revisions to Hobbes and Mandeville by identifying self-interest as the main cause of conflict, and regarding justice as both a "convention" and a real "virtue". Yet a crisis of justice emerges with the enlargement of society. Thereby I shed light on how Hume brings Mandeville and Hobbes back in his analysis of the moral motive to justice and the crisis human beings face. At last I discuss the origin of government and allegiance, as well as the development of justice and politeness, which marks the eventual formation of Hume's "civil society". For Hume, in a nutshell, civil society is grounded on multiple artifices, including the redirection of self-interest, obligations based on sense of morality and honour, the augmentation of moral sense by education and reputation, as well as coercion and the public propaganda of the government.

Chapter 4 turns to Hume's political and historical writings, putting his theory of civil society in the particular background of modern state-building. To begin with, I probe into Hume's depiction of the origin of government in actual history. Given the ever-lasting possibility of inter-societal conflicts, politics is as fundamental and original a dimension of human association as economic commerce. Then, by reviewing Hume's account of the history of civil society, I point out the socio-political preconditions for the rise of civilised commercial

society, including political institutions securing the strict execution of justice (especially rule of general laws), social norms honouring industry and commerce, and political practice favourable to the development of economy. Only in modern states these conditions are fulfilled. This is because in modern times, industry and trade are serving crucial political aims, i.e. supporting the military strength of the state. I therefore demonstrates Hume's development of Mandeville's political economic insights. Hume's civil society, from this perspective, results from the integration of commercial society into the power of modern states. Rather than a derivative of the natural development of the economy or the natural progress of civilisation, it is an outcome of the political-historical process of state-building.

Chapter 1 Self-Love and Civil Society: Hobbes's Problem and Project

A great political philosopher might have a lot of critics, but would never be ignored, for he presents true problems even without offering perfect answers. Hobbes is in this sense a milestone in the history of political thought. Rejecting the Aristotelean thesis that human beings are by nature "*zoon politikon*", Hobbes makes men's orderly living together a fundamental problem for the moderns.[1] As the starting point of our research, this chapter explores Hobbes's demonstration of the difficulty of men's sociability in his theory of the state of nature, and the solution he provides, namely the theory of civil society. The first section sheds light on Hobbes's analysis of men's society-regarding self-love. For Hobbes, mutual association is always needed even in the state of nature, whereas such sort of association cannot uphold large and lasting societies but lead to perpetual conflicts. Section II displays how Hobbes overcomes this dilemma by the establishment of civil society, which erects the common power of the unity through the relationship of artificial persons between the subjects and the sovereign. The last section focuses on men's life within the civil society, especially their various socio-economic activities. We will see that both his depiction of the problematic human nature and his emphasis on the artificiality of civil society have significant influence on thinkers after him.

[1] Parsons famously named this problem as "the Hobbesian problem of order". See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, Glencoe: Free Press, 1951, pp36-37.

I. Self-Love, "*Societate Mutua*" and the Problem of the State of Nature

1. The Paradox of Society-Regarding Self-Love: The Empirical Aspect

Hobbes is often seen as a theorist of self-love or unsociability. At first glance, Hobbes's understanding of the self and self-love is quite simple and distinct, deriving directly from his mechanistic philosophy. As animals with vital motions, human beings are motivated by passions.[2] What helps the vital motion is called "delight"/ "good" and is desired, whereas what hinders is called "pain"/ "evil" and is averted. The most terrible enemy of human nature is death, which means "loss of all power, and also the greatest bodily pain in the losing",[3] thus men have a universal aversion of death and a universal desire of protecting their life. Self-love, especially self-preservation, is one of the most fundamental passions and motives of human beings.[4] As the object of self-preservation, the "self" here is equal to one's physical-biological existence. Self-preservation means exactly to preserve one's own "nature", that is to say, one's body and limbs.[5] The content and limit of the "self" therefore seem self-evident. Each one knows clearly who he is as well as what himself consists of, for he endeavours to conserve nobody but himself. To understand human nature there is no need

[2] *EL*, v.14. Hobbes scholars debate a lot about the similarity and difference between Hobbes's three main works of political philosophy. It is generally agreed that Hobbes's ideas underwent some changes in explaining the causes of the state of nature and the legal process of erecting the sovereignty. Yet his basic arguments about the structure of human nature and the character of the state stayed the same. In this chapter, most of time I cite *Elements of Law*, *De Cive* and *Leviathan* indiscriminately, but I will discuss the differences between them when they actually appear and are of theoretical significance.

[3] *EL*, xiv.6.

[4] It is noteworthy, however, that this does not mean Hobbes is a psychological egoist, for Hobbes does not reduce all human desires to the desire of one's own welfare. See Bernard Gert, "Hobbes, Mechanism, and Egoism", *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 61 (Oct., 1965), pp341-349; "Hobbes and Psychological Egoism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1967), pp503-520; Gregory S. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp29-82.

[5] *L*, xiv.1.

to take their mutual engagement into consideration. In fact, “when we theoretically sunder society and put men into this natural state, human individuals are not destroyed when they are stripped of their social connections; rather, they are best revealed by that sundering”.[6] Social interactions seem irrelevant in the “natural condition” of the self-loving men.

However, Hobbes’s passion of self-love is neither Rousseau’s *amour de soi* nor Spinoza’s *conatus*. Rather than being independent from others and enclosed in his own bodily world like Rousseau’s savage, or striving for mere existence as Spinoza expects, Hobbes’s man is deeply influenced by others:

> Whatever seems Good is pleasant, and affects either the organs (of the body) or the mind. Every pleasure of the mind is either glory (or a good opinion of oneself), or ultimately relates to glory; the others are sensual or lead to something sensual, and can all be comprised under the name of advantages. All society, therefore, exists for the sake either of advantage or of glory, i.e. it is a product of love of self, not of love of friends [sui, non sociorum, amor].[7]

There is no doubt that Hobbes’s men are self-loving, yet Hobbesian self-love is much more complicated. Human beings consist not only of body but also of mind.[8] While body desires sensual pleasure or “advantages”, mind desires

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[6] Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p7. Hampton therefore labels Hobbes’s theory as “radical individualism”.

[7] *DC*, i.2.

[8] In recent years more scholars recognise that Hobbesian theory of human nature cannot be reduced entirely to materialism or mechanism. Precisely speaking, Hobbes’s materialism is “methodological” rather than “metaphysical”. For Hobbes, desire of bodily goods is neither the only nor the most important motive of men. E.g. S. A. Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes’s Leviathan: The Power of Mind over Matter*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Bernard Gert, *Hobbes: Prince of Peace*, ch2.

glory or “good opinions of oneself”. In other words, humans are driven by passion of self-preservation as well as by pride. The desire of advantages may motivate men to associate with one another, for commodious life requires help from others. More importantly, pride is by its nature a society-regarding passion. “GLORY, or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind, is that passion which proceedeth from the imagination or conception of our own power, above the power of him that contendeth with us.”[9] Glory means pre-eminence in the competition of power, which constitutes the only felicity of human beings.[10] It is unintelligible unless men live together with others and evaluate themselves in comparison with their fellows. Glory also demands others’ response, namely their “honouring”, which means to value a man at a relatively high rate according to the rate each man sets on himself.[11] According to Hobbes, the value or worth of a man is “dependent on the need and judgment of another”, thus “true value is no more than esteemed by others.”[12] Honour indicates the true power of a man, and is itself a sort of power, for it functions as a present means to future goods by influencing other people.[13] Honour both acknowledges and adds to one’s power, and finally, his glory. Thus men’s good opinions about themselves must be seconded in their conversation with others. In a nutshell, the passion of pride and its gratification necessitate mutual commerce even in the state of nature. Men’s self-love is fundamentally shaped

[9] *EL*, ix.1.
[10] *L*, xi.1.
[11] *L*, x.17.
[12] *L*, x.16.
[13] *L*, xi.3.

by this society-regarding feature, and this in turn explains the “causes why men seek each other’s company and enjoy associating with each other [societate mutua]”.[14] Since such sort of mutual engagement takes place both in reality and in the world of imagination, not only physical-biological existence but also (imaginary) social fame is considered as belonging to oneself. Each one’s self makes full sense only with the help of imagination and opinions of other humans.

Nevertheless, according to Hobbes, “no large or lasting society can be based upon the passion for glory”.[15] Men’s need for social glory and the good opinions of others fails to make them considerate of or useful to each other. The complexity of the Hobbesian self and the society-regarding feature of Hobbesian self-love are not sufficient to give rise to true sociability, because each man to some extent retains his original or unreflective self-understanding. First of all, in the state of nature where a common measure of good and evil is absent, Hobbes’s men refuse to evaluate themselves according to measures set by others. To the contrary,

> when men that think themselves wiser than all others, clamor and demand right Reason for judge; yet seek no more, but that things should be determined, by no other men's reason but their own, it is as intolerable in the society of men, as it is in play after trump is turned, to use for trump

[14] *DC*, i.2. Hobbes uses “society” “association” “societas” “societate” in two different senses. Sometimes this set of terms means men’s mutual commerce in the broad sense, whereas sometimes it means large and lasting society with stable order, especially when used together with “civil” or “civilis”. In this chapter, we use “societate mutua” to refer to men’s social interactions in the first sense and “civil society” in the second sense.
[15] *DC*, i.2.

on every occasion, that suite whereof they have most in their hand.[16]

Human beings are so proud that they rival with each other not only in competitions for honour, but also when defining what can be counted as honourable. Just like all players want to use what they have most in their hands as the trump, men unreflectively set up measures of good and evil, honourable and dishonourable according to their own reason and judgment. Rich men take pride in their wealth, while strong men regard strength as most glorious. Each one compares himself with others only according to his original private measure, by which he could always be the winner without difficulty. As a consequence, there is no public yardstick against which everyone establishes his self-evaluation, and then there is no possibility for a common code of honour applied to the whole society that directs men's pride to public benefits.

What is more, despite men's need for praise from others, they are often inclined to obtain it by force, instead of by mutual ingratiation and reciprocal flattery. Hobbes provides several accounts for this fact. Particularly speaking, there are vain-glorious men who over-evaluate their power and naturally tend to be aggressive, attempting to confirm their superiority and enjoy the pleasure of vanquishing others.[17] Generally, all glory-seeking men (that is, all men, no

[16] *L*, v.3.

[17] The meaning of "vainglory" is ambivalent in Hobbes's works. Sometimes vain-glory is contrasted with true glory or proper confidence. It "consists in the feigning and supposing of abilities in ourselves which we know are not", thus vainglorious men lack confidence and usually dare not to take part in real fights. (*L*, xi.41, xi.11; *EL*, ix.1; cf. Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, pp33-36.) But sometimes vain-glory is contrasted with modesty. Vain-glorious men are those "supposing himself superior to others", wanting "to be allowed everything", and demanding "more honour for himself than others have", whereas modest men "look for no more but equality". (*DC*, i.4; *EL*, xiv.3) Vain glory is "vain" since it results from men's over-valuation of their power. Given that human beings are in natural equality, in fact, all glory is vain in this sense, for glory by definition presupposes the precedence of power. But the vain-glorious people themselves are over-confident and aggressive, willing to harm others. Cf. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963, pp12ff. Unfortunately, Hobbes never

matter whether vain or not) are defensive and ready to fight others back when being insulted,

> For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himselfe: And upon all signes of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavours, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other), to extort a greater value from his contemners, by damage; and from others, by the example.[18]

Hobbes's men are too frank to be hypocrites and too stubborn to be flatterers. Although one's worth is not absolute but determined by others, and no one could win honour unless his self-evaluation is widely approved, yet man would not necessarily adjust his self-evaluation according to the opinions of others. The original or unreflective self-estimation is not yet eliminated. On the contrary, both the measure and the content of men's self-valuation are so firm that cannot be easily shaped from without. Once one's good opinions of himself are doubted or challenged by others, he would rather harm them then "extort" a higher evaluation than please them by good behavious to earn compliments. In fact, politeness or mutual exchange of flattery is undesirable due to the essence of glory, honour, and power. Hobbes's men, "whose joy consisteth in comparing

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explains how a man could be modest or acquire proper self-estimation in the state of nature.

[18] *L*, xiii.5; cf. Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (May, 2011), pp298-315. Some scholar claims that not all insults cause anger. People will resort to violence only when their "categorial honour" (instead of "comparative honour") is insulted, that is, when their "status" or "membership in the class of honourable men" is denied. See Clifton Mark, "The Natural Laws of Good Manners: Hobbes, Glory, and Early Modern Civility", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 80 (2018), pp391-414. But this interpretation is implausible, because "status" and "class" are unintelligible in the state of nature where common code of honour is absent.

himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent".[19] Honour is nothing if everybody has it. Hobbesian pride therefore seems more like a humour of frank noblemen, whose pre-eminence, even though it exists only in imagination, is sincerely pursued and believed by themselves.[20]

Due to the absence of common measure, men in the state of nature "must determine the pre-eminence by strength and force of body".[21] Notwithstanding that power may take various forms, men's physical existence is the ultimate foundation of all sorts of power, glory and honour; thus bodily violence and personal dominion over others are the most apparent and radical manifestations of one's superiority. The desire of glory (pleasure of mind) then shapes or re-directs the desire of advantages (pleasure of body). "It is true that the advantages of this life can be increased with other people's help. But this is much more effectively achieved by Dominion over others than by their help".[22] Although sociability might be useful for acquisition of bodily pleasure, dominion is much more attractive given its satisfaction of both aspects of self-love. There is no surprise that men feeling (over-)confident in their superiority in the competitions are enthusiastic in subduing others.[23] Moreover, even the modest man who has a "true estimate of himself" cannot but hold a will to do harm and

[19] *L*, xvii.8.
[20] Cf. *EL*, xvii.15; Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, ch4.
[21] *EL*, xiv.4.
[22] *DC*, i.2.
[23] For some scholars, the existence of bellicose, vainglorious men seeking dominion over others at the risk of their own life implies that pride can trump the passion of self-preservation, or fear of death. Therefore Hobbes's project of keeping men in awe by the sovereign's power might fail. (E.g. Michael Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1975, pp93-94; Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, p73; Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, p44.) But this is not the case. Those men are driven by the over-confidence in their power and the hope of victory, thus do not see the risk of their life in the conflicts. The passion of self-preservation is not overwhelmed, but only misled by their pride. Cf. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, ch2.

a restless desire of power, which are “derived from the need to defend his property and liberty against the other”.[24] Everyone is not sure whether the individuals he encounters are aggressive vain-glorious men or not. Trust in others is dangerous and stupid, for there is no way to secure one’s life once his moderation is exploited.[25] In the structure of moral-political anarchy, therefore, the uncertainty about the existence of the vain-glorious people leads to a universal inclination towards pre-emptive actions. Hobbes concludes that competition, diffidence and glory give rise to a state of war of all against all.[26] It is noteworthy that “competition” here should not be read as the struggle for scarce material goods and as the primary cause of conflicts.[27] As is pointed out by Hobbes, “man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease.”[28] Mutual conflict is inevitable despite the abundance of material goods. The “competition” resulting in war is in fact the competition of power, which is the means to all other goods and is “scarce” due to its positional feature. Such a competition is ignited by diffidence and glory. Actually, though glory is not regarded as the unique reason of conflict (especially in Hobbes’s later works), it is still a fundamental reason since it originally brings about the will to do harm and the anxiety of being harmed. Without the experience about the proud men’s conduct, both mutual “diffidence” and the vicious “competition” of power after

[24] *DC*, i.4.
[25] *DC*, i.3. M. M. Goldsmith, *Hobbes’s Science of Politics*, NY: Columbia University Press, 1966, pp78ff.
[26] *L*, xiii.6.
[27] Comp. David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969, pp14-20; Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, p60; Gregory S. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*.
[28] *L*, xvii.10.

power would not take place.[29]

According to Hobbes, the state of nature is a dilemma caused by human nature, especially the society-regarding self-love. Human nature is not defined by unsociability. For Hobbes's men, "societate mutua" is necessary for the formation of self-understanding and the gratification of self-love. Nonetheless, Hobbes's men are anything but sociable animals. As Hobbes insightfully captures,

> even if man were born in a condition to desire society, it does not follow that he was born suitably equipped to enter society. Wanting is one thing, ability another. For even those who arrogantly reject the equal conditions without which society is impossible, still want it.[30]

The paradox of human nature is dual: human passions are both society-regarding and self-centred, consequently, they give rise to both the presence of desire and the lack of ability of living together. Human beings depend on others as well as they may enter into conflict with them.

2. The Paradox of Natural Right: The Moral Aspect

The complexity of the Hobbesian self and the problem of society-regarding self-love reflect on the moral level as well. "What is not contrary to right reason,

[29] About the declining role of glory in Hobbes's account of the state of nature, see Gabriella Slomp, "From Genes to Species: The Unravelling of Hobbesian Glory", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Winter 1998), pp552-569. Cf. Yves Charles Zarka, *La Decision Metaphysique de Hobbes: Conditions de la Politique*, Paris: Vrin, 1987, pp306-309; Arash Abizadeh, "Glory and the Evolution of Hobbes's Disagreement Theory of War: From *Elements* to *Leviathan*", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020), pp265-298.

[30] *DC*, i.2, annotation.

all agrees is done justly and *of Right.*"[31] For Hobbes, self-preservation is both a natural passion and a natural right. We have mentioned that self-love, as a passion, requires more than one's physical-biological existence. Now self-preservation, as a right, is not limited to one's own life and body, either. Since each man has a right of self-preservation, he has also the right to use the means for that purpose. In the state of nature where everyone is threatened by others but governed by his own private reason, "there is nothing he can make use of, that may not be a help unto him, in preserving his life against his enemies".[32] The right of self-preservation therefore must be a right to all things, even to one another's body, as long as one judges that actions against others are necessary for protecting oneself.[33] This leads to an important consequence that in the state of nature "mine" becomes a society-regarding concept. On the one hand, it extends far beyond one's own physical-biological existence, for each one has a property right to others' bodies and possessions. Yet on the other hand, everybody loses the absolute dominion over himself, because his life is partly owned by others in return. The performance of natural right is not self-sustained but presupposes "societate mutua" among individuals. What is regarded as "belonging to oneself" is complicated and unexclusive.[34]

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[31] *DC*, i.7.

[32] *L*, xiv.4.

[33] Men's self-loving passions become society-regarding because of pride, while men's natural rights become society-regarding because of private judgement. It is noteworthy that private judgment is inherently connected with pride, for adherence to private judgment is an original symptom of pride. See Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the Causes of War: A Disagreement Theory", esp. pp308-312.

[34] Hobbes is therefore not a possessive individualist defining men as natural proprietors of their own persons. Comp. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, p3. Hobbes rejects the possibility of grounding sociability on Grotius's "oikeiosis" or Locke's self-ownership from the starting point. Johan Olsthoorn, "Hobbes on Justice, Property Rights and Self-Ownership", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 36. No. 3 (Autumn, 2015), pp471-498.

But as the moral expression of men's society-regarding self-love, men's socialised natural right by no means leads to community or collective self-preservation (preservation of the species). Though all things (including others' bodies) could be thought as everybody's "mine", they are not treated without discrimination. Hobbes points out that

> Of things held in propriety, those that are dearest to a man are his own life, and limbs; and in the next degree, in most men, those that concern conjugal affection; and after them, riches and means of living.[35]

Properties are associated with oneself to varying degrees. Things regarded as one's self in the most original or unreflective sense, namely one's body and limbs, take priority. Granted your body is mine, I would never make as much an effort to preserve your life as to preserve my "own life and limbs". From everybody's standpoint, bodies and possessions of others become "his" just because they could function as means of one's self-preservation, i.e. the preservation of his own life. That is to say, natural right is socialised for no other reason but self-love. The extensive right that everybody has to everything does not bring about extensive care or protection, rather, such a right is at bottom self-centred.

The natural rights, unable to establish general concord, are also unable to establish any individual's private security or dominion. The paradox of natural rights is also dual: on the one hand, they are both society-regarding and self-

[35] *L*, xxx.12.

centred; on the other hand, they are both unlimited and void. These rights are of no use since they oppose with each other when serving conflicting subjects, i.e. conflicting selves. According to Hobbes,

> the effect of this right is almost the same as if there were no right at all. For although one could say of anything, this is mine, still he could not enjoy it because of his neighbour, who claimed the same thing to be his by equal right and with equal force.[36]

Everyone's performance of his natural rights is obstructed by his fellows, because of (not merely in spite of) their ownership of their own body, life and possessions. Therefore, in juridical terms, the state of nature "is neither *Community*, nor *Propriety*, but *Uncertainty*."[37] This is considered by Hobbes as an additional reason for the state of war,

> to the natural tendency of men to exasperate each other, the source of which is the passions and especially an empty self-esteem, you now add the right of all men to all things, by which one man *rightly* attacks and the other *rightly* resist (an unfailing spring of suspicion and mutual resentment).[38]

Men's attacking one another is not merely an empirical fact, let alone a fact demonstrating men's natural evil.[39] Such actions are assigned with moral significance, for they are done "rightly", despite and because the "right" here is

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[36] *DC*, i.11.
[37] *L*, xxiv.5, original italics.
[38] *DC*, i.12. Original emphasis.
[39] Comp. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, pp13-15

understood as a morally blameless liberty instead of a Hohfeldian right which is correlated with others' duty.[40] The state of war is characterised by conflicts of human nature as well as by rights of conflicts and conflicts of rights.

The natural rights, setting aside their mutual opposition, are also inherently unfruitful. They cannot have full effects since individuals have no way to control the wills and actions of others. That is to say, men's wills and actions are not "owned" by one another like their bodies and possessions. Despite the lack of a property system distinguishing "mine" from "thine", not all sorts of exclusive ownership are removed from the state of nature. According to Hobbes, besides the ownership of goods and possessions, we are also able to talk about ownership of speeches and actions,

> A PERSON, is he, *whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction.*
>
> When they are considered as his own, then is he called a *natural person*; and when they are considered as representing the words and actions of

[40] Wesley Newcomb Hohfeld, *Fundamental Legal Conceptions as Applied in Judicial Reasoning and Other Legal Essays*, ed. by W. W. Cook, NH: Yale University Press, 1966, pp36ff; cf. David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan*, pp29-34. Also see Kant's comments on this point, "their *juridical* state, i.e. the relation in and through which they are capable of *rights* … is a situation of war, in which everyone must be constantly armed against everyone." Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, ed. by Wener S. Pluhar, tr. by Stephen R. Palmquist, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009, pp106-107, footnote, italics added. For some scholars, Hobbes's theory of natural right and natural law is naturalistic rather than normative, because self-preservation and seeking peace are at bottom prudentially rational conduct rather than moral conduct. E.g. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*; Thomas Nagel, "Hobbes's Concept of Obligation", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan., 1959), pp68-83; Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, pp89ff. However, other scholars hold that Hobbes's natural jurisprudence is consistent with prudence but cannot be reduced to the latter entirely. In other words, Hobbes's moral theory is prescriptive rather than descriptive. E.g. Michael Oakeshott, "The Moral Life in the Writings of Thomas Hobbes", in his *Hobbes on Civil Association*, pp80-132; Richard Tuck, *Hobbes*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989; Arash Abizadeh, *Hobbes and the Two Faces of Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Here we generally agree with the second strain of interpretation. Yet it is noteworthy that, affirming the moral status of natural rights does not mean natural laws always oblige men to seek peace. Neither does it necessarily mean the normative force of natural laws is secured by the God. (See footnote 55.) As we will see later, since natural right is prior to natural laws, the natural rights as moral rights lead to conflicts rather than moral order.

another, then is he a *feigned or artificial person*.[41]

Of persons artificial, some have their words and actions *owned* by those whom they represent. And then the person is the *actor*, and he that owneth his words and actions is the AUTHOR, in which case the actor acteth by authority. For that which in speaking of goods and possessions, is called an *owner* (and in Latin *dominus*, in Greek *kurios*), speaking of actions is called author. And as the right of possession, is called dominion; so the right of doing any action, is called AUTHORITY.[42]

Like goods and possessions, speeches and actions can also be "owned" by human beings or other subjects. But owning an action should not be simply understood as to perform it. The owner of speeches and actions is not necessarily the performer, but the one who has the ultimate right of doing these things and is responsible for them. Actions performed by someone could be owned either by himself or by others. If they are owned by himself, then he is a natural person; if they are owned by others, then he acts as an artificial person, namely a representative or an actor, while the owner becomes the author who holds the original right, namely "authority", of doing such actions.[43]

In the state of nature, albeit there is no exclusive ownership of possessions, everybody is regarded by each other as a natural person owning his speeches and actions exclusively. It is only himself that is in charge of those speeches

[41] *L*, xvi.1-2, original italics.
[42] *L*, xvi.4, original emphasis.
[43] Cf. Hannah Pitkin's classic study, "Hobbes's Concept of Representation--I", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Jun., 1964), pp328-340.

and actions and is responsible for them. Therefore, Hobbesian natural right is based on the authority that each individual has as a natural person, since natural right is nothing but "the liberty each man hath, to *use his own power, as he will himself*, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of *doing anything, which in his own judgment, and reason*, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto".[44] Like a coin with two sides, natural right is, on the one hand, the *dominion* over *everything*, which is unlimited but unexclusive; and on the other hand, the *authority* of the natural person over *himself*, which is exclusive but limited.

This is important for our appreciation of the state of nature and the Hobbesian self from a normative perspective. Firstly, one's words and deeds are by no means attributed to others, but thought to be owned by oneself. They are seen as reflections of his own judgment and "signs" of his own (good or evil) intention, while man's internal mind is invisible. Only in this way can mutual diffidence and hostility make sense.[45] Secondly, although each man has a right to all things, even to one another's body, he is not enabled to control the speeches and actions of others. Such an asymmetry between "dominion" and "authority" is of great practical significance. Unlike the power of inanimate things, the power of a human being cannot be possessed, used and enjoyed directly by another man without cooperative actions from the subject himself. Having

[44] *L*, xiv.1, emphasis added.
[45] For the relationship between rational agency and personhood, see Arash Abizadeh, *Hobbes and the Two Faces of Ethics*, pp245-262.

no authority over others' actions, a man in the state of nature thus is not enabled to make use of other's power or means effectively for the sake of his self-preservation. His natural rights fail to transform into power due to this inherent shortcoming.

In sum, the paradox of natural rights corresponds with the paradox of natural passions, i.e. the society-regarding self-love, and intensifies the dilemma of the state of nature. The unexclusive ownership of body and possessions prevents the establishment of stable community or property, causing a conflict of rights between individuals, while the exclusive ownership of speeches and actions prevents men from controlling or being controlled by each other (and then forming some sort of order), and gives rise to diffidence and enmity.

3. Natural Laws, "Societate Mutua" and the State of Nature

The state of nature is a state of self-contradiction. On both empirical and normative levels, for Hobbes, human beings are on the one hand too society-regarding to be self-sufficient like a Rousseauian savage, while on the other hand too self-centred to be considerate of or useful to each other. Nonetheless, the misery of the state of war motivates men to get rid of it. To form stable and lasting social relations, a new type of virtue and discipline is necessary.[46] According to Hobbes, although there is no original concord between individuals

[46] *L*, conclusion.4; *DC*, preface.13, i.2.

on good and evil, men to some degree achieve a second-ordered consensus through rational reflection,

> Men are therefore in a state of war so long as they judge good and evil by the different measures which their changing desires from time to time dictate. All men easily recognize that this state is evil when they are in it, and consequently the peace is good. Thus though they cannot agree on a present good, they do agree on a future good. And that is the work of reason; for things present are perceived by senses, thing future only by reason. Reason teaches that peace is good, it follows by the same reason that all necessary means to peace are good, and hence that modesty, fairness, good faith, kindness and mercy (which we have proved above are necessary for peace) are good manners or habits, i.e. virtues.[47]

Conflicts are inevitable as long as men judge good and evil according to private measures and act according to private judgments. However, even men are influenced by different sensations and passions, in their second-ordered reflection, conflict itself is recognised by everybody as a common evil, whereas peace a common good. This recognition is achieved through role exchange so that everybody "thinks himself into the other person's place".[48] With the technique of role switching, men's self-centredness is balanced. The conclusions drawn from such reflection, as dictates of right reason, are

[47] *DC*, iii.31.
[48] *DC*, iii.36. Hont points out the similarity between Hobbes's "role switching" and "sympathy" of eighteen-century Scottish philosophy. Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, p33.

therefore natural laws and true moral principle. Since the fundamental spirit of natural laws is "to seek peace when it can be had"[49], Hobbesian virtues must not be defined as individual excellence or superiority over others, but "good manners" such as modesty, equity, kindness and mercy in "societate mutua".[50] "The sum of virtue is to be sociable with them that will be sociable… And the same is the sum of the law of nature; for in being sociable, the law of nature taketh place by the way of peace and society".[51] Rather than satisfying pride and causing competition of honour, Hobbesian virtues serve to make men more sociable to each other. Correspondingly, besides demonstrating the legal means to set up order, the main content of the laws of nature is the discipline of sociability aiming to smooth the irregular edges and corners of human nature and fit the stones together into an edifice.[52] Only if natural laws are observed, i.e. when men's society-regarding self-love is overcome by disciplines of sociability, can stable mutual associations be possible.

Yet natural laws are hardly effectual in the state of nature. Rather than categorical imperatives, Hobbesian natural laws are conditional. The general rule of reason provides human beings with two alternatives: "*Every man, ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot*

[49] *DC*, iii.2.
[50] About the difference between classic virtues and Hobbesian virtues, see Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, chapters 3 & 7.
[51] *EL*, xvii.15.
[52] *DC*, iii.9; *L*, xv.17. Hobbes lists twenty clauses of natural laws: the fundamental law is "to seek peace", then laws of covenant (as fundamental means to peace), then laws of sociability (ingratitude, consideration, pardon, proper revenge, against insult, against pride, modesty, and fairness), then laws of property, and then laws of arbitration. Readers usually pay most attention to the first several clauses, but those about sociability are also indispensable. About natural laws as disciplines of "societate mutua", also see Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes on Civil Conversation", in his *From Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in Rhetoric and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp162-189; "Hobbes and the Social Control of Unsociability", in A. P. Martinich & Kinch Hoekstra eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp432-450.

obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war."[53] As the latter half of this sentence displays, the natural right of self-preservation takes priority over the fundamental natural law. Men are obliged to be sociable only when others are sociable as well. Thus in the state of mutual diffidence it might, paradoxically, be reasonable to suspend carrying out the natural law, i.e., the very dictates of reason seeking peace. "The laws of nature oblige *in foro interno*; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place: but *in foro externo*; that is, to the putting them in act, not always."[54] Some interpreters argue that humans always have moral obligation to seek peace, yet this obligation is not behaviourally binding in the state of nature.[55] This is not exactly the case. In fact, "the laws of nature oblige *in foro interno*" means merely that men should have a desire for peace, looking forward to the moment when peace becomes possible, but such a desire does not necessarily overwhelm the desire of preserving oneself in other reasonable ways (depending on one's private judgment). In sum, even with the help of reason and "sympathy" (role-switching), men would not naturally display sociability to one another.

For Hobbes, the state of nature is eventually a miserable condition. According to his famous description,

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[53] *L*, xiv.4, original italics.
[54] *L*, xv.36.
[55] This argument is known as the "Taylor-Warrender thesis", which attempts to find the theological-moral foundation of Hobbes's political obligations in natural laws. A. E. Taylor, "The Ethical Doctrine of Hobbes", *Philosophy*, Vol. 13, No. 52 (Oct., 1938), pp406-424; Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: His Theory of Obligation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957; "Hobbes's Conception of Morality", *Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1962), pp434-449. For recent development of this thesis, see A. P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp71-135; Kody W. Cooper, *Thomas Hobbes and the Natural Law*, ND: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018.

> In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently, no Culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea, no commodious Building, no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth, no account of Time; no Arts, no Letters, no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.[56]

Life in the state of nature is firstly depicted as a life of "solitude", lacking "society". Here "society" should be understood in a narrow sense as "large and lasting society". As we have seen before, not all social relations are excluded from the state of nature. Yet the existence of "societate mutua" does not prevent the war of all against all, for "societate mutua" have neither empirical nor normative binding force on the self-loving individuals. Justice and injustice "are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude".[57] The state of solitude is therefore a state of anomie, a vacuum of order in which life is determined by violence and everyone strives to survive in face of the perpetual threat of death.

Meanwhile, in socio-economic terms, life in the state of nature is also "poore, nasty and brutish", lacking "industry" and "commodities". In the continual war, "everything is his that getteth it, and keepeth it by force".[58]

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[56] *L*, xiii.9.
[57] *L*, xiii.13.
[58] *L*, xxiv.5.

Rationalised labour is useless. Culture and social communication are undeveloped. For Hobbes, industry and commodious life come along with society (in the narrow sense), thus socio-economic activities and civilised way of life are also unavailable without security and order. The state of nature is both a non-political and a non-civilised condition where basic security, stable social relations and civilisation are all absent.

Staying in the state of nature is contrary to human nature. According to Hobbes, “The passions that incline man to peace, are *fear of death*; desire of such things as are necessary to *commodious living*; and a hope by their *industry* to obtain them.”[59] Putting it in a simpler way, “the final cause, end, or design of men, who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others, in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in which we see them live in commonwealths, is the foresight of their own *preservation*, and of a more *contented life* thereby.”[60] For the purpose of self-preservation and civilised commodious life, regular “societas” must be established. The state of nature, i.e. the dilemma resulting from the society-regarding self-love, must be overcome.

II. Civil Society: Common Power and Artificial Person

1. Society and “Civil Society”

As is well known, Hobbes’s solution is the introduction of political power, or in other words, the erection of “that great LEVIATHAN called a

[59] *L*, xiii.14, emphasis added.
[60] *L*, xvii.1, emphasis added.

COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin CIVITAS)".[61] At first glance, the word "civitas" might remind us of the ancient city (polis) and suggest an analogy between the "state" and the Aristotelean political community. But Hobbes's usage of this word is anything but classical. For him, the state/civitas/commonwealth should at bottom be defined as some kind of "society".[62] According to Hobbes, society (societas) "is a voluntary arrangement, what is sought in every society is an Object of will, i.e. something which seems to each one of the members to be Good for himself."[63] Different from the natural concord of animals, society is founded upon voluntary choices of individuals for their own sake, and can be seen as a product of men's unique society-regarding self-love. The state, which is the product of mutual covenants between individuals who are equal and free in the state of nature for the purpose of security, is therefore undoubtedly a "society".[64] Nonetheless, the understanding of the state as a society brings about a theoretical problem. Since there has already been "association with each other" (societate mutua) in the state of nature and that this fails to rescue individuals from the state of war, how can the state, a society (societas) as well, overcome the troublesome society-regarding self-love and achieve peace?

The answer of this problem is both simple and complex, that the state is

[61] *L*, intro.1; also see *EL*, xix.8; *DC*, v.9.
[62] As we will see later, the state is understood as a "civil society" (societas civilis). *L*, xii.12, xiv.31, xxix.7, xxxviii.1.
[63] *DC*, i.2.
[64] Famously, Michael Oakeshott see Hobbes as a representative theorist of "civil association", which is a *societas* rather than *universitas*. Michael Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association*; also see his *On Human Conduct*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp185-326. But Oakeshott's conception of *societas* is not exactly identical to Hobbes's. See David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp13-33; "Is the State a Corporation?", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Winter, 2000), pp90-104.

not only a society, but also a “civil” society (societas civilis). “Societate mutua” is transitory and unstable, whereas civil societies are large and lasting societies (magnarum & diuturnarum societatum) with effective disciplines restraining each member. That is to say, it is the “civil” or political feature of the state that differentiates it from “society” in the general sense, and it is only by capturing such a feature that we can explain how the state works.

Hobbes does not disappoint us, for his endeavour to clarify what civil society contains more than mere society/association runs through all his main works in political philosophy. As is emphasised in *De Cive*, “civil Societies are not mere gatherings (congressus); they are Alliances (Foedera), which essentially require good faith and agreement for their making.”[65] For the formation of a civil society, not only “voluntary arrangement” but formal agreement is requested to establish a stable legal relationship between individuals. Moreover, a civil society is “also a civil person (persona civilis)” or a “union” holding “common power”.[66] Through formal agreement (covenant with each of the rest), everybody “transfers” his right of governing himself to one man or one assembly, and “submits” his will to the will of that man or that assembly, namely the sovereign of the state. In other words, all members of the civil society relinquish their own private judgments and their right of resisting the sovereign who acts only according to his own will. As long as there is only one will taken as the will of all, the civil society becomes “one person” that is

[65] *DC*, i.2, annotation.
[66] *DC*, v.9.

enabled to combine everybody's strength and resources for common peace or benefits.[67] And the common power, according to Hobbes, is "the greatest of the human powers".[68]

In all the three main works in political philosophy, Hobbes suggests that the unique characteristics of civil society are its common power and its legal status as a "civil person". By common power, the state can effectively keep all subjects in awe, oppress the aggressive proud men, and secure all sorts of "societas mutua" among individuals (including private agreements) when all other associations are not able to do. Meanwhile, by legal status as a civil person/union, the state is distinguished from all other kinds of "societas" in formal and normative respects. Furthermore, it is only through the authority as a civil person (*de jure*) that the state can obtain its common power (*de facto*), because power cannot be "common" unless it is mobilised by and for the union.

However, at first glance, civil society still looks quite similar to two other types of "societas", namely personal dominion and non-state corporation. Let us begin from comparing civil society with personal dominion, which is the associations between masters and servants or between parents and children. If the content of the state-making covenant is the subjects' transfer of right to the sovereign, then civil society shows no significant theoretical difference from personal dominion in the state of nature, for the former is eventually based on the natural right or natural power of the rulers no less than the latter is.

[67] *DC*, v.9; also see *EL*, xix.8.
[68] *L*, x.3.

According to Hobbes, “the argument that transfer of right consists solely in non-resistance is that the recipient already had a right to all things before the transfer of the right; hence the transfer could not give him a new right.”[69] The subjects’ transfer of right to the sovereign does not add anything new to the natural right already held by the sovereign, but only takes away the obstacles to the performance of his natural right. Their relinquishment of private judgments also leads merely to negative submission to the sovereign’s own judgment, but fails to create a true “union” of will acknowledged by everyone. As Hobbes explained, the submission of will means “not to withhold the use of his (the sovereign’s) wealth and strength against any other men than himself (the subject)”.[70] In other words, though the sovereign dominates the whole society of subjects without resistance and even freely disposes their material possessions (like a master), he remains in the state of nature as a natural man acting at his own will, and the power he relies on is his natural power rather than the “common power” contributed by his subjects. That turns out to be a fatal problem for Hobbes’s whole theory, for personal dominion, the non-civil association, is far from competent to overcome the state of war. Natural power is too unstable, and the sovereign’s will, even when its content is the preservation of the whole society, is entirely foreign to the subjects.[71]

[69] *DC*, ii.4.
[70] *DC*, v.7.
[71] Cf. Rita Koganzon, “The Hostile Family and the Purpose of the ‘Natural Kingdom’ in Hobbes’s Political Thought”, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 77 (2015), pp377–398; Daniel Lee, “Sovereignty and Dominion: The Foundations of Hobbesian Statehood”, in Robin Douglass & Johan Olsthoorn eds., *Hobbes’s* On the Citizen*: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp126-144.

What is more, granted that civil society is a “union”, Hobbes also needs to shed light on the qualitative distinction between civil society and non-state corporations. Hobbes has recognized “although every commonwealth is a civil person, not every civil person (by converse) is a commonwealth”.[72] Non-state systems or corporations, united in one person in the pursuit of some common benefits of some particular individuals (e.g. companies of merchants), are unions and civil persons as well, thus are analogous to the state. As Otto von Gierke keenly points out, the contractual theory of state might “tend towards the inclusion of the theory of the State in the general theory of Society, which permitted associations other than the State to appeal to a similar origin and to claim a similar justification.”[73] In other words, “societas civilis” might be confused with other sorts of mutual association, such as non-state corporations. An easy answer to this problem is that the subjects have subjected themselves “simply and in all things” in civil society, whereas “only in certain matters” in non-state corporations, thus the latter is subordinate to the former.[74] Nevertheless, since “the existence associations depends essentially on the same natural power of association which also created the State”, the state seems no more than an enhanced and extended version of a trading group.[75]

Hobbes attempted to overcome these difficulties in all of his main works of

[72] *DC*, v.10; also see *EL*, xix.9.
[73] Otto von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society: 1500-1800*, tr. by Ernest Barker, London: Cambridge University Press, 1938, p62.
[74] *DC*, v.10.
[75] Otto von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society*, p80. Also see David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State*, pp13ff.

political philosophy, and to a large extent his basic insights did not change. For instance, Hobbes always distinguishes "natural commonwealth" (personal dominion) from the "artificial commonwealth" (commonwealth by institution), highlighting the artificiality of the latter.[76] It is also stressed that no non-state corporations could be established but "with the permission of their commonwealth".[77] Yet the most innovative solution is found in *Leviathan.* Hobbes insists that civil society holds "a common power to keep them (the subjects) in awe, and to direct their actions to the common benefit".[78] Meanwhile, Hobbes accomplishes a clearer explanation of the legal-normative character of the civil society with the help of the theory of authorisation and representation. In this new discussion of personhood, Hobbes focuses no longer on the entities (individuals and corporations) represented but the agents acting as representatives. Both the sovereign and the subjects experience some kind of split of personhood in civil society, as both are enabled to act as "artificial persons".[79] Through the actions of artificial persons, the common

[76] *EL*, xxii.1; *DC*, v.12; *L*, xvii.15.
[77] *DC*, v.10; *EL*, xix.9; *L*, xxii.
[78] *L*, xvii.12.
[79] The theory of authorisation and representation, as Hobbes's theoretical "innovation" in *Leviathan*, has been well appreciated by scholars. E.g. Hannah Pitkin, "Hobbes's Concept of Representation--II", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Dec., 1964), pp902-918; David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan*, pp120-177; Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Civil Science* (Visions of Politics: Vol. 3), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp177-208; "Hobbes on Political Representation", in *From Humanism to Hobbes*, pp190-221; Robin Douglass, "Authorisation and Representation before *Leviathan*", *Hobbes Studies*, Vol. 31 (2018), pp30-47; Philippe Crignon, "Representation and the Person of the State", *Hobbes Studies*, Vol. 31 (2018), pp48-74; Michael Green, "Corporate Persons without Authorisation", in *Hobbes's* On the Citizen*: A Critical Guide*, pp145-160. But this innovation arouses new theoretical problems. In early works, Hobbes divides persons into "natural person" (individuals) and "civil person" (corporations), thus state is classified as a civil person. But in *Leviathan*, person is divided into "natural person" (individuals acting in their own name) and "artificial person" (representatives), thus it is ambivalent whether the state is a person and what sort of person the state is. Some scholars identify the state as a "fictional person". See David Runciman,"What Kind of Person is Hobbes's State: A Reply to Skinner", *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2000), pp268-278;"Hobbes's Theory of Representation: Anti-Democratic or Proto-Democratic", in Ian Shapiro et al (eds.), *Political Representation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp15-34; Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes on Political Representation"; "Hobbes on Persons, Authors, and Representatives", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's* Leviathan, ed. Patricia Springborg, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp157–180; Arash Abizadeh, "The Representation of Hobbesian Sovereignty: Leviathan as Mythology", in

power is established and mobilised. For Hobbes, therefore, it is by the introduction of common power and artificial person that “civil society” outperforms all other types of associations, and overcomes the conflicts aroused by society-regarding self-love.

2. Common Power and the Taming of Pride

Let us start from the common power, the function of which is easier to understand. As we have mentioned in section I, the state of war results from men’s perpetual competition for superiority, and men’s pursuit of superiority derives from their pride and their diffidence of the potential threats caused by the proud men (especially when whether a man is proud or not is unknown). When there is no natural common measures of good and evil, just and unjust, the proud men will consider their own reason as right reason, their self-evaluation as appropriate evaluation, and be aggressive to anyone who displays any signs of disagreement or contempt. When there is no stable and obvious inequality of power, the proud men will not be prevented from harming others, and everyone cannot help but attacking others since they are not protected from being attacked. Therefore, once there are common measures

Hobbes Today: Insights for the 21st Century, ed. S.A. Lloyd, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp113-152. However, for some other scholars, *Leviathan*’s distinction between natural and artificial person is not applicable to the state, because such a distinction is concerning persons as actors, and the state is not an actor at all. See Paul Sagar, “What is the Leviathan”, *Hobbes Studies*, Vol. 31 (2018), pp75-92; A. P. Martinich, “Authorisation and Representation in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*, pp316-338; Johan Olsthoorn, “*Leviathan* Inc.: Hobbes on the Nature and Person of the State”, *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2021), pp17-32; Sean Fleming, “The Two Faces of Personhood: Hobbes, Corporate Agency and the Personality of the State”, *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2021), pp5-26. We will not engage in this debate since it is not our present concern. But in the following sections we will display the significance of Hobbes’s new theory of persons in *Leviathan*, by showing that the introduction of “artificial person” also changes our way of understanding the actions of the subjects in civil society.

and a lasting greatest power securing the order, the state of war will cease. These two conditions are perfectly fulfilled by the common power. As “the greatest of the human powers”, the common power can sufficiently defend the group from foreign invasions as well as prevent injuries of one another by the deterrence of punishment. In the face of expectable punishment instead of uncertain outcome of mutual fight, the desire of self-preservation and fear of death will teach men to oppress their pride, give up aggressive behaviours. Diffidence between each other is in this way eliminated. That is why Hobbes calls the Leviathan “King of the Proud”.[80] Additionally, the common power also brings about common measure of values. On the one hand, the existence of the common power by itself sets up a common measure for the comparison of power, since the inequality of power is so obvious that no one can evaluate himself as more powerful than the state. On the other hand, for Hobbes,

> considering what values men are naturally apt to set upon themselves; what respect they look for from others; and how little they value other men; from whence continually arise amongst them, emulation, quarrels, factions, and at last war, to the destroying of one another, and diminution of their strength against a common enemy; it is necessary that there be laws of honour, and a public rate of the worth of such men as have deserved or are able to deserve well of the commonwealth; and that there be force in the hands of some or other, to put those laws in execution.[81]

[80] *L*, xxviii.27.
[81] *L*, xviii.15.

Pride is not entirely excluded from civil society, for it is deeply rooted in human nature. The civil society does not change human nature. As Hobbes admits, "ambition and longing for honour cannot be removed from men's minds, and sovereigns have no duty to attempt to do so."[82] But in civil society, subjects are only permitted to evaluate themselves according to the common measure (the laws of honour) endorsed by the sovereignty, and have no right of questioning the worth the state assigns to them. As long as the state ensures "that the road to honours does not lie through criticism of the current regime nor through factions and popular favour, but through the opposite, … there would be more ambition to obey than to oppose."[83] Hobbes also points out the importance of civil education and discipline. Subjects must be taught correct moral and political principles, as well as public code of honour and manners of conversation. Yet Hobbes is not entirely optimistic about the effectiveness of education, for not all humans, but only the naturally modest men, are educable.[84] The vain-glorious ones may be too stubborn to give up their own measures of evaluation. As there is no natural consensus about the content of the common measure, it must be put in execution by common power, in other words, "by a consistent employment of rewards and punishments". At bottom, the peace in civil society is guaranteed by the common power.

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[82] *DC*, xiii.12.
[83] *DC*, xiii.12.
[84] In *Leviathan* and *De Humane*, Hobbes becomes more optimistic about the malleability of human nature than in *Elements of Law* and *De Cive*. But Hobbes always concedes that some people are intractable. Cf. Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory*, pp108-118; Julie Cooper, "Vainglory, Modesty, and Political Agency in the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 72 (2010), pp241-269; Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes on Civil Conversation"; Clifton Mark, "The Natural Laws of Good Manners".

Nevertheless, we should not conclude that the state of war is terminated simply because the society represses the self, i.e. the troublesome society-regarding self-love is oppressed by the overwhelming power of the civil society. The “common” power, different from any natural power of natural man, is itself a normative power, and the civil society overcomes the difficulty of human nature in a much subtler way. To appreciate Hobbes’s project adequately, we now move to the other element of civil society, the artificial person.

3. Artificial Person and the Split of the Self

The concept of “artificial person” is inseparable with “representation” and “authorisation”. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes for the first time explains the establishment of civil society in terms of representation and authorisation,

> The only way to erect such a common power … is … to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own, and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person, shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety … This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if everyman should say to every man, *I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy*

right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner.[85]

In the state-making covenant, each individual not only "transfers" his original natural right to the sovereign, but also "authorises" the sovereign to bear his person and act in his name.[86] That indeed brings a new sort of right to the sovereign. As we have discussed in section I, although in the state of nature everybody has a right of possession (dominion) to all things, even to each other's body, his right of action (authority) is strictly limited to his natural person. No one has the right of doing any act in the name of others. But in civil society, the sovereign becomes an artificial person who acts not for himself (as a private man) but in the name of all his subjects. The right he performs is no longer a natural right but artificial authority, therefore in principle the power he employs is no longer a natural power but common power. In this way, civil society is distinct from personal dominion.

The authorisation has even greater influence on the subjects. The state-making covenant does endow the sovereign with new rights of action, but it does not mean that all actions in civil society are monopolised by the sovereign himself. The sovereign is not the only actor on the stage of politics. Hobbes informs us that "common power" is not only the sovereign's own power for the common use, nor limited to the exploitation of material resources in the whole society. For the sake of peace and common defence, the sovereign can and

[85] *L*, xvii.13, original italics.
[86] About the consistency between "transfer of right" and "authorisation", see Michael Green, "Authorisation and Political Authority in Hobbes", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (2015), pp25-47.

ought to make use of “the strength and means of them (the subjects) all”.[87] Therefore, the subjects, instead of being passive and let the sovereign do what he wants, are required to cooperate or assist him positively by actions. Non-resistance does not exhaust the full range of obedience. For instance, a subject “obligeth himself, to assist him that hath the sovereignty, in the punishing of another”.[88] But in doing these cooperative or supportive actions, the subjects should act according to the sovereign’s will, which might be different from or even opposite to their own original will. Here we meet the problem of the divergence of wills. Albeit the subjects give up their right of acting at their private will, the absence of a common will shared by the whole society still hinders the constitution of the true “union” and the formation of common power. This difficulty, nonetheless, is solved by introducing the legal relationship of representation and authorisation. Through the state-making covenant, every subject authorises all the commands of the sovereign, acknowledging himself as the owner of the sovereign’s speeches and actions. That is to say, the sovereign’s reason, judgment, will and command are no longer alienated from or foreign to the subjects, but belonging to them, considered as their own will and judgment. “When he wills, they are willing through him.”[89] Therefore to act in consistency with the sovereign’s commands, is *de jure* to act in consistency with themselves, though the subjects’ actions seem to be no more than some

[87] *L*, xvii.13.
[88] *L*, xxviii.2.
[89] Hannah Pitkin, “Hobbes’s Concept of Representation-II”, p904.

sort of “hypocrisy” *de facto* (for even a Muslim in private conscience has to pray publicly to Jesus if his sovereign gives that command).[90] Since everybody takes the sovereign’s will as their own, the civil society becomes “a real unity of them all, in one and the same person”. Correspondingly, the sovereign is enabled to make use of the “common power”, which is contributed by the subjects through their supportive actions.

Notably, at the same time of the formation of that unity, the self of each subject is split into two parts, one presented immediately in his actions according to his original private will, while the other re-presented in the sovereign’s actions and (more commonly) in his own actions commanded by the sovereign’s will. The sovereign, as an artificial person/representative/actor, is involved in the constitution of each subject’s selfhood. Hobbes concedes that

> for seeing there is no commonwealth in the world, wherein there be rules enough set down, for the regulating of all the actions, and words of men; as being a thing impossible: it followeth necessarily, that in all kinds of actions by the laws prætermitted, men have the liberty, of doing what their own reasons shall suggest, for the most profitable to themselves.[91]

Therefore, the first part of the self is not entirely substituted by the second even in civil society. As long as there is “silence of laws”, the first part remains as it used to be in the state of nature. But the second part demonstrates that civil

[90] Cf. David Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power, From Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, pp16-44.
[91] *L*, xxi.6.

society is able to manage the self-centred individuals in a unique way unavailable in other forms of mutual association. Due to the involvement of the sovereign's wills and commands in each individual's self, their judgments of self-preservation and glory are transformed (in fact, replaced by the judgments of the sovereign). With no need of substantial education or change of human nature, the conflict-making self-love and self-centred natural rights are harnessed through this legal process. The introduction of artificial person therefore not only assigns a proper title to the sovereign to make use of the common power, but no less importantly leads to a change of the subjects' life in civil society.

The story has not ended yet, however. Theoretically speaking, when acting in accordance with the sovereign's commands, even the subjects themselves to some extent become artificial persons. But to make this point clear, we need to take a necessary detour, and first concentrate our attention on Hobbes's own analysis of non-state corporations within civil society.

According to Hobbes, systems are "any numbers of men joined in one interest, or one business". Among all systems, some are regular, in which "one man or assembly of men, is constituted representative of the whole number".[92] Both civil society and non-state corporations are "regular systems". Civil society is an absolute and independent system, whose representative (the sovereign) has unlimited power, whereas all non-state corporations are "dependent, that is

[92] *L*, xxii.1.

to say, subordinate to some sovereign power, to which every one, as also their representative, is *subject*." [93] The power of representatives of non-state corporations is limited, for it is valid only over certain part of subjects concerning certain business. More importantly, in terms of authorisation, civil society and non-state corporations are constituted through totally different ways. While the representative of civil society, the sovereign, is authorised by all the subjects he represents, the representatives of non-state corporations are not authorised by the group members they represents, but by the sovereign:

> Of systems subordinate, some are *political*, and some *private*. *Political*, otherwise called *bodies politic*, and *persons in law*) are those which are made by authority from the sovereign power of the commonwealth.[94]
>
> Private bodies regular, and lawful, are those that are constituted without letters, or other written authority, saving the laws common to all other subjects.
>
> Private bodies regular, but unlawful, are those that unite themselves into one person representative, without any public authority at all …[95]

According to Hobbes's definitions, all lawful systems, political or private, must be endorsed by public authority from the sovereign. Therefore, albeit civil society and non-state corporations have the same structure of representation, they are grounded on different structures of authorisation. In non-state

[93] *L*, xxii.2, original emphasis.
[94] *L*, xxii.3, original emphasis.
[95] *L*, xxii.26-27.

corporations, regardless of who or what is represented, the author is always the sovereign.

Here are two points deserving our notice. Firstly, the relationship between the representative and the represented, and that between the actor and the author, are no longer identical. More precisely, the representee is not always the author. Secondly, the sovereign, who himself is a representative, becomes an author in civil society.[96]

The first point may seem odd according to our ordinary impression of Hobbes's theory. But in fact, the asymmetry between representation and authorisation is by no means a weird phenomenon. For example, in his analysis of the representation of inanimate things, Hobbes says,

> Inanimate things, as a church, an hospital, a bridge, may be personated by a rector, master, or overseer. But things inanimate, cannot be authors, nor therefore give authority to their actors; yet the actors may have authority to procure their maintenance, given them by those that are owners, or governors of those things. And therefore, such things cannot be personated, before there be some state of civil government.[97]

In this model, it is the inanimate thing that is represented, but it is the owner or governor that is the author. The "rector, master, or overseer" acts as a representative in correlation to that thing, while as an actor in correlation to its

[96] Yves Charles Zarka, *Hobbes and Modern Political Thought*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, pp189-191.
[97] *L*, xvi.9.

"owner or governor".[98] The same model can be applied to "children, fools, and madmen" as well,

> Likewise, children, fools, and madmen that have no use of reason, may be personated by guardians, or curators; but can be no authors, during that time, of any action done by them, longer than, when they shall recover the use of reason, they shall judge the same reasonable. Yet during the folly, he that hath right of governing them, may give authority to the guardian. But this again has no place but in a state civil, because before such estate, there is no dominion of persons.[99]

In sum, for Hobbes, things or men without the capacity of being authors can be represented as well, but the representative-actor is authorized only by the one who has the right of governing them.

This model is also applicable to the non-state corporations in civil society. The subjects have already authorised and given up their right of governing themselves to the sovereign. That is to say, in spite of their natural faculty (i.e. rational agency) for authorising representatives and constituting unities, they lack the legal right to freely do so once the civil society is established, unless by a converse authorisation from their governor, the sovereign. And if they retain such a right, all representatives of all associations are potentially sovereign. There would be sovereigns under the sovereign, commonwealths

[98] David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan*, pp122-123.
[99] *L*, xvi.10.

within the commonwealth, and confusion and war.[100] As Hobbes underlines,

> the sovereign, in every commonwealth, is the absolute representative of all the subjects; and therefore no other can be representative of any part of them, but so far forth, as he shall give leave.[101]

Albeit subordinate systems do not represent the sovereign, they cannot exist unless the sovereign authorises them.

In fact, the sovereign in civil society works more often as an author than not. Firstly, all civil laws are authorised by the sovereign. “There is, requisite, not only a declaration of the law, but also sufficient signs of the author and authority. The author, or legislator, is supposed in every commonwealth to be evident, because he is sovereign.”[102] Secondly, the sovereign also authorises all public ministers. “A PUBLIC MINISTER, is he, that by the sovereign, … is employed in any affairs, with authority to represent in that employment, of the commonwealth.” [103] More broadly, all lawful actions of the subjects are authorised by the sovereign as well, and such lawfulness derives from nothing but the sovereign’s authority.

According to our common sense, to “authorise” somebody or something is not necessarily to “author” something. For instance, an officer may issue a driving license to a man, authorising his action to drive a car, yet the officer is not the author or owner of his driving. However, Hobbes does not take this

[100] *DC*, xiii.13; David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State*, p27.
[101] *L*, xxii.5.
[102] *L*, xxvi.16.
[103] *L*, xxiii.2.

difference into consideration. As Hannah Pitkin observes, “the Hobbesian account begins with the ascription of action itself; this seems to be what he means by an action being a person’s ‘own’ or not his ‘own’. But this notion is immediately interpreted in terms of authorization, which is to say that the ascription of actions is identified with three other ideas: the ascription of the normative consequences of action, the giving (and receiving) of the right to act (authority to act), and having authority in general, particularly having authority over someone else.”[104] For Hobbes, being an author equals to owning some actions, equals to letting others do those actions by his authority, and equals to being responsible for those actions.[105] In the previous case, since the subjects have already given up their rights of governing themselves (including driving a car) to the sovereign, then it is the officer (who represents the sovereign) that holds the original authority and extends it to the driver, and it is the officer that is responsible for the driver’s lawful driving. Therefore, when the driver drives on the left side of road in the UK, his driving is owned by the officer (and ultimately the state). If a Chinese used to driving on the right side questions his manners of driving, he could attribute the responsibility to the UK government. But if he drives on the right side in the UK or in some no man’s land (where there is no laws) and causes a traffic accident, he himself is responsible for it, because his driving was not authorised by anyone but owned by himself. In this

[104] Hannah Pitkin, “Hobbes’s Concept of Representation-1”, p339. A similar critique see Michael Green, “Authorisation and Political Authority in Hobbes”.
[105] *L*, xvi.4.

sense, the authoriser is always the owner and author.

The text of *Leviathan* suggests that for Hobbes all actions done by the sovereign's command are done by his authority, and therefore the sovereign is the owner and author.[106] Now the two points we have demonstrated above, namely the asymmetry between representation and authorization, and the sovereign's being an author, could be applied to our analysis of each subject's actions. When acting according to the law and the sovereign's other commands, regardless of being ministers or not (that is to say, regardless of representing the sovereign or not), the subject should not be regarded as an entirely natural person. Even while he is personating himself or a non-state corporation (from the viewpoint of civil laws), his actions are authorised and owned by the sovereign (from the viewpoint of politics). The subject becomes an actor of the sovereign. Considering his relation with the sovereign, he is an artificial person.

We have argued that once an individual enters civil society, his self splits into two parts. Now, the split of self can be understood in terms of the split of personhood. In the realm of "liberty of subject" where laws are silent, everyone acts according to the original reason or appetites of himself as a natural person, like they used to do in the state of nature. But when it comes to actions in accordance with laws and the sovereign's commands, the subject acts as an artificial person, because his actions are derived from the sovereign's will and

[106] In chapter 22, Hobbes writes, "for though men may do many things which God does not *command*, nor is therefore *author* of them, yet they can have no passion nor appetite to anything of which appetite God's will is not the cause." (*L*, xxi.4, emphasis added.) Here to command is correlated with to be author.

therefore authorised/owned by the sovereign.[107] Therefore, the split of personhood corresponds with the distinction between natural liberty and civil obedience, as well as the difference between the state of nature and civil society (also named as “artificial commonwealth”). The artificiality of the person of the individuals is correlated to the artificiality of the commonwealth. Peace is secured in this way, besides by the deterrence of common power over the society-regarding self-love. Making use of the category of corporation theory, Hobbes provides a way of forming unity without changing human nature. While the diversity and depth of natural human passions remain as they are, men establish an artificial order in the artificial civil society through the legal relationship of artificial persons. In a word, stable associations are achieved in the world of artifice.

III. “Societate Mutua” in Civil Society

The civil society, as a political society established on the basis of common power and artificial person, rescues human beings from the miserable state of war. However, in spite of its unique role in human life, civil society by no means excludes other types of “societate mutua” among men. In Hobbes’s opinion, “the use of laws, which are but rules authorized, is not to bind the people from all voluntary actions; but to direct and keep them in such a motion, as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashness, or indiscretion”.[108]

[107] And the sovereign is ultimately a representative of himself (the subject), whose commands are acknowledged as of his (the subject’s) own.
[108] *L*, xxx.21.

Civil (political) relations do not constitute the whole range of men's ordinary life. For Hobbes, along with the erection of political power, the formation of various stable social relations (such as commercial and trade relations) and the establishment of civilised way of life are accomplished at the same time.[109] That can be seen especially in men's socio-economic activities in civil society.

We have discussed that economic activities are absent in the state of nature, because there is neither distinction of "mine" and "thine" while everyone has a right to everything, nor possibility of mutual trust in the state of war. Industry and trade are possible only when property and covenant are secured. And as the famous Hobbesian maxim goes, "property and commonwealths came into being together".[110] In civil society, rules of exclusive private property and of "all kinds of contract between subjects, as buying, selling, exchanging, borrowing, lending, letting, and taking to hire" are prescribed by the sovereign,[111] and safeguarded by the common power. Nevertheless, as is often overlooked by Hobbes's readers, what men achieve in civil society is not limited to the basic peace of living together (which is opposite to "solitude"). In Hobbes's eyes,

> Regarding this life only, the goods citizens may enjoy can be put into four categories: 1) defence from external enemies; 2) preservation of internal peace; 3) acquisition of wealth, so far as this is consistent with public

[109] In this way, Hobbes's concept of "civil society" is a unity of "political society", "civilised society", and "bürgerliche gesellschaft" (bourgeois society).
[110] *DC*, vi.15.
[111] *L*, xxiv.10.

> security; 4) full enjoyment of innocent liberty. Sovereigns can do no more for the citizens' happiness than to enable them to enjoy the possessions their industry has won them, safe from foreign and civil war.[112]

The dual aim leading men out of the state of nature, namely safety and contended life, must be fulfilled in the civil society. Therefore, besides a bare preservation against internal and external dangers, there should also be "contentment of life" or "commodious living" based on lawful wealth and liberty (which are opposite to poverty, nastiness and brutality).[113] Specifically, for Hobbes, the wealth and commodities of both the subjects and the state are acquired mainly by industry.

To understand men's social life in civil society, here we should pay attention to the significance of industry in Hobbes's theory. Industry is tightly tied with men's sociability, for it plays an indispensable role in the cultivation of human nature (especially of reason) as well as in the formation of social disciplines. According to Hobbes, "those other Faculties, of which I shall speak by and by, and which seem proper to man only, are acquired and encreased by study and industry; and of most men learned by instruction and discipline".[114] Thanks to industry, men develop their faculties necessary for social communication and become more disciplined animals. In fact, men could not be men in the full sense unless by industry, neither could regular social interactions be imaginable.

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[112] *DC*, xiii.6.
[113] *L*, xiii.13, xxx.1.
[114] *L*, iii.11.

Moreover, in civil society, human beings are directly motivated to associate with each other for the sake of industry. They transfer their property “mutually one to another, by exchange and mutual contract”,[115] and even unite into regular subordinate corporations for common benefits.[116] As a consequence of industry along with the education from the sovereign that peace is good and complaisance is honorable, men in civil society develop much “thicker” and “deeper” social relations than political relations constituted merely by the state-making covenant.

Meanwhile, industry, specifically labour and trade, is considered as the most effective means of accumulating material wealth. According to Hobbes,

> For the matter of this nutriment, consisting in animals, vegetals, and minerals, God hath freely laid them before us, in or near to the face of the earth; so as there needeth no more but the labour, and industry of receiving them. Insomuch as plenty dependeth, next to God's favour, merely on the labour and industry of men.
>
> This matter, commonly called commodities, is partly *native,* and partly *foreign*: *native*, that which is to be had within the territory of the commonwealth; *foreign*, that which is imported from without. And because there is no territory under the dominion of one commonwealth, except it be of very vast extent, that produceth all things needful for the maintenance, and motion of the whole body; and few that produce not

[115] *L*, xxiv.10.
[116] *L*, xxii.18.

> something more than necessary; the superfluous commodities to be had within, become no more superfluous, but supply these wants at home, by importation of that which may be had abroad, either by exchange, or by just war, or by labour. [117]

By industry, natural resources are exploited and circulated, transforming into commodities which gratify men's need for "enjoyment of life". Although military activity can be seen as another way to enrichment, they "sometimes increases the citizens' wealth but more often erodes it". In Hobbes's eyes, "as a means of gain, military activity is like gambling".[118] Hobbesian way of life in civil society, therefore, is far from simple, primitive or warlike, but a civilised lifestyle on the ground of rationalised labour and trade. Even on international level, the states may trade with each other rather than stay in a strict state of war of all against all.[119]

What is more, industry is of great significance not only for the subjects' private enjoyment of life or for the civilisation of men, because labour and trade have become constitutive elements of the power of the state,

> there have been commonwealths that, having no more territory than hath served them for habitation, have nevertheless, *not only maintained, but also encreased their power*, partly by the labour of trading from one place

[117] *L*, xxiv.3-4.
[118] *DC*, xiii.14.
[119] Tom Sorrell, "Hobbes on Trade, Consumption and International Order", *The Monist*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Apr. 2006), pp245-258; also cf. Patricia Springborg, "Thomas Hobbes and the Political Economy of Peace", *Croatian Political Review,* Vol. 55, No. 4 (2018), pp9-35. For more details about the differences between the state of nature and the international state of nature, see Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002, pp432-456; Maximilian Jaede, *Thomas Hobbes's Conception of Peace: Civil Society and International Order*, Edinburgh: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

to another, and partly by selling the manufactures whereof the materials were brought in from other places.[120]

State requires power in face of international competition, diffidence and desire of glory. As an artificial “man”, the state could not survive in the material world without adequate “nutrition”, which is material riches obtained by industry. In this sense, Hobbes even points out the conformity between the power of the state and the power of the subjects. “The good of the sovereign and people cannot be separated. It is a weak sovereign that has weak subjects,” thus unnecessary laws as “traps for money” should be avoided, and the subjects should be left with enough liberty of initiative.[121] In this way, socio-economic activities not only support the civil society by building more peaceful relations among men and making their life civilised, but also contribute to its strength and prosperity directly.

However, that is not to say Hobbes is an advocate of “possessive individualism” or a theorist of political economy.[122] Despite his attention to the role of social interactions, especially of economic activities, his standpoint is at bottom political. Whatever these social interactions may add to the civil society,

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[120] *L*, xxiv.4, emphasis added.
[121] *L*, xxx.21; *DC*, vi.15.
[122] Hont’s judgment of the historical position of Hobbes is more convincing than Macpherson’s. For Hobbes, the peace of civil society is not guaranteed by the non-violent competition of free market, but by the political power of the sovereign. Though Hobbes’s methodological individualism and some of his understanding of human nature do provide important theoretical foundations for modern economics, his explicit economic views are too old-fashioned in comparison with the new political economy of market society. Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, “Jealousy of Trade: An Introduction”; also see Quentin Taylor, “Thomas Hobbes, Political Economist: His Changing Historical Fortunes”, *The Independent Review*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Win., 2010), pp415-433; Laurence van Apeldoorn, “‘The Nutrition of a commonwealth’: On Hobbes’s Economic Thought”, in Jakob Bek-Thomsen et al (eds.), *History of Economic Rationalities: Economic Reasoning as Knowledge and Practical Authority*, Dortmund: Springer, 2018, pp21-30; comp. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism from Hobbes to Locke*, pp9-106; J. M. Z. Labiano, “A Reading of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* with Economists’ Glasses”, *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2000), pp134-146.

they could do nothing but lead to war of all against all without “civil” society—the unity with common power based on artificial persons. What Hobbes is primarily concerned about is always peace and order, for what worries him fundamentally is the potential for the collapse into the state of nature. Therefore, Hobbes would not grant a Lockean principle of property. Property is nothing but “what he can keep for himself by means of the laws and the power of the whole commonwealth, i.e. by means of the one on whom its sovereign power has been conferred”,[123] thus it can exclude other subjects but not the sovereign. Not to mention that immoderate private wealth itself is a potential threat to the state, and the sovereign has even a “duty” (not just a right) to control it.[124] Hobbes does not permit unregulated foreign trade, either, for some subjects may “furnish the enemy with means to hurt the commonwealth” for the sake of private gain.[125] Hobbes is also an opponent of luxury. Pursuit of consumer goods far exceeding men’s ordinary need of life is an expression of pride and could arouse conflicts.[126] For Hobbes, some things “pleasing men’s appetites” could also be “unprofitable” or even “noxious”, and must not be imported.[127] In essence, the power of Hobbesian states is not social-economic power, but political-legal power. What this power relies on, is not “societate mutua” between men and its byproduct (material wealth), but the artificial relations

[123] *DC*, vi.15.
[124] *DC*, xiii.14.
[125] *L*, xxii.9.
[126] David Lay Williams, “Hobbes on Wealth, Poverty, and Economic Inequality”, *Hobbes Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2021), pp9-57.
[127] *DC*, iii.9; *L*, xxii.9.

between the sovereign and the subjects as well as between the subjects themselves constituted by the state-making covenant. These relations, though they seem quite “thin”, work as the ultimate resolution of the dilemma of society-regarding self-love.

Conclusion

Hobbes brings about a significant theoretical development to early modern debates of natural law and sociability, though he comes from a direction opposite to the orthodoxy of the time and was criticized by most of his contemporaries. The challenge he presents to the theory of natural sociability is fatal, because “societate mutua”, which used to be regarded as an expression of men’s natural sociability and as the foundation of large society, is the problem itself rather than the solution. Hobbes’s insight is that the relationship between self-love and the desire for society is neither antagonistic nor harmonious, but dialectic. With the mechanism of pride (and the diffidence this causes), the society-regarding self-love naturally leads to universal conflicts between individuals. Therefore, a common life must be artificial; even though such artificiality is neither foreign nor alien to men. The common life need to be accepted by the subjects themselves. For Hobbes, this is achieved by civil society (societas civilis), in which society-regarding self-love is handled both by the deterrence of common power and by the transformation of the self, due to the introduction of the artificial person. When and only when men have entered civil society, civilised life and richer social relations (especially economic

activities) become available, and men are provided with enjoyment far beyond bare self-preservation.

Hobbes's theory is far from pleasant, but no theories of sociability could steer clear of the problem he poses, nor pretend to ignore it from the time Hobbes articulated it. To provide a more satisfactory explanation of human nature and society, nearly all the most important political thinkers of the seventeenth century tried in their own way to offer a response to Hobbes. Furthermore, when we come to the eighteenth century, Hobbes's insights are inherited and developed by another notorious thinker, Bernard Mandeville.

Chapter 2 The Mandevillean Maxim and the Transformation of Civil Society

In the history of social and political thought, Mandeville is famous as well as notorious for his maxim "private vices, public benefits".[1] He was sometimes seen as a "populariser of Hobbes".[2] In the eyes of his contemporaries (and many modern scholars), Mandeville accepts the Hobbesian selfish theory and the Augustinian understanding of morality, therefore denies the real existence and the practical value of the sociable virtues such as benevolence and public-spiritedness. For Mandeville, the foundation of society is nothing but man's self-love. His maxim is almost an exculpation or exhortation of evil, and should be regarded as a moral scandal for the moderns. Some contemporaries, shocked and enraged by him, even played a malicious joke on his name: "Man-Devil".[3] Nevertheless, sometimes Mandeville is also admired as a precursor of modern social and economic sciences, for his maxim reveals the rationale underlying modern civil society. Pointing out the gap between individual motive and social consequence as well as the tension between moral value and social-economic

[1] About the strains of literature of maxim, see E. J. Hundert, "Bernard Mandeville and the Enlightenment's Maxims of Modernity", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (1995), pp577-593.
[2] James Dean Young, "Mandeville: A Populariser of Hobbes", *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 74, No.1 (Jan., 1959), pp10-13.
[3] J. M. Stafford ed., *Private Vices, Public Benefits? The Contemporary Reception of Bernard Mandeville*, Solihull: Ismeron, 1997. Modern scholarship on Mandeville's Hobbism and Augustinianism, see Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1978, ch2; Laurence Dickey, "Pride, Hypocrisy and Civility in Mandeville's Social and Historical Theory", *Critical Review*, Vol.4, No.3, pp387-431; Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, ch1; Christian Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism and the Selfish Hypothesis*, pp58-85; Joost Hengstmengel, "Augustinian Motifs in Mandeville's Theory of Society", *Journal of Markets and Morality*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2016), pp317-338.

mechanism, Mandeville accomplishes the “discovery of society”, the operation of which is determined by principles independent from both the will of single individuals and the command of the state.[4] Especially, the Mandevillean maxim very much inspired modern macro-economics, though there are still debates about whether Mandeville is a mercantilist or an advocate of *laissez-faire*.[5] The multiple images of Mandeville, as a disciple of Hobbes or a foreteller of modern civil (economic) society, indicate the complexity of Mandeville’s thought that could easily be underestimated.[6]

To a considerable extent, such a complexity derives from the fact that the Mandevillean maxim has various meanings while answering various questions, in which the content of “private vices”, “public benefits” as well as the mechanism linking them are not simple.[7] In fact, such a formula runs through multiple levels of Mandeville’s theory, working in his analysis of a) the origin of

[4] E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment’s Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

[5] Economists inspired by Mandeville include Adam Smith (see his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), John Maynard Keynes (see his *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp359-361), and Fredrick Hayek (see his *Dr. Bernard Mandeville: New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas*, London: Routledge/ Kegan Paul, 1978). For representative studies considering Mandeville as a theorist of *laissez-faire*, see F.B. Kaye, “Introduction”, in Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, pp. cxxiv-cxlvi; Nathan Rosenberg, “Mandeville and Laissez-Faire”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol.24, No.2 (Apr.-Jun., 1963), pp183-196; F. A. Hayek, *Dr. Bernard Mandeville*. On Mandeville’s mercantilism, see L. S. Moss, “The Subjectivist Mercantilism of Bernard Mandeville”, *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol.14, No.6, pp167-184; Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, ch4.

[6] Some scholar, e.g. Mikko Tolonen, believes that there is a split between the early Mandeville (the follower of Hobbes) and the late Mandeville (the precursor of Hume and Scottish Enlightenment). See his *Mandeville and Hume*, passim; cf. Malcom Jack, “Man Become Sociable by Living Together in Society: Re-Assessing Mandeville’s Social Theory”, in Edmundo Balsemão Pires & Joaquim Braga (eds.), *Bernard de Mandeville’s Tropology of Paradoxes: Morals, Politics, Economics, and Therapy*, Cham: Springer, 2015, pp1-14.

[7] An exception is Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, pp211-223. According to Monro, the Mandevillean maxim is a “blanket” phrase owing to the multiple meanings of “vice”. Under this blanket Mandeville includes six theses. 1. The commercial prosperity of modern states depends on luxury. 2. Apart from luxury, there are some pernicious practices which help to contribute to the community’s prosperity, or at least to the prosperity of some members of it. 3. Unworthy motives do far more to keep society going than public spirits, or disinterested benevolence. 4. Apart from the part played in society by self-love and self-liking in general, some particular practices, pernicious in themselves, may be of advantage to the community. 5. Some evils go so deep in to the basis of society, and it is idle to suppose that they can be got rid of easily. 6. Since all human actions aim at self-preservation, they are all vicious: virtue itself is built upon the vice of pride. Monro’s clarification is helpful, but the six theses he presents overlap with each other and lack a systematic explanation.

society, b) the origin of morality and manners, and c) the origin of prosperity. Correspondingly, the Mandevillean Maxim can be divided into “fear thesis”, “pride thesis”, and “luxury thesis”. If we consider him as a theorist of sociability, Mandeville then presents a synthesis of moral, political and economic theories which explains the principles of commercial society on multiple levels from individual moral psychology to macroscopic political-economic mechanisms. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, Hobbes has made a decisive contribution to the theorising of modern society by putting forward the problem of self-love and presenting the solution of civil society. In this chapter, we will see that the multiple-meaning maxim “private vices, public benefits” manifests Mandeville’s new development, which preserves Hobbes’s basic insights while providing a revised understanding of human nature, and brings about a thicker concept of civil society. The following sections will in turn discuss the three theses behind Mandeville’s maxim.

I. Mandeville’s Hobbism and the “Fear Thesis”

1. Self-Love, Self-Liking, and the State of Nature

It is not without truth to read Mandeville as a disciple of Hobbes. Similarities can be easily found between the two thinkers. Like Hobbes, Mandeville is also a theorist of self-love, an opponent of natural sociability, and a critic of “virtue” in the traditional sense. Specifically speaking, Mandeville’s Hobbism is most obvious in his explanation of the origin of society.

Mandeville's starting point in the analysis of human nature is almost the same with Hobbes's. Human beings are driven by two fundamental passions, self-love and self-liking. As a universal passion of all creatures, self-love is the "Will, Wishes, and Endeavours" to preserve oneself or one's species. It gives rise to desire, an appetite of happiness which compels him to crave what he thinks will sustain or please him, as well as fear, a strong aversion of evil which inspires him to avoid pain or everything that makes him uneasy.[8] But self-love is not the only motivation that Nature has grafted in humans. Since no creature can love what it dislikes, "to encrease the Care in Creatures to preserve themselves, Nature has given them an Instinct, by which every Individual values itself above its real Worth" and likes its own Being superior to what it has to any other, namely self-liking.[9] At first glance, self-liking seems to be comprehended by self-love, for the former is no more than a symptom or by-product of the latter. Nonetheless, Mandeville emphasises that self-liking should not and could not be reduced to the desire of bare self-preservation. In some cases, the frustration of self-liking might lead one to suicide, because the suffering overcomes the natural resistance of self-preservation.[10] As "superior value" or "high esteem" that individuals set upon "their own Persons",[11] self-liking aims at the pleasure of the mind instead of bodily enjoyment. This kind of value is

[8] *FB*, I, p219; II, p134; *EOH*, p21.
[9] *FB*, II, p134; *EOH*, p3.
[10] *FB*, II, p143. As a medical, Mandeville also provides interesting analysis of men's psychological health, in which the frustration of self-liking is seen as the cause of hypochondria. See Bernard Mandeville, *A Treatise of the Hypochodriack and Hysterick Deceases in Three Dialogues*, London, 1730; Mauro Simonazzi, "Bernard Mandeville on Hypochondria and Self-Liking", *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring, 2016), pp62-81.
[11] *EOH*, p3.

imaginary rather than real, exists in the world of opinions, and is unintelligible unless individuals compare themselves with each other and seek approbation from others. That is to say, Mandeville's self-liking, like Hobbes's pride, is a society-regarding passion which presupposes mutual engagement between humans. In fact, "pride" is nothing but an excessive and therefore vicious display of "self-liking", while the latter concept is a technical term without a moral connotation.

For Mandeville as well as for Hobbes, therefore, it is not natural "Fondness to his Species"[12] but the society-regarding love of oneself that leads to men's mutual association.

> I am willing to allow, that among the Motives, that prompt Man to enter into Society, there is a Desire which he has naturally after Company; but he has it for his own Sake, in hopes of *being the better* for it; and he would never wish for, either Company or any thing else, but for some *Advantage* or other he proposes to himself from it.[13]

To gratify their self-love and self-liking, men cannot help but seeking advantage (material satisfaction) and superiority (Hobbes prefers to say "glory"), which cannot be obtained without staying together with others.[14] In this sense, Mandeville argues that the sociableness of men arises only from the multiplicity of their desires and the continual opposition they meet with in their endeavour

[12] *FB*, II, p203.
[13] *FB*, II, p203. Italics added.
[14] Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, p38.

to satisfy them.[15]

However, following Hobbes, Mandeville is not so optimistic as to believe that the society-regarding self-love could bring about a peaceful large society spontaneously. On this topic Mandeville provides two slightly different versions of explanation. In the early version of the *Fable*, Mandeville presents a depiction of the development of human desires. Human beings are originally more moderate and less aggressive than Hobbes's men, for their desire of ease and security, their fear of death, the mildness of their natural appetites, and their various ways to supply their wants have made them "timorous animals"[16]. Yet, they could not avoid mutual conflicts. Mandeville underlines, paradoxically, that it is precisely the society-regarding feature of men's love of self arouses the state of war:

> All untaught Animals are only solicitous of pleasing themselves, and naturally follow the bent of their own Inclinations, *without considering the good or harm that from their being pleased will accrue to others*. This is the Reason, that in the wild State of Nature those Creatures are fittest to live peaceably together in great Numbers, … and consequently no Species of Animals is, without the Curb of Government, less capable of agreeing long together in Multitudes than that of man.[17]

Similar to Hobbes, Mandeville also makes a comparison between human

[15] *FB*, I, p396.
[16] *FB*, I, p226.
[17] *FB*, I, p27.

beings and wild animals living in natural concord. Unlike untaught animals, human beings do care about others and form mutual associations, but they would not be friendly or sociable to each other. The trouble is caused by the mechanism of pride. Though no creatures can fight offensively while their fear of death lasts, the fear itself can be overcome by “anger”, a passion “which is rais’d in us when we are cross’d or disturb’d in our Desires”, stimulating us to remove or destroy whatever obstructs us.[18] Furthermore, when anger is accompanied by grief because of seeing others enjoy what we want, human beings become even envious and willing to do harm. Hence, once each individual bestows the highest worth to nobody but himself and desires positional superiority to others, anger and envy are inevitable.

> As soon as his Pride has room to play, and Envy, Avarice and Ambition begin to catch hold of him, he is rous’d from his natural Innocence and Stupidity. As his Knowledge increases, his Desires are enlarge’d, and consequently his Wants and Appetites are multiply’d: Hence it must follow, that he will be often cross’d in the pursuit of them, and meet with abundance more disappointment to stir up his Anger in this than his former Condition, and Man would in a little time become the most hurtful and noxious Creatures in the World.[19]

The development of pride enlarges men’s desires, the frustration of desires produces anger, and anger results in conflicts. That is the reason why

[18] *FB*, I, p221.
[19] *FB*, I, pp226-227.

Mandeville considers peaceful concord without government as inconsistent with human nature, for there would always be resentful people in the competition for positional good, even if "the Soil, the Climate, and their Plenty be whatever the most luxuriant Imagination shall be pleased to fancy him".[20] Mandeville's men eventually become as aggressive as Hobbes's, rendering the state of nature a state of perpetual war.

In his later works, Mandeville more and more regards self-liking as an original passion of human being. According to intellectual historians, it is Butler's critique of Hobbism that motivated Mandeville to revise his ideas.[21] Yet theoretically speaking, such a shift, rather than demonstrating a break with Hobbes, actually makes Mandeville's position closer to Hobbes's. Mandeville now negates the possibility of a Golden Age of natural innocence when individuals are not influenced by pride. Even the most untaught savages are proud. In fact, the more uncivilised men are, the more aggressively they act due to this passion. Mandeville summarises the effect of self-liking as "natural Instinct of Sovereignty", "Principle of Selfishness", or "Desire of Dominion".[22] That is to say, in spite of their need for association with each other, individuals

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[20] *FB*, II, p370.

[21] Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, ch2. Mandeville's distinction between self-love and self-liking is usually considered as an important theoretical development in Part II than the original *Fable*. Cf. E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, pp52-115; Bert Kerkhof, "A Fatal Attraction? Smith's 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' and Mandeville's 'Fable'", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 1995), pp219-233; Christian Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism and the Selfish Hypothesis*, pp58-85. But if due attention is paid to the role of pride in Part I as well as in Hobbes's theory, such a development should not be regarded as a decisive split between "the early Mandeville" (a disciple of Hobbes) and "the late Mandeville" (a precursor of Hume). First, if we do not equalise Hobbes's own thought with the 17th- and 18th-century popularised Hobbism, then the introduction of self-liking makes Mandeville more similar to, rather than more different from Hobbes. Second, Mandeville's explanation of the mechanism of pride and good manners has already taken shape in Part I. Cf. Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, pp119-120.

[22] *FB*, II, p229, p320.

are so stubborn as to look upon everything as centring in themselves, and prefer to extort esteem from others by domination rather than by mutual complaisance. As Mandeville describes,

> Man would have every thing he likes, without considereing, whether he has any Right to it or not; and he would do every thing he has a mind to do, without regard to the Consequence it would be of to others; at the same time that he dislikes every Body, that, acting from the same Principle, have in all their Behaviour not a special Regard to him.[23]

We have mentioned that all untaught animals except men do everything "without considering the good or harm to others", and this is the reason why they are able to live together peacefully. But when it comes to humans, doing things "without regard to the Consequence it would be of to others" means anything but independence or solitude. As is manifested by Mandeville's next sentence, each individual demands "a special Regard" to himself from others. In other words, human beings want and only want others as subjects or admirers, whereas refuse to consider others as equals or fit themselves into the association. Rather than the Rousseauian natural goodness, here men's disregard of others is only a cause of hostility and quarrel, a symptom of the Hobbesian paradox of society-regarding self-love.[24]

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[23] *FB*, II, p317.

[24] Mikko Tolonen is to some extent misled by the literal similarity between Mandeville and Rousseau, when he argues that "Mandeville is at pains to point out that he was not making the same mistake that natural jurists made when talking about natural weakness or aggressiveness in men: these are social rather than natural traits." See Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, p67. (Adam Smith might be responsible for this reading, see his "Letter to the Authors of the *Edinburgh Review*", in *The Edinburgh Review, From July 1755 to January 1756*, Edinburgh, 1756, pp63-79.) Albeit both Mandeville and Rousseau deny that human beings naturally desire society for its own sake, their descriptions of human nature depart from each other from the very beginning. Cf. Robin Douglass, "Morality

Nevertheless, in his analysis of the mechanism of self-liking, Mandeville goes further than Hobbes by deconstructing Hobbes's doctrine of natural rights. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, in Hobbes's state of nature, the dilemma of society-regarding self-love also reflects as conflicts of natural rights. Individuals not only fight with each other, but do so rightly, since everyone has unlimited rights to everything. The Hobbesian natural rights, different from classical "natural right" but mere "subjective claims", are confirmed by "right reason" or natural laws. But from Mandeville's point of view, man's belief in his unlimited natural rights is no more than another symptom of self-liking. It is the natural instinct of sovereignty that "prompts him to put in a Claim to every thing he can lay his Hands on", and makes man conceive himself as entitled to attack each other.[25] Similarly, exclusive property is absent in the state of nature, because everybody just takes everything, including his descendants, to be his own. As an anatomist of human nature instead of a natural lawyer, Mandeville has no interest in discussing whether these claims of rights are actually endorsed by natural laws, but regards them as mere facts that need to be explained in psychological terms. In this way, Mandeville provides a naturalistic explanation of the Hobbesian natural jurisprudence.

For Mandeville, in sum, the problem of the state of war can be ascribed entirely to men's love of self, especially their self-liking. While Hobbes points

and Sociability in Commercial Society: Smith, Rousseau, and Mandeville", *The Review of Politics*, 79 (2017), pp597–620; Simon Kow, "Rousseau's Mandevillean Conception of Desire and Modern Society", in *Rousseau and Desire*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, pp62-81.

[25] *FB*, II, p318, p223.

out that "Wanting (of society) is one thing, ability another",[26] Mandeville captures the paradox in a similar way, that Nature should send human beings into the world "with a visible Desire" after society, but "no Capacity for it at all".[27] The passion that opens the road to society at the same time obstructs it.

2. Civil Society as a Body Politic

Mandeville's solution to the problem of the state of nature is also the establishment of the civil society. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, for Hobbes, "civil society" (societas civilis) is the synonym of political society or "state". It is an artificial "unity" rather than natural multitudes, which has "one will" through artificial persons and hence is enabled to keep all subjects in awe by using "common power". Now almost all of these main points can be found in Mandeville's theory as well:

> By society I understand a Body Politick … where under one Head or other Form of Government each Member is render'd Subservient to the Whole, and all of them by cunning Management are made to Act as one.[28]
>
> … in our Nature we have a certain Fitness, by which great Multitudes of us co-operating, may be united and form'd into one Body; that endued with, and able to make Use of, the Strength, Skill, and Prudence of every

[26] *DC*, i.2, annotation.
[27] *FB*, II, p230. Mandeville himself misunderstood Hobbes's opinions and overlooked the similarity between them. According to Mandeville, Hobbes believes "that Man is born unfit for Society, and alledge no better Reason for it, than the Incapacity that Infants come into the World with" (*FB*, II, p177), whereas himself "speak of men and women full grown" when demonstrating men's "necessitous and helpless condition" (*FB*, II, p180). However, in fact, Hobbes was also talking about grown humans, who both desire the presence of others and conflict with them.
[28] *FB*, I, pp399-400.

Individual, shall govern itself, and act on all Emergencies, as if it was animated by one Soul, and actuated by one Will.[29]

Mandeville also understands civil society as political society with government enforcing the common power extracted from all its members. As he claims, "the undoubted Basis of all Societies is Government".[30] Since the state of war results from men's anger which is ignited by their self-liking and overcomes their fear, "the only useful Passion that Man is possess'd of toward the Peace and Quiet of a Society"[31], there should be some force that is efficient to increase men's fear while curb their anger. That is the punishment of the government. Mandeville agrees with Hobbes that when laws are strictly executed, individuals with "Experience, Understanding and Foresight"[32] then have to discipline themselves for the sake of self-preservation, for they would face definite punishments instead of uncertain outcomes of battle once they attack others. The unlimited claim to everything is meanwhile substituted by exclusive right of property, established and secured by the government. In a nutshell, political power is the ultimate defence of large and lasting society.

Besides the Hobbesian theoretical explanation, Mandeville also presents a conjectural history of the civil society, displaying how human nature is tamed step by step.[33] Such a story begins with the primitive families. The most

[29] *FB*, II, p204.
[30] *FB*, II, p204.
[31] *FB*, I, p227.
[32] *FB*, I, p227.
[33] Cf. Frank Pelmeri, "Bernard de Mandeville and the Shaping of Conjectural History", in *Bernard de Mandeville's Tropology of Paradoxes*, pp15-24.

uninstructed savages, albeit they express their natural affections sometimes, treat their descendants violently and capriciously because of their "domineering spirit" and lacking of understanding. Under their overwhelming power, the savage children learn reverence for their parents, which is a compound of fear, love, and esteem, and start to become governable. But owing to the incapacity of savage parents to regulate their own passions and to govern others, the savage families cannot get rid of the state of war, especially when the children grow up and begin to quarrel with each other. Mandeville agrees with Hobbes's conclusion that familial relation is not the foundation for large and lasting society, and even the short-lived peace within the families should be ascribed to power and fear more than to love.[34]

According to Mandeville, "the first thing that could make Man associate, would be common Danger".[35] The danger from wild beasts makes human beings increasingly depend on one another beyond small families, and gives rise to large congregations in pursuit of their same interest. In this, Mandeville reminds us of the typically Hobbesian theory of the state of nature:

> Different Families may endeavour to live together, and be ready to join in common Danger; but they are all of little use to one another, when there is no common Enemy to oppose. If we consider, that Strength, Agility, and Courage would in such a State be the most valuable Qualifications, and

[34] *FB*, II, pp224ff; I, pp400-401. Cf. Richard Chapman, "*Leviathan* Writ Small: Thomas Hobbes on the Family", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Mar., 1975), pp76-90.
[35] *FB*, II, p264.

> that many Families could not live long together, but some actuated by the Principle I named, would strive for Superiority: this must breed Quarrels, in which the most weak and fearful will, for their own Safety, always join with him, of whom they have the best opinion.[36]

Men become the greatest danger to each other because of the "stanch Principle of Pride and Ambition".[37] Once they get rid of the threats from non-humans, conflicts between them are inevitable. Even social contracts cannot last long as there is no power to enforce the obligation and punish perjury. In this condition, individuals have no better choice but unite in bands and companies. While Hobbes admits "acquisition" as another approach to civil society besides "institution" or covenant, Mandeville argues that society depends "either on mutual Compact, or the Force of the Strong, exerting itself upon the Patience of the Weak".[38] Thanks to the association, the weak obtain security (self-preservation), meanwhile the strong satisfy their desire of dominion (self-liking). To preserve peace and order, the authority to punish "are snatch'd away out of every Man's Hands, as dangerous Tools, and vested in the governing part, the supreme Power only".[39] Besides the monopoly of power, the leaders are also creative in inventing various ways of curbing mankind (especially by laws and penalties), thereby they can make more use of their subjects and govern vast

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[36] *FB*, II, pp311-312.
[37] *FB*, II, p302.
[38] *FB*, II, pp206-207. As Hobbes believes in the fundamental equality of human beings, the advantages the strong men have in the state of nature is not quite stable, and "commonwealth by acquisition" is not so formally perfect as "commonwealth by institution". Mandeville's standpoint here is closer to Rousseau's, that the state of nature is already a state of inequality where the weak and the strong have different incentives to associate with each other.
[39] *FB*, II, p323.

numbers of people more easily. This is the second step towards society. With the invention of letters and the announcing of written laws, the government is finally consolidated, indicating the full establishment of the civil society.

It is noteworthy, however, that Mandeville not only agrees with Hobbes on the role of common power. He does not forget that the essence of civil society is a "unity" with "one will" or "one soul", either. As we known, for Hobbes, subjects of civil society not merely submit negatively to the oppressive power, but have a positive obligation to obey the sovereign's commands through the relationship of artificial persons. Mandeville's adherence to this point seems strange at first glance, for he has decided to abandon Hobbes's juridical-normative theory, especially the category of corporation theory, and therefore cannot make use of concepts such as obligation and representation. Nevertheless, in his own way, Mandeville distinguishes civil society from a multitude merely overwhelmed by great might,

> There is a great Difference between being submissive, and being governable; for he who barely submits to another, only embraces what he dislikes, to shun what he dislikes more; and we may be very submissive, and be of no Use to the Person we submit to: But to be governable, implies an Endeavour to please, and a Willingness to exert ourselves in behalf of the Person that governs.[40]

[40] *FB*, II, pp204-205. Cf. E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, pp66-67. Hundert pays due attention to this paragraph by pointing out that fear and superior strength alone could not "sufficiently account for the various forms of submission required in any stable political order". But his simplistic understanding of Hobbes leads to an underestimation of the substantial similarity between the two thinkers.

For Mandeville as well as for Hobbes, to form a unity is not merely staying quietly under a superior force, but to act willingly as the sovereign commands, letting one's own strength be used according to the sovereign's will. While for Hobbes such a "willingness" derives from the obligation and authorisation, from Mandeville's perspective, it requires individuals finding their own interest in serving the public. Therefore, the substance of Hobbes's juridical-normative distinction between negative submission and positive obedience is maintained in Mandeville's theory, but has been transformed into a psychological distinction. As a consequence, what makes men "governable" is no longer the legal process of covenant and authorisation, but the "dextrous management" of the politicians through which obedience and service are made profitable for the individuals themselves.[41] "All of them by cunning management are made to act as one".[42]

Furthermore, in Mandeville's opinion, individuals are even required to be willing to defend their civil society at the risk of their own lives. This is obviously inconceivable for Hobbes, because the desire of self-preservation could never be overcome and the natural right to secure one's life could never be transferred. But from Mandeville's viewpoint, sacrificing oneself for the body politic is both necessary and possible. It is necessary since civil society, albeit achieves peace and order in itself, is still in the face of wars from without, and

[41] Insightful comments on the turn from juridical principles to "skilful management", see Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France*, Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp1-51, despite Foucault's discussion focuses on political economy instead of the regulation of social opinions.
[42] *FB*, II, p400.

hence must be defended. It is also possible, because the politician can “alter his Measures, and take off some of Man’s Fears”.[43] That is to say, although the fear of death is the foundation of civil society, it can be manipulated and overcome when more virtuous and public-spirited behaviours are needed, and this is of course achieved by “cunning management”. To sum up, in Mandeville’s theory, the civil society is thoroughly artificial where the skilful manipulation of passions is expected to play not only an equal but even a greater role than Hobbes’s juridical relations used to do.

Mandeville’s Hobbesian theory of the origin of society well illustrates the mechanism of “private vices, public benefits”. It is nothing but the fear of death (or punishment) along with the strong men’s desire of dominion, private vices for individuals, that give rise to large and lasting society. Yet, if submission is not the only requisite for the “raising or maintaining” of civil society, the question of what makes human beings willing to behave virtuously must be answered. At this point, Mandeville the anatomist of human nature departs from Hobbes and works out his own explanation.

II. The Civilisation of Man and the “Pride Thesis”

1. Self-liking, Virtues and Politeness

Mandeville apparently denied the existence of a “master passion” dominating human beings forever. Neither self-love nor self-liking could always

[43] *FB*, I, p228.

overwhelm the other. In most of time, the two fundamental passions are mutually intertwined, either intensified or checked by each other. As is pointed out by Mandeville, “an untaught Man would desire every body that came near him, to agree with him in the Opinion of his superior Worth, and be angry, as far as his Fear would let him, with all that should refuse it.”[44] It suggests that even in the state of nature where human beings display their “domineering spirit” in a most unscrupulous way, their self-liking or pride is to some extent restrained by fear of death. Yet as long as the outcome of combats is uncertain and the hope of winning both self-preservation and esteem still remains in men’s hearts, the fear of death is not strong enough to extinguish their ambition, thus is often surmounted by anger. When it comes to civil society, in turn, pride is suppressed by fear, because fear then becomes stronger when the penalties are expectable due to the severe execution of the government. Nonetheless, so far we should neither draw a conclusion that self-liking is always in contradiction with the requirement of peace and order, nor consider fear as the only object that can be regulated by the government. For Mandeville, self-liking or pride is also open to manipulation. In fact, this passion is much more flexible and thus more useful than fear of death, since it can be directed quite accurately to various targets. The presupposition of such a manipulation is that Mandeville denied the existence of a natural common measure of happiness or glory. Worth and excellency are uncertain. “Some think it the greatest Felicity to govern and rule

[44] *FB*, II, p138.

over others: Some take the Praise of Bravery and Undoubtedness in Dangers to be the most valuable… So that, tho' they all love Glory, they set out differently to acquire it."[45] But the absence of common measure, which Hobbes considers as an origin of conflicts, opens up the space for "skilful management". And as long as the management is "skilful" enough, self-liking will not arouse the state of war.

The most important function of self-liking in civil society is to promote men's moral virtues. According to Mandeville,

> The Chief Thing, therefore, which Lawgivers and other wise Men, that have laboured for the Establishment of Society, have endeavour'd, has been to make the People they were to govern, believe, that it was more beneficial for every Body to conquer than indulge his Appetites, and much better to mind the Publick than what seem'd his private Interest. … But whether Mankind would have ever believ'd it or not, it is not likely that any Body could have persuaded them to disapprove of their natural Inclinations, or prefer the good of others to their own, if at the same time he had not shew'd them an Equivalent to be enjoy'd as a Reward for the Violence, which by so doing they of necessity must commit upon themselves. … being unable to give so many real Rewards as would satisfy all Persons for every individual Action, they were forc'd to contrive an imaginary one, that as a general Equivalent for the trouble of Self-

[45] *FB*, II, p63.

> denial should serve on all Occasions, and without costing any thing either to themselves or others, be yet a most acceptable Recompense to the Receivers.[46]

In Mandeville's opinion, peace and order of the society are guaranteed neither by men's natural benevolence nor by some enlightened or generalised self-love considering public good as one's own long-term interest. Nor did he believe in the spontaneous unity between private and public benefits that Smith pointed out in the theory of the "invisible hand". Firstly, it is psychologically improbable for men to prefer remote interests to immediate gratification. "Things at a Distance, tho' we are sure they are to come, make little Impression upon us in Comparison with those that are present and immediately before us."[47] Furthermore, it is rather troublesome that not each individual virtuous actions could be perfectly rewarded, though acting virtuously is generally beneficial for everyone. On the one hand, for most individuals in most occasions, "whenever they check'd their Inclinations or but followed them with more Circumspection, they avoided a world of Troubles, and often escap'd many of the Calamities that generally attended the too eager Pursuit after Pleasure."[48] Thereby the regulation of men's immediate desires, as a "general rule", is in accordance with men's long-term selfishness. But on the other hand, Mandeville has recognised the existence of free-riders threatening the smooth operation of the

[46] *FB*, I, pp28-29.
[47] *EOH*, p35. Cf. Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, pp189-190.
[48] *FB*, I, p33.

general mechanism of society. “It being the Interest then of the very worst of them, more than any, to preach up Publick-spiritedness, that they might reap the Fruits of the Labour and Self-denial of others, and at the same time indulge their own Appetites with less disturbance … ”[49] Rather than short-sighted individuals who cannot help pursuing their immediate interests, the free riders parasitise upon the social mechanism and exploit the public-spiritedness of others. In sum, there are some particular occasions where breaking general rules become more profitable for some particular men. Being selfish, humans lack intrinsic motives to observe public order and promote public good.

Given that “real rewards” are not always effective motivation, politicians then turn to “imaginary rewards”, i.e. the flattery of men’s self-liking. Emulation is introduced to the multitudes; conquest of one’s appetites and beneficence to others are praised as virtues which belong to high-minded people, whereas actions injurious to society or rendering oneself less serviceable to others are called vices. Due to the aversion of shame, the good opinion of themselves, as well as their desire of approval from others, human beings endeavour to subdue their appetites as well as they can, or to conceal their imperfections when it is impossible to completely eliminate them. Pride is in this way played against other passions, for men’s loss in their former self-denial get over-paid by the satisfaction of self-liking. As substitutes for the undisciplined anger, desire of

[49] *FB*, I, p34. As we will see later, Hume also encounters with this problem while explaining the origin of justice. Cf. David Gauthier, “Artificial Virtues and the Sensible Knaves”, *Hume Studies*, Vol.18, No.2 (Nov., 1992), pp401-427.

praise and fear of shame might even overwhelm the fear of death, encouraging people to risk their lives on the battlefield. Actually, Mandeville defines shame as "a sorrow Reflexion on our own *Unworthiness*, proceeding from an Apprehension that others either do, or might, if they knew all, *deservedly* despise us".[50] That is to say, the sense of "worthiness" or "deservedness" is inherent in men's evaluative passions. Thus we should not underestimate the sincerity of men's endeavour in observing the social norms which have been so deeply internalised in their hearts, because even vicious actions unknown to others lead to a harm of self-liking (in terms of self-esteem). This explains the origin of moral virtues, "the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride."[51]

But it is noteworthy that "virtues" achieved by humans are not real virtues. For Mandeville, virtue requires not only external behaviours but also virtuous motive, namely a "rational ambition of being good".[52] Therefore, real virtue, or virtue in the strict sense must be a total victory over all passions, whereas what people actually do is no more than "a conquest which one passion obtains over another".[53] The latter is not a mere Gygesian concealment of selfishness, for

[50] *FB*, I, pp53-54, italics added. Also see Mandeville's discussion about men who "perform a worthy action in silence": "yet even in these we may discover no small *symptoms of pride*, and the humblest man alive must confess, that the reward of a virtuous action, which is the satisfaction that ensues upon it, consists in a certain pleasure he procures to himself *by contemplating on his own worth*." (*FB*, I, p43, italics added.) Scholars usually regard Smith's distinction between "desire of praise" and "desire of praiseworthiness" as a response to Mandeville (or Rousseau's critique of Mandeville), in whose theory self-liking leads to a heavy dependence on the opinions of others. E.g. Dennis Rasmussen, *The Problem and Promise of Commercial Society*, pp114-119; Ryan Hanley, "Commerce and Corruption: Rousseau's Diagnosis and Adam Smith's Cure", pp137-158; Robin Douglass, "Morality and Sociability in Commercial Society: Smith, Rousseau, and Mandeville"; Paul Sagar, "Smith and Rousseau, after Hume and Mandeville", *Political Theory*; Daniel Kapust, *Flattery and the History of Political Thought: That Glib and Oily Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp132-169. However, Smith's difference from Mandeville is to some extent overstated, as feelings of "blameworthiness" and "praiseworthiness" are already comprehended in Mandeville's understanding of shame and pride. For Mandeville, what virtuous man desires is not only reputation or material interest, but also self-esteem, though in practice they are always mixed with each other. Cf. Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, pp222-223.

[51] *FB*, I, p37.

[52] *FB*, I, p49.

[53] *FB*, I, p230.

we do restrain many of our immediate desires, yet the self-denial we carry out is far from complete since we fail to oppress our self-liking. In this sense, the pride-motivating actions are “counterfeited” rather than real virtues. And for human beings who never get rid of self-love, real virtue is beyond our reach.[54] Now the impossibility of having real virtues brings about the problem of the reality of moral virtues. According to some scholars, Mandeville does not reduce moral virtues to self-love and self-liking, for he adheres to the distinction between real and counterfeited virtues. Thus the impossibility of being really virtuous does not negate the reality of virtues as a criterion according to which men’s actions are judged.[55] Nevertheless, since our idea of virtues as thorough self-denial has no corresponding object in practice, it is itself an outcome of the politicians’ education and our self-deception. Finding that 1) some actions are beneficial for the public, and 2) having a false belief that those actions can and should be done with a total conquest of passions will better arouse men’s self-liking and more effectively motivate men to perform these actions, the educators would like to instil such an understanding of virtue, namely pure self-denial, in our mind. Consequently, we imagine a “rational ambition of being good” as the motive of our beneficial actions and take it for granted. The

[54] Shelley Burtt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp128-149; Jennifer Herdt, *Putting On Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, pp272ff. A weaker version of this argument, see Robin Douglass, “Mandeville on the Origins of Virtue”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2020), pp276-295; “Bernard Mandeville on the Use and Abuse of Hypocrisy”, *Political Studies*, 2020, pp1-18.

[55] Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, pp189ff; Christian Maurer, *Self-Love, Egoism and the Selfish Hypothesis*, pp79-80; Roger Crisp, *Sacrifice Regained*, pp69-73. A defence of the reality of virtue from another aspect, see John Colman, “Bernard Mandeville and the Reality of Virtue”, *Philosophy*, Vol. 47, No. 180 (Apr., 1972), pp125-139.

counterfeit of virtue is therefore logically prior to the idea of real virtue, for the latter is in fact a purification of the former.

Counterfeit of virtues bring about unity to members of civil society by directing their actions to the common good. Yet there remains a paradox in this "skilful management" of passions: while pride is used for curbing other passions, pride itself remains, if not increases. Such a paradox gives rise to problems for both individuals and society. For individuals, in terms of psychology, men's self-committed pursuit of virtues is in fact a self-deception. As is keenly pointed out by Mandeville, the more proud individuals are, the more likely they would mistake virtues as inherent in human nature rather than an artefact.

> For it must be granted, that in order to search into ourselves, it is required, we should be willing as well as able; and we have all the Reason in the World to think, that there is nothing, which a very proud Man of such high Qualifications would avoid more carefully, than such an Enquiry: Because for all other Acts of Self-denial he is repaid in his darling Passion; but this alone is really mortifying, and the only Sacrifice of his Quiet, for which he can have no equivalent.[56]

Given that self-denial can be rewarded by nothing but gratification of self-liking, there is no compensation and hence no motive for men to suppress their pride in turn, which in this case means to admit their being proud. The sidestepping of pride, no matter intentionally or not, is itself a symptom of it, illustrating the

[56] *FB*, II, p68.

fact that self-liking is “a most stubborn and an unconquerable passion”.[57] At the same time, on the level of society, the potential of mutual conflicts, as the by-product of self-liking, is not entirely precluded. Despite being introduced as a counterfeit for virtue, pride is at bottom a desire for superiority over others, a positional good which could never be shared by everyone. “What is very peculiar to this Faculty of ours, is, that those who are the fullest of it, are the least willing to connive at it in others.”[58] Openly enjoyment of self-liking is no other than an offence to others, and immediately arouses envy and hate. Then for the sake of peace pride in turn must be played against, by nothing but itself.[59] Nonetheless, since the entire suppression of this passion is impossible for human nature, the only way of regulating pride is concealment. For Mandeville, if counterfeited virtues are to a large extent consequences of sincere self-deception, then politeness is a more conscious hypocrisy which requests no more than appearance. As long as barefaced expression of pride is considered as a vice while manners and good-breeding are praised, “the Man of Sense and Education never exults more in his Pride than when he hides it with the greatest Dexterity.”[60] The covering of pride is itself a source of sense of pride. Moreover, besides the exchange of outward for secret satisfaction of self-liking in each individual’s heart, there is also a mutual exchange of flattery among members of society, as politeness requires “not only to deny the high

[57] *FB*, II, pp192-193.
[58] *FB*, I, p126. Thomas Horne, “Envy and Commercial Society: Mandeville and Smith on ‘Private Vices, Public Benefits’”, *Political Theory*, Vol.9, No.4 (Nov., 1981), pp551-569.
[59] *FB*, II, p67.
[60] *FB*, I, p73.

Value they have for themselves, but likewise to pretend that they have greater Value for others, than they have for themselves".[61] Once men have learnt to cater the pride of each other voluntarily, they "assist one another in the enjoyment of life, and refining upon pleasure; and every individual person is rendered more happy by it".[62] This indicates the accomplishment of the socialisation and civilisation of human beings.

While in Hobbes's theory the legal relationship of artificial persons eventually bonds civil society into a unit, for Mandeville, on the other hand, it is the artificial mechanisms of moral virtues and politeness that make human beings to "Act as One" and "subservient to the Whole".[63] This is another form of the Mandevillean maxim besides the "fear thesis" we mentioned previously: with the help of pride, the most irresistible "private vice", human beings tame other vices and this very vice itself, and finally obtain complaisance and sociability, the most fundamental "public benefits" for civil society. Nevertheless, since pride is no longer a subversive but a constructive power open to "skilful manipulation", Mandeville's abandonment of Hobbes's jurisprudence necessitates a systematic revision or development of Hobbes's theory of human nature. From Mandeville's viewpoint, the regulation of pride demonstrates another way of founding the artificial institutions of civil society on men's artificial self.

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[61] *FB*, II, p153, pp159-160.
[62] *FB*, II, p155.
[63] *FB*, I, p400.

2. Self-Liking and the Artificial Self

As a society-regarding passion, generally speaking, self-liking cannot make sense without others and opinions, because one's good estimation of himself is formed through his comparison with others, and need to be recognised by others in turn. This is the foundation upon which every individual is enabled to be influenced by the social conventions and norms. However, if we consider in detail the theories of different thinkers, the degree of men's dependence on the opinions of others can be quite different since self-liking may takes various forms. For the Cynic and Stoic schools, the extreme self-esteem "may take the form of an indifference to or contempt for the opinion of other persons, or of some classes or types of other persons".[64] In Hobbes's theory of the state of nature, as we have already seen, the vain-glorious individuals do desire praises from others, yet incline to "extort" a high opinion by force, since both the measure and the outcome of their self-evaluation are determined by themselves and hardly influenced by others substantially. Nonetheless, from Mandeville's perspective, men's self-liking to a larger extent relies on others' opinions:

> Nature has given them an Instinct, by which every Individual values itself above its real Worth; this in us, I mean in Man, seems to be accompany'd with a Diffidence, arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves: It is this that makes us so

[64] A. O. Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1961, p101.

fond of the Approbation, Liking and Assent of Others; because they strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves.[65]

In comparison with Hobbes's men, Mandeville's individuals are more self-reflective, uncertain about their worthiness, and less confident in their self-evaluation. As a consequence, the approval from others is of great significance, not merely as an outward token of recognition but as an indispensable evidence constituting the validity of our own self-appraisal. In this case, the disagreement between the self and others may not necessitate a change of others' opinions, i.e. a violent extortion of higher estimate, but an adjustment of ourselves. Mandeville then attributes a greater role to the opinions of others in the gratification of our self-liking, for they become a constituent of one's self-understanding. Though historically speaking the wildest savages may naively disregard others' attitudes because of their "instinct of Sovereignty", from mutual conflicts they would sooner or later learn their incapacity of determining their own worth independently. The more civilised human beings are, the deeper they are influenced by others.

This is not to overestimate the importance of others' attitudes relative to the self. For Mandeville as well as for Hobbes, man "never loves nor esteems any Thing so well as he does his own Individual; and that there is Nothing, which he has so constantly before his Eyes, as his own dear Self."[66] The ultimate centre of men's passions is always the self whose happiness is the goal of "the

[65] *FB*, II, p134.
[66] *EOH*, p39; *FB*, II, p196.

whole Design of life", no matter how much we may care about others. When Horatio argued that "what we fear, is the Judgment of others, and the ill Opinion they will justly have of us", Cleomenes, the spokesman of Mandeville, corrected him by pointing out that

> when we covet Glory, or dread Infamy, it is not the good or bad Opinion of Others that affects us with Joy or Sorrow, Pleasure or Pain; but it is the Notion we form that Opinion of theirs, and must proceed from the Regard and Value we have for it. If it was otherwise, the most Shameless Fellow would suffer as much in his Mind from publick Disgrace and Infamy, as a Man that values his Reputation. Therefore it is the Notion we have of Things, our own Thought and Something within our Selves, that creates and Fear of Shame.[67]

Our concern for the judgment of others derives from our concern for our own persons and own worth. That is why the senses of honour and shame are in fact esteem and fear of oneself. In Cleomenes's words, the self is both an "idol" set up by each individual, and its own "worshiper". What is more, as an object of men's fundamental passions, such a self must have at least a minimum level of identity or sameness through a variation of time. As claimed by Mandeville,

> It is that Self we wish well to; and therefore we cannot wish for any Change in ourselves, but with a Proviso, that that τὸ self, that Part of us, that wishes should still remain. … No Man can wish but to enjoy something,

[67] *EOH*, pp41-42.

which no Part of that same Man could do, if he was entirely another.[68]

Regardless of what sort of good or amelioration human beings desire, some essential consciousness of oneself must remain the same in spite of all alterations taking place in one's life, otherwise self-love and self-liking become nonsense. Nonetheless, from Mandeville's perspective, the "self" or "person" of each individual is far from a self-evident reality. Notwithstanding Mandeville's materialist metaphysics, empiricist epistemology and his unwillingness to probe the mind-body relation,[69] the notion of the "self" is indeed problematic for him.

Firstly, in Mandeville's theory, personal identity through time is grounded on nothing but memory and therefore lacks absolute certainty. One's remembrance of himself is limited and incomplete, for nobody could remember things that happened when he was newborn. Moreover, "this Remembrance, how far so ever it may reach, gives us no greater Surety of our selves, than we should have of another that had been brought up with us, and never above a Week or a Month out of Sight."[70] In other words, individuals have no intimate or transcendental consciousness of himself but only empirical observation, which is not different from spectating others. "So that all we can know of this Consciousness is, that it consists in, or is the Result of, the running and rummaging of the Spirits through all the Mazes of the Brain, and their looking

[68] *FB*, II, p144.
[69] About Mandeville's metaphysics, see Hector Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, ch3. Compared with Hobbes, Mandeville is more clearly aware of the problem of the self. Cf. Samantha Frost, "Hobbes and the Matter of Self-Consciousness", *Political Theory*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Aug., 2005), pp495-517.
[70] *FB*, II, p191.

there for Facts concerning ourselves."[71]

But then we encounter an even more complicated problem. Given that the identity of the self lies in a composite of "facts", it is not yet certain what "facts" should be considered as belonging to ourselves or "concerning ourselves". The self, "for the sake of which he values or despises, loves or hates everything else", is something "we hardly know what it consists in".[72] From Mandeville's point of view, human beings are used to uniting and confounding various qualities or possessions together, and regard them as their "own". However, as a matter of fact, these qualities or possessions can be divided into two parts, one "natural" while the other "acquired". And albeit "the acquired, as well as natural Parts, belong to the same Person; and the one is not more inseparable from him than the other"[73], they are related to one's "Person" to different degrees. On the one hand, "nothing is so near to a Man, nor so really and entirely his own, as what he has from Nature".[74] Mandeville does not provide a positive description of this "natural" self, but he definitely considers it as "meanness" and "deficiency" in the "lower steps" of the process of men's civilisation, which human beings with higher level of perfection feel ashamed to admit and endeavour to cover up. Yet in Mandeville's eyes, only the natural part of one's self, namely the "original nakedness" of human nature without any ornaments and education, is what really belongs to us. On the other hand,

[71] *FB*, II, pp191-192.
[72] *FB*, II, p359, p363.
[73] *FB*, II, p359.
[74] *FB*, II, p359.

individuals also incline to involve more things to their concept of the self, which actually “have nothing to do with their persons”,[75] such as virtues, politeness, knowledge, wealth and power. Mandeville does not deny that knowledge and politeness are real parts of oneself, “but neither of them belong to his Nature, any more than his Gold Watch or his Diamond Ring”.[76] Nevertheless,

> There is nothing we can be possess’d of, that is worth having, which we do not endeavour, closely to annex, and make an Ornament of to ourselves; even Wealth and Power, and all the Gifts of Fortune, that are plainly adventitious, and altogether remote from our Persons; whilst they are our Right and Property, we don’t love to be consider’d without them.[77]

Mandeville detects in human nature an inherent tendency of connecting all worthy things to themselves, or an unwillingness “to have any thing that is honourable separated from themselves”.[78] Though these qualities and possessions are acquired instead of intrinsic, individuals still endeavour to draw a value and respect to his person from them. In this way, self-liking shapes both human being’s understanding of the world and their self-understanding, for it functions both as a mechanism constituting one’s relationship with the external things and as a dynamic giving rise to an enlargement of the self. Owing to this passion, wealth and power are no longer regarded as mere materials, neither are virtues and politeness neutral behaviours, but tokens of value and glory.

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[75] *FB*, II, p361.
[76] *FB*, II, pp362-363.
[77] *FB*, II, p359.
[78] *FB*, II, p361.

Moreover, motivated by self-liking, human beings strive to associate these tokens to their natural selves, consider them as part of themselves, and evaluate their own worth and honour according to their possession of these tokens. To a large extent, rather than a static object of self-liking, the self is in turn an outcome of the operation of this very passion in a dynamic process. According to Mandeville,

> It is our fondness of that Self, which we hardly know what it consists in, that could first make us think of embellishing our Persons; and when we have taken Pains in correcting, polishing, and beautifying Nature, the same Self-love makes us unwilling to have the Ornaments seen separately from the Thing Adorned.[79]

The self is like a snowball, becoming increasingly bigger on the basis of a small original core. In addition, as we have seen before, there is no natural common measure setting up tokens of worth, nor are individuals confident in their self-estimation, then it is the opinions of others that actually determines what is usually annexed to men's persons. That is to say, not only the result of one's self-appraisal (through mutual comparison and approval) but even the content of the (acquired) self is shaped by others.

For Mandeville, with the enlargement of men's acquired or artificial self and its intertwining with the natural self, the latter can be encroached and concealed by the former. "What men have learned from their Infancy enslaves them, and

[79] *FB*, II, p363.

the Force of Custom warps Nature, and at the same time imitates her in such a manner, that it is often difficult to know which of the two we are influenced by."[80] Since the natural self is so mean and deficient that human beings are only too eager to disguise it, we "become altogether unknown to our selves" once the acquired qualities are made habitual and turn to a part of the self.[81] Therefore, in correspondence with the overcoming of the state of nature by artificial institutions, there is a conquest of the artificial self over the natural self, while the artificial self is both the product and the foundation of the artificial institutions.

Moreover, as a response to the artificial institutions which attribute tokens of worth according to men's outward behaviours, the artificial self may also become a sort of histrionic performance in the theatre of society.[82] As long as the internal world of men is invisible to others and hence can be dissembled, the individuals are not merely passively influenced by the opinions of others, but may also actively and purposely manage the images of themselves in the eyes of others for the sake of esteem. "It is impossible we could be sociable Creatures without Hypocrisy."[83] Thus not only philosophically speaking but also sociologically speaking, the self or self-image of human beings should be seen

[80] *FB*, I, p379.
[81] *FB*, I, p380.
[82] On the context of Mandeville's theatrical theory of the self, see E. J. Hundert, "Sociability and Self-Love in the Theatre of Moral Sentiments: Mandeville to Adam Smith", in Stefan Collini et al (eds.), *Economy, Polity, and Society: British Intellectual History 1750-1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp31-47; "Mandeville, Rousseau and the Political Economy of Fantasy", in M. Berg & E. Eger (eds.), *Luxury in the Eighteen Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002, pp28-40; *The Enlightenment's Fable*, ch3. Also cf. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York : Doubleday, 1959.
[83] *FB*, I, p401.

as an artefact, taking shape in the interaction between the public opinions (crystallised in social disciplines) and the subjects. On a purely artificial level a peaceful common life is achieved, notwithstanding men's born unfitness for society.

3. Civil Society, Political Power and "Civil Commerce"

Mandeville's emphasis on the role of the artificial social disciplines (i.e. moral virtues and good manners), which was mentioned by Hobbes yet not full developed by him, opens up new aspects of the civil society besides the juridical and political interaction between the subjects and the sovereign. For Mandeville, civil society is not only a unity with political power, but also a space where "civilisation" and "civility" are made possible. "I wonder how a Man of his unquestionable good Sense could … think of a civilis'd Man, before there was any Civil Society, and even before Men had commenc'd to associate."[84] By living in civil society and cultivating their qualities required by "civil commerce", human beings become increasingly sociable. It is noteworthy that according to Mandeville's usage, "civil commerce" should neither be considered as politics-regarding activities nor be understood narrowly as trade, business or any sort of economic activities. In fact, by this term Mandeville means the same thing which Hobbes means by "*societate mutua*", the mutual engagement among individuals.[85] The peaceful and stable civil commerce demonstrates a civilised

[84] *FB*, II, p214.
[85] *FB*, I, p69, p402.

lifestyle, and substantially constitutes the main part of men's everyday life.

Nonetheless, presenting a "thicker" concept of civil society than legal-political relations, Mandeville to some extent blurred the role of politics at the same time. Firstly, despite his repeated stressing that "Laws and Government are to the Political Bodies of Civil Societies, what the Vital Spirits and Life it self are to the Natural Bodies of Animated Creatures",[86] yet the artificial institutions forming the artificial self and eventually making the society a "unity", namely moral virtues and politeness, are not working in the same way as laws and government do but dependent on social opinions. Secondly, historically speaking, there also seems to be some ambiguity in Mandeville's explanation of the origin of virtues and good manners. On the one hand, these institutions are many times regarded as inventions of cunning politicians and outcomes of dexterous statecraft, especially in the early version of the *Fable*. On the other hand, the role of politicians is downplayed in *Part II*. And in *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, a work later than *Part II*, Mandeville mentions the politicians again, while arguing that

> I give those Names promiscuously to All that, having studied Human Nature, have endeavour'd to civilize Men, and render them more and more tractable, either for the Ease of Governours and Magistrates, or else for the Temporal Happiness of Society in general. I think of all Inventions of this Sort, the same which told you of Politeness, that they are the joint

[86] *FB*, I, p.iii.

Labour of Many. Human Wisdom is the Child of Time.[87]

The names of "moralists and politicians" are more a mark showing the artificiality of the social disciplines, whereas the latter are actually products of long-term evolution on the basis of human nature.[88] Then it is not the commands of the government, but the impersonal, unintended collective actions of the whole society that gives rise to the norms above mentioned. To sum up, in Mandeville's new picture of the civil society, both the logical and the temporal priority of the political power becomes problematic.[89]

At least at first glance, it is not unreasonable to consider the social norms as natural outcomes of the spontaneous evolution over a long time. Horatio, when summarising Cleomenes's ideas, argues that "Everybody, in this undisciplin'd State, being affected with the high Value he has for himself, and displaying the most natural Symptoms, … they would all be offended at the

[87] *EOH*, pp40-41.

[88] There is still a debate among Mandeville scholars about the role of politicians in the formation of virtues and politeness. In spite of Goldsmith's well-accepted argument that "politicians" should be considered as a symbol, some scholars remind the readers of the concrete meaning of this term. M. M. Goldsmith, "Public Virtue and Private Vices: Bernard Mandeville and English Political Ideologies in the Early Eighteenth Century", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Summer, 1976), pp477-510; *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp50-76. For critiques of Goldsmith, see J. A. W. Gunn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983, pp102-104; J. M. Stafford, "General Introduction", in *Private Vices, Public Benefits? The Contemporary Reception of Bernard Mandeville*, 1997, pp. xvi-xviii; Harold Cook, "Bernard Mandeville and the Therapy of 'the Clever Politician'", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), pp101-124. Since "politicians" appeared much more in Mandeville's early works than in Part II, Mikko Tolonen and Tim Stuart-Buttle argue further that Mandeville experienced an intellectual change between the early version of the *Fable* and Part II, turning from Hobbism to a theory of historical evolution. See Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, ch2; Tim Stuart-Buttle, *From Moral Theology to Moral Philosophy*, ch3. We admit that Mandeville made significant revisions to Hobbes's theory by providing an evolutionary account of the formation of politeness. Yet it is not so convincing to claim this constitutes the split between the early and the late Mandeville, for Mandeville went on ascribing the invention of virtues and politeness to "moralists and politicians" in *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*.

[89] As Mandeville discusses the conjectural history of the political society and that of politeness separately without providing an integrated story, it is not easy to tell the precise temporal sequence of their formation. Some scholars argue that the social convention of politeness must have already taken shape before the establishment of body politic, though its perfection has to wait until a later stage. Paul Sagar, *The Opinions of Mankind*, pp48-49; Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, pp86-99. Yet some other interpreters believe in the temporal priority of political power to the mechanism of politeness. E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, pp62-74; Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, pp42-43.

barefac'd Pride of their Neighbours: and it is impossible, that this should continue long among rational Creatures."[90] The inherent difficulties of human nature "must necessarily produce at long run, what we call good Manners and Politeness". And once the conventions are ready to operate, "the whole Machine may be made to play of itself, with as little Skill, as is required to wind up a Clock".[91] For the maintenance of the civil society, special wisdom of politicians is not necessary. Nevertheless, when Horatio asks the historical origin of this mechanism instead of its philosophical reason, Cleomenes answers that

> In the Pursuit of Self-preservation, Men discover a restless Endeavour to make themselves easy, which insensibly teaches them to avoid Mischief on all Emergencies: and when human Creatures once submit to Government, and are used to live under the Restraint of Laws, it is incredible, how many useful Cautions, Shifts, and Stratagems, they will learn to practice by Experience and Imitation, from conversing together.[92]

For Mandeville, the fact that politeness derives from long-term civil commerce does not negate its dependence on the regulation of government and laws. In other words, the social norms, however necessary and accordant with human nature, cannot come into being but in an existing body politic.

In his whole explanation of civil society, Mandeville always holds that "the

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[90] *FB*, II, p145.
[91] *FB*, II, p388.
[92] *FB*, II, p146.

undoubted Basis of all Societies is Government".[93] To "civilise Men" is not different from to "establish them into a Body Politick".[94] Although the redirected self-liking can be used to play against the destructive self-love as well as against itself, the intersubjective disciplines, or the mutual exchange of psychological goods among individuals, is not expected to substitute the vertical power relationship. As Hobbes warned long before, self-liking, or the desire of comparative superiority to others, is at bottom an unsafe and potentially aggressive passion, for its inherent inclination to zero-sum competition could never be eliminated.[95] In other words, the difficulty of the society-regarding self-love, albeit much moderated by various psychological techniques, is never entirely solved in Mandeville's theory. The social mechanisms of moral virtues and good manners are hence fragile and precarious in essence, always operating on the edge of causing conflict. In Mandeville's opinions,

> The grosser Sort of them it often affects so violently, that if they were not withheld by the Fear of the Laws, they would go directly and beat those their Envy is levell'd at, from no other Provocation than what that Passion suggests to them.[96]

It is the laws that keeps the self-liking on the right line, preventing it from

[93] *FB*, II, p204.
[94] *FB*, II, p229.
[95] Rudi Verburg, "Bernard Mandeville's Vision of the Social Utility of Pride and Greed", *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, No. 22, Vol.4, pp662-691. Verburg precisely points out that both the trend towards a positive-sum society and that towards mutual conflict can be found in Mandeville's society, and the society is in turn the product of the balance between the two currents.
[96] *FB*, I, p142.

becoming excessive envy and destroying the peace. Therefore, putting aside the debates about whether Mandeville's "conspiracy account" should be interpreted literally, we ought not to underestimate the significance of politics in Mandeville's entire theoretical framework. In terms of the principles of civil society, the mission of redirecting men's passions could not be completed but by holders of political power, regardless of the personal wisdom or insight of individual politicians. In a nutshell, there is a systematic need for government, even if we decide not to take Mandeville's words about the cunning politicians seriously.

Thereby it would not surprise us that according to Mandeville, setting up standards of worth and attributing tokens of honour are exactly powers and functions of the government.

> When we say the Sovereign is the Fountain of Honour, it signifies that he has the Power, by Titles or Ceremonies, or both together, to stamp a Mark upon whom he pleases, that shall be as current as his Coin, and procure the Owner the good Opinion of every Body, whether he deserves it or not.[97]

As "the Fountain of Honour", the sovereign determines glory and ignominy of the individuals while supporting his determination with power. Although Mandeville admits that "no Art could ever have fix'd or rais'd" men's self-liking "in any Breast, if that Passion had not pre-existed and been dominant there",[98]

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[97] *FB*, I, p53.
[98] *EOH*, p40. Comp. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 3.2.2.25.

it is the government that fixes the specific objects of this passion, enforces the redirection and ultimately puts the social disciplines into practice, regardless of whether the content of these norms is inventions of wise lawgivers or consequence of unconscious evolution. In this sense, moral virtues and good manners in civil commerce are at bottom dependent on political power, though they work on human nature in a totally different way than pure juridical-political institutions or commands. Considering Hobbes's discussion on the system of public honour in civil society, the positions between Mandeville and Hobbes may be closer than many scholars have thought. This is not only due to the literal similarity in their emphasis on the roles of fear and government, but also because of their common awareness about the fundamental problem of modern society, i.e. the difficulty of society-regarding self-love.[99] In other words, Thomas Horne's insightful comments are applicable to both thinkers: "The moral problem of commercial society is, then, not simply a conflict between self-interest and sociability; it is also a conflict between different aspects of sociability". If for Hobbes, the latter conflict is one between men's need of others' approval and a real concern for their opinions (let alone their welfare), then for

[99] Though Mandeville scholars often relate him to Hobbes in various ways, the theoretical relationship between the two thinkers are not adequately appreciated, as they sometimes over-simplify Hobbes as merely a theorist of fear, while sometimes overlook Mandeville's complicated consideration about the role of government. A representative interpretation is Paul Sagar's. Sagar precisely traces the disagreement between Hobbes and Mandeville back to one paragraph in *Leviathan*, "The force of words being (as I have formerly noted) too weak to hold men to the performance of their covenants, there are in man's nature but two imaginable helps to strengthen it. And those are either a fear of the consequence of breaking their word, or a glory or pride in appearing not to need to break it." According to Sagar, while Hobbes treats fear as the only constructive passion for peace and order in civil society, Mandeville definitely chooses Hobbes's neglected alternative. *The Opinion of Mankind*, pp39-49. Also cf. E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable*, pp66ff; Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*, pp41-49. This interpretation is not without truth, but as we have seen in the previous chapter, it ignores Hobbes's discussion about artificial person and public honour in the formation and maintenance of the "unity", and at the same time overestimates the role of pride in Mandeville's solution to the state of nature.

Mandeville there is at least a conflict “between the concern for the opinion of others and concern for the welfare of others”.[100] Mandeville’s more optimistic view on the malleability of human nature gives him a better prospect of coping with this problem by milder means, but never liberates him completely from the long shadow of Hobbes. In fact, both the cultivation of self-liking and the government are indispensable.

Yet Mandeville does accomplish an important development of Hobbism by shedding light on the evolutionary disciplining of men’s love of self and enriching the understanding of civil society. In spite of its ever-lasting significance, politics is no longer the whole or the main part of the civil life of the individuals. Especially, when it comes to modern large society where the majority of “civil commerce” takes the form of commercial activities, men’s self-love and self-liking are channelled to a new realm beyond Hobbes’s vision, namely economy. As a theorist of political economy as well as moral psychology, Mandeville keenly captures the great importance of this new aspect of civil society, treating it as the best exhibition site of the promise and problem of the society-regarding self-love.

III. The Engine of Prosperity and the “Luxury Thesis”

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Hobbes is not totally ignorant about economy. The “commodious life” is one of the main aims of the civil society from the very beginning; also, roles of industry and commercial activities,

[100] Thomas Horne, “Envy and Commercial Society: Mandeville and Smith of ‘Private Vices, Public Benefits’”, p554.

both in the cultivation of men's sociability and in the growth of state power, are clearly noticed in his discussion about "the nutrition and procreation of a commonwealth". But these ideas are quite brief and only peripheral for Hobbes's entire theory. Hobbes never attempted to integrate them with his complicated analysis of human passions (especially pride), neither did he devote much to theorising the material power of the commonwealth. Such two steps are taken by Mandeville. In his "research into the Nature of Society", Mandeville argues that

> Not only that the good and amiable Qualities of Man are not those that make him beyond other Animals a sociable Creature; but moreover that it would be utterly impossible, either to raise any Multitudes into a Populous, Rich and Flourishing Nation, or when so rais'd, to keep and maintain them in that Condition, without the assistance of what we call Evil both Natural and Moral.[101]
>
> What we call Evil in this World, Moral as well as Natural, is the grand Principle that makes us sociable Creatures, the solid Basis, the Life and Support of all Trades and Employments without Exception.[102]

From Mandeville's viewpoint, the "private vices", i.e. the self-loving instincts of human beings, lead to not only sociability of individuals but also greatness or flourish of the whole nation. By stressing the role of "evil both natural and moral", Mandeville connects the micro theory of personal morality to the macro theory

[101] *FB*, I, p373.
[102] *FB*, I, p428.

of politico-economic mechanisms, enabling his maxim to run through his whole analysis of modern society.

Looking at Mandeville's arguments in detail, what is firstly noteworthy is the great attention he pays to the material prosperity of a civil society, which differentiates him from not only Hobbes (and most of the natural lawyers) with his concerns for legal-political power, but also republican authors, who regarded the virtues and public-spiritedness of the citizens as the most vital ingredients of state's greatness.[103] Yet unlike modern economists caring about the utilities of the individuals, this derives from Mandeville's concern for the international political condition of civil societies. Mandeville notices the competition and wars modern states are facing. For Mandeville, besides peace and complaisance among individuals, "public benefits" for a civil society means its "earthly good", namely being a large, populous, rich, industrious, glorious, powerful and warlike nation. In other words, what constitutes the vitality of the state is the abundance of material and human resources, therefore "trades and employments" are of considerable significance. Even in military affairs which used to be the stage of civic virtues, it is now public finance and manpower that play the decisive role.

> what have the Aldermen, the Common-Council, or indeed all People of any Substance to do with the War, but to pay Taxes? The Hardships and Fatigues of War that are personally suffer'd, fall upon them that bear the

[103] J. G. A. Pocock, "Virtues, Rights, and Manners: A model for Historians of Political Thought", in his *Virtues, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp37-49; comp. Istvan Hont, "Introduction", in his *Jealousy of Trade*, pp8-22.

> Brunt of every Thing, the meanest Indigent Part of the Nation, the working slaving People. … Such a Variety of Labours in every great Nation require a vast Multitudes, in which there are always loose, idle, extravagant Fellows enough to spare for an Army.[104]

On the one hand, men of property, of whom the military force usually used to be made up, no longer devote themselves to the war personally, but make a contribution to financing the war through national taxation. Even for those of them serving as officers, what really matters is their sagacity and sense of honour (which for Mandeville results from the manipulation of self-liking), whereas civic spirit is irrelevant. On the other hand, the army now mainly consists of "the working slaving people", namely the labour force at the bottom of society. Though lacking traditional martial virtues, they are ready for mobilisation and can be easily trained and disciplined. Thus according to Mandeville, there is no need to worry about the war capacity of a state as long as "Military Affairs are taken care of as they ought, and the Soldiers well paid and kept in good Discipline".[105] Mandeville keenly grasps the transformation of the foundation and pattern of war, the most vital political affair for the survival of a civil society.[106] However, the dependence of war capacity upon material and human resources does not reject but in turn requires a highly prosperous

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[104] *FB*, I, p120.
[105] *FB*, I, p124.
[106] Such a transformation, for sociologists of history, can be termed as the rise of fiscal-military state, or the formation of "capitalised coercion". John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783*, London : Unwin Hyman, 1989; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

society where the wheel of industry spins fast and smoothly. In Mandeville's eyes, it is the demand that determines the condition of the whole economic system, therefore such a society is impossible unless people abandon "all the Virtue and Innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age",[107] bid farewell to the natural simplicity of small peaceful society, and turn to men's various desires for help. Most of the moral virtues, albeit no more than counterfeit, still require some abstinence and reduce men's capacity of consumption and production.

In correspondence with economy's becoming a matter of state affairs, enjoyment of commodities must become the focus of men's love of self. Nonetheless, according to Mandeville, the ever increasing concern individuals have for economy-regarding activities (including consumption and production stimulated by the former) derives neither from a simple bodily desire of material comfort, nor from a rationalised calculation of interest.[108] To emancipate the unlimited potential of demand, what Mandeville needs is "a restless desire after Changes and Novelty".[109] Actually, this is a consequence of the alliance of self-love and self-liking leaded by the latter. As our previous discussion has shown, each individual has an artificial self since he associates specific acquired things or qualities to his own person and endeavours to draw values or esteem from

[107] *FB,* I, pvii.
[108] Cf. Albert Hirschman, *Passions and Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977. According to Hirschman's classic study, as the dynamics of modern economy, self-interest is a moderate and calm passion resulting in predictability and constancy. But this is clearly not the case of Mandeville. A critical revision and development of Hirschman, see Pierre Force, *Self-Interest Before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
[109] *FB,* II, p303.

them, while what can be regarded as a part of oneself is flexible and shaped by others. This is the foundational rationale of self-liking, shame and honour. Thus, when wealth and luxury are established as tokens of glory, with the additional desires of bodily satisfaction, human beings cannot but striving for accumulation of wealth and conspicuous consumption, then bring about a flourishing market finally, as long as the overall balance of trade is secured and the "working slaving people" are kept in compelling poverty by skilful politicians. Especially, Mandeville points out that the concrete content of luxuries and fashions is ever-changing, "for if the wants of Men are innumerable, then what ought to supply them has no bounds; what is call'd superfluous to some degree of People, will be thought requisite to those of higher Quality".[110] Consequently, the dynamics of economy can be ever-lasting, and with the advance of the industry even the "very Poor liv'd better than the rich before".[111] Now we get the most well-known form of the Mandevillean maxim or the "luxury thesis": private vices that may lead to unhappiness or misery of specific individuals, namely luxury, vanity, avarice, greed, emulation and etc., are eventually the most powerful engine of the economic machine, giving rise to the "worldly greatness"

[110] *FB*, I, pp109-110. Mandeville denies the existence of a definite boundary between necessity and luxury. Extremely speaking, "if once we depart from calling every thing luxury that is not absolutely necessary to keep a Man alive, that then there is no Luxury at all." On Mandeville's strategy of replying to his republican critics, see Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp126-134; Istvan Hont, "The Early Enlightenment Debate on Commerce and Luxury", in Mark Goldie & Robert Wokler (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth Century Political Thought*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp377-418.

[111] *FB*, I, p11. Mandeville's attitude to the poor is quite harsh. For Mandeville, "men have not an equal share of pride". (*FB*, I, p233) As love of ease and idleness is more influential in the hearts of the poor, nothing could more powerfully compel them to work but poverty. Moreover, like Locke and Smith, Mandeville also suggests to transcend the problem of social justice by the overall growth of national wealth. Cf. Istvan Hont & Michael Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in the Wealth of Nation: An Introductory Essay", *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp1-44.

of a nation.[112]

In comparing the “luxury thesis” with the other two theses, however, there are several points worth of notice. Firstly, despite of its reliance upon “dextrous management”, the “luxury thesis” works in a more spontaneous way than the other two do. Unlike political institutions and political power, the operation of the economy of luxury depends on the interaction (civil commerce) between members of civil society, whereas has nothing to do with coercive force. Meanwhile, unlike the mechanisms of moral virtues and politeness, luxury is able to arouse specific “public benefits” directly, with no need to be played against, redirected, restrained or disguised, regardless of whether such redirection or concealment is intended or not. The transformation of luxury into prosperity is itself not an outcome of manipulation, while the role of manipulation is only to encourage luxury and to keep the final balance of trade. According to Mandeville,

> The short-sighted Vulgar in the Chain of Causes seldom can see further than one Link; but those who can enlarge their View, and will give themselves the Leisure of gazing on the Prospect of concatenated Events, may, in a hundred Places, see Good spring up and pullulate from Evil, as naturally as Chickens do from Eggs.[113]

[112] Mandeville also mentions that specific villainies (robbery, fraud, etc.) may bring about benefits to specific members of the society, and that some vices (e.g. avarice and prodigality) may correct each other. But these should not be seen as the primary mechanism of economy. The role of this sort of cases in Mandeville’s theory is rather satirical and rhetorical than substantial, demonstrating that there are “not any thing so entirely Evil, but it may prove beneficial to some part or other of the Creation”. (*FB,* I, p426)

[113] *FB,* I, p89.

In this sense, the “luxury thesis”, as an economic phenomena, indicates a more autonomous and naturalistic (though at bottom artificial) aspect of the civil society.

Secondly, besides its contribution to national prosperity, luxury, regarded as tokens of honour, is also beneficial for the improvement of men’s sociability by cultivating their artificial self and redirecting their pride. The market economy produces a society of strangers which becomes the best stage for hypocrisy. Meanwhile, albeit all human virtues are counterfeited as well, in comparison with other personal qualities, the conspicuous consumption itself is a most effortless adornment of men’s bare self,

> The most admired among the fashionable People that delight in outward Vanity, and know how to dress well, would be highly displeas’d if their Clothes, and Skill in putting them on, should be look’d upon otherwise than as Part of themselves; nay, it is this Part of them only, which whilst they are unknown, can procure them Access to the highest Companies, … without the least Regard to their Goodness, or their Understanding.[114]

For Mandeville, the difference between the ancients and the moderns lies not in that between true virtue and counterfeit, but that between different contents of counterfeit or hypocrisy. Yet such a difference brings about important effects. On the one hand, while ancient virtues are accessible only for the few, modern honour and politeness, expressed in luxury, can be achieved by the

[114] *FB,* II, p363.

plebeians.[115] On the other hand, luxury is usually accompanied by arts and civility. With the mediation of imaginary values, the artificiality of man's self and the boom of economy construct a positive feedback mechanism. Notwithstanding its incapacity of promoting true virtues, luxury is at least a way of taming men's offensive self-liking. Once human beings take pride in wealth and luxury instead of physical conquest and personal dominion, the emulation is no longer harmful but channelled to pacific realms.

Thirdly, when individuals pursue luxuries through the market, they obtain additional incentives to act sociably. As market economy extends as well as deepens the interdependence among individuals to an unprecedented level, mutual accommodation is promoted in men's civil commerce, and industry itself becomes a training course of disciplines.[116] In other words, besides men's general dependence on others in their seeking for approbation, the peculiar principles of market-based economic activities furthermore compel them to cooperate with each other.[117] In sum, by satisfying men's love of self (including self-love in the narrow sense and self-liking) and transforming it to state power as well as sociability, economic activities now function as the engine of large and lasting civil society. The civil society is closer and closer to the bourgeois society, the system of needs or material intercourses in Hegel and Marx's terms.

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[115] Cf. Tim Stuart-Buttle, *From Moral Theology to Moral Philosophy*, ch3.

[116] This point is not quite explicit in Mandeville's argument, for he has not yet developed a theory of division of labour. On the relationship between economic interdependence and sociability in commercial society, see Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

[117] Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, ch1; *Politics in Commercial Society*, ch1; also cf. Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind*, ch1. But Mandeville would not admit a pure "commercial sociability" without any concern of self-liking.

Yet Mandeville is not a theorist of bourgeois society, for he cares more about the greatness of the state than the welfare of the individuals. A civil society engined by economic activities is necessitated more by the condition of international competition than by human nature itself. Meanwhile, Mandeville also reminds us that in this condition the role of government becomes subtler. An economy running around luxuries also needs to be regulated by “dextrous management”, which mainly means to give everybody an opportunity of being employed as well as to maintain the balance of international trade. Concretely speaking, the government is expected “to promote as great as a variety of Manufactures, Arts, and Handicrafts, as Human Wit can invent; and the second to encourage Agriculture and Fishery in all their Branches, that the whole Earth may be forc’d to exert it self as well as Man.”[118] Good politicians should also conduct the course of trade to prevent the deficit.

Moreover, Mandeville is aware that “Trade is the Principal, but not the only Requisite to aggrandize a Nation: there are other Things to be taken care of besides”[119]. As we have seen already, such a “promotion” or “encouragement” of industries and transactions cannot be achieved when men are content with a simple, tranquil and idle way of life, but by evoking their envy and emulation. However, redirecting men’s self-liking to the conspicuous consumption necessitates not only a system of honour singing its praise, but also an institution through which money and commodities are associated with oneself.

[118] *FB,* I, p215.
[119] *FB,* I, p116.

That is to say, the goods and products, as external things, are not self-evidently considered as one's own from which the worth of one's person can be drawn. As is pointed out by Mandeville, "Wealth and Power, and all the Gifts of Fortune, that are plainly adventitious, and altogether remote from our Persons; whilst they are our Right and Property, we don't love to be consider'd without them".[120] Notwithstanding the lack of a well-developed theory of property in Mandeville's social and political thoughts, yet he notices that wealth and possessions cannot become a part of one's self without the institution of property. As a link in the formation of men's artificial self, property is not merely a requisite of pacific economic activities, but also a precondition upon which the mechanism of self-liking is enabled to work. But on the other hand, the restless passions of emulation, envy, avarice and greed at the same time increase the risk of mutual conflicts in a stirring society. Therefore, for the sovereign power, "the *Meum* and *Tuum* must be secur'd, Crimes punish'd, and all other Laws concerning the Administration of Justice, wisely contriv'd and strictly executed".[121] To a large extent, the institution of property then can be seen as a junction of the three main theses of the Mandevillean maxim: it is established and secured according to the "fear thesis" (by political power), working together with the "pride thesis" (the mechanism of honour) and putting the "luxury thesis" (the mechanism of economy) in to effect.

To sum up, Mandeville lists the tasks of the government as follows,

[120] *FB,* II, p359.
[121] *FB,* II, p359.

> “Would you render a Society of Men strong and powerful, you must touch their Passions. Divide the Land, tho’ there be never so much to spare, and their Possessions will make them Covetous: Rouse them, tho’ but in Jest, from their Idleness with Praises, and Pride will set them to work in earnest: Teach them Trades and Handicrafts, and you’ll bring Envy and Emulation among them: to increase their Numbers, set up a Variety of manufactures, and leave no Ground uncultivated; Let Property be inviolably secures, and Privileges equal to all Men; suffer no body to act but what is lawful, and every body to think what he pleases; for a Country where every body may be maintained that will be employ’d, and the other Maxims are observ’d, must always throng’d and can never want People, as long as there is any in the World.”[122]

In a large society powered by luxury, the role of the political power is not yet eliminated or undermined but transformed. It stimulates the social competition for the tokens of worth as well as controls its intensity, and itself benefits from both men’s acquired sociability and the material power generated by the socio-economic course. In a nutshell, Mandeville’s civil society is on the whole an artefact, since even the “semi-autonomous region”[123] of economy is embedded in artificial institutions, norms and regulations.

[122] *FB*, I, p200.
[123] E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment’s Fable*, p185.

Conclusion

The Mandevillean maxim, no matter which particular form it takes, is at bottom a response to the problem and project put forward by Hobbes. It demonstrates the complicated relationship between the society-regarding self-love and the civil society. For both Mandeville and Hobbes, the society-regarding self-love cannot lead to sociability autonomously but arouses a state of war if not regulated, while the civil society is an artificial unity founded on the artificial self of human beings. But for Mandeville "artifice" means something more than for Hobbes. While Hobbes equates artificial to political, the confidence in the malleability of men's self-liking makes Mandeville no longer regard social order entirely dependent on the coercive force and legal rights of the government, but inclines him to give a greater role to "civil commerce" (or Hobbes's societate mutua) between individuals, from which the mechanisms of virtue and politeness emerge. The civil society, consequently, is more and more understood as a space where a civilised way of life is formed within the context of increasingly stirring socio-economic activities with the help of the property system. That is why Mandeville seems to have provided some "proto-sociology".[124] Nonetheless, Mandeville sticks to using "civil society" in the political sense. Historically, the "process of civilisation", albeit begun in primitive families and tribes, did not have decisive effects until the establishment of the government and the written laws. Theoretically, the inherent difficulty of society-

[124] Pekka Sulkunen, "The Proto-Sociology of Mandeville and Hume", *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2014), pp361-365.

regarding self-love both drives the large society warlike in the face of other nations and preserves the root of conflicts within it. Commercial society or civil commerce could not be secured merely by “commercial sociability”, hence political power is always needed to maintain the precarious balance. This is a doctrine Mandeville cannot give up as long as he chooses to stand with Hobbes on his opposition to natural sociability.

Mandeville’s development of Hobbes marks the rising significance of new issues in eighteenth century political thought under the general theme of sociability inherited from the seventeenth century. Yet the Mandevillean Maxim aroused lots of criticism, for it makes us face the uncomfortable moral paradox of entirely reducing morality to self-love, and sociability to artifice. Furthermore, since Mandeville points out the necessity (not only inevitability) of “private vices” for the greatness of the state, he looks even more provocative than his Augustinian predecessors and Hobbes. Is it then possible to overcome the problematic elements of the Mandevillean Maxim while preserving Mandeville’s insights about human nature, the artificial civil society, and the political economy? Refusing to return to the orthodoxy of natural sociability, Hume revised and developed Mandeville’s arguments by providing a more sophisticated investigation of man’s self and a more systematic analysis of the social mechanisms.

Chapter 3 Hume on Self-Love and the Mechanisms of Artificial Virtues

Hume paid homage to Mandeville when he included him among the philosophers "who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing".[1] Yet, to tell the intellectual relationship between them is not easy, for Mandeville's name was listed alongside philosophers who were known as Mandeville's opponents, including Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Butler. For many scholars, Hume's stress on men's moral sense, the mechanism of sympathy, as well as natural affections and benevolence definitely demonstrates his debt to the Hutchesonian moral sentimentalists. Refusing to reduce everything to self-love (especially self-preservation), Hume never accepts the foundational doctrine of Mandevillean egoism.[2] Other interpreters remind us that those Hutchesonian elements are of little practical significance for the subsistence of social order.[3] Hume's social and political philosophy, especially his theory of artificial virtues, has a more Mandevillean aspect. And of course, to clarify Hume's thought we must do justice to its very originality and complexity.

Based on our interpretation of Hobbes and Mandeville, this chapter probes into Hume's analysis of men's society-regarding self-love, and also endeavours

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[1] *THN*, intro.8, SBNxvii.

[2] Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1941, pp1-51; Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945; David Fate Norton, *David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*; Christopher Finlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, ch6; Christian Maurer, "Self-Interest and Sociability", in James Harris ed., *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp292-312.

[3] John Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980; James Moore, "Hume and Hutcheson"; "Utility and Humanity: The Quest for the *Honestum* in Cicero, Hutcheson, and Hume", *Utilitas*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Nov., 2002), pp365-386; John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, ch6; Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume*. Also cf. James Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, ch2.

to clarify the coexistent naturalness, morality, and artificiality of Hume's civil society. Since men's idea of self is highly problematic in Hume's eyes, we will start with an examination of the construction of our self-understanding and the role pride plays in it. This explains why Hume's men, like Hobbes's and Mandeville's, are both self-centred and open to others. Then, in Section 2 to Section 4, we will investigate the formation of civil society step by step, from the state of nature to the emergence of justice, to the crisis of justice in the enlarged society, and finally to the establishment of government. We will see that, regarding justice and allegiance as "conventions" and "artificial virtues", Hume on the one hand agrees with Hobbes and Mandeville on the artificiality of civil society as well as on the role of coercion, honour and hypocrisy, while on the other hand he makes this artificiality consistent with the gradual evolution of social norms and the moral sentiments in man's heart. In this way, Hume offers a more enriched theory of civil society.

I. The Humean Self: Between Self-Love and Sociability[4]

1. Pride and the Construction of the Self

From the perspective of Hobbes and Mandeville, the ultimate origin of the difficulty of social order lies in men's society-regarding self-love, whereas the only solution is to establish a civil society on the basis of artifice. As we have discussed in previous chapters, to a large extent, the paradox of society-regarding self-love

[4] Strictly speaking, for Hume "when we talk of self-love, 'tis not in a proper sense", because the proper object of love is others (*THN*, 2.2.1.2, SBN329). Yet Hume still use this term in its vulgar sense as a concern for our own individual happiness. E.g. *THN*, 2.2.5.9, SBN361; 3.2.6.6, SBN529; 3.2.8.5, SBN543; EPM, 5.1.6-10, SBN215-216. Also cf. Jennifer Welchman, "Self-Love and Personal Identity in Hume's *Treatise*", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Apr., 2015), pp33-55.

is derived from the ambiguity of the self. On the one hand, the self is the centre of all our selfish passions, the starting point from which we make deliberations about all our actions, the subject (and sometimes object) of all our evaluations, and the owner of all our possessions. It is for ourselves that human beings really have concern, and it is for the sake of ourselves that human beings do everything. But on the other hand, this very self is far from a self-evident entity. We hardly have a simple and clear understanding about who we are. The dearest person we have so much concern for is always changing during life without perfect identity. Our self-evaluations are not self-supporting but originate from comparisons with others, need to be recognised by others, or are even determined by the opinions of others. Nor do we have a definite idea about what "belongs to" us or what is "our own", thus we may annex to our persons everything of which we can make use and from which some value or merit can be drawn. Both the formation of the self and its relationship with others as well as external things are complicated, leading to tensions between ourselves and the society. However, such a self is also open to artifice. In fact, for Hobbes and Mandeville, the civil society with artificial order and civilised lifestyle is precisely a counterpart of the artificial self, a self constructed by social institutions and conventions instead of the original appearance of human nature.

The problem of the self is even more highlighted by Hume, who has a more philosophical interest besides the concern for men's social and political life. In Hume's eyes, the problem of the self is at first ontological. Inspired by Descartes, Locke, and the debaters around them, Hume carries out his own attack against

systems of philosophy before him, most of which presuppose external objects with continued and distinct existence as well as intimate consciousness of our self with perfect simplicity and identity.[5] According to Hume's philosophical principles based on perceptions, both hypotheses are problematic, for there are no correspondent impressions of those sorts of substance, which should have been constant, invariable and uninterrupted. Our perceptions are independent existences, changing and often interrupted. Therefore, both the identity of external objects and that of ourselves are mere fictions. Yet Hume still presents an explanation about how these fictions are formed. All those objects to which we attribute a continued existence have a peculiar constancy, i.e. a resemblance between our broken perceptions of them suggesting such objects did not change upon the interruptions. Even if the constancy is not perfect, they still preserve a coherence from which we can infer their continued existence by causal inference. "The passage betwixt related ideas is, therefore, so smooth and easy, that it produces little alteration on the mind, and seems like the continuation of the same action; and as the continuation of the same action is an effect of the continu'd view of the same object, 'tis for this reason we attribute sameness to every succession of related objects."[6] Due to our natural preference for general rules, our imagination has a propensity to believe that the interrupted impressions are connected by a real, unchangeable substance. As a result, we mistake the

[5] There were heated debates about the theme of personal identity in 17th- and 18th-century philosophy, in which Descartes, Locke, Clarke, Collins, Bayle, Berkeley and Malebranche are important participants. About the context, see Udo Thiel, *The Early Modern Subject: Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

[6] *THN*, 1.4.2.34, SBN204.

succession for the identity of the objects. A similar process takes place when it comes to our personal identity. Since all our perceptions are related with each other by resemblance and causal relations, and those relations can be discovered by our memory, the transition between our perceptions must be quite easy. Thus the imagination is disposed to “feign” an identity as well as a simplicity underlying the related perceptions. Hume’s destruction of men’s idea of self is more thorough than Mandeville’s. On the ontological level, in fact, the self is nothing but a “bundle” or collection of successive perceptions.[7]

But the mechanism of imagination is not an exhaustive answer to the problem concerning our personal identity. “To answer this question, we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves.”[8] It has already been displayed that on the level of “thought or imagination”, the relations of resemblance and causation bind our perceptions together, affording us a complex idea of the self. This self, at the same time, is in the whirl of passions. According to Hume’s classification, passions are impressions of reflection, which are subdivided into “direct passions” and “indirect passions”. Among the former are desire, aversion, hope, fear, etc., whereas the latter includes pride, humility, love, hatred, and their various mixtures. As individual members in the bundle of perceptions, the passions are related to each other and to other kinds of perceptions. We may feel proud of our virtuous characters, may be angered by a

[7] *THN*, 1.4.6.4, SBN252.
[8] *THN*, 1.4.6.5, SBN253.

pain caused by our enemies, and may love another person when being pleased by his handsome appearance. In this way, the mechanism of passions provides more connections between our perceptions besides those have been discovered in Hume's analysis of "thought and imagination", such as the resemblance and causal relations between impressions and their correspondent ideas. Especially, some passions, such as hope, fear, pride and humility, rouse our memory and anticipation by presenting us with a conscious concern for our past or future experience, despite there being no simple and strict identity of the self through time. Therefore, part of the foundation on which our imagination constructs the consciousness of the self is generated by men's passions. In Hume's own words,"in this view our identity with regard to the passions serves to corroborate that with regard to the imagination, by the making our distant perceptions influence each other, and by giving us a present concern for our past or future pains or pleasures."[9]

But besides establishing relations between perceptions and contributing to the formation of the "bundle", some specific passions are directly relevant to the bundle (as a whole) itself, namely pride and humility. Hume's analysis focuses on pride, as "the mind has a much stronger propensity to pride than to humility".[10] Despite a simple impression, pride has an object as well as a cause, both of which are ideas:

The first idea, that is presented to the mind, is that of the cause or productive

[9] *THN*, 1.4.6.9, SBN261. Cf. Jane McIntyre, "Personal Identity and the Passions", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), pp545-557; "Hume on the Problem of Personal Identity", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. by David Fate Norton, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp177-208.
[10] *THN*, 2.2.10.4, SBN390.

> principle. This excites the passion, connected with it; and that passion, when excited, turns our view to another idea, which is that of self. Here then is a passion plac'd betwixt two ideas, of which the one produces it, and the other is produc'd by it. The first idea, therefore, represents the cause, the second the object of the passion.[11]

The cause produces pride, then the object is produced by pride. According to Hume, the object is the self, which is not the thinking substance with perfect identity and simplicity in the traditional sense, but "the succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness" as has already been discussed.[12] The cause also has something to do with the self. Hume makes a further distinction between the quality which operates and the subject on which the quality is placed. In order to produce pride, the quality must be able to arouse a separate pleasure, and the subject must be "either parts of ourselves, or sometimes nearly related to us".[13] Thus the impression of pleasure, the impression of pride, the idea of the cause/subject, and the idea of ourselves form the "double relations" of impression and idea, which is necessary for the occurrence of pride. For instance, we may easily feel joy from a beautiful house, but pride takes place only if I am the owner or the constructor of such a house so that it is annexed to me. Hume then lists several main causes of pride. "The most obvious cause" is virtue, which refers to how good qualities of our actions and manners determine our personal characters. The beauty of our body are also

[11] *THN*, 2.1.2.4, SBN278.
[12] *THN*, 2.1.2.2, SBN277.
[13] *THN*, 2.1.5.2, SBN285.

"natural and immediate" causes, for whether we consider the body as a part of ourselves, it is still closely connected with us. Besides, we take pride in external advantages as well, and the closest relation, "which of all others produces most commonly the passion of pride, is that of property" that associates a person and the possessions belonging to him.[14] Now the self involved in the cause is to some extent different from the self as the object. As successive perceptions, the self as object is equalised to the mind, whereas the self involved in the cause is "our mind and body", who is also a bearer of social relations and an owner of property. In some commentators' words, the former is an "intellectual" self, while the latter is an "embodied" social self, an agent, an individual person in the sense of our "vulgar" common life.[15] As an original force in human nature, pride seems to generate an entirely new self in a more simple and direct way.

However, this does not mean Hume illegitimately introduced another sort of self, some reality which had been denied in Book 1 of the *Treatise*. To the contrary, the embodied self or the agent is by no means in contradiction with the self as a succession of perceptions. Firstly, the self as a holder of virtues is well consistent with Hume's arguments in Book 1. Being a bundle or heap of successive

[14] *THN*, 2.1.7.2, SBN295; 2.1.8.1, SBN298; 2.1.10.1, SBN309.

[15] It has almost been a common sense in Hume scholarship that the concept of self in Book 2 is much enriched than that in Book 1. See Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, "'Pride Produces the Idea of Self': Hume on Moral Agency", *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (1990), pp255-269; Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's* Treatise, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991, ch6; Robert Henderson, "David Hume on Personal Identity and the Indirect Passions", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Apr., 1990), pp33-44; Pauline Chazan, "Pride, Virtue, and Selfhood: A Reconstruction of Hume", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Mar., 1992), pp45-64; Terence Penelhum, *Themes in Hume: The Self, the Will, Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, ch5; Eugenio Lecaldano, "The Passions, Character, and the Self in Hume", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Nov., 2002), pp175-193; A. E. Pitson, *Hume's Philosophy of the Self*, London: Routledge, 2002; Jennifer Welchman, "Self-Love and Personal Identity in Hume's *Treatise*"; Ruth Boeker, "Locke and Hume on Personal Identity: Moral and Religious Differences", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Nov., 2015), pp105-135. Some commentators, such as Rorty, Henderson, Penelhum and Lecaldano hold that the embodied social self in Book 2 is substantially different from the intellectual self in Book 1, therefore pride provides us with a new idea of self. This view is not without truth, but it is noteworthy that for Hume, the embodied social self is involved in the cause rather than the object of pride, while the object, i.e. the idea of self exactly produced by pride, is still "a succession of perceptions". (Also see footnote 14 below.)

perceptions, the self nonetheless has some structures or dispositions, which display various relations between individual perceptions and are relatively more stable than the latter. The bundle of a vain person is expected to contain more impressions of vanity than that of a modest person. Men with great strength of mind tend to have more experience of calm passions than violent ones in their heaps. In this way, we are still enabled to tell some qualities and characters in spite of the lack of pure personal identity. Hume even analogises the self to a republic, which makes better sense of characters than the "bundle theory":

> I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts. And as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may change his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity.[16]

The self is like a republic, with perceptions as the individual members, and characters as the laws and constitutions. Therefore, the perceptions are not piled together arbitrarily, but organised according to certain rules that reflect the features of the given person. Albeit mere characters do not constitute the "republic" which depends on causal relations and resemblance between

[16] *THN*, 1.4.6.19, SBN261. Cf. Jane McIntyre, "Character: A Humean Account", *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Apr., 1990), pp193-206; Lilly Alanen, "Personal Identity, Passions, and 'The True Idea of the Human Mind'", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Apr., 2014), pp3-28.

perceptions, they have no difficulty being the cause of pride, and also enable moral evaluations as we will see later.

Things become more complicated when it comes to the body. The body can be seen as our own, yet when I say “this body is mine” I mean something totally different from saying “this perception or character is mine”. A perception belongs to the self in the sense that an individual belongs to the collection. But the relationship between the body and the embodied self goes beyond the world of perceptions and have something to do with the ownership of material objects. In fact, though Hume considers body as a part of ourselves, he does not provide an explicit analysis of the body-mind relation, and mentions that some philosophers “regard it as something external”.[17] Nevertheless, there is no contradiction between Hume’s position concerning this problem and his basic philosophical principles. Considering the body as an external existence, we may form impressions and ideas of our body in the same way as cognising other objects. We perceive its shape, colour, motion, its various qualities as well as relationship with other objects, and construct it as a continued and distinct existence. But we may also find some unique causal relationships between our body and our motives, which cannot be applied to other objects. For instance, we may observe a constant association between the perception of a willed action - “raise up my hand” - and the perception of a bodily movement when my hand is raised up, as well as a constant association between the perception that my head is hit by a stick and the perception of pain. There are no equivalent relations between my

[17] *THN*, 2.1.8.1, SBN298.

mind and other external existences. Therefore, the body is regarded as something more tightly connected with ourselves, albeit the essential relationship between our body and mind or our intrinsic “power” of agency is unintelligible. The embodiedness of the self does not discredit its ontological nature as a succession of perceptions, and can be explained by the bundle theory.

The self as the owner of possessions is also explainable in this manner. “Property may be defin’d, such relation betwixt a person and an object as permits him, but forbids any other, the free use and possession of it, without violating the laws of justice and moral equity.”[18] According to Hume’s definition, the relation of property involves both a relation between a person and an object, and a relation between persons, for it on the one hand permits a person (the owner) to deal with the object at his will, and on the other hand prevent others from intervention. Specifically, as a moral and legal institution, the forbiddance imposed on others does not work like physical obstacles do. Yet the moral/legal relations concerning property and persons can still be reduced to natural relations of perceptions. Regardless of whether justice is natural or artificial, from Hume’s perspective, property at bottom “may be look’d upon as a particular species of causation”, and there is no difference between moral-legal causation and physical causation.[19] On the one hand, “ownership” means that the proprietor has the liberty to operate as he pleases upon the object, as well as to reap advantage from it. On the other hand, all the others, as will be discussed in the next section, abstain from his

[18] *THN*, 2.1.10.1, SBN310.
[19] *THN*, 2.1.10.1, SBN310. Cf. James Harris, “Hume’s Reconciling Project and ‘the Common Distinction betwixt Moral and Physical Necessity”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2003), pp451-471.

property due to their self-interest, their moral sentiments, or their desire of honour and reputation. Given that causation is in fact a particular species of relation between perceptions, ontologically speaking, the self with property and social status is derived from the self as a collection of perceptions. In sum, the self involved in the cause of pride is not substantially different from the self as the object of such a passion.

Pride therefore does not produce an entirely new self with more reality or self-evidence, nonetheless, it indeed enriches men's understanding of ourselves. As Hume has already demonstrated in Book 1, by causal relations and resemblance between perceptions, a "bundle" or "republic" is formed, giving rise to our intimate consciousness of the self as a continued existence. But the self so far is a person with no face, for we have no knowledge about "who I am" but only a bare awareness that "I am". In other words, except for a consciousness of existence, there is neither an understanding of what can be seen as our own, nor an evaluation of what kind of person we are. In order to characterise the self, attention must be paid to certain perceptions as well as their relations in the bundle rather than the bundle as bundle. This further step is achieved by our indirect passions, especially pride. "The passion always turns our view to ourselves, and makes us think of our own qualities and circumstances."[20] Pride,

[20] *THN*, 2.1.5.6, SBN287. There are some scholars arguing that the self must have been existing prior to the occurrence of pride, otherwise pride could not take place. (Terence Penelhum, *Themes in Hume*, ch5; "The Indirect Passions, Myself, and Others", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume's* Treatise, ed. by Donal Ainslie & Annemarie Butler, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp206-229; Robert Henderson, "David Hume on Personal Identity and the Indirect Passions".) Some others hold that the idea of self is produced by pride, thus is logically simultaneous or posterior to that passion. (Pauline Chazan, "Pride, Virtue, and Selfhood: A Reconstruction of Hume"; Eugenio Lecaldano, "The Passions, Character, and the Self in Hume".) Amélie Oksenberg Rorty attempts to solve this problem by distinguishing the characterised self posterior to pride from the self prior to it (i.e. the self in Book 1). (See Rorty, "'Pride Produces the Idea of Self': Hume on Moral Agency".) This attempt is thought-provoking, but it overestimates the advancement brought about by pride. In fact, the self in Book 1 and Book 2 is the same. What pride produces is a

itself a perception in the bundle, concentrates our attention to the whole bundle as well as the perceptions constituting it. With the help of the mechanism of pride, we identify our characters, recognise the connections between ourselves and the body or external properties, and also attempt to "infer an excellency in ourselves" from those things that cause our pride, considering them as what defines us as who we are.[21] In this way, we step out of the intellectual world of perceptions and enter into the common life. Our selves are now recognised as embodied and characterised persons, occupying certain statuses in the web of social and moral relations. Yet our "vulgar" sense of the self, philosophically speaking, is formed on the basis of (rather than independent from) the succession of perceptions.

2. Pride, Fame, and Society-Regarding Self-Love

As a product of pride, men's self-understanding is flexible and open to the impact of others, because pride is itself a society-regarding passion. Though caused by something related to ourselves and directed to the idea of the self, pride is far from self-sustaining. As is known to us, some causes of pride, such as properties, are not annexed to ourselves naturally and immediately but through social conventions. Furthermore, whatever cause it is, to arouse pride it must "be not only closely related, but also peculiar to ourselves, or at least common to us with a few persons", because "we likewise judge of objects more from comparison than from their real and intrinsic merit; and where we cannot by some contrast

characterised bundle of perceptions.

[21] *THN*, 2.1.6.7, SBN293; Donald Ainslie, "Scepticism about Persons in Book II of Hume's *Treatise*", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Jul., 1999), pp469-492.

enhance their value, we are apt to overlook even what is essentially good in them."[22] Hume points out that human beings "are every moment apt to" compare ourselves with others, and dispose to evaluate things and ourselves through comparison. Albeit this disposition operates generally, it has a much greater influence on the passion of pride, thus pride requisites not only a separate pleasure in the cause but also peculiarity and superiority. For example, health is commonly agreeable and valuable in itself, and is tightly associated with us as well. But it might hardly excite our pride unless we are particularly more muscular than others. Such a disposition especially leads to our vanity of power and shame of slavery:

> For supposing it possible to frame statues of such an admirable mechanism, that they cou'd move and act in obedience to the will; 'tis evident the possession of them wou'd give pleasure and pride, but not to such a degree, as the same authority, when exerted over sensible and rational creatures, whose condition, being compar'd to our own, makes it seem more agreeable and honourable.[23]

Authority itself is agreeable, but the slavery of others will augment our pride by comparison. In this case, pride takes the form as enjoyment of positional goods and therefore causes zero-sum competitions between individuals, even giving rise to envy or malice. Hume does not highlight the potential danger of pride at

[22] *THN*, 2.1.6.4, SBN291.
[23] *THN*, 2.1.10.12, SBN315. Also see Jacqueline Taylor's insightful comments on pride and social power, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume's Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, ch3. According to Taylor, pride is the foundation of social stratification, but Hume did not develop this point in his analysis of social order in Book 3 of the *Treatise*.

this moment, but he at least agrees with his predecessors (including Hobbes and Mandeville) that both pride and our self-understanding derived from it cannot make sense without reference to others.

What is more, human beings are directly influenced by the opinions and feelings of others, since they count as a secondary cause of pride, and also play a significant role in sustaining our pride resulting from the original causes. To explain this phenomenon Hume introduces the mechanism of sympathy. According to Hume, individuals are not secluded in each one's own world of perceptions, rather we can to some extent enter the experience of others. Firstly, due to our observation of causal relations, the actions or appearances of others are considered as effects or "external signs" of their inward emotions. Having seen these signs, we then form a belief (i.e. an idea with great vividness) in the reality of the sentiments they are experiencing.[24] Secondly, given that there is a great resemblance among human beings, the force and vivacity of the idea of ourselves, which we always intimately perceive, can be conveyed to the idea of others' affections, enlivening the latter and transforming it into an impression.[25]

[24] *THN*, 2.1.11.3, SBN317.

[25] Hume's terminology here has aroused lots of debates in interpreters. In Book 2, Part 1, Section 11 of the *Treatise*, Hume mentions men's "idea, or rather impression of ourselves" and "impression of our person" (*THN*, 2.1.11.4-5, SBN317-318). Yet according to Hume's own analysis in Book 1, human beings cannot have an "impression" of the self. Cf. Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of Its Origins and Central Doctrines*, London: Macmillan, 1941, pv. There are several plausible explanations if we adhere to our previous view and not make recourse to a new sort of self. Nicholas Capaldi suggests that the vivacity of our pride is conveyed to the idea of self and makes the latter become an impression. See his *Hume's Place in Moral Philosophy*, NY: Peter Lang, 1989, pp174-176. From another perspective, Don Garrett claims that Hume merely denies *the* impression of self as a simple and invariable substance, whereas in some sense, all impressions contribute to our idea of self could be regarded as impressions of ourselves. See his *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy*, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp167-169. Åsa Carlson presents a similar interpretation that Hume's usage of "impression" here is in the vulgar instead of philosophical sense. Although the self is no more than a bundle of perceptions, ordinary people do have some "vague" impression of themselves, which would be some lively memory of their personal history or perceptions of their body. Åsa Carlson, "There is Just One Idea of Self in Hume's *Treatise*", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1&2 (2009), pp171-184. In sum, despite "in sympathy our own person is not the object of any passion, nor is there any thing, that fixes our attention on ourselves" (*THN*, 2.2.2.17, SBN340), the self-consciousness is by all means important, otherwise we could not "feel" the emotions of others in ourselves.

As a consequence we not only know but by ourselves “feel” the sentiments taking place on others in a lively manner. Hume also notes that besides the general resemblance of human creatures, other relations as well facilitate the process of sympathy, and the more closely others are related to us, the more easily and strongly we sympathise with them. That is why we are more touched by the affections of our relatives and fellows than those of the strangers. Now the sympathised emotions of others may excite our second-order pride. At first, some good quality of ourselves or something belonging to us provides us with an immediate joy along with pride, and at the same time causes praise or esteem in the hearts of others. Then, the praise of others is sympathised by us, giving rise to a sentiment both pleasant and closely related to ourselves. At last we feel an additional pride. In Hume’s words, the minds of men are mirrors to one another, because they reflect each other’s emotions, and “those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated.”[26]

But for Hume, the mechanism of sympathy plays a more important role than exciting our secondary pride. In fact, human beings are not merely enabled to share the experience of others, but also take their opinions and feelings into serious consideration:

> These two principles of authority and sympathy influence almost all our opinions, but must have a peculiar influence, when we judge of our own worth and character. Such judgments are always attended with passion; and nothing tends more to disturb our understanding, and precipitate us into any

[26] *THN*, 2.2.6.21, SBN365.

> opinions, however unreasonable, than their connexion with passion; which defuses itself over the imagination, and gives an additional force to every related idea. To which we may add, that being conscious of great partiality in our own favour, we are peculiarly pleas'd with any thing, that confirms the good opinion we have of ourselves, and are easily shock'd with whatever oppose it.[27]

Hume explains this phenomenon firstly by reminding us of the affinity between passions and judgments. At first glance, men's self-evaluation about our worth and character is a kind of "judgment" made by reason, and could be independent from the feelings of ourselves and others. Nonetheless, as an evaluative passion, pride is always attended with such sort of judgment. The satisfaction or frustration of pride will to a large extent affect our judgment in the corresponding direction. Thus the sympathised feelings and opinions of others, by influencing our pride, eventually influence our self-estimation. Furthermore, Hume also notices the fragility of our pride. Hume's claim here is quite similar to that of Mandeville. As we have discussed in the last chapter, Mandeville's men are diffident in their self-evaluations because they recognise their tendency to overestimate themselves. That makes them not so stubborn as to "extort" good opinions from others like Hobbes's vain-glorious individuals. In Hume's view, human beings also have an awareness of our "great partiality in our own favour", and consequently are not sure about the judgments of our own qualities. Therefore, the opinions and feelings of others are no longer additional recognitions of our value, but rather

[27] *THN*, 2.1.11.9, SBN321.

constitute our self-understanding, for they either confirm our own estimation or challenge the latter and require an adjustment of our opinions. In this sense, the "mirror analogy" does not represent this process very precisely, because it is rather by "reflections" that the "incident light" itself is fixed.

This explains why Hume titles the corresponding section in the *Treatise* as "love of fame" instead of "pride in fame". Pride itself is a "pure emotion in the soul" not necessarily attended with desires,[28] but our concern about others' evaluations about ourselves still gives us a desire of praise, otherwise neither our pride could be sustained nor our self-estimation established. Such a desire or "love of fame" may further arouse desires of those good qualities or properties and of showing them to others. "Popular fame may be agreeable even to a man, who despises the vulgar, … plagiaries are delighted with praises, which they are conscious they do not deserve."[29] The pride caused by others' good opinions is secondary in time, but it surpasses or even replaces the original pride considering its impact on men. "This secondary satisfaction or vanity becomes one of the principal recommendation for riches, and is the chief reason, why we either desire them for ourselves, or esteem them in others".[30] Briefly speaking, our evaluative passions are inherently dependent on others. And as we will see later, not only the outcome, but also the criteria according to which we make evaluations are society-regarding.

The passion of pride and mechanism of sympathy demonstrate men's

[28] *THN*, 2.2.6.3, SBN367.
[29] *THN*, 2.1.11.19, SBN324.
[30] *THN*, 2.2.5.21, SBN365.

inherent wants of society. Besides them Hume also affirms the existence of men's natural benevolence, compassion, and love of others. Nevertheless, the self-centeredness of human beings could by no means be overestimated. The mechanism of pride is ultimately directed to the self, and is ultimately determined by human nature. Hume even traces it back to our natural "organs":

> Nature has given to the organs of the human mind, a certain disposition fitted to produce a peculiar impression or emotion, which we call pride: To this emotion she has assign'd a certain idea, viz. that of *self*, which it never fails to produce. … The organs are so dispose'd as to produce the passion; and the passion, after its production, naturally produces a certain idea. … we never shou'd be possest of that passion, were there not a disposition of mind proper for it. 'Tis as evident, that the passion always turns our view to ourselves, and makes us think of our own qualities and circumstances.[31]

There is an inherent disposition in human nature that we would like to annex something to ourselves and take pride in ourselves because of those things. The mechanism of pride is as original and powerful as those of lust and hunger, operating as an original force besides imagination in constituting our understanding of the self. Albeit the society plays an indispensable role in determining who we are, the social factors cannot work but through the mechanism of pride grounded on the "organs". For instance, the society may create a connection between our property and ourselves in our thought, yet only when such a connection touches the organs could it excite our pride, make us

[31] *THN*, 2.1.5.6, SBN287, original emphasis.

evaluate ourselves according to property and arouses an additional desire of property. Likewise we may also sympathise with the pain that others suffer due to our harmful behaviours, but might do nothing to change the situation unless we really feel shame in our vices. The “organs” are like the eye of a needle; only that which successfully passes through is able to affect our selves.

> Our self, independent of the perceptions of every other object, is in reality nothing: For which reason we must turn our view to external objects; and ’tis natural for us to consider with most attention such as lie contiguous to us, or resemble us. But when self is the object of a passion, ’tis not natural to quit the consideration of it, till the passion be exhausted.[32]

The self is not a self-sustaining substance, thus philosophically speaking it must be filled or composed with perceptions of various objects, and vulgarly speaking it must be open to the external world, especially to the interactions with our fellow creatures. But whatever the self consists in, it is the final centre of our self-love and the natural object of our pride, and for Hume, “nothing invigorates and exalts the mind equally with pride and vanity”.[33] In this sense, the self-love of human beings takes priority to sociality. It is the original mechanism of men’s self-directed passions rather than the social commerce that determines how others would influence us. It is also those passions that bestow our self-understanding with force, making us “believe in” instead of merely “imagine” who we are.

In a nutshell, notwithstanding Hume’s analysis is much subtler than those of

[32] *THN*, 2.2.2.17, SBN340-341.
[33] *THN*, 2.2.10.6, SBN391.

Hobbes and Mandeville, human beings in his eyes are not completely sociable and concordant with each other. To the contrary, the complexity of the society-regarding self-love remains in Hume's theory and runs through his practical philosophy. As we will see in the following sections, for Hume, human beings can be socialised, but our sociability is derived from nothing but various artifices against our original self-love.

II. Justice in Small Society: Hume's Revision to Hobbes and Mandeville

1. Enlightened Self-Love and the Artifice of Justice

Though Hume refuses to reduce all human passions to self-love and admits that men do have a sympathetic concern for others, when it comes to justice, the fundamental principle upholding the society, he ultimately stands with Hobbes and Mandeville.[34] For Hume, natural friendship or benevolence in human nature play no significant role in the establishment of social order. This is not only because they are "too remote and too sublime to affect the generality of mankind".[35] It is also because these passions by their nature cannot afford the stability and universality required by large and lasting society. To be stable, the society must be grounded on a definite system of rights and obligations, which requires "absolute and entire property" (perfect dominion) instead of "a constant and perpetual will of giving everyone his due" in the traditional sense.[36] To be

[34] The distinction between natural virtue and artificial virtue disappears in *The Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. But there is no substantial difference between Hume's analysis of justice in the *Enquiry* and the *Treatise*.
[35] *THN*, 3.2.1.11, SBN481.
[36] *THN*, 3.2.6.2, SBN526. About the context of Hume's "strict" definition of justice, see Dario Castiglione, "Hume's Conventionalist Analysis of Justice", *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, Vol. 21 (1987), pp139-173; James Harris, "Hume's Peculiar Definition of Justice", in Ian Hunter & Richard Whatmore eds., *Philosophy, Rights, and Natural Law*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019, pp217-236.

universal, the social disciplines must be applied to each individual and each case without exceptions, therefore the particular characters of individuals or particular effects of single acts should not be taken into consideration. But the ordinary course of human nature fails to support general and inflexible rules. As is underlined by Hume, our private benevolence is highly partial in that we always desire to acquire goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, while neglecting the interest of strangers and our enemies. Even our public benevolence cannot disregard particular situations entirely. “When a man of merit, of a beneficial disposition, restores a great fortune to a miser, or a seditious bigot, he has acted justly and laudably, but the public is a real sufferer.”[37] Since a pure and universal love of mankind is impossible, our natural regard of public interest would give us a strong disposition of suspending the general rule in this condition, though such sort of interruptions will inevitably lead to confusion and disorder. Therefore, notwithstanding some “seeds” of natural sociability in human nature, their weakness and narrowness prevent them from being the “real and universal motive” to justice. In fact, “so noble an affection, instead of fitting men for large societies, is almost as contrary to them, as the most narrow selfishness.”[38]

Rejecting Hutchesonian natural sociability, Hume turns to self-love to explain the origin of society. Like Hobbes and Mandeville, Hume also regards self-love as a troublesome or paradoxical passion. On the one hand, men’s self-love can be and must be society-regarding, because “whatever other passions we may be

[37] *THN*, 3.2.2.22, SBN497.
[38] *THN*, 3.2.2.6, SBN487.

actuated by, pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge or lust, the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy; nor would they have any force, were we to abstract entirely from the thoughts and sentiments of others".[39] As we have mentioned above, even the idea of the self cannot make sense unless referring to others. The desire of gratifying our pride specifically affords us "the most ardent desire of society" than any other creatures in the universe.[40] On the other hand, this very society-regarding self-love gives rise to social conflicts rather than concord, because "self-love, when it acts at its liberty, … is the source of all injustice and violence".[41] In Hobbes's words, the "need" of others does not spontaneously and immediately give us the "capacity" to live peacefully with others, for we wish that others existed only to satisfy our self-love. As each individual takes himself as the centre, oppositions of passions and actions are unavoidable.

Nevertheless, Hume makes some important revisions to Hobbes and Mandeville's theory of human nature. Though self-love includes both the love of material gain (self-love in the narrow sense) and the concern for our reputation (self-liking), only the former is seen as the main cause of conflict in men's original condition. Unlike Hobbes and Mandeville, Hume does not blame pride as the most dangerous passion leading to a "restless desire of power" or an "instinct of sovereignty". According to Hume,

There are three different species of goods, which we are possessed of; the

[39] *THN*, 2.2.5.15, SBN363.
[40] *THN*, 2.2.5.15, SBN363.
[41] *THN*, 3.2.1.10, SBN480.

> internal satisfaction of our mind, the external advantages of our body, and the enjoyment of such possessions as we have acquired by our industry and good fortune. We are perfectly secure in the enjoyment of the first. The second may be ravished from us, but can be of no advantage to him who deprives us of them. The last only are both exposed to the violence of others, and may be transferred without suffering any lass or alteration; while at the same time, there is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one's desires and necessities.[42]

In the early stage of human history where possessions are few and productivity is low, passions based on comparison (especially pride) cannot be very strong, and personal dominion is of no use for the individuals.[43] At this time, men's attention is attracted by the necessities for survival, thereby most quarrels or conflicts are about external things, which are transferable and scarce. Hume's men are more primitive rather than more civilised or rationalised than Hobbes's. Yet as a consequence, Hume's original condition of mankind, though is still a state of disorder, is "milder" than Hobbes's and Mandeville's, for there is no violence against bodies and limbs. That is to say, human interactions are not games of life and death, in which players have to choose whether to trust others and renounce their arms or to fight, and once their trust are exploited their loss will be irreparable. Individuals can therefore engage with each other for many times during their lives, and can adjust their strategy of action by degrees

[42] *THN*, 3.2.2.7, SBN487.
[43] Different from Hobbes, Hume does not take the interest of enslavement into consideration, neither does he pay attention to the advantage one gains by excluding others from the competition.

according to the response of others. In a nutshell, while a Hobbesian state of war precludes trial and error, iterated interactions are still possible in Hume's original condition,[44] leaving room for social cooperation and coordination.

Such a possibility has to come true for the sake of survival. The lack of force, ability and security prevents every individual from satisfying his various necessities by his own labour, against which only society can provide a remedy. Since there is no natural motive upholding the social order, artificial disciplines must be imposed on human nature, especially on the self-interest. But human beings cannot restrain themselves merely by "natural laws" or rational reflections, which are too complicated as knowledge and too weak as motivation. "There is no passion, therefore, capable of controuling the interested affection, but the very affection itself".[45] However, when Hume has recourse to self-interest, he does not necessitate a common power to keep individuals in awe like Hobbes and Mandeville did, but only "an alteration of its direction".[46] For Hume, the uncultivated individuals are quite sensible of the advantages of association thanks to their experience of family life.[47] The early education received in families enhances men's desire for company, even though familial affections themselves are too partial to support a large-scale social order. Therefore,

> this alteration must necessarily take place upon the least reflection; since 'tis evident, that the passions is much better satisfy'd by its restraint, than by its

[44] An explanation of the difference between Hobbes and Hume from the perspective of game theory, see Russell Hardin, *David Hume: Moral and Political Theorist*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, ch3.
[45] *THN*, 3.2.2.13, SBN492.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Annette Baier, *The Cautious Jealous Virtue: Hume on Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010, ch6.

> liberty, and that by preserving the society, we make much greater advances in the acquiring possessions, than by running into the solitary and forlorn condition, which must follow upon violence and an universal licence.[48]

In comparison with the condition of solitude, preserving society is not a "public interest" transcending men's self-love, but both "cognised" and intimately "felt" as everyone's own interest, or as a "common interest" that each individual participates.[49] Consequently, the very passion of self-interest requires human beings to stabilise their external possessions and abstain from the possessions of others, i.e. to set up the institution of property or justice.

Nonetheless, this is a necessary but insufficient condition for the establishment of justice. What Hume's individuals have recognised is something quite similar to Hobbes's "hypothetical natural law": "I observe, that it will be for my interest to leave another in the possession of his goods, *provided* he will act in the same manner with regard to me."[50] But as Hobbes has pointed out, the natural law revealed by the right reason, "that a man be willing, when others are so too, … to lay down this right to all things",[51] is no longer valid when it comes to the external court. Even though the advantages of society have aroused an inclination to peace in men's hearts, they are still hindered from really renouncing their unlimited natural rights. As Hobbes points out, the main hindrance is not the weakness of reason, but the very rational suspicion between individuals. If each

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[48] *THN*, 3.2.2.13, SBN492.
[49] In this way, Hume's theory has a starting point fundamentally different from utilitarianism. Cf. David Gauthier, "David Hume, Contractarian", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 88 (1979), pp3-38; Gerald J. Postema, *Bentham and the Common Law Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp104-106.
[50] *THN*, 3.2.2.10, SBN490. Original italics.
[51] *L*, xiv.5.

individual cannot be sure whether others are proud and aggressive people or not, the most reasonable way to preserve himself is pre-emptive fighting instead of trusting. Therefore, in order to establish justice, the sense of the interest of preserving society must be shared by everybody, and this very fact must in turn be known to everybody. In other words, not only a “sense of common interest”, but also a “common sense of interest” are necessary.

According to Hume, such a “common sense” is available in men’s original condition, and it is exactly this gradually reached “common sense” makes justice a “convention”. As we have mentioned above, Hume’s men are not playing a life-or-death game, in which each individual would not take any action of seeking peace unless he could make sure the intention of others. Hume’s men are enabled to have iterated interactions, through which the willingness to cooperate and coordinate can be identified and responded, while uncooperative actions can be retaliated effectively.[52] Like two men pulling the oars of a boat, one’s intention of coordination as well as his expectation of another is expressed through the very action of pulling. The intention-in-action is not conditional,[53] individuals can thus break the dilemma of rational suspicion, mutually express their sense of interest and obtain trust without formal covenant or superior power:

> the sense of interest has become common to all our fellows, and gives us a confidence of the future regularity of their conduct: And ’tis only on the

[52] The retaliation is performed through ostracism, namely excluding the person involved from the intersubjective cooperation, therefore preventing him from benefiting from it. This is different from the Lockean execution of Natural Law for it does not impose any further disadvantage (punishment).

[53] Cf. Gerald J. Postema, *Bentham and the Common Law Tradition*, p110.

expectation of this, that our moderation and abstinence are founded.[54]

Through iterative communication, the "confidence" and "expectation" in others provide human beings with a sufficient resolution to regulate themselves. "No more is requisite to induce any one of them to perform an act of justice, who has the first opportunity".[55] This eventually gives rise to the "convention" of justice, which is no longer a form of "pact" but the principle of coordination and reciprocation arising "gradually" and "by a slow progression".[56] Hume in this way diverges from Hobbism as well as other sorts of social contractarianism,[57] and finds a proper concept to capture the process of evolution that Mandeville has to some extent recognised but not adequately theorised.[58] With such a convention the passion of self-interest is redirected from the immediate satisfaction to the long-term common interest of sustaining society, thereby becomes "enlightened", and is gratified "in an oblique and indirect manner".[59] Consequently, a lasting society is formed before the erection of political power, though this is achieved with the help of rational reflection and convention, or in other words by artifice.

Hume highlights that to uphold stable social order, justice must be a general and inflexible rule. "However single acts of justice may be contrary, either to public

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[54] *THN*, 3.2.2.10, SBN490.
[55] *THN*, 3.2.2.23, SBN498.
[56] *THN*, 3.2.2.10, SBN490. Dario Castiglione, "Hume's Conventionalist Analysis of Justice", pp159-166; Andrew Sabl, *Hume's Politics: Coordination and Crisis in* The History of England, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012, ch1. Also cf. David Lewis, *Convention: A Philosophic Study*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
[57] In the tradition of natural jurisprudence, the contractarian theories can be generally assorted into social contractarianism (*pact societatis*, dealing with association between free individuals) and political contractarianism (*pact subjectionis*, dealing with political obligation between the ruler and the ruled). Dario Castiglione, "The Origin of Civil Society", in James Harris ed., *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp491-529. Hume's critique of political contractarianism will be discussed in Section IV of this chapter.
[58] As is discussed in the previous chapter, Mandeville notices the evolution of virtues and politeness independent from the political-legal coercion of the government and the statecraft of particular politicians, yet he still regards "mutual compact" as the milestone of the establishment of large and lasting society.
[59] *THN*, 3.2.2.21, SBN497.

or private interest, 'tis certain, that the whole plan or scheme is highly conductive, or indeed absolutely requisite, both to the support of society, and the well-being of every individual."[60] Albeit justice does not at each moment maximise the public benefits or the benefits of the concerned people, the attribution of property should not be determined case by case, otherwise there will be dispute and confusion. That is to say, not only the natural (non-redirected) self-interest, but also the ordinary course of our private and public benevolence need to be disciplined by the artificial convention. This seems implausible at the early stage of history, because the advantage of the "whole plan or scheme" rather than single acts might be too complicated for the simple minds of uncultivated humans. Yet this is not a problem in Hume's eyes. When the society is primitive and small (though larger than family), even if some single acts of justice might not be advantageous, any single acts of injustice must definitely cause disorder and dissolution of society. By their "repeated experience of the inconveniencies of transgressing" the convention,[61] sooner or later, individuals recognise that strict observance of justice is the most beneficial way of conduct in their region.[62] Therefore, the enlightened self-interest alone is sufficient for sustaining the general rule of justice. There is no need of a sense of "rule-obligation", namely a disinterested disposition to regulate one's behaviours according to general rules.[63] Neither is any coercive power required.

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[60] *THN*, 3.2.2.22, SBN497.
[61] *THN*, 3.2.2.10, SBN490.
[62] In fact, for a certain individual, the advantage of justice includes both a general interest of preserving society, and a particular interest of not being ostracised. But Hume focuses on the former one in his explanation of the natural motive to justice.
[63] Cf. Stephen Darwall, "Motive and Obligation in Hume's Ethics", *Noûs*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Dec., 1993), pp415-448.

2. Moral Evaluation and the Virtuousness of Justice

But from Hume's perspective, justice does not only mean a set of actions of abstaining from others' property. Like Hobbes and Mandeville, Hume also holds that social order (though for Hume it is a pre-political order at this stage) has both outward and inward dimensions. Justice is an "artificial virtue" and a duty, that is to say, its reliance on "artifice" does not negate its essence as a "virtue" and "duty". According to Hume,

> If any action be either virtuous or vicious, 'tis only as a sign of some quality or characters. It must depend upon durable principles of the mind, which extend over the whole conduct, and enter into the personal character.[64]

Although functioning as a good indication of personal characters, external actions themselves have no merit, because they are too short, inconstant, and easily influenced by contingent factors, then cannot be the proper object of moral evaluation or sufficient cause of evaluative passions. "When we praise any actions, we regard only the motives that produce them"[65], which are more durable and stably annexed to one's person. In this term, virtues are qualities or characters approved by our moral sense, while vices are motives disapproved. According to Hume, human beings usually take the "ordinary course" of human nature as the criterion of moral evaluation:

> 'Tis according to their general force in human nature, that we blame or praise. In judging of the beauty of animal bodies, we always carry in our eye

[64] *THN*, 3.3.1.4, SBN575.
[65] *THN*, 3.2.1.2, SBN477.

> the economy of a certain species … In like manner we always consider the natural and usual force of the passions, when we determine concerning vice and virtue; and if the passions depart very much from the common measure on either side, they are always disapprov'd as vices.[66]

The experience of our everyday life tells us the ordinary course, i.e. the natural and usual force of our passions and emotions. This is naturally regarded as what a person should be influenced by in a given situation. As a result, motives corresponding with the ordinary course are praised, while those departing from it are blamed. For instance, a father neglecting his child is disapproved, because it shows a deviation of the ordinary course and a want of natural affection, and this is seen as a defect of character. (Yet, if this father does love his child while his actions are checked by some circumstances, we will retract our blame.)

Here are two points worth our notice concerning this "ordinary course" account of moral evaluation. Firstly, the moral evaluation directly has characters or qualities as its object. An action would not be approved unless the character it signifies is considered as the ordinary course of human nature. Secondly, taking the ordinary course as the foundation of moral evaluation means that normative force is bestowed upon the natural conduct of the majority. What are praised as virtues is nothing but what most of us naturally do. And what are blamed as defects is failing to do what most of us naturally do.[67] Nevertheless, such a theory

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[66] *THN*, 3.2.2.18, SBN483, original emphasis.

[67] Some scholars even claim that for Hume, we should be motivated solely by our natural motives to perform naturally virtuous actions if we want our actions to be genuinely virtuous. David Fate Norton, "Hume, Human Nature, and the Foundations of Morality", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. by David Fate Norton, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp148–181; Don Garrett, "The First Motive to Justice: Hume's Circle Argument Squared", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Nov., 2007), pp257-288; Elizabeth Radcliffe, "How Does the Humean Sense of Duty Motivate?", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Jul., 1996), pp383-407; Donald Ainslie, "Hume and

makes justice highly problematic. As Hume admits, observance of general rule is by no means the ordinary course of human nature. That is to say, justice should not have been praised, or at least injustice should not have been blamed.[68] It is unreasonable to blame somebody for not doing a thing that most people would not like to do. In fact, according to the theory of ordinary course, no "artificial" things could be regarded as "virtue", let alone "duty".

Fortunately, Hume does not treat the ordinary course of human nature as the ultimate ground of moral evaluation. Rather, it reflects "our natural uncultivated ideas of morality".[69] In his serious explanation of moral sense, Hume depicts moral evaluation as a disinterested sympathetic reaction in the hearts of spectators. Human beings are not dominated by interested passions, for we do feel the pleasure and pain of people unrelated to ourselves due to the mechanism of sympathy. But such sympathetic reactions are usually partial, since we naturally have a stronger sympathy with individuals closely related to us, and are always influenced by our interested passions as well. For instance, our moral approbation about our parents is too often confused with our natural affection to them and our expectation of benefiting from them. As a consequence, there would be frequent conflicts of opinions if individuals stick to their own point of view. Nonetheless, human beings have a diffidence in their own judgments and a

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Moral Motivation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume's* Treatise, pp283-300; Tito Magri, "Hume's Justice", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume's* Treatise, pp301-332. Critique and revision to this view, see Philip Reed, "Motivating Hume's Natural Virtues", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 42, No. S1, pp134-147.

[68] *THN*, 3.2.6.3, SBN531. Cf. Jonathan Harrison, *Hume's Theory of Justice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, pp24-26.

[69] *THN*, 3.2.2.8, SBN489. When presenting the "ordinary course theory", Hume analogises moral evaluations with aesthetic judgments. But later in the *Treatise*, aesthetic judgments are also explained according to "effects-sympathy theory". The beauty of something derives from its pleasant effects, mainly its usefulness. (*THN*, 3.3.1.8, SBN576) The "ordinary course theory" is entirely given up in Hume's analysis of moral evaluation in the *Enquiry*.

desire of agreement with others. With the help of mutual communication, gradually, individuals (as spectators) learn to correct their partiality resulting from their particular situations and reach a general point of view. From such a viewpoint, they obtain sentiments of pleasure or pain by sympathising (extensively) with the person directly influenced by certain characters or actions. The so-called moral approbation is nothing but the feeling of pleasure at this moment, while moral blame the feeling of uneasiness.

Now it is not hard to see the differences between the "effects-sympathy" mechanism and the theory of "ordinary course". First of all, though moral evaluation takes characters as its ultimate object, it touches characters indirectly through the mediation of actions and their effects. Actually, except for the qualities immediately agreeable, the pleasant or painful effects sympathised by the spectators cannot but be caused by actions. Hume underlines that moral sentiments

> may arise either from the mere species or appearance of characters and passions, or from reflections on their tendency to the happiness of mankind, and of particular persons. … Tho' I am also of opinion, that reflections on the tendencies of actions have by far the greatest influence, and determine all the great lines of our duty.[70]

It is the "tendencies of actions" that demonstrates the characters' tendencies of causing pleasure or uneasiness and determines the sympathetic feelings of the

[70] *THN*, 3.3.1.27, SBN590. Cf. James Chamberlain, "Justice and the Tendency towards Good: The Role of Custom in Hume's Theory of Moral Motivation", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Apr., 2017), pp117-137.

spectator. Notwithstanding that moral judgment must be traced back to more durable principles of characters, the effects of actions produce some *proto*-moral evaluation, which roughly directs our moral evaluation by pointing out which qualities should be taken into consideration and whether they should be praised or blamed. In a nutshell, the consideration of the effects of actions is an indispensable link in the formation of moral sentiments.

Furthermore, when effects of actions and characters are taken as the foundation of moral evaluation, it is utility rather than the original appearance of human nature that plays the core role in Hume's moral theory.[71] The ordinary course of mankind has no self-evident normative force. Unlike classical ethicists and followers of Hutcheson, Hume finds no indication of metaphysical natural order or providence in the natural course of men's passions.[72] In fact, as long as a character is beneficial to men's private or public interest and arouses a sympathetic pleasure in spectators, it can be approved as a virtue; if it is so requisite that its absence causes a sympathetic uneasiness in spectators, it can then become a duty. Whether this character corresponds with the ordinary course of the majority is of no significance.[73]

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[71] Yet Hume's utilitarianism is devoted to explaining the psychological mechanism of our moral judgement, rather than establishing an abstract normative principle. Friedrich Whelan, *Order and Artifice in Hume's Political Philosophy*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp206-218.

[72] David Fate Norton, *Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, pp55-192.

[73] These differences between the "effects-sympathy theory" and the "ordinary course theory" are not adequately noticed in secondary literatures. Some scholars argue that actions are of no importance in Hume's official doctrine about moral evaluation, then justice, of which the focus is nothing but the regulation of men's actions, needs another moral theory which takes actions instead of characters as the object of evaluation. See Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality: Feeling and Fabrication*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, ch6-7; James Harris, "Hume on the Moral Obligation to Justice", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Apr., 2010), pp25-50. There are also some scholars holding that once the majority of men fail to perform justice, it ceases to be a virtue or duty; thus to justify the moral obligation of justice, we have to find out a more persisting and effectual natural motive. See Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, "Hume on the Artificial Virtues", in Paul Russell ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Hume*, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp435-470; Don Garrett, "The First Motive to Justice: Hume's Circle Argument Squared". All of them are misunderstandings of the "effects-sympathy theory" due to some confusion between the two theories.

From this new perspective, the virtuousness of justice can be well explained. As an artifice invented to regulate men's actions and uphold the society, justice is absolutely necessary for the public interest, therefore is approved by our moral sense as a virtue and duty without difficulty.[74] However, as we have already seen, the original motive of justice is nothing but enlightened self-interest. It seems odd to bestow moral merit to some self-interest, for according to our intuition, virtues are usually altruistic qualities, while self-interest are often harmful to public interest. And according to some scholars, even if self-interest is virtuous, the virtue based on it should be prudence instead of justice.[75] But Hume reminds us that the self-interest leading to justice is already enlightened and redirected. That is to say, it is enabled to work against the natural course of self-love, binding individuals to satisfy themselves by preserving society:

> 'Tis self-love which is their real origin; and as the self-love of one person is naturally contrary to that of another, these several interested passions are *obliged* to adjust themselves after such a manner as to concur in some system of conduct and behaviour.[76]

Men with the quality of enlightened self-interest will feel "obliged", i.e. experience a feeling of determination, while performing justice. In this sense, enlightened

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[74] Some scholars have noticed the affinity between artificial virtues and the "effects-sympathy theory", for both of them are based on utility. John Mackie, *Hume's Moral Theory*, London: Routledge, 1980, pp122-125; Jacqueline Taylor, "Justice and the Foundations of Social Morality in Hume's *Treatise*", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Apr., 1998), pp5-30. Also cf. Francis Snare, *Morals, Motivation, and Convention: Hume's Influential Doctrines*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp179-180. But Mackie and Taylor have gone too far when interpreting natural virtues as artifice or dependent on artifice. In fact, natural virtues do not eliminate partiality (e.g. natural affection to one's own children), and such partiality can be justified as long as it can arouse pleasure on impartial spectators. In other words, there are still fundamental differences between natural and artificial virtues.

[75] Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator: the Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp31-34; Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality*, pp184-189.

[76] *THN*, 3.2.6.6, SBN529, emphasis added.

self-interest is not only a passion, but also a "natural obligation",[77] imposing disciplines upon human beings in a non-moral way. The effect or utility of such a motive lays foundation for its virtuousness, thus naturally arouses a sense of moral obligation in our hearts. As Hume claims, "the moral obligation is founded on the natural".[78] And since justice is praised for its "immediate tendency to promote the interests of society", it is distinguished from prudence, which is only useful to the concerned person himself and has nothing to do with public interest, notwithstanding that justice is "also considered as advantageous to the person himself" once established.[79] Hume in this way distances himself from Mandeville. For Mandeville, the fact that human beings do just things because of their self-love negates the existence of true moral virtue. But in Hume's opinion, on the one hand, there is in fact some disinterested moral sense in human nature, while on the other hand, the enlightened self-interest is no less virtuous for it is approved by our moral sense disinterestedly.[80]

So far, it is quite reasonable to say that for Hume, there is some sort of sociability in human nature based on utility or interest. This is precisely the so-called "commercial sociability" that unites individuals into society, as well as grounds the normative standing of the social order.[81] Unlike Hobbes who denies

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[77] Cf. Tito Magri, "Natural Obligation and Normative Motivation in Hume's *Treatise*", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Nov., 1996), pp231-253. Yet Magri overestimates the normative force of the natural obligation. We have a sense of natural obligation because we do care about our long-term interest, not because we "ought to" care about it.

[78] *THN*, 3.2.10.4, SBN553.

[79] EPM, 6.1.13, SBN238. In both the *Treatise* and the *Enquiry*, justice is classified as a virtue useful to others, while prudence useful to the person himself.

[80] According to Hume's "effects-sympathy" theory of moral evaluation, Mandeville's moral language is self-contradictory. "It is not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public?" (Essay, p280) For Hume, public utility itself is a sufficient foundation of moral merits.

[81] Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, pp7ff.

the validity of natural laws in the state of nature and Mandeville who reduces morality completely to some manipulated self-love, Hume appreciates both the practical function and the moral status of enlightened self-interest. With the help of artificial but non-political convention, Hume does find out a new solution to the problem of society-regarding self-love, which is neither Hutchesonian nor Hobbesian- Mandevillean. However, this is only the start of the story.

III. Crisis of Enlarged Society: Mandeville and Hobbes Brought Back

1. The Crisis of Commercial Sociability, Moral Motive, and Hume's Mandevilleanism

Rather than a "commercial society" in the strict sense, i.e. a society with thorough division of labour and frequent market transactions,[82] the society grounded on "commercial sociability" or "sociability derived from utility" is merely a simple one, in which life is primitive, the economy is undeveloped, and various wants of human beings still lie dormant. The demonstration of "commercial sociability" is not any complex commercial activities, but simply the abstinence from each other's property. Nevertheless, Hume's discussion of justice and social order is not static, for some new conditions emerge with the growth of society. On the one hand, due to the convention of justice, property is now stably annexed to one's person, and becomes "the most common" cause of pride as well as esteem. While the progress of industry provides more possessions, the developed pride and love of fame, intertwined with self-interest, give rise to "so many wants, real

[82] Cf. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, I.iv.1.

or imaginary"[83]. On the other hand, in the enlarged society, the long-term interest of observing justice becomes more remote, "nor do men so readily perceive, that disorder and confusion follow upon every breach of these rules, as in a more narrow and contracted society."[84] Hume claims that in large society the interest of justice is no less real, albeit more remote. "Every" unjust action eventually threatens the social order, no matter how late the effects will come out. But human beings are usually short-sighted, more attracted by contiguous things than distant and obscure objects. When their immediate desires become more powerful and the advantage of sustaining society becomes more distant, individuals cannot help but frequently "follow a lesser and more present interest".[85] In other words, the enlightened self-interest no longer functions as the sufficient motive to justice. The large and civilised society is now facing the danger of dissolution.

But for Hume, this does not mean the total failure of the artificial virtue. Firstly, in spite of the relative weakness of its motivational force, observing justice is still required by men's long-term interest. Therefore, in principle, the natural obligation of justice does not cease even when the natural motive to justice becomes invalid.[86] Secondly, due to the "progress of sentiments", a sense of moral obligation naturally follows the natural obligation. It is admitted that the concern for public interest is not so strong as to counter-balance our present desires, yet the loss of public interest never fails to arouse uneasiness in the hearts of the

[83] *THN*, 3.2.8.6, SBN544.
[84] *THN*, 3.2.2.24, SBN499.
[85] *THN*, 3.2.2.24, SBN499.
[86] The condition here is different from that when government becomes tyrannical. When tyranny takes place, allegiance is by no means advantageous, then both natural and moral obligations to it cease.

spectators. Hume claims that

> we never fail to observe the prejudice we receive, … Nay when the injustice is so distant from us, as no way to affect our interest, it still displeases us; because we consider it as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one that approaches the person guilty of it. … The general rule reaches beyond those instances, from which it arose; while at the same time we naturally sympathize with others in the sentiments they entertain of us.[87]

According to the abovementioned "effects-sympathy" mechanism, as long as justice is necessary while injustice is harmful to the public interest, human beings will approve the former and blame the latter. Thus justice can be sensed as a virtue and duty even when the majority of people lose sight of its original virtuous motive (i.e. enlightened self-interest) and fail to perform corresponding actions. In other words, notwithstanding the decay of social order, the moral obligation of justice remains valid, unless all individuals became unjust at one moment and made enlightened self-interest entirely beyond the reach of human nature.[88]

The survival of the moral obligation of justice is of great significance, for Hume presents a further argument, that the sense of duty is able to work as a motive to justice and fill in the gap left by the weakened original motive.

> I suppose a person to have lent me a sum of money … I ask, What reason or motive have I to restore the money? It will, perhaps, be said, that my

[87] *THN*, 3.2.2.24, SBN499.

[88] For Hume, morality must be realistic. "If no human creatures had that inclination, no one cou'd lie under any such obligation." (*THN*, 3.2.5.6, SBN519) In the present case, whether individuals are able to prefer their long-term interest depends on their "strength of mind", which is to a large extent a natural ability. Cf. Lauren Kopajtic, "Cultivating Strength of Mind: Hume on the Government of the Passions and Artificial Virtue", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Nov., 2015), pp201-229; Elizabeth Radcliffe, *Hume, Passion, and Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp160-166.

> regard to justice, and abhorrence of villainy and knavery, are sufficient reasons for me, if I have the least grain of honesty, or sense of duty and obligation. And this answer, no doubt, is just and satisfactory to man in his civilised state, and when train'd up according to a certain discipline and education.[89]

Though the *first* motive of justice is "nothing but self-interest", Hume emphasises that such a motive is "first in time, not in dignity and force".[90] At the stage of civilised society, the dignity and force of enlightened self-interest have declined. It is the sense of duty, or the regard of the moral merit of justice, that becomes a motivation both "sufficient" for the person involved, and "just and satisfactory" in the eyes of spectators.

Theoretically speaking, this argument is consistent with the fundamental principle of Hume's moral theory (especially the "undoubted maxim"), that no action can be virtuous unless there be in human nature some non-moral motive to produce it. According to Hume,"to suppose, that the mere regard to the virtue of the action, may be the first motive, which produc'd the action, and render'd it virtuous, is to reason in a circle."[91] In other words, the moral motive, namely the regard of the moral merit of a certain virtue could not emerge until that virtue had already been performed and approved. Since the sense of duty in our case is posterior to the enlightened self-interest in temporal order, working not as the original virtuous motive but only after the establishment of justice, it would not

[89] *THN*, 3.2.1.8, SBN479.
[90] *THN*, 3.2.8.5, SBN543, original footnote 79.
[91] *THN*, 3.2.1.4, SBN478.

lead to a vicious circle.[92]

Nevertheless, it is still problematic how, on a practical level the moral motive to justice could work, especially when the natural motive has failed? Hume does not provide a detailed and systematic analysis about how morality motivates, but some clues can be found in the text. There is an interesting example as follows:

> But may not the sense of morality or duty produce an action, without any other motive? I answer, it may … When any virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person, who feels his heart devoid of that principle, may *hate* himself upon that account, and may perform the action without the motive, from a certain sense of duty, in order to acquire by practice, that virtuous principle, or at least, to *disguise* to himself, as much as possible, his want of it. … Actions are at first only considered as signs of motives, but it is usual, in this case, as in all others, to fix our attention on the signs, and neglect, in some measure, the thing signify'd.[93]

If some quality or motive is considered as a duty, then the absence of it will bring about a feeling of uneasiness, "a secret sting or compunction",[94] to the person involved. (In fact, a more appropriate name of this feeling is "humility" or "shame" rather than "self-hatred", for the proper object of hatred is others.) In order to get

[92] Cohon correctly points out that "redirected interest itself need not be a persisting motive of honest actions". (Yet her further argument, that "it is not that in virtue of which we approve honest people and so classify them as virtuous", is misleading.) See Rachel Cohon, *Hume's Morality*, p184. Though moral motive is grounded on the natural, the former can motivate human beings independently from the latter. Therefore, to find out a persisting natural motive to justice is both theoretically unnecessary and contradictory to Hume's text. Comp. Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, "Hume on the Artificial Virtues"; Don Garrett, "The First Motive to Justice: Hume's Circle Argument Squared"; Annette Baier, "Artificial Virtue and the Equally Sensible Non-Knaves: A Response to Gauthier", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Nov., 1992), pp429-439.

[93] THN 3.2.1.8, SBN479, italics added.

[94] EPM, Appx.4.3, SBN314.

rid of this uneasiness,[95] the individual will compel himself to perform the external sign of that duty, even though the required natural motive does not exist in his heart.

More generally speaking, in Hume's theory, moral evaluations are often attended with indirect passions, which are also evaluative. "Pride and humility, love and hatred are excited, when there is any thing presented to us, that both bears a relation to the object of the passion, and produces a separate sensation related to the sensation of the passion. Now virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances."[96] From the standpoint of the spectators, moral approbation or blame are always accompanied with, or even equalised to, "a fainter and more imperceptible love or hatred".[97] As for the agents, virtues and vices are "the most obvious causes" of pride and humility. Despite the fact that pride and humility are "pure emotions in the soul, unattended with desire, and not immediately exciting us to action",[98] they never fail to provide us with ever-present feelings of pleasure or uneasiness when we reflect on our characters, which are durable and always presented to us. The sense of pride and humility may further give rise to desires to prolong the pleasure or terminate the uneasiness, which prompts us to perform

[95] The emphasis on the motivational force of moral sentiments is usually seen as Hume's main difference from the rationalists. Nicholas Capaldi, *Hume's Place in Moral Philosophy*, ch2. But there are heated debates about how moral sentiments motivate on earth. Though moral sentiments are closely connected with indirect passions (Pall Ardal, *Passion and Value in Hume's* Treatise, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966; a revision to Ardal's view, see Donald Ainslie, "Scepticism About Persons in Book II of Hume's *Treatise*", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Jul., 1999), pp469-492), some commentators have doubts on whether morality is "inherently" motivating. The "self-hatred theory" suggests that the motivational force of the sense of duty ultimately depends on our desire of happiness and aversion of uneasiness. Charlotte Brown, "Is Hume an Internalist?", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), pp69-87; Elizabeth Radcliffe, "How Does the Humean Sense of Duty Motivate?"; *Hume, Passion, and Action*, ch5; Rachel Cohon, "Hume's Moral Sentiments as Motives", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Nov., 2010), pp 193-213.

[96] *THN*, 3.1.2.5, SBN473.

[97] *THN*, 3.3.5.1, SBN614. Debates concerning this proposition, see Donald Ainslie, "Scepticism About Persons in Book II of Hume's *Treatise*".

[98] *THN*, 2.2.6.3, SBN367.

virtuous actions.[99] In short, with the help of pride and humility, moral motives can operate indirectly. It is precisely for this reason that Hume explains "moral obligations" as "moral obligations of *honour* and *conscience*" antithetical to "natural obligations of interest"[100]. Humean moral sense (i.e. "conscience") is not Kantian practical reason or "free will" in the traditional sense, but works through the sentiments of honour. In this sense, causing indirect passions is "the *most considerable effect* that virtue and vice have upon the human mind".[101]

What is more, the moral motives are also assisted by the interest of reputation. As we have already seen, besides our own qualities the opinions of others have a significant influence on our pride and humility. Even the (reflexive) pride in our own virtues is not self-sustaining but needs to be seconded by the recognition of others. In Hume's texts, the "pursuit of a character" of human beings is often merged with the pursuit of "a name, a reputation in the world".[102] Individuals desiring approbation of the "impartial spectators" in their own hearts

[99] Cf. Annette Baier, "Master Passions", in *Explaining Emotion*, ed. by A. Oksenburg Rorty, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, pp403-423. Some commentators argue that if moral judgments motivate us merely by pointing out the consequences of our actions, and arousing our desire for future pleasure or aversion of future uneasiness, then they does not play a role that reason alone cannot do. As a result, Hume's rejection to rationalism is invalid. See Charlotte Brown, "Is Hume an Internalist?"; cf. Stephen Darwall, "Motive and Obligation in Hume's Ethics". But it is noteworthy that moral evaluations are not only "judgments" concerning our "actions", but also "sentiments" concerning our "characters". Since characters are durable and constant, when we are reflecting on our characters, we *always feel* some pride or "self-hatred", and then may have a desire to prolong or get rid of our present feelings. In this way, though moral sentiments motivate us indirectly, they work in a way unavailable for reason.

[100] *THN*, 3.2.8.7, SBN545, italics added.

[101] *THN*, 3.1.2.5, SBN473, italics added. We are not definitely negating the direct motivational force of moral sentiments. But according to Hume's texts, the role of pride and humility is of the most considerable importance in practice. In EPM, our moral sentiments are lent more strength because the mechanism of sympathy is replaced by humanity or fellow-feeling, which functions as an original principle of human nature and leads to a direct concern for others. However, they are still too weak to function as effectual motives. Jane McIntyre, "The Idea of the Self in the Evolution of Hume's Account of Passions", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 42, No. S1 (2012), pp171-182.

[102] *THN*, 2.1.11.1, SBN316; EPM, 9.10, SBN276; Philip Reed, "The Alliance of Virtue and Vanity in Hume's Moral Theory", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 93 (2012), pp595-614. Underlining the positive role of men's desire for reputation, Reed even claims that vanity and pride may change our characters by making calm moral sentiments more influential on the will. See Philip Reed, "Hume on the Cultivation of Moral Character", *Philosophia*, Vol. 45 (2017), pp299-315. But as we will see later, though vanity helps our moral sentiments to conform our actions to the rule of justice, it by no means makes our characters more virtuous, because the original virtuous motive should not be moral-regarding.

also desire praises of real spectators. For the sake of reputation, therefore, we have to “act” (in a histrionic sense) virtuously, regardless of whether we have the original virtuous motives and whether we are committed to those moral norms from our own perspective. That is why “vanity is rather to be esteem’d a social passion, and a bond of union among men.”[103]

Now let us come back to the case of justice. The enlightened self-interest, which is necessary for both the society and the person himself, is considered as a quality one “ought to” have. But in the transition from the primitive to the large and civilised society, such a motive loses its efficacy. Human beings aware of this fact feel humility in themselves, then to get free from it, they cannot but pretend (to both themselves and others) to be just by acting justly. In addition, the moral motive is forwarded by some new artifice, namely custom, education and reputation. Praise of justice and blame of injustice are induced to the children from their infancy, taking root in their tender minds. Consequently, men who grow up in society may be so accustomed to performing justice that they obtain an additional pleasure of facility.[104]

But these ideas may remind us of the notorious teachings of Mandeville. Hume does attempt to distance himself from Mandeville by refusing to reduce morality entirely to the invention and manipulation of the politicians. “For if nature did not aid us in this particular, ’twould be in vain for politicians to talk of *honourable* or *dishonourable*, *praise-worthy* or *blameable*.”[105] At first glance, it

[103] *THN*, 3.2.2.12, SBN491.
[104] *THN*, 2.3.5.3, SBN423.
[105] *THN*, 3.2.2.25, SBN500, original italics.

seems that Hume to some extent misunderstands Mandeville's position, for as we have discussed in the last chapter, Mandeville's "inventions of politicians" is in fact a symbol of the evolution of social norms on the basis of men's self-love. But there is still some truth in Hume's critique of Mandeville. Regardless of whether morality is a product of unintended evolution or intended manipulation, Mandeville's theory based on selfishness fails to explain the difference we experience between moral sentiments and interested passions, or in other words, what makes moral sentiments "moral". Though Hume also confesses that the artifice of politicians "may even on some occasions, produce alone an approbation or esteem for any particular action",[106] we cannot understand the "moral" merits bestowed to the advantageous qualities or actions if we had no moral sense at all. Thus for Hume, self-love is not the unique or ultimate passion of human nature. There are indeed natural virtues based on natural virtuous motives. And when it comes to justice, notwithstanding the artificiality of the convention itself, men's sense of moral obligation is by no means artificial. Rather, it is the moral sentiment, naturally and disinterestedly caused by the sympathy of public utility, that lays a foundation for education and manipulation. However, with the decay of the natural (non-moral) motive to justice in large society, individuals no longer perform artificial virtue automatically. At this moment, Hume agrees with Mandeville on some substantial aspects. Firstly, "when we wou'd govern a man, and push him to any action, 'twill commonly be better policy to work upon the violent than the calm passions, and rather take him by his inclination, than what

[106] Ibid.

is vulgarly call'd his *reason*."[107] Although the moral sentiments themselves are disinterested, they can hardly prompt us but with the help of some violent passions, namely sense of honour and reputation. Therefore, self-liking (or pride) plays a decisive role in securing the order of the civilised society. It is the imaginary rather than real reward that persuades individuals to act justly. Secondly, in fact, human beings lack the character required by the virtue of justice, albeit what is required is nothing sublime but merely enlightened self-interest. Neither can they actually "acquire by practice that virtuous principle".[108] They just perform the external "signs" of justice and "disguise" their lack of true virtue.[109] That is to say, the observance of justice in large society results from some hypocrisy or counterfeit, though human beings may do this because of their sincere commitment to the moral duty. Justice at this stage is artificial not only in the sense of "redirection", but also in the sense of "hypocrisy". If the enlightened self-interest indicates men's "unsocial sociability", then the pretended justice might be called some "unvirtuous virtue". Despite Hume is sometimes seen as a "virtue ethicist", it is Mandevillean hypocrisy rather than virtuous characters that constitutes the fundamental order of the civilised way of life.

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[107] *THN*, 2.3.4.1, SBN419, original emphasis.

[108] *THN*, 3.2.1.8, SBN479.

[109] In Hume's moral theory, moral sentiments are not absolutely without moral merit. "A sense of moral is a principle inherent in the soul, and one of the most powerful that enters into the composition. But this sense certainly acquire new force, when *reflecting on itself* … not only virtue must be approv'd of, but also the *sense of virtue*; and not only that sense, but also the principles, from whence it is deriv'd." (*THN*, 3.3.6.3, SBN619, emphasis added) According to the "effects-sympathy theory", moral sentiments are also advantageous to the public good, therefore are bestowed a second-order approbation by itself. (Annette Baier underlines such a "reflexivity" as the core feature of Hume's philosophy. *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's* Treatise.) Besides, a due pride in virtue is also a virtuous motive in Hume's eyes. Lorraine Besser-Jones, "Hume on Pride-in-Virtue: A Reliable Motive?", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Nov. 2010), pp171-192. But this reflexivity is a self-contentedness of the moral sense when someone has a reflection on his own virtuousness. If the sense of moral obligation works as the sole motive to certain virtuous actions, the absence of original virtuous motive still indicates a lack of true virtue. In sum, while Mandeville derives all virtuous actions from hypocrisy, for Hume, natural virtues and justice in small society are true virtues, but justice in large society also depends on hypocrisy.

2. The Problem of Sensible Knaves and Hume's Hobbesian Moment

Drawing Hume closer to Mandeville, the moral motives and sense of honour nonetheless save the social order from total destruction. However, in Hume's later work *The Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, he seems to recognise that the crisis of justice in the enlarged society was underestimated in the *Treatise*. The motivational force of the sense of duty depends on the validity of the moral obligation, while the moral obligation of justice is grounded on the natural obligation. Therefore, the ultimate foundation of Hume's abovementioned arguments is that observing justice is always beneficial to our long-term self-interest. This principle relies on a presupposition that the fatal consequence of "every breach" of justice, though remote, is still real. In other words, the collapse of social order may be delayed but not denied. But such a causal relationship between each unjust action and the dissolution of society is untrue. In fact, in a large-scale society, some amount of injustice will not lead to widespread confusion at all. Neither would every unjust act be discovered and retaliated by ostracism. The relatively optimistic arguments in the *Treatise* are based on an exaggeration of the harmful effects of injustice. In the *Enquiry*, Hume realises that

> according to the imperfect way in which human affairs are conducted, a sensible knave, in particular incidents, may think that an act of iniquity or infidelity will make a considerable addition to his fortune, without causing any considerable breach in the social union and confederacy. That honesty is the best policy, may be a good general rule, but is liable to many

> exceptions; and he, it may perhaps be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom, who observes the general rule, and takes advantage of all the exceptions.[110]

Besides the short-sighted men always submitting to their immediate desires and the just men strictly regulated by the general rule of justice, there is another sort of men, the thoroughly rationalised opportunists, namely the "sensible knaves". Like Hobbes's "Foole" and Mandeville's "very worst of men"[111], in a system where others are committed to the convention of justice, the "sensible knaves" are sensible enough to discern each occasion where unjust actions can be done without causing either the general disadvantage of social disorder or the particular disadvantage of being ostracised. If they perform injustice in these occasions while observing justice at other times, they can then maximise their self-interest but suffer no trouble against themselves, as if wearing the ring of Gyges.

Now it is clear that this sort of men brings about great challenges to Hume's theory of justice as an artificial virtue. Firstly, the *existence* of the sensible knaves shows that there are some men, or everyone potentially, lacking the natural as well as moral motives to justice.[112] (Yet this is not a fatal problem. As we have discussed, a moral justification of justice does not presuppose that all men, or the majority of men, are motivated by enlightened self-interest.[113]) More importantly,

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[110] EPM, 9.2.22, SBN282-283.
[111] *L*, xv.4; *FB*, I, p34.
[112] David Gauthier, "Artificial Virtue and the Sensible Knave".
[113] Cf. Jason Baldwin, "Hume's Knave and the Interests of Justice", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 2004), pp277-296. Baldwin's response to Gauthier is not without reason, but as we will see very soon, he does not grasp the difficulty of the interested account of justice adequately. It is not the (potentially) widespread existence of the sensible knaves but their reasoning that invalidates the moral obligation of justice.

the *reasoning* of the sensible knaves demonstrates that the strict observance of the general rule of justice, in principle, is not the best way of maximising our long-term self-interest. That is to say, the natural obligation of justice is false at bottom, and so the moral obligation is groundless. The non-knaves' loyalty to justice results from either a misunderstanding of their interest due to the "noble lie" of the educators, or a false belief in their fellows that there was a virtuous motive to justice in other men's hearts, or mere naivety and foolishness.[114] If the logic of the sensible knaves are true, theoretically speaking, even justice is practiced by large amounts of honest people who never dream of taking advantages of opportunistic injustice, the obligation to justice is still normatively invalid. We can of course give a moral blame to the sensible knaves, for their unjust actions are pernicious to others involved and harmful to public interest. Besides, the knaves cannot take pride in their knavery, for no quality counts as the cause of Humean pride unless it is also a cause of love when realised by others.[115] But the fact that knavery is a vice does not mean justice is genuinely a virtue and a duty. Rather, the "artificial virtue" looks more like a product of the cunning of *un*reason. In some commentator's eyes, Hume's improvement of Hobbes and Mandeville in moral theory is only an illusion, whereas in fact, the social norms are secured by

[114] Barry Stroud, *Hume*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1997, pp205-210; Macia Baron, "Hume's Noble Lie: An Account of His Artificial Virtues", *Canadian Journal or Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Sep., 1982), pp539-555; Knud Haakonssen, *The Science of a Legislator*, pp31-34; David Gauthier, "Artificial Virtue and the Sensible Knave". For Baron, Haakonssen, and Gauthier, since the reasoning of the sensible knaves are quite plausible, an "error theory" is needed to explain the existence of the non-knaves, answering why the would-be-knaves are persuaded to perform justice. But this might be both insufficient and unnecessary. On the one hand, the sensible knaves cannot be persuaded, for they are quite sensible with their "true" interest. On the other hand, the non-knaves need not be persuaded, for they may be too naïve to think of an opportunistic way of conduct. Nonetheless, the existence of non-knaves does not remove the inherent difficulty of justice on the normative level.

[115] *THN*, 2.2.1.9, SBN332. James King, "Pride and Hume's Sensible Knaves", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1&2 (1999), pp123-137.

Mandevillean manipulation, or even Hobbesian coercion.[116]

Hume concedes that “if a man think, that this reasoning much requires an answer, it will be difficult to find any, which will to him appear satisfactory and convincing”.[117] Such a confession itself does not imply Hume’s surrender to the sensible knaves, since no moral philosophy promises to eliminate immorality by persuading all vicious people. Practically speaking, large-scale social order is able to bear some knavish exceptions. The very sensibility of the knaves presupposes that they should not really threaten the social union from which they benefit, otherwise they were acting stupidly and no longer “sensible”. Yet to overcome the inherent difficulty of justice, it must be proved that conforming to such a general rule is really beneficial, at least for the non-knaves.

Hume firstly turns to the pleasure of integrity. The sensible knaves are not really Gyges with unique mythical ability but free riders. Since the number of potential free riders is uncertain, their interest of free riding is still conditional, because the society would nevertheless collapse if there were too many free riders. The sensible knaves thereby must make sure that justice is obeyed by others. To achieve this, they have to perform injustice secretly while praise justice publicly. The general point of view in moral evaluation is replaced by a discrimination between themselves and others. Despite the satisfaction of their material advantages, they sacrifice their integrity and suffer the self-contradiction of parasitizing the general rule undermined by themselves. Furthermore, the

[116] Macia Baron, “Hume’s Noble Lie: An Account of His Artificial Virtues”.
[117] EPM, 9.2.23, SBN283.

sensible knaves also lose the pleasure of custom. According to Hume, custom and repetition can bestow a facility and tendency towards the performance of certain actions. “The pleasure of facility does not so much consist in any ferment of the spirits, as in their orderly motion; which will sometimes be so powerful as even to concert pain into pleasure, and give us a relish in time for what at first was most harsh and disagreeable.”[118] As for justice, though some redirection of men’s original passion (which might be “harsh and disagreeable” at first) is required, observing the general rule is more available for human nature, because the facility of “orderly motion” brings about an additional pleasure, which is artificial but no less real. In this sense, the completely opportunistic deliberation in each single case is more contrary to the “frail” human nature inclining to general rules. On the one hand, in spite of the fact that “we naturally desire what is forbid, and take a pleasure in performing actions, merely because they are unlawful”,[119] this sort of violent pleasure will languish if injustice is performed frequently, while the calm pleasure of “orderly motion” can last long without decay. On the other hand, it is almost beyond human nature to remain “sensible”. Once the sensible knaves are tempted by the gain of unjust actions, giving up their moderation and secrecy in cheating, they “can never extricate themselves, without a total loss of reputation, and the forfeiture of all future trust and confidence in human nature”.[120] In sum, rather than being deceived by educators or limited by their own stupidity, the non-knaves can obtain some true benefits from the observance

[118] *THN*, 2.3.5.3, SBN423.
[119] *THN*, 2.3.4.5, SBN421.
[120] EPM, 9.2.24, SBN283.

of the general rule.[121] Although such benefits might not be cherished by the knaves, especially those "so secret and successful", they make sense to the ordinary people and are taken seriously by them. This is not to deny that such pleasure is only secondary and auxiliary, arising from the "form" of justice (i.e. the general rule, which is both a generalizable principle applied to all members of society and a custom applied to all time), thereby cannot substitute the first-order interest derived from the "content". Nevertheless, it plays an indispensable role in defence of the moral status of justice, as it outweighs the extra material advantage gained by opportunistic unjust actions, which is no more than "worthless toys and gewgaws" from the non-knaves' perspective.[122] Hume therefore saves the moral obligation of justice from reducing to a product of Hobbesian coercion or Mandevillean statecraft.

However, the crisis of justice is not so easily overcome, thus we should not overstate Hume's difference from Hobbes and Mandeville. Notwithstanding the

[121] It is not to say that all the non-knaves are motivated by such sort of pleasure, for otherwise there would be no need of moral motives. In fact, as long as there are someone deliberately preferring the general rule of justice to knavish actions, the natural and moral obligations of justice can be validated, and everyone will obtain a sense of duty, which may motivate them through pride and humility.

[122] It has been insightfully argued by some commentators that Hume's men understand their self-interest in a dynamic and dialectical way. With the development of society, self-interest takes different forms not limited to material advantage. See Annette Baier, "Artificial Virtue and the Equally Sensible Non-Knaves"; Jason Baldwin, "Hume's Knave and the Interests of Justice"; Lorriane Besser-Jones, "The Role of Justice in Hume's Theory of Psychological Development", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Nov., 2006), pp253-276. But concerning the present case, a defence of justice should not rely on the interest of reputation, otherwise there would be a circle. (Justice cannot be a virtue unless we have an interested motive to it; the interest lies in our reputation; conforming to justice is good for our reputation because it is a virtue.) Nor should we depend on the fear of punishment, otherwise the moral obligation of justice would be invalid before the erection of government. Darwall correctly reminds us of the significance of the "form" of justice, namely the general rule. To secure the convention, human beings must care about the general rule instead of single acts. Stephen Darwall, "Motive and Obligation in Hume's Ethics". However, though general rule is a typical element of artificial virtue, it does not related to artificial virtue exclusively. Since there are natural dispositions supporting our preference to general rule, there is no need of a Kantian "rule-obligation". Yet it is still problematic that whether these pleasures of observing general rule can be seen as "interest". If the answer is yes, Hume seems to have enlarged the extension of this term. (Like Butler enlarged the extension of "self-love".) If the answer is no, then an interested account of justice is still insufficient, despite we can turn to abovementioned pleasure for help rather than the "noble lie" or "errors". (For such explanations see Sharon Krause, "Hume and the Luster of Justice", *Political Theory*, Vol. 32, No. 5 (Oct., 2004), pp628-655; Lorenzo Greco, "A Powerless Conscience: Hume on Reflection and Acting Conscientiously", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2017), pp547-564.)

motivational force of the sense of duty, it is far from sufficient to uphold the social order. As is admitted by Hume, the principle of sympathy “has sufficient force to influence our taste”, but “is too weak to controul our passions”.[123] The case of the sensible knaves also illustrates that there indeed are some people who are so self-centred that reject to judge themselves from the general point of view, and are not influenced by moral sentiments at all. The infirmity of human nature as well as our awareness of it causes us to have a pessimistic expectation of others’ conduct, thus destroying the mutual confidence required for the preservation of convention. “You are, therefore, naturally carry’d to commit acts of injustice as well as I. Your example both pushes me forward in this way by imitation, and also affords me a new reason for any breach of equity, by showing me, that I shou’d be the cully of my integrity, if I alone shou’d impose on muself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others.”[124] The Hobbesian rational suspicion, which had been avoided in the original condition by the common sense of common interest, now emerges and aggravates the confusion.

Moreover, while individuals in the original condition do harm to others merely by seizing their possessions, now there are new and more harmful forms of injustice, such as promise-breaking, deceptions, personal dominion and bodily violence. This regression of social order is not difficult to understand. Promise-breaking takes place only after the formation of the convention of promise. Deceptions are easier and more frequent in a society of strangers. Personal

[123] *THN*, 3.2.2.24, SBN500.
[124] *THN*, 3.2.8.3, SBN535.

dominion is desired when men's vanity of power has developed and a slave is able to produce more than his own necessities. Violence against life and limbs also occurs in the war caused by "considerable goods among man."[125] In a word, human beings are in an even more terrible situation than they had experienced at the pre-justice stage. The dilemma of rational suspicion and violence against life indicate that a true "Hobbesian Moment" has come.

In order to solve this typically Hobbesian problem, unsurprisingly, Hume returns to an ultimately Hobbesian trajectory.

IV. Life in Civil Society: A Humean Picture

1. Government, Allegiance, and Justice

While redirection and hypocrisy are not sufficient to secure the social order, some new artifice is needed, namely coercion. For Hume, human beings are too short-sighted to follow their long-term interest. But such an infirmity is not entirely incurable, for men are able to engage in an undistorted reflection on their real interest when their minds are not disturbed by present desires. "When we consider any objects at a distance, all their minute distinctions vanish, and we always give the preference to whatever is in itself preferable, without considering its situation and circumstances."[126] This leads to two important consequences. On the one hand, while reflecting on situations that will take place in the far future, we have no problem of preferring the greater good for us, regardless of its relative

[125] *THN*, 3.2.8.1, SBN540. Cf. Annette Baier, "Artificial Virtue and the Equally Sensible Non-Knaves: A Response to Gauthier".
[126] *THN*, 3.2.7.5, SBN536.

distance. The awareness of our long-term interest as well as our natural infirmity may make us “embrace with pleasure any other expedient, by which I may impose a restraint upon myself, and guard against this weakness”.[127] On the other hand, if we are considering the situation of others with whom we have no interested relations, we can find out what is more advantageous for them without difficulty. Therefore, if we could find some disinterested people and let them be willing to impose a restraint upon us, our propensity to prefer contiguous to remote would be overcome by the necessity of observing justice. Given that human nature is unchangeable, the only method to achieve this is to change the circumstance of a few persons by a new artifice. Now human begings are divided into two parts. A few of them are put in the position of rulers or magistrates and bestowed the power of executing justice. Since they are indifferent to most of others in society, and their part in society brings about a satisfaction of their desire of dominion, they will identify the observance of justice as their immediate interest. “These persons, then, are not only induc’d to observe those rules in their own conduct, but also to constrain others to a like regularity, and enforce the dictates of equity thro’ the whole society.”[128] And from the perspective of the subjects, unjust actions now result in some obvious disadvantages, because they will be punished by the rulers. Therefore, while the magistrates observe justice thanks to their rearranged self-interest, the subjects are compelled to do so due to their fear of punishment.[129] According to Hume, this explains the origin of government

[127] Ibid.
[128] *THN*, 3.2.7.6, SBN537.
[129] In his analysis of the function of government, Hume’s phraseology is quite subtle. Only a few persons, namely magistrates and rulers, are rendered to find an immediate interest in observing (as well as executing justice). As for the

and allegiance. Albeit "the state of society without government is one of the most natural states of men, and may subsist … long after the first generation",[130] large and civilised society cannot be sustained unless it develops into a civil society, namely a political society. As allegiance is so necessary for the subsistence of government, the preservation of social order and the well-being of individuals, we are obliged to perform it both by our natural long-term interest and by our moral sense. Therefore, besides the natural duty of justice, we are also bound by the civil duty of obeying the government.[131] Hume agrees with Hobbes and Mandeville that it is the government that ultimately overcomes men's society-regarding self-love and consolidate men's association.

Yet we would not like to underestimate Hume's difference from Hobbes. Hume's distinction between our natural (private) and civil (public) duties is of great theoretical significance, for it breaks the Hobbesian dichotomy between natural rights (or natural liberty) and civil obligations which is quite influential in the tradition of natural jurisprudence.[132] As we have discussed, for Hobbes, there is a world of natural condition characterised by natural rights and disorder, as well as a world of civil society characterised by civil obligations and order. After the

subjects, they are just "constrained" by the magistrates. While ostracism by other fellows is only a relative disadvantage in comparison with participating in social commerce, punishment by magistrates is an absolute disadvantage, making the observance of justice relatively "advantageous". But Hume never claims that their interest in observing justice is also drew close. In fact, they are motivated by fear of punishment rather than desire for interest.

[130] *THN*, 3.2.8.2, SBN541.

[131] Scholars have noticed that Hume uses the term "natural" in different senses, as opposite to "artificial", "moral", "civil", etc. Cf. David Gauthier, "Artificial Virtue and the Sensible Knaves". In fact, in Hume's natural history of society, there is a dialectic concerning the meaning of this term. At the beginning, only the original course of human passions are termed as "natural". In comparison with "natural virtues", the abstinence from others' property, motivated by the redirected self-interest, is classified as "artificial virtue." But when justice is bestowed moral approbation, enlightened self-interest is seen as a "natural motive", while the sense of duty the "moral motive". Furthermore, after the establishment of the government, justice is defined as "natural duty", and allegiance our "civil duty". In a nutshell, once a new artifice is introduced, the existing artifice becomes "natural".

[132] Cf. Christopher Finlay, "Hume's Theory of Civil Society".

erection of political power, this distinction is to some extent preserved and transformed into the split between one's artificial person and natural person. On the one hand, all law-obeying actions, public-regarding or private-regarding, are attributed to the artificial person, because they are performed through the sovereign's authorisation. On the other hand, when the laws are silent, the subjects, as natural persons, still enjoy the liberty remaining in their hands. In this way, the subjects' obligation to observe civil laws and other social norms are absorbed in their obligation of obeying the sovereignty, whereas all injustice are actually disobedience. But from Hume's viewpoint, the obligations to justice and allegiance are independent from each other, for they are grounded on different but equally indispensable sorts of interest. A regard to property is necessary to natural society, as well as obedience is to civil society or government; the former society is necessary to the being of mankind, as well as the latter to their well-being and happiness.[133] Therefore, justice, being artificial, is no less a duty even without government, nor was the pre-political society a moral vacuum.

However, unlike Locke's distinction between society and government, Hume's theory is not mainly intended to protect the seemingly self-sustaining society from the potential violence of the government. Rather, it is employed in defence of the political authority against the revolutionary instinct inherent in the contractual theory,[134] or more precisely, to establish a balance between authority

[133] *THN*, 3.2.8.6, SBN545.

[134] Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics & Locke's Two Treatises of Government*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986. Yet Locke's own political philosophy should not be equalised to the popularised whiggish contractarian ideology after him. Also cf. H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, London: Methuen, 1977, ch2. Hume's rejection to contractarianism is often seen as an indication of his conservativism. David Miller, *Philosophy and Ideology in Hume's Political Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, ch4; Fredrick Whelan, "Hume and Contractarianism", *Polity*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Win., 1994),

and liberty. Notwithstanding the complexity and diversity within the tradition of contract theory, for Hume, the political contractarianism is to a large extent an ideological position on the legitimacy of government mainly associated with the Whig party.[135] Hume summarises such a theory as the doctrine of "original contract", which includes three main points: firstly, all men are born equal; secondly, the government is *always* rested on the consent or voluntary acquiescence of the people, while the people owe allegiance to no government unless bound by the obligation and sanction of a *promise*; thirdly, the people's promise is conditional, because the sovereign promises them in turn the advantages of justice and protection, so the people possess the right of resistance and are able to get free from allegiance once the sovereign fail to fulfil his promise.[136] These arguments are often used in defence of the legitimacy of the 1688 Revolution and the Settlement after it. But from the perspective of Hume, such a theory is both dangerous in practice and implausible in theory. Practically speaking, "almost all the governments, which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest."[137] If the original contract theory is true, then most rulers must be seen as illegitimate, and rebellions must be frequent due to the fury and caprice of the multitude. That would of course threat the authority of the government, which is

pp201-224. But according Duncan Forbes's insightful analysis, Hume is not therefore inclined to Torism, but to a "scientific" (instead of "vulgar") version of Whiggism. *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, pp125-193; also see J. G. A. Pocock, "The Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform: A History of Ideology and Discourse", in his *Virtues, Commerce and History,* pp250-254.

[135] About the various ideas of contract, see Martyn Thompson, *Ideas of Contract in English Political Thought in the Age of John Locke*, NY & London: Garland, 1987; the context of Hume's critique of political contractarianism, see Stephen Buckle and Dario Castiglione, "Hume's Critique of the Contract Theory", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), pp457-480

[136] "Of Original Contract", *EMPL*, p469.

[137] Ibid, p471.

nonetheless necessary for the subsistence of peace and order. “In reality, there is not a more terrible event, than a total dissolution of government.” [138] Theoretically speaking, the contract or consent theory fails to explain the experience in our common life. Hume sees “opinions” as of fundamental significance for the authority of government. In the general opinions of the subjects, “where he thinks (as all mankind do who are born under established governments) that by his birth he owes allegiance to a certain prince or certain form of government; it would be absurd to infer a consent or choice.”[139] In fact, most individuals just take their obligation of obedience for granted, never considering the government as dependent on their voluntary choices, let alone participating in any original contract. Hume does not deny the truth of the contractual and consensual theory in explaining the very earliest infancy of the government, but considers it nonsensical for clarifying the foundation of our allegiance in mature civil society.

Hume overcomes the imbalance between authority and liberty inherent in the doctrine of “original contract” by liberating the obligation of allegiance from that of promise-keeping, and grounding both obligations on the general principle of utility and moral sense as well as the particular dispositions of the imagination. According to Hume, both obligations are based on private and public utility, whereas the utility they target are different. “To obey the civil magistrates is requisite to preserve order and concord in society. To perform promises is

[138] Ibid, p472.
[139] Ibid, P473.

requisite to beget mutual trust and confidence in the common offices of life."[140] While there is no reason to reduce the latter to the former, there is also no reason to reduce the former to the latter. Even if the government and particular rulers are erected by voluntary consent at first, the separate interest of submission would be sensed after some time, and produce a separate sense of moral obligation. In this new situation, individuals feel obliged to obey the government as long as its advantage of upholding society lasts. As for the allegiance to particular rulers, to avoid confusion and disorder, they no longer consider single cases deliberately but conform themselves to general rules determined by imagination and custom, such as long possession, succession, and conquest. In a nutshell, the government is supported by necessity and moral obligation (in principle) as well as by acquiescence (when legitimacy of particular rulers is considered), which are solider and more stable than social contract or consent. Hume concedes that subjects might resist legitimately when there is tyranny, because the moral obligation is parasitic on the interest and must cease when allegiance is no longer advantageous. But like Hobbes's reserved natural right of self-preservation in civil society, resistance is permissible only as the "last refuge" in "extraordinary emergencies",[141] thereby cannot be theorised or taught systematically.

Setting aside the debate with the Whiggish contractual theory, the separation of the public/civil duty from the private/natural duty brings about some other theoretical outcomes in favour of the authority of the government. Hume has

[140] *THN*, 3.2.8.5, SBN544.
[141] "Of Original Contract", *EMPL*, p490. Similarly, to extend Hobbes's reserved right of self-preservation to a right of resistance is also misleading. Comp. Susanne Sreedhar, *Hobbes on Resistance: Defying the Leviathan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

noticed a potential challenge to his explanation of allegiance, that “the factitious duty of obedience, from its very nature, lays as feeble a hold of the human mind, as the primitive and natural duty of justice. Peculiar interests and present temptations may overcome the one as well as the other”. It thus seems difficult to understand why “our duty to the magistrates is more strictly guarded by the principles of human nature, than our duty to our fellow-citizens”.[142] This problem can be solved by stressing the inherent difference between justice and allegiance. Functioning as the rule of mutual engagements between the members of society, justice might encounter frequent challenges, for individuals might have lots of opportunities of satisfying immediate self-interest by unjust acts. But as an obligation owed to the government, allegiance is seldom violated, since chances of benefiting from rebellions are quite rare. In other words, as the interest of allegiance is substantially different from that of justice, the temptation of disobedience is much weaker than that of injustice, and would not frequently overcome the sense of duty. This is corresponding to our experience in practice, that rebellions are much less common than unjust actions, and that even the people facing punishment prefer running away to subverting the government. In this way, Hume distances the public authority from the conflicts in our private life.

More importantly, Hume points out that our private duties are “more dependent on” the public:

> Tho’ there was no such thing as a promise in the world, government wou’d still be necessary in all large and civilis’d societies; and if promises had only

[142] “Of the Origin of Government”, *EMPL*, p38. Also cf. Rachel Cohon, *Hume’s Morality*, ch8.

> their own proper obligation, without the separate sanction of government, they wou'd have but little efficacy in such societies.[143]

As we have already seen, large and civilised society is not merely quantitatively, but qualitatively different from natural and primitive society. Given that a "Hobbesian moment" disrupted the transition from the small society to the large and worsened men's living condition, government is not an auxiliary apparatus added to an existing social order to solve some inconvenience and make our life more polished, but what saves peaceful common life from the confusion by reconstructing the social order. Correspondingly, the civil society should not be understood as a natural society plus a government. Since the developed self-love has already aroused "so many wants, real and imaginary" as well as changed our way of life and manners of mutual commerce, human beings at the civilised stage could not return to a simple natural society. Therefore, unlike the Lockean "society" that can survive the dissolution of government, Hume's natural society is no longer of paradigmatic significance on the normative level. It should not be taken as an ahistorical model with reference to which the legitimacy of government is measured, but merely a historical phenomenon in a past phase. Neither does it afford a self-sustaining "economic society" within civil society.[144] Replacing the standard theory of natural jurisprudence with a natural history of society,[145] Hume on the one hand gives up explaining public

[143] *THN*, 3.2.8.7, SBN546.
[144] Comp. John Stewart, *Opinion and Reform in Hume's Political Philosophy*, Princeton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, p168.
[145] About the significance of Hume's historicising of natural jurisprudence, see Donald Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1984, ch10.

authority in private law categories,[146] and on the other hand clarifies the relationship between the multiple artifices constituting civil society, in which government takes priority to the non-government part. In this sense, reading Hume as a predecessor of the theory of *burgerliche gesellschaft* is not without merit. But different from Hont and Finlay's interpretation, the key point is Hume's rejection of the contractual theory and his attention to the role of the state, which Hegel shared with him to some extent, rather than the emphasis on the autonomy of the "society" or economy independent from the state. And, of course, we should not overestimate Hume's similarity with Hegel as well. In spite of his departure from natural jurisprudence, Hume still explains the origin of civil (political) society in the same way by which he explains the natural society, that is, by self-interest. As might be criticised by Hegel, Hume's civil society is still an instrument to gratify men's society-regarding self-love, at bottom.[147]

2. Justice and Politeness in Civil Society

Highlighting the dependence of justice upon government does not mean that large and civilised society is upheld entirely by coercion.[148] Hume has a consensus with Mandeville on the indispensable role of men's sentiments of morality and honour. As is already known to us, the moral sense of justice is a

[146] Cf. Dario Castiglione, "History, Reason and Experience: Hume's Arguments against Contract Theories", in *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls*, ed. by David Boucher & Paul Kelly, London and NY: Routledge, 1994, p104.
[147] G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §258. Cf. Christopher Berry, "From Hume to Hegel: The Case of the Social Contract", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1977), pp691-703.
[148] Jeffery Church, "Selfish and Moral Politics: David Hume on Stability and Cohesion in the Modern State", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Feb., 2007), pp169–181.

"sufficient" as well as "just and satisfactory" motive for "a man in his civilis'd state".[149] Such a claim is not withdrawn after the erection of political power. But this seems odd at first glance. If the moral sense was a sufficient motive, then the government would be of no use. If it is precisely the weakness of the moral motive to justice that necessitates the government, then it is hard to imagine how this very motive suddenly becomes effectual in civil society, functioning as the main motivational force without being replaced by the fear of punishment.

To answer this question, it is noteworthy that before the artifice of government, there are some obstacles to justice besides the short-sightedness of human beings. Firstly, despite some universally accepted rules such as occupation, prescription, accession and succession, the division of property is no more than an informal convention. The determination of mine and yours depends on nothing but mutual recognition of the individuals. Nonetheless, "as violent passion hinders men from seeing distinctly they have in an equitable behaviour towards others, so it hinders them from seeing the equity itself, and gives them a remarkable partiality in their own favours."[150] Regardless of men's inclination of trespassing the property of others, conflicts might emerge as early as in the very formation of the system of property, for everyone has a disposition of annexing valuable things to his person as much as he can, thereby holds a partial understanding concerning what belongs to him. Then the system of property must itself be very vague and unstable. Secondly, due to the rational suspicion, individuals find

[149] *THN*, 3.2.1.9, SBN479.
[150] *THN*, 3.2.7.7, SBN538.

themselves in a condition unfriendly to the observance of justice. The potentially just men who prefer their long-term interest (granted there are some), are eventually deterred by the potentially unjust men. In Hobbes's terms, the private judgments, both concerning one's rights and concerning the situation one faces, aggravate the crisis caused by the infirmity of human nature.

These difficulties are resolved in civil society. On the one hand, with the execution of justice by the magistrates, injustice can be discovered and punished, thereby rational suspicion is removed while everyone is kept in awe. On the other hand, thanks to the rulers' decision of justice, the division of property is confirmed by civil laws. No longer a conventional qualification of ownership, property now becomes a formal and precise legal right.[151] Albeit the general interest of conforming to justice is still remote, owing to the elimination of these obstacles preventing individuals from performing justly, the moral motive to justice is enabled to work effectually.

For Hume, the formation and consolidation of social norms is a dynamic process which is considerably path-dependent. The solider the order is, the better it promotes the public interest, and the stronger men's sympathy with justice becomes, which in turn makes the order solider. Even our "natural uncultivated ideas of morality" may contribute to the path dependence[152]. If there are increasingly more people performing justice, then just actions will be seen as an "ordinary course" of men, whereas injustice will rouse a stronger humility. Thus

[151] The execution and decision of justice are corresponding to the sovereign's rights of punishment and public judgment in Hobbes's theory.
[152] *THN*, 3.2.2.8, SBN489.

the sense of duty and honour will prompt us more and more powerfully. In this way, government reshapes the convention of justice by terminating the vicious cycle of injustice and starting the virtuous cycle. Moreover, the rulers take great efforts on public education for the sake of easier governance. As public praise and blame are most influential on men's hearts, our sense of justice is much enhanced. Eventually, observing justice becomes our habit. This is not to say we do just actions naturally and spontaneously, but that our moral sense is so deeply ingrained that we habitually praise justice and blame injustice without taking their interested effects into consideration.

> we are so accustomed to blame injustice, that we are not, in every instance, conscious of any immediate reflection on the pernicious consequences of it. The views the most familiar to us are apt, for that very reason, to escape us; and what we have very frequently performed from certain motives, we are apt likewise to continue mechanically, without recalling, on every occasion, the reflections, which first determined us.[153]

Once the social order has been stabilised, coercion is no long necessary for everyone. Human beings on the one hand have a strong sense of morality, while on the other hand regard their moral obligations as self-evident. It is only in a society with government that most men are enabled to observe justice without the coercion of government. In this sense, the seeming uselessness of political power is exactly the effect of its usefulness. Hume thus provides a clarification of the role of government, which was to some extent ambiguous in Mandeville's

[153] EPM, 3.2.47, SBN203.

theory. Men's moral sense is not derived from the manipulation of politicians, nonetheless, our being motivated by moral sense is dependent on the operation of the political power.

Yet the subsistence of large and polished society requires more than the basic order of property and justice. Paying due attention to the motivational force of men's moral sense and the accompanied indirect passions, like Hobbes and Mandeville，Hume nonetheless does not overlook the negative aspect of pride. As we have seen, Hume discerns two fundamental principles in human nature, namely sympathy and comparison. The former makes us share the same feelings with others, whereas the latter gives us an impetus to pursue positional goods. "In all kinds of comparison an object makes us always receive from another, to which it is compar'd, a sensation contrary to what arises from itself in its direct and immediate survey."[154] We may take pleasure in others' pain, for it augments our own happiness by comparison, and may feel painful because of the pleasure of others. Generally speaking, comparison takes place much easier than sympathy, for "sympathy being the conversion of an idea into an impression, demands a greater force and vivacity in the idea than is requisite to comparison".[155] Not to mention that human beings always desire superiority and tend to seek pride from objects peculiar to themselves. As a consequence, men's pride, which is pleasant for himself, must cause disagreeable comparisons very frequently and arouse uneasiness in others. Hume agrees with Hobbes and

[154] *THN*, 3.3.2.4, SBN594.
[155] *THN*, 3.3.2.5, SBN595.

Mandeville that it is our own pride that makes us unable to bear the pride of others. In this sense, the inclination of causing mutual conflicts inherent in pride is never eliminated, no matter to what direction such a passion is channelled. This problem is furthermore aggravated by the fact that, albeit "due pride" is a virtue in principle, our pride in ourselves is seldom "due".[156] Even if the partiality in men's evaluation of others is almost corrected through the intersubjective communication, a strictly general point of view is still beyond our reach when it comes to our own self-evaluation. On the one hand, human beings are conscious of the great partiality in our own favour, and that is why we take the opinions of others into serious consideration. Yet on the other hand, "no one can well distinguish *in himself* betwixt the vice and the virtue, or be certain, that his esteem of his own merit is well-founded."[157] Since this is an inherent shortcoming of human nature, the negative effects of pride must be regulated artificially.

As justice and other natural laws are established to prevent the opposition of self-interest,[158] laws of good-breeding or politeness are now established to prevent the opposition of pride, without making any exceptions "in favour of men of sense and merit".[159] According to this new convention, all direct and open

[156] *THN*, 3.3.2.8, SBN596. Considering due pride as a virtue, Hume is on this point different from Hobbes and Mandeville, though such a difference should not be overestimated. Cf. Jacqueline Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects*, pp134-142.

[157] *THN*, 3.3.2.10, SBN598. Original italics.

[158] It is worth our notice that, as we have discussed, self-interest (as the desire of gain) can be intertwined with pride and become an "imaginary want", thus is not limited to bare self-preservation.

[159] *THN*, 3.2.2.10, SBN597. Mikko Tolonen reads Hume's "good-breeding" as a counterpart of Mandeville's politeness. *Mandeville and Hume*, ch4. Whereas Eugenio Lecaldano argues that, Hume's good manners are different from Mandeville's politeness, for Hume makes use of elements that are not present in Mandeville, including "general rule", the mechanism of sympathy, and sense of moral obligation. "Orgoglio e Società in Mandeville e Hume", *Revisita di Filosofia*, Vol. 106, No. 3 (2015), pp337-360. Lecaldano's argument is not unreasonable, yet it overestimates the difference between the two thinkers. Semantically, in Hume's works, "good-breeding" "good manners" and "politeness" are used interchangeably. Theoretically, Hume's "good-breeding" plays the same function as Mandeville's politeness does, namely "to facilitate the intercourse of minds, and an undisturbed conversation and commerce". See EPM, Section VIII. About the moral merit of Hume's good-breeding, see our following discussion.

expression of pride is condemned, while appearance of modesty is praised. For Hume as well as for Mandeville, what is requisite for politeness is only a disguise of our pride, rather than true humility in our hearts. In fact, individuals are enabled to indulge in (secret) pride more easily without the impediment from others. And since politeness is approved as a virtue agreeable to others, conforming to the rule of good manners will in turn reward us an additional (though secret) pride, a pride in virtue and reputation. Like our self-interest, pride is also redirected and gratified in an oblique and indirect way. In sum, while the basic social order is secured by justice and allegiance, good-breeding functions as the lubricant of our civil commerce.

But someone may have doubts on the moral status of good-breeding. From Mandeville's perspective, politeness is far from a true virtue/self-denial, which means a total conquest of all passions. Nor is it a counterfeit of virtue/self-denial, which requires some certain passions being conquered by pride. Though men's performance of other virtues is at bottom a sort of hypocrisy in order to disguise their lack of true virtue, politeness is hypocritical in a more thorough sense, because pride, the very target against which it works, is not subdued at all but merely concealed.

Hume does not deny Mandeville's basic arguments as he admits that

> I believe no one, who has any practice of the world, and can penetrate into the inward sentiments of men, will assert, that the humility, which good-breeding and decency require of us, goes beyond the outside, or that a

thorough sincerity in this particular is esteem'd a real part of our duty.[160]

Politeness seems no more than a set of external actions regulated by the "law of good-breeding", and neither does the deference of others it signifies really exist. However, Hume oddly classifies good-breeding as an artificial virtue, which is, at bottom, a virtue.[161] As is known to us, each virtue presupposes some "inward" character or quality as the natural motive to the corresponding actions. If our modesty does not "go beyond the outside" at all, then good-breeding can hardly be regarded as a virtue because of the lack of an original virtuous motive.

Such doubts can be answered (paradoxically) by entirely distinguishing good-breeding from modesty and humility. The absence of real humility in polite men's hearts does not negate the virtuousness of politeness, but simply demonstrates that humility is neither a virtue in itself nor the original virtuous motive to politeness. As is seen in the case of justice, it is not our natural sociability but the enlightened self-interest, a quality of taking the preservation of society as one's long-term interest, that secures the moral merit of that virtue. Now it is exactly our redirected pride, a quality of taking pleasure and pride in agreeable and inoffensive conversation, that functions as the natural (i.e. artificial but non-moral) motive to good manners and obtains our moral approbation. Therefore, despite sincere modesty is not a real part of our duty, the convention

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[160] *THN*, 3.3.2.11, SBN598.

[161] EPM, 8.1, SBN261. Arguing against J. G. A. Pocock and Nicholas Philipson who interpret Hume's theory of politeness as a development of republicanism, Mikko Tolonen correctly captures the link between Mandeville and Hume: "Hume's argument about politeness was, in fact, directed against Shaftsbury, Addison, and others who tried to forge a link between politeness and certain qualities of heart." See his *Mandeville and Hume*, p37; cf. J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, ch2; Nicholas Phillipson, "Politics, Politeness and the Anglicisation of Early Eighteenth-Century Scottish Culture", in R. A. Mason ed., *Scotland and England 1286-1815*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1987, pp226-246.. But Tolonen overlooks the fact that, though politeness is not a natural virtue, Hume nonetheless regard it as a "virtue", which by definition is a quality or character.

of good manners nevertheless imposes upon us some “internal” duty. Politeness might be seen as a hypocrisy of humility, but it is not necessarily a hypocrisy of its own virtuous motive. Only when good-breeding has already been identified as a duty, and the sense of moral obligation solely prompts some individual to act politely, can we regard polite actions as a complete hypocrisy. Therefore, by carrying the Mandevillean distinction between politeness and modesty to a more thorough extent, Hume defends the moral merit of good-breeding which had been denied by Mandeville. The formation of good-manners as an artificial virtue now indicates the completion of “large and civilised society” where men’s lifestyle is “polished”.

Conclusion

Like Mandeville, Hume is not a natural lawyer, but the problem of society-regarding self-love presented by Hobbes is still attractive for him. Since Hobbes and Mandeville have already been doubtful about the simplicity of the “self”, such an idea in Hume’s eyes becomes more problematic. Instead of a self-evident substance, the self is actually a bundle of perceptions constructed by our imagination and passions, especially pride. It is complicated and flexible in both ontological and sociological senses. The dialectic between the self-centredness of human beings and the complexity of our self-understanding leads to a paradoxical condition which we have already seen in Hobbes’s and Mandeville’s theories, that social factors do shape us, but only through the mechanism of our self-love.

For Hobbes and Mandeville, the paradox of human nature cannot be solved but in civil society, which is supported both by a set of artificial institutions and by our artificial persons or artificial selves correspondent to the former. But from Hobbes to Mandeville more elements can be found in the “civil society”, and the artifice upholding it becomes more multidimensional. More precisely speaking, what Hobbes had mentioned but not paid great attention to is of increasing significance. As far as we concern, both clues can be found in Hume’s moral and political philosophy. Hume agrees with his two predecessors that natural sociability is not the foundation of the society beyond the scale of family. The social order is secured both by artificial conventions (on the macro level) and by artificial virtues in ourselves correspondent to the former. Furthermore, the well-being of individuals is realised only in civil society, which in Hume’s term is also a “political society”. Nonetheless, on the other hand, by “artifice” Hume means a variety of things, including the redirection of our self-interest, the obligations derived from our sentiments of morality and honour, the augmentation of moral sense by education and reputation, as well as the coercion and public propaganda by the government. Hume notices that men’s pursuit of long-term interest affords us some disciplines before and besides the operation of political power. These disciplines, approved by our moral sense as virtues and duties, are always valid in our “internal court”. In this sense, the civil society is not merely a society with government, but where human beings are cultivated through civil commerce. However, the social order based on material utility is fragile, what eventually conforms our behaviours to the social norms is our sense of honour

and fear of punishments. That is to say, the role of self-liking is not replaced by that of self-interest, neither is the role of government substituted by the socio-economic mechanisms.

From Hume's perspective, civil society is also a synthesis of political unity, civilised society and the more economic *burgerliche gesellschaft*. But with the latter two growing into maturity, the interactions between political power, social-economic mechanisms and individuals become subtler and more complicated. Now to obtain a more adequate understanding, we need to turn to Hume's concrete analysis about the emergence of modern civil society, and see how these factors work in the political and historical background.

Chapter 4　Hume's Civil Society: The Political-Historical Dimension

In the previous chapter we have examined Hume's ideas about human nature and social order, as well as the role of artifice in harmonising the former with the latter. Now, like what we have done with Hobbes and Mandeville, we turn to Hume's analysis of the basic political-economic features of modern state. But in comparison with Hobbes and Mandeville, Hume pays more attention to the history of civil society. For Hume, the characters of modern large and polished society is more adequately demonstrated by both a comparison with ancient societies and a clarification of the political-historical background in which it emerges. Thus in this chapter, we will firstly have a look at Hume's explanation of the actual formation of civil/political society. It will enhance our critique of the "commercial sociability" model by showing that politics is an original and fundamental dimension of human associations. Then Section 2 will explore the development of civil society in the light of Hume's comparative study of various forms of civil government. We will see that certain institutions, policies and social norms are required for the rise of commerce and civility. As these conditions are not fulfilled unless in modern states, Section 3 will probe into the principal reason for the transformation from ancient polities to modern states, namely the change of the mode of war and war finance. The development of commercial society, therefore, is not natural but embedded in the dynamics of politics.

I. The Political Dimension of Civil Society: Domestic and International

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Hume brings to light the foundation of civil society through a "conjectural history" starting from the original state of nature and ending up with a large and polished society.[1] Underlining the artificiality of society, such a history is divided into two phases according to different types of artifice: At the first stage, human beings established the conventions of property, voluntary transaction, and promise; and then at the second stage, government was erected to execute justice when the original conventions had become too weak to oblige the individuals. Hume agrees with Hobbes and Mandeville on the theoretical priority of politics, for government is the ultimate foundation of all the other conventions once we have entered the second stage. Yet from a causal and temporal point of view, it is not

[1] There are heated debates about Hume's style of philosophical and historical writings. On the one hand, though Hume himself neither used the term "conjectural history" nor provided a clear "four stages" theory (cf. Ronald Meek, *Social Sciences and the Ignoble Savages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), his philosophical explanations about the origins of civil institutions (justice, government, religion, etc.) are grounded on the hypothesis of "the uniformity of human nature" and delivered in a historicised way. Some scholars read Hume as a conjectural historian. (E.g. Juan Castro, "Hume and Conjectural History", *Journal of Scottish Philosophy*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Jun., 2017), pp157-174; Frank Palmeri, *State of Nature, Stages of Society: Enlightenment Conjectural History and Modern Social Discourse*, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016). Especially, Annette Baier argues that Hume's theory of sociability is "a conjectural history, in which conventions arise in a definite order … Each artifice remedies inconveniences the previous one had helped to create" (See her *The Cautious Jealous Virtue*, p37). For Istvan Hont, such a theory is a "natural history of justice" (*Politics in Commercial Society*, p49; cf. Nicholas Phillipson, *David Hume: The Philosopher as Historian*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989, pp32-49), and as is known to us, "natural history" is usually considered as an approximation of "conjectural history". (Dugald Stewart, *Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith*, reprinted in Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. E. G. Wakefield, London: Charles Knight & Co., 1843, pplv-lvi; Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in Scottish Enlightenment*, ch2.) On the other hand, Hume's historical works are also to a large extent philosophised. (David Fate Norton et al (eds.), *David Hume: Philosophical Historian*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.) Pocock locates Hume's history of England in the tradition of enlightenment philosophical history, because of its "reconciliation of narrative and philosophy". (J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion (II):Narratives of Civil Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp163-257; cf. Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophic Politics*, Part III.) However, "Hume himself seems to realise that in *The History of England* he is doing something quite different from conjectural history both in terms of interest and in terms of method." (Simon Evnine, "Hume, Conjectural History, and the Uniformity of Human Nature", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1993), pp589-606) In his historical works, Hume relies more on historical facts than conjecture, and pays more attention to peculiarity that cannot be explained away by general rules. In this chapter, our distinction between "conjectural history" and "actual history" is correspondent with the above difference between Hume's philosophical and historical works.

entirely unreasonable to say that (natural) society “is a domain with its own distinctive principles defined by social relations, conventions and economic cooperation”, while government “is a dimension added on to society at a late stage chronologically”.[2] Regardless of its importance, politics emerges only when there is certain growth of economy, which is certainly natural, within a society.

It is noteworthy, however, that a revision is made to this point very soon when Hume talks about the actual emergence of government in reality.

> And so far am I from thinking with some philosophers, that men are utterly incapable of society without government, that I assert the first rudiments of government to arise from quarrels, not among men of the same society, but among those of different societies. A less degree of riches will suffice to this latter effect, than us requisite for the former. … Now foreign war to a society without government necessarily produces civil war. … In a foreign war the most considerable of all goods, life and limbs, are at stake; and as everyone shuns dangerous posts, seizes best arms, seeks excuse for the slightest wounds, the rules of society, which may be well enough observ’d, while men were calm, can now no longer take place, when they are in such commotion.[3]

Rather than explaining the invention of government from the domestic perspective, Hume now review it from the inter-societal perspective. At first, it

[2] Christopher Finlay, “Hume’s Theory of Civil Society”, p371.
[3] *THN*, 3.2.8.1, SBN539-540.

is conceded that a natural society should have been able to last long without the need of government. Nevertheless, foreign wars could break out before the society grows so rich as to cause internal conflicts. Since men's most considerable goods, their life and limbs, were endangered in foreign wars, they would seek to escape from the formidable task of defence. In this way, wars directly gave rise to internal disorder, and called for political power.[4] Hume provides historical evidence for this argument in the *History*:

> The ancient Germans were little removed from the original state of nature. The social confederacy among them was more martial than civil: They had chiefly in view the means of attack or defence against public enemies, not those of protection against their fellow-citizens. Their possessions were so slender and so equal, that they were not exposed to great danger.[5]

The real life of human beings in the original state was neither the enjoyment of peaceful commerce nor the struggle against injustice done by their fellows. Rather, it was focusing on "attack or defence against public enemies", namely foreign wars. This seems quite unlike the condition Hume depicts in his standard theory which we have already explored. The change of perspective, from domestic to inter-societal, is therefore not a re-telling of the same story on a different level, but rather leads to a substantially different story.[6]

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[4] Cf. R. J. Glossop, "Hume and the Future of the Society of Nations", *Hume Studies*, Vol. X (1984), p54.
[5] *HOE*, I, p174.
[6] Andrew Sabl also notices Hume's "change of emphasis", that "in conditions that Hume describes as close to or resembling a state of nature, the greatest lack people feel is not justice but authority. And the result of their lacking it is not unstable property but physical danger, personal security". (*Hume's Politics*, p98) But Sabl does not recognise the potential tension between such an argument and Hume's standard theory of men's sociability, and of course provides no account for it..

In comparison with his standard theory about the origin of government, Hume's logic here more easily reminds us of Hobbes's depiction of the formation of civil society from the state of nature. As is known to us, the main purpose of establishing political unity is to secure peace between its members. Looking at Hobbes's analysis in detail, however, we will find that such a process is initially triggered by external wars.[7] According to Hobbes, individuals in the state of war would like to form multitudes for the sake of defence and protection against their "common enemy". But since external security was impossible due to the lack of internal order, "the only way to erect such a common power as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners and the injuries of one another … is to confer all their power and strength to one man".[8] Therefore, the first purpose of government, more precisely speaking, is to secure internal order in the face of foreign threats. Hume agrees with Hobbes on this point. Hume does not deny that in the early age of history wars might not be frequent and long-lasting given the small population of the earth and the far distance between different tribes, therefore public authority usually dissolved "after their return from the field, and the establishment of peace with the neighbouring tribes".[9] He admits that only when the possessions of a society became rich enough to arouse injustice at home even in peacetime, did men make use of

[7] As Hobbes's state of nature is a state of war of all against all, then it is impossible to make a distinction between internal and external wars *a priori*. But after the erection of the political unities, we can talk of external wars in the state of nature retrospectively.

[8] *L*, xvii.3-4, 13. Also see Hedley Bull's insightful comments, "one of the main pressures driving individual persons to leave the state of nature is the need to form groupings large enough, united enough, and enduring enough to be able to resist external attack." Hedley Bull, "Hobbes and International Anarchy", *Social Research*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Winter, 1981), p726.

[9] *THN*, 3.2.8.2, SBN540.

the public authority they had already known during the wars and finally establish government as a perpetual institution. Nevertheless, the connection between wars and government is of great theoretical significance. Firstly, it suggests the inseparability of the domestic and inter-societal (international) aspects of politics. In fact, domestic power is initially necessitated by the condition of foreign conflicts. Secondly, if wars between societies are always possible for human beings, then politics can be more than an outcome of domestic economic development, but a phenomenon as original as economy.

Someone may have doubts on the above arguments. Given that Hume's theory of sociability is different from Hobbes's, it seems unlikely that they explain the origin of government along the same logic. For Hobbes, the state of nature is a state of war through and through, so conflict is the universal background against which political artifice is made. Civil societies are, figuratively speaking, islands of peace rising up in the sea of war, while the sea remains between the islands. In this way, international conflict is the perpetual situation that civil societies have to survive. But according to Hume's standard theory, the original condition is far from a state of war, except at the "Hobbesian moment" as we have previously discussed. For Hume, mutual commerce is always beneficial. Since the common sense of interest is able to set up peace and order between human beings, war should not be an instinctive or inevitable feature of human life. Despite the frequent quarrels between tribes and nations in the history, it is not necessary to conclude that men will never get rid of

fighting with each other. One might argue that war is only a result of economic backwardness, and with the development of commerce and knowledge men will eventually recognise the advantage of trading over fighting. Actually, this argument, known as the “doux commerce” thesis, has been quite popular since the eighteenth century.[10] In the eyes of thinkers including Montesquieu, Thomas Paine, Immanuel Kant and Benjamin Constant, war is a curable disease, because more civilised societies are expected to prefer peaceful commerce.

To a considerable extent Hume agrees with the “doux commerce” thesis. From Hume’s viewpoint, the hostility between nations is nothing but absurdity. Making wars is expensive. It disturbs the ordinary industry of a society, consumes labour that otherwise could be employed in manufactory, and exhausts the economic superfluity which serves as the incentive of men’s productivity. Succession of wars will entrap people in sloth and barbarity, and eventually reduce their happiness.[11] Moreover, not only wars, but also jealousy of trade, which means “to look on the progress of their neighbours with a suspicious eye, to consider all trading states as their rivals, and to suppose that it is impossible for any of them to flourish but at their expense”, is a groundless apprehension.[12] In fact, a main purpose of Hume’s political writings is exactly

[10] About the intellectual history of the “doux commerce” thesis see Albert Hirschman, *Passions and Interests*; cf. Laurence Dickey, “Doux Commerce and Humanitarian Values: Free Trade, Sociability, and Universal Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century Thinking”, *Grotiana*, Vol. 22, No. 1(2001), pp271-318; Bela Kapossy et al. (eds.), *Commerce and Peace in the Enlightenment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
[11] “Of Commerce”, *EMPL*, p258ff.
[12] “Of the Balance of Trade”, *EMPL*, p310.

to remove this ill-grounded "jealous fear": "In opposition to this narrow and malignant opinion, I will venture to assert, that the increase of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbours."[13] According to Hume, the "zero-sum" logic of war does not apply to trade, because the latter is by its nature reciprocally beneficial as well as reciprocally dependent (otherwise it would not take place), and "in this respect states are in the same condition as individuals".[14] The prosperity of one nation requires the prosperity of its neighbouring nations, for the exportation of its commodities would be impossible if other nations cannot give something in exchange. Therefore, the prohibition of free trade will just act directly against their intentions, while a more reasonable policy is *laissez faire*.[15] Hume also believes the development of commerce will bring about improvements of human nature. The prosperity of trade let more and more people get employed, awakened them from solitude and indolence, and also made them more sociable by "instructing men in the advantage of humane maxims above rigour and severity".[16] "Industry, knowledge, and humanity, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly

[13] "Of the Jealousy of Trade", *EMPL*, p328. Cf. Andrew Skinner, "Hume's Principle of Political Economy", in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. by Jacqueline Taylor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp381-413.
[14] Ibid, p329.
[15] Leonard Gomes, *Foreign Trade and National Economy: Mercantilist and Classical Perspectives*, Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 1987, pp107-116; Laurence Dickey, "Doux Commerce and Humanitarian Values", pp285ff; Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, ch3.
[16] "Of the Populousness of the Ancient Nations", *EMPL*, p404.

denominated, the more luxurious ages."[17] For Hume, an increase of humanity is the natural consequence of the refinement of arts and manners in a developed economy. As a result, civilised men will not be as brutal as barbarians who took pleasure in fights, slaughters and domineering others, and will become less inclined to make wars. In sum, both theoretically and historically speaking, commerce is a uniting and pacifying force leading human beings to a more harmonious world.

Nonetheless, Hume is never so optimistic as to expect a "perpetual peace" or a global commercial society in which wars and separated political societies are wiped out. To understand why we must look more carefully at Hume's theory of sociability. Thanks to the enlightened self-interest, the original condition of men is not a Hobbesian state of war of all against all. But since Hume stands with Hobbes (and Mandeville) in rejecting Hutchesonian natural sociability, it is not a state of universal "peace and concord", either. Hume reminds us that "our primary instincts lead us, either to indulge ourselves in unlimited freedom, or to seek dominion over others".[18] The natural operation of men's appetites results in disorder, and it is not regulated unless mutual association is necessary for men's survival. In this sense, conflict is also the background against which various artifices work, though "artifice" for Hume means much more than the erection of sovereignty. Hume's societies, like Hobbes's, are also islands of

[17] "Of Refinement in the Art", *EMPL*, p271; Neil McArthur, *David Hume's Political Theory: Law, Commerce, and the Constitution of Government*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, ch1. About the moral effects of industry, see Carl Wennerlind, "The Role of Political Economy in Hume's Moral Philosophy", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Apr., 2011), pp43-64.

[18] "Of the Original Contract", *EMPL*, p480.

peace rising up in the sea of war. Now some important conclusions can be drawn from this picture. Firstly, societies are by their nature limited. And more importantly, the original association between individuals is not merely economic, but also potentially political, given the ever-presenting possibility of foreign conflicts faced by each society.

Yet this is not to say Hume believes in some Hobbesian international anarchy. The progress of civilisation arouses more and more desires in men's body and mind, for the gratification of which more extensive commerce is needed. Then human beings are increasingly ready to find out the benefits of trading with foreigners. "The advantage, therefore, of peace, commerce, and mutual succour, make us extend to different kingdoms the same notions of justice, which take place among individuals."[19] As the common sense of the interest of preserving society has given rise to the convention of justice, now the common sense of the interest of international commerce gives rise to the convention of the laws of nations, including three fundamental laws of nature and other diplomatic rules. In this sense, it is not unreasonable to say that for Hume there is an "international society", in which each nation acts like an individual.[20] However, the difference between laws of nations and laws of nature should not be overlooked. As is keenly pointed out by Hume,

The same obligation of interest takes place among independent kingdoms,

[19] *THN*, 3.2.11.2, SBN568.

[20] About Hume and the idea of "international society", see Renee Jeffery, "Moral Sentiment Theory and the International Thought of David Hume", in Ian Hall & Lisa Hill (eds.), *British International Thinkers from Hobbes to Namier*, London: Palgrave, 2009, pp49-69; Benjamin Straumann &Benedict Kingsbury, "The State of Nature and Commercial Sociability in International Legal Thought", *Grotiana*, Vol. 31 (2010), pp22-43.

> and gives rise to the same morality. … But here we may observe, that tho' the intercourse of different states be advantageous, and even sometimes necessary, yet it is not so necessary nor advantageous as that among individuals, without which 'tis utterly impossible for human nature to subsist. Since, therefore, the natural obligation to justice, among different states, is not so strong as among individuals, the moral obligation, which arises from it, must partake of its weakness.[21]

Though interest is always a uniting agent of human beings, national society still differs greatly from international society. Hume makes a distinction between two sorts of commercial sociability, one is based on our restless desires of real and imaginary goods, while the other on the necessity of self-preservation. Roughly speaking, the former is the foundation underlying the ever-expanding international social relations, but it is not so strong as the latter, which upholds the limited national societies. External violence, "because it comes from strangers, seems less pernicious in its consequences, than when they are expos'd singly against one whose commerce is advantageous to them, and without whose society 'tis impossible they can subsist."[22] The force disciplining our natural and harmful avidity, namely the advantage of mutual commerce and disadvantage of conflicts, is much weaker on international level than on domestic. Consequently, quarrels more easily break out between societies than between individuals. Returning to the analogy we have used previously, the

[21] *THN*, 3.2.11.4, SBN569.
[22] *THN*, 3.2.8.1, SBN540.

advantage of international commerce may be to build bridges between the islands of nations, but it is ultimately unable to fill the sea of conflicts and form the Pangaea of global peace. In a nutshell, war is an ineradicable feature of human life, because the commercial sociability is by itself limited and uneven. Hume's analysis of war and the actual history of government is consistent with his theory of human nature and the conjectural history of civil society.

Additionally, Hume also mentions other factors impeding the formation of a super-national society. The difference in conventions and climates gives rise to vastly different national characters. The "passion of national pride" associates one's country more tightly than any other human groups to the idea of oneself, making the global unity both impossible and undesirable, because "nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy. The emulation which naturally arises among those neighbouring states, is an obvious source of improvement".[23] More importantly, men's sympathy, the mechanism underlying our moral sentiments, is partial and limited. The more distant a person is from us, the weaker we can feel his feelings. It is especially difficult for one to sympathise with someone merely "as an individual with a private sense of interest detached from that of others",[24] i.e. as a typical

[23] "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", *EMPL*, p119. Some international relation scholars have noticed that for Hume the prospect of a peaceful global society is quite bleak. Edwin Van de Haar, "David Hume and International Political Theory: A Reappraisal", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 34 (2008), pp225-242; *Classical Liberalism and International Relations Theory: Hume, Smith, Mises, and Hayek*, London: Palgrave, 2009, pp41-56. Also cf. Robert Manzer, "The Promise of Peace? Hume and Smith on the Effects of Commerce on War and Peace", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Nov., 1996), pp369-382. Later we will see what this means for Hume's theory of civil society.

[24] Donald Ainslie, "The Problem of National Self in Hume's Theory of Justice", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Nov.,

member of human species with no face. Commercial sociability on international level, relatively weak in itself, thus must often be overwhelmed by those "local" and more violent passions. As a result, discord will never be eliminated even in an era of a highly developed global market economy.

The inevitability of war, along with the connection between war and politics, now enhances our critique of Hont's "commercial sociability" model or Finlay's "(Hegelian) civil society" interpretation, and further demonstrates the significance of politics for Hume's theory. Economic commerce or the pursuit of utility, being the foundation of men's sociability, is nonetheless not necessarily the centre of men's life.[25] Politics is also an original and fundamental dimension of human association. Besides the necessity of securing domestic order, human beings must always respond to challenges from outside as well. Politics is then not only a derivative of economic development, nor would it be extinguished by further economic development. Therefore, "bringing the politics back in" may afford us a more adequate, and also more complex understanding of the civil society. It suggests that there is no "natural" progress of economy or growth of civilisation without taking political conditions into consideration. This is confirmed by Hume's historical explanation of the origin of modern commercial

1995), pp289-313; A. B. Stilz, "Hume, Modern Patriotism, and Commercial Society", *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 29, No.1 (2003), pp15-32. Yet we should distinguish Hume's "patriotism" from Ferguson and Kames's "agonistic patriotism", which sees antagonism as crucial in generating political cohesion and sustaining moral virtue. Cf. Iain McDaniel, "Unsocial Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment: Ferguson and Kames on War, Sociability and the Foundations of Patriotism", *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 41, No. 5 (2015), pp662-682.

[25] Andrew Sabl has precisely pointed out that for Hume, human beings "had no initial reason to think economically. Money is not automatically more attractive than power". See his *Hume's Politics*, p68. But unlike Sabl, here we do not want to read Hume's history of civil society abstractly as a case of the "liberal" project, which overcomes the "coordinating problem" by enlarging the common interest of men with various desires "that in their early form were incompatible with another" (Ibid, p53). Rather, our purpose is to understand Hume's theory of civil society in the historical background of modern state building, and better appreciate the relationship between his theory of human nature and his political economy.

society.

II. The History of Civil Society: From Barbarity to Civilisation

1. Arbitrary Power, War, and Ancient Polities

In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume's history of civil society (conjectural or actual) ends with the invention and institutionalisation of government. Although it well demonstrates the fundamental principles of various artifice upholding social order, this is a history covering only the early period of the progress human beings have experienced. But in his *Essays* and *History of England*, Hume provides us with the whole story, either from a general perspective or focusing specifically on England and its neighbours.

The process of civilisation, including the development of industry and wealth, the refinement of arts and sciences, the improvement of human nature, as well as the growth of liberty, is the main theme attracting Hume the philosopher and historian's interest. To a large extent, Hume's historical explanation is delivered through a contrast between the ancients and the moderns. The lifestyle of the ancients is bellicose, simple and austere, while that of the moderns is more sociable, luxurious, and well-bred. The transition from the former to the latter is usually attributed to the increasing role of commerce in society. However, it should not be overlooked that Hume also organises his analysis into a comparative political framework, in which the political-socio-military system is regarded as a significant interpretive

variable.[26] For Hume, an important contributor to the debates of civil government, the historiography of society is also a historiography of state.[27]

According to Hume, the first stage of civil society is the barbarous monarchy, or the "pure despotism", which is the legacy of war during which "the suddenness of every exigency" could not be managed "without some authority in a single person".[28] At first glance, there seems to be some contradiction between the terms "civil" and "barbarous", and the confusion of "monarchy" and "despotism" also looks strange. It is noteworthy that "civil" here means no more than "political", which is distinguished from the "natural" society without government, while "barbarous" describes the government itself. Meanwhile, departing from classical regime theory as well as Montesquieu's famous trichotomy between despotism, monarchy, and republic, Hume does not make a clear distinction between monarchy and despotism, nor does he regard despotism as an illegitimate regime. For Hume, despotism is not a definite form of government, but the arbitrary way of ruling, which can be expressed in various regimes to different degrees.[29] A barbarous monarchy did have a

[26] About the role of different constitutions in Hume's historical analysis, see Neil McArthur, *David Hume's Political Theory.* Tatsuya Sakamoto claims that Hume in his later works replaces the comparative constitutional framework with a manner-centred explanation, while "manner" is a synthesis of modes of substance, social norms and lifestyle. "Hume's Economy as a System of Manners", in Tatsuya Sakamoto & Hideo Tanaka (eds.), *The Rise of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, NY: Routledge, 2003, pp86-102; also cf. Christopher Berry, "Hume and the Customary Causes of Knowledge, Industry, and Humanity", *History of Political Economy*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2006), pp291-317. Here we use "comparative political framework" instead of "comparative constitutional", and by the term "political" we mean not only political forms but also practice, policy and other relevant political-sociological elements. From our perspective, the political factors still play important roles even in Hume's later works, though Hume certainly does not believe in some political determinism. And, in this sense Hume is similar to Montesquieu. Cf. Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. and tr. by Anne M. Cohler et al, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 1.1.3; Thomas Pangle, *Montesquieu's Philosophy of Liberalism: A Commentary on* The Spirit of the Laws, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1973, pp44ff.

[27] J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. II, p2.

[28] "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", *EMPL*, p116, 125; *THN*, 3.2.8.2, SBN541.

[29] Also see "Of the Liberty of Press", *EPML*, pp11-12.

government executing justice and securing the property of individuals from mutual injuries, which makes it a legislative political form. Yet such a society was clearly not economy-centred or commerce-friendly. As is pointed out by Hume, “among that military and turbulent people, so averse to commerce and the arts, and so little enured to industry, justice was commonly very ill administered, and great oppression and violence seem to have prevailed.”[30] Here the prevalence of violence did not result from the absence of public authority, but from the public authority itself. The barbarity of such a regime consisted in the fact that there is no security against the harm from the rulers:

> If the people, … increase to a great multitude, the monarch, finding it impossible, in his own person, to execute every office of sovereignty, in every place, must delegate his authority to inferior magistrates, who preserve peace and order in their respective districts. … The prince, who is himself unrestrained, never dreams of restraining his ministers, but delegates his full authority to everyone, whom he sets over any portion of the people.[31]

The purpose of erecting government is to put someone who “being indifferent persons to the greatest part of the state, have no interest, or but a remote one, in any act of injustice” in the office of enforcing justice upon all the other members of society.[32] But nothing could guarantee that the rulers would

[30] *HOE,* I, p166.
[31] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL,* p116.
[32] *THN,* 3.2.7.6, SBN537.

be satisfied with their position and never crete advantages for themselves by ill performance of their office. This problem is especially serious when it comes to the magistrates and aristocrats under the sovereign. The barbarous monarch could not rule a large nation without the assistance of sub-magistrates. Then, if the magistrates were dependent on the arbitrary will of the monarch, having only limited and uncertain terms of office, they would be even more oppressive to the subjects to get the utmost out of their contemporary authority. “A people, governed after such a manner, are slaves in the full and proper sense of the word.”[33] And if they were aristocrats and enjoy independent authority from the monarch’s, they actually became whom the people are “obliged to consider as their sovereign, more than the king himself, or even the legislature”[34]. The exorbitant power of those “petty tyrants” gave rise to violence and disorder, while the disorder in turn increased their power, because the subjects had no other ways to defend themselves but relying on the force of the aristocrats. “Where they receive not protection from the laws and magistrate, they will seek it by submission to superiors, and by herding in some inferior confederacy, which acts under the direction of a powerful chieftain.”[35] In a word, no matter how the inferior rulers obtain their power, its arbitrariness could not but threaten the security and property of the individuals. Inevitably, “the barbarous policy debases the people, and forever prevents all improvements”.[36] And since

[33] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL*, p117.
[34] *HOE*, I, p167.
[35] Ibid, p148.
[36] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL*, p117.

nothing but the progress of legal science could cure this disease, the barbarity would just propagate itself perpetually.

Hume attributes this problem to the lack of knowledge, which was inevitable in early ages of history. On the one hand, the subjects placed an implicit confidence in the rulers, without recognising the necessity of establishing general laws and political institutions to protect themselves from their oppression. On the other hand, the monarch was also ignorant of the advantages of general laws over full discretionary power, namely social stability and more effectual control over his magistrates. “All general laws are attended with inconveniencies, when applied to particular cases; and it requires great penetration and experience, … to perceive that these inconveniencies are fewer than what result from full discretionary powers in every magistrate.”[37] The benefits of acting as a legislator rather than a despot lay beyond the understanding of the barbarous monarch. In this sense, the want of stable justice indicates precisely men’s incapacity of making a society prosperous.

However, Hume also notices that barbarous rulers could damage the stability of property on purpose (instead of ignorantly). For example, in the Anglo-Saxon tribes,

> All the refined arts of life were unknown among the Germans: They even seem to have *been anxious to prevent any improvements of that nature*;

[37] Ibid, p116. Istvan Hont has displayed the debates between Adam Smith and Rousseau about “which comes first, judges or law”. Hume’s idea is similar with Smith’s, that judges (rulers) emerged before the legislation (general laws). See Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, ch3-4.

> and the leaders, by annually distributing anew all the land among the inhabitants of each village, *kept them from attaching themselves to particular possessions*, or making such progress in agriculture as might divert their attention from military expeditions, the chief occupation of the community.[38]

And also, in the early era of English feudalism,

> The languishing state of commerce kept the inhabitants poor and contemptible; and *the political institutions were calculated to render that poverty perpetual*. The barons and gentry, living in rustic plenty and hospitality, gave no encouragement to the arts, and had no demand for any of the more elaborate manufactures: Every profession was held in contempt but that of arms: And if any merchant or manufacturer rose by industry and frugality to a degree of opulence, he found himself but the more exposed to injuries, from the envy and avidity of the military nobles.[39]

In these cases, the rulers were not simply incapable of securing justice by precautionary institutions or effectual administration, rather, they did not want to do so. They were “anxious” and tried in a “calculated” way to obstruct economic development. Their policies and institutions, being discouraging to any progress, are outcomes of political decisions, which were made deliberately. In the eyes of the Anglo-Saxon chiefs and the English lords, the improvement

[38] *HOE,* I, p16, italics added.
[39] Ibid, pp464-465, italics added. Hume does not sort feudalism to certain form of government, yet the arbitrariness of the barons demonstrates the barbarity of such a regime. David Miller terms it as “a barbarous version of limited monarchy”. *Philosophy and Ideology in Hume’s Political Thought*, p154.

of industry and arts would distract the subjects from military activities, the only honourable and necessary profession for the survival of their communities. And the military service, notwithstanding a heavy burden, was “less felt by a people addicted to arms, who fight for honour and revenge more than pay”.[40] That is to say, commerce was far from the first thing human beings were concerned with, but instead was regarded as ignoble and harmful. In Hume’s explanation, therefore, politics influences socio-economic activities not only as a structure but also as a variety of practices, and not only through coercion but also with the help of social norms about honour.

After barbarous monarchy comes the ancient republic, which for Hume is the consequence of the rebellion against tyrants. The republics provided the commerce with a much better political condition where the power of the rulers is no longer arbitrary. “Though a republic should be barbarous, it necessarily, by an infallible operation, gives rise to LAW, even before mankind have made any considerable advances in the other sciences.”[41] For Hume, at the beginning, laws in republics might be as rough as those in monarchies, since the want of jealousy between citizens and magistrates allowed the latter to hold great discretionary power. But “a republic and free government would be an obvious absurdity, if the particular checks and controls, provided by the constitution, had really no influence, even of bad men, to act for the public good.”[42] The frequent

[40] “Of Commerce”, *EMPL,* p259.
[41] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL,* p117.
[42] “That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science”, *EMPL,* p15.

elections by the people afforded considerable checks upon authority, and by "trials and experiments" they sooner or later recognised the necessity of restraining the magistrates for the preservation of liberty.[43] Republics, unlike monarchies, by their nature require rule of law. As is sketched in the *Treatise* and demonstrated by the history of ancient Greece and Rome, general laws sufficiently secured the lives and properties of the citizens, and then led to the improvements of arts and sciences.

Nonetheless, despite its institutional advantages over barbarous monarchy, Hume reminds us that ancient republic is not much better at supporting economic prosperity, as some readers might have expected given the "indissoluble chain" of "industry, knowledge, and humanity". [44] Justice guarantees the stability of property, which is the precondition of any accumulation of wealth, but justice itself does not automatically generate the desire for industry and wealth. In fact, the rule of law and perfection of arts in ancient Greece and Rome were "attended with poverty, and the greatest simplicity of life and manners".[45] The ancient nations were not so populous as some of Hume's contemporaries believed, either.[46] Hume points out that the extreme love of liberty, as well as the barbarity of ancient tyrants, "must have banished every merchant and manufacturer, and have quite depopulated the

[43] "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", *EMPL*, p124.
[44] "Of Refinement in the Art", *EMPL*, p271.
[45] "Of Civil Liberty", *EMPL*, p89.
[46] Hume had a debate with Robert Wallace and Montesquieu on this topic. James Moore, "Montesquieu and the Scottish Enlightenment", in Rebecca Kingston ed., *Montesquieu and His Legacy*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2009, pp181-184.

state, had it subsisted upon industry and commerce".[47] Far from a revolutionary transformation of men's life, the progress ancient republics made is still limited.

The reason why the growth of economy is hindered in spite of general laws is multiple. Hume highlights the instability of the ancient republics. Notwithstanding the rule of law, ancient republics could also become "violent governments" due to the factional strife:

> In ancient history, we may always observe, where one party prevailed, whether the nobles or people … that they immediately butchered all of the opposite party who fell into their hands, and banished such as hand been so fortunate as to escape their fury. No form of process, no law, no trial, no pardon.[48]

As there was on the one hand an extreme love of liberty and equality, whereas on the other hand "no medium between a severe, jealous Aristocracy, and turbulent, factious, tyrannical Democracy",[49] the rage between factions was much bloodier than that in modern times, which interrupted the regular exertion of laws. Additionally, ancient republics, even uncorrupted, were dominated by the spirit of simplicity, frugality and self-denial, which were great obstacles to economic activities. Hume shares a consensus with Montesquieu that, although a republic (in its classic sense) is distinguished from arbitrary rule of despotism or barbarous monarchy, it is not by its nature a moderate government.[50]

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[47] "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations", *EMPL,* p419.
[48] Ibid, p407.
[49] Ibid, p416.
[50] Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 2.11.4.1. Also see Thomas Pangle, *Montesquieu's Philosophy of Liberalism*, ch2; Paul Rahe, *Montesquieu and the Logic of Liberty*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press,

Yet the principal reason lies in the fundamental similarity between ancient republics and barbarous monarchies, that they "were almost in perpetual war".[51] In ancient republics as well as barbarous monarchies, military activities were of paramount significance for the public benefit of societies, and were considered much more honourable than industry and commerce. While many "doux commerce" thinkers explained the perpetual war in ancient times in a (to some extent) materialistic way, i.e. regarding it as a result of the undeveloped economy, Hume keenly points out a reversed causal relationship. As we have discussed previously, war has its ineradicable root in human nature. According to Hume, the perpetual ancient war is "a natural effect of their martial spirit, their love of liberty, their mutual emulation, and that hatred which generally prevails among nations that live in close neighbourhood".[52] But the great cost of war causes the scarcity of human and material resources, bringing about a tension between private wealth and public finance:

> A state is never greater than when all its superfluous hands are employed in the service of public. The ease and convenience of private persons require, that these hand should be employed in their service. … As the ambition of the sovereign must entrench the luxury of the individuals, so the luxury of individuals must diminish the force, and check the ambition of the sovereign.[53]

2009, pp70ff.
[51] Ibid, p404.
[52] Ibid, p404.
[53] "Of Commerce", *EMPL*, p257.

The labour and resources of each economy, once devoted to private industry and consumption, could no longer supply the wars and arms. This is especially true for the small body politic with only small scale of surplus. Therefore, to secure the war capacity of the ancient polities, manufacture and commerce could not but be restrained, whereas frugality and public-spiritedness were approved as virtues.

> The fewer desires and wants are found in the proprietors and labourers of land, the fewer hands do they employ; and consequently the superfluities of the land, instead of maintaining tradesmen and manufacturers, may support fleets and armies to a much greater extent, than where a great many arts are required to minister to the luxury of particular persons.[54]

An extreme example is Sparta. It was the extreme rusticity of the Spartans that enabled the Helots to feed them, and allowed the republic to maintain so great an army. Furthermore, from a dynamic perspective, wars might result in a vicious cycle of poverty. Since the superfluity, once produced, is extorted away immediately as well as continually to finance the successive wars, accumulation of private wealth in turn becomes impossible, nor could the interactive mechanism of production and consumption driving the economy work. In a nutshell, the greatness of the states and the happiness of the individuals are in contradiction. (Holding this viewpoint, Hume is yet different from classical republicans, because this contradiction for him is not only on

[54] Ibid, pp256-257.

moral but also on political-economic level.) It is for this political reason that in both ancient republics and barbarous monarchies, economic activities must be discouraged and dishonoured.

Clearly demonstrating the political limits to the development of economy,[55] Hume's analysis on ancient polities confirms the conclusions we have already drawn. Instead of a natural progress on the basis of human nature (i.e. the "commercial sociability"), the prosperity of commerce could not come true unless there are both political institutions entirely safeguarding domestic justice, and policies sufficiently encouraging industry and trade in the face of foreign wars. To some extent, the latter is even more difficult to achieve than the former, because a body politic must overcome the inherent contradiction between public power and private wealth. Or in other words, it must find out a new mode of securing its state capacity, and then conform men's way of life to this new mode through a variety of artificial conventions.

2. General Law, Political Economy, and the Modern States

The situation has changed in modern times when commerce flourishes even without free government, as is observed by Hume. This is first because of the reformation of constitution that took place in modern monarchies. As we have seen previously, "a pure despotism established among a barbarous people" is stuck in the vicious circle between violence and ignorance, thus can

[55] Cf. J. G. A. Pocock, "The Political Limits to Premodern Economics", in *The Economic Limits to Modern Politics*, ed. by John Dunn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp121-141.

never by its native force and energy polish itself. However, it is able to "borrow its laws, and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments".[56] The most important thing monarchies "borrowed" is the restraint of inferior magistrates by general laws:

> Every minister or magistrate, must subsist to the general laws, which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner, which is prescribed. The people depend on none but their sovereign, for the security of their property. He is so far removed from them, and is so much exempt from private jealousies or interests. That this dependence is scarcely felt.[57]

In the reformed constitution there is a distinction between the monarch and the magistrates. The monarch remains absolute, holding full discretionary power beyond the system of laws, ruling only according to customs and his own deliberation, whereas the magistrates, authorised by the sovereign, cannot exercise their power but in accordance with the prescription of the laws. That is to say, the government, except its head, is depersonalised. Unlike those authors of "vulgar Whiggism" who equate absolute government with slavery, Hume argues that such a distinction is enough to overcome the problem of barbarous monarchies, namely the oppression from the rulers.[58] Since the

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[56] "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", *EMPL*, p125.
[57] Ibid, p125.
[58] It was Locke that first negated the consistency between absolute government and civil society. In Hume's era, "English liberty vs French slavery" had been a prevalent stereotype. See Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics*, pp139ff; Neil McArthur, "Laws not Men: Hume's Distinction between Barbarous and Civilised Government", *Hume Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan., 2005), pp123-144.

monarch, as the ultimate sovereign of the state, no longer enters into the detail of administration which may be easily influenced by private prejudices, his absoluteness is in no direct contradiction with the depersonalised apparatus of the state. In this sense, the monarchy becomes “civilised”. It is worth our notice that by “civilised” Hume means no longer the mere presence of political authority, but that such a regime is “a government of law not of men”.[59] Hence besides the distinction between natural and civil society, there is now a historical contrast between barbarity and “civility” or “civilisation”. Though Hume does not make use of Montesquieu’s distinction between monarchy and despotism, yet by differentiating civilised monarchy from barbarous monarchy, Hume agrees with Montesquieu that modern monarchy can be consistent with rule of law and become a “moderate government”. Such a new regime may afford “tolerable security” to the people.[60] This explains why arts, sciences and commerce were able to rise in absolute monarchies like France.

Nevertheless, it is still unclear why the originally barbarous monarchies wanted to “borrow” the general laws to make themselves “civilised”, and how they successfully accomplished it. Since Hume concedes that “in a monarchical government, laws arise not necessarily from the form of government”,[61] there must have been some factors that motivated such a reformation. Hume does not systematically discuss this topic, yet his comments on the civilisation of

[59] “Of Civil Liberty”, *EMPL,* p56.
[60] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL,* p125; cf. Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1.3.5-8.
[61] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL,* p118.

English monarchy displays some important elements of this process.

Feudal England can be justly seen as a barbarous monarchy, in which military profession is the centre of men's life, while judicial authority was combined with military command.[62] The barons holding comprehensive and arbitrary power disturbed the regular execution of justice, and put the people into slavery. Hume recognises the great difficulty of breaking such a system, since "men, not protected by law in their lives and properties, sought shelter, by their personal servility and attachments, under some powerful chieftains."[63] The violence of the feudal lords is self-reinforcing. As a result, "it required the authority almost absolute of the sovereigns, which took place in the subsequent period, to pull down those disorderly and licentious tyrants, who were equally averse from peace and from freedom, and to establish that regular execution of the laws, which, in a following age, enabled the people to erect a regular and equitable plan of liberty."[64] The improvement of the constitution did not take place naturally, rather, it was an outcome of some complicated political struggles.

From Hume's perspective, the kings played an indispensable role in the transformation of English constitution. The Norman Conquest once endowed the kings with great power over the whole nation, making the central government in England relatively stronger than other European governments.

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[62] John Danford, "Hume on Development: The First Volumes of the History of England", *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Mar., 1989), pp107-127.
[63] *HOE*, II, p443.
[64] Ibid, p525.

Yet with the development of feudalism, the barons gradually obtained the hereditary property right of their fiefs, and became independent rulers over their serfs. In the eyes of the king, the barons were more his rivals who everlastingly challenge his authority than mere vassals subject to him. But the people, more than often injured and oppressed by the lords, had some common interest with the king.

> Instead of checking and controuling the authority of the king, they were naturally induced to adhere to him, as the great fountain of law and justice, and to support him against the power of the aristocracy, which at once was the source of oppression to themselves, and disturbed him in the execution of the laws. The king, in his turn, gave countenance to an order of men, so useful and so little dangerous.[65]

Restraining the arbitrary power of the barons was beneficial for both the king and the people, therefore, the king was ready to implement the general laws, which would curb the aristocracy and further promote the obedience of the people. Such a strategy was carried out gradually, accompanied by the recovery of legal science and the progress of industry and commerce.

According to Hume, the most significant measure of undermining the feudal lords the kings had ever taken was Henry VII's Statute of Fines:

> … the most important law in its consequences, which was enacted during the reign of Henry, was that by which the nobility and gentry acquired a

[65] Ibid, p109.

> power of breaking the ancient entails, and of alienating their estates. By means of this law, joined to the beginning luxury and refinements of the age, the great fortunes of the barons were gradually dissipated, and the property of the commons encreased in England. It is probable, that Henry foresaw and intended this consequence, because the constant scheme of his policy consisted in depressing the great, and exalting churchmen, lawyers, and men of new families, who were more dependent on him.[66]

The reign of Henry VII witnessed the critical decline of the nobility's power, of which Hume's explanation is quite influential in the history of political thought. As is pointed out by Adam Smith and appreciated by many modern scholars, Hume keenly highlights the role of commerce and luxury in this process.[67] With the introduction of the habits of luxury, the peasants and tradesmen acquired a share of property, whereas the nobility "acquired by degrees a more civilised species of emulation, and endeavoured to excel in the splendour and elegance of their equipage, houses, and tables".[68] Attracted by the refined way of life, the noblemen exhausted their wealth, which used to maintain their retainers, on the consumption of all sorts of opulent goods. In this way, "a nobleman, instead of that unlimited ascendant, which he was wont to assume over those who were

[66] *HOE*, III, p77.
[67] Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, III.iv.4. Also see Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, ch.6; *Politics in Commercial Society*, ch4; "Adam Smith's History of Law and Government as Political Theory", in Richard Burke &nRaymond Guess eds., *Political Judgment: Essays for John Dunn*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009, pp131-171; Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*, ch6; *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp132-142; Jia Wei, *Commerce and Politics in Hume's* History of England, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017, pp57ff; Anthony Brewer, "Luxury and Economic Development: David Hume and Adam Smith", *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Jan., 1998), pp78-98.
[68] *HOE*, III, p76.

maintained at his board, or subsisted by salaries conferred on them, retained only that moderate influence, which customers have over tradesmen, and which can never be dangerous to civil government."[69] As both riches and influence of the nobles diminished, a more unified and generalised system of jurisdiction became available. It is in this sense that neither the so-called ancient constitution nor the recent revolution but rather commerce and luxury gave rise to the civil liberty of the modern English state.[70] Nevertheless, Hume also paid due attention to the legislative actions and policies of Henry VII. The Statute of Fine allowed the barons to break the family heritance of their ownership of lands and circulate those on open market. Therefore, without fundamentally damaging the feudal system, the king effectually undermined the aristocratic authority by dissipating their property. "The settled authority, which he acquired to the crown, enabled the sovereign to encroach on the separate jurisdictions of the barons, and produced a more general and regular execution of the laws."[71] In fact, the policies of Henry VII were so constant that Hume even suggests that the king had a clear and deliberate project. To a considerable extent, there are reasons to say that the king's pursuit and acquisition of absolute power prompted the transformation of English polity into a civilised monarchy, while the refinement of manners afforded him favourable socio-economic conditions.

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[69] *HOE*, IV, p384.
[70] "The change of manners was the chief cause of the secret revolution of government, and subverted the power of the barons." Ibid, p384. That is to say, the political condition favour to commerce is itself a result of the improvement of commerce.
[71] Ibid, p384.

Besides the establishment of general laws, the civilisation of modern monarchy was also indicated by policies encouraging development of economy. According to Hume's observation, such an inclination emerged even long before the Tudors. Since the reign of Edward II,

> during the course of several years, the kings of England, in imitation of other European princes, had embraced the salutary policy of encouraging and protecting the lower and more industrious orders of the state; whom they found *well disposed to obey the laws and civil magistrate*, and whose ingenuity and labour furnished commodities, requisite for the ornament of peace and *support of war*. Though the inhabitants of the country were still left at the disposal of their imperious lords; many attempts were made to give more security and liberty to citizens, and make them enjoy unmolested the fruits of their industry. Boroughs were erected by royal patent within the demesne lands: Liberty of trade was conferred upon them; The inhabitants were allowed to farm at a fixed rent their own tolls and customs."[72]

Rather than consciously keeping the subjects "from attaching themselves to particular possessions", the kings then began to protect their enjoyment of the fruits of their own labour and allowed them to commerce freely. This was not only because "the lower and more industrious orders" were more governable and more supportive to the kingly authority in the domestic power struggle, as

[72] *HOE*, II, pp105-106, italics added.

we have seen above. Moreover, the sovereign had recognised the increasing significance of industry and trade for the war finance.

Notwithstanding the fact that military activities used to be the centre of men's life, it must be admitted that "England, as well as other European countries, was, in its ancient state, very ill qualified for making, and still worse for maintaining conquests".[73] The great devotion to war did not naturally bring about strong war capacity. One crucial reason of that lay in the difficulty of supporting the army efficiently and steadily. "People possessed little riches and the public no credit, made it impossible for sovereign to bear the expense of a steady or durable war, even on their frontiers."[74] In order to secure their military capacity, the ancient nations had endeavoured to minimise private economic activities, supressing all consumption and commerce beyond necessity. But as the superfluity of the whole economy was itself thin, and the intensity of war was increasing, the supply it could afford to the state was far from adequate. That is to say, sufficient support for war requires more surplus, which furthermore requires stronger capacity of industry. From this new perspective, the manufactures and tradesmen were no longer seen as humble or even harmful professions, but indispensable contributors to the public good. Thus both the king and the subjects developed a more positive attitude toward economic activities.

The rise in status of economic activities was also facilitated by the relatively

[73] Ibid, p125.
[74] *HOE*, I, p380.

safe geopolitical condition England was in.

> Affairs, in this island particularly, took early a turn, which was more favourable to justice and to liberty. Civil employments and occupations soon became honourable among the English: The situation of that people rendered not the perpetual attention to wars so necessary as among their neighbours, and all regard was not confined to the military profession.[75]

Although national defence remained a fundamental consideration, England, as an island, did not face the kind of succession of wars or invasions that would prevent all improvements of economy and civilisation. In a relatively peaceful situation, the focus of both men's life and measure of honour begun to move from military affairs to civil commerce. Therefore, with the change of relationship between industry and war, the kings were increasingly inclined to encourage economic growth. Hume does not deny that at first most policies of this sort were awkward due to the ignorance of the science of political economy. "If we may judge by most of the laws enacted during his reign, trade and industry were rather hurt than promoted by the care and attention given to them."[76] For a long time, laws against taking interest from money, against the exportation of money, and regulations of price, invented to protect the still fragile economy, just unintendedly impeded the prosperity of the nation. Thus we may conclude from these comments that Hume has a strong critique of government's interference in markets, because "these matters ought always to be let free, and be

[75] Ibid, p522.
[76] *HOE*, III, p77. "His reign" here is the reign of Henry VII.

entrusted to the common course of business and commerce".[77] Yet this merely suggests that the economic affairs should be managed in a more reasonable as well as subtle way, for the development at least requires the welcome of the rulers. The kings' concern for economy is thus still a progress than the policy of the barbarous monarchs. At bottom, the fundamental precondition of the rise of industry and commerce is their capacity of fulfilling particular political aims. This constitutes the typical feature of the modern states.[78]

Like civilised monarchy, modern free government is friendly to civil commerce as well, for it also affords general laws securing the stability of property and policies promoting economic intercourse. But difference in political forms still leads to difference in social norms. "In both these forms of government, those who possess the supreme authority have the disposal of many honours and advantages, which excite the ambition and avarice of mankind."[79] Hume agrees with Mandeville and Hobbes that political power is able to channel human behaviours by shaping the system of honour. In republics, citizens are in a great measure independent from each other, while the candidate of office must gain the suffrage of the people, thus the power rises upwards from the bottom to the top. Such a political structure honours

[77] Ibid, p78.
[78] A comparison with the case of China may better reveal this feature of European modern states. In Hume's eyes, Chinese government was a pure but non-despotic monarchy. It was more moderate than barbarous monarchies, for the monarch was sufficiently restrained by the people and the magistrates were under the restraint of general laws. But it was unfitted for defence against foreign enemies. With no urgent requirement of war capacity due to its peculiar geopolitical situation, there was no impetus for Chinese government to grow into an absolute monarchy. And notwithstanding its "considerable stock of politeness and science", it fell into stagnation, compared with modern European states. See "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", *EMPL*, p122, footnote 13.
[79] Ibid, p126.

"strong genius", for a man cannot be welcomed by his fellows (equal to him in citizenship) unless making himself "*useful*, by his industry, capacity, or knowledge".[80] In this way, industry and sciences are most encouraged in free states. But civilised monarchies are not so "utilitarian" as the republics:

> In a civilised monarchy, there is a long train of dependence from the prince to the peasant, which is not great enough to render property precarious, or depress the minds of the people; but is sufficient to beget in every one an inclination to please his superiors, and to form himself upon those models, which are most acceptable to people of condition and education.[81]

Hume's analysis of the norms of civilised monarchy is quite similar to Montesquieu's. A civilised monarchy is a society with hierarchy, in which the lower orders depend on the higher. As the power goes downwards (though not arbitrarily), what is honoured becomes "refined taste", because to obtain the favour of the greats one has to render himself "*agreeable*, by his wit, complaisance, or civility".[82] Consequently, it is polite arts that are most encouraged in monarchies. Hume here analyses the rise of politeness of manners in modern courts. Like Mandeville, Hume also regards politeness as an artificial virtue necessary for any large and polished society, for it curbs the excessive pride inherent in human nature and prevents us from committing real

[80] Ibid, p126.
[81] Ibid, p127.
[82] Ibid, p126, original italics. Cf. Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1.3.7; 1.4.2, "Education in monarchs requires a certain politeness. … It arises from the desire to distinguish oneself."

injuries to others. Yet, similar to Mandeville again, from the historical perspective, the flourishing of good-manners is regarded as a modern phenomenon that originated from a specific political form, namely civilised monarchy. “If the superiority in politeness should be allowed to modern times, the modern notions of gallantry, the natural produce of courts and monarchies, will probably be assigned the cause of this refinement.”[83] Therefore, after the monarchy’s “borrowing” of general laws from the free state, now it is the latter that borrows the politeness from the former, for such a virtue has a natural affinity with the refinement in the gratification of the senses which determines the lifestyle of modern ages. In this sense, politeness, one of the central conventions upholding civil society, also must be understood by taking its political and historical condition into consideration.

However, notwithstanding the conventions of justice and politeness are ready and the policies are generally favourable to commerce, Hume still finds “something hurtful to commerce inherent in the nature of absolute government, and inseparable from it”.[84] Hume’s argument here is worth quoting at length,

> Private property seems to me almost as secure in a civilized EUROPEAN monarchy, as in a republic; nor is danger much apprehended in such a government, from the violence of the sovereign, more than we commonly dread harm from thunder, or earthquakes. … Commerce, therefore, is apt

[83] Ibid, p131. About the complex meanings of Hume’s conception of politeness, see Marc Hanvelt, *The Politics of Eloquence: David Hume’s Polite Rhetoric*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012, pp56-79.
[84] “Of Civil Liberty”, *EMPL*, p92.

> to decay in absolute governments, not because it is there less *secure*, but because it is less *honourable*. A subordination of ranks is absolutely necessary to the support of monarchy. Birth, titles, and place, must be honoured above industry and riches. While these notions prevail, all the considerable traders will be tempted to throw up their commerce, in order to purchase some of those employments, to which privileges and honour are annexed."[85]

Hume appreciates the decisive progress modern monarchy has made in performing general laws. Besides, in comparison with the cases of barbarous nations, the public evaluation of industry and trade has become much more positive in civilised monarchy. The rising approbation of economic activities, to a large degree sufficient to excite the ambitions of the lower orders, yet is fundamentally limited by the very nature of monarchical government. Unlike the free governments in which the principle of authority could almost be harmonised with that of utility, (hereditary) monarchy cannot but ground the authority of its rulers upon entirely different thing, namely status. As a result, despite the advantages of commerce, it cannot gratify men's pride, and is then put aside once more honourable professions are available.[86] Hume admittedly does not draw from these shortcomings any reason to subvert existing monarchies or radically change social norms. But for him, the perfect form of government, at

[85] Ibid, p93, original italics.
[86] This case can be seen as a counterexample of Hirschman's "passions and interests" thesis. The prosperity of commerce is supported not by the victory of self-interest over pride, but by a combination of the two passions.

least in imagination, is a republic. Though, considering the possible improvements of the civilised monarchy, these species of civil polity might become almost equal.

Hume's discussion of various forms of civil government is different from the traditional regime theories by downplaying the distinction between rule of one, few and many, as well as that between good and perverse government. Like Montesquieu, Hume also organises his analysis into a system of two dualities. Firstly, barbarous monarchy is distinguished from other civil polities, for the former is rule of arbitrary will, whereas the latter is rule of general law. Secondly, the ancient republic is distinguished from modern civilised monarchy and modern free government, for the former is prompted by the love of liberty and equality, the spirit of simplicity and frugality, and enthusiasm for war, while the latter encourages commerce, industry, luxury, refinement of arts and sciences, and the desire for honour and private interest.[87] Meanwhile, since the discussion on the nature of government is intertwined with that on the nature of "civilisation" itself, such analysis can also be read as a history of civil society complementing the theoretical analysis in the *Treatise*, through which Hume also probes into the rise of modern commerce and civility by clarifying its

[87] Similarly, Montesquieu also distinguishes despotism from regimes of laws at first, and then distinguishes republic from monarchy. While the principle of republic is virtue, Istvan Hont insightfully argues that, Montesquieu's model of monarchy is fundamentally Hobbesian-Mandevillean, for social order is achieved through making use of men's psychological desire for false honour. See *Politics in Commercial Society*, pp43-45. Thus the contrast between republic and monarchy is actually one between ancient and modern principles of government, rather than one between liberty and absolutism. Cf. Peter T. Manicas, "Montesquieu and the Eighteenth-Century Vision of the State", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer, 1981), pp313-347. Such a contrast also corresponds with Mandeville's contrast between small and large societies. Montesquieu does not take modern free government as a definite category, but to some extent, this position is filled by the "Constitution of England", which is also grounded on the "marvellous dexterity" of *amour proper*. Paul Rahe, *Montesquieu and the Logic of Liberty*, pp108-113.

political condition.[88] On the one hand, there is no doubt that commercial society has its roots in human nature, and that all the artificial conventions sustaining it result from the mutual engagement of human beings. Yet on the other hand, the rise of commercial society requires certain conditions which should not be taken for granted: Firstly, there should be a government executing justice, especially political institutions enabling rule of general laws, to completely secure the stability of property. Secondly, the practice of the rulers, including their legislative actions and policies, have to be favourable to commercial activities. In addition, the accumulation of wealth, the polished way of life, industry and trade must be encouraged by the rulers and the social norms. While the first condition provides the basic framework of all orderly civil commerce, it is the latter that substantially incite the desire for riches and refinements which drives the mechanism of modern economy.[89] According to Hume, the entire fulfilment of the three conditions is brought about by the historical combination of commerce and the power of the state.[90] The (in some sense) autonomous

[88] Cf. Dario Castiglione, "The Origin of Civil Government", p491. And, it is incorrect to say that for Hume the essential feature of civil or "civilised" society is "not in its political feature but in the organisation of material civilisation". Cf. Jean L. Cohen & Andrew Ataro, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, p90.

[89] Carl Wennerlind has rightly claimed that "property alone would not suffice to generate the greatest possible industry and consequent prosperity". Yet by taking for granted "the government's primary role was to … generate as much industry, commerce, and advancement in the arts as possible" (which is definitely untrue for ancient polities), Wennerlind still underestimates the crucial role of politics in the rise of modern commercial society. ("The Role of Political Economy in Hume's Moral Philosophy", p47, p56.)

[90] Hume's history of civil society deeply influenced the four-stage theory of his Scottish successors. A comparison with Adam Smith may help us better understand Hume's position. According to the standard four-stage theory, as a result of men's "desire of bettering our life", different modes of subsistence naturally follow one after another, and bring about the corresponding progress of politics. (Ronald Meek, *Social Sciences and the Ignoble Savages*.) However, while Smith presents the four-stage theory as a natural progress of society, he also provides an "unnatural and retrograde" explanation of the actual history of modern European commercial society. In the "unnatural and retrograde" history, the development of commercial society is tightly intertwined with wars and also changes of political institutions and policies. Modern commercial society is an outcome of sophisticated historical process, thus it is impossible to understand it without a political perspective. But for Smith, we had better understand such a history as an unintended process of getting rid of the political shackles on the natural improvement of economy, and from this point Smith argues against the Physiocrats that the actual history has its own legitimacy, so we should not attempt to "correct" the "unnatural" order according to the pure and simple natural law orders. (Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, ch6.) Comparatively speaking, Hume relies less on the idea of the natural evolution of civilisation. In his eyes,

sphere of civil society is from its very birth intertwined with the political.[91]

III. Commercial Society, The Modern State, and Hume's Mandevilleanism

Hume has keenly captured the characteristic of modern politics distinguishing it from its ancient counterpart, that trade has been "esteemed an affair of state". "The great opulence, grandeur, and military achievements of the two maritime powers seem first to have instructed mankind in the importance of an extensive commerce."[92] People are ready to admit that commerce is important, precisely because it is politically important. This phenomenon indicates the historical transformation of the relationship between economic activities and state power, or in other words, between private pursuit of riches (motivated by self-interest as well as by pride) and public benefits (in terms of security or "greatness" of the nation). While the unity of private passions and public order on moral level is accomplished through the artificial conventions of justice, allegiance, and politeness, here it comes again to a typically Mandevillean topic, and what is required now is a new mechanism of political economy.

Like Mandeville, Hume also well understands the radical change of the mode of war. Although Hume is not an advocate of standing army,[93] he

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the more sophisticated history seems to be the only possible history of modern civil society.

[91] Cf. Bruce Buchan, "Enlightenment Histories: Civilisation, War, and the Scottish Enlightenment", *The European Legacy*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2005), pp177-192; "Civilisation, Sovereignty, and War: The Scottish Enlightenment and International Relations", *International Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2006), pp175-192. Buchan correctly points out that the Scottish philosophers have a broader understanding of "civilisation" or "civil society" containing not only the diffusion of "civility" but also the development of state monopolization of violence, though his discussion focuses mainly on the domestic power struggle. Also see Norbert Elias's classic study on this topic, *The Civilising Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*.

[92] "Of Civil Liberty", *EMPL*, p89.

[93] John Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue*, Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985.

acknowledges that the antique *thymos* no longer plays a decisive role in modern military affairs. In an era of refinement and politeness, what supports the martial spirit is a "civilised" sense of honour, an artifice resulting from the manipulation of political authority and the influence of social norms, instead of the original anger or spirit of revenge which are more volatile and uncontrollable.[94] Moreover, courage itself is of less significance for modern wars. The invention of firearms and gunpowder brought about a "military revolution" which had thoroughly changed the tactics of war.[95] The strength of a modern army does not depend on the physical force or heroic performance of each individual soldier, but on the efficient organisation of men and various equipment. In other words, modern war is not merely war of men, but also of techniques and material resources. "Success in war has been nearly to be a matter of calculation."[96] Therefore, it is upon two pillars that the war capacity of modern states rely. First of all, the soldiers, even though they do not have great vigour, must be easily trained and disciplined. "Courage can neither have any duration, nor be of any use, when not accompanied with discipline and martial skill, which are seldom found among a barbarous people."[97] The requirement of discipline can be better fulfilled by armies composed of ordinary labourers than those composed of citizens (as masters of their slaves) and barons, for

[94] Maria Pia Paganelli & Reinhard Schumacher, "The Vigorous and Doux Soldier: Hume's Military Defence of Commerce", *History of European Ideas*, vol. 44, No. 8 (Aug., 2018), pp1141-1152.
[95] Cf. Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660", in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Clifford Rogers, NY: Routledge, 1995, pp13-35.
[96] *HOE*, II, p432.
[97] "Of Refinement in the Arts", *EMPL*, p274.

industry and trade have accustomed them with orderly commerce and rational behaviours. A reliable manufacture or tradesman is thus ready to act as a reliable soldier. Secondly, the nation itself must be populous and prosperous, able to afford enough human and material resources. In this sense, the defence of modern states depends even more on economic flourishing than ancient nations. And such prosperity is unavailable without the rise of commerce and luxury.

In comparison with Mandeville, Hume provides a more systematic explanation of the new political-economic mode. Mandeville only roughly discusses about the positive but unintended effects of hypocrisy, luxury, and squander, whereas Hume starts from an analysis of the basic structure of economy of civil society. “The bulk of every state must be divided into *husbandmen* and *manufacturers*. The former are employed in the culture of the land; the latter work up the materials furnished by the former, into all the commodities which are necessary or ornamental to human life.”[98] With the improvements of the arts of agriculture, the land may maintain a greater number of men than the peasants and manufactures immediately supplying the basic needs of human beings. Then there are two ways of making use of the superfluity. The ancient nations facing perpetual wars had to devote it entirely to military affairs, since only in this way could they obtain so strong a power from so small a territory. However, in Hume’s eyes, such a scheme was “violent,

[98] “Of Commerce”, *EMPL,* p256.

and contrary to the more natural and usual course of things".[99] Like Mandeville's purified beehive, Hume also imagined a "fortified camp" in which each individual was infused with "so martial a genius, and such a passion for public good, as to make every one willing to undergo the greatest hardships for the sake of the public".[100] Hume concedes that in this condition, the public spirit might alone be a sufficient spur to industry, and to banish arts and luxury might be an advantageous policy. But "as these principles are too disinterested and too difficult to support",[101] it on the one hand required intensive public education and strong moral pressure to work against private avarice, and on the other hand achieved only limited success, providing ancient nations with no more than a fragile system of public finance. As is pointed out by Hume, both aspects make the ancient political-economic mode unfit in modern times. Citizens ardent in their political liberty, living in a small territory against which invasion might take place at any time, are easier to be implanted with public spirit, whereas people in a more "large and polished" nation are unlikely to be.[102] More importantly, the industry spurred by such a passion, hardly covering the cost of an ancient army, is much less than what is needed by modern wars.

Hume's analysis here is consistent with the principles displayed in his philosophical works. It is passion rather than reason that motivates our

[99] Ibid, p259.
[100] Ibid, p262.
[101] Ibid, p262.
[102] Benjamin Constant underlines this point in his famous comparison between the ancients and the moderns. See his "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns", in *Political Writings*, tr. & ed. by Biancamaria Fontana, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp308-328. Interestingly, while Constant discerns from this fact an inclination of the moderns to give up wars, Hume detects a transformation of the mode of war.

actions.[103] Human beings tend to be indolent if there were no passions exciting them. Yet different passions differ in their motivational force upon particular actions. As “a motive too remote and too sublime to affect the generality of mankind, and operate with any force in actions so contrary to private interest”,[104] the regard to public interest cannot function as the sufficient motive of justice, and nor could it alone arouse industry. “Avarice, or the desire of gain, is an universal passion, which operates at all times, in all places, and upon all persons.”[105] Even with the help of pride, i.e. a sense of honour in serving the public, the public spirit still puts the individuals in a contradiction with their private avarice, which weakens the strength of the former. “They have no temptation, therefore, to increase their skill and industry; since they cannot exchange the superfluity for any commodities, which may serve either to their pleasure or vanity. A habit of indolence naturally prevails.”[106] In the long run, the want of manufacture and trade hinders rather than promotes the greatness of the body politic.

In order to secure its military capacity, the modern state must turn to a different scheme, devoting its economic surplus to luxury and trade. At first glance, this seems a mere consumption of the human and material resources. Nevertheless,

The superfluity, which arises from their labour, is not lost; but is exchanged

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[103] *THN*, 2.3.3.4, SBN415.
[104] *THN*, 3.2.1.11, SBN481.
[105] “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences”, *EMPL*, p113; Edward Soule, “Hume on Economic Policy and Human Nature”, *Hume Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Apr., 2000), pp143-157.
[106] “Of Commerce”, *EMPL*, p261.

> with manufactures for those commodities, which men's luxury now makes the covet. By this means, land furnishes a great deal more of the necessaries of life, than what suffices for those who cultivate it. In times of peace and tranquillity, these superfluity goes to the maintenance of manufacturers, and the improvers of liberal arts. But it is easy for the public to convert many of these manufacturers into soldiers, and maintain them by the superfluity, which arises from the labour of the farmers.[107]

According to Hume's explanation, such a political-economic system consists of two basic mechanisms. Firstly, there is an interaction between luxury and industry. Luxury is not only an expense of wealth serving the pleasures of life, but also enlarges the employment of the manufacturers and tradesmen, as well as incentivises the increase of production of all labourers. Secondly, there is a transformation between peacetime finance and wartime finance. The increment of economy created in peacetime is used to cover the cost of the wars. The mobilisation is accomplished easily by levying a tax, which obliges the people to retrench unnecessary consumption and indirectly leads the labour to military service or agriculture. In Hume's words, therefore, "the increase and consumption of all the commodities, … are a kind of *storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service".[108] It is noteworthy that the above mechanism also implies the end of the perpetual war ancient nations were faced with. Modern states are not always fighting, yet from

[107] Ibid, p261.
[108] Ibid, p272.

the distinction between peace and war they obtain stronger power of fighting. In turn, the prosperity of commercial society and progress of civilisation are promoted in neither perpetual war nor perpetual peace (of Chinese style)[109], but in relatively peaceful states preparing for war.

From such a political-economic system Hume draws a significant conclusion. “As private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men.”[110] Modern civil society successfully unites the happiness of the individuals and the greatness of the state. Additionally, according to Hume’s theory of moral evaluation, industry can be approved as a virtue because of the benefits it produces for both the subject and others, while luxury should not be condemned as a vice unless “it engrosses all a man’s expence, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune”.[111] The paradox between “private vices” and “public benefits” in Mandeville’s “luxury thesis”, is now transformed into the harmony between private and public interests. Therefore, all the three forms of the Mandevillean Maxim have their counterparts, in a technically more delicate and morally less shocking version but meanwhile maintaining all Mandeville’s original insights, in Hume’s theory.

[109] About perpetual peace and the stagnation of China, see footnote 79.
[110] Ibid, p255.
[111] “Of Refinement in the Arts”, *EMPL*, p279.

Conclusion

The purpose of our above discussion is not to clarify Hume's contribution in the debates of luxury or his critique of classic virtues, as many scholars have already done. Rather, it attempts to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Hume's theory of civil society. For Mandeville, political power, civilised lifestyle, and economic prosperity are combined in civil society, while the mechanisms underlying them, the "fear thesis", "pride thesis", and "luxury thesis" are unified in the Maxim "Private Vices, Public Benefits". Now, the similarity between Mandeville and Hume implies some deeper unity between Hume's theory of human nature, his moral philosophy and political economy. A common principle can be found behind Hume's analysis of various elements of civil society, namely the artificial exploitation and cultivation of men's society-regarding self-love.[112] With the conventions of justice, allegiance and politeness, the avaricious and proud human beings find common interest as well as moral approbation in orderly and complaisant intercourse. Likewise, the policies and social norms encouraging commerce and industry also lead the individuals' desire for riches and enjoyment to the power of the state, though the economic mechanism itself is not man-made. In this sense, it is with considerable truth to say the logic of "unsocial sociability" is best demonstrated by modern commercial society, for it even runs through the operation of the fiscal-military state.

[112] At bottom, as we have discussed in previous chapters, this principle is first clearly proposed by Hobbes.

Yet it is no less important that, the formation of modern commercial society should not be isolated from its specific political-historical background, nor should we read into Hume's theory of civil society a project of distinguishing a spontaneous economic society from the state. It is the state that provides the institutional conditions in which prosperous commerce is made possible, and it is the state's desire for power that motivated the encouragement of economic activities. For Hume, the mechanism of the artificial cultivation of men's society-regarding self-love matches perfectly with the process of modern state building.[113] In brief, both modern commercial society and modern civilised individuals are always embedded in modern politics. Notwithstanding his attention to the autonomous sphere of socio-economic activities, Hume is still on the path made by Mandeville, and Hobbes.

[113] In comparison with Hume, the seventeenth-century natural lawyers, even Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, and John Locke who had developed sophisticated thoughts about property right, international commerce and the civilizational aspect of civil society, have no clear idea of a commercial society grounded on restless production and consumption with great prosperity and military strength. (Maybe C. B. Macpherson could read into these thinkers an anticipation of modern capitalism, but his ideological interpretation has been adequately criticised by scholars. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*; cf. James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. As is pointed out by Tully, the life in Locke's civil society is still of agricultural style. Due to the same reason, besides, we should also be careful about Hont's connection of Pufendorf with Scottish theorists of commercial society.)

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to provide a balanced understanding of civil society, the key word of modern political thought that describes the modern form of men's living together, over and against the non-political, economic view. Focusing on Hume, the representative thinker of the Scottish Enlightenment who is usually seen as the apologist of men's self-interest and the autonomy of commercial society, we nonetheless read him through the tradition of Hobbes and Mandeville, who are often considered as theorists underlining men's unsociability and the necessity of political power. In fact, this re-reading of Hume is also a re-reading of Hobbes and Mandeville. From our perspective, Hobbes, Mandeville and Hume are all theorists of unsocial sociability and civil society. On the one hand, their political philosophy starts from the same point of departure, society-regarding self-love, which is a combination of desire for self-preservation and pride. On the other hand, their political philosophy achieves the same destination, the political unity in which individuals lead a civilised life and devote themselves to various socio-economic activities, which is a synthesis of political society, civilised society, and potentially bourgeois/economic society. And the path connecting the point of departure and the destination, for them all, is men's artifice.

It is undeniable that from Hobbes to Mandeville and Hume the exact meaning of artifice undergoes some important changes. For Hobbes, the

“artificial” equals the “political”, though by “the political” Hobbes means more than the coercive power of the state. The civil society has common power keeping individuals in awe as well as a public rate of worth redirecting their desire for honour. Importantly, in a typically “artificial commonwealth” rather than natural, personal dominion, both the commonness of the “common power” and the publicity of the “public rate of worth” require the true unity of will within the civil society. Hobbes argues that such a unity is obtained through the juridical relation of authorisation and representation. Acting as an artificial person bearing the person of each individual, the sovereign is recognised by the subjects and enabled to make use of their power. The subjects, correspondingly, also experience a splitting of their personality. When obeying the laws and the sovereign’s commands, they are acting as artificial persons, for the sovereign is responsible for their actions. While acting in the sphere where laws are silent, they remain natural persons exerting their private liberty. Therefore, the construction of artificial persons serves as the foundation of the artificial social order.

When it comes to Mandeville, the juridical theory of “person” is replaced by a socio-psychological analysis of the self. According to Mandeville, men’s natural self, namely their instinctive qualities, are ugly and mean, whereas they may connect some learnt manners and external possessions to themselves and draw their own value from them, in this way the artificial self is constituted. Mandeville then attributes the “governability” of men to the artificial process of

education, which redirects men's pride, their desire of embellishing their artificial selves, to behaviours beneficial for the public. Albeit the government still plays an indispensable role in determining the content and endorsing the force of the social norms, yet the norms are not entirely uttered by the politicians and executed by the coercive power. Rather, they evolve gradually from men's everyday civil commerce, and are enforced through the pressure of public opinion. Specifically, in modern society it is the refined lifestyle that is honoured, thus the adornment of the artificial self takes the form of politeness and luxury, which further propels the economic mechanism of consumption and production. Therefore, Mandeville's insistence of the artificiality of men's socio-economic activities, and his addition of socio-economic connotations to the term "artifice", constitute the two sides of the same coin, and give rise to Mandeville's transformative status in the history of political thought.

Mandeville's revision of Hobbes is developed by Hume. From Hume's viewpoint, artifice includes not only political coercion and the redirection of pride, but also the redirection of self-interest (i.e. justice). Moreover, Hume defines the essence of those artifices with the terms "convention" and "virtue". On the one hand, "convention" captures the historical evolution of the social norms taking place gradually and unintendedly. On the other hand, "virtue" means that justice, politeness and allegiance, being artificial, are still qualities with moral merits, though what human beings actually perform might be some hypocrisy. In comparison with Hobbes's cold-hearted absolutism and Mandeville's

provocative moral paradox, Hume's picture of civil society seems much less shocking.

Yet some of Hobbes's and Mandeville's core ideas are accepted by Hume and well integrated into his theorising of the socio-economic aspect of civil society. From a static perspective, Hume claims that government functions as the ultimate foundation of civil society by re-constituting the convention of justice, which was damaged at the Hobbesian moment during the transformation from small to large and polished society. The political authority also contributes to shaping the artificial aspect within each individual. This is achieved not only by public education, but also by providing a favourable condition in which the motivational force of men's sense of morality and honour is enhanced. Therefore, only in a political society could most individuals obey the social order while not coerced by the political power. From a dynamic and historical perspective, Hume pointed out that modern civil society, characterised by prosperous commerce, is not a natural embodiment of "commercial sociability" but requires a certain political impetus. The basic order of justice and allegiance does not automatically generate economic prosperity until there are strict rule of law as well as commerce-friendly policies and social norms. The latter conditions are not realised until commerce becomes necessary for supporting the power of the state in domestic and international struggles. Though the constitutional reformation and cultural transformation in favour of commerce might not be attributed to particular rulers, yet it is the concern for

political effects that enables the rise of modern economy. In a nutshell, modern commercial society is born at the same time with the modern state.

Such a complicated understanding of civil society and its artificiality is not always appreciated in the history of political thought. Seeing it as a shortcoming needs to be overcome, Smith traces the origin of justice instead to men's natural resentment and re-emphasises the naturalness of orderly social interactions.[1] After Smith, the four-stage conjectural history also regards the progress of civilisation, based on the evolution of modes of subsistence, as a natural process determined by human nature.[2] With the discovery of the "system of natural liberty" and the formation of modern economics and sociology, the synthesis of political, civilised and bourgeois society is soon sublated by the distinction between the self-sustaining socio-economic sphere and the government. This is not to say such a development necessarily leads to a narrow concern for economy and an overlooking of the significance of politics. Hegel, by distinguishing civil society from the state, nonetheless stresses the dignity of the state even more thoroughly than Hobbes. But unlike his analysis of civil society, Hegel's theory of the state is not generally accepted by the mainstream of modern liberalism and socialism. And, although 20th century has witnessed a revival of the idea of "civil society" which has a political and normative concern for both freedom of association and democratic

[1] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, II.ii.2.1.
[2] Cf. Christopher Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ch3; *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ch2; Frank Palmeri, *State of Nature, Stages of Society*.

participation, yet civil society is defined more narrowly as a specific part of the social domain. To a large extent, the contemporary theory of civil society, whether in individualistic or communitarian form, is a defence of principles of pluralism and self-rule against the invasion of the state.[3] Specifically, in Eastern European countries and China (especially in 1990s and 2000s), the discussion of civil society contributes to the criticism of the totalitarian state and the reflection on the road to modernisation.[4]

Reading Hume in the Hobbesian-Mandevillean tradition and highlighting the artificial and political dimension inherent in civil society, we are not going to re-politicise this concept. Nor would we like to return to the classic version of civil society before the rise of commercial society, or the Rousseauian version against the corruptive development of commercial society, or the totalitarian version putting commercial society entirely under the control of the state. Our purpose is to remind the readers that modern civil society is not so natural, autonomous and spontaneous as it sometimes appears. Rather, it is supported by a complex dialectic of society-retarding self-love and political impetus that should not be taken for granted. It requires combination as well as balance between human nature and social discipline, private commerce and public power, prudential deliberation and moral commitment. As an artifice, it is the fruit of elaborate cultivation and even some contingent historical occasions.

[3] E.g. Ernest Gellner, *The Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*, NY: Penguin Books, 1996; Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, tr. by Thomas Burger, Oxford : Polity, 1999; Charles Taylor, "Invoking Civil Society".

[4] Cf. Zhenglai Deng ed., *State and Civil Society: The Chinese Perspective*, Singapore: World Scientific, 2011.

This is what we could still learn from Hume after more than 200 years.

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