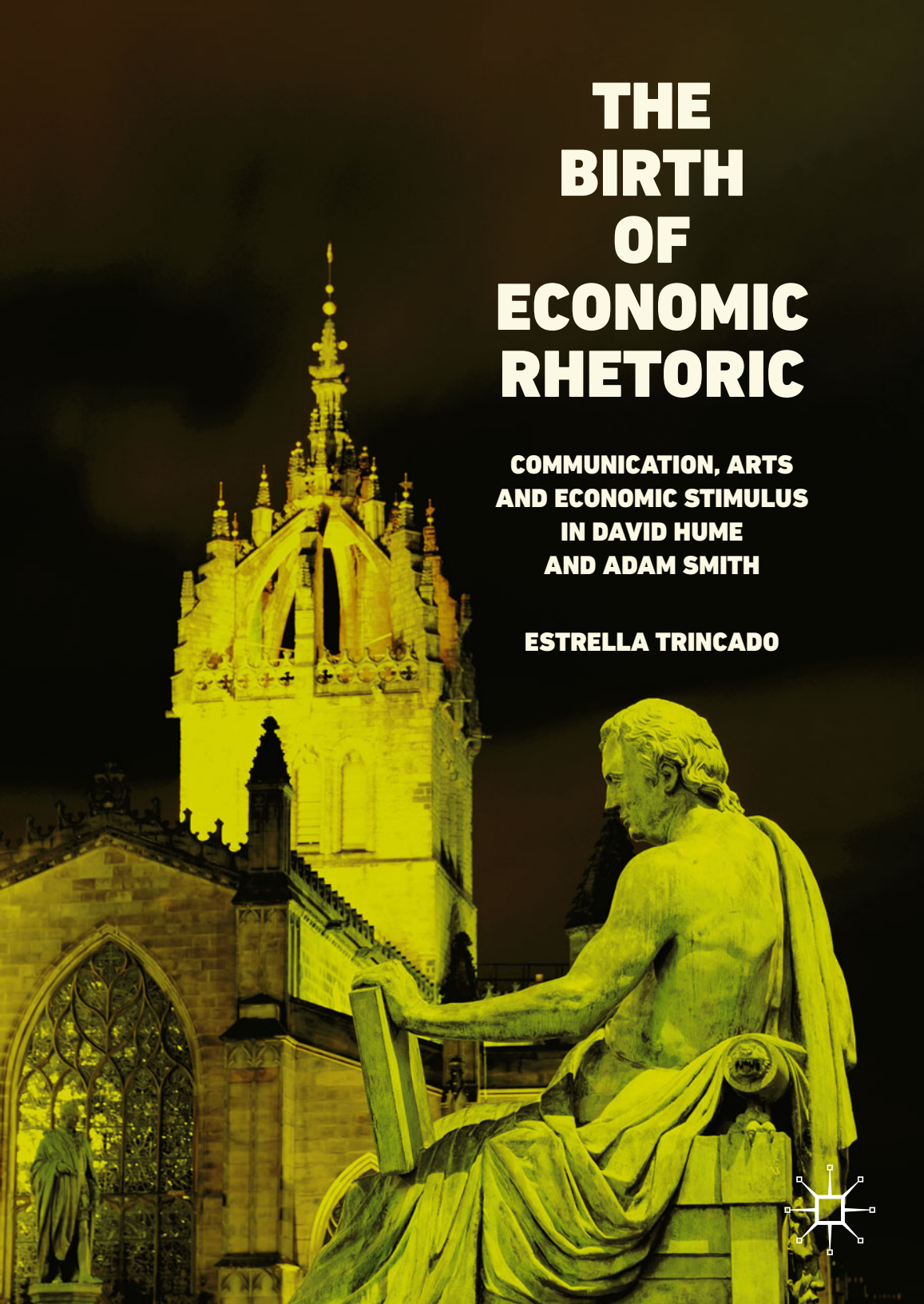
THE BIRTH OF ECONOMIC RHETORIC

COMMUNICATION, ARTS AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS IN DAVID HUME AND ADAM SMITH

ESTRELLA TRINCADO



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Communication, Arts and Economic Stimulus in David Hume and Adam Smith

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The Setting of the Play

1.1 Introduction

This book deals with the Scottish Enlightenment in an innovative way, relating Rhetoric, rationality and economics. It contributes to the comparison between the theory of David Hume and Adam Smith and shows, against some recent scholarship, that interest lies more in the differences between Hume and Smith than in their similarities. The birth of economic rationality determines the roots of different rhetorical usages of economic science. Therefore, this chapter sets the scene in the Scottish Enlightenment and shows that authors from this period had different concepts of time, which meant that the newborn baby of Rhetoric had different growth paths. In Chapter 2, we analyse the friendship of Hume and Smith, pointing out the similarities between them, but also the differences, which implied long-term bonds and commitments. In particular, in their objective to revolutionize knowledge and faith, Hume and Smith displayed different literary strategies. These different strategies also led to dissimilar appraisals of religion and the exhibition of piety. In Chapter 3, we provide an interpretation of Hume's thought, supplying an explanation for the more important

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elements that have traditionally defined his philosophy: his scepticism, his conservatism and his doctrine of utility. In Chapter 4, we prove that Adam Smith criticizes all of those theses presented by Hume: he was a realist and he gives a different definition of perception and pleasure, sympathy and rationality. Actually, Hume was describing "the mortal self" of Smith, but for Smith the active, ever present self, is the principal actor of morality. In Chapter 5, we discuss Rhetoric and acknowledge differences also in the early formation of language, the basis for rationality. Then, literature, imitative arts and the theatre have different objectives in the theory of Hume and Adam Smith. Chapter 6 shows the consequences in economic theory of the different philosophies: the concept of time and language affect the objective of economic growth and also affect the instrument of money, blood and channel of production and growth. The book concludes with some important conclusions to be drawn on current philosophy. The comparison between these two great and fundamental philosophers, David Hume and Adam Smith, is a good setting for reconsidering the path the world will take in the future.

1.2 The Scottish Enlightenment

Recently, the dominant tendency has sought to connect Scottish thought of the eighteenth century with the general Enlightenment, particularly the French. A first group of pioneering historians such as G. Bryson, D. Forbes and H. Trevor-Roper introduced the expression the European Enlightenment movement.[1] However, more recent studies have questioned the validity of such a reading. The existence of a Scottish Enlightenment with its own characteristics clearly distinguished from the French or British Enlightenment is now evident.[2] As against the French Enlightenment, the Scottish Enlightenment broke

[1]Bryson (1968), Forbes (1975), and Trevor-Roper (1972, 2010).

[2]See, for example, Bryson (1968), Hont and Ignatieff (1983), Skinner (1979), Campbell and Skinner (1982), and Berry (1997).

with the a priori reason of the Middle Ages to go into the study of common sense and the common world, to individual perception instead of the perception of an Almighty and inapprehensible Creator of human existence.

In the opinion of Berry, Scotland was affected by the loss of the Scottish Parliament, as well as the loss of the capital in 1707 with the Act of the Union.[3] Although the Scottish Parliament had decamped for London early in the century, Scotland remained the legal and ecclesiastical capital. Edinburgh was at the time one of the most cosmopolitan cities in all of Britain, boasting a rich cultural life and a group of prominent literati. This prompted the novelist Tobias Smollett to call it "a hot-bed of genius". The Union brought times of peace, but the enlightened Scottish feared their disadvantageous position with respect to England. The concern of creating in Scotland a national character related and different from the dominant English culture led to the insistence on the need to stimulate everything that contributes to refinement in interpersonal and social relationships such as the creation of clubs and universities. The authentic heart of Scottish painting is shaped by the theoretical background developed by a heterogeneous group of authors known as Scottish literati (philosophers or moralists): Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson are some of the best-known characters, but no less significant are Hugh Blair, John Miller, William Robertson, Lord Kames (Henry Home) and poets and artists such as Robert Burns and Henry Raeburn.[4]

Robertson reinforces the sense of intellectual unity that, in his opinion, the Scottish Enlightenment movement has, which made "scientific" efforts in the fields of moral philosophy, historical narrative and "political economy".[5] One of the issues that most worried all those authors was the complex relationship between historical progress, economic or material, and the no less desirable moral improvement of the human

[3]Berry (1997, 8–19).

[4]Schneider (1967) and Gill (2006).

[5]Robertson (2000).

being.[6] From this relationship arise, in turn, certain paradoxical situations that must be accepted as they are the result of one's own historical circumstances.

The field of moral philosophy was always one of the favourites of the Scottish philosophers of the eighteenth century. The key international figure is undoubtedly Francis Hutcheson, considered by Campbell to be the authentic "father" of the Scottish Enlightenment.[7] One of the main problems addressed in common from the moral sphere—but also from different angles and with confrontations by authors such as Hutcheson, Hume and Smith—was the challenge of Mandeville's provocative "cynicism" to the belief in innately benevolent moral dispositions and solidarity among people. According to Scottish Enlightenment authors, the moral philosopher should inquire whether such benevolent qualities could arise from a society exposed to the temptations brought by material opulence. They needed to discern if sociability, virtue and justice are natural to humanity or artificial constructions of the individual. Although it was not an incompatible approach in all cases with the religious sentiment, in the end its more radical versions would be incompatible. The "moral philosophy" consisted largely of an effort to apply the basic principles of "experimental philosophy" to the economic, political and social spheres. As against Hobbes, who based morals and political philosophy on a priori reasoning, first Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton, and then Hume tried to create a moral science based on the experimental method. Thus, Hume's science of man sought to propose "experiments" that would contribute to unveiling the common mechanisms (such as the "association" principle) of individual psychology and social life.

In the Scottish Enlightenment, this experimental method was applied to the social self, and the idea of reality as a mirror presented by Hume was key: "the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each other's emotions but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may

[6]Rosales (2003).

[7]Campbell and Skinner (1982).

decay away by insensible degrees".[8] The meaning of morality was in the eighteenth century still very much anchored in the public sphere since in the period the authentic solitary individual was still exceptional and relative. The eighteenth-century thinkers of the Scottish enlightenment when they spoke of human passions divided them between personal and those related to happiness or survival of the group. They sought for a balance between both passions. For example, sympathetic passions were not always positive: going too far would lead to a repressive intolerance of differences, cultural fanaticism or aggression towards foreigners. A "sympathetic" nationalism emerged: the moral philosophers were convinced that it was the social bonds, the small-scale sympathetic exchanges and not the wisdom of the ruler or the laws, that gradually united individuals into a larger national unity. So, the concept of the nation was to be relevant to reinforce people's moral attitudes.[9]

1.3 The Birth of Rhetoric

Rhetoric has been defined as the art or study of using language and discourse effectively and persuasively; it may also be bombast or excessive use of ornamentation and contrivance in spoken or written discourse. The first concept, which implies persuasion, may be understood in two different ways: language used as an instrument for making someone come to your terms aiming at the search for some utility, be it more wealth or more contacts, influences or power; but language can also be an instrument of communication with the common-to-all world. Then, it is the raw material for creating new situations or sharing memories with other fellow creatures.

These different perceptions of Rhetoric and language imply also different philosophies of life. These distinct views were clearly distinguishable at the very moment in which Rhetoric began to be

[8]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: II: VI: 152.

[9]Dwyer (1998).

considered an experimental science, precisely the period of the Scottish Enlightenment.[10] Scottish Enlightenment Rhetoric is usually linked to the beginning of Phenomenalism, to bundle theory, empiricism and logical positivism. This implies a tradition in an array of authors such as Hobbes, Berkeley, Locke and Hume, who would after bring about the philosophy of Emmanuel Kant (1724–1804). But phenomenalism is a radical form of empiricism based on subjective idealism. Hume's linguistic theory was influenced by phenomenalism and Hume subsequently influenced analytical philosophy. According to Kant, space and time, which are the priori forms and preconditions of all sensory experience, refer to objects only to the extent that these are considered as phenomena, but do not represent the things in themselves. This does not exclude the existence of objects (noumena), but Kant never proved it.[11]

During the Scottish Enlightenment, however, there was a heated debate on philosophical subjects, especially on Rhetoric and the construction of language. Philosophers were resisting the definition of perception by external impressions presented by Hobbes and Berkeley. They were rebutting the concept of the self as a bundle of sensations. In this sense, Adam Smith provided a quite original philosophy of perception and language against the theory of David Hume. However, these philosophical essays have not been studied much. This neglect is quite unfortunate as Smith's first classes were on Rhetoric. These public lectures on Rhetoric were delivered in Edinburgh between 1748 and 1751 and in January 1751, Smith was offered a position at his alma mater, Glasgow University, where he held the Chair of Logic. Then, Francis Hutcheson's successor as Chair of Moral Philosophy, Thomas Craigie, was forced to step down because of ill health and Smith occupied the Chair of Moral Philosophy for nearly twelve years, from April 1752 to January 1764. Smith published his moral theory in 1759 (The Theory of Moral Sentiments, TMS), his economics is from 1776 (The Wealth of Nations, WN), and some philosophical writings of his were published in 1795. The latter is a posthumous publication using unprepared

[10]McKenna (2016).

[11]Kant (1998).

material from Smith's papers. Finally, his theory on law was published as class lessons (Lectures on Jurisprudence, LJ) partly in 1896 by Edwin Cannan and partly in 1976 in the Glasgow Edition of his works and correspondence. However, his lessons on Rhetoric were not discovered until 1958.

We endeavour to give credit here to Smith's contributions to Rhetoric. But the philosophical description of language is linked to a wider social area. Actually, Smith was trying to defend realism against phenomenalism. According to Vivenza, Smith deliberately used the terms appearance and phenomenon interchangeably.[12] For Smith, phenomenon is only the image left by reality in our minds, which can sometimes be misleading. But there is a common-to-all world that deserves our attention and care. Distance between image and reality may lead us to self-deception.

By the same token, words change their meaning depending on the moment and the audience.[13] And, as Givone claims, with language life opens onto itself.[14] Smith demonstrates the importance of the spectator in language, the same as he did in the areas of ethics, justice and economics. However, as Darwall points out, according to Smith, the perspective of moral judgement, is not strictly a *spectator's* standpoint, as the concept of the impartial spectator implies moral reality and propriety beyond the fleeing sensations.[15]

1.4 Concepts of Time

Wilcox argues that modern historians generally operate under the assumption of a continuous time line,[16] although in the twentieth century, discontinuity has increasingly preoccupied theorists.[17] The

[12]Vivenza (2001, 13).
[13]Putnam (1975).
[14]Givone (1990, 11–12).
[15]Darwall (1999).
[16]Wilcox (1987, 4).
[17]Eisenstein (1967, 36, 48).

post-modern concept of time is characterized by non-linearity, discontinuity and fragmentation.[18] But in the Scottish Enlightenment period, there was a continuous perception of time. Through the "experimental method", the proper structure of inherited social institutions was studied to see the factors that stop or encourage their advancement—e.g., in terms of better conditions of justice and economic equity, but also of religious tolerance and political stability. The dilemma of taking social reality as given led in the Scottish Enlightenment to a "conservative" modality. But there was also a "progressive" mode—the future of human perfectibility, which was "solved" by some of the Scottish authors by accepting a more complex than usual notion of "progress". It was based on "the theory of intended or unintended consequences". Besides conservative and progressive sides, a break from utopias, a detachment from the past and the future, was also defended. Differences, not similarities, must be emphasized in the debates of the Scottish Enlightenment period, and we may consider time perception as the basis for these differences.[19] Hume and Smith coincide in criticizing the idea of human perfectibility and utopias but they differ in their own perception of time.

On the one hand, Hume's conception of time is similar to what has been called "Greco-Latin or Dionysian conception".[20] In 1872, Nietzsche distinguished previous concepts of time between Apollonian and Dionysian or Bacchic.[21] The Bacchic mentality is catastrophist and emphasizes how man is always returning to the same point, to the starting point, always looking for the same pleasures, committing, in its wake, identical mistakes. By continually reemerging from the oblivion of the past, men can repeat habit without awareness of mistakes. We enjoy "over stubble of the dead" and, after that joy, there is a residue of melancholy and unreason. Time has a circular shape.

[18]See Miller (2001, 2), in special with regard to Marx's discontinuism. See also Adam (1990) and Kellner (1975).

[19]Trincado (2006).

[20]See Trincado (2013).

[21]Nietzsche (1993).

So, human beings are chased by a *spectre*, a distrust of "the causes from which his existence derives" and the "condition to which he will return after death".[22] That shadow is so close to the skin, that man clings to the security of what was alive. We admire the past because its very capacity to exist makes it virtuous. We fear the future because we dread our own death and the possible disappearance of everything known. In addition, we are not apt to imagine that our posterity will exceed us, or equal our ancestors.[23] The distance in time, which does not discourage our imagination altogether, inspires greatness. By gathering forces to overcome the opposition produced by distance, we strengthen the mind. In this way, our respect for the past increases when it is farther away, and our fear of the future when it is more distant. Hume, therefore, explicitly rejects the "Judeo-Christian conception" of society, focused on the future. Actually, he displays a conservative idea of time.

Hume did not believe that progress is inevitable. In *History of England*, he states that he will reveal "the great mixture of accident, which commonly concurs with a small ingredient of wisdom and foresight"[24] in the emergence of civilized society. However, as in the *Political Discourses*, Hume firmly defends the superiority of the modern world. He was against the idea of a fall from ancient glory. For him, most of English history had been a story of disorder, oppression, poverty and dependence. The uncultivated nations are inferior in Government, civil, military and ecclesiastical, but also in Morals. *History of England* was highly regarded and in his writings Hume was trying to develop as previously noted a science of human nature using "the experimental method". As it is impossible to run controlled laboratory experiments on every aspect of human nature, Hume noted the recourse is to "glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life and take them as they appear in the common course of the world".[25] As Hume writes, history enables us to see the entire

[22]Hume (1964b), Treatise: 1: IV: VII: 548, ed Green and Grose.

[23]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: III: VIII: 213.

[24]Hume (1778, 489).

[25]Hume (1975), THN Intro 10, 6.

"human race, from the beginning of time, which passes, as it were, in review before us".[26] Hume did not refrain from passing judgement on the actions and beliefs of historical figures. He was a master at sympathizing with great historical actors and unveiling their motivations and he presented the strongest arguments on both sides of the question at hand.

Adam Smith's theory, though, can be labelled as a present theory. Smith shows that the search for what has been useful in the past or is supposed to be useful in the future is not the grounds for human action. The first movement of a human being is not due to a past or a future image, but to the instinctive desire to move that does not depend on past experiences.[27] Smith concluded that, through an understanding of the value of "Time, the great and universal comforter",[28] self-command could dominate passion, enjoying beforehand that tranquillity which we foresee the course of time will restore to us in the end. Self-command allows sentiment to emerge, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within. Besides, for Smith, perception is not only large and wide, but it is also "depth" perception that requires the passage of time and a detachment of the self from volume and time.[29] Then, the art that most represents the observer of the present is sculpture, voluminous reality. Finally, Time is also related to economics. As Foucault says:

> From Smith onward, the time of economics was no longer to be the cyclical time of alternating impoverishment and wealth; nor the linear increase achieved by astute policies, constantly introducing slight increases in the amount of circulating specie so that they accelerated production at a faster rate than they raised prices; it was to be the interior time of an organic structure which grows in accordance with its own necessity and develops in accordance with autochthonous laws – the time of capital and production.[30]

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[26]Hume (1964a), EMPL 566.

[27]Smith (1980), External Senses 133–168.

[28]Smith (1976), TMS III.iii.32, 151.

[29]Smith (1980), External Senses 50–52, 150–152.

[30]Foucault (1970, 245).

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2

Hume and Smith, Truth and Experience

2.1 Friendship Is in Feeling a Connection

According to Dugald Stewart, it is not clear when Hume and Smith met, possibly during Smith's first years at Oxford University in 1749[1] or in 1752.[2] They maintained a warm friendship from that very moment until the death of Hume, in 1776.

Hume's personality may be known by his own words. Rasmussen comments that Hume counselled a young friend in 1735 that "there is nothing to be learnt from a Professor, which is not to be met with in Books… I see no reason why we shou'd either go to a University, more than to any other place, or ever trouble ourselves about the Learning or Capacity of the Professor".[3] This quote is a sample of the way in which Hume understood language and knowledge. David Hume spent the years from the ages of fourteen to twenty-two in independent study, immersing

[1]See Rasmussen (2017).

[2]Dugald Stewart in Smith (1980, Vol. II): EPS, Scott (1992). See Ross (2007).

[3]Rasmussen (2017, 18). Cited from David Hume to James Birch, 18 May 1735, in E. C. Mossner, "Hume at La Flèche, 1735: An Unpublished Letter", *University of Texas Studies in English* 37 (1958): 32.

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himself in works of philosophy and literature. Due to this study, he went into a "disease of the learned": morbid introspection became auto-intoxication, the "vapours" or lowness of spirits, a disease of the mind which he vainly imagined was restricted to the idle rich. Hume became worried over some scurvy spots that broke out on his fingers.[4] "I found that I was not able to follow out any Train of Thought, by one continued Stretch of View, but by repeated Interruptions".[5] He only recovered from the disease of the learned by activity and conversation as "the free Conversation of a friend is what I would prefer to any Entertainment".[6] In the process of recovering from "the disease of the learned", Hume worked as a merchant's clerk in Briston, but he soon found the post "totally unsuitable". According to Rasmussen, Hume seems to have been found equally unsuitable by his employer: he was fired for correcting his master's grammar.[7]

Regarding Smith's personality, Carlyle said that "Smith, though perhaps only second to David [Hume] in learning and ingenuity, was far inferior to him in conversational talents… He was the most absent man in company that I ever saw[8]". The term that seems to appear most frequently in descriptions of Smith's demeanour is "absent". Carlyle adds, though, that Smith's travels abroad in the 1760s eventually "cured him in part of those foibles.[9] Like Hume, he preferred the company of a few select companions to large groups; and he also made friends very easily due to a sort of bonhomie. Similarly, Hume occasionally exhibited a kind of amiable distractedness. For instance, he was sometimes observed to stare vacantly into the distance, a habit that would later unnerve Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

[4]Mossner (1980, 66–80).

[5]Mossner (1980, 70). See also Mossner (1980, 66) and Livingston (1998).

[6]David Hume to Michael Ramsay, 4 July 1727, in HL, I, 9.

[7]Rasmussen (2017, 21).

[8]Carlyle (1860, 279).

[9]Ibid., 280.

2.2 But Allure Is in Differences

In the important recent contribution by Rasmussen, the author gives a very good report of Hume and Smith's friendship.[10] Rasmussen seems to assert that Smith was a Humean, only with some little questioning points of what Hume defended. According to Rasmussen, Smith regarded Hume's theory as the most accurate yet developed but still a bit reductive or incomplete.[11] According to the author, Smith thus sought to correct and extend Hume's views to provide a more comprehensive picture.[12] We will claim that this interpretation is a misunderstanding of Smith's motives. As Matson comments, Rasmussen does not offer a convincing argument as to *why* Smith would give a one-sided presentation of Hume's thinking (for instance, suppressing the role of agreeableness in his theory).[13] Actually, Smith was very clearly criticizing Hume and presenting an alternative theory, something of which Hume was perfectly aware.[14] Thus, he reproached Smith in a letter written in 1759: "Robertson's Book [History of Scotland, 1759] has great Merit; but it was visible that he profited here by the Animosity against me. I suppose the Case was the same with you".[15]

Smith was devoted to the construction of a full social theory whose basis confronted the foundations of Hume's theory, or at least theories that assumed that men act searching for utility. Some scholars still label Smith as a utilitarian or a "contemplative utilitarian".[16] Others, though, acknowledge that Smith was a "non-utilitarian", for instance, Haakonssen and Vivenza, and recently Fleischacker, Montes and Griswold.[17] Many even claim that

[10]Rasmussen (2017, 18).

[11]Smith (1976), TMS VII.ii.3.21, 306, and VII.iii.3.17, 327

[12]See also Hanley (2016).

[13]Matson (2017).

[14]Raynor (1984).

[15]Corr. 44.

[16]Campbell (1971) and Campbell and Ross (1981) or, more recently, Ross (1995, 167).

[17]Haakonssen (1981, 135), Vivenza (2001, 97–104), Fleischacker (2004, 145), Montes (2004, 51, 114–122), and Griswold (1999, 540). For the utilitarian principles in Smith, see Levy (1995).

Hume was not a utilitarian.[18] So, labelling them as utilitarian is really misleading. Obviously, the word utilitarianism has some negative connotations that many try to avoid and nail down. Then, we need to distinguish here between the restrictive way utilitarianism emerged just after Hume and Smith were dead. Undoubtedly, neither Hume nor Smith were utilitarian in this way, as a Philosophical Radical of the nineteenth century such as Bentham, James Mill, etc. But it is not to be doubted that Hume became famous as a defender of the theory of impressions and as the consideration of utility as a central element of morality and social sciences.[19] Smith knew this, and, although he may have admired Hume for championing the search for truth, "against those ideas of the rest of humanity", he criticized Hume's philosophy from the earliest of his works.

According to Smith, human action is not based on the love of a mental system of utility, that is to say, a structure that their memory retains of longed-for pleasures and pains feared. But Humean passions are, precisely, based on that structure: on the habit of the association of ideas, threatened by the desire for survival and, in short, by the death instinct. Hume said that we are carried away irremediably by the pleasure instinct, but it is "the good" for men; the pain instinct, which we cannot avoid either, is "the evil" for men. So, as Hume himself tells us, men are slaves of their own passions.

2.3 A Literary Strategy

There is some controversy regarding whether Hume is a sceptic or a non-sceptic. In his final years, in 1775, Hume appended a warning to the second part of his complete works. There he seemed to renounce his *Treatise* and expressed the desire to be remembered by the Essays:

> Most of the principles and reasoning contained in this volume were published in a three-volume work called Treatise on Human Nature: a work

[18]Wand (1962), Botwinick (1977), Darwall (1995), Ashford (2005), and Reichlin 2016.

[19]For the emergence of utilitarianism, see Halevy (1928), Rosen (2003), Plamenatz (1966), Darwall (1995).

> that the author projected before leaving the University and which he wrote and published much later. But, the author has realized that it was not satisfactory, and his mistake as they have seen the light too early. For that reason, he reconstructs everything in the following articles where he trusts that some oversights in his previous reasoning and, above all, in the expression, are corrected. In any case, several authors have honoured with answers to the author's philosophy, they have dealt with directing all their artillery against that youthful work that the author never recognized, they have pretended to have triumphed and imagine having obtained great advantages over it: a very contrary to all the rules of openness and fair play, and an obvious example of the artifices of the controversy that intolerant fervour is believed to be entitled to use. Therefore, the author wishes that only the following articles be considered part of his philosophical principles and feelings.[20]

Despite this "plea", T. H. Green continued to assert in his introduction of 1874–1875 that Hume was a sceptic. Morris says that the famous warning should not be taken very seriously[21]: perhaps Hume wanted to ingratiate himself with his contemporaries and popular opinion. According to Morris, there is no substantial difference between the various works of Hume. The muted reaction to this warning seems to endorse this idea. When he claims that "the majority of the principles and reasoning contained in this volume were published" in the Treatise and that "it reconstructs everything in the following articles, trusting that some oversights will be corrected in its previous reasoning and, above all, in the expression", this does not seem to repudiate his previous philosophy. This is reinforced by a letter from Hume to Gilbert Elliot that said "philosophical principles are the same in both … I only complete them, cutting and simplifying some questions".[22] And in "My own life", Hume says that the Treatise did not have a substantial problem: perhaps Hume's warning wished to highlight this fact.

[20]Hume (1964a).

[21]Morris (2004).

[22]Hume (1969a), Letter 1: 158.

The question is that Hume was much saddened by the indifference of the great public to his philosophical works, and this he blamed on his impiety and irreligiosity. Hume decided that it would be worth his while to spend some time "castrating my Work, that is, cutting off its noble parts, that is, endeavouring it shall give as Little Offence as possible". He declared that "this is a Piece of Cowardice, for which I blame myself… But I was resolv'd not to be an Enthusiast, in Philosophy, while I was blaming other Enthusiasms".[23] However, this enthusiasm was not indifferent for some and, unbeknownst to Hume, a young Smith was reading his works in Balliol College, where he studied. Smith is reported to have complained to friends that Oxford authorities once discovered him reading a copy of the Treatise and they subsequently confiscated his book and punished him severely for reading it.[24] "The reverend inquisitors seized that heretical book, and severely reprimanded the young philosopher".[25]

Hume reconsidered his literary strategy in the wake of the disappointing reception of the *Treatise*, and he soon turned to essay writing. He abandoned dense, complex argumentation and endeavoured to serve as a self-appointed "Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation", bringing the fruits of philosophy, literature and history to a wider audience. "Learning has been as great a Loser by being shut up in colleges and Cells and secluded from the World and good Company".[26]

He followed the traditions of authors that tried to circulate their ideas through essay writing, such as the French author Michel Montaigne. In 1580, Montaigne created a literary genre by publishing his *Essais* on a variety of themes ("Of laziness", "Of liars", "Of friendship", etc.) in an informal, personal style and to entertain. Later, many essays of this type appeared, from the hand of major writers such as Francis Bacon, John Dryden, Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson. But

[23]Hume (1969b, 3), 2 December 1737, to Henry Home.

[24]Rae (1895, 5).

[25]Review of Adam Smiths's Essays on Philosophical Subject, in *Monthly Review*, Vol. 2 (January 1797): 60.

[26]Hume (1964b, 534–534), Of essay writing.

the essay form was by the time of Hume popularized by Joseph Addison (1672–1719) and Richard Steele (1672–1729). Their collaborative journalism seemed a perfect vehicle for Hume's bridge-building effort. Steele took on the job of editing the official newspaper, the London *Gazette*. Then, he started *The Tatler* in 1709, which, rather than focusing on news, offered essays on a variety of topics: theatre reviews, essays on clothing and manners and so on. *The Tatler* was immediately popular. In an age when much print publication was bitterly political, it was non-partisan. Addison contributed several essays.[27] It was almost immediately followed by *The Spectator*, which was published every day except Sunday. Both journals were widely read, often being offered to students as examples of clear, vigorous English prose.[28] The sociologist Jürgen Habermas called this "the bourgeois public sphere", a domain of society separate from the state or the royal courts where middle-class people came together to debate social issues.[29]

Hume consciously followed this model of informal essay. From 1741 until his death, Hume added up to 47 different essays to his collection and he eliminated some of them. Over time, they became more formal, both in style and content. Hume expresses his hope that this collection of essays would be of interest to both enlightened and common sociable people. In the introductory section of his first Enquiry (1748, originally called Philosophical Essays), Hume also explicitly states that his essays are a good forum for discussing the philosophy of everyday life—against the harsher abstract philosophy.

The *Political Discourses* of Hume also caught Adam Smith's attention immediately. Actually, Smith first used the essay form too, during his years at Oxford, composing a remarkable work titled *The Principles Which Lead and Direct Philosophical Enquiries*, comprising three related essays. The first part of this work is generally referred to as *The History of Astronomy*. The work was published five years after Smith's death when his friends and literary executors, Joseph Black and James Hutton,

[27]Addison (1854).

[28]The Open Anthology of Literature in English.

[29]Habermas (1989).

included it as part of a posthumous collections of Smith's *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*.

Smith often went to Edinburgh "and he took an active part, along with his friends, in promoting some of those projects of literary, scientific and social improvement with which Scotland was then rife".[30] In January 1752, just a few months after arriving in Glasgow, Smith helped to found the Literary Society of Glasgow, composed largely of professors of the university. They met weekly to discuss the members' works in progress or recent publications by others and at the third meeting, Smith read an "Account of some of Mr. David Hume's Essays on Commerce".[31] The political Discourses had appeared no more than a month or two before, and the close timing suggests that Hume may have shared the work with him prior to publication.[32]

The fact that Smith chose to focus on Hume's work in his first presentation to the Literary Society is a visible sign of admiration for Hume. Precisely at that moment, Hume needed support for a post at the University, a support that Rae conjectures he finally gave him.[33] It would certainly have been strange for him to draw attention to the popular publication of an individual whose candidacy he had just opposed.[34] Actually, in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and belles lettres*, Smith seems to have recommended Hume's *History of England* to his students as the only modern history free of "party spirit".

However, the efforts of Adam Smith and other friends to achieve the Chair of Logic at Glasgow University for Hume were, again and again, unsuccessful. Smith suggested to William Cullen, professor at the University of Glasgow, that they wait to "see how the public receives" Hume's candidacy and he said, "I should prefer David Hume to any man for a colleague but I am afraid the public would not be of my opinion; and the interest of the society [i.e., the university] will oblige

[30]Rae (1895, 101).

[31]See Duncan (1831, 132) and Coutts (1909, 316).

[32]Rasmussen (2017, 61).

[33]Rae (1895, 101).

[34]Rasmussen (2017, 62).

us to have some regard to the opinion of the public".[35] This remark is read by scholars as the first of many instances of Smith's excessive prudence with respect to Hume and his irreligiosity.[36] However, we do not know of any further action Smith may have taken regarding Hume's candidacy. Cullen, the recipient of the letter, ended up backing Hume, as a letter from Hume himself gratefully acknowledges.[37] Besides, Smith said that he preferred Hume, whom he had met a little earlier, to any man for a colleague, so we see that friendship and admiration for Hume were already at the heart of Smith's action. The Chair of Logic was ultimately filled by James Clow, who would surely give students the "right"—religious—principles (the same thing happened with Edinburgh's Chair of Ethics, which was filled by William Cleghorn).

The Hume–Smith correspondence begins with a letter that Hume wrote to Smith in September 1752, just before the start of Smith's first full year as holder of the Moral Philosophy chair. This does not seem to be the first message between Hume and Smith: Hume mentions that Smith's previous letter was delayed due to being wrongly addressed as Smith had not yet learned of Hume's recent move. Hume often complaints about Smith not having visited him. However, Smith came to Edinburgh periodically to attend meetings of various clubs and societies.

The most influential society in the Scottish Enlightenment was the Select Society, formed in May 1754. Hume and Smith were both founding members. Hume was its treasurer for some time. They met every Wednesday. All topics were acceptable for debate "except such as regard Revealed Religion, or which may give occasion to vent any Principles of Jacobitism".[38] As Rasmussen explains, Smith took the chair in the second meeting and talked about bounties on the exportation of corn and Hume on December 4 talked about national characters. The Select Society grew to over a hundred members, but it collapsed in the early 1760s. By the mid-1750s, Hume's reputation for irreligiosity had

[35]Adam Smith to William Cullen, November 1751, in CAS, 5–6.

[36]Rasmussen (2017, 53).

[37]David Hume to Wiliam Cullen, 21 January 1752, in HL I, 163.

[38]Mossner (1980, 281).

started to ruin his public image and the next few years would see him excluded from another joint undertaking by the literati—the launch of the *Edinburgh Review*—as well as an attempt to expel him from the Church of Scotland. Smith took a leading part in the launching of the *Edinburgh Review*, a biannual periodical beginning in 1755 and devoted to reviewing new Scottish literary works. He contributed to the first two issues, which were the only two issues in its eighteenth-century manifestation. But in 1802 Francis Jeffrey began to publish a magazine of the same name, which went on to have a long and distinguished career. Hume was not invited to join in the undertaking.

In 1755, the club formed the *Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufacturing and Agriculture* in Scotland. Hume and Smith were both appointed to the committee on "belles lettres and criticism" that awarded a prize for the best treatise on taste.

2.4 Adam Smith's Piety

Scholars have been much attracted by the question of Smith's religiosity. They inquire if he actually was a pious man or not, especially considering that David Hume was one of his closest acquaintances. It is clear that Smith was not pious, at least not a devotee of some institutionalized religion. Besides, he did not like to show off his beliefs or give moral guidance to his students or the general public. Smith must have spoken with Hume about the church and they may have agreed in their criticism of and contempt for the pious character of some of their colleagues and friends. When Hume writes to Smith (in 1759, July 28), he discusses the Voltaire *Candide* saying it "is full of Sprightliness and Impiety, and is indeed a Satire upon Providence, under Pretext of criticizing the Leibnizian System". It is also interesting to note that Dugald Stewart discreetly omitted this sentence from his transcription of Hume's letter, along with a sentence that refers to bishops as "Retainers to Superstition".[39]

[39]Stewart in Smith (1980, 297–298).

Also, in 1745 John Douglas, an Anglican clergyman (later Bishop of Salisbury) published a refutation of Hume's views of miracles in a book taking the form of a letter to an anonymous friend. Douglas was a Balliol classmate and friend of Smith's and it has often been supposed that Smith himself was the publication's anonymous addressee. The addressee is said to have "reasoned himself… into an unfavourable Opinion of the Evidences of Christianity" partly as a result of the arguments advanced by Hume but also partly as a result of "Objections, which are peculiar to yourself and not borrowed from Books". Douglas spends over four hundred pages trying to bring Smith and other friends "back to that Religion which you seem to have forsaken".[40] However, there is no evidence that Smith read the Criterion, as it is absent from the catalogue of Smith's library.

Another piece of evidence is that Rasmussen comments that Smith had signed the required Westminster Confession of Faith before occupying his post at the university, but one of his first actions when he arrived there was to ask to be freed from the customary duty of prefacing each day's class with a prayer.[41] The request was denied, but the prayers that Smith ended up offering had a flavour of "natural religion".[42] He also managed to dispense with Hutcheson's usual practice of convening his students on Sundays to impart "a discourse suited to that day".[43] According to Ramsay, it was widely suspected that Smith's "principles were not sound" both because he was "very guarded in conversation" and because of "the company he kept"—an obvious allusion to Hume.[44]

However, Smith tried to keep apart from Hume in religious matters. He seems to have refused to invoke Hume's name in his works because of his discomfort regarding his friend's reputation for impiety, but, as

[40]Douglas (1754, 1–2).

[41]Rasmussen (2017, 462–463).

[42]For a letter revealing Smith's obvious irritation at having to perform Easter exercises at the university, see Smith to William Johnstone, March/April 1752–1763 in CAS, 326.

[43]John Ramsay, 463. See also Grahamm (1908, 153).

[44]John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, in Allardyce (1888, 462–463).

Rasmussen comments, this explanation is not persuasive.[45] It is not only Hume's name that Smith refrains from citing: he rarely identifies any of the philosophers with whom he engages in the text because he wanted to appeal to the reader's everyday experience rather than to some old debates and to make the work accessible to as broad an audience as possible.

Smith's criticism of institutionalized religion does not seem to be accompanied by a criticism of the religious sentiment. He tried to find some psychological reasons for the construction of the idea of God and in this, he also arrived at a different conclusion than Hume. In the eighteenth century, these differences and subtleties could not be understood: public opinion was intolerant of even small doubts on established religion. Obviously, this is not so in the twenty-first century. And we may say in the twenty-first century that subtle differences in Hume's and Smith's approach to religion were due to major differences in their philosophies. Let us explore those differences.

In his *History of Astronomy*, which is widely believed to have been written between 1744 and 1750, Smith considers that polytheism emerges in the first stages of society as "Fire burns and water refreshes… by the necessity of their own natures; nor was the invisible hand of Jupiter ever apprehended to be employed in those matters".[46] Even in the most primitive ages, the more "beautiful and agreeable" irregularities of the natural world, such as rainbows, could have produced uncomprehending "transports of gratitude". Then, the first sentiment towards nature is gratitude—or fear in the case of terrible phenomena. Hume joins Smith in positing that the earliest religions were polytheistic and that the idea of a single God arrived on the scene comparatively late, but he goes on, as Smith had not, to offer an extended comparison of polytheism and monotheism, to the great detriment of the latter. He shows that polytheistic religions tend to be more tolerant, more conducive to real (as opposed to monkish) virtue, and more credible. Pious individuals seek to go beyond ordinary morality, to

[45]Rasmussen (2017, 87).

[46]Hume (1980), EPS, II, 48. See Macfie (1971).

suppress their natural inclinations, in hopes of preparing for the future world. This tend to subvert the normal operations of sympathy. In *The Natural History of Religion*, which was published in 1757 and composed probably in the early 1750s—several years after Smith's the History of Astronomy was completed—Hume locates the roots of religious belief not in reason but in a combination of ignorance and passions, but this time such passions are hope and fear. It is doubtful that Smith influenced Hume on this score, as Hume did not learn of the existence of the principles until 1773. It is possible, however, that they discussed these issues in conversation or correspondence which has been lost, but it seems more likely that they wrote independently. Afterwards, Hume shared the *Natural History of Religion* with Smith prior to its publication. Actually, according to both of them, rather than turning to a separate invisible being to explain each event, primitive people sought an overarching explanation, and thus gave birth to philosophy or science—and to monotheism. This was part of the desire to explain the world as a coherent whole.

Hume agrees with Smith that people turn to the idea of a God in order to gain a sense of control over the world around them, but he insists that against the first intention, religion tends to increase people's fears and anxieties: religion creates a new and artificial worry about the possibility of an everlasting punishment.[47] Hume highlights the way in which religious "superstition" (essentially, Catholicism) "renders men tame and abject, and fits them for slavery", while religious "enthusiasm" (essentially the more rigorous strands of Protestantism) "produces the cruellest disorders" as it makes its way in the world. He claims that the various Christian sects had "engendered a spirit of persecution" that had proved to be "the poison of human society, and the source of the most inveterate factions in every government".[48]

But here, as on many other occasions, Hume contradicts himself. He makes the notion of unintended consequences one of his great recurring motifs, much as Smith would do later in WN. An example is the

[47]Rasmussen (2017, 82).

[48]EMPL, 78, 77, 62.

way in which religion plays an unexpected beneficial role. He explains the ills perpetrated by organized religion, both Catholic and Protestant. But in *History of England* he manages to find some benefits coming from organized religion and even from religious fanaticism. As Duncan Forbes notes, Hume frequently adopts a kind of bifocal approach in the History, arguing that certain ideas and actions were simultaneously blameworthy at the time and justified in retrospect because of their salutary effect.[49]

> "The influence of the prelates and the clergy was often of great service to the public. Though the religion of that age can merit no better name than that of superstition, it served to unite together a body of men who had great sway over the people, and who kept the community from falling to pieces, by the factions and independent power of the nobles".[50]

The Church in this era also served as a patron of the arts and performed the invaluable service of preserving the previous literature of antiquity from total extinction. Even more surprisingly, Hume claims that during the Tudor and Stuart eras, religious fanaticism helped to further the cause of civil liberty. The extensive royal authority would not have been resisted if it were not for the courage inspired by religion. Puritan zealots, fearing God's judgement far more than the king or queen, were the only ones willing to stand up to them. Indeed, in the otherwise absolute rule of Elizabeth "the previous spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved, by the puritans alone; and it was to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous and habits so ridiculous, that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution".[51] This has been called "the consummate irony of Hume's career".[52]

In the part on Smith's theory, John Millar described his course on Moral Philosophy as consisting of four parts: natural theology, ethics, jurisprudence and political economy. The first part is the only one that is not published. Millar reports that he "considered the proofs of

[49]Forbes (1975, Chapter 8, Sect. 2).
[50]Hume (1778, HE II, 14).
[51]Hume (1778, HE IV, 145–146).
[52]Herzog (1985).

the being and the attributes of God and those principles of the human mind upon which religion is founded".[53] John Ramsay of Ochtertyre reports that because of Smith's teachings, "presumptuous striplings" were induced "to draw an unwarranted conclusion—namely, that the great truths of theology, together with the duties which man owes to God and his neighbours, may be discovered by the light of nature without any special revelation".[54] This also challenges Hume's idea of knowledge: the everyday experience and moral sentiments give us a direct knowledge and God. However, the pious of the time were not pleased with Smith's approach to theology.

According to Smith, primitive peoples, unable to fit some phenomena within their narrow understanding of nature, would instinctively attribute them to the "direction of some invisible and designing power".[55] The first religions were, like later scientific theories, inventions of the imagination designed to explain the inexplicable and thereby satisfy the human mind. This belief in wilful deities was not solely produced by positive passions such as gratitude; it could be a consequence of terror that according to Rasmussen led to "the lowest and most pusillanimous superstition".[56] However, what needs to be considered is that according to Smith, a first sentiment towards reality is gratitude, something that Hume does not consider. For Hume, the direct passions, which include desire, aversion, hope, fear, grief and joy, are those that arise immediately from good or evil, which are for him pleasure and pain of the self; and he also groups with them some instincts of unknown origin, such as the bodily appetites and the desires that good come to those we love and harm to those we hate, which do not proceed from pain and pleasure but produce them. The indirect passions, primarily pride, humility (shame), love and hatred are created in a more complex way, but still one involving either the thought or the experience of pain or pleasure.

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[53]Smith (1980), EPS, 274, Account. by Stewart.

[54]John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, in Allardyce (1888, 462).

[55]Smith (1980), EPS, 50; see also EPS, 112.13.

[56]Rasmussen (2017, 53).

However, both Hume and Smith coincide in asserting that morality is a human construction rather than one based on some sacred, mysterious or other worldly authority. The distinction between right and wrong does not emanate from a God's will but detached from us. So, Smith's idea that gratitude towards nature is a natural feeling not ascribed to animals, does not imply, as divine voluntarists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as Samuel Pufendorf claimed, that moral standard is the product of God's will. Smith's gratitude does not mean a moral obligation to give in return or a possible punishment in case of not obeying some moral standards; it only means that reality and the others are there, and that if we want to leave reality appear, we need to sympathize with them—according to Smith, we love them as much as they are able to love you. As Rasmussen comments, the idea of an ordered world created by an intelligent designer was a staple of eighteenth-century religious belief, both deist and Christian. And nothing that Smith says rules out the possibility of there actually being an ordered world or an intelligent designer. But the only thing he acknowledges is that men feel gratitude—or fear—towards nature or life. Smith says:

"That system which places virtue in obedience to the will of the Deity, may be counted either among those which make it consist in prudence, or among those which make it consist in propriety. When it is asked, why we ought to obey the will of the Deity, this question, which would be impious and absurd in the highest degree, if asked from any doubt that we ought to obey him, can admit but of two different answers. It must either be said that we ought to obey the will of the Deity because he is a Being of infinite power, who will reward us eternally if we do so, and punish us eternally if we do otherwise: or it must be said that, independent of any regard to our own happiness, or to rewards and punishments of any kind, there is a congruity and fitness that a creature should obey its creator, that a limited and imperfect being should submit to one of infinite and incomprehensible perfections. Besides one or other of these two, it is impossible to conceive that any other answer can be given to this question. If the first answer be the proper one, virtue consists in prudence or in the proper pursuit of our own final interest and happiness; since it is upon this account

that we are obliged to obey the will of the Deity. If the second answer be the proper one, virtue must consist in propriety, since the ground of our obligation to obedience is the suitableness or congruity of the sentiments of humility and submission to the superiority of the object which excites them.

That system which places virtue in utility, coincides too with that which makes it consist in propriety. According to this system, all those qualities of the mind which are agreeable or advantageous, either to the person himself or to others, are approved of as virtuous, and the contrary disapproved of as vicious. But the agreeableness or utility of any affection depends upon the degree which it can subsist in. Every affection is useful when it is confined to a certain degree of moderation; and every affection is disadvantageous when it exceeds the proper bounds. According to this system therefore, virtue consists not in any one affection, but in the proper degree of all the affections. The only difference between it and that which I have been endeavouring to establish, is, that it makes utility, and not sympathy, or the correspondent affection of the spectator, the natural and original measure of this proper degree".[57]

As we see, Smith argues about an interaction between virtues, and, according to McCloskey, he is the last of the former virtue ethicists.[58] Both Smith and Hume consider that the foundation of moral laws is experience and sentiments towards nature. But one based those sentiments primarily on pleasure or pain of an image of the self, and the other on sympathy, propriety or gratitude towards nature.

Throughout the TMS Smith refers periodically to God and the idea of a providential order. But his references to a providential God are often "attended with circumlocutions, indirect speech and frequent use of the verb "to seem".[59] His theory does not rely in any way on religious premises or a divine will.[60] Smith rarely invokes "the author of Nature" (his favourite term for the deity) to explain the otherwise inexplicable.

[57]Smith (1976), TMS VII.ii.3.21, 306.

[58]McCloskey (2008).

[59]Rothschild (2002, 129).

[60]Macfie (1967, 102), and Fleischacker (2004, 44–45)

On the contrary, he recurrently invokes our emotional and intellectual needs to explain our belief in God and an afterlife. Still, as Rasmussen recognizes, Smith generally describes the religious impulse in sympathetic terms.[61] Religious beliefs and hopes often spring from what is best in us rather than what is worst. Religion is not a foundation of morals, but it provides support for it.

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[61] Rassmussen (2017, 101).

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3

David Hume

3.1 The Life of David Hume

David Hume was born in Scotland in 1711. He came from a family of the small Scottish landowning bourgeoisie. At the age of twelve he entered the University of Edinburgh to study law, as his family wished, but from his youth he became adept at philosophical studies. After graduating, in 1734 he decided to travel to expand the horizon of his ideas, and thus spent three years in France, in La Flèche. In this small town, there was a Jesuit university, where Hume lived from 1735 to 1737. The philosopher René Descartes was educated there and the institution continued in the 1730s as a centre of Cartesians. Hume apparently maintained cordial relations with the local Jesuits and used their library, which boasted as many as 40,000 volumes.[1]

It was there, in the shadow of Descartes, that he wrote his *Treatise on Human Nature* (in 1734 he published the first two books and in 1740 the third). In it, Hume wanted to introduce the Method of Experimental Reasoning in the Moral Subjects. Hume names John Locke, the Third

[1]Mossner (1980, 99–104).

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Earl of Shaftesbury, Bernard Mandeville, Francis Hutcheson and Joseph Butler as his predecessors in this regard. As we have said, the reception of the *Treatise* disappointed Hume. The work went unnoticed and the criticism was hostile, especially because the *Treatise* was classified as anti-religious and contrary to "true morality". Hume thought that his views had not been understood, and in 1740 anonymously wrote and disseminated a summary that later fell into oblivion. John Maynard Keynes and Piero Sraffa discovered it and published it, with a prologue, in 1940 under the title of *An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature, 1740 a Pamphlet Hitherto Unknown.*

From then on, Hume began his administrative career, combining it with trips to the continent. He competed for a Chair at the University of Edinburgh as he wanted to be a professor of Ethics and Pneumatic Philosophy, but he did not achieve it due to the opposition of the orthodox ecclesiastical environment. In 1741, he published the first part of his *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*. The favourable reception received in Edinburgh by the publication made him forget his first failure. These essays covered a great diversity of political, economic, legal, philosophical, critical and moral topics. Hume expanded them in later editions and, over time, suppressed those of them that were devoted to lighter subjects.

From the summer of 1744 through the spring of 1745, Hume sought an appointment to the Chair of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at Edinburgh University. According to the university's job description, the holder of this chair was expected to instruct his students on "the being and perfections of the one true God, the nature of Angels and the Soul of man" and to lecture every Monday "upon the truth of the Christian religions", tasks Hume was not well suited to perform.[2] Even some of Hume's friends, such as Francis Hutcheson, stood against him. It would have been a little hypocritical on Hume's part for him to accept the position. On another occasion he wished to be a Hypocrite in this particular: "The common duties of society usually require it".[3]

[2]Rasmussen (2017, 28).

[3]David Hume to James Edmonstoune, April 1764, in NHL, 83. See Shklar and Cowles (1984, 72).

Subsequently, Hume worked as preceptor to the Marquis of Annandale (1745–1746) and lived in Saint Alban's, near London. The Marquis of Annandale was declared legally insane a few years after Hume left his employ. Hume took part in a minor military expedition to the western coast of France as a secretary to a distant relation of his, Lieutenant-General James St. Clair. From then on, Hume's fame of living far from the ivory tower—a world of business, military expeditions, international diplomacy and Parisian ladies—spread.[4]

He was secretary to General St. Clair (1746–1748), whom he accompanied on a diplomatic mission. In 1751, Hume settled in Edinburgh. Endeavouring to replace the third book of his Treatise, he finally published *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), which together with an *Enquiry Concerning the Principle of Morals* (1751) were to constitute his most popular work. It is a better written work in which some of its previous arguments are emphasized. He was pleased with the result, judging that "by shortening & simplifying the Questions, I really render them much more complete".[5] He also wrote in that period his *Three Essays, Moral and Political*, never published, which completed the former edition in two volumes of the 26 essay of *Essays, Moral and Political*, published in 1748. In 1752 the *Political Discourses* appeared. As we have said, it was probably in that year that he met Adam Smith.[6]

As Rasmussen says, as he was completing these works Hume was called away from his literary pursuits once again to serve a second stint as St. Clair's secretary, this time on a military mission to Vienna and Turin.[7] The pensions that he received from these secretarial appointments left him financially secure. Between 1749 and 1759 he composed a draft of the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, published the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, a volume of *Political*

[4]Mazza (2012).

[5]David Hume to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, March/April 1751, in JL, I, 158.

[6]Ross (2007).

[7]Rasmussen (2017, 34).

Discourse, a collection of essays that included the *Natural History of Religion*, and the first four volumes of the *History of England*. This would also be the first decade of his friendship with Smith.

Hume was then nominated for a chair at Glasgow University, which he did not win. But almost immediately after this missed opportunity, another prospect opened up for Hume. In February 1752 he was appointed keeper of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, a post that brought him a modest salary but also access to one of the best libraries in Britain. He worked at the library for five years, resigning in January 1757 for unknown reasons in favour of Adam Ferguson, his common friend with Adam Smith. The exceptionally well-stocked library helped the investigations of his *History of England*. The six volumes of the *History of England* appeared between 1754 and 1762.

Some were quite ill-received by the liberal bourgeoisie. In his autobiography, Hume says that he was disappointed "assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man, who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I and the Earl of Strafford".[8] Hume "had dared" to distance himself from power and the authority of the moment narrating in an objective way the episode of the death of Charles I of England, decapitated in London on January 30, 1649 and that ended with the fall of the royal party until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Actually, Hume considered that the division of parties of his time was one between the party of the court and the party of the people. Hume was not an enthusiastic enough Whig, as he thought that England was abused by the violence of both Parties. If there is a central guiding theme in his work as a whole, it is the blessings of civilization. Hume discusses the British parties in several of his essays, for example, "Of Parties in General", "Of the parties in Great Britain", "Of passive obedience", "Of the coalition of parties" and "Of the protestant succession".

[8]Hume (1980 [1776], 614).

The same division into party of the court and party of the people was made by Bolingbroke, defender of the Tory party in parliament and Secretary of State from 1710 to 1714, who went into exile in 1715 after the accession to the throne of George I, which led to a period of Whig domination from 1714 to 1760 (Bolingbroke defended James III, the other pretender to the throne).[9] After returning to London in 1725, Bolingbroke contributed in the following decade to The Craftsman, a newspaper that opposed the Whig government when Walpole was there. The *Dissertation Upon Parties* by Bolingbroke, which appeared in *The Craftsman* in 1733, is a vehement attack on Walpole. Bolingbroke argued that the basis of the old division between Tories and Whigs no longer existed. Both now form a constitutional party, which seeks to preserve the British constitution through the independence of parliaments against the new influence of the Crown. The anti-constitutional party of Walpole, or court party, however, tried to extend the power of the crown and reduce parliaments to absolute dependence. This was then the context in which Hume published his *History of England*.

In 1756 Hume prepared some essays. One was the controversial "The Natural History of Religion", and "Of the Passions" (a revised summary of Book Two of the Treatise), "Of Tragedy", "Of Standard of taste", "On suicide" and "On the immortality of the soul". But these last two texts were the object of a judicial threat on the part of the Rev. William Warburton and were only published anonymously one year after the death of Hume in Edinburgh. The other four essays appeared as "Four Dissertations" in 1757.

The essay "On Tragedy" was included afterwards as the 25th essay in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, Part 1 (1758). In it, Hume discusses the psychological basis for pleasure when we observe theatrical representations of tragic events. For Hume, what gives value to the representation is the admiration of the author's mastery. This essay marked a milestone in the history of eighteenth-century aesthetics.

[9]Bolingbroke (1735).

Although "On suicide" and "On the Immortality of the Soul" were probably written in 1755, and they were intended to be printed in "Five dissertations", as we have said the prospect of ecclesiastical condemnation and possible prosecution led Hume and his editor Andrew Millar to withdraw them from publication. They were replaced by "Of the Standard of Taste" and the essay book appeared in 1757 under the title "Four Dissertations". There were rumours for years about the two essays withdrawn, and clandestine copies appeared in French (1770) and English (1777). This posthumous publication of 1777 was anonymous and was published under the title of two essays. In 1783, both essays were published with Hume's name. In any case, he did not authorize any of the editions. With the two essays, the anonymous publisher of 1783 included his own critical notes against the idea of suicide and in favour of the immortality of the soul, in addition to excerpts from Rousseau's "La Nouvelle Heloise" about suicide, opposing Hume's ideas. There is a copy of the two original essays of "Five Dissertations" in the National Library of Scotland. The copy contains 19 handwritten corrections by Hume, and it is the revision of Hume himself. However, these corrections did not appear in the 1783 edition.

In 1763, Hume accepted the invitation of Lord Hertford to join the embassy in Paris, the city where he lived until 1766. He met the encyclopaedists, and, in Parisian literary circles, he initiated a close friendship with Jean Jacques Rousseau. Hume returned to England accompanied by Rousseau, but a confrontation broke out between them that ended with public denunciations by both.[10] He was also a close friend of the literati d'Alembert and Lawrence Sterne, with whom he had stormy relationships.

Between 1767 and 1768, Hume acted as an Undersecretary of State. There was no salary for that, but the Under-Secretaries and the chief clerks divided among themselves, in an unknown proportion, certain fees, gratuities and post-office rights. The reward was perhaps sufficient, as the duties were hardly arduous.[11] However, in 1769 he left the administrative career to retire to Edinburgh with the purpose

[10]Rasmussen (2017, 244).

[11]Mossner (1980, 533).

of enjoying the fortune he had received from both his positions and, finally, with his works. After a painful illness undergone with great fortitude of mind, Hume died in Edinburgh, the same city where he was born, on August 25, 1776, at the age of 65. In 1777, his Autobiography appeared posthumously, as well as the two essays on *Immortality* and *Suicide*, which religious bigotry had prevented him from publishing in 1757. The *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, although written in 1750, were also published posthumously, in 1779.

3.2 Scepticism

3.2.1 Epistemological Scepticism

It is impossible to understand Hume's theory without reviewing, very briefly, his philosophy. Many scholars have recently put his most purely sceptical ideas into parenthesis. They have called him an epistemological naturalist.[12] This belies the interpretation of Bermudo, who said that Hume was a clear sceptic, "the philosopher who dares to be left without World, without God and without himself, like a strange wild monster".[13] But Bermudo coincides with many interpreters of Hume's philosophy who have understood him as a sceptic, from Thomas Reid to Beattie and Green. In *An Inquiry into the Human Mind: On the Principles of Common Sense* (1764), Thomas Reid claimed that Hume's philosophy was one of implacable scepticism.[14] His theory, he said, is the logical result of the philosophical position that Descartes had with his *Discourse on Method* of 1637 and that Reid calls the "theory of ideas". According to this theory, we do not perceive external objects directly, but rather we experience perceptual images—"ideas"—of external objects. The sceptical consequence is that we must question the existence of everything, except for these perceptual images. A famous

[12]Smith (1941).

[13]Bermudo (1983, 82, 264).

[14]Reid (1970).

and influential introduction by Green to Humes's complete works endorsed this reading of Hume's works.[15] Many writers perpetuated this interpretation of Hume, as is the case with George L. Scott, Richard Price and Joseph Highmore. The Scottish philosophers were especially interested in responding to Hume. But Balfour and James Oswald, and especially James Beattie, accepted the vision of his philosophy as a sceptic. Beattie devoted much of the work *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* to refute many of Hume's philosophical ideas.[16] Although these philosophers usually directed their criticisms at the *Enquiry*, some also pointed to the *Treatise*.

The question is that David Hume plays by dropping arguments through the Discourse through characters that hide and do not allow the author's true ideas to be grasped. Not in vain is the dialogical method used as a method of discovery that, since the dialogues of Plato, sought to place a mirror in which to reflect ourselves. And, in the case of David Hume, it was the method used to make room for his own self-justification.[17]

The essay on the Sceptics appeared in ninth place in *Essays Moral and Political* (1742, Vol. 2). In it, Hume expresses the sceptical view that there are no objects in themselves desirable or odious, valuable or despicable, but that they acquire these qualities by the character and constitution of the mind that observes them. For instance, calm passions can be more intense for the Sceptic, as they do not depend on the object that produces them, but on the quality of the passion and the disorder of the mind when he feels them. Actually, mental strength consists of a prevalence of calm passions. Hume seems to be the sceptic, as there is a great similarity between Hume's theory and how he describes the Sceptic in the essays as regards the consideration of happiness as the prevalence of calmed passions. But in this there is some controversy also: Kemp Smith says that Hume may be identified with the character of Philo. But Bricke argues that none of the characters in the Dialogues can be identified with Hume.[18]

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[15]Hume (1964a).

[16]Beattie (1770).

[17]Norton (1982).

[18]Smith (1941) and Bricke (1975). See Coleman (1989).

In the final analysis, we cannot absolve Hume of scepticism in his epistemological theory. However, we will absolve Hume from the charge of moral scepticism. Hume keeps to Locke's two characteristic positions, that we can only know the world of ideas; and that thought cannot originate ideas. Every idea must be sketched from a perception. Hume distinguishes between perceptions that are "impressions" and those that are "ideas", some originally produced in the feelings, and others reproduced by memory and imagination. The difference between impressions and ideas is in the degree of liveliness or strength with which they strike our mind. Ideas are less strong impressions. Another division of perceptions is between simple and complex; the latter can be divided into parts and they arise from a relation between simple ideas. The last division is between impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. The first type arises from the mind originally, from unknown causes. The second is derived largely from our ideas. An impression first impacts the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain or some kind of sensation or other. From this impression there is a copy taken by the mind that remains after the cessation of the impression; and we call this the idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns to the mind, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and pain, which properly should be called impressions of reflection, because they are derived from it. Depending on the greater or lesser degree of secondary liveliness, the ideas are classified as "ideas of memory" or "ideas of imagination". Ideas of imagination have a less comparative sharpness than ideas of memory and they can be reproduced in a different order than that in which the corresponding ideas are originally presented.

The key to Hume's philosophy is his treatment of the "association of ideas" as a process of spontaneous generation, by which impressions of sensation give rise to impressions of reflection in the form of habitual propensities. The qualities from which the associations of ideas arise are those of similarity, continuity in time and place, and cause and effect. The reason for this attraction of ideas is unknown. Regarding the ideas of relation, Hume distinguishes between "philosophical relation" and "natural relation". There are seven philosophical relations: similarity, identity, relations of time and place, quantity and number, degrees in

quality, contrariety and causation. Hume deals more extensively with the relations of identity and causation. For him, they are the result of certain impressions of reflection called "propensities to ascribe simplicity and identity to the different perception" that result in natural relations and ideas—the qualities by which one idea usually introduces another.[19]

Hume does not identify, like Locke, our first consciousness with a gross physical theory in which the inside–outside is assumed a priori. When we speak of an impression, it does not mean that the feeling is determined by reference to something other than itself. The senses are unable to give rise to the notion of a continued existence of objects, after they no longer appear to the senses. It is "habit" that makes us expect a train of events for the future like that of the past. That is to say, the order of nature depends on the strength of expectation.

Besides, the idea of time is not derived from a distinguishable impression but arises from the way the impressions appear in the mind. The concept of time responds to different ideas or impressions and objects arranged in a certain way, i.e., happening in succession. But the infinite divisibility of space implies that of time, as evidenced from the nature of motion. If the latter, therefore, be impossible, the former must be equally so.[20] Time does not exist in the present, but it is only the warning that the mind takes off the way in which impressions appear in it.

Likewise, when we examine any particular object that we assume to be related as cause and effect, such as the sight of a flame and the feeling of heat, we only find its constant union in experience, and union is equivalent to "contiguity in time and place", a natural relationship that acts as a principle of union between ideas. Because the impression of a flame has always been found, followed by that of heat, the idea of flame suggests that of heat. It is only habit that determines the transition from one to the other.

[19]Hume (1964a), Treatise: Section VI.

[20]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: 11: 11: 338.

Because of his doctrine, Hume obtains two definitions of the cause and effect relationship. First, he considers it as a philosophical relation or comparison of two ideas, the cause being an object present and contiguous to another.[21] Hume does not, however, make the difference between cause and chance very clear. All our arguments about causes and effects consist on the one hand in an impression of memory or senses, and on the other in the idea which produces the object of the impression or is produced by it. It is only habit that determines the transition from one to the other. But, according to the distinction inherited from Locke, as the cause or effect does not consist in a comparison of the related ideas, any inference is only a probability. If there has been no exception to the habit, it is safe and a test. When there have been exceptions, it creates an imperfect experience—there is a weaker likelihood due to "contrary causes". Therefore, any inference is just a probability that depends on the number of experiments in which "a" follows "b" and those that do not follow that path. In a way, this assumes that the law of causation is objective and universal and there is a notion of continued existence distinct from our perceptions.[22] Hume ends up accepting the cause–effect relationship as an objective reality, with a definition of it as a philosophical relation.

3.2.2 Moral Naturalism

Hume says that mankind "are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement… There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different".[23] There, he displays his epistemological scepticism, as there is no self to acquire knowledge. He does not recognize an intellectual or sensitive

[21]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: 111: XIV: 464.
[22]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: 111: XII: 436.
[23]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: IV: VI: 54.

synthesis of successive feelings. But, appealing to habit, Hume makes "impressions of memory" lead him to the conception of a real system of thought since together with a system of perceptions there is another connected by habit.[24] In the last analysis, Hume could not fully demonstrate the non-existence of innate ideas: we must assume some innate ideas to affirm the existence of memory, habit and custom—and of a "natural law" based on it.

Hume justifies that our imagination conceives the idea of the self by assuming that each of the parts, the successive sensations, refers to each other by a combination made to achieve a common purpose, survival. The human species would not be alive if nature had not inspired in us an aversion towards annihilation. And in this sense our identity based on the imagination, in making our distant perceptions influence each other, gives us a present concern for our past and future pleasures and pains. Scepticism is not a philosophy of action, and, for Hume, only the doctrine of utility can be a philosophy of the action of the sceptical man.

In theological reasoning, the objects we are dealing with are too broad to encompass. He puts in the voice of Demea, Philo and Cleantes, in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, the idea that the a priori arguments for the existence of God are not valid, but neither are they a posteriori. To affirm that something begins to exist without cause is not to affirm that it is its own cause, but that all external causes are excluded.[25] We do not need a final cause or a necessary and eternal being. In fact, Hume accepted the possible

> mortality of this fabric of the world, and its passage, by corruption or dissolution, from one state or order to another. It must therefore, as well as each individual form which it contains, have its infancy, youth, manhood, and old age; and it is probable that, in all these variations, man, equally with every animal and vegetable, will partake.[26]

[24]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: 1 11: IX: 407–408.

[25]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: III: III: 382.

[26]Hume (1964c), Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations: XI: 381.

Hume then comes back to the idea of the eternal return, accepted by Plato and Aristotle in a weakened form, also more firmly proposed by the Stoics, the Pythagorean circles and the cosmic cycle of Empedocles.[27]

> Instead of supposing matter infinite, as EPICURUS did; let us suppose it finite. A finite number of particles is only susceptible of finite transpositions: and it must happen, in an eternal duration, that every possible order or position must be tried an infinite number of times.[28]

In any case, as Cleantes says, even if a man renounced all belief and opinion, it would be impossible for him to persevere in this total scepticism, nor apply it to his behaviour even for a few hours: "When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first to join in the laugh against himself, and to confess, that all his objections are mere amusement, and can have no other tendency than to show the whimsical condition of mankind, who must act and reason and believe".[29] "Whether your scepticism is as absolute and sincere as you claim is something we shall learn later on, when we end this little meeting: we'll see then whether you leave the room through the door or the window; and whether you really doubt that your body has gravity and can be injured by its fall—which is what people in general think on the basis of their fallacious senses and more fallacious experience".[30]

Hume's scepticism about reason is however consistent with his naturalism.[31] The distinction between good and evil cannot be based on reasoning. Morality is a feeling. But the feeling that Hume discovers when trying to escape from rationalism is, paradoxically, also rationalist.[32] For Hume, reason is not something distinguishable from feeling, but

[27]Barnes (1992, 590).

[28]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: VIII: 426.

[29]Hume (1964d), Academical or Sceptical Philosophy: 11: 131.

[30]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: 1: 382.

[31]Sturgeon (2001).

[32]See Radcliffe (1997) and Millgram (1995).

feeling is constructed through the relations of ideas with impressions, and the memory of material impulses of pleasure and pain that struggle to survive.[33]

Hume's contemporaries attacked his position because he opened the doors to relativism, which they considered the inevitable consequence of basing morality on individual sentiment. Yet, Hume exerted great influence on the French and German illuminists. It is enough to remember the debt that Kant says he contracted with Hume's scepticism, in which he identified the famous "awakening of the dogmatic dream". His influence, however, decreased, at least on the European continent, because of the criticisms of alleged superficiality that romantic philosophy made against empiricism. But it remained very much alive in England and exercised great influence in the United States. Hume's true historical acceptance began at the end of the nineteenth century, with the revalorization of the *Treatise*, whose theses have directly influenced neopositivism.

Finally, as we have indicated, Hume says that the greatest detractors of Pyrrhonism and scepticism are the action and occupations of common life. Despite introducing sceptical doubt on the first level of discourse, the absence of foundation or the emptiness of life transgresses the same scepticism on the second level of discourse. In it, Hume envisions a new path for philosophy, a path that is based on the celebration of philosophical defeat.[34] In his *Dialogues*, he cites the pessimistic view of men: "what leads him to seek protection from God, the being on whom he and all nature depend, is not any reasoning but rather his consciousness of his own weakness and misery".[35] On the one hand, contempt for philosophy causes man to fall into taught theology, but, on the other, philosophy itself can lead to extravagant new doctrines, which rely too much on reason. For Hume, the attributes of God that we preach are the product of piety, of the institutions that fill the divine being with all the perfections of which we have an idea.[36]

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[33]See Trincado (2004).

[34]Trabal (1995).

[35]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: X: 434.

[36]Hume (1964d), Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State: 113.

As a minor evil, Hume says that it would be preferable if the fiction of God and that of general utility were not contradictory. But it is politics, real and earthly punishments, what he considers the more useful to direct human behaviour. The principle of action of religion works only at intervals on the temperament.[37] He concludes with a resigned and conservative pessimism: A superior penetration of judgement; a more delicate taste for beauty; greater sensitivity for benevolence and friendship would make man a better person, a "gentleman". But this would upset the order of nature and exalt our being to a higher rank, which can be very inconvenient, since often man is too passionate about his superior ideals. Thus, religion must be replaced by public utility (politics).

In fact, although on his philosophical path, Hume started from scepticism, he finally developed a constructive philosophy and, although sometimes anti-rationalist, not at all irrational.[38] Wright says that Hume was not a sceptic, but a sceptical "realist".[39] Hume's moral theory has a more systematic and unitary character than what the interpretations that have accused it of naive scepticism have attempted. Hume wanted to build a science of man based on experience and the inductive method and he simply recognized that science could not surpass what is known. Cognitive abuse characterizes metaphysics and religion, which end up becoming a chimerical and fictitious knowledge. In this sense, two major contributions are that of García Roca, who has tried to clean up Hume's epistemology of his sceptical interpretations; and Tasset, who did the same with his moral and political philosophy.[40]

However, nothing is clear about natural religion, and Philo replies that "The most careless, the most stupid, thinker sees everywhere a purpose, an intention, a design".[41] "But what, I ask you, is the aim of all the intricately designed machinery that nature has displayed in all animals? Here is my answer to that. The aim is simply the preservation

[37]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: XII: 462–463.

[38]Tasset (1999).

[39]Wright (1983). For pro and cons, see Read and Richman (2000).

[40]García Roca (1981) and Tasset (1999).

[41]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: XI I: 455.

of individuals, and the continuance of the species".[42] Philo subsequently sharpens the pessimistic view. Man is dissatisfied and distrustful, but we do not dissolve society for fear of death:

> 'But if they were really as unhappy as they claim,' says my antagonist, 'why do they stay alive?' 'Not satisfied with life, afraid of death'.[43] This is the secret chain that holds us, I reply. We are terrified, not bribed, into continuing our existence.[44]

After Hume quotes an odd phrase of Lord Bacon's: "That a little philosophy, replied Cleanthes, makes a man an atheist: a great deal converts him to religion".[45]

Possibly defending scepticism was not among Hume's intentions. Hume did not consider himself a sceptic.[46] N. Kemp Smith, in several pioneering works, succeeded in establishing a reading that emphasized the naturalistic and moderately sceptical character of Humean intentions.[47] It was a reading established later by other interpreters, such as B. Stroud and D. F. Norton.[48] According to Passmore,[49] with his epistemological theory, Hume sought to establish a logic of probability intended to act as a method of reasoning and inference in the field of the science of human nature. We can only know with certainty the propositions of mathematics ($2+2 = 4$) and pure logic (all bachelors are unmarried). But this does not suggest that we should live in perpetual doubt. Utility recommends the oblivion of scepticism and the nonsense of life.

The "naturalistic fallacy", which denies the derivation of ethical conclusions (should be) from factual conclusions (being), is the fruit of the naturalist interpretation of Hume's philosophy by Norman Kemp Smith

[42]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: X: 440.
[43]Milton, Paradise Lost 11.
[44]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: X: 438.
[45]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: 1: 338.
[46]De Salas Urtuesta (1967, 18).
[47]Smith (1941).
[48]The study of the different interpretations of Hume's intentions is in Dow (2002).
[49]Passmore (1980, 6).

and of the sceptic-naturalism of Penelhum.[50] However, as Tasset says, Hume did not really defend the idea that it is not possible to extract the "ought" from the "is".[51] Macintyre also says that it is not true that Hume with his passage of "is" and "ought" wanted to show that ethical or natural cognitivism is not possible.[52] Rather, he would defend a "Factualist Fallacy" or "Value Fallacy", because the naturalistic fallacy is a problem of definition of terms that are identified with physical phenomena. This idea is formulated by Moore and, according to it, Hume could be a critic of the Naturalistic Fallacy.[53] Norton defends Hume from the accusations of subjectivism regarding the objects of approval.[54] Indeed, the assessment mechanism of Hume's ethical theory seems to imply ethical objectivity and cognitivism.[55] Moreover, Hume compares physical vision with moral reality. According to Hume, we tend to project feelings into moral actions, so we think that these actions have objectively moral characters.[56]

At the time, since the 1730s with the works of Bernoulli, the theory of probability was known; it affirms that preferences about different states of nature depend on the opinions of the individual about how likely they are. And, indeed, it is not that Hume thought (as traditionally said) that propositions in fact, such as that the sun will rise tomorrow, have no certainty—in terms of opinion—, but that their negation implies no logical contradiction, although it has a high probability of being fulfilled. As we have said, we can only know impressions as they are given by experience. The underlying object is unknowable, then it cannot lead us to have useful inferences for the scientific domain.

In his dialogue with himself, Hume wants to get rid of all the false arguments: so, there is no doubt that he "believed" in the truth he sought. However, in his theory, truth is not a natural aim and there is

[50]Penelhum (1975).

[51]Tasset (1997). See Hudson (1964), Hunter (1962), and Falk (1976).

[52]Macintyre (1959).

[53]Soghoian (1979).

[54]Norton (1982). See also Kail (2007).

[55]See Tasset (1999, 74–86), Mackie (1980), and Norton (1982).

[56]See Tasset (1999, 84) and Mackie (1980).

no natural motive for honest action. In it, it is very difficult to determine what action an honest person would be moved to do (what her duty is). "Since it is not a form of greed or self-interest (or concern for others, for that matter), it can offer motivational resistance in the face of the temptation to violate the rules for one's own profit or even for society's good".[57]

But Hume's philosophy sought, without a doubt, to remove the terrors of death and he thought some type of scepticism was the way out of terror. This fear of death was for him the main cause of distress for humankind. For Hume, too much time invested in thinking about death ruins moral character. In his Dialogues, he says

> Hence the reason of that vulgar observation, that the highest zeal in religion and the deepest hypocrisy, so far from being inconsistent, are often or commonly united in the same individual character (…) The steady attention alone to so important an interest as that of eternal salvation is apt to extinguish the benevolent affections, and beget a narrow, contracted selfishness.[58]

Hume used the arguments of Epicurus: "the most frightful of all evils, death, is nothing to us because, as long as we live, death does not exist, and when death exists, we are no longer there. Therefore, death does not exist neither for the living nor for the dead because for some it does not exist, and the others are no longer there".[59] Finally, in his removal of the fear of death, he had a Lucretian air. Lucretius said:

> No matter how much we lengthen our life
> some time we steal to death;
> their victims will be without remedy;
> if the revolution of many centuries

[57]Cohon (1997, 107).

[58]Hume (1964d), Dialogues XII: 462–463.

[59]Letter to Meneceo, Herder (1982, 93–97).

it was possible to see, eternal death
not for that reason to stop waiting for us;
and the one who has just covered the earth
will not be dead for less time
than the other who died a thousand years before.[60]

3.3 Conservatism

Therefore, we may conclude that, although Hume's intentions could be others, his philosophy did generate scepticism. And indeed, Hume's first scepticism affected all his theory. He himself entered, during his philosophical work, into some destructive psychological processes that led him to later reject his metaphysics.

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception… If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I call reason no longer with him… He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued, which he calls himself; though I am certain there is no such principle in me.[61]

The possibility of transgressing the rules of memory created in Hume a great anxiety. In fact, his tendency to conservatism was a way of soothing that anxiety. We may think that a sense of unreality would lead to anarchism, given that we cannot ensure that anything exists beyond the present impression of a man. However, unrealism, being psychologically untenable, in the end falls in the defence of tradition, from where the relations of ideas within language are supposed to arise.

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[60]Lucretio (1990, 233).

[61]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: IV: VI: 534.

> The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have, I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, invironed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.[62]

Hume wanted to impart "a lesson of moderation in all our political controversies".[63] While scepticism is often associated with nihilism and paralysis, Hume suggests that it tends to lead to inner tranquillity, intellectual humility and a passion for ever-further inquiry. Regarding political issues, "factions subvert government, render laws impotent and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation, who ought to give mutual assistance and protections to each other".

But Hume's "conservatism" has also been the subject of heated discussions. In this sense, one of the best-founded interpretations is the one sponsored by D. Miller who, in his reconstruction of Hume's political thought, accepts the validity of describing the Scottish philosopher as "conservative".[64] This author points out that the original Humean conservatism offers as its main features a cautious and moderate approach to politics that, in any case, does not exclude the progressive change, provided it is gradual, supported by a sceptical attitude towards all grandiose projects erected on rationalist foundations for social or political reconstruction. It is not that Hume simply dismisses any attempt at political reform, but that every attempt in that direction must take into account the need to maintain the necessary conditions

[62]Hume (1964a), Treatise: 1: IV: VII: 548, ed. Green and Grose.

[63]ENPL, 55, 53, cited in Rasmussen (2017, 26).

[64]Miller (1981, 5).

for civilized coexistence. For example, as regards the artificial rules of justice, it is necessary to avoid falling into the temptation of sacrificing political stability in order to fulfil impossible, utopian dreams of social renewal.[65]

In "From the Original Contract" the quintessence of the conservative approach of Hume is presented:

> Some innovations must necessarily have place in every human institution; and it is happy where the enlightened genius of the age give these a direction to the side of reason, liberty, and justice: but violent innovations no individual is entitled to make: they are even dangerous to be attempted by the legislature: more ill than good is ever to be expected from them: and if history affords examples to the contrary, they are not to be drawn into precedent, and are only to be regarded as proofs, that the science of politics affords few rules, which will not admit of some exception, and which may not sometimes be controlled by fortune and accidents.[66]

Fear of historical change is part of Hume's theory. In this regard, authors who point out that tradition is a moderator of the possibilities of reason, a means of institutional learning based on an evolutionary epistemology, can be considered followers of Hume.[67] As in the later theory of Charles Darwin, evolution does not imply the presumption of progress towards better, only the awareness that the survivors, within their mutual dependence, will be the most suitable for adaptation to the environment and the capacity for procreation.[68]

According to Hume, institutions must be evaluated for their survival: we are facing the so-called institutional Darwinism, in which we stick to the constructions of the past because we sense in them an implicit wisdom that human reason is not always able to distinguish. Therefore,

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[65]See Gill (2000).

[66]Hume (1758), "From the Original Contract", in Political Essays, 107.

[67]Hayek (1988) and Gauthier (1979).

[68]Schwartz (1987).

in Hume's attempt to build a science of complete human behaviour, the *History of England*, apparently a work exclusively of historical interest, is also part of the system.[69]

In another essay Hume advises women to study history:

> THERE is nothing which I would recommend more earnestly to my female readers than the study of history, as an occupation, of all others, the best suited both to their sex and education, much more instructive than their ordinary books of amusement, and more entertaining than those serious compositions, which are usually to be found in their closets.[70]

As we have said, the imagination moves harder in time than in space so, if the distance in time is greater, the imagination is reinforced by the effort. In this way, we respect the past, more so when it is distant and historical.

Miller's interpretative reading was challenged several years later by another scholar, J. B. Stewart.[71] In his second major study of Humean political philosophy, Stewart recalls that while Hume himself dismissed numerous verbal disputes as futile around such notions as "conservative" or "liberal", yet it is possible to defend (against Miller) that Hume as an author was rather inclined towards a liberal vision of morality and political reform.[72] Thus, we could accommodate Hume's reading as a conservative philosopher to Hume's explicit interest in progress and social reform.

As Rosales says, really it is difficult to classify Hume definitively in one or another enlightened side, the "conservative" or the "liberal".[73] What needs to be recognized is that Hume's moral and political philosophy, imbued as it is in the sceptical-moderate assumptions of his epistemological theory, and like several of his fellow circle historians of

[69]Norton (1965).

[70]Hume (1964d), Of the Study of History: VI: 388.

[71]Stewart (1963, 145).

[72]Stewart (1992, 4).

[73]Rosales Rodríguez (2005).

Scottish *literati*, does not convert the idea of progress into something unquestionable.[74] Hume had a certain idea of definite progress, with N. Rotenstreich, as "A cumulative advance through history towards a universal normal".[75] He believed in human perfectibility but did not accept a determinism or historical providentialism guarantor, until the end of time, of its flowering in society.

Hume's perspective on progress can be assigned within what may be called a "critical philosophy of history". On the one hand, he looks for the historically fixed or invariable psychological foundations of human nature, so that his concept of historical evolution could not be "progressive" but static. But the verification of uniformity is a condition for talking about progress in human affairs.[76] Humean philosophy emerges, as Phillipson says, from the concern of the Scottish philosophers to politically and socially consolidate a high "civic morality".[77] The final moral perspective of Hume contained in his second *Enquiry* is the indissoluble relationship between conduct or moral habit and political security that somehow guarantees the supremacy of social virtues.[78] It could be said that social progress is capable of being "measured" based on the degree of benevolence and sympathy that a society is capable of generating—or that it could be strengthened, since there is of course a "natural feeling of benevolence" among people—in the middle of the circumstances that tend to favour the private interest and to socialize people, facilitating the educated exchange of ideas and softening the inter-individual interplay. But, although the previous idea expresses certain optimism about the possibilities of progress, it does not mean for Hume that we must renounce the belief in the rather contingent character of the human efforts of association and political coexistence ("From the origin of the government"). Because, although the habit created by relations of command and obedience seems to determine a "certain and inevitable" course of social relations, as

[74]See Harrison (1976).

[75]Rotenstreich (1971, 197).

[76]Rosales Rodríguez (2005).

[77]Phillipson (1979, 140).

[78]See also Norton (1993).

R. McRae has explained, Humean institutions "are products of human invention, not super or sub-human forces gradually unfolding their effects on history".[79] The development of better political devices represents an enlightened task that can only be assumed from a strictly human and secular perspective. For all this, Hume shows his dissatisfaction with the over-optimistic, in his opinion, *Essay on History and Civil Society* by Ferguson.[80] In any case, and as C. J. Berry has emphasized, Hume was not alone on the question of progress: his views were shared, with variations, by many other *literati* of the time.[81] And in the essay "Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature" Hume says that we are more inclined towards morality if we maintain an optimistic view of human nature than a pessimistic one.

In "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm", published in 1741 in the first volume of the Essays, Hume criticizes what he considers sources of false belief regarding politics that separate us from moderate freedom. Fanaticism breeds an inordinate love for freedom, and superstition a predisposition to slavery. The cause of these real dangers is the excessive conviction with respect to undemonstrated and unprovable principles. In Hume there is a very close relationship between his criticism of political conceptions and his philosophy. His philosophical method aims to replace both superstition and philosophical abstraction by an empirical and methodologically systematic research method. Thus, he dismisses philosophical–political abstractions derived from an inappropriate method (fanaticism) as political principles derived purely from religious superstition.[82]

Hume recommends political moderation and the establishment of governments of laws, not of men. These are fairer and maintain a more lasting peace. In his Essay "That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science" of *Essays Moral and Political*,[83] Hume argues that the best government is "a hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by

[79]McRae (1991, 31).
[80]Mossner (1980, 543).
[81]Berry (1997, 70–71).
[82]See Cuaqui (1988).
[83]Hume (1985, Vol. 1).

their representatives form the best monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy".[84] He preferred the monarchy of a hereditary prince because, if the legislative power rests on the people, that is, a collective body, it will vote for popularity and that will lead to anarchy and despotic power. Hume advocated civil liberty against authoritarian government, the only way for the country to flourish and trade. Monarchies, he thought, had demonstrated in their time their capacity for order, method and constancy that could achieve the commented objective of being a government of laws, not of men.

> With governments, says Hume, it does not happen as with machines, in which an old one could be replaced by a new one for possible improvements. Antiquity is a value in the social order and experiments in society cannot be carried out by alleged rational arguments and philosophy. Although some improvements can be made for the public good, a wise magistrate should only make gentle innovations within the old constitution and its pillars.[85]

Hume's legal system is based on the fear of the disappearance of society in the event of transgressing it: there is nothing more important in a state than the preservation of the old government, especially when it is free.[86] The legitimacy of government power does not arise from an act of the will, but from an involuntary habit of submission to current leaders.[87] However, long possession does not justify injustice nor is it the origin of justice: time must refine it to perfection and the setbacks that arise must give rise to the possibility of correcting errors into which you inevitably fall in the first tests and experiments (see *On the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences*). As we see, Hume evaluates freedom for its utilitarian consequences and for its political advantages.

But once the power is delegated, the problem will be how to control it and when the rebellion will be lawful. Undoubtedly, the best control

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[84]Hume (1985, 342).

[85]Hume (1964c), Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth: XVI: 481.

[86]Hume (1964d), Liberty of Press: II, Foot: 97.

[87]Haakonssen (1996, 112–113).

of power is the fear of rebellion itself, which makes the government less strict. "Tyrants, we know, produce rebels; and all history informs us that rebels, when they prevail, are apt to become tyrants in their turn".[88] For instance, in essay 5 "Of the First Principles of Government" of *Essays Moral and Political* (1742, Vol. 2), Hume asserts that the arts and sciences only arise in free governments. Once established, a republic is more favourable to science and a civilized monarchy is more favourable to the arts. When the arts and sciences decline in a country, they rarely revive in that same country. In another essay 15 of *Essays Moral and Political* (1741, Vol. 1), which appeared under the title "Of Liberty and Despotism", Hume says that arts and sciences flourish more under absolute governments and trade with free governments. Education and knowledge extend thanks to international trade. People in monarchies tend to be more refined than in other forms of government. Free governments tend to degenerate due to excess debts and taxes.

As one of the multiple contradictions of Hume, in "Idea of a perfect commonwealth" (published posthumously in 1777), Hume asserted that the perfect government is a representative democracy of owners with division of powers and a federal structure. In this essay, Hume is closer to the idea of artificial identification of interests, instead of natural identification. Precisely, with this objective of establishing a constitution that would make it the private interest of the ruler to pursue the public good, the *Philosophical Radicals* and designed utilitarian constitutions (as is the case with Jeremy Bentham [1830]).

3.4 Doctrine of Utility

3.4.1 Morality

Therefore, in Hume's thought, morality, politics, history and philosophy cannot be dissociated. Hume tries to create a complete science of human behaviour, embryonic in his time, which would explain what

[88]Hume (1964d), Of Love and Marriage: V: 385.

man is versus what he "ought to be". That is, he will create a positive, not normative, science, critical of the scholastic or the preceding Greek theories. In particular, the principles of the human mind, although intimately present in us, are practically unknown to man himself: "and the more obvious this science may appear (and it is by no means obvious) the more contemptible still must the ignorance of it be esteemed, in all pretenders to learning and philosophy".[89] Morality, though, sometimes tries to solve problems that are beyond human understanding, but:

> The only method of freeing learning, at once, from these abstruse questions, is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects. We must submit to this fatigue, to live at ease ever after: And must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, to destroy the false and adulterate.[90]

Hume wrote his Treatise after a period in which many writings on ethical issues had been published, in a dispute between Clarke, Shaftesbury, Butler and Hutcheson. The controversy touched two points:

a. The distinction between interested and disinterested affections.
b. The origin and nature of the law that constitutes virtuous or vicious action.

Faced with the inconsistencies of previous authors, Hume creates a relatively coherent system. He joined Hutcheson's criticism of ethical rationalism, especially Clarke and William Wollaston, omitting professor Hutcheson's[91] explicit attack on the egoistic theory expounded in 1714 by Mandeville,[92] whose anti-ethical theory Hume thought to be surpassed.

[89]Hume (1964d), Enquiry: 1: 9–10.
[90]Hume (1964d), Enquiry: 1: 9–10.
[91]Hutcheson (1742).
[92]Mandeville (1988).

According to Hume, reason never moves desire or will. The mind, by an instinct, tends to go to the good—pleasure—and avoid the evil—pain. In principle, Hume rejects any notion of non-egoistic affections other than pleasure. Only the vision of the tendencies to produce pleasure can excite the pleasure of virtue. The originality of Hume, in contrast to Locke, who does not abandon the semi-platonic vision of quasi-mathematical moral concepts, was his effort to look for objects of desire other than pleasure and pain immediately coming from sensory experience, which results in a modification of primary feelings by "associated ideas". In his Principles of Morals, especially in Appendix II ("On Self-Love"), Hume identifies Locke and Hobbes as modern proponents of the "moral system of selfishness", assuming that his moral theory was not based on selfishness.

According to Hume, as impressions precede their corresponding ideas, there must be some impressions that appear in the mind without antecedents. Pains and bodily pleasures are the source of ideas but arise directly in the mind or body without any thought or previous perception, by operations that Hume does not intend to explain. These depend on natural and physical causes, and the secondary impressions must appear from the idea of self, although in Hume it is not clear. It is the custom of the self that makes man reflect on himself.

The passions are for Hume the "impressions of reflection", appetites, desires and emotions. There are direct passions, which arise immediately from pleasure or bodily pain, and indirect passions, which arise from the same principle but by a conjunction of other qualities, such as pride, humility, ambition, envy, generosity. Penelhum considers that direct passions are those in which the productive principle of passion is identified—in which we distinguish the quality that acts and the subject that has the quality—and in which we know the object or idea produced by the passion.[93] In the indirect passions, the cause and the object are different, because they are not born only out of the perception of something but require my consciousness of the person with whom it relates: in the case of pride and humility, it is concerned with the self, in love and hatred with another person. The direct passions are

[93]Penelhum (1975, 98).

desire and aversion, sorrow and joy, hope and fear, which arise from good and evil—pleasure or pain—directly. The pleasure produced by the imagination or observation of pleasure is joy—its opposite is sorrow; when it is uncertain, it gives rise to hope—its opposite is fear. The direct passions different from desire/aversion are pure emotions which do not immediately excite the action. In the case of certainty, they produce joy or sadness, it gives rise to fear or hope in the case of uncertainty.

The passions of pride and humility are simple impressions and, according to Hume, you cannot give a fair definition of them. They have the same object: the self, or the succession of ideas or impressions of which we have an intimate memory or consciousness. We consider any object, Hume says, with respect to ourselves and, if we did not, they would never excite the passions of pride and humility. The idea of the self is the object, but not the cause, of these passions, since the cause is the object itself. As Tasset says, the idea of the self is the origin and the consequence of the passion.[94] All qualities of mind and body can be causes of pride and humility. A person is proud or humiliated because of his/her beauty, strength, intelligence, knowledge, because he/she considers that they belong to his/her self. Although the qualities that operate in pride or humility give a sensation of pleasure and pain (the beauty of a person gives pleasure, his or her deformity, pain or humility), the beauty itself, if it is not placed on something that belongs to the self, does not produce pride.

Hume says that if nature had not given the mind some original qualities, it could not have any secondary qualities, because it would have no basis for action or they would not begin to be exercised. The object of pride and humility is determined by a natural and original instinct of property, and it is impossible by the primary constitution of the mind that these passions look beyond the self, or the individual person, who is intimately aware of those actions and feelings. This implies a contradiction with the principle of Hume's theory that there are no ideas or

[94]Tasset (1999, 56).

qualities innate to the mind. As Clotet says, it is curious that Hume, a philosopher of ethics, on the one hand denied the idea of the self (the identity that is ascribed to the human mind is fictitious); and at the same time, he asserts that "the impression of the self is always intimately present to us".[95] The need of the self for ethics made him accept the a-philosophical "propensity to assume" that he criticized. To save his philosophical theory from these ideas, Hume says that this reference to the idea of self must arise from an original quality or primary impulse.

However, Hume concludes, again contradicting himself:

> This reflection is that the persons who are proudest, and who in the eye of the world have most reason for their pride, are not always the happiest; nor the most humble always the most miserable, as may at first sight be imagined from this system.[96]

Hume does not explain why this happens. Garrett claims that Hume is not contradictory in this,[97] but that he was aware of the contradiction.[98] The object that arouses pride must be closely related to the self and must be peculiar to him or a few people: "everything, which is often presented and to which we have been long accustomed, loses its value in our eyes, and is in a little time despised and neglected. We likewise judge of objects more from comparison than from their real and intrinsic merit".[99] For the feeling to occur, the constancy of the object that is the cause of pride is also necessary. What is casual and inconstant gives us little joy and less pride. We anticipate its change with the imagination, we compare it with us whose existence is more durable, and it seems ridiculous to infer an excellence in us for an object of such short duration. Therefore, general rules have more influence on pride and humility.

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[95]Clotet (1994, 17–28).

[96]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: 1: VI: 91–92.

[97]Garrett (1997).

[98]Botros (2006).

[99]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: I: VI: 89.

Pride and humility operate by a double relationship of ideas with the self that produces pleasure. For example, Hume tells us, an old man will feel humiliated when he is sick. Although a young man does not care so much about this,

> no topic is so proper to mortify human pride and make us entertain a mean opinion of our nature, than this, that we are every moment of our lives subject to such infirmities. This sufficiently proves that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility.[100]

In fact, a very strong component of the fear of death is shame. Hume says:

> We are ashamed of such maladies as affect others, and are either dangerous or disagreeable to them. Of the epilepsy; because it gives a horror to every one present: Of the itch; because it is infectious: Of the king's-evil; because it commonly goes to posterity.[101]

Vice or virtue are also related with pride or humility. The approval or disapproval arises from the fact that each passion tends to our advantage or prejudice and produces comfort or discomfort. If all morality is based on pain or pleasure that may result from our own character or that of others, all the effects of morality must be derived from pain or pleasure and, among the rest, of the passions of pride and humility. The origin of moral rights and obligations arises from the fact that our primary constitution makes certain characters and passions produce pain or pleasure by their mere contemplation.[102] The observation of virtue produces pleasure and the observation of vice produces pain. Pride, therefore, is the pleasant impression that comes from the mind when the vision of virtue, beauty or wealth makes us satisfied, and humility is the opposite.[103]

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[100]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: I: VIII: 99.

[101]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: I: VIII: 99.

[102]See McIntyre (1990).

[103]An explanation of the sense of duty in Hume is in Radcliffe (1996).

If pride necessarily is the consequence of something external that, when relating to the self, produces pleasure, virtue depends on some external beauty of an image, that is to say, it depends on utility, which motivates externally and whose impulse lashes us.

> To this method of thinking I so far agree, that I own the mind to be insufficient, of itself, to its own entertainment, and that it naturally seeks after foreign objects, which may produce a lively sensation, and agitate the spirits. On the appearance of such an object it awakes, as it were, from a dream.[104]

One difficulty of considering passion, like Hume, as a unique impression is how it is possible that one passion or another is more or less intense, more or less pleasant. To solve this, Hume says that a passion is not a simple emotion but composed of many weaker passions derived from the vision of each part of the object. If not, passion could not increase with the increase of its parts.

Bergson was later to criticize Hume, saying that the existence of different intensities of the phenomenon sensation is very doubtful.[105] If its quantity can increase and decrease, is it not therefore divisible and extensive? Is it not contradictory to speak of an un-extensive quantity? If a desire has been gradually transformed into a deep passion, the initial weak intensity of this desire is due to the fact that it seemed isolated and strange to all the rest of our inner life. When we say that an object occupies a great place in the soul, Bergson says, it must be understood that its memory has modified the nuance of a thousand perceptions or memories, and that it penetrates them without being seen there. Little by little it affects more psychic elements and the point of view about all things seems to have changed.

Hume was aware of the difficulty of proving that weaker passions can be added one to the other. In fact, he talks contemptuously about moral systems in which pleasures and pains are added and compared. Hume did not value highly philosophers who reduced pleasures and pains to

[104]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: II: IV: 141.

[105]Bergson (1963).

numbers, and who even dared to make interpersonal comparisons of utility, such as Helvetius.[106] He feared the French philosophers who made drawings of a perfect world and tried to impose them on a world of true human beings. Not even a man can compare his pleasures at different moments of time, because these are much more a function of custom than of a rationalistic utility. The comparison is made through a process of trial and error in which reason is built, a weak impression recorded in the memory and by which we can perceive the relationship between means and ends more clearly, and thus, flee from a present good to achieve a greater future good. As Hume says in the essay "The Epicurean", a pleasure cannot be provided or perceived from the outside, since happiness is ungraspable and individually perceived.

3.4.2 Utility

However, according to Hume, utility is "a foundation of the chief part of morals".[107] Hume was not a radical utilitarian, but he was a consequentialist of thought. For him the admirable mind is one whose results consistently yield useful consequences, and these are only admirable because they make him peek at an orderly and kindly mind. The element worthy of praise, therefore, is the utilitarian virtue of the mind, not the actual utility created.

Against the rationalist or hedonist tradition, there is in Hume's theory a primacy of instinct. Direct passions often arise from an unknown impulse or instinct. These are direct attractions to objects. And, impelled by instinct, man can adopt a course of action detrimental to himself on many occasions. These passions produce good or evil, they do not come from them like the other affections. The punishment of an adversary, that is to say, gratifying revenge, is good; the illness of a friend, by affecting friendship, is bad. But this passion is not an appetite (hunger) or an emotion (pride), it is a desire whose gratification is a pleasure, but cannot be a desire for pleasure. This is a contradiction in

[106]Helvétius (1759).
[107]EPM 5.44.45.

terms, which Hume does not resolve. In any case, although the psychology of instinct has given more importance to the conditioning influence of social forces, this emphasis of the irrational elements (not oriented to pleasure) in human behaviour makes Hume's more modern than the utilitarian school that would become mainstream later in British economic thinking (benthamism). Utility is not attached to pleasure but it is an illusion created to make men be distracted by an achievement of desires.

> The enjoyment will be given by the surprise of moving from indolence to the movement that causes attention to resurface from its numbness. Human life is so tiresome a scene, and men generally are of such indolent dispositions, that whatever amuses them, though by a passion mixt with pain, does in the main give them a sensible pleasure.[108]

Besides, there is some type of relation between morality and the arts. In Hume, the concept of utility can be included within his aesthetic theory. As utility is a type of beauty and beauty is defined as a taste or sensation, it is nothing else but a shape or image that produces pleasure, and deformity, pain. Taste, according to Hume, is the source of our judgements on natural and moral beauty. We rely on taste, and not on reason, to judge the beauty of works of art or the virtue of an action.

According to Stroud, Hume's theory is absent of any adequate notion of objective judgement, or assertion, or putting something forward as true.[109] With no account of judgement, it would be hard to find a place for preaching. Hume's notion of beauty is based on the motivations of habit and fashion. We build notions of beauty through instinctive attractions which produce a sensation of accustomed pleasure. The idea of beauty is communicated by sympathy: for example, an asymmetric figure is unpleasant, because it communicates the ideas of its fall, of pain. Personal beauty is due largely to the aspect of health and vigour, and to a constitution of the members that promises strength and

[108]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: III: X: 226–227.

[109]Stroud (1993, 268).

activity. Strength is beautiful because it is useful, but also because it evokes power that is considered as a lower kind of ambition. In fact, much of the beauty we admire in animals or other objects derives from the idea of their convenience and usefulness.

It is evident that Hume's definition of passions is not at all reductionist.[110] Hume's position is contrary to Epicureans' claim. For Hume, the main failure of the Epicureans is that they believed that what is not natural is arbitrary, ignoring that humanity is creative and can be based on many different life forms, which can provide natural pleasure.[111] The Epicurean does not move in short-term hedonism. He learns that pleasure is moderation, in social life and in love. Much of what the Epicurean says is compatible with Hume's own ideas. In his epistemology, for example, Hume emphasizes that nature controls what we believe. The tone of "The Epicurean" is like the last pages of Book I of the *Treatise* in which, finally, human nature is reaffirmed. For Hume, the anxiety that produces desire, fruit of uncertainty, never compensates for the pleasure. However, absolute apathy, says Hume, is not the basis for the truth happiness of the wise person, since human happiness consists of three ingredients: action, pleasure and indolence (see "Of the Refinement of Arts"). The wise man feels the charm of social affections and laments the miseries of humanity. He sympathizes and suffers observing the evils of the world, and, as Hume says in "The Stoic", while breathing the stern air, he looks with pleasure, united with compassion, the errors of mortals, who blindly seek wealth, nobility, honour or power as if it were genuine happiness.

> Admitting your position, replied PHILO, which yet is extremely doubtful, you must at the same time allow, that if pain be less frequent than pleasure, it is infinitely more violent and durable. One hour of it is often able to outweigh a day, a week, a month of our common insipid enjoyments; and how many days, weeks, and months, are passed by several in the most acute torments? Pleasure, scarcely in one instance, is ever able to

[110] See Árdal (1966).

[111] See Immerwahr (1989).

> reach ecstasy and rapture; and in no one instance can it continue for any time at its highest pitch and altitude.[112]

The only genuine pleasures are those of pride, for example, action and work. In the Treatise Hume says that "when you loosen all the holds, which he [the man] has of external objects, he immediately drops down into the deepest melancholy and despair".[113] Hume repeats this in several other places.

In *Treatise*, although the causes of passions are considered natural, they are not original. In the essay "The Epicurean", Hume uses the words "natural" and "original" indifferently. Hume distinguishes natural and artificial virtue: benevolence is an example of the first, justice of the second.[114] Artificial virtues depend indirectly on the usefulness of their rules—the pleasure or pain caused by them—and the approval of the artificial virtue depends on sympathy with the happiness of society. Every virtue is related to the beneficial effects in the form of pleasure–pain felt by individuals and society.[115] In fact, Hume distinguishes three levels of natural or original, and artificial. Our feelings and passions are original in the sense that they do not depend on civilization or education, but they would exist even in the state of nature. Other qualities such as justice are artificial in the sense that they are learned in a social context, but they are natural in a loose sense since they are obvious and necessary for the human condition.[116] The third category would not be artificial, but arbitrary. For example, monastic virtues such as mortification can be inculcated, but they are not natural, and for Hume we could say that they are vices.

Despite the melancholic philosophy of Hume, some authors have seen a parallelism of his empiricist philosophy with the art of hunting, or with gambling, which Hume cites on some occasions. For instance, the life of knowledge may be understood as an adventure, as a game

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[112]Hume (1964d), Dialogues: 442.

[113]Hume (1964b), Treatise II: II: IV: 141.

[114]See Gauthier (1992).

[115]See Harrison (1981).

[116]Taylor (1998, 2002).

whose justification is given by the pleasure it produces. The important thing is not to reach the goal, but to devote one's time to the quest for it. The lover of truth is not the one who possesses it, but the one who pursues it as his "prey". This assessment of the process before the product implies an appeal to think for oneself, a rejection of the simple acceptance of the thought of others. The works of the philosophers, then, are possible paths to follow but only insofar as that the follower manages to appropriate the pleasure of the journey.[117] However, we must recognize that for the theory of impressions it would be the same if pleasure was real or imagined by the mind, since pleasure is an image, like perception itself, and the idea of truth is not absolute. The man who remains static imagining, or one who is introduced to images through technical means, should feel the same pleasure as an active man: he is a spectator of the image.[118]

3.4.3 Sympathy

There is a certain "anomaly" in Hume's theory of the search for utility that is related to the sociability on which the Scottish Enlightenment is based.[119]

> In all creatures, that prey not upon others, and are not agitated with violent passions, there appears a remarkable desire of company, which associates them together, without any advantages they can ever propose to reap from their union… We can form no wish, which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer… Let all the powers and elements of nature conspire to serve and obey one man: Let the sun rise and set at his command: The sea and rivers roll as he pleases, and the earth furnish spontaneously whatever may be useful or agreeable to him: He will still be miserable, till you give him

[117]Bermudo (1983, 27–39) and Tasset (1999, 38).

[118]Cohon (2008).

[119]Trincado (2004).

> some one person at least, with whom he may share his happiness, and whose esteem and friendship he may enjoy.[120]

Hume understood social unions in terms of "sympatheia", like the Stoic doctrine—Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Cicero—who linked man's moral duties with his legal obligations as a citizen.[121] Hume followed Hutcheson by claiming that benevolence is a natural motive of the man who is seeking approval.[122] But he does not accept that benevolence is the sole motive for virtuous action or that moral approval is a basic innate feeling. The spectator feels pleasure of sympathy with the consequences of actions, and benevolence produces naturally that pleasure.

In the case of Hutcheson, who accepted that benevolence is a natural motive of man (an innate sense), it is coherent to appeal to generalized benevolence. But, since Hume rejected innate ideas, the fact that generalized sympathetic behaviours exist is difficult to understand and it would only be statistically justified. Hume did believe in the existence of a natural benevolence for which I love my friend, independent of the pleasure that I experience in observing his pleasure, something intrinsic to the constitution of the mind related to man's sociability and natural sympathy.[123]

> There are no phenomena that indicate any such kind affection towards men simply as men, independently of their merit and every other detailed fact about them. We love company in general, but that's like our love for any other way of passing the time. In Italy an Englishman is a friend; in China a European is a friend; and it may be that if we were on the moon and encountered a human being there, we would love him just as a human being. But this comes only from the person's relation to ourselves, which in these cases gathers force by being confined to a few persons.[124]

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[120]Hume (1964b), Treatise: 11: 11: V: 150.

[121]See Jones (1982).

[122]Hutcheson (1725).

[123]McGilvary (1903).

[124]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: II: 1: 256.

Natural sympathy is somehow an anomaly of Hume's theory as his concept of sympathy is that of emotional contagion, a pleasure that I obtain when observing the pleasure of another person. Then, Hume's interpretation is closer to the idea that sympathy exists because only civilizations that have sympathized with their peers have managed to survive.

In Hume's definition, animals could feel the same sympathy as men. Fear and anger are communicated from one animal to the other. The crying of a dog leads the others to mourn. It is the contemplation of pleasure or pain which produces the feeling of sympathy. Men enjoy when they see, by external indicators, other people enjoying; and they suffer when they see others suffering. A jovial face instils a complacency and serenity in my mind; an angry or distressed person suddenly discourages me from feeling with the other person. Sympathy arises from the imagination and when an emotion is infected by sympathy it is only known by the spectator by its effects, which give him an idea of the internal sensation felt by the other person. This is an impression and acquires strength to become a passion and produce an emotion.

> The case, therefore, must be the same with happiness and misery. The direct survey of another's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure, and therefore produces pain when compar'd with our own. His pain, consider'd in itself, is painful to us, but augments the idea of our own happiness, and gives us pleasure.[125]

The reference to the self leads Hume to affirm that I feel happy by comparison, and so with other people's lack of happiness. "The misery of another gives us a more lively idea of our happiness, and his happiness of our misery. The former, therefore, produces delight; and the latter uneasiness".[126] The greater the disproportion, the greater the discomfort. "Now I assert, that when a sympathy with uneasiness is weak, it produces hatred or contempt by the former cause; when strong, it produces love or tenderness by the latter… Nor have we only our reason to trust to for this principle, but also experience.

[125]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: II: VIII: 160–161.

[126]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: II: VIII: 160–161.

A certain degree of poverty produces contempt; but a degree beyond causes compassion and good-will".[127] The one who becomes useful to us and intends to achieve that goal is sure to achieve our affection. A good act is a test of the goodness and esteem of the person who performs it, and it produces vanity in the spectator. If there is no intention, we will not feel vanity and this causes a considerable decrease in the passions of love or hatred. However, if the quality is constant or inherent to the person or character, it causes love or hatred regardless of the intention. Someone unpleasant due to his deformity, Hume says, is the object of our aversion, although it was not part of his intentions to develop these qualities.

The causes of love according to Hume are external qualities of the person, such as virtue, knowledge, good humour, beauty or strength. The object of our esteem is an intelligent being that, by its relation to us, produces love in the case of pride, a pleasant sensation; and hatred in the case of contempt, an unpleasant sensation, as this person does not possess the external qualities that our pattern of individual or social beauty has predetermined. People, therefore, produce in us the same feelings as those produced by things that we possess.

These passions of love and hatred are followed by benevolence and rage. Pride and humility, as above mentioned, are pure emotions of the mind, and do not excite actions immediately. But love or hatred do not stop in themselves. Love is followed by a desire for happiness of the beloved person and an aversion to his misery; hatred produces a desire for misery and an aversion to the happiness of the hated person. But, according to Hume, the opposite can happen: as love only subsists insofar as the object of this feeling and its qualities are related to the self, we may want the evil of the loved person when it implies not losing the relationship of the loved person to the self, and the good of the hated one when the opposite is true. Love is craving for possession and the fear of loss of the loved person can transform it into hatred.[128]

Envy arises from the present enjoyment of another person who, by comparison, reduces our own enjoyment—it is normally accompanied

[127]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: 11: IX: 169–171.

[128]See Korsgaard (1999).

by fury; Malice is a desire to produce evil to another person and to end his pleasure. Malice is a pleasure and mercy a pain. We will flee from mercy; we will be attracted by malice. Hume says that sometimes love and tenderness are accompanied by piety, and hatred or anger by malice.

Besides, we will have more sympathy for people from our own country, or our own social class, race, etc., who are like us. We are used to those external signs, with which we identify. Only these evoke in us the idea of a relationship with our self. But the differences may also be due to natural causes, which leads Hume to defend racist arguments in the essay On National Characters. This essay first appeared as essay 24 in *Essays Moral and Political* (1748). In it, Hume argues that the character of the people depends mainly on "moral reasons", such as governments, and rarely on "physical reasons" such as food or climate. Hume, by putting the principles of analysis of the different "national characters" in a diachronic perspective of historical development, states that the environmental, material or historical circumstances are different in the later stages of progress, but homogeneous and uniform in the former.[129] Therefore, for Hume, sympathy will only come with the pleasure of people who relate to ourselves; if it is from a stranger, it produces envy; if we sympathize with pain, it produces mercy, which is a form of pain. In the 1753 edition, Hume included a controversial note arguing that he is "apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent in either action or speculation".[130]

In brief, "sympathy" for Hume is a self-referential feeling.

3.4.4 Suicide

But then, what happens with the self-elimination? Can there be any beauty and approval derived from the self that eventually denies its

[129]See Hudson (1996).

[130]Hume (1758, Vol. 1, 125n).

own existence? In a controversial essay, Hume talks about suicide and he takes for granted the Stoic idea. Hume quotes Pliny when he said that men overreached God as they could commit suicide. "Deus non sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis".[131] For Hume, authority over the self is authority over the body (to commit suicide or maiming oneself) and this authority is an object of pride.

> Resignation to providence is indeed recommended in scripture; but that implies only submission to ills that are unavoidable, not to such as may be remedied by prudence or courage. Thou shalt not kill is evidently meant to exclude only the killing of others, over whose life we have no authority.[132]

A contradiction is that here is no other self to have authority or control over passions than passions themselves. We cannot avoid being slaves of our passions. The self is led by passions. Hume could not prove human freedom philosophically.[133] In the *Treatise* he says that the operations of the external bodies are necessary, and each object is determined by a destiny. The actions of matter should be considered as necessary. But, are the actions of the mind necessary? The mental need arises from the usual connection, not from the real cause–effect, although if the objects did not have a uniform conjunction, we would never arrive at an idea of cause–effect. For Hume, the observation of the constant union of cause and effect only allows us to obtain an inference by the effect of habit. In addition, the creative power of the mind comes to nothing more than the ability to compose, change order, increase or decrease the materials that have been provided by feelings and experience. But, according to Hume, moral necessity is required to define justice and morality. Only a necessary act, whose cause comes from the character and disposition of the person, and not

[131]Plinio, Natural History, 2.5.27.

[132]Hume (1964d), Of Suicide, Note.

[133]Persson (1997).

from chance, can be considered honourable or good.[134] In this sense, Hume is contradicting his idea that suicide will set man free.

Hume's theory of suicide is in the last analysis based on stoicism. Stoics thought that God is the Divine logos and that suicide is no more than an open door to coming back to it. Hume sometimes understands suicide within the utility of the social whole. As Aranguren argues, Stoic morality is that of a defensive man who retreats on himself and that, as he has lost confidence in the world, is inserted in the broader framework of a social ethic with a communitarian accent.[135] Stoics thought that we are a dream of a God who is pleased to play with us. It gives us the life to "enjoy" it, and when we stop enjoying, we have the right to leave the game. Even the rule of the gods makes it appropriate to abandon it. If in the situation of the wise man there are more circumstances that are natural objects of rejection than of choice, the whole situation becomes an object of repudiation, and the rule of gods is to leave it as quickly as its specific circumstances advise.

3.4.5 Justice

Hume says in his essays that political principles can be deduced a priori, i.e., from general reasoning about our ideas or concepts and without reference to particular examples. But he is contradictory as, for Hume, justice depends conceptually on sympathy, which is not an apriori principle.[136]

For instance, Hume considers that institutions are a human invention deriving from our notions of utility. Justice is the feeling of an a posteriori utility of the existence of society without which man would disappear. All citizens are interested in the creation of a power that maintains these rules of justice or that makes their maintenance the interest of the people. The narrow-mindedness of man, who prefers the

[134]Hume (1964b), Treatise: II: III: I: 185.

[135]Aranguren (1993).

[136]Bagolini (1966).

contiguous to the remote, leads him to transgress the rules on which his future pleasures are based only to obtain an immediate pleasure.

Hume says that if there were no scarcity or the human mind was endowed with absolute benevolence and love for their fellowmen, justice would not be necessary: therefore, it is utility that recommends it and not public benevolence. Thus, justice is not created by reason or a discovery of certain connections or relations eternal, immutable and universally compulsory, but by the concern for our own interest. Justice and moral approval are not subjective for Hume: but they do not exist beyond intersubjectivity and its cultural result.[137]

Justice, therefore, is not a natural virtue a priori. The sense of justice derives from the individual reflection on the tendency produced by rules.[138] But, although self-interest is the original motive for the establishment of justice, the sympathy with the public interest is the source of the moral approval that follows the virtue of justice. Justice as a moral value is a pleasure felt for the observance of actions and laws that tend to the peace of society. This sense of morality is artificially reinforced through education.

When saying that justice is not natural, Hume was only contrasting the word to artificial. But this does not mean that it is arbitrary. It could be said to arise from the Laws of Nature if by nature we understand what is common to the species.[139] In fact, Buckle considers that Hume, in his solution to problems of the natural legal theory, is part of the ius-naturalist tradition.[140] The main disturbances in society arise from the scarce fixity of the goods that we call external. The remedy for this evil is to leave these goods in the same place as the constant and fixed advantages of the mind and body through a convention established by all members of society. Property does not derive from a utility or advantage that a private person or the public can obtain from the enjoyment of goods but seeks to settle all occasions of discord

[137]Haakonssen (1981, 7).

[138]Hume (1964d), Of Justice: III: I: 179.

[139]Forbes (1975, 59–90).

[140]Buckle (1991).

and achieve social peace with general rules valid for the whole of society and as inflexible when they favour as when they harm us.[141] One exception: Hume accepts the scholasticism assumption of extreme necessity.[142] Although in his theory a person cannot appeal to the original promise when he falls into a state of extreme misery, for Hume the laws of property are useless in the case of extreme need and the search for self-preservation forces the laws to be suspended. In any case, Hume's utilitarianism remains intact even in this example when property has no sense "because it is useless".

In this way, Hume contrasts with the anti-historical abstractism of his contemporaries. This feature was among the most relevant aspects of the Enlightenment. For example, Hume gives a meaning to the term legal "convention" that implies that justice is not produced by a concrete act; its realization is immanent to history, and man acts in its course even without giving rise to an express manifestation of his motivation. Hume exemplifies this with his metaphor of two men who manoeuvre the oars of a boat: they do it by agreement or convention, although no reciprocal promise has been made, something that implies time and gradualness.[143] The distinction between the asocial moment of the condition of man and the social moment that is the origin of the convention of justice is, in short, a distinction of psychological, not chronological, order.[144] As Garret states, the motive for justice is

> a disposition grounded in a desire to regulate one's actions by the rules of justice. Because it refers to conventional rules, it is a "new motive" not original in human nature; it is instead produced by self-interest, which is the original motive in human nature that satisfies Hume's Undoubted Maxim.[145]

[141]Tasset (1999, 209) and Magri (1996).

[142]San Emeterio (2001, 288).

[143]Tasset (1999, 203–205) and Jensen (1977).

[144]Fassó (1982, 217).

[145]Garret (2007, 276).

David Miller considers that the bases for government and authority in Hume are purely imaginative, not based on utility.[146] However, of the five rules of access to authority that Hume enunciates (prolonged possession, current possession, conquest, succession and positive laws), the first four possess an associative-imaginative character; but the fifth gives primacy to utility and rationality.[147] For Hume, property is based on occupation, prescription, accession and succession, which arises from the imagination and relations of contiguity, similarity and cause and effect. These rules are taken from Roman Law[148] and are different than the Lockean concept of a right to own the products of one's own work[149] (the labour theory of property presented in the Second Treatise on Government[150]).

Thus, Hume looked for fixed rules in the construction of his legal system based on three fundamental laws: the stability of propriety, the freedom of voluntary transference and the fulfilment of contracts that, by not privileging anybody, will ensure the permanence of civil society. Haakonssen says that the theory appeals to "the utility of the means" against the "utility of ends" of Bentham.[151] However, he does not clarify if Hume realized this difference.

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[146]Miller (1981).

[147]Tasset (1999, 236).

[148]See DesJardins (1967) and Jones (1982).

[149]Against what Schlatter says.

[150]Locke (1690).

[151]Haakonssen (1981, 41).

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4

Adam Smith

4.1 Smithian Realism

Despite having asked Black and Hutton to burn all his papers, Smith wanted to spare from the flames some philosophical essays. In these essays, Smith sought to confront Hume's phenomenalism that denied substance.[1] With Schliesser, and contrary to Griswold, we will show that Smith does not "suspend judgement"[2]: clearly, he asserts the existence of substance.[3] Although in some of his statements, Smith seems to approach the idea of an "overcoming of metaphysics", he writes—talking about the work on moral philosophy by his friend John Bruce—"It is as free of metaphysics as is possible for any work upon that subject to be. Its fault, in my opinion, is that it is too free of them".[4] According to Smith, we value greater capacity of perception in objects not because

[1]Griswold (1999, 29–39) and Ross (2004, 40–59).

[2]Schliesser (2006) and Griswold (1999, 336–344).

[3]See Vivenza (2001, 206–209) and Trincado (2006a). On his epistemological option and Newtonianism see also Schliesser (2005), Montes (2009), and Fiori (2012).

[4]Corr. 296.

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it is useful, but because it draws us closer to reality as originally "we approve of another man's judgment, not as something useful, but as right, as accurate, as agreeable to truth and reality".[5]

According to Smith, we sense the external objects thanks to time passing and experience: "though the sensations of heat and cold do not necessarily suggest the presence of any external object, we soon learn from experience that they are commonly excited by some such object".[6] "We consider it, therefore, as what we call a Substance, or as a thing that subsists by itself, and independent of any other thing".[7] Nouns instead of adjectives, Smith says, were the first words created, due to an intuitive knowledge of substance, before touch and sight. "Do any of our other senses, antecedently to such observation and experience, instinctively suggest to us some conception of the solid and resisting substances which excite their respective sensations…?".[8]

It is to be noted that, although Smith had read the works of Hume and other idealists, he never uses the word impressions or phenomenon as synonymous with perception. If there is an intuitive knowledge of substance, as Smith acknowledges, objects must not be perceived by "impressions" (phantasy for the Pyrrhonic school). Perception is for Smith not a plain image. "The tangible world… has three dimensions, Length, Breadth and Depth. The visible world… has only two, Length and Breadth. It presents to us only a plain or surface… (in the same manner as a picture does)".[9] For Smith, it is thanks to movement—in time—that we can perceive the variation of perspective.[10] If at any point we have perhaps confused flatness with depth, we only need "time" to situate ourselves in the intuitive position capable of understanding perspective.

[5]Smith (1976a), TMS I.i.4.4, 61.
[6]Smith (1980), External Senses 21.
[7]Smith (1980), External Senses 8.
[8]Smith (1980), External Senses 75, 164.
[9]Smith (1980), External Senses 50–52, 150–152.
[10]Smith (1980), External Senses 59, 155.

This greater capacity of perception was shown in the case of the blind mathematician Saunderson, who developed supernormal powers of touch and hearing. His experience encouraged an outburst of philosophical writings about blindness in the eighteenth century, including Diderot's, Berkeley's and Reid's. Smith also mentions him. According to Smith, when the blind man "was just beginning to understand the strong and distinct perspective of Nature, the faint and feeble perspective of Painting made no impression upon him".[11] Perception is different from image as the whole object is perceived at once. In the same vein, Gestalt theory speaks of perception as something whole. "Shapes" are perceived in an immediate, intuitive way.[12] In this sense, the beauty of perception is the intimacy with the object. Aristotle, in his most original idea on aesthetics, said that only that which is perceptible may be called beautiful. Limited things please because they may be embraced by the senses, sight and memory. So, we see them fully and better and they are made more transparent.[13] Actually, Smith quotes Aristotle on several occasions as he owned his Collected Works.[14] According to Vivenza, he was unconsciously Aristotelian.[15]

By the same token, while in Hume's theory time and self-existence were called into question by his definition of perception as an unending succession of impressions, according to Smith, the intuition of personal identity is needed even to perceive solidness. "When he lays his hand upon the table… he feels it therefore as something external, not only to his hand, but to himself".[16] Smith comments that in the beginning of the formation of language, human beings must have faced the difficulty that the word "I" was very special. The verb structure "I am" does not derive its existence from facts, but rather from existence itself.[17]

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[11]Smith (1980), External Senses 67. See also External Senses 52, 65–67, 151–152, 159–160.

[12]Marchán (1996, 239–240).

[13]Tatarkiewicz (1987, 159).

[14]Mizuta (2000, 14–16).

[15]Vivenza (2001, 2). Also Fleischacker (1999) and Griswold (1999) or Carrasco (2004).

[16]Smith (1980), External Senses 3–8, 135–136.

[17]Smith (1983), LRBL, Languages, 34, 221.

4.2 Perception and Pleasure

The definition of "pleasure" is different in Hume and in Smith. Humean passions are based on a certain structure of the mind: the search for the habitual pleasures and association of ideas, threatened by the survival desire and, in short, by the death instinct. We are carried away irremediably by an instinctive pleasure and by the attraction to objects, but it is "the good" for men; instinctive pain, that we can not avoid, is "the evil" for men. So, as Hume himself tells us, men are slaves of their own passions. In Hume, the idea of beauty is communicated through sympathy. The simple contemplation of a beautiful object is agreeable, and virtue consists in the production of this beauty that we relate to the self. The utility of an object pleases its owner because it suggests the pleasure and convenience it can produce, so the owner is proud of the relation of the object with himself. The spectator sympathizes with the owner's pride and with the pleasure he imagines that the object creates. This reflection is secondary to the original pleasure; but finally, it becomes the more important recommendation of riches and the main reason for our desiring them or admiring them in others.[18] Society is for Hume a collection of atomic subjective beauties perceived only individually and based on the idea of the self. As beauty is defined as a taste or sensation, it can be concluded that it is no more than a shape that provides pleasure, and deformity pain. Apart from instinctive pain, which seeks survival, Hume's notion of beauty is centred on the motives of habit and fashion.[19]

On the contrary, for Smith, utility is only an image that we chase in our mind. In the quest for utility—or for riches—we do not value the pleasure or pain foreseen but the reducing of an anxiety we feel in the seeking for an accurateness of an imagined system in which means seem to be adapted to ends. The search for utility is therefore love of system, a love that creates temporal or fictitious illusion, but not pleasure. The

[18]Hume (1964).

[19]For different concepts of utility, see Long (1990, 12–39) and Stigler (1950, 58: 4: 307–327 and 58: 5: 373–396, p. 392).

conceited son of the poor that, to obtain the conveniences that he supposes the rich enjoys, courts his hateful enemies and lives in an endless intrigue, is looking only for an image of pleasure, never attaining it.[20] Utility is a vain object of desire. Haakonssen and Vivenza freed Smith from the utilitarian label in his moral theory and in his law theory.[21] The problem of Smith's utilitarianism has also been presented, amongst other works, in Griswold and Trincado.[22]

But is there for Smith any really satisfying pleasure? For Smith, seeking an image is frustrating, but there is a pleasure that is not a reflexive perception but a propensity. As Schliesser comments, Smith appears to view human nature as a collection of human propensities.[23] For instance, the original propensity to feel with others makes us construct language and language makes us construct division of labour as a necessary consequence of the faculty of reason and speech. In the same way, if anticipation is to Hume the source of pleasure, to Smith pleasure does not need anticipation.

> Nature has directed us to the greater part of these by original and immediate instincts. Hunger, thirst, the passion which unites the two sexes, and the dread of pain, prompt us to apply those means for their own sakes, and without any consideration of their tendency to those beneficent ends which the great Director of nature intended to produce by them.[24]

Smith defines pleasure as a propensity to feel with people, things and events. This gratitude is felt in calm events, from which pleasure can begin. Happiness consists of and depends on tranquillity and enjoyment. A wise man will be in every situation of his life equally calm, joyful and satisfied. He is not blinded by frivolous pleasures. Smith himself said that "I have, however, a mortal aversion to all anticipations".[25]

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[20]Smith (1976b, 181–183).

[21]Haakonssen (1981, 97–110) and Vivenza (2001, 143).

[22]Griswold (1999, 540) and Trincado (2003b).

[23]Schliesser (2009).

[24]Smith (1976a, 77–78).

[25]Smith (1987, 270).

Our great evils come from not knowing the price of our own happiness and wanting to change it for an illusory one.[26] For Smith, "nothing is more graceful than habitual cheerfulness, which is always founded upon a peculiar relish for all the little pleasures, which common occurrences afford".[27] That is the case of the contemplation of Statuary and Painting, in which we enjoy the pleasure of perception of embraceable objects and the satisfaction of knowledge; or of the performers of Dancing and Music, in which we enjoy the pleasure of movement.[28] "After the pleasures which arise from the gratification of the bodily appetites, there seem to be none more natural to man than Music and Dancing".[29]

Pleasure for Smith is neither corporal nor mental. Smith criticizes the Epicurean system, which considered the search for corporal pleasure and the avoidance of corporal pain—the body as a centre of sensations—as the only motive of action and the last and final objectives of natural desire and aversion.[30] According to Epicurus, every mental pleasure or pain is derived from one of the body and from the self-preservation principle; but mental pleasures and pains are more acute than corporal pleasures. The body only experiments the present sensation, while the brain can also feel past and future sensations, the one through memory, the other through anticipation. So, it consequently suffers and enjoys more. When we are exposed to the greater physical pain, Epicurus said, we will always find, if we pay attention, that it is not the suffering of the present moment that basically torments us, but the recall of the past and the fear of the future. The present pain, alone and separated from what happened in the past or is bound to come, is a trifle that does not deserve consideration. At the same time, when we enjoy the most intense pleasure, we will always find that the physical sensation of the present moment is just a little fraction of our happiness

[26]Smith (1976a, 149).
[27]Smith (1976a, 41–42).
[28]Smith (1980, 176–207).
[29]Smith (1980, 187).
[30]Smith (1976a), TMS VII.ii.1.19–22, 275–278.

and that our enjoyment emerges mainly from the evocation of the past or the bringing forward of the future.[31] But, in Epicurus' system, future uncertainty is painful; so, abstaining from the seeking of pleasure lets man live quietly, without fears, awaiting unavoidable death. When the body is free from pain and the brain from every anxiety, the added sensation of physical pleasure is of little importance.

Smith refutes this need of apathy and asserts that the wise man is sensible to whatever pleasure. Epicurus falls into the most customary error of science: excessive simplification. All his theory is based on the seeking of prudential pleasure, not in the correction of active sensations, since for Epicurus human action is passive—or reactive.[32] In this sense, for Smith we do not seek this mental tranquillity to free ourselves from uncertainty and the anxiety of anticipation.[33] We seek tranquillity because only from that mood of our mind does reality emerge and we are capable of having sensations (the opposite of "apathy"). So, the hedonistic idea of pleasure and pain imply that sensations are ex post to movement.

> Those sensations appear to have been given us for the preservation of our own bodies… But the desire of changing our situation necessarily supposes some idea of externality; or of motion into a place different from that in which we are; end even the desire of remaining in the same place supposes some idea of at least the possibility of changing. Those sensations could not well have answered the intention of Nature, had they not thus instinctively suggested some vague notion of external existence.[34]

Unlike the Stoics, for Smith, it is not only our sensibility to others' feelings that is compatible with a self-commanding nature, but it is the very same principle on which it is based. The propriety of our feelings and sensations seems to be exactly in proportion to the force and vivacity with which we enter into and conceive the feelings and sensations

[31]Smith (1976a, 294–300).

[32]Smith (1976a, 299).

[33]Smith (1976a), TMS VI.iii.21, 246.

[34]Smith (1980, 167–168).

of others. The individual that feels most the joy and sorrow of others is better endowed to obtain the fullest control of his own joy and sorrow.[35] Some authors attribute this idea to the Stoical influence on Smith, as Smith's system points to a moral minimum and a moral maximum.[36] But according to Smith it is human feeling, personal memories that acts, not the absence of feeling with the logos acting as a self-commander.[37] Smith argues that the judge of our actions is not "other people" in general, but certain individuals who evoke wonder and admiration and inspire emulation in us.[38]

Contrary to Hume's argument, Smith says that the virtues and passions we acquire by habit are not so admired, because we find it difficult to enter into another person's habit, as we have not acquired it by ourselves. This is the case with inferior prudence. In consequence, we approve of prudential self-command, in which a present object interests us as much as a future one, but we do not admire it. The search for self-preservation is implicit in nature and, according to Smith, all the necessities and conveniences of the body "are always very easily supplied".[39]

But prudence not addressed to the care of one's self is necessarily admirable.[40] Self-command allows us to address our passive feelings to the objective of Justice and Magnanimity. Aiming for the accomplishment of virtue, it can control fear and rage, or the longing for comfort, pleasure or applause; and it is "independent of the beauty, which it derives from its utility".[41] Thus, when we observe someone controlling his fear of death addressed to a noble motive,[42] the decrease in his fear of death allows us to empathize with his noble search without being blocked by the sympathy with his pain. Thus, self-command increases

[35]Smith (1976a, 152).
[36]Waszek (1984).
[37]For Stoics influences in Smith, see Lázaro (2012).
[38]Klein (2016).
[39]Smith (1976a, 213).
[40]Smith (1976a, 216).
[41]Smith (1976a, 238).
[42]As in Smith (1976a, 238–239).

our admiration.[43] This is due to the fact that, according to Smith, and as Griswold points out, the fear of death is a pain of the imagination and, in consequence, it is easier for us to sympathize with it than with a corporal pain.[44]

This idea of pleasure, obviously, challenges the homo oeconomicus rational calculator of pleasures and pains constructed in the nineteenth century.[45] The higher moral standard implies a dialogue between materialistic and moral concerns. Actually, between the first and last editions of TMS, the taste for luxury and conspicuous consumption became widespread in Great Britain, but Smith decided to consider superior prudence and magnanimity the best way to keep society away from moral deception. Inferior prudence depends on the expectation of external success, superior prudence depends on wisdom of moral character,[46] which at best "imitates the work of a divine artist, which can never be equalled".[47]

4.3 The Self

But Adam Smith is not lacking in contradiction. Smith says that a person growing up in some solitary place could not think of his own character or of the propriety or merit of his own sentiments and conduct.[48] As Smith intended to confirm "that our judgments concerning our own conduct have always a reference to the sentiments of some other being",[49] in the formation of the self, Smith presupposes the idea of the observer, which is in fact what he wants to explain.[50] If the process of creating the self consists in observing elements external—another's

[43]Meardon and Ortmann (1996), Montes (2004, 76–86), and McKenna (2006).
[44]Griswold (1999, 119).
[45]Persky (1995).
[46]Morrow (1923) and Garbo (2016).
[47]Smith (1976a), TMS VI.iii.25, 247.
[48]Smith (1976a), TMS III.i.3, 111.
[49]Corr. 49.
[50]Smith (1976a), TMS III.i.2–5, 109–112; TMS IV.ii.

smile, and rewards—and achieving their acceptance, and the self of the Other has also been shaped in a similar way, everything is a reflection of a reflection, pure semblance, a mask foreign to the individual himself. This contradiction earned Smith innumerable criticisms.[51] From literature, we know that to insist on this idea can create a duplication of the self, which can draw us into labyrinth-like feelings. This duplication has been described by Borges, who continually ventured deeper and deeper into his own private labyrinth.[52] Moreover, Smith recognizes that the imaginary spectator of our own conduct examines it when we are about to act and afterwards, but never when we are acting.[53] Consequently, it cannot motivate the action, and to justify the act he uses the self-deceiving mechanism.[54] The process of socialization is key for the adaptive function of the self[55] but this adaptation is based on a Hobbesian fear of death.[56] Smith says that we even sympathize with the dead.[57] According to Griswold, the sympathy with the death implies that Smithian sympathy is self-referencing as the dead cannot feel what we are feeling.[58] But actually, when we sympathize with the dead we are feeling something: a void of reality. And, in order to avoid this feeling of void, we create a reactive self. This is Hume's definition of the self.

But Smith's praise for self-command implies a belief in the existence of a free, self-restrained "self", immune to pleasure–pain pulsation.[59] According to Smith, there seems to be an active and grateful self, and a reactive and possessive self in all of us. The former is always present, and from it perception and active principles are bound to emerge; the latter

[51]See the objections by Stewart and Thomas Reid in Thomas Brown lectures. Reeder (1997, 143–144).

[52]See Trincado (2006b).

[53]Smith (1976a), TMS III.4.2–4, 157.

[54]Related in TMS III.iv.4–6, 157–159. Self-deception in the Impartial Spectator is studied in Gerschlager (2002).

[55]Smith (1976a), TMS III.

[56]Cropsey (1957) and Pack (1991).

[57]Smith (1976a), TMS I.i.1.13, 12.

[58]Griswold (1999, 89).

[59]See (Montes 2004, 101–114). But, curiously, in the Glasgow edition of the TMS there is only one reference to the word 'liberty' (Harpham 2000).

is dependent, unreal and mortal, with reactive principles of movement. It is thanks to the first self that human beings seek an emotional bond with people in the present and create relationships with present things.

For instance, when he talks about "dignity", Smith expresses two ideas: one, the virtue of self-command; the other, the notion of social rank. It is an inherent value of people, but in the first case it implies that we command a self intrinsically worthy of dignity, and in the second that we create an image of a social self. Both cases depend on affective human nature, based on a power or faculty of mind, not rational or divine.[60]

Considering the existence of an active principle of the self, it is easier to understand why self-love is a positive ethical principle.[61] This self is a grateful reality, not a manmade construction. When Smith looks in the mirror, he expresses self-love that is neither self-referencing nor dependent but that is grateful or friendly to reality.

> One's own face becomes then the most agreeable object which a looking-glass can represent to us…; whether handsome or ugly, whether old or young, it is the face of a friend always.[62]

Perhaps Borges' fear of mirrors was due to their making him feel more unreal for lack of self-love: the reflection did not differ from the thing reflected.

4.3.1 The Reactive Self

Let us explain then, how the reactive and the active self work in Smith's morality. For Smith, the death instinct cannot be the target of our action since fear of death is "the great poison of human happiness".[63] The lack of fear of death makes humans more sensitive,[64] and for that

[60]Debes (2012).

[61]For the question of self-love, see Black (2006).

[62]Imitative Arts I.17, 186.

[63]Smith (1976a), TMS I.i.1.13, 13.

[64]Smith (1976a), TMS V.ii.11, 208.

reason, for instance, soldiers evince a "character of gaiety, levity, and sprightly freedom".[65] That is, when people allow themselves to be swayed by the imagination of nothingness, their movements are reactive and evasive, not free.

In this sense, "the idea of death" implies a break in time where, as above mentioned, the individual lives in a vacuum "in the present". It implies some type of "not accepting of reality" and this should mean some type of non-existence. So, in such a situation, the only thing the individual can do is try to forget the vacuum by placing a veil over his or her imagination. In fact, "utility" is that image, and "uses" the present for its self-determination.[66]

This leads to an anxious search for utility that wipes out any possibility of a relaxed present, and our own image enslaves us. As we said, in the final stage of his life, the arriviste understands that wealth and splendour are "no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys".[67] Only through an understanding of the value of "Time, the great and universal comforter"[68] could self-command dominate passion, enjoying beforehand that tranquillity which we foresee the course of time will restore to us in the end. Moreover, the idea of death can be a utility to be admired or accepted, something religions have managed to promote. This may be a reason why Smith challenged the church as an institution.[69]

However, Smith became increasingly sceptical of the judgement of popular opinion[70] and perceived the influence of a tribunal in moral judgement different from others' judgement.[71] Smith says:

> You will observe that it is intended both to confirm my doctrine that our judgements concerning our own conduct have always a reference to the

[65]Smith (1976a), TMS V.2.6, 203.
[66]Smith (1976a), TMS IV.i.1–6, 179–180.
[67]Smith (1976a), TMS IV.i.8, 181.
[68]Smith (1976a), TMS III.iii.32, 151.
[69]See Griswold (1999, 10–11).
[70]Corr. 48–57.
[71]Smith (1976a), TMS III.ii.32, 130.

sentiment of some other being and, to shew that, notwithstanding, this real magnanimity and conscious virtue can support itself under the disapprobation of all mankind.[72]

4.3.2 The Active Self

In Smith's theory, moral sentiments, like self-command, are not totally based on education or custom. "The principles of the imagination, upon which our sense of beauty depends… may easily be altered by habit and education… the sentiments of moral approbation… are founded on the strongest… passions of human nature; and… cannot be entirely perverted".[73] The principles of the imagination are contrasted with the sentiments of moral approbation. Besides, self-command does not imply negating oneself. The passions, instead of disappearing, "lie concealed in the breast of the sufferer".[74] Self-command is self-actualization of certain principles of justice and enables us to express "the highest contempt of death and pain",[75] increasing the admiration of the spectator.

Although some scholars have considered Smith's impartial spectator to be a collective person,[76] if this were so he would not approve of an action that all humanity would disapprove of. The existence of a tribunal not dependent on imagination seems to imply a momentary psychological break with the image of the self. The man "sees, with grief and affliction, in how many different features the mortal copy falls short of the immortal original".[77] "In such cases, this demigod within the breast appears, like the demigods of the poets, though partly of immortal, yet

[72]The Correspondence of Adam Smith, Letter 40 to Gilbert Elliot, Glasgow, 10 October 1959, p. 49 (ed. Mossner and Ross).

[73]Smith (1976a), TMS V.ii.1, 200.

[74]Smith (1976a), TMS V.ii.11, 208.

[75]Smith (1976a), TMS V.ii.9, 206.

[76]Hope (1989, 9) and Campbell (1971).

[77]Smith (1976a), TMS VI.iii.25, 247.

partly too of mortal extraction".[78] This self is the one that makes depth perception possible which supposes an identification with ubiquity, and it resolves the contradiction of the existence of an impartial spectator who, at the same time, sums up others' judgement and disapproves of all humanity. The imaginary man requires an impulse "from outside" to act; an active "self" acts "towards the outside". It requires, as Ricoeur (1984, 53) says, to be present in the passage.

As we have said, for Smith the sense of merit is made up of a direct sympathy with the sentiments of the agent and an indirect sympathy with the gratitude of those who receive the benefit of his actions.[79] But the demigod within the breast has as its motive life itself and sympathizes with the gratitude of people affected by it. In TMS Smith says that "whatever is the cause of pleasure naturally excites our gratitude".[80] In its first stage, this gratitude is inseparable from wonder and the sense of reality.[81] Probably, the faith in an ordered world, emerges then. Haakonssen points out that Smith's is based on Samuel von Cocceji's theory, which asserts that the individual should understand his life to be a personal gift from God.[82]

The active "self" does not necessarily imply the existence of a Kantian transcendental ego or of innate ideas. A non-eidetic self can be placed in the observer of memory, which covers the present as a whole, out of succession of time. This self has active principles as it does not oppose the outside.[83] It does not want to observe an image; it wants a correspondence with life and to find a sense of freedom and gratitude shared with its peers.[84]

In his work, Smith talks about some active principles of movement, which depend to some extent on self-command. The first active

[78]Smith (1976a), TMS III.ii.32, 131. See also Smith (1976a), TMS III.v.9, 168; Smith (1976a), TMS III.ii.12, 121.

[79]Smith (1976a), TMS II.i.v.2, 74.

[80]Smith (1980), Astronomy III. 2, 48.

[81]Smith (1980), Astronomy III.2, 49.

[82]Haakonssen (1996, 135–148).

[83]See Trincado (2003a) and Huxley (1963).

[84]Trincado (2004).

principle is joy, very closely related with "the willingness to live" and contrary to the idea of suicide. "Nature, in her sound and healthful state, seems never to prompt us to suicide…"[85] Smith was prompted to write this by Hume's posthumous publication "On Suicide". As in Husserl, this self implies a direct perceptive contact, a "now" that retains but also seeks the future and does not conceive of "no future". Actually, in Husserl, and after Ricoeur, time is not defined as a succession of moments, but rather the following of a narration, with a past, a present and a future.[86] For Smith, confidence in the "divine plan" allows the wise person to face all types of adversities, including death, "not only with humble resignation… but… with alacrity and joy".[87] He submits to reality because it is right, regardless of the effect on his happiness in the afterlife.[88]

Curiosity and wonder are also active principles that are part of Smith system. Wonder leads men in the direction of novelty and does not necessarily seek "any expectation of advantage from its discoveries".[89] Curiosity needs in some way self-love, which, as opposed to selfishness, is a morally positive principle, as it is the basis for the capacity to understand: he/she who does not believe in himself (or herself) shuts off their intuitive capacity, losing one of the underpinnings of existence, that is, "attention to life".

> Those unfortunate persons, whom nature has formed a good deal below the common level, seem sometimes to rate themselves still more below it than they really are. This humility appears sometimes to sink them into idiotism.[90]

And for self-love to activate itself it is essential that there be a consciousness of reciprocity and belief in the other. "The man who had

[85]TMS VII.ii.1.34, 287.

[86]Ricoeur (1984, 27).

[87]Smith (1976a), TMS VI.ii.3.4, 236.

[88]Smith (1976a), TMS VII.iii.3.13–14, 325. For comparison with utilitarian theory, see TMS VII.ii.3.21, 305–306.

[89]Astronomy III.3, 51.

[90]Smith (1976a), TMS VI.iii.49, 260.

the misfortune to imagine that nobody believed a single word he says, would feel himself the outcast of human society".[91] In Astronomy II Smith also describes wonder in terms of uncertainty about the future and as a painful sentiment which gives rise to anxious curiosity.[92]

Two other principles that Smith briefly sketches are creativity and play. In Smith's treatment of political economy, active play implies reciprocity. Certain types of work—the repetitive and mechanical—undermine the meaning and value of personal life and stupefy people. Time becomes cyclical in eternal repetition. Lázaro relates this feature of Smith's theory to Nicolas Grimaldi's philosophy, for whom work is marked by a sense of creativity and gift: work opens the worker to all those who may benefit from his work.[93] In WN, active play is persuasion and it is displayed in the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another. Solitary and self-referring play can be harmful, based as it is on reactions. "The over-weening conceit which the greater part of men has of their own abilities"[94] leads them to "The contempt of risk and the presumptuous hope of success".[95] However, Smith does not explore the concept of creativity in the WN. He does that in his theory of Rhetoric and aesthetics, which we will subsequently study.

4.4 Rationality

Another of the common elements of the Scottish Enlightenment was its critique of rationalism. In this period, the authors of "the analysis of riches" normally raised the mechanical efficiency principle to the category of beauty. They talked about organic beauty, or adaptation of a shape to the environment, and about mechanical beauty, the perfect adaptation of the shape to its end, use or utility.[96] Berkeley in his *Theory of Vision* and

[91]Smith (1976a), TMS VII.iv.26, 336.
[92]Schliesser (2006).
[93]Lázaro (2010, 76–77), quoting Grimaldi (1998).
[94]Smith (1976b), WN I.x.b, 124.
[95]Smith (1976b), WN I.x.b, 126.
[96]Marchán (1996, 50).

in *Alciphron* was a more earnest defender of the functionalist theory, in which all beauty depends on imagination of the subordination of the uses to the ends.[97]

The imagination for Hobbes is the "weakened sense", the image that stays when closing your eyes in the darkness. There is no active principle to create it: when it weakens further it is "memory" and a lot of memories are "experience", which is obtained with years and independent of individual will. The sequence of thoughts is "mental speech". It is not an arbitrary succession but it is "not–guided", created without intention by a desire (to digress); or "regulated" by some desire or plan (to deliberate).[98]

Hume, following Hobbes and Hutcheson, claimed that reason is only a reflection of a feeling. And Smith subsequently reasserts this idea. When they refute reason as the principle of approbation, they were criticizing the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688) who considered that ideas of right and wrong are antecedent to all law and experience.[99] For Hume, reason can only have two effects: excite a passion by informing us of the existence of something that is its proper object, or discover the connection of causes and effects, to give us the means to execute a passion. The person may be wrong in what will produce an imagined pleasure, but it is an involuntary error, in fact, that cannot be a source of guilt or criminality. Sometimes, Hume says, calm actions are mixed with those of reason. For him, what we call mental strength is no more than the prevalence of calm over violent passions. But these calmed passions are known more by the effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation. Tasset says that Hume mixes reason with peaceful passion without justification.[100] Stroud argues that Hume fails to demonstrate why gentle passions (which are supposed to be less strong) manage to affect behaviour and are the cause of quiet inclinations.[101]

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[97]Berkeley (1709, 1732).

[98]Hobbes (1989, 43).

[99]Carrasco (2004).

[100]Tasset (1999, 47).

[101]Stroud (1977, 167–168).

According to Hume, after many experiences, "we retain a degree of belief, which is sufficient for our purpose, either in philosophy or common life".[102] A demonstration is a belief (for example, that the sun will rise tomorrow). It is an experience of the sensible part of our natures, rather than the rational part, a fruit of imagination. Only by giving an impulse in the opposite direction to a passion might reason operate, but reason does not produce impulses. Therefore, Hume does not allude to reason as an ability of the practical type, which directly determines conduct, but rather conduct is affected by reason in an indirect way, through passion.[103]

Smith also asserts that the first perceptions of good and evil cannot derive from reason, but from the immediate feeling and emotion. Even cause and effect is a type of beauty that impresses men strongly, the same as animal and vegetable kingdom beauty does, the great natural ecosystem in which every element seems to fit as a great puzzle and every specie suits the niche for which it seems to have been created.

But, unlike previous authors, for Smith systems of reason deal with objects that we consider independently of any relation with us or the individual whose feelings we judge. We admire them because they refer to something external of which we are common spectators and that we share.[104]

> When the sentiments of our companion coincide with our own in things of this kind, which are obvious and easy, he seems to deserve no praise or admiration on account of them. But when they not only coincide with our own, but lead and direct our own; when informing them he appears to have attended to many things which we had overlooked, and to have adjusted them to all the various circumstances of their objects; we not only approve of them, but wonder and are surprised at their uncommon and unexpected acuteness and comprehensiveness, and he appears to deserve a very high degree of admiration and applause… The utility of those qualities, it may be thought, is what first recommends them to us;

[102]Hume (1964a, 476), Treatise: I: IV: I. See Livingston (1984).

[103]Tasset (1999, 50). On the several meanings of the term "reason" in Hume, see Tasset (1999, 47–59) and Norton (1982, 96–98).

[104]Smith (1976a): TMS: 67–68, I: I: IV.

> and, no doubt, the consideration of this, when we come to attend to it, gives them a new value. Originally, however, we approve of another man's judgment, not as something useful, but as right, as accurate, as agreeable to truth and reality.[105]

We do not admire the special capacity of perception of objects, both natural and humane, due to its utility, but because it is wise and brings us closer to reality without creating a barrier of incredulity. In this case, therefore, not only is it the coincidence of imagined feelings that produces pleasure, but the surprise and the gratitude for a common reality.

Unlike Hume, Smith does not hold that moral distinctions derive from sentiment *as opposed to* reason.[106] For Smith, our aptitude for reasoning arises from language, and reason itself is a type of language. Therefore, it arises from the desire to coincide with the feelings of others and is a reflection of moral feelings, not the other way round. It adapts to temperament and the historical age, but people also adapt their reason to language, and their reason is perverted by the perversions of language. In his *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, Smith considers the subjective side of the scientific enterprise. He argues that human beings engage in science primarily in hopes of soothing the imagination by accounting for the chaos of appearances. In this sense, all scientific theories are "mere inventions of imagination". Therefore, every theory must remain forever subject to revision. Science is a permanently open activity, one that is prompted by our passions and forged by the imagination.[107] This does not mean, however, that reality does not exist: only that science is an imagined product that tries to represent or account for the regularities of nature. As Hühn says, it stresses the fact that the *values and sentiments of scientists* are involved in knowledge generation which must be based in humility: scientists must never make claims of absolute truth.[108]

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[105]Smith (1976a, 68–69), I: IV.

[106]Darwall (1999, 142).

[107]Rasmussen (2017, 41).

[108]Hühn (2017).

But, who are the epigones of Hume's and Smith's concept of rationality? We may find in the theorists of bounded rationality and different decision-making procedures, including behavioural economics, the successors of Hume.[109] Smith's imprint is to be seen in Popper's work. Popper has an evolutionary theory of knowledge and learning but also a methodological proposal for the social sciences known as "Situational Analysis", which has an "objectivist" and "subjectivist" version.[110] Even Schumpeter's distinction between the "rationality of the observer" and the "rationality in the observed" may be considered included in the Smithian concept of rationality.[111]

4.5 Sympathy

Both Hume and Smith consider that, as against Hutcheson, morality springs not from an innate, God-given moral sense but rather from the operations of sympathy. For them, our moral sentiments are acquired and developed over time, not written directly into human nature.[112] They coincide also in considering that right and wrong are established by the sentiments that we feel when we adopt the proper perspective that corrects for personal biases and misinformation. So, for both it is not true that whatever feels right is right. Hume thinks that to make an accurate judgement of an action or character we must surmount our own circumstances and adopt a "general point of view" or the "common point of view", the viewpoint of the judicious spectator. We must consider the effects of the actions on ourselves and on those who have any commerce with the person we consider. Likewise, Smith holds that proper moral judgment requires adopting the standpoint of an impartial spectator.

[109]Simon (1957), Rubinstein (1998), and Thaler (1994).

[110]Popper (1957).

[111]Schumpeter (1991).

[112]Smith (1976a), TMS III.4.5, 158; VII.iii.3, 321–327.

But Hume also differed from Adam Smith in his definition of "sympathy". Smith himself, in the Theory of Moral Sentiments, wanted to get rid of that earlier meaning of the term sympathy: "'Sympathy', though its meaning may originally have been the same, can now fairly properly be used to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever".[113] The Greek term of sym-patheia—suffering with—had the sense of compassion. In English, sympathy and compassion have no semantic identity but in the English usage of the seventeenth century, sympathy included compassion. Sympathy is now a broader term than compassion: it implies sharing a feeling, while compassion, especially during the eighteenth century, acquires its current meaning and implies commiseration, grief or pity towards the other and, therefore, an implicit inequality.

From these different concepts, two radically different views of morality arise. Hume had spoken of a sympathy that can be opposed to antipathy: it consists in the characters being hateful or pleasant for us. Hume considered that the spectator shares sympathy with the pleasure of the benefit; Smith believed that sympathy is with the affections and motives of the person who acts, and we sympathize with the gratitude of the person who is acted upon.[114] For Hume, therefore, we cannot sympathize with pain without a certain aversion. For Smith, the shared gratitude is sufficient payment for the spectator. The moral approval and propriety of an action consist in the coincidence of the feelings of the spectator with the motives of the agent. Smith tried to criticize the theory that reduces sympathy to the egocentric self-love in which man, aware of his weakness and need for help from others, rejoices when another adopts his own passion because he is sure of his help.[115]

As gratitude leads naturally to the search for correspondence, man reflects on his fellow beings and makes them the subject of his gratitude. The objective of human action is then to feel loved by their fellow creatures and to be in consonance with others' judgements. In addition,

[113]Smith (1976a), TMS: 1: 1: 1: 52. See Fricke (2016, 181–183) and Rasmussen (2017, 90–94).

[114]Smith, TMS: I: 1: V.

[115]See Holthoon (1993, 45).

this is the moment when moral sentiment emerges, with the recognition of our equality with another being and his seeking to harmonize his feelings with our own.[116]

Smith explains the difference between his theory and that of Hume:

> II. There is another system which attempts to account for the origin of our moral sentiments from sympathy, distinct from that which I have been endeavouring to establish. It is that which places virtue in utility, and accounts for the pleasure with which the spectator surveys the utility of any quality from sympathy with the happiness of those who are affected by it. This sympathy is different both from that by which we enter into the motives of the agent, and from that by which we go along with the gratitude of the persons who are benefited by his actions. It is the same principle with that by which we approve of a well-contrived machine. But no machine can be the object of either of those two last mentioned sympathies. I have already, in the fourth part of this discourse, given some account of this system.[117]

This is targeting the theory of David Hume directly. Subsequently, as David Raynor points out, Hume silently complains that he was not cited and tries to correct Smith's simplification of his theory in an anonymous review of the book.[118] However, he knew perfectly well that their theories differed, and that Smith was taking advantage of his opposition to Hume's.

This difference in their concepts of sympathy may be exemplified by their understanding of suicide. For Hume, as we have seen, suicide is morally admirable; for Smith, it is an object of commiseration and a consequence of a lack of self-command. Hume sympathizes with the avoidance of pain in a life that he thinks not worth living. He considers admirable the self-command that entails opposing the human instinct for survival. But in the sixth edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* of 1790, Smith says that although suicide is not criminal, it

[116]For the importance of love in smith, see Griswold and Uyl (1996).

[117]Smith (1976a), TMS VII.iii.3.17, 327.

[118]Raynor (1984).

is reprehensible for an impartial spectator. According to Eckstein, the fact that Smith did not consider suicide punishable was contrary to contemporary opinion.[119] But the important question is that, for Smith, the principle of praise of suicide is a philosophical refinement. Nature, in her sound and healthful state, never impels us to suicide. It is true, he says, that there is a kind of melancholy that seems to be accompanied by an appetite for self-destruction. But "The unfortunate persons who perish in this miserable manner are the proper objects not of censure but of commiseration". It is never a sign of strength, but of weakness (and pride). But "I do not remember to have either read or heard of any American savage who, upon being taken prisoner by some hostile tribe, put himself to death in order to avoid being afterwards put to death in torture".[120] However, pretending to punish a person when they are out of reach of any human sanction is as absurd as it is unfair. The punishment can fall only on their surviving friends and relations, who are always perfectly innocent, and must be devastated by the final decision of the loved one.[121] Smith, as we see, does not consider suicide proper, as he cannot sympathize with the motive of the agent—avoiding pain is not admirable, only an instinct; and neither does he consider it meritorious as he sympathizes with the gratitude—in this case, indignation—of those relatives affected. Finally, he might reject the non-gratitude to life of the person committing suicide, which is related to the pride of considering some life not worth living.

We may account for some other differences in the concepts of sympathy of both authors. For Hume sympathy is passive, almost a mechanical process, an emotional contagion. For Smith, it is more active projection and we sympathize not so much with the real circumstances of the person, but with what those circumstances would be for a wise and fair person, who is in touch with reality. The fact that human beings are capable of indignation shows that sympathy can be distinguished from the "emotional contagion" or complete identification,

[119]Foot 36 of Smith, TMS: VII: II: I: 287, ed. Raphael and Macfie.

[120]Smith (1976b), TMS: VII: I: II, par. 34.

[121]Smith (1976b), TMS: VII: II: I: 504–505.

which disallows any chance of dissension between people.[122] Smith insists with examples such as the fact that we feel pity for someone who has lost the use of reason even if she appears perfectly content or that we feel sorry for someone's death.[123] For Smith what makes us approve or disapprove of moral action is propriety and merit, which are not to do with feeling happy or sad or angry, but with motives. Neither of them is based on pleasure, but on the gratitude for some intention to benefit someone.

Darwall has proposed that we use "empathy" instead of "sympathy" when referring to the Smithian imagined change of position.[124] Pleasure in the form of gratitude can be felt equally by the agent and the spectator. Fontaine defines Smith's sympathy as a "complete empathetic identification". However, Smith is only speaking about "harmony of sentiments", about an identification with the other when we agree with the motives.[125] For that reason, the theory could be better defined as an empathizing sympathy, or as a critical empathy. The self that can criticize feelings of others needs to be outside the imaginative process. The Smithian idea of natural "sympathy" requires a profound belief in the notion of external existence and the possibility of empathetic sympathy. For Smith, we like to see that we can sympathize with people's real motives, even when they consist of pain. So, we want to get to know others, not in search of utility, but to feel and get to know the reality of things.[126]

Then, the concept of the "empathizing sympathy" implies that we can imagine the circumstances of the other person, and even our own, without possessing an admirative or critical ability with respect to those circumstances. Then, we sympathize with his—our—feelings. Nevertheless, when the imaginative process becomes independent of the imaginary self, and we observe it from a time outside succession, our

[122]Tasset (1995, 101). See also Griswold (1999, Ch. 6); or Vivenza 2001.

[123]Fleischacker (2012, 276).

[124]Darwall (1998, 264–269).

[125]Fontaine (2001, 388). Raynor (1984) differed from Fointaine's claim.

[126]Smith (1976a), TMS VII.iv.28, 337. Smith (1976a), TMS VII.iii.1.4, 317.

relationship with time opens up. Then, we "realize" that an independent and active feeling occurs, a feeling of admiration, of indignation, of compassion, of gratitude. This is because we seek gratefulness to reality from the other person, and not finding it causes surprise. In many cases, this capacity of comprehension is obstructed because, in fact, "we do not want to understand". We prefer to maintain our comfortable situation of inactivity or we do not want to recognize a previous mistake—the self-deceit. However, it is possible for a sufficiently moving experience to expand our understanding again, and sometimes it can help us make a break with our previous acceptance connections. One familiar case of this sudden shift of mind is Hume's mental crisis[127] or the one suffered by John Stuart Mill.[128]

For instance, Smith shows in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* that indignation is the feeling on which the notion of justice is based. The foundation of justice is another topic about which Smith diverges from Hume.[129] According to Hume, rules are necessary for the existence of society and, then, authority emerged due to this need for external control. Hume's description of society seems to agree with the idea of "possessive individualism",[130] since it gives importance to the desire for possession and to the problems posed for coexistence by the opposing individual desires. However, Hume is not monist about social motivation. Men do not only want wealth and power; they live their passions by comparison, something that rules out an exclusive tendency to possession, since what matters is not the objects themselves, but how they appear in the social light.[131]

Conversely, Smith considers justice a feeling and precisely it is a non-adaptive feeling. Justice is a feeling of propriety, not based on the volatile enjoyment of pleasure or flight from pain but on indignation when we see an improper act. The basis for justice is not utility or

[127]Mossner (1980, 66, 70).

[128]Mill (1971).

[129]Haakonsen (1981, Ch. 4), Fleischacker (2004, 151–154), Pack and Schliesser (2004, 61–63), and Frazer (2010, Ch. 4).

[130]Macpherson (1970).

[131]Tasset (1999, 243–244).

reason, which are an outline of the future that would use punishment for an imaginary end. Justice is for Smith a feeling in the present.[132]

> The revenge of the injured which prompts him to retaliate the injury on the offender is the real source of the punishment of crimes. That which Grotius and other writers commonly allege as the original measure of punishments, viz the consideration of the publick good, will not sufficiently account for the constitution of punishments.[133]

Indignation is a feeling that precedes the law. The state must acknowledge this feeling, the state does not create it.[134] Disapproval in terms of (im)propriety and (de)merit comes now from the criminal motives and the rage of the affected person. Pack & Schliesser note that in TMS revenge gets replaced by resentment of the injured and the sympathetic observer.[135] Therefore, Smith stresses the idea of the spectator both in his ethics and in his theory of law. Smith's theory of morals led to his theory of jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence led him to his history of economics.[136]

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[132]Trincado (2000, 2004).

[133]Smith (1978), LJ 104.

[134]Smith (1978), LJ 547 and LJ (B): 475: 182. See Fleischacker (2004, 151).

[135]Pack and Schliesser (2004).

[136]Fitzgibbons (1995, 22).

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5

Rhetoric in Hume and Smith

5.1 The First Formation of Language

Language is a universal tie between the people, and it was also the main common interest and link between David Hume and Adam Smith. It was in 1958 that John M. Lothian, of Aberdeen University, bought in a book sale in Aberdeenshire two volumes of manuscript lessons "Notice of Dr Smith's Rhetorick Lectures", which turned out to be Adam Smith's lessons on rhetoric and literature of 1948–1951. Smith began delivering public lectures in Edinburgh in 1748, sponsored by the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh under the patronage of Lord Kames, partly at the instigation of Hume's neighbour, patron and friend, Henry Home. The initial lectures were well received and subscribed, so he continued lecturing for two years, adding a series on jurisprudence and perhaps on the history of natural science. It was during this period, that Smith met Hume for the first time, as the antiquarian George Chalmers said in his notes after Smith's death. He said that it was probably in the autumn of 1749, in the first lectures by Smith after Hume's return to Scotland from Vienna and Turin in the autumn.[1]

[1]See Rasmussen (2017).

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Smith would have been eager to meet Hume, given his familiarity with Hume's works and that they had several mutual friends who could have facilitated a meeting, including Henry Home and James Oswald of Dunnikier. It is possible that Hume attended some of Smith's lectures as some of the lectures were, as W. R. Scott suggests, hosted by the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, since Hume was an active member of the society and would soon become one of its two secretaries.

This reputation led to Smith becoming the tutor of the Duke of Buccleuch from 1764. Apparently, during his two-year sojourn in France in 1764–1766 he continued to deliver his lectures on rhetoric and belles-lettres in private classes.[2] These lectures were delivered in the context of traditional Classical Rhetoric and they followed the legacy of Addison's and Edmund Burke's works.[3] According to his coetaneous, Adam Smith's knowledge of Greek and Latin literature was not common among his contemporaries.[4] Hisrhetoric lectures were not published until 1963 as "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres Delivered in the University of Glasgow by Adam Smith, Reported by a Student in 1762-63".[5]

Adam Smith's "Considerations concerning the first formation of Languages, and the different genius of original and compounded Languages" was originally part of his University Lectures on Rhetoric, a work of which Smith was, according to Dugald Stewart, proud: "It is an essay of great ingenuity, and on which the author himself set a high value."[6] In 1761, Smith had published an extended version of his lecture on the origins of language in a short-lived review called the Philological Miscellany. His theory of morals and the discussion of the process of sympathetic exchange on which it was based presupposed a certain theory of language. Inequalities emerge from the unequal ability of the members of the commercial society to use rhetoric and attract

[2]Phillipson (2010, 127) and Ortmann and Walraevens (2015).

[3]Addison (1854) and Burke (1909 [1757]). See Dascal (2006) and Skinner (1983).

[4]Rae (1895, 23), see Vivenza (2001).

[5]Smith (1983).

[6]Stewart (1810, 44), in Smith (1980).

sympathy from others.[7] But also Smith underlines the ethical character of economic agents.[8]

The theory of language he had presented to his Edinburgh and Glasgow students had been designed to show that language was essentially a vehicle for communication created many centuries ago. It then addressed Rousseau's objection that "not even our new grammarians" (he has Condillac in mind) could convince him that all the complexities of modern grammar could be explained in naturalistic terms. Smith was against this idea. Smith may have not read Condillac's work but he must have known of it and he refers his Considerations to Rousseau's *Discourse* in which he takes up issues raised by Condillac.[9]

As in philosophy, morals and economics, Smith was trying to provide in this juvenile lecture a new view of the Rhetorical art. Smith opposed the description of speech proffered by Hobbes, Locke, Hume. All these fought against Descartes' innate concept of knowledge, based on an objective reality that leads to creating a general idea, an operation of the mind. According to Hobbes, the use of language consists of transferring our mental speech to a verbal one.[10] Thought is, therefore, discursive. "Real" or "false" are attributes of language, not of things. A man who wants to find the truth must use definitions. Belief is to base our own arguments on those of others, within the definitions of language. Then, the arguments of authority are only faith put in men. Names were first used as signs that help us to remember. Hobbes' philosophy of language implicitly denies that linguistic expressions refer to anything real.[11]

But Hobbes' theory does not make the simple element of the particular idea clear. In this vein, Locke tries to clarify that the function of language is to externalize an individual world.[12] The words only make sense for the person using them to the degree that their mind finds the corresponding idea present. Words are arbitrary sounds, that are used as signs

[7]Herzog (2013).

[8]Walraevens (2010).

[9]Condillac (1746) and Rousseau (1754). See Land (1977).

[10]Hobbes (1989).

[11]Abizadeh (2015, 15).

[12]Locke (1690).

of ideas that are in the mind of the speaker. They are communicated because they excite the same ideas in the hearer, due to tacit consent as to their meaning. This thesis makes it difficult to explain learning: the first language is impossible because communication requires the identification of names and ideas between the speakers. Besides, if we can only use words that, in the mind of everyone, have corresponding ideas, how do we explain the use of words that name objects or experiences unknown to the other?[13] Locke talks about names—nouns and adjectives—and his semantic reflections on verbs are incidental and circumstantial. Communication is possible by means of a chimera of a direct relationship between language and reality. In some sense, it is not in contradiction with the theory of Berkeley, in which impressions are the way in which the Creator communicates with man.[14]

Along these lines, David Hume clarifies that habit leads us to connect an idea to a word.[15] Hume's theory of language challenged the identification of Cartesians of the general idea with an objective reality, general operation of the mind. Words only refer to ideas and they mean nothing except for the ideas that are in the mind of the user. Thought can only operate through language. Hearing a certain sound suggests the idea to us by association. Hume follows Locke and Berkeley and praises the latter especially for asserting that any general idea is a particular idea assigned to a certain term, which gives it a more extensive meaning and leads to it evoking other similar objects. When we observe many objects and we find that they have similarities, we apply the same name to all of them, even if we find differences between them.[16]

These theories would then be followed by expressionist literary movements, which considered that nouns do not exist but are only a symbol in adjectival or verbal form of non-existent nouns. In Spain, this was the basis for the ultraism poetics, led by Cansinos Assens. We take ideas, impressions of "things"—colours, shapes, etc.—to form general ideas

[13]De Bustos (2000, 98–102).

[14]Berkeley (1732).

[15]Hume (1964d).

[16]See Trincado (2015).

and, if we are consistent, also the idea of a noun or "thing" is a general idea that comes from impressions of colour or touch.

Against these theories, Adam Smith's linguistic explicitly rejects Berkeley's philosophy and starts by discussing nouns before going on to conduct an analysis of the process of abstraction. According to Smith, talking about the first formation of language or about our capacity to express feelings means investigating the way in which man understands the world and the capacity of the human mind to create concepts. This ability is, in nature, intuitive and it later operates through mechanisms such as comparison, classification and abstraction. He concludes that we perceive and acquire knowledge intuitively. But for Smith words are not simple labels for things: the word does not only convey the object, but the situation that creates some memories from that which it names. This does not mean that we have inborn ideas, but that, as we have previously explained, our perception is a global whole with self-organizing tendencies.[17]

So, nouns are the first words created due to an intuitive knowledge of substance. The savage would name the thing from his intuitive knowledge of it and, later, he would assign some name to the ideas of the thing. Smith says that human language is more imperfect than that of nature. It is a representation of visible and tangible objects and feelings, a flat system without perspective. But the language of reality is a language with Substance. This language of reality is not learned by the sense of tact or sight, which create flat figures, but thanks to a different sense that the perspective of time creates. As we have already cited, Smith shows this idea through the example of a blind person who gradually begins to see. Through observation, this person manages to see objects as they are, after the initial confusion caused by the distorting perspective of inexperience. Thanks to what the author calls an "instinctive unknown principle", the previously blind could read the language of reality, which human language ex post may never equal.

[17]For a reassessment of this theory, see Epstein (1988).

> When the young gentleman said that the objects which he saw touched his eyes, he certainly could not mean that they pressed upon or resisted his eyes; for the objects of sight never act upon the organ in any way that resembles pressure or resistance… When the young gentleman was just beginning to understand the strong and distinct perspective of Nature, the faint and feeble perspective of Painting made no impression upon him, and the picture appeared to him what it really was, a plain surface bedaubed with different colours… yet he could not have been thus imposed upon by so imperfect an imitation, if the great principles of Vision had not beforehand been deeply impressed upon his mind, and if he had not, either by the association of ideas, or by some other unknown principle, been strongly determined to expect certain tangible objects in consequence of the visible ones which had been presented to him.[18]

Primitive men would first name the objects around them, thanks to their intuitive understanding of substance, and would then associate ideas to classify objects of the same type in terms of quality, kind, number and relationship. To qualify them further, it would be necessary to resort to prepositions and adjectives. To create these nouns, in any case, some sense of a noun was necessary along with an aptitude to identify their different characteristics. Touch and sight were not enough to come to this conclusion, as the idea of substance, of something connected with itself for a necessary connection, is needed. This is obviously a critique of Locke, for whom the present sensation must be a feeling of tact or refer to an object of touch. If the object stops being touched and the ideas became a nominal essence in the mind, this knowledge ceases to be real. The idea of space is for Locke artificial and complex, created by spaces that are simple ideas. Without it, the process of intuitive knowledge will not begin, and this is necessary to create the subsequent derivative knowledge.

But for Smith, the very fact that we know or express something that refers to another thing shows that the process of understanding and language are created via intuitions. Adjectives would be concrete before abstract (black before blackness), but any adjective assumes a comparison

[18]Smith (1980, 159–161), Of the External Senses, 65–70.

(between black and not black) and therefore an abstraction and a complex process of ordering and clarifying. Gender (which implies using different words to qualify the same noun) and number (first with a variation of the word, then with specific words such as "much", "little" …) would be created in the same way. Comparison and generalization are needed to build prepositions. They are expressions of the situation and true relationship between things, for example, the fruit of the tree. The first verbs would refer to external things in the present—to sound an alarm regarding an approaching animal, for example, they will say "it is coming!" Then time would be expressed. The impersonal verb, which expresses action as opposed to non-action, would be the first to be created (for example, "it is raining").

From there, language progresses like the construction of machines. It becomes more and more elementary. The first person to write would have used a character for every word or unit of sense, but as the system became more complex, a simpler "mutation" would take place, with a greater chance of survival. Letters would have been created and with their variants come words. When two nations unite, the one adopting the language of the other never completely loses its own language but instead, we see the proliferation of mixtures, languages losing their initial complexity. For that reason, modern analytic languages are more prolix, less agreeable to the ear and more rigid in their conventions for word arrangement than the former synthetic ones. In the case of machines, this simplicity is something positive. When language is simpler it shows less variation, and this makes it more difficult to arrange the sounds in diverse ways since the order will be almost given. This makes language more prolix. More words will be necessary to express what was previously expressed by one, even though linguistic beauty, according to Smith, depends on brevity. This deleterious effect of language construction is, however, the same as the deleterious effects that the division of labour have on the perspicuity of the workforce. Markets and the spectator promote beneficial orders not only in economics, but also in language and morality.[19]

[19]Otteson (2002a).

Although Evensky asserts that institutionalized education was very important for Smith,[20] knowledge is for Smith intuitive in the WN, academic education being only a way of counteracting the harmful effects of the division of labour.[21] Labourers, according to Smith, become stupid and ignorant when they become specialized. The worker's dexterity at his trade seems "to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social and martial virtues".[22] So, the evolution of the division of labour, the same as the evolution of language, creates an apparent contradiction as it is the source of dexterity and knowledge in the market but, at the same time, it is the source of ignorance, simplicity and lack of depth.[23] In this sense, language, reason and economics evolve along the same lines, due to their common political and moral value. But, contrary to progressivists such as Hugh Blair,[24] for Smith language, and therefore reason, does not progress in a linear way, as happens with the evolution of specialization. For Smith, markets are no a-historical phenomena. They are not only spaces of negative liberty, connected to individual autonomy and political self-government.[25]

This relating of language with economics was widespread in Smith's days: that is the case with Condillac and Destutt, and Turgot's comparison of money and words in his "Étymologie" for the Encyclopédie.[26] In his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (LRBL) Smith relates languages to specialization and markets.[27] And, as Jermolowicz says, this could have led to his outlining and preparing the Scottish public for the later reception of the Wealth of Nations.[28]

[20]Evensky (1993, 395–412).

[21]Deaño (1993, 25).

[22]Smith (1937, 734–735).

[23]See Rosenberg (1965) and Otteson (2002a).

[24]See Eddy (2011).

[25]Herzog (2016).

[26]See Foucault (1970, 84). Cremaschi (1984, 1988, 2002) studies analogies and metaphors in Smith's theory.

[27]Yeager (1998).

[28]Jermolowicz (2004, 204).

5.2 Rhetoric and the Theories of Language

In Smith's day, rhetoric was an important hobby for nobles who selected their children's tutors based on the teacher's reputation, and undoubtedly Adam Smith became famous due to his lessons on rhetoric. Adam Smith's lectures implied a clear transition from the well-established academic tradition of formal rhetoric to the most practical and creative vision of rhetoric, Smith being a defender of naturalness as opposed to bombastic rhetoric. In addition to having constructed a theory of literary criticism,[29] in these lessons Smith made rhetoric a general theory of communication and, in this sense, it was the basis for the other sciences of human behaviour and of the conscience of the other and the desire to exchange.[30]

Berry places Smith's theory within the Organic School[31] and, although Jermołowicz believes there is some merit in Smith's Lectures,[32] Purcell argues that the Lectures do not represent a new and innovative theory of rhetoric.[33] This unrecognized scholarship is due to the fact that these scholars do not look at the whole picture: as we have said, Smith's theory is part of his system for understanding the social world on the basis of a natural tendency to act based on the conscience of the other. He wanted to construct a complete "science of man",[34] with TMS describing humanity in general, and WN exploring the possibilities of a virtuous "commercial society".[35] Jeffrey Young explains how Smith intended TMS, WN, and his other major works to work as a system.[36] And many scholars attempt to reconcile Smith's views by careful analyses of TMS and WN.[37] But the LRBL are also part of the system.

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[29]Purcell, 198.

[30]Howell (1969), McCloskey (1985), and Hurtado (2006).

[31]Berry (1974).

[32]Jermołowicz (2004).

[33]Purcell (2009).

[34]Ross (2004, 51).

[35]Griswold (1999) and Otteson (2002b).

[36]Young (1997).

[37]Heilbroner (1982), West (1969), Morrow (1928), Rosenberg (1960), and Cropsey (1975).

Smith stresses that rhetoric is about "perspicuity" as a communicator and he then changes the place of communication from the speaker to the spectator. The formation of language, therefore, is an exceptional part of the system. It deals with the construction of the principal tool of communication, a human construction that, on occasions, as in other cases such as morality, law and economics, can be a source of alienation.[38]

As Smith says, the desire to be believed, the desire to persuade and direct other people is the instinct on which the faculty of speech is founded.[39] Language and style are the verbal manifestation of the natural power of the mind and it is based on powers common to all men.[40] Smith shows the importance of the spectator in language. Words change their meaning depending on the moment and the audience.[41] Smith understood that different circumstances required different discourses.[42] The speaker and the audience, as Grice says, are in the habit of coordinating their actions to facilitate the process of transmission of information from one to another, which is called "the principle of linguistic cooperation" and when this is violated, the audience can extract the conclusion that the speaker does not have a real intention of communicating with them.[43] Sincerity and context shape propriety and audiences look to the fit between speech and character to feel moral trustworthiness.[44]

For Smith, rationality itself is a type of language. Therefore, it adapts to temperament and the historical age, but people also adapt to language, and their reason is perverted by the perversions of language. Jacob Viner highlights in Smith the limits of human rationality, as is the

[38]Lamb (1973).

[39]Smith (1976b: 586–587, VII: IV).

[40]Bevilazqua (1966, 1968). See also McCloskey (1994), Plank (1992), and Otteson (2002a) draw parallels between the early essay "Considerations concerning the First Formation of Languages" and the WN and TMS (see also Carrión 2017).

[41]Smith (1983, 25–26, 96).

[42]See Putnam (1975) and Ortmann and Walraevens (2015).

[43]Grice (1989).

[44]Kapust and Schwarze (2016).

case in his tolerance for "inconsistencies".[45] In LRBL Smith does not speak about the problem of uncertainty or ambiguity of definitions,[46] but in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* he discusses the contractual obligations, retarded by ambiguity. The spoken language, being more direct, is freer from ambiguities.[47] However, constructions of reason and of science differ from those of language, which refer to the linguistic world and appeal to individual pride.

> The beauty of poetry is a matter of such nicety, that a young beginner can scarce ever be certain that he has attained it. Nothing delights him so much, therefore, as the favourable judgments of his friends and of the public; and nothing mortifies him so severely as the contrary.[48]

As Holthoon says, the coinciding of our feelings with those of the other, the sympathy that Smith speaks about, is a pleasant experience even when these feelings are of pain. It is the pleasure of understanding human nature, something related in Smithian theory of admiration and curiosity about scientific systems.[49] The Theory of Moral Sentiments is influenced by the drama and sentimental novels of his time, where Smith thought the description of the feelings of love, pity, piety or complacency provoked in the spectator to be more revealing of moral sentiments than any philosophy or essay.

Nevertheless, for Smith morality is not only discursive, since there is some property of moral judgment that does not depend on speech, an intuitive moral law.[50] Speech is only an exact expression of the "man within the breast", who becomes admirable through the property of actions.[51] In Smith's idea, thought is before language and it can be expressed without language, as the mime artist makes evident in his

[45]Viner (1928, 138).
[46]Brown (1994).
[47]Smith (1978).
[48]Smith (1976a: 245, III: II).
[49]Holthoon (1993, 45).
[50]Christie (1987).
[51]For language, see Levy (1997), Otteson (2002a, b), and Dascal (2006).

pantomime, which is a different language.[52] Things for us are "sensations that create in us" or a latent content. Already in 1814, Schubert with his "Symbol of dreams" distinguished between the conscious language of a word and the unconscious language of the soul, which is also expressed in the dreams.

This does not mean that we have inborn ideas, rationalistic or naturalistic. Chomsky assumed a set of "innate ideas" that the child possesses for the acquisition of the linguistic competence.[53] In contrast, for Smith, language consists of a symbolic particular relation between the elements of conscience that relate words to sensations, images or categories thanks to conscious attention—and, Sapir will say, also to elements located in the hearing centres of the brain.[54] According to Smith, therefore, the name only tries to represent reality as well as possible, with two aims: to be understood and that the language is assimilated fluently. Both things make up its beauty. The rest is something that is incomprehensible to a person who does not share the same relations of ideas.

Language then is only a means of communication, not an end. The phenomenalism conclusion that we live inside language implies treating as an object what is a being, an existence developed in the course of time. This that leads man to feel only within some learned concepts. Language as culture is the experiences and realities that a group of people have decided to choose as words for the common reality—for example, in a jungle they will probably distinguish many types of plants or insects, while a person from an industrialized nation does not know how to distinguish one species from another.

In this way, Smith also opposed Hume's theory. For Smith, it is not true that words are simply labels for things: they are a conceptual and sensitive device. Wittgenstein said that there is an indefinite repertoire of language games, from reporting stories up to giving orders or insulting. Many of his "games" are reactive. But it is true that although language is acquired, on occasion, through external correction, it is not

[52]Nowadays this is proved by Sapir (1995, 225).

[53]Chomsky (1989).

[54]Sapir, Edward, in Velasco (1995, 221).

possible that repression would play a role the first time an expression is captured—what would it repress? In this sense, Smith creates a path to Bergson's subsequent intuitive theory of language. Bergson argued in *Matter and Memory* that memory collects and preserves all aspects of existence that are never erased, although the body, and especially the brain, is the medium that allows us to recover the mnemonic data, bringing out memories with perceptions or more freely in dreams.[55] For Bergson, the words embodied in reality, which man feels as fluid are one of the most flexible forms of communication. However, the word lived externally is alienating, and it loses all its communicative ability. It turns into a form of repression of individuality,

> We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present. The creation of concepts calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist.[56]

Creation, in this context, can only take place within concern for and faith in reality: "But only in love, only in a love overshadowed by illusion, does a person create, that is, only in unconditional belief in perfection and righteousness".[57]

5.3 The Literary Critique

After proposing his philosophical theory, in 1757, Hume published *Four Dissertations,* which contained two essays on aesthetic theory. In the reviews of his work, these essays were well received. For example, the *Literary Magazine* said about *On Tragedy* that "what the author adds of himself is very beautiful" and that "Hume's fourth essay on the norm of taste is very elegant and entertaining". Richard Hurd answered Hume

[55]Bergson (1911).

[56]Deleuze and Guattari (1993, 110).

[57]Nietzsche (1974).

in some letters published in 1757; Alexander Gerard critically discussed *Of the Standard of Taste* in *Essay on Taste* (1759); likewise, Archibald Alisan in *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790). However, the definitive criticism was published twenty years later in the work of George Campbell, *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) and then Dugald Stewart (1810).[58]

Several essays by Hume dealt with topics such as taste, cultural refinement, eloquence, essay writing and the aesthetic pleasure derived from tragedy. In the eighteenth century, these subjects were usually treated in books on rhetoric, which presented the principles of how to write and speak well. Hume's contribution was his theory of taste.

In the eighteenth century, the word "taste" referred to a mental faculty that allows people to appreciate and critically judge aesthetic objects. Theorists described the instinctive mental mechanism of this faculty, and how we refine our judgments of this type. The expression "delicacy of taste", which Hume will refer to, is a refinement of a faculty, which allows man to feel more subtle ranges of experiences. Hume named a first essay of the first volume of EMPL after this expression, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Pasion". He argued that the cultivation of the liberal arts is the secret to happiness. The essay recommends "a serious attention to the sciences and liberal arts".[59] The person of refined taste can "place his happiness on such objects chiefly as depend upon himself" since "we are pretty much masters of what books we shall read, what diversions we shall partake of and what company we shall keep", so they are more likely to find happiness than those who desire immense fame and fortune. Besides, "a delicacy of taste is favourable to love and friendship, by confining our choice to few people thereby creating deeper, more meaningful relationships with those select few". In *An Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Francis Hutcheson described the mechanism of taste as an internal sense of beauty that produces pleasure when objects are presented to us "Uniform as well as varied". It includes objects in nature, artistic

[58]Hurd (1757), Gerard (1759), Alison (1790), Campbell (1776), and Stewart (1810).
[59]EMPL 170.

representations and even mathematical theorems. Hume criticizes Hutcheson, although he does not discuss the psychological details of the mechanism of taste and does not specify, like Hutcheson, any good criterion of beauty. Hume also describes the delicacy of taste as a delicacy of passion and refinement of the faculties that make a person have a greater and more subtle range of experiences. A taste cultivated for the arts, Hume says, improves our ability to feel tender passions, while making us incapable of more violent emotions—as a counterexample of these ideas, cultivated taste and love of music and art by Nazis have been presented.

"The standard of Taste" by Hume was originally published in 1757, as a fourth dissertation and was then included as essay 26 of Moral, Political and Literary, Part 1 (1758). And it contradicts Hume's previous ideas. Although the standard of taste is subjective, a function of how the object reaches the mind that seeks for beauty in it, Hume concludes that there is an established, universal standard that one who observes the object with care and accuracy will know how to read. There is a uniform sense of artistic taste like that of moral judgement.[60] Specific objects communicate a natural feeling of beauty. If man is not able to perceive it in the masterpiece, it is because of haste and anxiety.[61] The first observation of a work of arts is always accompanied by a certain anxiety and haste of thought that disorients the genuine feeling of beauty. However, a man who has no element of comparison is not qualified to pronounce any opinion with respect to an object presented to him. Only the comparison gives us an estimate of the merit of praise or blame. We can refine our sense of artistic beauty; however, our judgments in this regard differ by the different characters of different men; and by the customs of age and country.

As Marchán Fiz says, Hume makes a mental pirouette that proclaims the factual universality of taste.[62] In principle, beauty is not a quality of things, but exists only in the mind that contemplates it, that does

[60]Elósegui (1992, 51–59).

[61]Hume (1964c, 275), Of the Standard of Taste: XXIII.

[62]Marchán Fiz (1996, 31–32).

not have to render accounts to anything. But the diversity and relativity of taste does not prevent recognition of a refined, delicate game of the imagination. Any disagreement with that refined sense is projected on the screen of universality. The universality of taste is conquered through the exercise of an art, the frequent observation of various kinds of beauty and the comparison between a wide range of art works belonging to different times and peoples that show us the feelings common to human nature. Taste, which participates in the creative powers of the imagination, is not a static mode but a process that evolves as a rejection of authority and prejudices, especially religious, which are obstacles to it.

As far as literary taste is concerned, according to Hume, the paradoxical, difficult and surprising adds an appearance of depth. Ornamental language is more beautiful than the simple kind, which is presented more strongly in the imagination.

> Nothing can please persons of taste, but nature drawn with all her graces and ornaments, *la belle nature*; or if we copy low life, the strokes must be strong and remarkable, and must convey a lively image to the mind.[63]

The same is true of orators and philosophers.

> If his language be not elegant, his observations uncommon, his sense strong and masculine, he will in vain boast his nature and simplicity. He may be correct; but he never will be agreeable. (ibid.)

This, in short, is due to the fact that for Hume, language is a relation of ideas within words, an individual image. However, Hume appeals to moderation and to approaching nature as a language pattern. Impressionable and vacuous readers are carried away by the ornament, which they believe is more difficult than the simplicity of language.

> On the other hand, productions, which are merely surprising, without being natural, can never give any lasting entertainment to the mind… Too much ornament is a fault in every kind of production. (ibid.)

[63]Hume (1964): Of Simplicity and Refinement in Writing: XX: 24.

Excesses, both in simplicity and in refinement, should be avoided, but the midpoint is not fixed and admits of a considerable range. We must, however, guard more against the excesses of refinement than those of simplicity, especially in the compositions where actions and passions are expressed, and not so much in those that consist of reflections and observations. For instance, in the case of history, the standard of taste implies that "the first Quality of an Historian is to be true and impartial; the next to be interesting".[64] He proposed as a model the concise manner of the ancient Historians, rather than the prolix tedious style of modern ones.[65]

Conversely, Adam Smith asserts that the beauty of language comes from its simplicity and properties, that is to say, from the ability to communicate the mind of the author and to create empathy of feelings. In 1756 in his letter to the *Edinburgh Review* Smith compares English and French authors, claiming that the excessive imagination of the former makes the reader confused, while the latter wrote with elegance and propriety.[66] He suggests that while England occupied the preeminent position in learning in the past, France does so in the present, and Scotland was in a position to do so in the future.[67] Afterwards, when Smith was writing the WN, political and social changes were happening in England and Scotland that factored into Smith's three-year delay in finishing the book.[68]

Smith assumes that simplicity is the richest expression of represented reality. For Smith, the main point about language is veracity. The author is the origin of the language and the meaning is pre-linguistic (immanent in the text), awaiting the empathic reader to restore the original meaning. Thus, Smith's theory is opposed to the critique of the twentieth century, which questions whether the meaning is present in the text or constructed by the process of reading. The expression "death of

[64]David Hume to William Mure of Caldwell, October 1754, in HL I, 193.

[65]David Hume to the abbé le Blanc, 12 September 1754, in HL I, 193.

[66]"A Letter to the authors of the Edinburgh Review", *The Edinburgh Review* from July 1775 to January 1756, 63–79, in Smith (1982, 243–244).

[67]See Lomonaco (2002).

[68]Ortmann and Walraevens (2015).

the author" hints that authorship cannot be used to provide a starting point for interpretation. For these authors, the wealth of the text can be explained independently of the consciousness of the author. Every reader creates the work by reading it, and language is read inside the language itself.

Against this idea, Smith uses the principle "intention of the author", which takes us away from subjectivity: the writer does not want to express "anything" that the reader wants to hear, but rather his feelings and thoughts in the most accurate and exact way, within the context in which he writes. Here, Smith reaffirms his idea that moral approbation depends on the coincidence of feelings of the spectator with the motives of the agent and the gratitude of the affected person. If the reader understands another meaning it is a failure of the writer, a perversion of language or an absence of location of the reader. Language, therefore, is only a mediating instrument for feelings, not an image that appeals to "any me" who gets involved in it, which is valid providing that someone receives suggestive impulses.

Nevertheless, as Ricoeur said after, the idea of "intention of the author" does not have to mean the spiritual world of the author that preceded the genesis of the text[69]; it is not a question of using the text as a means between different psyches, not to return to life some shades of the past. To interpret is to explicate a sort of being-in-the world which unfolds in front of the text, not of the author. It is not the world lived by the writer to which we must transport ourselves, but what the text wants, that is to say, we must get into its sense and to the direction of thought that it opens. The reader takes the decision of remaining in the "place of the text" and in the "isolation" of this place: the text does not have an external, but an internal sense, it does not intend to be self-transcended.[70]

Smith goes beyond the typical idea of his time that a piece of work must have unity of time and space, proposing instead unity of interest: all the circumstances must relate to the principal fact directly or

[69]Ricoeur (1981).

[70]Givone (1990, 195–196).

indirectly.[71] Nothing must have an opposite meaning. There are three things that a good writer does: (1) He/She has complete knowledge of the topics. (2) He/She properly arranges all the parts of the topic. (3) He/She describes the ideas in the most proper and expressive way.

The most important thing with a piece of work is that the author is knowledgeable about what he is dealing with: a person who knows the topic will arrange it naturally. In the case of oratory, this implies that the speaker must appear to be very involved in the matter and to offer their arguments in a friendly, non-dictatorial form, from the propositions to the demonstrations. In addition, it is advisable to excite the passions of pity and indignation, the second being more lasting than the first. In brief, the author must show that he is affected by a moral reality different from the moment of the speech. If he shows in an agreeable way that he is affected by the miseries of others, he will make others feel melancholic or beautiful feelings. The pleasure will come from the coinciding of feelings with the author and with the imagined subject of speech, which produces pity. This empathy will follow the same mechanisms as moral feelings.

The order of words is also a core element in speech: it must be the one that makes the meaning most intelligible, free of parenthesis and superfluous words, accurate and not using overly long sentences. This is especially true for didactic language or the language of historians. The order of words must, therefore, be the one that naturally comes to the mind and best expresses the sense. The most interesting element of the sentence must be placed first, the second next, and so on. When the feeling of the person who speaks is clear, simple and ingenious, and the passion that he possesses and try to communicate to the listener through empathy is expressed in a simple and suitable way, the expression has all the force and beauty that the language can provide. The expression should always be suited to the mind of the author.

Actually, the notes of rhetoric start by describing the style and language of Quintilian, whose most important ingredient was the property of language, calling everything by its name, looking at the language of

[71] Marshall (1986, 167–192) and Frazer (2010, 95–111).

objects, free of ambiguities. Smith places special emphasis on the notion of an articulated chain, a continuous sequence of relationships conducive to the understanding of the relation of cause–effect. The orator arranges the whole story into a connected narration. And there are two key narrators in Smith's texts: the "we", all inclusive first person plural—the voice of a reasonable man, and the more authoritative narrator, impersonal, that corrects the judgements of the common experience narrator.[72]

According to Smith, if one's purpose is to relate facts, the Narrative or Historical style ought to be chosen.[73] If one wishes to prove a proposition, then one should choose Didactic or Rhetorical discourse. With Didactic proof, the speaker treats his subject impartially, weighing the pros and cons. Rhetorical proof is designed to be a persuasive device. Smith divides this into Aristotelian and Socratic. In the first, the speaker states his main point and justifies it. In the Socratic, the speaker initially hides his point, leading the reader along his path of reasoning towards a conclusion. The latter method is the most engaging manner to persuade.[74]

Language must be a continuum for the imagination to follow it without interruption. A great fault with a sentence is that sense seems to have been concluded when it has not: the mind in suspense gives many advantages in terms of attention and understanding. Language can communicate our thoughts and feelings through the skill of predicting its effect on the person listening to us, just as we act based on an imaginary projection of the other person's feelings.

Smith replaces the old explanation of figures of speech and thought, motifs, subdivisions of the speech, characters of style, etc., with his philosophical and all-inclusive explanation of the beauty of a system. Thus, his theory is anti-rhetorical because Smith wanted to show that language is a system that describes feelings to other human beings, based on empathy. The aim of language is communication, and Smith

[72]Griswold (1999, 49–50), Brown (1994, 28), and Valihora (2016).

[73]See Ortmann and Walraevens (2014).

[74]Smith (1983), LRBL, 146–147.

criticizes the reverence for words that are not in normal use or are presented unusually. So, he is against the notion that you must write in the way that another ancient or modern author wrote: you must write as you are or you think. A man is pleasant company if he naturally expresses his feelings, so that we can agree with them and with the sole purpose of expressing them.

Smith offers Shaftesbury as a counter-example.[75] Nowadays critics coincide in the fact that there is a curious affectation about Shaftesbury's style—a falsetto note—which, notwithstanding all his efforts to please, is often irritating to the reader.[76] According to Adam Smith, Shaftesbury had a preconceived idea of beauty of style, abstracted from his character, and he tried to regulate his character with that idea. Smith says that this author was a man without self-control, a weak person, always in a state of disorder or in danger of falling into disorder. And this habit of the body, he says, is usually linked with a similar one of the mind. Abstract and deep thoughts exhausted him, and love and ambition were too violent for him to work on them. He preferred the imaginative arts, entertainment, because he got tired when he reasoned, as in the natural philosophy or mathematical thought. Due to his weakness, he found it easy to be content with the rules he had established for himself. In this case, therefore, the relations of ideas took place only with an accepted or admired system by the writer, and not with his current feelings, which, according to Smith, is what readers want to identify with. For Smith, all styles are agreeable if they express the character of the author with propriety and self-command.[77]

Smith supports minimalist language. Objects, he says: (1) Need to be described so that they excite a single emotion. (2) The description must be short and not tedious, enhancing the vivacity of the thing described. (3) Need to include curious and beautiful circumstances that help us feel the emotion.

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[75]Shaftesbury (2001).

[76]Fowler and Mitchell (1911, 764, 765).

[77]See McKenna (2006).

Although communication starts with describing external objects, the contemplation of which makes all men equal and whose description is provided through the parts that compose them, it later expresses internal feelings. The curiosity and inability to share these internal feelings if not through expression makes them the most interesting element of communication. This description is more difficult than that of external objects: they do not have parts that affect our senses. For example, a good historian who shows the agents or spectators the effects of the historical moment reported provokes our interest through the empathic feelings they create in us. Tragedy is beautiful because it makes us feel with other people's grave and profound feelings.[78]

Only the causes that excite curiosity must be reported, the ones that impress and help to explain the feelings aroused by the circumstances. Nevertheless, the poetical method connects facts with circumstances that are not their causes. Poets were the first historians. They told the most surprising facts, such as mythological ones or the adventures of gods and military campaigns. They used a language of surprise, describing the memorable actions in a way that entertained and impressed. A good work of art can last forever because it provokes feelings that are imperishable, even if the specific style in which the work was composed does not last.[79] Habits affect beauty and it will be difficult to sympathize with an art to which we are not accustomed.[80]

According to the Ancient rhetoricians, a certain metric was by nature adapted for each type of writing, as it was naturally expressive of the character, feeling or passion that had to prevail in it. They said that one type of metric was appropriate for serious works and another for entertaining works, and that they could not be exchanged without us falling into the greatest absence of correction. But the experience of modern times, Smith says, seems to contradict this principle. Habit has made a nation associate the ideas of gravity, sublimity and seriousness with one metric while another is connected with the idea of the festive, light and

[78]Costelloe (2013, 46–47).

[79]Smith (1976a, 351, V: I).

[80]Smith (1976a, 351–352, V: I).

comical.[81] Language, Smith says, must be an appropriate and a natural way of expressing feelings but it does not add or remove anything of the beauty of expression. Therefore, beauty is based on property, and aesthetics is focused on correspondence, relation and affinity.

The excessively adorned style is arbitrary. Nevertheless, poetical communication needs elegance of expression, and Smith says, "I dislike that homely stile which some think fit to call the language of nature and simplicity".[82] Exaggeration can communicate a histrionic feeling. For example, comedy uses unexpected incongruities, such as the aggrandizement of small things or the contraction of large ones. The basis for something ridiculous is founded on contradiction. Another contradiction: there is no better way of ridiculing a stupid object than to make someone express the greatest admiration for it. However, any metaphor that is not appropriate is burlesque. For example, according to Smith two metaphors must not be put together: it is something that Shakespeare did, and people admired him because nobody worried about what he wanted to say. They were amazed at his pompous sounds as if he were a "man of system". Smith knew Shakespeare's work as part of his mental furniture; however, it is to be said that he cites him from memory with some mistakes probably because he was not so fond of his works.[83] In any case, any critique is somehow superfluous, provided that, as Smith says, you will learn more about poetry by reading from a good poem than by reading thousands of volumes of criticism. In the same way, Burke felt sad for those who are habitually devoted to finding imperfection in others: "By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little".[84]

As previously mentioned, Smith's theory is similar to the theory subsequently presented by Bergson. The words embodied in reality and that the man feels as fluid and grateful realities when they are uttered are one of the most flexible forms of communication. But the word

[81]Smith (1976a, 353, V: I).

[82]Smith (1983, 230), The bee or Literary weekly intelligence, for Wednesday, May 11, 1791, Appendix 1.

[83]Swyre (2013).

[84]Burke (1909, 303).

lived in externality is alienating, as happened with Shaftesbury's writing. Therefore, "the quality of beauty" is what communicates continuity, which immerses us in the sensation and makes us forget our social self, being immersed in the discourse or the text in the present. The objective of art is to lull the active or resistant powers of our personality to lead us to a condition of perfect docility in which we create the idea that is suggested to us, in empathy with the expressed feeling, as in a condition of hypnosis. The art of the writer consists of making us forget that he using words.[85]

5.4 The Invention of Imitation

According to Hume, men try to imitate nature in art, but they find, annoyingly, that nature always orders things in a more beautiful way, with forms that are more alive. We admire a work of art when it most resembles the nature it imitates. When we look at it, not only do we admire the feeling of it being a means to an end, but we admire the beauty of the mind that has created it, managing to come close to the perfection of nature. Conversely, Smith criticizes Hume saying that in imitative arts we cannot stand it when they trick us with an illusion of reality. We prefer exclusive objects that do not have an exact reflection in nature, of which they will always be mere imitators. According to Smith, what we want is to share an original feeling in the mind of the author, which is surprising precisely because we have never observed it in nature. Smith makes a defence of non-naturalistic art: in the twentieth century one might even extend it to abstract art, offering an exclusivity that has not been seen before.

> A good looking-glass represents the objects which are set before it with much more truth and vivacity than either Statuary or Painting. But, though the science of optics may explain to the understanding, the looking-glass itself does not at all demonstrate to the eye how this effect is brought about…. In all looking-glasses the effects are produced by the same means, applied exactly in the same manner. In every different statue and picture the effects are produced, though by similar, yet not by the

[85]Bergson (1963).

> same means; and those means too are applied in a different manner in each. Every good statue and picture are a fresh wonder, which at the same time carries, in some measure, its own explication along with it.[86]

With this, Smith does not move away from the tendencies of his time, such as *La Querelle* of the seventeenth century (the quarrel between the Ancient and the Moderns). They still valued the creations of art considering the imitative scale but also began to consider the beginning of the *Inventio*. The Ancients supported the merits of the ancient authors and contended that a writer could do no better than imitate them. On the other side were the Moderns, with Perrault and Fontanelle, who argued that modern scholarship allowed modern man to surpass the ancients in knowledge.[87] The Inventions of Modern Times are evidence of the Moderns' superiority. On one side, authority was under attack, on the other, the idea of Progress. According to moderns, art should not only provide pleasure but unleash a whole range of psychic emotions. Although it still imitates, it no longer pursues the perfection of the imitation of the ancients or of nature, but the perfection of the effect, that is, to make affection spring, and artificial passions emerge. The weakening of the imitative principle goes hand in hand with the idea of art as a representation of freedom or "free play of faculties," which retains but also alters the perceived images. Modern aesthetics is constructed in such a way that now the artist imitates nature insofar as it is recognized as a "creative" principle by analogy with himself.[88]

5.5 Theatre

As Stradella comments, when Hume considers men as "mirrors to one another", it is an invitation to watch the show of humanity on the stage of life.[89] Hume regards human nature as exhibited in the space of

[86]Smith (1780, 14), Of the Imitative Arts, I: 10.

[87]Perrault (1687) and Fontanelle (1688).

[88]Marchán (1996, 22–29).

[89]Stradella (2010).

spectacle. By the time Hume enters the philosophical scene, the stage metaphor is a common literary device of moral criticism. The figure of the *theatrum mundi* served literature and philosophy.

In this context, Hume and Smith talk about the theatrical art and, also in this, Smith contradicts Hume's explanation of the beauty of a stage play. In *Of Tragedy*, Hume shows that the vision or, at least, imagination of a strong passion, that arises from a great loss or gain, affects the spectator. When we represent a play, we like it to convey feelings of indignation and compassion. By sympathy, it gives some touches of the same passion, and serves as a momentary entertainment. It makes time pass faster and is an aid to the oppression under which men commonly work when left entirely to their own thoughts and meditations. The mind is uncomfortable when it is in absolute rest and tranquillity and to distract attention from itself it tends to move. The spectator needs a break from his habit and it pleases him to undo his mental structure.[90]

However, there is a problem. The same object of affliction that pleases in a tragedy, even if it cures indolence, should cause pain. Hume supports Fontenelle's theory in this regard, that pleasure and pain do not differ very much in the cause, so that pleasure, taken too far, is painful; and pain that paces itself is pleasure. So, there is an agreeable sorrow, which consists of limited pain. However, on watching a play, we are aware that what is being represented is false and this makes us happy, creating pleasure or reducing the distress of watching the play. We are sorry for the misfortune of the hero, but we immediately feel better knowing that everything is fiction. Hume adds that the difficulty is in the fact that we take pleasure in the historical harangues of Cicero even though we think that what they tell us is true. The effect comes from the same eloquence with which the melancholic scene appears. It is the admiration of the mind that has unfolded these talents which, with the strength and beauty of expression, produces pleasure for us. In the case of a tragedy, imitation is what gives greater pleasure.

[90]Hume (1764c, 259), Of Tragedy: XXII.

Here Hume is arguing that there is a relation between the aesthetic and moral evaluations of a work of art. Moral goodness can be a reason to consider a good work aesthetically (although not every moral flaw is an aesthetic flaw, as is the case with speculative errors of the pagan system). For example, religious superstitions reduce the aesthetic value if they are not consistent with the natural limits of vice or virtue. This moderate moralism of Hume can be distinguished from radical autonomism, which would state that morality and aesthetics are independent and the moral position of a work of art should not be considered when evaluating it. Richard Posner, in "Against Ethical Criticism", says: "The aesthetic outlook is a moral outlook, one that stresses the values of openness, detachment, hedonism, curiosity, tolerance, the cultivation of the self, and the preservation of a private sphere—in short, the values of liberal individualism".[91]

But for Smith, the admiration of a play comes less from the pleasure that it brings to us than from the fact that the actors manage for a moment to be the centre of attention and draw all eyes to them. It also depends on the fact that when we see a play we have subtle feelings, and we also feel some pride at having been able to understand the mind of the author. The effect of a stage play, for example, is greater when we already know the plot, as we can then concentrate more on the underlying feelings. What an actor does reverberates in the admiration of others, because it adds value to the work itself. A person watching a play alone does not admire it in the same way as a person watching it with the public clapping. Once more, here Smith reaffirms his idea that moral approbation depends on persuasion, on our desire to share our feelings and on the gratitude of the affected person. In this sense, Smith is conscious of the old problem of Rhetoric: of the relationship between form, content and audience. In the last analysis, this entails, as in the case of ethics, jurisprudence and economics, giving importance to the spectator.[92]

[91]Posner (1997, 2).

[92]Griswold (1999, 41).

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6

Consequences on Economic Theory

6.1 Time and Economics

Finally, we will try to see how this applies to economics. Hume's economics is imbued with his cyclical vision of history and institutional Darwinism. The causes or ends of work, which arise from our passions, are three: pleasure, action and indolence. In Hume's theory, the usefulness of the object suggests the pleasure and convenience the owner is willing to promote, and he feels proud of the object's relationship with himself. The spectator sympathizes with this pride of the owner and with the pleasure promoted by the object. The sympathy produced in others makes the owner have an additional pleasure or esteem. This second reflection is secondary to the original pleasure; however, it becomes one of the most important recommendations of wealth and the main reason why we want it or esteem it in others.

But economic behaviour implies not only a desire to gratify desires, but a desire to have and seek desires, without which man would fall into languor.[1] The value of goods depends, according to Hume,

[1]Lapidus in Ege and Igersheim (2012, 218).

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on utility—only supply and demand affect prices—but, together with Hume's doctrine of human behaviour, we could better call his theory "utility of labour". If the vanity of the search for pleasure leaves a void in man, however, there is a genuine pleasure, work, so that other pleasures are a reward for the work done. Economic activity for Hume is intrinsically rewarding and the biggest obstacles to meeting the needs often generate an expansion of effort. Hume was transforming the mercantilist interpretation of the relationship between laziness and an excessive indulgence to pleasure. While the mercantilists considered the indulgence to pleasure like the pleasure for laziness, Hume takes it as a frustration, the attempt to compensate through pleasure the desire of liveliness that results from inaction.[2]

In some things, Hume followed mercantilist theory. For example, he held the belief that the increase in the tax burden increases the capacity of the individual to support it and the industriousness of workers, who want to maintain their previous standard of living. The lack of importance that Hume gave to the desire for gain as a work incentive, coupled with his claim that man intrinsically possesses a desire for action that takes him out of natural languor, led him to accept the mercantilist idea of an "optimal level of frustration".[3]

For Hume, man is determined by circumstances and custom. In fact, Hume's method is historical, because his concept of freedom prevents him from following a non-causal linearity. Although Hume introduces other perspectives, it is true that for him the historical perspective plays a dominant role. He was mainly recognized for his achievements as a historian.[4] But Hume is not so interested in the question of how the social order arises as, by relating history and psychology, what elements of human nature can contribute to demolish or maintain it, giving special importance to the role of selfishness and altruism in its maintenance.[5] It is a consequence of his philosophy based on the fear of

[2]Rotwein (1970).
[3]Hume (1964c), Of Money.
[4]Teggart (1925, 87).
[5]Tasset (1999, 150).

disappearance of civil society by which he morally justifies the "existing" institutions. This historicity is posed in the form of an intergenerational transmission; therefore, history is descriptive and transmits ways of thinking and acting that one generation "imposes" on another. For example, Hume considered that misery and populousness are not due to nature, as in the later theory of Malthus, but to institutions.[6]

To analyse the relationship between historicity and economy, let us take the example of the interest rate. Hume tried to show that this was not a monetary phenomenon and that wealth is a cause, not a consequence, of its reduction. But due to his historical methodology and its concept of "habituated" freedom, he was more concerned to show that supply and demand are in themselves conditioned by the change in economic motivation caused by the development of trade. His theory of interest, in fact, proves that the phenomenon is reducible to changes in manners and customs, an argument that forces us to accept that the interest rate can be used as an instrument of economic policy.[7]

Likewise, in *Of Public Credit*, the historical and psychological perspective also predominates. Echoing Cicero, he makes a pessimistic prediction regarding the inevitability of the rise and fall of governments by excessive public debt, albeit optimistic about the inevitability of its resurgence.[8] Hume also offers a forecast for the period that follows the collapse that shows his cyclical vision of history. Men, forgetful of the past, make time and again the same mistakes and, seeking public admiration, enter a circle of power. Indeed, his theory of action by action, as well as the historical and psychological methodology and his institutional Darwinism, is embedded in all his writings.[9]

For Hume, on the other hand, the development of industry leads to greater mental development. Mandeville, Harris and Josiah Tucker; Ferguson and Hutcheson also highlighted the importance of the division of labour for development. For Hume, in *Of the First Principles*

[6]Hume (1964c), Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations.

[7]Trincado (2005).

[8]Henderson (2010, 159).

[9]Paganelli (2012).

of Government, government is a result of a process of division of social labour in which a human group is specifically assigned the task of maintaining order and reciprocal cooperation.[10] Hume thinks it inadvisable to have a system of repression of the individual in favour of the collective, but he does look for a channelling and directing system towards interpersonal social passions. To do this, an élite must be constituted which, in addition to observing the rules of justice themselves, guarantee that others comply with them. Therefore, the maintenance of stability, especially in complex societies, requires the creation of an organizing and stabilizing order that has the essential function of providing incentives to individual behaviour, usually of short-sightedness, orienting it to long-term interests.[11] Thus, starting from its philosophical bases, Hume's treatment approaches a favourable vision of the role of government in society and in economy. However, the volubility of the image of merit, the mutability of human action, and the subjectivism of Hume's theory makes information about human action too uncertain for it to be easy to be imposed from the outside.

Adam Smith, on the other hand, tends to withdraw the historical and psychological influences of his treatment of the theoretical issues of economic policy. This is closely related to the Smithian idea of natural freedom. Smith's psychology is not so closely linked with his economic theory as in the case of Hume. Hume, with the historical and psychological method, tried to assess which social policies were the most acceptable according to the criterion of "utility" or survival. For Smith, natural liberty in the present is beyond the idea of utility. For that reason, he has an essential distrust of political decision-making.[12]

Smith considered his book on economics, *Wealth of Nations*, a continuation of his moral theory, developed in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. At the end of the 6th edition of the TMS he promises another book on law and government, and says that he has already partially made that promise with the WN. The economic man of the *Wealth of Nations*

[10]Hume (1964d).

[11]Tasset (1999, 234–235 and 247).

[12]Mueller (2014), who argues against Stigler (1971) or Rothschild (2002).

does not contradict the ethical man of the TMS.[13] But, de facto, Smith decided to detach the theories without performing cross-referencing, thereby failing to take advantage of the publishing success of both books. As Pack says, Smith's theological basis does not affect his economics either.[14] The fact that the value of goods depends, according to Smith, on the cost makes it objective enough so that he did not need to examine subjective psychological elements or lateral historical instincts. In Smith, the "natural" is opposed to the "historical". Although custom influences moral feelings, economics can disengage from them. Men are not determined by history or convention.[15]

Considering, as Smith does, the value of commodities as labour commanded is applying the moral term of empathizing sympathy or "having realized" to the economics' realm: when we say a person has discovered how much a thing is worth we are in effect speaking of its objective value, not of something subjective or relativistic related to his unaccountable pleasure. When the person realizes the value of something, he/she has sewn together for the first time the various relationships of ideas that will lead him to "realize" the meaning of each one of the minutes of work and experience required to produce an object.[16] As we have said above, in many cases the capacity for intuitive understanding is obstructed because really "we do not want to understand". There is a value that is difficult for people to keep in mind: the passing and harnessing of time, together with the power of saving and risking those savings.[17] Lastly, the landowner seeks, at least, the same income that is paid to his neighbours for their soil, with alternative uses. So, value is an institution defined in terms of institutional effort which commodities can command. It is a function of the sacrifice that the buyer avoids and imposes on others, which is therefore based on externality and attaches its importance to the spectator in economics also.[18] This spectator can

[13]Grampp (1948), Macfie (1967), and Macfie (1959).

[14]Pack (1995) and Rothschild (2002).

[15]Griswold (1999, 349–354).

[16]Smith (1976b), WN I.vi.4–9, 65–68.

[17]Smith (1976b), WN II.iii.16–20, 337–339.

[18]Smith (1976b), WN I.v.1–3, 47–48.

be seen "in the mirror of the market" and is therefore something real and objective.[19] For instance, although it might not cause them any worries, we could calculate the productivity of the appropriation of the land by comparing the status of the lands in private hands with land not privately held.[20]

Ricardo thought that Smith had crossed the line into confusion between embodied and commanded labour.[21] But, for Smith, the labour embodied at the moment in which a commodity is created is already forgotten about. Value-cost requires paying attention to the market and is "a certain command… over all the produce of labour which is then in the market".[22] The idea of value comes from the "labour which we exchange for what is supposed at the time ['in the present'] to contain the value of an equal quantity".[23] This implies that utility is not an exogenous pleasure that determines its value, but rather an endogenous one that depends on how it compares with other goods in the market. Thus, this makes economics abandon self-contemplation and subjectivity. Demand is not a function of price but the amount of a product that was able to be sold established after price determination.[24]

As against utilitarianism, for Smith men are not *homo economicus*. This term "economic man" was used by Bentham for the first time in the early nineteenth century when he describes action in maximization terms.[25] Afterwards, critics of John Stuart Mill stressed the idea.[26] But for Smith, people do not make judgements as a maximization of their subjectively defined ends; rather they try to better their condition or they reciprocate through the propensity to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another. In modern ethics, the concept of "homo reciprocans" has been forged to make a contrast with individual

[19]Smith (1976b), WN I.xi.1–9, 160–162.
[20]Smith (1976b), WN III.ii.
[21]Ricardo (1817, 6–11).
[22]Smith (1976b), WN I.v.3, 48.
[23]Smith (1976b), WN I.v.2, 47–48.
[24]Urrutia (1983, 19).
[25]Stark (1954), The Psychology of Economic Man, 435.
[26]Mill (1836).

utilitarianism.[27] Besides, there is an emphasis made on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation.[28] According to Adam Smith, regarding moral sentiments, we may reciprocate with an image of ourselves that represents what others may expect from our actions. Actually, as we have seen, for Smith, the search for utility is love of the system.[29] In addition, the rules of custom cannot be the basis of morality: as Smith says, a friend who thanks for obligation, as in a rule of religion that professes, although we approve, we will not appreciate it as much as if he did so because he truly enjoys the intimate feeling of companionship with us.

In some sense, the economic theories of Hume and Smith even rely on different "protagonists". We could define the protagonist of Smith's economic theory as the "ethical man" of Kierkegaard; that of Hume is the "aesthetic man", according to the terminology of the aforementioned philosopher.[30] The ethical man assumes duties of a lifetime, which admit no exceptions. He is the prudent man of Smith, who does not value things for his individual whim but for what they "really are worth", that is, for what they cost to society. However, the only goal of the "aesthetic man" is satisfaction and, to avoid pain and boredom, he always flies towards new satisfactions. According to Kierkegaard, it is a state of permanent dissatisfaction. The protagonist of Hume's theory seeks activities that make him forget his melancholic state. He is an inactive man but, contradictorily, very active (or reactive), as he "works for the sake of working" as this gives him the privilege of not thinking. As the aesthetic is a momentary state, it seems to be a less solid basis for science. For that reason, Hume relies on statistical methods, as a theory based on the aesthetic man is necessarily bound to explain parallel and irregular states, in a certain way exceptional. Actually, Hume considered that the indeterminacy of human behaviour can make any political prediction impossible.[31] Any explanation is timeless or can be

[27]Godelier (1999).

[28]See Frey (1992) and Caruso (2012).

[29]Smith (1976a), TMS: 11: 1: 326–329.

[30]Kierkegaard (1965).

[31]Stewart (1977, 172–173) and Tasset (1999, 146).

reconstructed as timeless without loss of information.[32] According to Urrutia, an explanation requires the concept of equilibrium that makes us think of all reality as an "eternal present" (in his own words).[33] And, indeed, the long-term methodology of Smith moderates the fatigue and caprices of time, introducing us in a movement without friction.

6.2 Language and Economics

Their different concepts of language also affect Hume's and Smith's idea of the value of commodities.[34] As we have said, the final goal of Hume's economics seems to be to explain "how a common world is created from private and subjective elements",[35] which coincides with the goal of explaining the first formation of languages. Here Hume permeates his phenomenalist philosophy: man can only know the impressions perceived, which are subjective and changing. But the theory of perception by impressions, in social science, ends up defending an institutional Darwinism and suffers from the fear of the disappearance of civil society. It might seem that this relativistic view should advise caution in offering generalizations in economics. However, in contradiction to the alleged individual indeterminacy of passion, Hume affirms regarding the force of laws and government that the determination of politics over the passions of the masses leads to consequences almost as general and certain as those of mathematics.[36] In social sciences, he affirmed the law of large numbers and, thus, Hume says that what arises from the greatest number can be considered produced by certain causes.[37] Actually, Hume tried to show that there were habitual effects on the changing environmental forces that can be reduced to well-defined historical laws of behaviour. Schabas argues that for Hume phenomena such as money

[32]Urrutia and Grafe (1982).

[33]See Urrutia (1983, 148).

[34]For language and Rhetoric in economics, see MacCloskey (1985, 1994) and Otteson (2002a).

[35]Tasset (1999, 182).

[36]Hume (1964a, 99, 288).

[37]Hume (1964a, 175).

and prices need to be related to the constitution of men, climates and soils.[38] The joining together of psychology and history would allow him to describe a human world, which the legislator had to leave intact so as not to produce revolutions that broke existing relations.[39] However, in Hume's explanations at certain times he seems to be giving primacy to the static point of view of the psychologist against the dynamic of the historian. In fact, the scholarship claims that the moral and political philosophy of Hume is mechanistic, uniformist and ahistorical. According to Black, the motives of action are always qualitatively the same, so history is nothing but an incessant repetition of the same.[40]

Adam Smith develops a discursive and demonstrative method in economics, based on logic, but away from the modelling, as models often try to obscure what can be easy. Smith says that the Physiocrats had followers because they were men "fond of paradoxes, and of appearing to understand what surpasses the comprehension of ordinary people".[41] Not even the existing data are very revealing, given that they require the process of language reductionism, whether encrypted or not. "I do not have much faith in political arithmetic and I do not intend to ensure the accuracy of this data",[42] Smith says about Charles Smith's calculation of the ratio between the average quantity of grains imported by Great Britain and the grains consumed. Neither does Smith consider mathematics useful: this science was not developed by a consideration of its usefulness, but because we admire its beauty or precision. According to Brady, Adam Smith also rejected the use of the mathematical laws of the calculus of probabilities and the classical interpretation of La Place and the Bernoulli brothers, and the personalist, subjectivist, psychological Bayesian approach used by neoclassical schools of thought. Adam Smith recognized that the mathematical concept of probability is not applicable, in general, in real-world decision-making.[43]

[38]Schabas (2001).
[39]Hume (1964b, 292).
[40]Forbes (1975, 102).
[41]Smith (1980, 75).
[42]Smith (1976b, 577).
[43]Brady (2013).

That is to say, Smith uses a hypothetico-deductive method with an empirical testing; and for Smith, the economic dissertation does not necessarily seek utility, but the description of reality. West considers that Smith was addressing the constitution builders, but with his criticism of legislators, Smith shows that he was only in search for objectivity: he intended to address the general public to criticize the mercantile system and create confidence in freedom.[44] This, obviously, could be a basis for a critical stance of modern formalism in economics, which tries to remove the language of economics from common people's understanding to show off an unnecessary rhetorical difficulty.

It is evident, however, that there is a connection between *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* and the *Wealth of Nations*. Its attack on mercantilism was influenced by compositional conventions presented by Smith in the former.[45] There, the division of labour and the metaphor of the pin factory is a key literary metaphor of self-contained management.[46] It was a tiny tool that was a promise of progress and that has even been related to women's liberation, as allusions to pins and needles, sewing and knitting, tended to bear a negative relationship to the picture of domestic bliss which they evoke.[47] Arguments were used although sometimes it seems clear that rhetoric was against logical effects.[48] Also, the metaphor of the invisible hand took on a life of its own and now has little to do with Adam Smith's original meaning.[49]

6.3 Economic Growth

Hume's action in the economic sphere is based on three different motives: action for its own sake, habit and imitation. The first two, action and habit, can be considered constant in time. Therefore,

[44]West (1976).
[45]Endres (1991).
[46]Harskamp (2010, 191).
[47]Harskamp (2010).
[48]Peaucelle (2012).
[49]Kennedy (2009, 2011).

imitation must be the one that promotes the differential growth between historical stages, stimulating the spirit of enterprise or the imitative demand. Here we find a contradiction, given that Hume says that moral judgement depends on the agent's usual behaviour, which reminds us of the difficulty of directing attention to something new. In addition, imitation seems more of a consequence than a cause of action, since it needs a reflection on what it imitates. This objection is the same as the one made with the Humean concept of the self: certainly, the mirror of the self cannot be the self.

Then, the enjoyment of "pleasures" is for Hume an additional element of action that seems to be the consequence of the search for wealth. For instance, Hume treats imitation in the thread of the luxury controversy, typical of his time.[50] Desire for consumption operates as an instrumental end that makes economic activity a vehicle for the desire for action. Man wishes to gratify his desires, but this is because he enjoys the emotional excitement of having desires. So, contradictorily, he wishes not to gratify his desires because tranquillity is painful.

This implies another differential element between Hume and Smith: for Smith, the positive consequence of the creation of wealth is not that it increases the amount of "happiness" to which money gives access, but the very fact of the possibility of "breaking" the habit enjoying the feeling of curiosity and creation. "The progressive state is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state to all the different orders of society. The stationary is dull; the declining, melancholy".[51] Smith contrasts joy with melancholy, that is, curiosity towards the future to attachment to memory. As we have said, the feeling of joy in the economic area is based on the natural impulse of everyone to better their own condition, the means that normal man uses to get out of the state of "passivity" of the passions. But, as Bréban argues, adverse and prosperous events are only short-term shocks, so if in TMS an individual's level of happiness tends towards the one of his "ordinary state of happiness" (nowadays

[50]Tufts and Thompson (1904).

[51]Smith (1976b), WN I.viii.43, 99.

we would say "hedonic adaptation"), short-term market prices also tend towards long-term natural prices.[52]

The impulse to better our condition does not seek the satisfaction of pleasure, but man tries to become the centre of attention for his wealth. "What interests us is vanity, not tranquillity or pleasure".[53] This feeling also depends on the prideful image of having brought another over to one's own side through verbal seduction,[54] something which is not always morally laudable. Although in WN Smith does not criticize the propensity to barter, in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* he says that "To perform anything, or to give anything, without a reward is always generous and noble, but to barter one thing for another is mean".[55] So, the impartial spectator does not necessarily approve of the causes of economic growth.[56] But the idea of a benevolent state is also an unconscious image that absorbs the energies of the anxious man and forces people into vicious circles.

For instance, capitalists "can never be multiplied so as to hurt the publick, though they may so as to hurt one another".[57] Besides, for Smith we want to improve our condition to maintain a social status,[58] sometimes based on a painful fear ratified by the stimulus of the spectator.[59] Nor is this worthy of praise: "An augmentation of fortune is the means by which the greater part of men propose and wish to better their condition. It is the means the most vulgar and the most obvious",[60] but which is a consequence of the psychological need to break the habit and the excess of specialization, which leads to workers having ambition and encourages them to work more the higher the wages are. On occasion, competition

[52]Bréban (2014).

[53]Smith (1976a, 124).

[54]Smith (1976b), WN I.ii.2, 25 and Fleischacker (2004, 90–95) on butcher/baker's passage.

[55]Smith (1978), LJ 527.

[56]See Smith (1976b), WN II.iii, 42. For a different conclusion, Young (1997).

[57]Smith (1976b), II.V, 7.

[58]Smith (1976a), VI.ii.1.16–20, 224–226.

[59]See Lerner (1999) and Otteson (2002b).

[60]Smith (1976b, 341–342).

hurts workers when it obliges them to work to exhaustion[61] or leads them to suffer from "torpor of mind".[62] Smith complains about the mercantile system's "production for production's sake".[63] The ethic of work for work's sake is contrary to the principle of prudence.[64] Nevertheless, continuous growth is necessary to unleash rivalry between captains of industry.

All these economic illusions allow us to feel a temporal continuity of time. For Smith only growth takes man out of the subsistence state; he considered that men are prudent, and their own nature leads them to have an idea of the future, the basis for illusion although illusion can also be deceptive. A rich country is joyful because, since subsistence is assured for all its inhabitants, creative capacity is released, not being frightened by subsistence crises. "The rich man consumes no more food than his poor neighbour… The desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human stomach".[65] Then, in the WN, Smith gives up the idea of abundance that the State must "encourage" (which he defended in his Lectures on Jurisprudence of 1762–1766) to move on to the economic growth which the State must "allow". The use of history allows Hume to introduce a long-term perspective; however, Hume continues to speak of wealth as a stock, not as a flow. China according to him is represented as one of the most flourishing empires in the world, although it developed little trade beyond its territories.[66] This contrasts with Smith's consideration that China, despite its abundance, was poor, in a stationary state and with workers who earned low wages.[67] According to Smith, for the economy to overcome a situation of poverty it is not enough to have accumulated capital: we need a continuous growth that raises wages.[68] This is mainly based on his natural

[61]Smith (1976b), WN I.viii.13, 84.
[62]Smith (1976b), WN V.i.f.50, 782.
[63]Smith (1976b), WN IV.viii.48–49, 660.
[64]Smith (1976b), WN I.viii.44, 100.
[65]Smith (1978, 194; 1976b, I.xi,c, 181; 1976a, 332–333).
[66]Hume (1964b, 296).
[67]See Dodds (2018).
[68]See Wood (1890).

price of labour theory with a rising secular trend.[69] It gives the short-term labour supply curve a positive slope.[70] Growth is based then on the ability to produce goods in a fluid way, which leads to an inflation of profits, which competes for workers, and deepens the system of distribution of wealth.

The difference between the two theories of Hume and Smith, then, is that the WN is a study of growth under the assumption that there is a natural desire for freedom; while for Hume man is determined by environmental forces. Hume raised the problem of growth from the sceptical perspective of the survival of society, while Smith's vision is more optimistic. Hume attempts to morally justify "existing" institutions from a certain fear of change; Smith, campaigns for freeing the maximum creative capacity of men.

For Smith, the wealth of nations requires that there be no oppression and that there is certain stability in property. Then, there will be a creative flow, which depends on work, physical and human capital and the institutions that preserve both. Wealth is not stock but institutional effort—labour that we do not need to do but that we may command from others. In this sense, labour from others is always positive for me, wealth of someone never entails the poverty of others if it is not used in terms of political power. Governments and institutions are responsible for poverty, not God or other people that are fond of living an active life.[71] Also, for the definition of economic growth, the difference between productive and unproductive work is fundamental: in underdeveloped countries, work does not contribute to the economic system reinforcing its self-sustainability and the elements that could be used as productive instruments in the future remain. Therefore, Malthusian mechanisms of procreation and death will appear.[72] Smith's growth occurs thanks to the increasing productivity result of the division of labour, with progress in one sector being a prerequisite for progress in others.[73]

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[69]Blaug (1985, 73–74).

[70]Marshall (1998).

[71]See Rodríguez Braun (1998) and Schoeck (1987).

[72]Prasch (1991).

[73]Reid (1987).

The greatest contrast between Hume and Smith lies in their different treatment of capital accumulation. Hume considers that growth depends on the intensity of the effective desire for savings from the feudal state with idle landlords and oppressed peasants to the mercantile economy of his own time.[74] Hume's preference for the middle class is evident in his work. He argues that the best position in life is the middle class, given that the rich are lost between pleasures and the poor among needs. Classes are understood as psychological categories of their members. The middle class is the best position to be able to acquire virtue, wisdom and happiness. The active middle class is the most useful. Lords, landowners, are indolent and seekers of pleasure; peasants are ignorant and unambitious and traders or middle class can be frugal and active. Trade is positive because of its sociological effect of creating the middle class and therefore economic development. The new merchants rival the old nobility. Foreign trade makes the pleasures of luxury known and, making the desire for a better way of life emerge, it takes men out of their indolence by desire for emulation.[75]

Then, Hume treats the spirit of the age as a differential element of historical periods, while Smith seems to consider it universal, and he does so even in the parts of the analysis that are related to historical sequence. So, his historical analysis consists more in an exemplification of his deductive theories than in the facts of which he pretends to induce his theories, the opposite of Hume's methodology. Smith bases the motivation of economic action on an inborn propensity to truck, and he does not look for that motivation in historical analysis. He assumes a persistence of an industry spirit and argues that the first development of trade is achieved after an institutional break. In what appears to be a rejection of Hume's position on universalist grounds,[76] Smith argues that there is no reason why all groups are not always equally frugal, because people are based on a

[74]Skinner (1993).

[75]History of England 4, 384. See Wennerlind (2002).

[76]Rotwein (1970, 109). See also Hayek (1963) and more recently Berry (1997, 68–70).

> universal, continual, and uninterrupted effort to better their own condition. It is this effort, protected by law and allowed by liberty to exert itself in the manner that is most advantageous, which has maintained the progress of England towards opulence and improvement in almost all former times, and which, it is to be hoped, will do so in all future times.[77]

There are cases in Smith where general history is important, for example, on the issue of public debt or free trade, but even in this case, he does not refer to historical influences. In the same way, although its monetary theory contains historical material, it is of an analytical nature and he does not develop, like Hume, a discussion of the development of a monetary economy. So, it is necessary to adjust the legislation to the interests and temperament of the times, but habits and prejudices are presented only as a hindrance.[78] This is quite important given that, for example, for Smith, we can predict that the absence of an ethic of hard work, frugality and reinvestment is not the cause of underdevelopment. As Bauer says, these attitudes are not a guarantee of development if they are expressed in a political economy that systematically hampers the accumulation of capital.[79]

6.4 Money Issues

A final, and paradigmatic, debate between Hume and Smith is the money issue.[80] For Smith, the confusion between stock and flow arises from the false identification between wealth (purchasing power) and an increase in the amount of money. Two main issues show how Hume and Smith's money theories contrast: the specie-flow mechanism and

[77]Smith (1976b, 345): Book II: Chapter III. This argument is to be found in different places of the WN 99, 139, 285, 341, 374–375, 405, 454, 455, 540, 674, 718.

[78]Smith (1976b, 573): Book IV: Chapter V.

[79]See Harris (1983, 379).

[80]See Trincado (2005).

the question of bank-notes issuance. Briefly, Smith neglected to refer to Hume's specie-flow mechanism because, although at first this self-regulating system was intended to refute the mercantilist defence of money accumulation, finally Hume had to defend the non-neutrality of money. Hume argued for the "non" neutrality of money and arbitrated new ways of artificial incentive to action. As Humphrey says, in Hume's case, non-neutrality of money is due to the inflexibility of some prices creating an additional real expenditure in a short-run inflation context, as unemployed labour is willing to work at present wages.[81] With regard to note issuing, Smith proposed free-banking, whereas Hume, in the last analysis, defended the existence of a public bank that should restrict issuance. According to Smith, the overissue of money is due in general to the action of government. Money reduces transaction costs, but it only does so if it rises above circulation channels, as a way of allowing—not forcing—economic creation. Currency competition is the only means of being able to choose for trustful currencies. Smith's libertarian philosophy has, therefore, a determining influence on moulding his monetary theory.

In Hume's time, literature on monetary issues had both mercantilist and classical elements: the intrinsic desirability of money was key, but an increase in the quantity of money was considered to be a cause of inflation. Hume, at first, shows a preference for the classical view. But, as soon as he introduces his historical method and concentrates on the monetary meaning of a greater population and industry, or on the change of habits related with them, he ends up defending money productivity. Hume officially formulates his quantitative version of the specie-flow mechanism in *Of the Balance of Trade*. The famous argument posits that the quantity of metal in different trading nations tends automatically to an equilibrium in a gold standard. It is through the effects on the price level and the following increase or decrease in exports and imports. Hume's thinking was based on three assumptions: that the quantity of money is a determining factor in establishing the price level; that the volume of exports and imports affects internal and external

[81] Humphrey (1991).

relative level prices; and that the difference between the international balance of payments between nations must be paid for in metal. These three assumptions combined develop the theory of a self-regulating system of international distribution of cash that completely weakens the mercantilist objective of seeking gold as wealth.

But, although Hume attached great importance to the mechanicism part of the doctrine, from the outset he linked the argument with the question of economic growth. Hume considered price levels to be determined by the proportion of metals "with respect to" industry and capacities in the long run (by industry, Hume meant the level of economic development). He did not deny that the withdrawal of metal would be negative for a country, and he objected to the use of paper money because gold and silver would be in danger of being lost. What he intended to solve was a problem of causality: an increase in population and not the prohibition of imports is the cause of the growth of the quantity of money; but if we manage to increase the quantity of money, we could, at least in the short term, increase wealth through alterations in relative prices. If an increase in the quantity of money affects prices of some sectors more than that of others, it would encourage transactions and credit and increase demand for money, that is to say, its rate of circulation. The adjustment theory stops making sense if the new metal accumulates. In a letter to Oswal, Hume says:

> I never meant to say that money, in all countries which communicate, must necessarily be on a level, but only on a level proportioned to their people, industry and commodities… I agree with you, that the increase of money, if not too sudden, naturally increases people and industry, and by that means may retain itself; but if it do not produce such an increase, nothing will retain except hoarding.[82]

Hume intended to demonstrate his vital cycle of wealth theory that foresaw a limit to the possibilities of growth. As with other subjects he tackles, he sought the psychological and moral elements that could contribute to demolishing society to defend the conservation of the ones

[82]Letter from Hume to Oswald, November 1, 1750, in Rotwein (1970, 197–198).

that help to maintain it, in this case giving importance to the role of the selfishness of a rich country that wants to hoard all wealth. The wealthy country, with the greatest demand and increasing prices, loses its leadership over poor nations with decreasing prices. Answering Josiah Tucker, Hume says in a letter to Lord Kames, March 4, 1758:

> All the advantages which the author insists upon as belonging to a nation of extensive commerce, are undoubtedly real… The question is whether these advantages can go on, increasing trade in infinitum, or whether they do not at last come to a ne plus ultra.[83]

Hume specifies among these disadvantages the high price of provisions and labour, which enables the poorer country to rival the industry of the rich country. This is presented as a generalized law of growth and decadence that governs relations between all commercial nations. As Hume assures that growth opportunities will pass through one nation to other, he considers the result as "a happy concurrence of causes" that maintains international distribution of specie in an equilibrium.

But in *Of Money*, Hume comments further and more authoritatively on the emphasis of monetary process on economic growth. He takes his argument on economic development a step further to discuss the importance of the transformation from a barter economy to a monetary economy, achieved by increasing specialization and exchange. It was not the quantity of money but the more generalized use of money that should "enter into every transaction and contract"[84]—and the change in people's habits, that increased the wealth and power of the state. Hume bases this idea on two arguments. Firstly, the more the money is distributed, the larger the proportion of total expenses that could be collected as taxes. This is because the capacity to increase taxes tends to vary inversely with the tax charge on each taxpayer. Second, when we replace barter with a money economy, the quantity of commodities that arrive on the market increases; either the same commodities circulate

[83]Letter from Hume to Lord Kames, March 4, 1758, in Rotwein (1970, 200).
[84]Hume (1964c), Of Money: II: I: 317.

more (diminishing demand and the need for money) or the demand for money for making transactions increases. Thus, if the quantity of money remains the same, the general price level will be reduced by the greater quantity of commodities circulating. In a more developed economy, the sovereign will be better supplied not only because he can extract taxes in cash from his taxpayers, but also because he can buy and make more payments with the money he receives.

Hume also accepts the role played by exchange rates in the adjustment process. So, he establishes the arguments based on the demand for money. In this case, demand could be increased by supply regardless of the influence of a growth in supply on commerce, activity and employment. For instance, the metal flow in Western European countries since the discovery of the American mines was multiplied by a general expansion of industry because the process of exchange led to a greater quantity of money. In the intermediate period before money circulates to all the echelons of State and has its full effect in all the ranks, monetary expansion has two beneficial effects. The first is on employment. The analysis contains a detailed relation of the transmission effect in an economy enjoying full employment of resources. Hume shapes step by step the way in which the increase in the quantity of money, assuming that it initially reaches the hands of the employer, increases the demand for labour if wages have not increased, and increases employment and the output of the economy as a whole.[85]

Although significant, this effect is not the most important for Hume, who stresses more the sociological influence of the growth of the supply of money, which affects the "spirit of industry" in a mechanical and determinist way. Before the increase in the labour wage, money will accelerate the diligence of individuals in response to a greater demand of markets. This artificial incentive can spark individuals to action. Hume's analysis, in short, is like the more recent literature that shows the causal relations between pecuniary incentives and the development of a monetary economy. Hume concludes that the quantity of money is

[85]Hume (1964d, 313), Of Money.

not important for the happiness of the state, but it is important that the magistrate keeps it going.[86] This looks like the attitude of mercantilism that sought beneficial inflation. Hume's argument maintains the "utility of labour" mercantilist theory of value. In the end, the greater quantity of money is important. Nevertheless, Hume is showing that inflation is harmful, unlike the beneficial spirit of industry that it creates in the long run.

Finally, in the conclusions of the essay *Of the Balance of Trade*, Hume sought to justify the rejection of paper and his support of metal money as a precaution against serious alterations in money's value and, as money is for Hume the measure of all goods, in wealth. In effect, Hume showed his disagreement with the excessive extension of bank notes. But finally, he says: "We observed in Essay III ["Of Money"] that money, when increasing, gives encouragement to industry, during the interval between the increase of money and rise of the prices. A good effect of this nature may follow too from paper-credit; but it is dangerous to precipitate matters".[87] As the growth of paper-money affects exchanges and purchasing power parity and displaces metals, which are not necessary to circulate goods and go abroad reducing reserves, Hume, in principle, does not recommend the use of paper money. But, later, he changes his mind saying "it must, however, be confessed, that, as all these questions of trade and money are extremely complicated, there are certain lights, in which this subject may be placed, so as to represent the advantages of paper-credit and banks to be superior to their disadvantages".[88] He continues by asserting that it is not to be doubted that the creation of banknotes makes metal leave a country but he doubts that the advantages of metals are so important they cannot be offset by the growth of industry and credit due to the right to use paper money and bank credits.[89] "But", he concludes, "whatever other advantages result from these inventions, it must still be allowed that, besides

[86]Heimann (1953, 45).

[87]Hume (1964c, 337), Of the Balance of Trade: II: V: Footnote 2.

[88]Hume (1964c, 338–339), Of the Balance of Trade: II: V.

[89]Hume (1964c, 339–340), Of the Balance of Trade: II: V.

giving too great facility to credit, which is dangerous, they banish the precious metals…"[90] Finally, he trusted hierarchy to reduce transaction costs, as he said that there is no better bank than a public bank that keeps all the money it receives, and that never increases the quantity of money in circulation.[91] Certainly, the emphasis Hume places on historical processes in his monetary theory was, not only its most general element but also its only sound characteristic.

Adam Smith neglected to refer to Hume's specie-flow mechanism precisely because not introducing money into his analysis allowed him to maintain the central argument of his work, that is to say, that labour (not money) is the cause of progress and growth.[92] As Smith suggests, "Mr. Hume's reasoning (about the specie-flow mechanism) is exceedingly ingenious. He seems however to have gone a little into the notion that public opulence consists in money".[93] Smith was only worried about real variables in the long run. He did not distinguish between the effects of growth on the quantity of money in prices or on activity because he did not want to defend that artificial incentives could spark a person to action. According to Smith, money is "like" a capital that makes commodities move: he says that a money increase is a net income decrease.[94] So, ideally, a nation should develop commerce with the minimum quantity of money possible.

Smith preferred to present a monetary conception of balance of payments which neither includes the flow-specie mechanism nor the quantitative theory of money. Thus, according to Humphrey,[95] Smith laid the foundations of the modern balance of payments theory. Self-regulation of the market, however, continues to be the basis of the system, one of the three lessons driven by Smith's theory according to Amartya Sen (the others are the adequacy of the profit motive as the

[90]Hume (1964c, 340), Of the Balance of Trade: II: V.
[91]Hume (1964d, 312), Of Money: II: I.
[92]Petrella (1968).
[93]Smith (1978, 507), LJ (B): 253.
[94]Smith (1976b, 371–376), WN: II: II.
[95]Humphrey (1981).

basis of rational behaviour and the adequacy of self-interest as socially productive behaviour).[96]

The monetary theory of balance of payments predicts that an eventual growth in the quantity of metal (not depending on the greater production of mines) does not affect prices, but temporarily causes a balance of payments deficit that diminishes until it disappears, that is to say, affects the quantity of reserves or the rate of exchange and discount of bills of exchange (although that could mean greater profits and investment in the short run). In fact, Smith objects to the accepted maxim of his time that the growth in convertible paper money necessarily increases the monetary price of commodities. In a gold-standard situation, the quantity of gold and silver withdrawn from circulation always equals that of the paper added, so paper money does not necessarily expand the total amount in circulation.

According to Smith, Hume was not correct in his statements as "In 1751 and in 1752, when Mr. Hume published his Political Discourses, and soon after the great multiplication of paper money in Scotland, there was a very sensible rise in the price of provisions, owing, probably, to the badness of the seasons, and not to the multiplication of paper money".[97] Inflation is due to real causes, not to monetary ones. As Smith says, if mine production increases regarding that of other goods, then, like every other good, the price of gold will fall in a gold standard. Only the cost of production of goods affects relative value, taking the costs of production as the institutional effort that the good is able to command. So, if the quantity of money that can be annually employed in whatever country is determined by the value of annually consumable goods that circulate within the country; and, if production diminishes, money will be sent abroad in metal and used to buy goods, as it lacks national employment. "The exportation of gold and silver is, in this case, not the cause, but the effect of its declension, and may even, for some little time, alleviate the misery of that declension".[98]

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[96]Sen (2011, 259).

[97]Smith (1978, 418), WN: 2: 2.

[98]Smith (1976b, 436–437), WN: 2: 3.

In disagreement with Hume's arguments, Smith defends the creation of bank notes, a cheaper means of exchange than metal.[99] If money is "like" a capital, if its production is made cheaper, the means of production is made cheaper, and the bank system becomes more productive. Smith also points out problems with bank-note issuance: for him, trust, and the fact that bank notes have a fixed purchasing power, as they are a measure of value, is very important.[100] National safety will be threatened if most of the money is issued in the form of paper or if there is a risk of a bank crisis.

But for Smith, the excessive issue of bank notes is due in general to the hierarchical action of government that imposes notes of legal tender. Although it is in the direct interest of the State to achieve monetary and bank stability, synonymous with its own stability, the State seeks to obtain a short-term profit, damaging itself in the long run. For that reason and based always on the necessary convertibility of notes to metal, Smith defended free banking, the formula developed in Scotland in the eighteenth century. In this case, different currencies, convertible by law, competed to obtain public trust, the means by which Smith thought possible to avoid excess issuing.[101] As the general price level is determined through the costs of production of gold relative to other goods—which constitutes its "natural price"–, Smith's analysis of substitution of specie with paper money makes his banking theory a part of his economic growth theory. A state monopoly of the issue of notes always leads to the excess of money. Public bank stability depends on that of the State, but this same advantage creates an excess of trust in the issuing of those notes of obligatory acceptance. "It acts, not only as an ordinary bank, but also as a great engine of state. In those different operations, its duty to the publick may sometimes have obliged it, without any fault of its directors, to overstock the circulation with paper money".[102] Conversely, the interest of private banks is to create confidence in its notes since, if they did not, they would

[99]Smith (1976b, 377), WN: 2: 2.
[100]Smith (1976b, 377), WN: 2: 2.
[101]Smith (1976b), WN: II: II.
[102]Smith (1976b, 320), WN: II: II.

not be accepted or they would be continually replaced by gold, an additional cost for the bank that needs to maintain more metal in its coffers to satisfy eventual demands.[103] In consequence,

> The only method to prevent the bad consequence arising from the ruin of banks is to give monopolies to none, but to encourage the erection of as many as possible. When several are established in a country, a mutual jealousy prevails… Even tho' one did break, every individual (would) have very few of its notes.[104]

Government protection of a system of regulated banks is also a greater source of potential instability. Smith criticizes the relief programmes during bank crises. Banks take an excessive risk because they assume the central bank will save them, bailing them out of the difficulty. The memory of bankruptcy or the possibility of bankruptcy is the only risk deterrent. Instability even has serious effects in the long run, as it affects credibility and expectations:

> When any alteration is made one does not really know how much of the new coin is equal to a certain value; this necessarily embarrasses commerce. The merchant won't sell but for a very high price, being afraid of losing, and the purchaser for the same reason will not give but a very low one… It is also productive of a great deal of fraud.[105]

Moreover, currency devaluation reduces public faith, and nobody will lend any sum to the government, or bargain with it, as he perhaps may be paid with one half of it.[106] On the other hand, neither is it necessary for the State to control issuing. It is true that at a certain moment there is a correct quantity of money to satiate the "circulation channel"

[103]Smith (1976b, 387–389), WN: II: II.
[104]Smith (1978, 505), LJ (B): 251.
[105]Smith (1978, 505), LJ (B): 251.
[106]Smith (1978, 502), LJ (B): 243: 502.

of transactions, but in most cases the growth of the quantity of money is a consequence, not a cause, of wealth. Cabrillo says that Smith did not understand the idea of demand for money or monetary balance, as the speed of circulation of money did not play a significant role in his theory, in spite of the importance that Cantillon had attributed to that concept.[107] But, as we see, this is really part of Smith's argument: it is not the demand for goods that affects supply but the greater division of labour, the accumulation of capital and the reduction in cost of raw materials. In the case of commodity "money" (the utility of which is to promote the circulation of other commodities), the supply of commodities determines the demand for commodities, and this, the supply of and demand for money. When money is understood as something like a real bill, the channel of circulation demands a sum of it high enough to fulfil circulation and never demands more.

As Méndez argues, increasing the quantity of notes is always beneficial as it cuts down the cost of issue "while it does not exceed the reserves available".[108] But, in Smith, over issuing of notes is possible, making us lose gold. When we overissue, if the lesser difficulty occurs, or there is a delay in payments, the alarm it would create will necessarily intensify the run on gold and the Central Bank will need to be continually coining and paying for the tax for coining. This happened at the beginning of the eighteenth century when John Law's actions led to a State crisis after having persuaded the French government to overissue money, as "he thought it would be a great convenience, as the government then might do what it pleased, raise armies, pay soldiers, and be at any expense whatever".[109]

Nevertheless, Smith proposes monetary reform to reduce transaction costs in a metallic system, saying that the issue of notes of a certain small quantity should not be allowed as a way of preventing circulation between dealers and consumers, who require little sums that move

[107]Cabrillo (1976, 34).

[108]Méndez (1988, 83).

[109]Smith (1978, 515), LJ (B): 271.

quickly, be realized with notes. But he needed to justify this proposal of legislation, which "is a manifest violation of that natural liberty which it is the proper business of law, not to infringe, but to support".[110] Smith concludes that if bankers are restrained from issuing any circulation bank notes, or notes payable to the bearer, for less than a certain sum and if they are subjected to the obligation of an immediate and unconditional payment of such bank notes as soon as presented, "their trade may, with safety to the publick, be rendered in all other respects perfectly free".[111]

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[110]Smith (1976b, 416–417), WN: II: II.

[111]Smith (1976b, 423), WN: II: II.

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Conclusion

Concluding Remarks

The Hume–Smith debate is a really fascinating one. There was no piece of knowledge that they would not try to understand and fix in their system. For them, language and rhetoric are the basis for understanding and reason. They emerged in the exchange of glances and mirror-looking that society enables us to have.

By describing the different images that oppress the present, we try to free ourselves from them. For that reason, we also need to describe the present itself. Smith's theory is an attempt to argue a concept of time based on a 'creative present'. This clears up some of the confusion displayed by philosophical, ethical and social theories based on utility.

Hume said that the man is attracted unavoidably by pleasures and repelled by pains; he is a slave of passions. In contrast, Smith gave especial importance in his moral theory to self-command, based on a definition of freedom in positive terms. Self-command, according to Smith, does not provide—only—the avoidance of the "painful" uncertainty, but thanks to it we search for the propriety of actions: it allows us to pursue truth and Justice. According to Smith, we act partly, it is true, to satisfy a mental system,—especially to feel loved by our fellow feelings; but we are also partly

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guided by a moral reality when we do not listen to the applause of the real spectator, but to the approval of the impartial spectator. This provides us with the tranquillity of knowing that we are worthy of love, a peace of mind that allows grateful reality to emerge and that is a necessary condition for our ability to feel. For Smith, the search for utility is, as we have seen, a love of system; in short, it is a mental hallucination that makes us sacrifice real happiness, a happiness that we always have within our reach. Pleasure is gratitude, a gift of nature that we do not need to foresee, and that the anxiety of anticipation forbids. In fact, Smith says, the first movement was not due to self-preservation, but to a desire for instinctive movement that does not depend on past experiences.

Smith describes a type of perception, depth, which is different from perception based on impressions. Depth perception is linked to wonder, and this can be lost in the socialization process. For this type of perception to occur, it is necessary to recognize the independence and reality of the 'self' and the 'other'. In contrast to the hunt for pleasure, which is a reaction to the pleasure-pain dynamic and requires using imaginative processes, Smith presents active principles that are lived in the present, such as gratitude, joy, curiosity, game playing, creation. The emergence of these active principles depends on self-command. Besides, although imagination is crucial for sympathy, only an observer of time can put himself in the place of the other person maintaining active principles. He 'realizes' the reality through an intuitive burst of clarity that leads to an understanding of things.

As we have shown, Smith has an original theory of language. Smith supports the idea that language is a convention that relates the sound or the word to the reality of a feeling or, conversely, the external reality to its representative word. Language is the recollection of a situation linked to a name but, in different contexts this name can have very different meanings in our memories. Language, therefore, does not follow the method of logic, does not reject all the sentences that we could have said, but rather looks for the best representation of reality. So, the understanding of language is not based on words that express a certain object or concept, but on sentences, semantic contents, that is to say, the whole context that makes the speaker and listener enter into a new, remembered and imagined reality. This creation can only take place within the affection for and faithfulness to reality.

From Smith we can also learn that there are connections to ideas prior to language and thought. Smith is not a nominalist who would deny the existence of universals: the word expresses a real experience—always in the inner man. The idea that we live inside language or that language is something material located in the brain is simply treating as an object that which exists in time, something that, as we have said, leads man to feel only within some learned concepts.

Against Hume, Smith believes that the beauty of language is not in ornamentation but in the ability to communicate reality with simplicity. This simplicity is the richest expression of reality represented. For Smith, the important thing about language is truthfulness. The author is the origin of language and the meaning is pre-linguistic (immanent in the text), waiting for the empathic reader to restore the original meaning. This is along the lines of the subsequent theory propounded by Bergson. Smith uses the principle of the author's intention, language being a mediating instrument of the real feeling. He therefore criticizes Hume's idea that the meaning is constructed by the reading process.

I would like to pinpoint the fact that all these ideas are pivotal in the understanding of why nationalism and national identities may be such a misleading track for the future of the world. Nationalism as a promotion of the identity of a nation is based on the philosophy of Hume, who considers the existence of national characters and that defends that language determines our mind and thought. As there is no permanent self, the self of language is the one that makes us survive and promotes the survival of a certain culture and common history. Then, we will reinforce pride in national achievements—and Hume also defends the superiority of races. This results in a society reinterpreting their identity, retaining elements that are deemed acceptable and removing elements deemed unacceptable, to create a unified community. Just before Hume's death, Johann Gottfried Herder originated the term nationalism in 1772 in his "Treatise on the Origin of Language", stressing the role of a common language.

However, for Adam Smith, the question is quite different. Language is not the same as thought. There is some common reality that we may all feel. Language, it is true, selects the more representative experiences to a certain community, landscape or geography, but it is no more than a means to express some underlying feeling. So, nationalism has no

sense and it is only one more of the alienations of modernity, with all the stress they put on identities included. The real identity—the active self—is the one that is able to grasp time, past and present, with curiosity and gratitude. If, as we have previously said, Hume asserted the superiority of the white race, Smith, in contrast, said that

> there is not a negro from the coast of Africa who does not… possess a degree of magnanimity which the soul of his sordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the jails of Europe.[1]

I would repeat that it is very surprising that Hume's and Smith's theories are mixed… Smith criticized the pride of nations, races and social classes and was against classical republicanism as civic participation that was confined to a narrow elite.[2]

With respect to economics, Smith also bases his theory on action lived in the present, not reaction. The division of labour is the result of people's natural tendency to be creative and enjoy themselves, and not of individual or societal foresight. The value of goods implies also 'realizing' that there is an objective value. The positive consequence of the generation of wealth is not the amount of 'happinesses' that money provides, but rather the chance to 'break' with habit by enjoying the feeling of curiosity and creation. For Smith, only production cost affects the relative value, which is regulated by the institutional effort that goods can command. Value depends neither on subjective utility nor on demand, but on the relative shortage as compared to other commodities and to market persuasion.

Microeconomic theory is based on a utilitarian or environmentalist conception of man, but we have seen that there are important -and distinguished-alternatives. These alternatives study economic development

[1]Smith (1976a), TMS V. 2.9, 206.
[2]Muller (1993).

in the most fertile way, which must look for non-subjective hypotheses to understand the "intermediate world" among men. To assume this method, it is necessary to believe, against Hume, that the psychological -subjective- and historical determinants are not the only element to be studied, a relativist thesis that, purely, could only describe circumstantial causes. This is the case, obviously, of Adam Smith's theory.

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