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## ABSTRACT

N.J.RENGGER

### 'REASON, SCEPTICISM AND POLITICS'

This thesis is concerned to discuss two related questions in political theory. First, the relationship of 'theory' and 'practice', concentrating specifically on the relationship between 'philosophy' and 'politics'; and, secondly, how the political theory of the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment is helpful in revealing an answer to the first problem.

In order to encompass this dual task, the thesis is divided into three parts. Part One, 'Philosophy in its Place', delineates two trends in modern political thought that most explicitly bracket off the theoretical and the practical. It goes on to discuss the thesis of Alisdair MacIntyre in AFTER VIRTUE, that it was the Enlightenment that was, in fact, the intellectual origin of these two trends. Chapter Two of Part One, continues this discussion by considering recent adaptations of the central claims (such as that offered by Bernard Williams), and challenges to them from thinkers who emphasise the methodological importance of the history of thought (such as MacIntyre himself, and Richard Rorty). It concludes with an analysis of an issue central to the discussions of all three thinkers: incommensurability.

Part Two, 'Theory and Practice in the Enlightenment's Politics', consists of three chapters which together offer an interpretation of the Enlightenment's reflections on the relation between theory and practice and, specifically, of the two thinkers most important for this question, Hume and Kant. The analysis also discusses rival interpretations and concentrates specifically on refuting MacIntyre's arguments in AFTER VIRTUE on the nature, character and implications of Enlightenment thought.

Part Three, 'Bringing Philosophy Back In', ties these various threads together by first discussing the methodological questions set out in Part One in more detail, and then by showing how the Enlightenment's thought on this topic is still of the utmost importance for modern political theorists and why this should be so.

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'REASON, SCEPTICISM AND POLITICS:

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT'S POLITICS'

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS

1987



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PREFACE

As with any piece of sustained research, in the course of writing this thesis I have incurred many debts, which I gratefully acknowledge here.

Professor Alan Milne has been the very model of a modern research supervisor (as an individual of whom we are both great admirers might have put it). During my three years of research at Durham he was endlessly considerate and patient towards a post-graduate student often led astray by his own whims and fancies, and was tireless in reading and commenting on the draft chapters I irregularly produced. He has been no less helpful over the last two years, when I have been elsewhere, in keeping the thesis (to say nothing of its wayward author) up to the mark. I have benefitted immeasurably from these, and many other, kindnesses and am unable to fully express the amount I have learnt from him over the years.

Bob Dyson discussed many aspects of this thesis with me in its most formative stages. Although always friendly and sympathetic, his criticisms were invariably formidable and searching and many of the solutions I proffer were first defined and elaborated in discussions with him. Henry Tudor and Paddy Fitzpatrick also both commented on various aspects of the thesis, as well as allowing me time in the seminars they organized to read parts of it to scholarly audiences, and I am very grateful to them both.

I owe a special debt to that most personal of institutions, Durham University. Not only did it provide a marvellous setting

in which to embark on scholarly work but through its award of a research studentship it provided me with the financial means to pursue it. The staff of the University library were characteristically helpful in a multiplicity of roles, and I gladly acknowledge the benefit I received from this.

Finally there are two more personal debts I wish to acknowledge. Vanessa Robinson read many parts of this thesis, and discussed others with me, and, while not surprised by the force and acuteness of her suggestions, I remain more grateful than I can say, both for these and for our continuing friendship. Lastly, my Mother and Father have provided, throughout my whole academic career to date so great a level of support - moral, emotional and financial - that any words of mine would be inadequate to express my gratitude. During my thesis, especially, they have helped in innumerable ways, and I say, in all honesty, that I do not know what I would have done without them. Were it not inappropriate to dedicate a Ph.D thesis I would dedicate it to them.

Doubtless there are faults in what follows. In philosophy and political theory there are never last words, only pauses for breath, but for those faults I am responsible, not those people who have helped my understanding, and whose help it is the purpose of this preface to acknowledge.

N.J.R.

December 1986.



INTRODUCTION

This Monograph is an attempt to do two things. The first is to offer a defence of a certain interpretation of the Enlightenment, against a number of critics in philosophy and the social sciences. The second and wider theme, is to use this defence to contribute to the ongoing debate over the nature of the relationship of philosophy and political theory to political practice. Although this debate went underground (along with a number of others) during the years in which the analytical movement reigned, unchallenged, in the Anglo-American philosophical worlds, it has lately re-emerged with a vengeance, in the work of (amongst others) Richard Rorty and Alisdair MacIntyre - the two modern thinkers with whom I shall be most engaged in this work.

The debate has a number of central loci and a series of implications for other areas - for example the nature of the relationship between philosophy per se and its history - and inevitably I shall be dealing, at least tangentially, with some of them in the course of this study, but its most important implication (or so I shall argue in chapter six) is that it displays the poverty of a good deal of modern political theory.

It will be my argument that modern political theory is impoverished, not in the sense that is not ingenious, well thought out, provoking or interesting (much modern political theory is all these things), but that, for reasons that lie largely in the history of philosophy in the last three hundred years - and especially in the last century - political theory has lost its true identity. Like Britain, it has lost an empire, the empire it had in what is now often referred to as the 'classical' period of political thought (1), and has not yet found an agreed role. It is often at war with itself, as John Dunn has said, philosophically feeble and politically maladroit(2).

It is so, in large part, because theory and practice have been separated in a way that does grave damage to both. This is the nub of the charge that Alisdair MacIntyre levels at what he calls 'emotivism', and he is right. He is not right, however, in laying emotivism at the door of the Enlightenment, and more seriously, in tying the Enlightenment and emotivism together he obscures one of the most important legacies of the Enlightenment - its attempt to bind together theory and practice. It is my interpretation of this attempt that I want to elaborate and defend in chapters three, four and five of the present work, and analyse the implications of, in chapter six.

The sense in which this is relevant to my wider theme, however, can only be made clear if I look at those modern exponents of emotivism whom MacIntyre wishes to link the Enlightenment, and then examine both MacIntyre's own case and those of some others who treat of the same or similar issues. Thus the first chapter of this thesis examines the approaches in twentieth century philosophy which attempt to separate theory and practice, and deduces two trends in twentieth century political theory - Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen - which carry this into effect, as it were, in the political realm. The second chapter examines the way in which one open ally of these two trends (Bernard Williams), one avowed enemy (MacIntyre himself) and one thinker who in a sense is both (Richard Rorty) develop and elaborate their cases, and cope with the one idea which is the fundamental bedrock for any Humpty Dumpty, Red Queen or emotivist argument:- the incommensurability of values.

Thus, in part one of the thesis the modern arguments for the rigid separation of theory and practice are analysed and discussed, and the terrain of the conceptual battlefield described - Humpty Dumpty, the Red Queen, Emotivism, Incommensurability and the alleged (by MacIntyre) derivation of all these from the Enlightenment's ideas and their failure. Part two offers an interpretation of the Enlightenment which rejects this allegation, and seeks to show how both in its

general tenor and often seemingly disparate approaches, and in the specific arguments of perhaps its two most distinctive and influential philosophical voices (Hume and Kant), the Enlightenment, far from separating theory and practice, was convinced of the necessity of their interdependence.

Part three, then, is left to draw out the implications of all this. It suggests that, in a number of vitally important ways the concerns of the Enlightenment and the concerns of the late twentieth century are analogous, and that the solutions discussed are of considerable significance for the relationship of theory to practice, philosophy to politics, that was my wider concern at the beginning of the thesis. The various problems left unresolved at the end of part one, particularly that of incommensurability, are then re-examined and some solutions proffered.

Finally the thesis attempts to show how the concerns activating it are of relevance in rectifying that 'poverty' in modern political theory that I referred to earlier, emphasising that political theory, philosophy, indeed all social enquiry must take history, and what has been called the 'view from here and now'(3), much more seriously if it is adequately to perform the task that the role discussed above defines for it. Perhaps the least appreciated legacy of the Enlightenment for modern political theory is what Peter Gay has called its 'recovery of nerve'(4); political theory too needs to recover its nerve and to become more self aware of both itself and its surroundings. The final part of this thesis also attempts to outline just what form both the recovery and the self awareness should take.

PART 1: PHILOSOPHY IN ITS PLACE.

Chapter 1

Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen :  
A Methodological Introduction.

"The most striking feature of contemporary moral utterance is that so much of it is used to express disagreements: and the most striking feature of the debates in which these disagreements are expressed is their interminable character".

Alisdair MacIntyre.

"There is nothing which is not the subject of debate, and in which men of learning are not of contrary opinions".

David Hume

This chapter is concerned to do two things; first, to discuss the climate in political philosophy which has made the relationship between philosophy and politics a problematic one and, secondly, to suggest why looking at the works of Hume and Kant might be especially illuminating in analysing this fact.

The most obvious cause of this problem has, of course, been the dominance in Britain and America, at least for most of the twentieth century, of conceptions of philosophy which argue that to prescribe, in the moral or political realm, is no part of philosophy's purpose and that if and when philosophers do so prescribe they cease, at that moment, to be philosophers at all; they become moralists, or in Moritz Schlick's contemptuous word 'preachers'.<sup>1</sup>

Characteristically, these conceptions of philosophy have not always agreed among themselves. The realists, dominant in Britain in the years before (and just after) the first World War, were criticised and eventually displaced.



by the logical positivists and their analytically minded confrères, yet both argued against moral or political theorizing of the 'traditional' sort, and many philosophers who could by no stretch of the imagination be called 'analytical philosophers' argued a similar case, albeit for different reasons.<sup>2</sup>

In much modern political theory these conceptions of philosophy have given rise to two particular ways of thinking that I shall call (with apologies to Lewis Carroll) 'Humpty Dumpty' and the 'Red Queen'. It is an interesting fact, however, that even now that analytical and linguistic philosophy is nothing like as dominant as it once was, 'Humpty Dumpty' and the 'Red Queen' still exercise a powerful influence on political thought. It is this influence that I chiefly want to discuss in this chapter, its effects and its source, but I must first identify and describe my two trends of thought.

## I

Before discussing these two trends in modern political philosophy, however, I must make a few remarks about the role, form and nature of political theory, in order to set them in context. At the height of the debate over "who killed political theory", in the 1950's and 1960's, Isaiah Berlin observed that it was a "strange paradox that political theory should seem to lead so shadowy an existence at a time when, for the first time in history, literally the whole of mankind is violently divided by issues the reality of which is, and always has been, the sole *raison d'etre* of this branch of study".<sup>3</sup> At least part of the reason why this paradox existed was that the issues involved - those which, according to Berlin, it is the *raison d'etre* of political theory to study - had come to be seen as those that are in principle un settleable by argument, and Berlin infers this later in his article. Previously such issues were seen as settleable in principle - even if they have never actually been settled in practice. Obviously this is a conceptual shift of great importance and is of especial importance in the present context because throughout the history of political theory, its "*raison d'etre*" was not simply to study the issues (i.e. analyse, describe and explain them), it was also expected to

help decide upon them in some way or another. It was, of course, this function that the growth of positivism and linguistic philosophy was supposed to have 'killed'. Unfortunately, even those philosophers who have, in some way or another, reverted to an older idea of political theory, seem to remain ambivalent about precisely what it is they are doing when they do political philosophy.

This is the case in the work of a number of political philosophers, most interestingly perhaps, Rawls. He has argued that one can pursue substantive moral theory independently of views about the origin of, or method to be used in ethical thinking per se,<sup>4</sup> or at least, that substantive moral concerns should hold central place in our studies over and above debates about definition, analysis and so on. Up to a point, of course, he is quite right and it is easy to understand his impatience with thinkers who spend so much time discussing methodology that they never get around to actually discussing the subject, but the weakness of this argument is that it poses no real threat to a conception of philosophy which says that ethical recommendation, simply by virtue of it being ethical, makes such theorizing dubious philosophy or not philosophy at all. Many thinkers still argue this and however much they might admire Rawls' argumentation itself, it is such views that lie at the back of Alan Ryan's description of Rawls' as "the ideologist of American Liberalism", and the various dismissals of Rawls' A Theory of Justice as a work of Liberal apologetics.<sup>5</sup>

Now Rawls' work (and that of philosophers like Nozick, Dworkin and so on) lies most assuredly in the analytical tradition, at least in the sense that the distinctive apparatus and impedimenta of analytical philosophy are deployed with impressive skill and effect. However, they go beyond the analytic tradition in that their arguments are supposed to have practical (i.e. prescriptive) import, the one thing the founders of the analytic tradition set themselves most sternly against in the moral or (in this case) political spheres. Rawls himself is explicitly arguing against a tradition of moral philosophy beginning in the mid eighteenth century<sup>6</sup>, (a point of some interest and one to which I shall return), but his argument is meant also to apply (at least obliquely) to modern 'moral philosophy' and specifically at that school which denies, in fact, that moral philosophy can be done in this mode (as philosophy) at all.

For the proponents of this 'school' Rawls' work (and those of thinkers like Walzer, Nozick, Putnam and others) is necessarily not philosophy but 'preaching' or (more usually) ideology of some form or another. Unfortunately, there is no agreed use of this term either. P.H. Partridge regards it as a blanket term covering all appraisive moral or political judgements; "'the ideological' is a moral judgement about ends and ways of life, and about the institutional conditions of the good life."<sup>7</sup> Others, like David Manning, have a more precise use of the term, restricting it to political action and affiliation and describing it as the "language of adherence".<sup>8</sup> Marxist theorists produce variances of Marx's use of ideology.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately the lack of an adequate definition has produced the not unsurprising result, that various philosophers have used it in markedly different ways, and in attempts to establish a number of different points.

The general view of philosophy that I have been outlining and which is associated chiefly with what I will call the 'hard core' analytical philosophers, separates out the ethical and the philosophical, at least as far as conduct is concerned and is the usual premiss for the two trends in political philosophy that I shall delineate in a moment. It holds that philosophy is about (any or all of) analysis, description, observation and explanation but not about recommendation and has been described by Peter Winch, borrowing a phrase from Locke, as the "under-labourer" conception of philosophy.<sup>10</sup> When a moral argument takes place, (the under-labourer argument runs) philosophy cannot do anything but describe and analyse the form the argument takes - it cannot recommend one course of action over another (though it can, of course, show that one line of argument is confused or irrelevant, an important concession to which I shall return). This conception of philosophy has a long history; Bacon, Locke, Hume, Moore, Russell, Schlick and Carnap have all, in one form or another, been trumpeted as allies or fellow travellers. It has also more recently taken over many of the leading ideas, methods, vocabulary and apparatus of Wittgenstein's philosophy.

This approach has inevitably led to a corollary; this being the assumption that many of the concepts of moral and political debate in which political philosophers necessarily engage are without any "objective" criteria for



being judged - they are, in Gallie's words, "essentially contested concepts" and, therefore, display an "interminable" and "unsettleable" character - which brings us back to the "paradox" that Berlin spoke of, and that I mentioned earlier.

That moral philosophers have disagreed and continue to do so is scarcely news, but the assumption of the inherent unsettleability of moral dispute has been a minority view in philosophy until recently. The belief that moral disputants are engaged in - the words are Alisdair Macintyre's - "a clash of antagonistic wills, each will determined by some act of arbitrary choices of its own" <sup>11</sup> is one that was found in some ancient writers (particularly, for example, certain of the sophists and Lucretius) <sup>12</sup> and, at least partially, in certain very individual modern thinkers, such as Hobbes, but its modern version, deriving its inspiration from many different sources, is perhaps the most formidable of all; and leads to the starkest implications for students of political theory.

## II

It is now time to turn to the two aspects of modern political philosophy that I have called "Humpty Dumpty" and the "Red Queen". Again, let me consider first, the background. As far as it has been applied to politics, the most uncompromising and perhaps the best known examples of the "under-labourer" conception have been the later views of T.D. Weldon, though varieties of it have also been deployed by Margaret Macdonald and Rush Rees. <sup>13</sup>

The essential contention here, of course, is that philosophy can have no effect on political conduct as philosophy. There can, of course, be arguments offered by philosophers in support of particular views in politics, but by the definition of philosophy given by the "under-labourers" this cannot be philosophy properly so called. It does not matter, therefore, how important the issue, or how sophisticated the recommendation, philosophy (as philosophy) can never advance the discussion of bed-rock moral or political issues; it is stuck where it is; it is entirely second order and descriptive; it never "advances" or "retreats". In this sense political philosophy, in its "under-labourer" formulation, is like the "Red Queen" and those who look for any sort of practical guidance from it, rather like the bewildered Alice:-

"Alice never could quite make out ..... how it was they began.....  
the Queen kept crying "faster, faster,"..... just as Alice was getting

quite exhausted, they stopped..... Alice looked around her in great surprise."

"Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time. Everything's just as it was!"

"Of course it is" said the Queen, "What would you have it?"

"Well in our country" said Alice, still panting a little, "You'd generally get to somewhere else - if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place!!!" <sup>14</sup>

So, if the under-labourers are right, moral and political argument is unshakable by reason; and given their conception of philosophy, it is useless, therefore, to apply philosophy to it except in a purely descriptive way. For them, either ethics ceases to be part of philosophy at all, or the normative component of ethics must be excised from it. It is this latter course that most have adopted, and it is this general approach - that philosophy necessarily has no direct influence on politics as philosophy - that I characterise as the "Red Queen" view of political philosophy. [It should be emphasized, however, that a 'Red Queen' position is not always allied to the 'Under-labourer' thesis. I discuss this a little later on]

Then there is the corollary I mentioned - the "interminable" nature of moral discourse. Alisdair MacIntyre remarked that this is "the most striking feature of contemporary moral utterance", <sup>15</sup> and in discussions about the status of moral and political argument, this feature has produced what I call the "Humpty Dumpty" view of moral and political concepts.

"Humpty Dumpty", you will remember, insisted that "when I use a word..... it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less".<sup>16</sup> My meaning here is simply that, according to this view, part of the reason why rational argument is important in moral and political discourse, is that ethical arguments - as arguments - can only take place within a given ethical framework. I shall take a closer look at two ideas that I have already mentioned to convey exactly what I have in mind here and to show how deeply this view is now embedded in our moral and philosophical consciousness.

The first is W.B. Gallie's notion of an "essentially contested concept". <sup>17</sup>

Though he is by no means an "under-labourer" in his general conception of philosophy, Gallie's account of "essentially contested concepts" gives considerable support to both the "Red Queen" and "Humpty Dumpty" views. His basic argument is that essentially contested concepts lie at the centre of disputes "which although not resolvable by argument of any kind, are nevertheless sustained by perfectly respectable arguments and evidence ..... There are concepts....., the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users".<sup>18</sup> He suggests five concepts as examples - religion, art, science, democracy and social justice - but says that many other examples could be found.

Where does this contention leave moral and political enquiry? It is not at all obvious that Gallie wishes to subscribe to the "Red Queen" view of political philosophy: indeed he tries to "re-introduce" philosophy into political appraisal in the course of his essay! Nonetheless, in order to "bring philosophy" into the activity, as it were, he makes two observations towards the end of the essay which, unfortunately for his argument, serve only to establish the "Red Queen" view more firmly than ever. He first asks whether these "endless disputes" are genuine disputes? and, secondly, "In what ways should we expect recognition of the essentially contestedness of a given concept by all its users to affect the character or level of the conflicts and arguments to which it gives rise?".<sup>19</sup>

In response to the first question, Gallie argues that the disputes are genuine disputes because they can manifest what he calls a "logic of conversion". This would be such that even died-in-the-wool opponents could recognize the force of an argument which might lead a weaker minded colleague to abandon their use of the essentially contested concept in question for a rival one. This kind of argument, however, is vacuous if it is intended as a prop for re-introducing "reason" or "philosophy" (in any recognizable sense) to Gallie's framework because philosophical "argument" either can help settle the dispute or it cannot. Gallie's avowed belief here, is that it cannot, because "fundamental differences of attitude of a kind for which no logical justification can be given, must also lie back of the kind of situation which we have discussed".<sup>20</sup> [my emphasis] If argument cannot settle these issues, however, and if, at whatever stage, acceptance or rejection of an essentially contested concept depends upon factors of personality irrespective of argument or judgement, all a "logic of conversion"

would amount to would be, not logic at all but Rhetoric, in the sense of its classical usage: i.e. it would be an appeal aimed at manipulating the emotions, not arguments directed at 'reason'. The disputes are certainly "genuine" but their genuineness lies in the fact that they are between opinions so totally alien to one another that philosophy (or any form of reasoning, indeed) can never help to settle them.

This aspect of his thinking crops up again in his response to the second question. He differentiates between a "higher" and a "lower" recognition of the fact that one has opponents in the use of an essentially contested concept. The higher, and better, recognition (though why it is better is never stated) being the recognition that such is a necessary part of the activity in which you are engaged. What he wants to derive from this is a spirit of mutual toleration - the recognition of rival uses "as not only logically possible and humanly likely but as of permanent potential critical value to one's own use or interpretation of the concept in question".<sup>21</sup>

This is certainly Wonderland logic, for one cannot spend the best part of an essay describing a situation in which rival uses of certain concepts are endemic in the nature of those concepts, and where argument is of no use in resolving the differences, and then say that where two rival - and possibly contradictory - uses are in dispute, each should recognize in the other an equally valid rival use of "permanent, potential critical value". You could not say to a Nazi, given Gallie's premisses, "you are quite within your rights to define "Jew" as you do but you must realise that another's concept of "Jew" is equally viable and, in any case, has permanent potential critical value for your own". The whole point of the Nazi's conception of "Jew" (or of a Marxist's conception of capitalism and so on) is that, for the believers they are true. Gallie's argument presupposes the acceptance of the possibility of error, or of a "rival use" being (in some way) correct. This, however, is precisely what, in the above example, the Nazi would never admit, and indeed, could not admit. Gallie is building into his argument something which on his own argument is an essentially contested concept in itself - the idea that to have competing uses of a term helps you to improve your use or conception of it.

The second idea which helps to place "Humpty Dumpty" and the "Red Queen" in a broader context is the concept of "ideology". This, in many ways, follows on

from what we have seen of Gallie's arguments. Despite the varied uses of the term "ideology", it is generally agreed that it is used to refer to an organized set of moral and/or political beliefs - (the type of belief that would, for example, make use of an essentially contested concept). One persuasive and well-argued account of ideology suggests that "ideologies are doctrines to which we can adhere, they are not properly speaking theories", <sup>22</sup> and that "we have ideological beliefs in a world not ideological knowledge of the world". <sup>23</sup> Even if the specific sense of this is doubtful, it is only within the framework of such beliefs that a single concept - "democracy", for example, or "revolution" - can be understood, and equally, therefore, different ideologies will mean different things when they use the same terms - "In calling an example of the crime treason a 'revolution', a Marxist does not succeed in distinguishing it from any other illegal seizure of power beyond the fact that he, and those who claim to share his convictions approve of its occurrence..... To substantiate an ideological claim we must refer to the doctrine to which it belongs". <sup>24</sup> In other words, when an ideology uses a term, it means what that ideology says it means neither more nor less - the "Humpty Dumpty" view of moral and political concepts!

It will be seen then, that the "Red Queen" view and the "Humpty Dumpty" view go hand in hand in political philosophy. The one restricts philosophy to an essentially under-labouring task and denies it any moral role in political theory, the other explains and elucidates the "interminable" nature of moral and political discourse, and outlines the kinds of normative argument you find in it. It attempts to show that moral argument is, in fact, not argument at all but expressions of moral opinion and, indeed, can never be anything else.

### III

Some of the "implications" of this will, by now, be obvious. As philosophy, from this viewpoint, is an entirely second order activity (i.e. it is concerned only with description and analysis) then much of the traditional task of political philosophy - which Berlin was describing in the passage I quoted earlier - is simply not "philosophy" at all and we can never expect any rational resolution of such issues.

It is not the case, however, that as some argue, this type of philosophising rules out prescription completely. Even Wittgenstein did not interpret literally his own oft quoted remark that philosophy "leaves everything as it is"<sup>25</sup> (as is shown, for example, by his comment to Norman Malcolm apropos of "national characters").<sup>26</sup> Even when its tasks are as limited as the under-labourers would have them, philosophy still 'prescribes': it still says that one way of viewing a problem is incorrect or incoherent, and another is correct or, at least, more correct. To again follow Wittgenstein, it helps us to get clear the "bumps" in our imperfect understanding.<sup>27</sup>

What the "under-labourers" say we cannot do is to prescribe in moral, or ethical spheres. Of course, they say, we can analyse political or moral claims and by so doing may clear up a "bump" in our understanding, but at this point we have to stop, or we simply cease being philosophers. In the words of Moritz Schlick "ethics is a system of knowledge..... its only goal is the truth. Every science is, as such, purely theoretical, it seeks to understand.....there is no greater danger than to change from a philosopher into a moralist, from an investigator into a preacher."<sup>28</sup> The most Schlick will admit is that ethics as a normative science may furnish justification for action only "in a relative - hypothetical way..... it justifies a certain judgement only to the extent that it shows that the judgement corresponds to a certain norm; that this norm itself is "right" or "justified" it can neither show nor, by itself, determine".<sup>29</sup> In other words, for Schlick, ethics function in a similar way to "essentially contested concepts", or "ideologies" - within a given framework possibilities for some sort of prescription exist, but outside them (or between them) they do not: even within such a framework Schlick is suspicious of preaching; "Even as a normative science" he says, "a science can do no more than explain."<sup>30</sup>

The writings of Schlick and the rest of the logical positivists (and their fellow travellers, and occasional companions)<sup>31</sup> have, of course, influenced much moral philosophy in this century, and the arguments I have discussed here were amplified by a later generation of writers; in particular C.L. Stevenson, the high priest of the "emotivist" theory of ethics which, in many ways, is the logical inheritor of all the foregoing and which is certainly a classic formulation of the "Humpty Dumpty" approach. Even many writers who argued against this view of ethics - I have already mentioned

Rawls - often seem to avoid providing any real challenge at this level. This, of course, should not be taken to mean that no challenge is made, but as I suggested earlier, such challenges as are made often merely scratch the surface, and don't go much deeper. In part, I suspect this is because, as MacIntyre says, "such writers cannot agree among themselves either on what the character of moral rationality is, or on the morality which is to be founded on that rationality"<sup>32</sup> and, therefore, they fail to find any kind of answer to those like Gallie who take this to be an inevitable, indeed essential, part of ethics.

There is a wider problem here. Increasingly, as I have suggested there has been no shortage of philosophers prepared to challenge the main lines of the arguments I have been describing. Rawls has done so and, on occasions others, like Walzer, Nagel and the various philosophers referred to earlier have all worked fruitfully on several substantive questions of ethics, without bothering their heads too much about the nature of what they were doing. The results, however, have still left a vital gap in an important area of philosophical concern. "Humpty Dumpty" and the "Red Queen" still in an important sense control the battlefield, even if some of their opponents no longer recognize that the war is still on. Even a writer as avowedly a "political" philosopher as Honderich, for example, has a conception of philosophy which, (with very little distortion) can be seen as a variant of the "Red Queen" and "Humpty Dumpty" approach.<sup>33</sup> I suggest that part of the reason for this is simply that the sources of "Humpty Dumpty" and the "Red Queen" are a lot more complex, varied and sophisticated than some of their more intemperate critics have supposed and that, therefore, they cannot be rejected merely by a rejection of logical positivism, emotivism and so on. Certainly, it is these movements which have helped them to the prominent position they occupy in twentieth century thought but, as I have suggested several times, the arguments and assumptions on which they are based are much older. The positivists happened to articulate a particularly "pure" conception of this type of philosophy, but it did not begin with them and, therefore, could not be expected to end with them either.

It is interesting, however, that some philosophers who do not share the under-labourer conception of philosophy have come, with various

qualifications, to adopt the "Humpty Dumpty"/"Red Queen view when it comes to morals and politics. This is the case with writers who otherwise deeply disagree with one another (and sometimes with the "under-labourers"). Perhaps the two most interesting examples of this are Michael Oakeshott and Elizabeth Anscombe: but another case in point is Gordon Graham, who has argued a classic "Red Queen" case that philosophical reflection can have no effect on practical politics in an admirably short and lucid form.<sup>34</sup> According to traditional conceptions of political philosophy, argues Graham, "if a man proposes to do 'X', advancing 'Y' as his reason, then to show him that 'Y' is nonsense is to eliminate his reason for doing 'X'".<sup>35</sup> However, "the apparently straightforward character of this argument depends upon our overlooking an ambiguity in the phrase 'showing 'Y' to be nonsense'. For showing a man may mean persuading him, or proving to him, or both. Now it does not follow from the fact that a man has a thesis proven to him..... that he is persuaded by that demonstration.....the philosopher's especial skill consists in tracing the implications of beliefs and proposals (and since it is) only when we are persuaded to change our beliefs that practical politics is underway, it follows that at best the preceding argument has established that the exercise of philosophical reasons may, as it happens, in certain circumstances, have certain repercussions in the political affairs of those who listen and argue..... A man's philosophical enquiries may make him more confident, more hesitant, more sceptical, or more enthusiastic in his political endeavours, but none of these responses will be a conclusion forced upon him by the logic of his own arguments (though he may think it is)".<sup>36</sup>

There are two key points in this discussion. The first is his contention that "proving" does not imply "persuading", and the conclusion he draws from it; and the second is his somewhat curious conception of "practical politics": As far as the first is concerned, Graham clearly has a point. My showing you that X is nonsense<sup>37</sup> obviously will not necessitate your abandoning X, nor will it necessarily eliminate your reason for doing X, (not the same thing at all!). In politics he is quite right that "proof" - in whatever sense - is rarely enough; persuasion, either rhetorical or physical is usually necessary. However, the force of this point in carrying Graham's argument is dependent upon his way of seeing



"practical politics". This, remember, takes place only "when we are actually persuaded to change our beliefs", but surely this is a most eccentric conception. "Practical Politics" are underway not only when we are persuaded to change our beliefs, but while we are being persuaded - indeed part of 'practical politics' is surely the very act of trying to persuade someone to change his beliefs or actions. It is interwoven with the whole structure within which that "attempted persuasion" takes place and, therefore, exists within the boundaries of many essentially contested concepts or competing "ideological frameworks".

Now most political philosophers have generally never claimed any more than they could offer arguments for or against certain positions - they have never said that people would necessarily take their advice (though most of them, understandably, thought they should). Yet these arguments often took place against the "practical politics" of the day and in some ways were contributions to "practical politics" considered, as it were as a cultural activity. A philosophical enquiry leading a philosopher to espouse course X, in "practical politics" might be rejected for a whole variety of reasons, but it would still be an argument generated by philosophical enquiry and appertaining to practical politics. (I attempt to illustrate one very obvious case of this - the philosophes political views during the Enlightenment - in Chapter Two).

What is important here is to see that Graham's conception of philosophy is no help to his argument on this point. "Understanding in philosophy" he says elliptically, "does not consist in reaching the end but in making the journey".<sup>38</sup> This may be so, indeed, as I shall suggest later, in some sense it is so, but it does nothing in this form to say that a philosophical argument may not contribute to practical politics. Only an argument which simply excluded philosophical consideration by definition from normative moral and political enquiry could thus support the "Red Queen" stand that Graham takes. As Michael Oakeshott once remarked apropos of Hayek, "a plan to resist all planning may be better than its opposite (but) it is still part of the same style of politics".<sup>39</sup> Equally, moral or political philosophy which denies that one can do moral or political philosophy is in the same style of thinking as that which it opposes - because it is saying that there is a certain way of behaving, thinking and acting we should eschew. This kind of logic can

often be seen at work even where, as in Graham's case, the philosopher is not an "under-labourer".

#### IV

Very little in intellectual history develops in isolation, of course, and what I have called "Humpty Dumpty" and the "Red Queen" is naturally no exception to this rule. MacIntyre - who calls the same phenomenon 'emotivism' - sees the interminable nature of modern moral discourse but instead of seeing it as an inevitable feature of the nature of moral and political conduct, he argues that it is a mistake, and suggests that it was brought about by "episodes in the history of philosophy (and) that it is only in the light of that history that we can understand how the idiosyncracies of every day contemporary moral discourse came to be".<sup>40</sup> Now I shall return to some of the methodological assumptions of this view in chapters two and six but, for now an examination of it, yields considerable dividends in tracing the sources of 'Humpty Dumpty' and the 'Red Queen'. The key period for MacIntyre is 1630-1880, and especially that part of this period which is generally referred to as the "Enlightenment". "It is only in the latter 17th Century and the 18th Century" he writes, "when (the) distinguishing of the moral from the theological, the legal and aesthetic has become a received doctrine that the project of an independent rational justification for morality becomes not merely the concern of individual thinkers, but central to Northern European culture".<sup>41</sup>

It is MacIntyre's thesis, crucially, that this period also saw the breakdown of this project and that it was this failure that paved the way for the 'modern' view of morality that he labels as "emotivist". It is also worth noting that Hume is seen in many ways as a Chief Villian in both the building-up and breakdown of the enlightenment project, while Kant, though given his share of the blame, is credited with having come within a hair's breadth of noticing its collapse. The emotivist view, says MacIntyre, "envisages moral debate in terms of a confrontation between incompatible and incommensurable moral premisses, and moral commitment as the expression of a criterionless choice between such premisses, a type of choice for which no rational justification can be given".<sup>42</sup> As far as politics is concerned this view is, of course, what I have called the 'Humpty Dumpty' view.

Parts of MacIntyre's arguments can, I think, be largely accepted. His view of the Enlightenment as consciously revolutionary dovetails very largely with the opinion of the majority of Enlightenment thinkers themselves, in that they saw themselves as emancipators of their age from the dead hand of superstition, and so on (though naturally in general they do not think they failed).<sup>43</sup> Many modern scholars, of course, also agree up to a point. Peter Gay, for example, one of the foremost scholars of Enlightenment thought, argues forcefully for the view that it was this period that set the preconditions for much modern thinking - the 3rd Book in his influential interpretation of the Enlightenment is even entitled: The Pursuit of Modernity.<sup>44</sup>

However, it is necessary to pause here and deal briefly with the most notorious departure from this view: Carl Becker's The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers,<sup>45</sup> and I should point out that it is necessary to refute Becker's view because, although I disagree with MacIntyre's conclusions, his view of the Enlightenment project is an important one for the structure of my later argument, and it is essential, therefore, to consider the most dangerous objection to it.

"I know it is the custom to call the Thirteenth Century the age of faith" Becker writes, "and to contrast it with Eighteenth Century, which is thought to be pre-eminently the age of reason..... there were certainly many differences between Voltaire and St. Thomas Aquinas but the two men had much in common for all that. What they had in common was the profound conviction that their beliefs could be reasonably demonstrated".<sup>46</sup> Thus, he argues, that the underlying preconceptions of Eighteenth Century thought were still, allowance made for certain alterations in bias, essentially the same as those of the Thirteenth Century. "I shall attempt to show", he concludes, "that the philosophers demolished The Heavenly City of St. Augustine only to rebuild it with more up-to-date materials".<sup>47</sup>

If Becker is right, then obviously, we will dismiss MacIntyre, Gay and the others. However, on this I think MacIntyre can be defended. Despite making some pertinent remarks against those (both the philosophes themselves and some of their later admirers) who have too exalted a view of the break with the past represented by the Enlightenment, and despite

a lucid, cogent and witty interpretation of the Enlightenment which shows very clearly the extent of continuity with earlier theories of the World, it is my view that Becker fails to establish the conceptual similarity of the ideas of the philosophes to the mediaeval cousins and - more importantly - their difference from modern ones.

There are several reasons for this. Becker's arguments, though opposed to MacIntyre's on the nature of The Enlightenment, display a similar conception about what is important in "Modern Thought" - i.e. the 'interminable' nature of disputes in modern moral thought and the contrast of this with the similarity between Eighteenth Century and Mediaeval ideas in the belief that these arguments could be "reasonably demonstrated". "For good or ill", he says, "we must now regard the world as a continuous flux, a ceaseless and infinitely complicated process of waste and repair", <sup>48</sup> and he later emphasizes this point: "Edit and interpret the conclusions of modern science as tenderly as we like, it is still quite impossible for us to regard man as the Child of God for whom the Earth was created as a temporary habitation". <sup>49</sup>

Two observations can surely be made on these remarks. The first is simply that the second remark is extraordinarily simplistic. If Becker means literally it is impossible for any man to believe in man as a Child of God he is merely incorrect as it is obvious that many millions of people do conceive of God and man in this way. It is more likely, of course, that Becker is referring to the fact that the intellectual climate is no longer congenial to this idea, as (by implication) it was in the Eighteenth Century.

When Becker says that the "World pattern that determines the character and direction of modern thinking" is that "man is but a foundling in the cosmos, abandoned by the forces that created him", <sup>50</sup> he may be echoing one prominent "Climate of opinion" (his own phrase) within modern thought, but there are other equally important aspects of 'modern thought' (a phrase, incidentally, he fails to define) which he ignores and, furthermore, there are in any case aspects of "Enlightenment thought" which prefigure this. Diderot, in La Reve D'Alambert, for example, and as Becker himself admits, Humes's arguments in the Dialogues concerning Natural Religion: "To read

Hume's dialogues," he writes, "after having read.....the earnest deists and optimistic philosophers of the early century, is to experience a slight chill, a feeling of apprehension. It is as if, at the high noon of the Enlightenment, at the hour of the siesta when everything is quiet and secure all about, one was suddenly aware of a short, sharp slipping of the foundations, a faint, far-off tremor running underneath the solid ground of common sense".<sup>51</sup>

What I find mystifying is why, having gone this far, Becker cannot see how many more "modern styles of thinking" are prefigured in the more seminal minds of the Enlightenment, Hume, Diderot and, of course, Kant - whom Becker nowhere mentions, surely a most curious omission in a work purporting to deal with 18th Century philosophers. Moreover, one can easily admit this without denying that there was far more continuity between the philosophes and the styles of thinking they revolted against than they themselves thought. Of course, it is always a simplification to talk of "Enlightenment thought" (or, "Modern" thought or "Mediaeval" thought) at all, except in a purely explanatory historical sense, although in any historical period certain predominant strains can often be isolated, and it is this that allows scholars like Gay, Cassirer<sup>52</sup> (and indeed Becker himself) to legitimately link the 18th Century philosophers together and, as I argue later (in Part Two) many very different "Styles of Thought" or - if you will - climates of opinion, are interwoven to make up the tapestry we call "Enlightenment thought" and it is only to be expected that there is almost as much disagreement as there is agreement. In Hume's case, to take one example, religion, politics and economics were just 3 of the areas where he differed very sharply from the French philosophes. - as Gibbon, a man who admired both sides of this argument, noted. The philosophes, he says, "laughed at the scepticism of Hume, (and) preached the tenets of atheism with the bigotry of dogmatists".<sup>53</sup> Yet that did not prevent them considering one another as brothers in a common cause.

There is one further point here, only obliquely a refutation of Becker's central thesis, but one which is of great significance for the rest of my arguments. Many characteristically Enlightenment subjects are still centre-stage in philosophy and the social sciences and, again, of

nobody is this more true than Hume. To cite one modern philosopher "An exhaustive guide to discussions of Hume's problems and their descendants as they appear in 20th Century philosophy would be an almost exhaustive guide to 20th Century philosophy".<sup>54</sup> Yet this presents an insurmountable problem for Becker, as Hume was considered among the most important thinkers of the Enlightenment, both by his contemporaries and subsequently, and if - as Becker contends - the Enlightenment is so distant from modern world views, it is more than a little curious that this should be so.<sup>55</sup> Given all of this it seems fair to conclude with the bulk of modern scholarship - and with MacIntyre - that decisive conceptual shifts were made during this period which continue to be important in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century thought. The point, however, is to isolate precisely what these shifts actually consisted of and what they led to. MacIntyre thinks, first, that they gave rise to what he calls emotivism, (and what I have divided into 'Humpty Dumpty' and the 'Red Queen') and secondly, that the Enlightenment project failed and that it is this failure which was the means whereby this process occurred.

I want to make it plain that on these two crucial points I part company from MacIntyre. I do not deny that certain elements of enlightenment thought contributed very powerfully to the various theories which underpin emotivism and that, in some ways, this thought was new and original, though it had, as I have said, a respectable tradition behind it running back to the Enlightenment's beloved Classics. Unlike MacIntyre, however, though I consider much of it to be wrong-headed, I do not think that a return to some form of Aristotelean teleology<sup>56</sup> is the answer to it. Moreover, it is largely (or so I would argue) modern interpretations of the Enlightenment that have given credence to MacIntyre's supposition that the specific "decisive" shifts that occurred gave rise to emotivism, and it is precisely these interpretations I am concerned - in at least one important sense - to challenge in the next three chapters. This is particularly true of Hume's thought, which in this century has been most often cast as the principal agent of this shift of philosophical viewpoint. I want to suggest (and shall do so in Chapter Five) that if this is true it is true only in a very partial way, and that in fact it ignores or distorts many aspects of Hume's thought. However, I am running ahead of myself.

This chapter has been concerned to sketch a general outline of the main reasons why the notion of political philosophy has been seen as a problem in a good deal of ethical theorising in the twentieth century, and to look at the account of the origin of this problem - Alisdair MacIntyre's - with which I shall be chiefly concerned.

This account has as its centrepiece, a contention concerning the status and implications of the political and ethical theorising of the Enlightenment. It is this contention that I shall be concerned to challenge in chapters three - five of the present work: specifically by examining the views on the relation of theory to practice of perhaps the two most philosophically significant Enlightenment thinkers - David Hume and Emmanuel Kant,<sup>57</sup>

Before I embark on this, however, I want to look more closely at the methodological assumptions that underlie MacIntyre's solution, and relate them to both the tradition they were chiefly designed to challenge (the analytical tradition, of course,) and to the thought of another theorist who might in some ways be seen as an ally of MacIntyre. Examining these issues in more detail will help to set the methodological scene for my concluding chapter, and will also illumine far more clearly precisely what is at stake with MacIntyre's thesis about the Enlightenment. It is to this task, then, that I now turn.

CHAPTER 2

Laying Claim to Politics: Culture, History and the  
'Reconstruction of Philosophy'.

"It is difficult not to notice a curious unrest in the philosophic atmosphere ..... a loosening of old landmarks, a softening of oppositions, a mutual borrowing from one another on the part of systems anciently closed, and an interest in new suggestions".

William James

"Nothing is just in itself, everything shifts with time".

Pascal

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In this chapter, I want to explore in more detail certain key claims in the structure of the arguments I have sketched, in outline, above. Many of these claims have to do with the supposedly contingent nature of the relation of philosophy to politics, and they are drawn largely from two schools of thought, the analytic and that school which, at least in Anglo-American philosophy has most recently and most successfully challenged the analytic approach i.e., that which emphasises the key role of the 'history' of philosophy in our understanding.

This investigation, for a number of reasons, will concentrate on specific representatives of the aforementioned schools rather than attempting any more detailed overview than that offered in chapter one, the specific representatives being, in the case of the analytic school, Bernard Williams, and in the case of (what I shall call) the 'historical' school, Alisdair MacIntyre and Richard Rorty. I make no claim that these are the only



representatives that could have been chosen, but, to my mind at least, they are the most interesting.

I

To begin with, then, let us look at the latest metamorphosis of the analytic school. One of its most influential voices in moral thought over the last decade-and-a-half has been Bernard Williams. In his book Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Williams clearly identifies himself with the analytical tradition: "The philosophy of this book" he writes "can no doubt be called, on some broad specification, 'analytical', and so is much of the philosophy it discusses . . . . What distinguishes analytical philosophy from other contemporary philosophy . . . . is a certain way of going on, which involves argument, distinctions and so far as it remembers to try and achieve it and succeeds, moderately plain speech. As an alternative to plain speech it distinguishes sharply between obscurity and technicality. It always rejects the first but the second it sometimes finds a necessity. This feature "he comments", particularly enrages some of its enemies. Wanting philosophy to be at once profound and accessible, they resent technicality and are comforted by obscurity" (1).

This much would probably be accepted by virtually all analytically minded philosophers, though I cannot resist pointing out that the analytical school's most important and original thinker - Wittgenstein, of course - was, at times, a maddeningly obscure philosopher (2). Nonetheless, as I say, most analytical philosophers would agree with Williams up to this point. After this point, however, they might begin to part company. Williams has none of the 'pure' analytical philosopher's zeal to rigidly demarcate off 'moral philosophy' from consideration as philosophy at all; Williams' project is more modestly to point out the limits of modern moral philosophy, which, he thinks, is not "well-adjusted to the modern world"(3), and to suggest ways in which we might modify our ethical conceptions so as to be more in tune with it. His chosen solution is to massively reformulate some ideas implicit in ancient thought(4), but his concern in the book is not to "concede to abstract ethical enquiry its claim to provide

the only intellectual surroundings"(5) for ideas about freedom, social justice etc., that Williams happens to think valuable (though on what grounds they are 'valuable', he doesn't say).

In other words, Williams is engaged in a characteristic piece of Red Queen theorising, on occasion masked by what earlier analytical philosophers might see as concessions to prescriptive thinking. In fact, however, these concessions do no damage to the essential integrity of Williams' Red Queen message, indeed, by moderating it, they strengthen it. At the end of the book Williams confesses that despite the strictures on moral thought that he has outlined, "my ... optimistic belief is in the continuing possibility of a meaningful individual life, that does not reject society, and indeed shares its perceptions with other people to a considerable depth, but is enough unlike others ... to make it somebody's. Philosophy", he says, "can help make (such) a society possible .... Some people might even get help from philosophy in living such a life - but not, as Socrates supposed, each reflective person, and not from the ground up" (6). In other words, philosophy's role for each reflective person is a contingent one. The argument here is very like Graham's that I quoted in chapter one i.e., that the most philosophy can hope for is that 'in certain circumstances, philosophy may, as it happens, have certain repercussions in the affairs of those who listen and argue', but no more than this.

This analysis of Williams' argument is given further support if one examines some of his essays, which have the further advantage of showing just how far Williams has taken the Red Queen conception of moral and political theorising away from its foundations without abandoning its characteristic stance. In 'Conflicts of Values'(7), for example, he argues, echoing explicitly Isaiah Berlin(8) (and implicitly Gallie's point that I discussed in chapter one), "It is my view .... that value conflict is .... something necessarily involved in human values, and to be taken as central by an adequate understanding of them"(9). Later on in the essay he strengthens the claim: "Values", he says, "or at least the most basic values are not only plural but in a real sense incommensurable"(10), and

he goes on to argue that any attempt to "remove moral uncertainty, by constructing a philosophical ethical theory (in the sense of systematising moral belief) is a misguided one "(11).

In 'The Truth in Relativism', he claims that whatever else might be true of relativism, "there is truth in relativism (in) the area of ethical relativism"(12) and that this is so only when a number of conditions obtain, his purpose in the paper being to sketch in those conditions. One of them is that any two conflicting systems (called by Williams S1 and S2) must be exclusive of one another. "That this should in some sense be so is", says Williams, "a necessary condition of the problems arising to which relativism is supposed to provide an answer"(13). Elaborating this, he says that it must be impossible to live, at one and the same time, in S1 and S2, and makes a distinction (borrowing the terms from Newman's A Grammar of Assent) between real and notional confrontation. This is to examine cases in which "Mutual awareness can be regarded as, in principle, a development independent of the existence of S1 and S2"(14). In other words, in the terms in which we will confront this later on, Williams is here addressing the question of incommensurability. Real confrontation is defined as follows: "For any S, there has to be something that counts as assenting to that S, fully accepting it or living within it - whatever it is, in that sort of case, for S to be 'somebody's'. There is a real confrontation between S1 and S2 at a given time if there is a group at that time for whom each of S1 and S2 is a real option"(15). Williams defines a 'real option' as follows: "S2 is a real option for a group if it is either their S or it is possible for them to go over to S2; where going over to S2 involves, first, that it is possible for them to live within or hold S2 and retain their hold on reality, and, second, to the extent that rational comparison between S2 and their present outlook is possible, they could acknowledge their transition to S2 in the light of such comparison"(16). A notional confrontation, on the other hand, "resembles real confrontation in that there are persons who are aware of S1 and S2, and aware of their differences; it differs from it in that at least one

of S1 and S2 do not present a real option to them"(17).

The conclusion which Williams wants to draw from all this is that "Relativism, with regard to a given type of S, is the view that for one whose S stands in purely notional confrontation with such an S, questions of appraisal of it do not genuinely arise. This form of relativism, unlike most others, is coherent. The truth in relativism ..... is that for ethical outlooks at least this standpoint is correct ..... because, unlike most other forms it manages, in the distinction between real and notional confrontation, to cohere with two propositions both of which are true. The first is that we must have a form of thought not relativized to our own existing S for thinking about other Ss which may be of concern to us, and to express those concerns. The second is that we can nevertheless recognize that there can be many Ss which are related to our concerns too distantly for our judgments to have any grip on them, while admitting that other persons' judgment might get a grip on them, namely, those for whom they were a real option"(18).

These arguments illumine precisely the Red Queen and Humpty Dumpty stance taken by Williams. His incommensurability of values thesis clearly expresses a variant of the classic Humpty Dumpty argument asserted (in other ways) by Gallie, Partridge, Manning, Schlick and others. To be sure he does so at a level of philosophical sophistication unmatched by any of them, but the point is essentially the same. The argument is, of course, buttressed and deepened by the discussions in 'The Truth in Relativism'. Real confrontations are confrontations where essentially contested concepts are at issue and where, in Gallie's formulation, there is the possibility of a 'logic of conversion' i.e., where either of the two competing essentially contested concepts are (this time in Williams' terms) real options. We cannot, Williams would want to claim, be seriously relativist about these confrontations as the systems involved are (in a similar way to Manning's 'ideologies') the ways in which we view, and orient ourselves in, the world.

We can be relativist in our treatment of notional confrontations, however, because our notions of reality are not engaged to the same extent. The implications of this are that, in either case, philosophy (in the sense of a 'philosophical ethical theory') cannot help to resolve any conflicts that may arise; a philosophy must, after all, be part of one of the competing Ss in a real or notional confrontation, and, in so far as it tried to straddle both (a philosopher like Mill, for example, trying to combine utilitarianism with other philosophies) the result is likely to be uneasy tension or outright confusion and conceptual failure.

Part of the case that Williams makes in these various works (elaborated at greatest length in Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy) is that a good deal of the problem in moral philosophy, which helps to create the mistakes that he sees his work as at least partially correcting, lies in a notion of the ethical that is too strictly tied to a particular notion of the moral. A number of his arguments are directed at this idea. One of his most important and influential papers, 'Moral Luck', is a complex argument aimed especially at exploding the notion of morality he takes to be current among 'us' (presumably twentieth century Western European man). This notion is that "there is one basic form of value, moral value, which is immune to luck and - in the crucial term of the idea's most rigorous exponent - 'unconditioned' .... such a conception has an ultimate form of justice at its heart, and that is its allure"(19).

The idea's 'most rigerous exponant', of course, is Kant and for Williams, Kantian modes of thought express "in a very pure form, something which is basic to our ideas of morality"(20). It is this something which Williams sees himself as challenging, both directly (as in 'Moral Luck' and Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy) and indirectly in other aspects of his work. The 'something' that he is challenging is quite simply this primacy of the moral in our culture. "Scepticism about the freedom of morality from luck", he says, "will leave us with a concept of morality, but one less important, certainly than ours is usually taken to be; and that will not be ours, since one thing that

is particularly important about ours is how important it is taken to be"(21). In Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Williams expands on the idea that the solution to this might be found in certain notions belonging to classical thought. When he claims that the resources of modern moral philosophy are not 'well-adjusted' to the modern world, he argues that this is so "because it is too much caught up in it, unreflectively appealing to administrative ideas of rationality. In other ways, notably in its more Kantian forms, it is not involved enough; it is governed by a dream of a community of reason that is too far removed .... from any concrete sense of a particular ethical life ..... it is not a paradox that in these very new circumstances very old philosophies may have more to offer than moderately new ones, and a historical story could be told to show why this is so. It would involve the coming and departure of Christianity (which helps to explain why the ancient world is nearer than it may seem) and the failures of the Enlightenment (which make its characteristic philosophies so unhelpful)"(22).

Now, it might have occurred to some by this point, that these rather grandiloquent claims that Williams is making do not sound much like the kind of philosophy I was associating with Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen in my last chapter, but a close examination reveals a really quite remarkable degree of overlap. The status of Williams as a Humpty Dumpty theorist is easily established, when one bears in mind my discussion above of his incommensurability thesis. The Red Queen aspect of his thought is more effectively hidden but emerges as soon as one reflects for a moment on the nature of his claims about the status of 'morality', and what his solutions would mean, when coupled with his Humpty Dumpty pronouncements about values. Philosophy's task while not certainly merely an 'underlabouring' one, is still very different from its traditional role; it could no more arbitrate in that dispute Berlin mentions in its Williamsite mode than it could in its 'harder' Schlickian one(23).

Its effect on practical life would still be a contingent one. To be sure Williams does not say that it can have no effect on practical activity, but then not even Graham argued that.

Williams' arguments amount, then, to a wide-ranging and sophisticated reformulation of the Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen case, one that has been extremely influential in discussions within contemporary moral and political theory. Before attempting to discuss them in detail, however, I want to turn to two thinkers who, if Williams could be called a 'critical friend' of analytical philosophy, would probably qualify for its criminal hall of fame as deserters of the 'good old cause': Richard Rorty and Alisdair MacIntyre.

## II

Before I embark on this, however, I should, I think, correct a misapprehension I may have encouraged. I have referred to the 'historical school' within philosophy, but this must only be taken to indicate a very general approach, and only this in a very general sense. In a similar way to most philosophical schools, the methods of approach within it vary greatly. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern a central core of the approach which justifies my use of the appellation 'school'. This core is nicely expressed in the introductory section of a book of essays drawn from the members of the school, Philosophy in History (24): "There is, in our view, nothing general to be said in answer to the question, 'how should the history of philosophy be written?' except as self consciously as one can - in as full awareness as possible of the variety of contemporary concerns to which a past figure may be relevant .... in Britain and America, the historiography of philosophy has recently been less self conscious than it ought to have been. In particular the influence of Analytic philosophy has worked against self consciousness of the desired sort"(25). The reason for this, the editors go on to say, is analytic philosophers' assertion

that they (and they, almost alone) understand what questions are 'the genuinely philosophical ones'(26) and that, as a consequence, "it has become customary to take the concerns of contemporary analytic philosophy as the focus of attention, and to leave aside present day religious ..... literary or political concerns, as well as those of non-analytic philosophers"(27). At best, the editors think, this has produced a historiography of philosophy less like history and more like a collection of anecdotes: "Stories about people who almost stumbled on what we now know to be philosophy are like stories about people who would have discovered America if they had just sailed a little further. A collection of such stories cannot be a history of anything"(28).

The real problem here, according to the editors, is that the Analytical Philosophers want to have their cake and eat it too, but, "This will not work. Analytic philosophers cannot both be the discoverers of what Descartes and Kant were really up to and be the culmination of a great tradition, participants in the final episode in a narrative of progress ..... This problem of lack of self-consciousness concerning one's place in history was less acute before the rise of analytic philosophy because training in the subject was then much more historical .... this approach to philosophy .... did have the advantage of inculcating a sense of historical contingency, a sense that .... philosophy might not be a natural kind, something with a real essence, and the word 'philosophy' functions as a demonstrative - marking out an area of logical space which the speaker occupies - rather than a rigid designator"(29).

Now it is true, of course, that within this broad based critique of the analytic tradition there is room for many different approaches but I shall concentrate initially on two. The first is that of Richard Rorty. Rorty's conception is expressed in a number of influential papers and, most powerfully, of course, in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. In this work, Rorty



offers a classic illustration of how an emphasis on history can alter our philosophical perspective, by giving an historical account of the origins of the 'standard' philosophical problems, (and how they came to be the standard ones), which amounts to an account of the rise and fall of the mind and, in Richard Bernstein's words, "the prized philosophical discipline - 'epistemology'"(30). Of course, Rorty does a good deal more in the book than this; it becomes indeed, a meditation on the nature of philosophy itself. A key to understanding the true significance of Rorty's view is found in his repeated assertion that philosophy is not 'foundational', in the sense that "culture is the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims ..... (because) Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of representation, a theory which will divide culture up into areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well and those which do not represent it at all"(31).

This view is attacked again and again throughout the book. It is Rorty's central claim that there is no foundational discipline that, again to quote Bernstein's perceptive criticism, "There is no part of culture that is more privileged than any other part - and the illusion that there must be such a discipline is one that needs to be exorcised"(32). To illustrate how he thinks philosophy ought to be carried on, Rorty borrows an analogy from an interesting source. The source is Michael Oakeshott's essay 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind', and the analogy he borrows is that of a conversation.

Oakeshott's claim is that human modes of inquiry should be conceived of in terms of a 'conversation': "In a conversation", he says, "the participants are not engaged in an enquiry or a debate; there is no truth to be discovered, no proposition to be affirmed, no conclusion sought .... the cogency of their utterances does not depend on their speaking the same idiom; they may differ without disagreeing"(33). This, remarks Rorty "catches the tone in which philosophy should be discussed"(34).

Earlier in his book, Rorty had divided philosophers into two types, mainstream ones - called by Rorty 'systematic philosophers - and more peripheral thinkers, called 'edifying philosophers'. Figures he mentions as 'edifying philosophers' include Goethe, Kierkegaard, Santayana, William James and Rorty's three heroes of twentieth century philosophy, Dewey, the later Wittgenstein and the later Heidegger. "These writers", he says, "have kept alive the suggestion that, even when we have justified true belief about everything we want to know, we may have no more than conformity to the norms of the day. They have kept alive the historicist sense that this century's 'superstition' was the last century's triumph of reason, as well as the relativists' sense that the latest vocabulary .... may not express privileged representations of essences, but be just another of the potential infinity of vocabularies in which the world can be described"(35).

Now although Rorty recognizes that edifying philosophy is inevitably parasitic upon systematic philosophy, he thinks that the distinction is a crucial one, because edifying philosophers are the cutting edge of the attack on the idea of philosophy as foundational, on what he calls the 'whole project of commensuration' that is the great aim of systematic philosophy. We add this analysis to his adaptation of Oakeshott's metaphor of conversation, and we have how Rorty thinks of the nature of philosophy; we can view philosophers - especially edifying philosophers - as 'conversational partners' rather than "seeing them as holding views on subjects of common concern"(36), and thus the "philosopher's moral concern should be with continuing the conversation of the West, rather than with insisting upon a place for the traditional problems of modern philosophy within that conversation"(37).

Naturally, all this has certain implications for both the practice of philosophy, and, as it were, the practice of practice. In his paper 'The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres.', Rorty spells out the implications of his view for the former. He identifies four 'genres' of attempts to make sense of

philosophies past:- rational reconstruction; for example (a work I shall be looking at in some detail later on, in chapter four) Strawson's The Bounds of Sense and Bennet's Locke, Berkely, Hume: Central Themes: Historical reconstruction; that is to say reconstructions which abide by a maxim outlined by Quentin Skinner that "no agent can eventually be said to have meant or done something which he could never be brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done"(38): Geistesgeschichte, or 'canon formation', and Rorty says that Hegel is paradigmatic here, but also singles out Heidegger, Reichenbach, Foucault, Blumenburg and [interestingly] MacIntyre(39): finally there is what Rorty calls Doxography, which is, Rorty says, "exemplified by books which start from Thales or Descartes and wind up with some figure roughly contemporary with the author, ticking off what various figures traditionally called 'philosophers' had to say about problems traditionally called 'philosophical'"(40).

According to Rorty, the first three are perfectly reasonable enquiries - if they are carried out in the right manner and in the right spirit - but the latter is not because it assumes that "philosophy is the name of a natural kind: the name of a discipline which in all ages and places has managed to dig down to the same, deep, fundamental questions"(41). The general reasons that Rorty gives for opposing this idea are familiar from Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Its real problem is that it puts, as it were, the conceptual cart before the historical horse:" (it is) the attempt to impose a problematic on a canon drawn up without reference to that problematic, or, conversely, to impose a canon on a problematic drawn up without reference to that canon"(42). To finally get rid of the idea that philosophy is a natural kind, Rorty thinks we need "more and better contextualist historical reconstructions on the one hand, and more self-confident Geistesgeschichte on the other"(43).

We have, then, what Rorty calls a 'Hegelian triad' of concepts

in the historiography of philosophy and one much larger and more diffuse genre which Rorty also wishes to mention, though, strictly speaking it falls outside the triad. This is 'intellectual history', by which term Rorty means "descriptions of what the intellectuals were up to at a given time, and of their interaction with the rest of society - descriptions which, for the most part, bracket the question of what activities which intellectuals were conducting"(44). One of the chief advantages for Rorty in 'intellectual history' is that it embraces discussions of those peripheral figures in 'the history of philosophy', who yet have been enormously influential in just the areas that are supposed to be the province of 'the great philosophers'; "the people .... who, in fact, did the jobs which philosophers are popularly supposed to do - impelling social reform, supplying new vocabularies for moral deliberation, deflecting the course of scientific and literary disciplines into new channels .... (for example) Paracelsus, Montaigne, Grotius, Bayle, Lessing, Paine, Coleridge .... Mathew Arnold, Weber, Freud, Franz Boas .... T.S.Kuhn"(45). Rorty sums up his account of this genre by asserting that "intellectual history is the raw material for the historiography of philosophy - or, to vary the metaphor, the ground out of which histories of philosophy grow"(46).

In the closing sections of his essay, Rorty glancingly mentions a problem to which I shall return later, and it is as well to see his own answer to it in advance. The problem is the suspicion that "If we have the sort of complicated, thick, intellectual history which is wary of canons (philosophical, literary, scientific, or other) do we not have enough?"(47). Rorty's answer is that we do not have enough because "we need mountain peaks to look up to .... we .... need the idea that there is such a thing as philosophy in the honorific sense - the idea that there are, had we but the wit to pose them, certain questions which everybody should always have been asking. We cannot give up this idea without giving up the notion that the intellectuals of the previous epochs of European

history form a community, a community of which it is good to be a member. If we are to persist in this image of ourselves, then we have to have both imaginary conversations with the dead and the conviction that we have seen further than they. That means we need *Geistesgeschichte*, self-justificatory conversations .... I have been writing on the assumption that we .... want to make our conversation with the dead richer and fuller"(48).

As I say, this problem is one to which I shall be returning, but it is clear from what he says that Rorty believes very strongly in the need for *Geistesgeschichte*. I want to turn now, briefly, to the author of such a 'self-justificatory conversation' moreover one whom I have already had occasion to discuss in an earlier chapter; Alisdair MacIntyre.

### III

It should not be assumed, of course, that MacIntyre necessarily accepts Rorty's genre distinction, or, for that matter, his terminology, but it is clear that there is considerable sympathy between them at least on the importance for philosophy of its past. This much is obvious from the central thesis of After Virtue that I outlined in my last chapter. What I want to do here, however, is to look at some of the aspects of MacIntyre's arguments in the light of my outline of the thought of Williams and Rorty, and then to reflect on what that implies for MacIntyre's main thesis in After Virtue, that I discussed in chapter one, and for those two strong currents within modern political thought, Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen.

To begin with, it is perhaps best to look at an essay of MacIntyre's which explicitly addresses the question of the relationship of philosophy to its past(49). Here, a number of the criticisms contained in After Virtue are repeated(50), but MacIntyre's main aim is different, nothing less, in fact, than to offer a challenge to the incommensurability of values

thesis that is one of the main planks in the Humpty Dumpty construction. This at once sets him dramatically apart from all 'analytical philosophers' (even of the more venturesome Williamsesque type) and also, though less dramatically, from his equally historically minded colleague Rorty.

MacIntyre poses the problem thus:-

"Philosophy, so it is sometimes claimed, differs from the natural sciences in its inability to resolve fundamental disagreements; since philosophers address the world in varying and discordant voices, why should any attention be paid to them?"(51). He goes on to say that one superficially attractive solution is simply to deal with the philosophical past in two different ways, essentially what Rorty would call 'rational reconstruction' and 'historical reconstruction'. In the former "we shall admit philosophers of the past to our debates only on our own terms, and if that involves historical distortion, so much perhaps the better"(52). As historians of philosophy, on the other hand, "we shall be genuinely scrupulous in trying to understand the past as it actually was and, if this makes the past philosophically irrelevant, we shall simply decry relevance and, where others speak of antiquarianism, we shall speak of scholarship"(53).

However, argues MacIntyre, this is no real solution for "the study of the past will have been defined so as to exclude any consideration of what is true or good or rationally warranted, rather than what they then, with their peculiar concepts of truth, goodness and rationality believed to be so. Enquiries into what actually is true, good and rational will be reserved for the present. But notice that for any particular philosophical generation its occupation of the present can only be temporary; in some not too distant future it will have been transmuted into one or more part of the philosophical past .... it will turn out not to have contributed to an enquiry continuing through generations, but to have removed itself from active philosophical

enquiry to become a mere subject matter for historians .... so the philosophical nullifying of the past by this conception of the relationship between past and present turns out to be a way of nullifying ourselves in advance"(54).

To meet this challenge, MacIntyre thinks we must be able to confront the philosophical past philosophically as well as historically, but to provide such an account requires us facing up (and overcoming) the problems "Of how issues can be rationally resolved when they divide the adherants of large and comprehensive points of view whose systematic disagreements extend to disagreements about how those disagreements are to be characterised"(55): or, in other words, the problems of incommensurability, first defined in relation to the history and philosophy of science by Kuhn (56) (though, of course, the problem is much older than him). There have been a number of responses to Kuhn's identification, but, according to MacIntyre, all parties agree that "If and insofar as the concept of incommensurability has application to a choice between rival bodies of theory, then we can have no rational grounds for accepting any one of those rivals rather than another"(57). It is this assertion that MacIntyre wishes to dispute.

He does so by drawing attention to two points that he feels philosophers of science, and others who have discussed the phenomenon of incommensurability, have, hitherto, taken insufficient note of. The first is the essentially historical existence of theories in the natural sciences, as elsewhere. "There is no such thing", MacIntyre argues, "as the Kinetic theory of gasses; there is only the Kinetic theory as it was in 1850, the theory as it was in 1870, the theory as it is now and so on .... Bodies of theory, that is to say, themselves progress or fail to progress and they do so because and insofar as they provide by their incoherencies and inadequacies - incoherencies and inadequacies judged by the standards of the body of theory itself - a definition of problems the solution of which provides direction for the formulation and reformulation

of that body of theory .... by providing itself with problems, a body of theory provides itself with goals and with some measure of its own progress or lack of progress towards those goals"(58).

The second point consists in remembering that "Particular small scale theories come to us for the most part embedded in larger bodies of theory; and such larger bodies of theory are in turn embedded in still more comprehensive schemes of belief. It is these schemes of belief which provide the framework of continuity through time within which the transition from one incommensurable body of theory to its rival is made; and there has to be such a framework, for without the conceptual resources which it affords we could not understand the two bodies of theory as rivals which provide alternative and incompatible accounts of one and the same subject matter and which offer us rival and incompatible means of attaining one and the same set of theoretical goals"(59).

This matters, according to MacIntyre, because these two points are required, not only for the statement of the problems of incommensurability, but also for their solution, and he formulates the solution as a criterion "by means of which the rational superiority of one large scale body of theory to another can be judged. One large scale body of theory .... may be judged decisively superior to another .... if and only if the former body of theory enables us to give an adequate and, by the best standards we have, true explanation of why the latter body of theory both enjoyed the success and victories that it did and suffered the defeats and frustrations that it did, where success and failure, victory and defeat are defined in terms of the standards for success and failure, victory and defeat provided by .... the internal problematic of the latter body of theory .... it is success and failure, progress and sterility in terms of both of the problems and the goals that were or could have been identified by the adherants of the rationally inferior theory"(60).



Essentially then MacIntyre's solution rests on the assertion that the history of natural science is, in a sense, sovereign over the natural sciences: "At least where those large-scale incommensurable bodies of theory .... are concerned, the superior theory in natural science is that which affords grounds for a certain sort of historical explanation, that which gives to an historical narrative an intelligibility it would not otherwise possess"(61). At this point, however, MacIntyre's argument hits a snag, because, for his general point to be carried, this analysis must be translatable from the history of science to the history of philosophy, but, whereas Kuhn was able to define what counted as the history of science by reference to the modern natural sciences, no such recourse is open to MacIntyre. "It would be fatal to our whole project", MacIntyre concedes, "to allow the philosophical present to determine what was to be counted as the philosophical past"(62). Here, MacIntyre's solution is a kind of conceptual elaboration of Whitehead's celebrated obiter dicta that all philosophy is but a footnote to Plato, for his argument is that "Nobody is to count as a philosopher who does not have to be judged in the end against standards set by Plato .... Plato transcends, in just the way I have described [i.e. in the natural sciences], the limitations of Pre-Socratic philosophy and in so doing sets a standard for all later attempts to transcend his limitations in turn .... all philosophers after Plato must confront a situation in which if you cannot transcend the limitations or what you take to be the limitations of Plato's fundamental positions then you have no sufficient reason for failing to recognize yourself as a Platonist .... to recognize this is to provide for philosophy that minimal unity both prospectively and retrospectively which the present condition of the natural sciences provides retrospectively"(63).

There are two further points that MacIntyre makes, in order to complete his argument. The first is to point out, against an obvious objection, that "Even the most radical of philosophical

conflicts occur within the context of not dissimilar continuities .... that is to say, the types of discontinuity and difference catalogued at the beginning of my argument require as their counterpart an equally comprehensive catalogue of the types of continuity, resemblance and recurrence"(64).

Secondly, he asserts that philosophical arguments and debates are of at least two distinct kinds: "There are of course those that occur within a very largely shared body of assumptions about background beliefs, standards of argument .... and so on. But there are also the types of debate or conflict between rival large-scale standpoints .... where disagreement is systematic in a way that apparently limits the possibility of any common standard for the rational resolution of disagreement .... What constitutes the rational superiority of one large-scale philosophical standpoint over another is its ability to transcend the limitations of that other by providing, from its own point of view, a better explanation and understanding of the failures, frustrations and incoherencies of the other point of view (failure, frustrations and incoherencies, that is, as judged by the standards internal to that other point of view) than that other point of view can give of itself"(65).

Thus, MacIntyre is able to conclude that the history of philosophy is, in fact, sovereign over the rest of the discipline, a conclusion which, he thinks, will seem "paradoxical to some and unwelcome to many"(66), but he identifies himself as part of a tradition which includes Vico, Hegel and Collingwood. That tradition has an interest of its own for my wider theme, and I shall be returning to it later, but for the moment let me look at how what MacIntyre, Rorty and Williams say fits into that larger theme.

#### IV

It is interesting to begin this by considering that issue on

which at least two of the participants in the 'conversation' - I use the phrase out of courtesy for Rorty - confront one another directly: incommensurability. "Basic values are not only plural, but in a real sense incommensurable"(67), we will remember Williams claiming, whereas, as we have just seen, MacIntyre thinks that their alleged incommensurability can be successfully dissolved by the history of philosophy. I want to see how MacIntyre's arguments might fare if we put them into Williamsite mode.

Let us, then, consider two incommensurable bodies of theory - S1 and S2 - that stand in real confrontation with one another (they must, of course be in real and not notional confrontation). Williams' case, at least as expressed in 'Conflicts of Values' is that the claim that values are incommensurable says at least three important things:-

- "1. There is no one currency in terms of which each conflict of values can be resolved.
2. It is not true that for each conflict of values, there is some value, independent of any of the conflicting values, which can be appealed to in order to resolve that conflict.
3. It is not true that for each conflict of values, there is some value which can be appealed to (independent or not) in order rationally to resolve that conflict"(68).

Now Williams holds that "value conflict is .... necessarily involved in human values, and to be taken as central by an adequate understanding of them"(69), but that the above three propositions allow a version of incommensurability which denies that no conflict of values can ever be resolved (the usual position elicited from incommensurability, according to Williams), but develops the truth of the view that to see the conflict of values as harmful - pathological is the word

Williams uses - is to wrongly assimilate conflicts of moral belief with theoretical contradiction: "Rather", he says, "we should see such needs as there are to reduce conflict and to rationalise our moral thought as having a more social and personal basis"(70).

In the context outlined above then, a real confrontation between S1 and S2, though it may exhibit a 'logic of conversion' à la Gallie, could not be resolved [though it might be dissolved - for example by the changing social, technological or political environment(71)] i.e., the competition between the values could not be 'decided', with one being accorded the palm as the rational victor, the other being the loser. There might be a social need to dissolve the dispute, however, which would demand, according to Williams, an 'equilibrium' between public and private which would further illumine the relations between conflict and rationalisation in values(72).

Nonetheless this solution of the value conflict would be in accordance with the thesis of incommensurability, in that the introduction of the public/private dimension and the need for 'rationalisation' would not remove the conflict of values it would merely structure it. There would still be no 'rational' way of moving from S1 to S2 (what might be at stake, after all, could easily include what was to count as rationality); to become an inhabitant of S2 would necessarily require the abandonment of S1, given always that the two S's were genuinely in real, and not notional, confrontation.

How do MacIntyre and Rorty respond to this? To begin with, it seems clear that Rorty is, in some ways, a more extreme supporter of the incommensurability thesis even than Williams, though for very different reasons. For Rorty, we cannot escape the cultural 'grid' [he explicitly uses this Foucaultian term(73)] of which we are a part, in our case that which emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "We are the heirs", he says, "of three hundred years of rhetoric about the importance of distinguishing sharply between science (and other areas of

inquiry). This rhetoric has formed the culture of Europe .... but to proclaim our loyalty to these distinctions is not to say that there are 'objective' and 'rational' standards for adopting them"(74). He could, in many ways accept Williams' analysis of ethical statements, but Williams could not accept Rorty's thesis because it carries away something that is vital to analytic philosophy, the contention that Philosophy is, if not a natural kind, then at least a quasi-natural kind, that certain problems (mind/body, subject/object, sense/reference) are 'philosophical', whilst others (poetic imagery, structure of the novel, musical tonality, political action) are not. Rorty repeats time and again, throughout Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, that "the true and the right are matters of social practice"(75), or that "objectivity should be seen as conformity to norms of justification we find about us"(76).

Now, it might be thought that this position of Rorty's is, in fact, a yet purer form of Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen, but this is not so. Far from saying that Philosophy can have no effect on Politics as philosophy, other than a purely contingent one, Rorty is arguing that the explicit relationship of politics and philosophy will be a cultural event in itself, different in differing cultures. Sometimes that link will be very marked, as, for example, in Imperial China and the ancient (European) world, sometimes one will define the other out, as in the 'hard' linguistic philosophers of the mid-twentieth century, or certain totalitarian regimes(77). His thought has a little more sympathy for the Humpty Dumpty view that words, or at any rate, meanings are to a certain extent internally defined, but it would be a very much attenuated Humpty Dumpty view, given that the internal definitions would have to be culturally located rather than located in (say) a particular ideology.

Interestingly, Richard Bernstein has suggested that, in a sense, Rorty can be seen as attempting to recover the notion of phronesis, Aristotle's idea of practical reasoning which makes

no appeals to ultimate standards or eternal foundations, but, in effect, turning Aristotle on his head by denying Aristotle's contrast between phronesis and noesis, contemplative understanding(78). This is an interesting suggestion for a number of reasons: partly because both Williams and MacIntyre also make a reversion to classical thought (in MacIntyre's case, of course, a direct return to Aristotle), but more importantly because it shows beyond any doubt just how radical Rorty's break with traditional philosophy is. In a sense, Rorty is infinitely more radical than the most ferocious logical positivist, because, however limited the role prescribed for philosophy by the hard core of the underlabourer school, within those parameters philosophy is truly sovereign; indeed in some ways it was a desire to ensure philosophy's certain sovereignty that created the impetus for the 'linguistic turn' in the first place. On Rorty's account, however, 'philosophy' is never sovereign, it is merely one strand in the conversation of the West; one strand among many.

There is, however, a weakness, or, at any rate, a tension in Rorty's argument. It is implicit in his somewhat rhetorical last sentence (in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature) and made obvious, I think, in his 'Historiography of Philosophy' essay. The logic of Rorty's case can, as he admits, quite happily take on board rational and historical reconstruction, always providing these are carried out in the right manner, but geistesgeschichte is surely a different matter. Anticipating this objection towards the end of his essay, Rorty claims that we cannot get along without canons; as I mentioned earlier, for Rorty, "We need mountain peaks to look up to .... we cannot give up this idea without giving up the idea that the intellectuals of the previous epochs of European history form a community, a community of which it is good to be a member"(79).

This, however, is simply conceptual wish-fulfillment. For one thing 'the intellectuals of the previous epochs of European history' do not form a community, they form several, at least

if you assume 'community' to refer to something other than a mere geographical boundary. On Rorty's argument, these communities may hold a conversation together, but to assume they are one is to assume that there is something specific to each of them that yet they all share and this, of course, is to fall into the trap of essentialism that Rorty so vigorously criticises elsewhere.

Part of the problem here is that Rorty is, in a sense, trapped himself by his own obsession - the failures of previous philosophy. He cannot seem to see the force of his own liberating case and remains bound in the chains that he has helped others to cast off(80). From my point of view, however, Rorty's most interesting admission is that "We have to have both imaginary conversations with the dead, and the conviction that we have seen further than they"(81). What is significant about this is that no-where does Rorty truly address what would constitute 'seeing further' than 'the mighty dead'. By whose perspective? Well, obviously, Rorty might reply, ours; but, in a very real sense, on Rorty's arguments, we cannot see 'further' than our predecessors, we can only see differently. When Rorty says that to proclaim our loyalty to the distinctions that have, in large part, created Modern European culture is not to say that there are objective or rational standards for adopting them, he is, in effect, removing the possibility that we can legitimately see 'further' than our ancestors, because we are not looking at the same thing. Our knowledge claims are, of course, more relevant for us, they are part of the intellectual air we breathe (indeed, in many ways, they are the lungs through which we breathe that air) but they are incommensurable with other theories or claims and can, therefore, not see 'further' or more accurately, they merely perceive the relevant 'reality' in a different way.

Rorty's addiction to the notion of incommensurability is the true stumbling block for his defence of *Geistesgeschichte* because

it undercuts the reasons he outlines for Geistesgeschichte. We need 'mountain peaks to look up to'? Why, if the only mountain we can climb is our own? He claims that only the 'impassioned conversation' of competing geistesgeschichten can maintain that 'sense of community' that he believes we need so much, but that assumes an adequate definition of 'sense of community' (which Rorty nowhere offers us) and accession to the belief that we do, in fact, need the 'sense of community' to which Rorty appeals and if, as I suggested earlier, European thought is not a community but several, this belief would seem to be difficult to sustain.

Rorty's response, then, would appear to open the door to a line of thought which challenges the Humpty Dumpty/Red Queen approach by denying philosophy any status as a natural kind, but would not do anything to delineate the relationship of philosophy to politics except in the broadly contingent way suggested by Rorty's (and Oakeshott's) metaphor of 'conversation'. It is, however, suggestive in its critique of the analytical school's lack of historical self-consciousness. I shall suggest later (in chapter six) ways in which the approach might be modified so as to avoid the kind of problems outlined above, and also so that its position on the theory/practice dichotomy is clearer and more illuminating. Yet, if Rorty and Williams are enemies in general intent they are at least allies in that both accept the incommensurability of values thesis. Where does this leave Rorty's ally in the historical 'school', MacIntyre?

V

First of all, it is important to be clear that MacIntyre, both in After Virtue and in his later work, stands firmly out against any form of the incommensurability thesis. In fact, of course, this thesis, in its purest and most uncompromising form, is at the heart of what MacIntyre thinks Nietzsche divines in the modern moral life and reflection upon it: "It was Nietzsche's



historic achievement to understand more clearly than any other philosopher .... not only that what purported to be appeals to objectivity were in fact expressions of subjective will, but also the nature of the problems this posed for moral philosophy"(82).

Thus, for MacIntyre, "Either one must follow through the aspirations and the collapse of the different versions of the enlightenment project until there remains only the Nietzschean diagnosis and the Nietzschean problematic or one must hold the enlightenment project was not only a mistake, but should never have been commenced in the first place. There is no third alternative"(83).

MacIntyre erects this conclusion on his two premisses; (1) that the Enlightenment 'project' as he calls it, was to provide an 'independent', 'rational' justification of morality and (2) that it was the failure of this project that created the conceptual void - 'emotivism', Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen or whatever - which Nietzsche so acutely divines. Thus, it follows that what was destroyed or corrupted by the Enlightenment project, i.e., the approach to ethics which reached its apogee in the high and late middle ages and which took the moral and political writings of Aristotle as canonical, is the only path left for us to follow, and so we arrive at the choice posed for us by MacIntyre in chapter 9 of After Virtue: Nietzsche or Aristotle.

The rest of MacIntyre's book is, of course, devoted to a reconstruction of the Aristotelean case, one which, he thinks, solves the problems of the moral life outlined in his 'disquieting suggestion' at the start of the book. The details of this case do not at present concern me, but it is important to note that MacIntyre's sketch of the 'Virtues' comes down, in chapters fourteen and fifteen, to a complex argument for a unitary core of the 'Virtues', and which provides the basis for his assertion that it is Aristotle we should prefer over Nietzsche.

MacIntyre builds this unitary core from a three tiered argument:

"The first stage requires a background account of what I shall call a practice, the second an account of what I have already characterised as the narrative order of a single human life and the third, an account a good deal fuller than I have given up to now of what constitutes a moral tradition. Each later stage presupposes the earlier, but not, vice versa"(84). A practice, for MacIntyre, is "(A) coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended"(85).

This notion is necessary for MacIntyre because of his initial definition of a virtue as "An acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods"(86). One problem, however, with the role of the notion of a practice here is that it is simply too broad, considered of and for itself, to support any concrete notion of the virtues that could escape the charge of being relativistic or empty(87). What is lacking, as one perceptive critic has put it, "is any standard or principle for ordering or evaluating the confusing array of practices"(88).

MacIntyre concedes this but attempts to circumvent it by outlining a Telos of a whole human life, which would transcend what he calls 'limiting goods and practices' by constituting the good of a whole life; the good of a human life conceived as a unity. This involves MacIntyre in a tremendous amount of intellectual juggling with concepts as slippery and complex as the concept of a person, the notion of intelligible action, personal identity and the character of a narrative history.

I shall be returning to some of these points in detail in Chapter Six, and will, therefore, discuss MacIntyre's specific arguments there, but note that his conclusion is that "the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is"(89).

MacIntyre completes his three stage argument by asserting that we are never able to seek for the good (or by extension, exercise the virtues) as individuals: "I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation"(90). Thus we function within, and gain our social identity through, communities and communities have histories and develop traditions. Vital and alive traditions, MacIntyre says, "embody continuities of conflict"(91) and "the virtues find their point and purpose not only in sustaining those relationships necessary if the variety of goods internal to practices are to be achieved and not only in sustaining the form of an individual life in which that individual may seek out his or her good as the good of his or her whole life, but also in sustaining those traditions which provide practices and individual lives with their necessary historical context"(92) [my emphasis].

We have now reached the point where we can see, without any ambiguity, the significance both of incommensurability as an idea, and of the way in which, in 'The Relationship of Philosophy to its Past', MacIntyre seeks to combat it. Incommensurability is fatal to his case because it would permit there to be an infinite variety of practices or traditions which could not be effectively compared to one another in a prescriptive way. In Williams' language they would be in real, not notional confrontation. This would vitiate everything MacIntyre is trying to achieve and so he suggests (in 'The Relationship of Philosophy to its Past') a way in which we can compare traditions,

belief systems or whatever such that one can be adjudged superior to another.

Even the more attenuated version of incommensurability Williams puts forward in Ethics and The Limits of Philosophy(93), which he calls the 'relativism of distance'(94), would be too much for MacIntyre.

Note, however, that just as Williams and Rorty show some points of overlap on incommensurability, so MacIntyre and Williams are close to one another in that both suggest the best route forward for ethics is a return to some form of classical philosophy. Note also that all three agree that to a greater or lesser extent, and in different ways, a 'wrong turn' was taken during the 17th and 18th centuries and that, at the very least, for our conceptual world to be rooted in theirs is as serious a mistake as it is a truth. They do not agree what the 'wrong turn' was, nor what the solution to it is, nor where its real significance lies, but to the fact of there being such a 'wrong turn' they speak with one voice.

## VI

Thus, for representatives of both the analytical school and the historical school, the period culminating in the Enlightenment is a crucial one. For Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen it is crucial also, for, on these arguments, they were born, or invented, at that time, and their eminence dates from the changes in our conceptual landscape wrought by that period. Some applaud the turn (the logical positivists, for example, and the 'hard' linguistic philosophers) others, while approving of some of the results (the general implications, for example, of Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen) are deeply opposed to some others (this, perhaps, is true of Rorty in a way). Of all of the philosophers I have discussed in detail only MacIntyre deplores both the turn and the results, and thinks that philosophy's role in the practical world is not as contingent

as the analytical philosophers believe, nor as tangential as Rorty appears to think, and he predicates these claims on an analysis of the character of that 'wrong turn'.

We appear to have seen, as William James once wrote about another philosophical era, a "curious unrest in the philosophic landscape .... a loosening of old landmarks, a softening of opposites, a mutual borrowing"(95). In the work of the three thinkers I have discussed in this chapter, all of this has been present, and yet the relationship between philosophy and practice seems as unsatisfactorily explained as ever. In my next three chapters I want to suggest that the view of the Enlightenment glimpsed, from time to time, in all of these writers (explicitly in MacIntyre, implicitly in Williams and to a lesser extent Rorty) is at best a partial truth and at worst a distortion. I want to argue that certain ideas arising out of the 'grid' (and I shall return to this Foucaultian term in chapter six) of Enlightenment political thought, and particularly some of the ideas of Hume and Kant within that 'grid', are peculiarly apposite in discussing the relationship of theory to practice in the late twentieth century. Then in my final chapter, the last part of this study, I shall draw the moral of this interpretation for the practice of the history of philosophy, for the nature and limits of political theory and for the relationship of 'philosophy' to practice more generally.

PART 2: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE  
ENLIGHTENMENT'S POLITICS.

'Placing Man in Society'  
The Enlightenment and Politics

"Everything I have said is drawn from nature  
and highly favourable to the liberty of the  
Citizen."

Montesquieu in  
De l'esprit des lois

"Man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains."

Rousseau in  
Du Contrat Social

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I am conscious that in discussing the Enlightenment's involvement in, and attitudes towards, politics I am following a path well-trodden by scholars far more learned than I. Peter Gay<sup>1</sup> and Ernst Cassirer<sup>2</sup> (to name but two of the most celebrated) have each dealt with the entire subject magisterially, and commentaries on the individual philosophes political ideas are, of course, legion. However, I may, I hope, be forgiven for treading this well-worn ground in that my aim, in this chapter, is not just to argue for a particular interpretation of the Enlightenment's view of politics but also to prepare the way for the analysis of the arguments of Hume and Kant that I shall offer in my next two chapters. Thus my chief aim in discussing the Enlightenment's view of politics is to draw attention to the significance of these arguments for the problems posed in my first two chapters by placing them in the appropriate (and I hope illuminating) historical context.

It is important that I sketch this context in some detail for two reasons. First, of course, for any serious understanding of the meaning and significance of a philosophy to be valid the intellectual climate in which

it was produced must itself be understood (I freely concede this much to Rorty and to MacIntyre). Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, since my interpretation of Hume and Kant will differ in some respects from other - and well received - interpretations the foundations of that interpretation must, in any case, be laid bare, and those foundations are firmly located in the general matrix of Enlightenment political thought.

I.

Let me begin then, with a text:-

"The philosophy of Enlightenment" writes Gay, "insisted on man's essential autonomy: man is responsible to himself, to his own rational interests, to his self-development and by an inescapable extension, to the welfare of his fellow man"<sup>3</sup>(my emphasis).

Gay is here referring explicitly to the Enlightenment's political philosophy, and the one thing that immediately strikes one about this assertion is, simply, the fact that the political writings of the members of the philosophic family are remarkable not for their unity but for their apparent diversity: Voltaire is a relativist and a believer in enlightened autocracy; Rousseau, a democratic radical; Becceria a legal (though humane) absolutist and so on. Can we make a unity out of such diverse material? or is the proclaimed unity a false creature created, as Roy Porter suggests, by "mingled academic imperialism and tidy mindedness"?<sup>4</sup>

In fact the answer to this question is both yes and no. There was, I think, in the Enlightenment as a whole a unity in aim, though a diversity in method, and in its political aspect this unity in aim follows directly from the generally accepted values of the Enlightenment; liberty, tolerance, progress, criticism. According to Cassirer, in politics "The philosophy of the Enlightenment tackles once more Plato's fundamental question of the relationship between might and right, adapting the ancient problem to its own intellectual milieu"<sup>5</sup> and this view contains an important truth in that the philosophes, in their reflections on politics (and their actions in politics) sought a political order that would be at once



intelligent, rational and humane; moreover, one that would strengthen and maintain institutions which would promote such values for the future.

Cassirer's view must be amended, however, at least to the extent of pointing out that the 'right' individual philosophes opposed to 'might' (and sometimes even their definition of what constituted either) differed considerably one from another, and it is this that leads to the diverse means they adopt to achieve their (generally agreed) aim.

Within this broad agreement on the general aspects of what politics should aim toward, there was, however, one crucial and far-reaching difference, both in method and solution, that divided the Enlightenment. I shall argue that this is best seen as a division between the 'mainstream' of Enlightenment political thought - rational, critical, naturalistic - and a powerful, though muted, undercurrent, and for a moment I want to elaborate on this distinction.

The mainstream is committed to the reform of obvious abuses which stand in the way of 'intelligent humane and rational' administration, and it runs as a central thread through many discussions of politics in the period of the Enlightenment. In most respects in this field (as in so many others) the true originator is Montesquieu, and especially De l'esprit des lois. "I have not drawn my principles from my prejudices" wrote Montesquieu, announcing his project in the preface, "but from the nature of things".<sup>6</sup> It was a claim that echoed through the century of Enlightenment.

Gay calls Montesquieu "the most influential writer of the eighteenth century"<sup>7</sup> and whether or not this claim is acceptable (and I would want a fairly careful definition of his use of 'influential' before I would be prepared to accept it without heavy qualification) the influence Montesquieu had in the eighteenth century itself is manifest. In Scotland, France, America and Italy. De l'esprit des lois was hugely successful - leading Beccaria to call its author the "immortal Montesquieu", and Hamilton, 'that great man'. Hume corresponded with him and even Catherine the Great (not noted for her commitment to the cause of Enlightenment) found it at least politic to claim that she was his devoted follower.<sup>8</sup>

Montesquieu's great treatise is, of course, extraordinarily wide ranging

and I have no intention of even attempting to summarize it here, I merely want to draw attention to certain crucial aspects of it as far as its treatment of politics is concerned. Essentially these aspects are those which ally reason, humanity and liberality - those aspects, in other words, which gave the work its lasting contemporary influence. These aspects are prefigured to some extent in Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes <sup>9</sup> and consist largely of a social relativism uneasily combined with a radical individualism, but which both lead to the conclusion that - in the words of Franz Neuman - "there is.....no universally applicable solution. There are only types of solution." <sup>10</sup> It also, of course, leads (in practical terms) to some of Montesquieu's most influential ideas - his criticism of slavery (anticipated by his treatment of it in Lettres Persanes) is, of course, a good example; an attack in which he was followed by many philosophes, most importantly Voltaire and Rousseau. <sup>11</sup>

More influential still were his arguments in Book XII of De l'esprit des lois - which Neuman calls the "Magna Carta of the Citizen". <sup>12</sup> In Chapter II of Book XII he discusses his 'fundamental principle' - political liberty - which depends on 'security', in its turn dependent on the soundness of the Laws. <sup>13</sup> He therefore goes on to discuss what will make the Laws 'sound' and here, too, prefigures concerns that the later Enlightenment were to take up and elaborate. Voltaire, for example, became an unceasing propogandist against the French legal system, a concern stemming from his involvement in the notorious Calas case, but also following on from his admiration for Montesquieu. <sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the greatest flowering of this particular influence of Montesquieu's, however, was Becceria's Dei Delitti e Delle Pene, (1764). Here Becceria combines Montesquieu's legal theories with a thoroughgoing utilitarianism ('the scientific principle of Society', says Becceria, 'is that the greatest happiness must be divided by the greatest number') to produce the Enlightenment's finest blueprint for legal reform, and it became (in the words of Owen Chadwick) "the book which above all others interested the rest of Europe in the brilliance and originality of Italian enlightened thought". <sup>15</sup>

Here again the hallmarks are rationality and humanity. Following Montesquieu, Becceria insists that laws must be arranged such that punishments for crime differ in severity. If all crimes are punished with equal severity where is the incentive for the criminal to commit the lesser instead of the greater one?

Becceria specifically concentrates his critical fire on torture and the Death Penalty, heavily criticised by Montesquieu in both Lettres Persanes and De l'esprit des lois. Becceria's withering arguments in Dei Delitti bore interesting fruit. In 1772, for example, Gustavus III of Sweden abolished torture, giving the credit to Becceria; more significantly, in 1792-3, during the tumultuous debate in the French National Assembly over an appropriate punishment for Louis XVI, the 'last of the French philosophes' and true inheritors of the Enlightenment - Condorcet and Paine - were united in their opposition to the Death Penalty demanded by the Jacobins:-

"What justice truly demands" wrote Condorcet, "is that..... the general principles of jurisprudence in favour of the accused should be preserved or even extended..... (Louis's Crimes) must be judged and punished like crimes of the same sort committed by any other man." <sup>16</sup>

Paine even went so far as to suggest that 'Louis Capet' - as he was now known - be exiled to the United States - there to learn the duties of a citizen, which (once acquired) would allow him back into the Republic as 'Citizen Capet'. In a very real sense Paine and Condorcet were speaking in the accents of the waning Enlightenment; indeed these were almost the last words of the Enlightenment in France, before it was engulfed by the terror, the Revolutionary War and Napoleon. As Michael Walzer has argued "the lesson (Condorcet) and his friends wanted to teach was not only that kings were citizens, but also that citizens (including traitors) had rights that could not be taken away even by the will of the people". <sup>17</sup> Here they spoke as representatives of a line of thought that can be traced back through Voltaire and Becceria to Montesquieu, <sup>18</sup> and thus were the true inheritors of the main current of Enlightenment thought.

Even when the philosophes addressed subjects of only tangential relation to politics, the general political values they held dear - reason, liberty, tolerance, humanity - come through. Diderot's Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville (1772) is, ostensibly, not about politics at all. It is rather an essay in what might be called 'moral anthropology', as its purpose is to (invidiously) contrast "hypocritical Christian civilization with pure, honest, free Tahitian civilization." <sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, it has distinct political implications as Christian morality was, in the eighteenth century, an essential prop for a series of assumptions about political society and, therefore, if it was undermined, so were they ( a point very well understood by Hume; see my discussion in Chapter Five below). Like Montesquieu,

Diderot believed that it is through man's own nature that the true principles of society are found (though his reasons for thinking so are rather different as I suggest in my next section). Thus, Diderot's revolutionary view of sexuality in Supplément au voyage de Bougainville also has revolutionary political implications. It is Diderot's aim to show that Christian morality is 'unnatural' about sexuality and, therefore, in error, and the implications of this are that sexual relations should (indeed must) be liberalised in accordance with the dictates of our nature and the concept of reason.<sup>20</sup> In political terms, this is a cry (again) for tolerance and humanity and the removal of institutional restraints on natural human freedoms - exactly the same kind of thing we observed in Montesquieu, Voltaire and Becceria.

The fact that Voltaire was a believer in enlightened autocracy or that Diderot's political views fluctuated between near-democracy, Montesquieuan liberalism and Voltairean enlightened autocracy, does not mean that their aim was in reality any different from the liberal Montesquieu or the absolutist Becceria - in Gay's words "as the philosophes understood it the science of politics was a supremely practical science with two related tasks; to provide intelligent, humane administrators and to discover forms of government that would establish, strengthen and maintain rational institutions in a rational political atmosphere".<sup>21</sup> Indeed, for the philosophes the eclecticism of the forms of government they favoured to 'establish, strengthen and maintain rational institutions' was an advantage and one in keeping with the observed facts of human nature. Bentham perhaps summed this view up most neatly with his aphorism that "I should think myself a weak reasoner and bad citizen..... were I not, though a Royalist in London, a republican in Paris".<sup>22</sup>

## II

There was then, a central current of Enlightenment thought about politics - a 'mainstream' as I have called it. It is, therefore, worthwhile at this point to examine in more detail some of the cardinal non-political assumptions of this mainstream and see how they influenced its political ideas. Although there are several doctrines which might be considered for my purpose I am going to concentrate on one - the Enlightenment's concept of, and development of, the 'Science of Man'.

The Enlightenment's obsession with science is well known. Voltaire was a supremely successful scientific populariser, Diderot, D'Alambert, Buffon, Helvetius (to say nothing of Hume and Kant) all wrote influential works with important philosophical implications for science. Newton was the 'Divine Newton' or the 'Immortal Newton' - the culture hero of the Enlightenment -, and the philosophes aspired to be 'Newtons of the Mind'.<sup>23</sup>

What, however, did this acknowledged ambition actually represent? D'Alambert, in a celebrated essay, gave perhaps the best answer; "from the principles of the secular sciences to the foundations of religious revelation, from metaphysics to matters of taste, from music to morals, from the laws of princes to those of peoples, from natural law to the arbitrary laws of nations..... everything has been discussed and analysed. The fruit or sequel of this general effervescence of minds has been to cast new light on some matters and new shadows on others, just as the effect of the ebb and flow of the tide is to leave some things on the shore and to wash others away." <sup>24</sup>

The key word here is 'analysed', for this is what all the philosophes attempted to do. Montesquieu claimed to be a 'scientist of society' and, however far his performance fell short of his intention he was taken as such and (as I have already indicated) other philosophes strove to emulate him. "Laws" he claimed, "in their broadest sense are the necessary relations which are derived from the nature of things" <sup>25</sup> and the function of the science of man was first, to comprehensively analyse 'the nature of things' before proceeding to discuss that derivation. It is, of course, also well known that the eighteenth century proved to have a marked hostility to the system building that was at once the characteristic and the glory of seventeenth century philosophy. Not until the very end of the Enlightenment did a great philosophical system emerge - Kant's - and this in Germany where the influence of Leibniz on the philosophes was strongest. Leibniz's principal work in epistemology - the New Essays on Human Understanding - did not appear until 1765 and it fed into the Enlightenment through its influence on German Aufklärer like Wolff and Baumgarten. In turn, therefore, it indirectly influenced Kant. <sup>26</sup>

In France and elsewhere 'systematic' treatises were very few and far between. This was largely because the Enlightenment's central assumptions in epistemology were empirical - influenced by Bacon, Locke, Newton (of course) and Hartley - <sup>27</sup> but also, in part, the result of a changing conception of

reason. As Cassirer said "in the great metaphysical systems of the (seventeenth) century.....reason is the realm of the 'eternal verities' of those truths held in common by the human and divine mind. What we know through reason, we therefore behold 'in God'. Every act of reason mirrors the .....intelligible world. The eighteenth century takes reason in a different and more modest sense. It is no longer the sum of 'innate ideas' given prior to all experience, which reveals the absolute essence of things. Reason is now looked upon rather as an acquisition than as a heritage. It is not the treasury of the mind in which the truth, like a minted coin, lies stored; it is rather the original intellectual force which guides the discovery and determination of truth..... What reason is and what it can do can never be known by its results but only by its function. And its most important function is to bind and to dissolve." <sup>28</sup> Lessing expressed this in one vivid phrase - the power of reason, he said, was not 'in the possession but in the acquisition of truth.' (my emphasis).

This view of reason is seen repeatedly throughout the Enlightenment. It is, according to Diderot, the purpose of the Encyclopaedie to bring about a change in the manners of thinking <sup>29</sup>; it is Montesquieu's method in De l'esprit des lois and it goes hand in hand with the re-evaluation of the nature and role of the passions, that was such a characteristic of Enlightenment thought. The most interesting case of this is, of course, Hume (although he is also something of a curious case! <sup>30</sup>) but it is a common theme for the philosophes; "I forgive everything that is inspired by passion" wrote Diderot to Sophie Volland <sup>31</sup> in a moment of pardonable hyperbole, but, in a less exaggerated sense his philosophical friends would have agreed with his remark. In this sense the Enlightenment was a 'revolt against rationalism' though not - most emphatically not - a revolt against rationality, (a distinction made brilliantly in polemical form by Diderot in Supplément au voyage de Bougainville).

The downgraded conception of reason and the rehabilitation of the passions led to an emphasis on philosophical psychology. This became, in Gay's words, 'The Strategic Science' - as it provided the premises from which the philosophes argued in their attacks on religion, on the political status quo, on hierarchy and on hypocrisy of all sorts. <sup>32</sup>

It was Locke, of course, that laid the foundation for Enlightenment psychology (and it really remained in the Lockean mode until Kant). <sup>33</sup> This psychology in turn laid the foundation for epistemology, which had marked implications for the Enlightenment's view of politics. A classic, if extreme, case in point

is Diderot's La Rêve D'Alambert. Here the content of most of the dialogue is scientific and technical and it argues for a very radical materialism and a determinism far more radical than many of his fellow philosophers liked. This materialistic determinism is developed through an uncompromising empiricism and a kind of Lockean psychology carried to extremes - but there is no doubt that Diderot's primary aim was a moral one, as in the Supplément au voyage de Bougainville: to point out the foundations of man's behaviour, its implications, how we should (and should not) react to this, and what it is right to praise and right to blame. For Diderot, his conclusions meant a radical change, not only in morality, but in the social conditions which allowed (indeed sanctioned) the existing morality that he was criticising. It was, therefore, a 'political' work - although it had not been composed specifically as one.

It must be admitted, of course, that Diderot's views in La Rêve D'Alambert were not typical. D'Alambert himself, and his mistress Julie de L'epinasse disavowed them when they were circulated in manuscript form, but the close connection between psychology, epistemology, morality and politics observed in that work was largely staple fare for the philosophes. Voltaire's Lettres Philosophique is another good example, as is Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments (albeit of a different kind). Towards the end of the Enlightenment period this tendency was seen most obviously in Condorcet - in his masterpiece the Esquisse d'un tableau historique de progres de l'esprit humain (written in 1793-4) and in many of his lesser known but equally interesting essays. <sup>34</sup>

Condorcet is an interesting example because, as I have already remarked, he is one of the last true representatives of the Enlightenment in France, and even if Gay is right that his Esquisse "is as much a caricature of the Enlightenment as its testament" <sup>35</sup> it is still important to see (albeit in caricature) how the Enlightenment at the end of the 'century of philosophy' was expressing itself. There is certainly no sign in the Esquisse of any belief that the Enlightenment project was a failure - quite the contrary. In fact, Condorcet believes (and expresses in a wonderful rhetorical sally) that one day "the sun will shine only on freemen on this earth, on men who will recognize no master but their reason; when tyrants and slaves, priests and their stupid or hypocritical instruments will exist only in history as on the stage; where men will study the efforts and sufferings that characterized the past only to guard vigilantly against any recurrence of

superstition and tyranny." <sup>36</sup> Here in this one sentence are embraced all the hallmarks of the Enlightenment as I have discussed them in this chapter; reason, tolerance, humanity, freedom. The Esquisse indeed has a self-confidence absent in most of the works of the earlier Enlightenment. In his own early works too, Condorcet displayed the essential unity of the Enlightenment approach. In 1785, for example, he published an essay on applying probability theory to politics, which, drawing on the work of Pascal and Leibniz, suggested a concept of 'collective reason' similar in form (though different in content) to Rousseau's general will:-

"When he submits to a law contrary to his opinion (man) must say to himself 'It is not now a question of myself alone, but of everyone. I ought not, therefore, conduct myself according to what I believe to be reasonable, but according to what all, in discovering, like me, their own opinion, ought to regard as being in conformity with reason and truth.'" <sup>37</sup>

His main contention in the essay is to argue from theories of probability to conclusions in politics, and even though he is again far more self-confident than the men and women of the early Enlightenment (like Montesquieu) the general project is still the same: The Science of Man .

### III

The assertion that there was a 'mainstream' to Enlightenment thought about politics naturally implies that there was a 'substream' or undercurrent as well. In fact, the undercurrent has been as influential (and in some fields more influential) than the 'mainstream'. Its major figure, of course, is Rousseau.

In political theory the force and (almost inevitably) ambiguity of Rousseau's thought has long been recognized, but it is interesting for a moment to consider it in relation to the rest of the Enlightenment.

For many years, of course, Rousseau was the outcast of the philosophic family. His views were in many ways opposed to theirs, and his temperament and ever increasing paranoia drove a firm wedge between him and all who were - at one time or another - his friends. Diderot, Voltaire, D'Alambert, Hume - all



ended estranged from him (though Diderot and Hume remained admiring of him and sympathetic). Yet, as Gay has remarked, "Rousseau may not have been wholly in the Enlightenment, but he was of it - the philosophes and Rousseau needed each other in friendship as in enmity." <sup>38</sup> Yet he was a stupendously annoying individual, a walking paradox - "A playwright who inveighed against the theatre, a moralist who abandoned his children, a religious philosopher who changed his confession twice for dubious reasons, a libertarian who could not get compulsion out of his mind, a deist who accused his fellow deists of irreligion, a professional celebrant of friendship who broke with everyone." <sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, he is of the Enlightenment even if, at times, his ideas appear to put him beyond it. His problems were the common currency of Enlightenment thought and his solutions, though radical and often startlingly at variance with those of other philosophes, are firmly anchored in 'the soil of the Enlightenment'. The main difference between Rousseau's political thought and the mainstream Enlightenment is predicated - as might be expected - on his view of man. In his Dijon Academy prize-winning essay 'Discours sur les sciences et les artes' he proclaims the importance of the science of man (though he does not call it that) in characteristically rhetorical, (but firmly Enlightenment,) terms:-

"It is a great and beautiful spectacle to see man raising himself from nothingness by his own efforts.....lifting himself above himself, soaring in spirit up to the celestial regions, like the sun.....and what is still greater and more difficult, returning into himself to study man and to get to know his nature, his duties and his end." <sup>40</sup>

With this concern, of course, the rest of the Enlightenment would be thoroughly in agreement (as Berman says, Rousseau's argument here "prefigures the inner structure of the Enlightenment as a whole") <sup>41</sup>, but the conclusions Rousseau arrives at about the state of existing society - and the reasons for it - go far beyond anything his fellow philosophes (at the time of the essay on arts and sciences) had suggested. At the heart of these conclusions, of course, is his view that man was - by nature - pre-moral (neither bad nor good, but innocent), and that he was not civilized, but fatally corrupted by existing cultures and society. Rousseau's intense exhortations to virtue as a counter to this corruption, only point it up the more, <sup>42</sup> and his insistence many years later (in the third dialogue of Rousseau juge de Jean Jaques) that "our spirits have been corrupted to the degree that our arts

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and sciences have advanced towards perfection" showed that however much he might have cause to qualify that early work, the idea central to it was still in the same place at the end of his career that it was at its beginning. His later works, in particular the three great works of the late 1750's and early 1760's, La Nouvelle Heloise, Du Contrat Social and Emile, all pose this problem again, in their different ways, and offer partial solutions to it. As Gay has remarked, however, "we must not call Rousseau a primitivist because he attacked modern civilization"<sup>44</sup>, he was after all, very insistent that mere destruction of institutions would only serve to kill possible avenues of remedy, while leaving the vice and corruption extant.<sup>45</sup> The view of man on which this was based was, therefore, not a simple case of primitivism or a recourse to the 'noble savage'. Rousseau's account of man, culled from Du Contrat Social and Emile, is an imaginative reconstruction of man's 'nature, duties and end'. It is not an 'historical' recreation of man's nature, for it is partly through the process of history itself that man's nature has become corrupted,<sup>46</sup> but it uses that history to provide insight and illumination. In a powerful image, Rousseau describes just what an onslaught man's true nature faces:-

"Man's nature" (he wrote in Emile) "is like a young tree which has, by mischance, been born in the middle of a large highway.....how important it is to separate the new tree from the great highway, to protect it from the crushing force of social conventions."<sup>47</sup>

In Emile, of course, Rousseau's solution is to isolate the 'young tree', to 'build a wall around the root'. Du Contrat Social is the second half of that solution; to erect a society which can then allow the wall to be dismantled; in Gay's words "Emile has shown the making of moral man, the Contrat Social shows the making of moral society."<sup>48</sup> Both halves of this solution are, Rousseau believes, necessary because of the interdependence he perceives between corrupt man and corrupt society. An uncorrupted man in present society would soon - and inevitably - become corrupt; equally, corrupt men would soon destroy a society based on the principles of Du Contrat Social. Thus, both moral men and a moral society are necessary and this means, of course, that both are, in their present state, corrupt.

This is the centrepiece of the real point at issue between Rousseau and the mainstream Enlightenment. Those of the philosophes who reflected on it certainly believed that there were serious things wrong with their society.

This was most obviously true in France, but looking at the character of the Enlightenment elsewhere (in Italy and Germany for example) amply confirms a general feeling of social malaise.<sup>49</sup> Even in Britain, usually regarded as a haven of tolerance and liberality, some Enlightenment thought was critical of the status quo.<sup>50</sup> Then, again, many philosophes had a distinctly unflattering view of their fellowman (as he currently existed), even if they felt that he was capable of Enlightenment.<sup>51</sup>

Yet there is a crucial difference between these critical attitudes and Rousseau's. As Berman rightly points out "The Paris Rousseau criticized was essentially no different from the Paris Montesquieu had celebrated. Rousseau did not call attention to new facts, but rather examined the acknowledged facts of metropolitan life from a radically new perspective."<sup>52</sup> The 'radical new perspective' essentially consists of Rousseau's concept of alienation - in particular self-alienation - the conclusions that Rousseau draws from the fact of alienation and the solutions he is forced to proffer because of it. He was not, of course, entirely alone in seeing man as alienated (Pascal, for instance, also believed that) but he was virtually a lone voice in saying that this alienation was curable, and in trying to show how.

Essentially Rousseau's argument consists in showing that to dissolve this alienation, and to discover and adhere to his true nature man must 'order himself in relation to the whole cosmic order' (i.e. that order ordained by God),<sup>53</sup> rather than attempting to bend the universe to his will. Rousseau believed that there are some universally applicable truths "admitted by all times, all sages, recognized by every nation and engraved in the human heart in indelible characters."<sup>54</sup> Now, as I have already indicated, to a certain extent mainstream Enlightenment thinkers also believed this, but Rousseau's concept of man's nature is so different from theirs that the role this belief plays in his political thought becomes equally different.

When man passes from the state of nature to civil society, Rousseau argues, justice is substituted for instinct and thus morality enters man's nature. "It is then only, with the voice of duty succeeding physical impulse and right succeeding desire, that man who has, up to then, thought of himself alone, finds himself compelled to act on other principles and to consult his reason before he listens to his inclinations."<sup>55</sup> It is this prospect that brings forth man's greatest opportunity and (at the same time) greatest

danger - "his faculties are so ennobled" says Rousseau, "that if the abuse of his new condition did not often degrade him below the one from which he emerged he would endlessly bless the happy moment that tore him from it forever, and which, in place of a stupid and narrow animal, made him a man." <sup>56</sup>

Of course, Rousseau's concept is that, at present at least, the 'new condition is abused but man can remedy that if he wishes to, and Emile and Du Contrat Social are Rousseau's attempt to point the way. In Emile the stoic tag 'live according to nature' is wedded to human educational development, and in Du Contrat Social it is used to help set up a state that will permit the truly 'educated' man to live a moral life.

This transition is the centrepiece of Rousseau's moral theory and the arena of his greatest clash with the other philosophes. His political theory, somewhat relativistic like theirs as far as forms of government were concerned, was in one vital respect different. For Rousseau, the citizen must be 'ruler and ruled', 'law giver and subject' <sup>57</sup>, and one means of achieving this was the 'general will'. This concept, with all its ambiguity, is indicative of the difference upheld in Rousseau's view of political society, when contrasted with (say) Montesquieu's, Voltaire's or Diderot's. The 'general will' is a result of what Gay has called Rousseau's hunger for Community' <sup>58</sup>, and this, of course, has its source in Rousseau's view of alienation. For alienation to be avoided, the social structure must be such that all individuals rule themselves at the same time as they rule others for "the natural man exists entirely for himself. He is the numerical, the whole, he enters into relations only with himself or with men like him. The citizen is only the numerator of a fraction whose value depends on the denominator, his value depends on the whole." <sup>59</sup> The conversion of 'natural men' into 'citizens' is what the 'general will' is designed to accomplish, and despite all Rousseau's protestations that freedom was the most important thing for him, it is this concept more than any other that has allowed his opponents to call him a totalitarian. In my view, however, those who do so misread him. It is true that in an unreformed society, compulsion (by a supreme legislator) would be occasionally necessary, but the important point is that the institutions of Du Contrat Social are meant to apply chiefly to

a society of individuals educated as Emile was. Rousseau is no totalitarian because (like the good disciple of Montesquieu he once was and, in part remained to the end) man does have 'inalienable rights', if they are understood correctly. As John Plamenatz has said "In Rousseau's State nobody can ever speak for the people except the people, and even they are sovereign only as an assembly of equals whose every member has the right against all others that they shall not so act as to make his opinion count for nothing. This idea may be unattainable, but it is not totalitarian." <sup>60</sup>

Rousseau, then, takes a view of man which is radically different from his fellow philosophes and bases a political theory on it, which has equally radical implications. He was not a typical philosophe but then, as Gay has written, he was not a typical anything <sup>61</sup> and his work represents a powerful, if lonely, voice in the Enlightenment's view of politics, looking back to Plato and forward to political problems that were only to come into full focus after the Enlightenment had waned and its other champions were ignored or derided. Yet in important respects, the political thought of the Enlightenment includes Rousseau as a characteristic exemplar, as it does Montesquieu; and if Montesquieu was the most influential 18th Century writer for the 18th Century, certainly as far as political thought is concerned, Rousseau bids fair to being its most influential writer for the 19th and 20th Centuries. As Ernst Cassirer has said "in (this) clash of doctrines.....and in Rousseau's passionate quarrel with his epoch, the inner spiritual unity of the age appears once more in a new light. Rousseau is a true son of the Enlightenment even when he attacks it..... (he) did not question the world of the Enlightenment, he only transferred its centre of gravity to another position." <sup>62</sup>

#### IV

In arguing that there was a mainstream of Enlightenment thought about politics, represented at its best by Montesquieu (and apparent in Becceria, Voltaire, Diderot and others) and a powerful (but solitary) minor current best exemplified by Rousseau, it will be noticed that two figures are, by

and large, conspicuous by their absence - David Hume and Immanuel Kant. This is not, of course, accidental, I intend to deal with them both at some length in a while, but first let me return briefly to the problems I outlined at the end of Chapter One.

Essentially, it will be remembered, these were twofold - first a thesis about the nature and effect of the Enlightenment project of finding an independent rational justification for 'morality' and secondly, the modern renderings (that I have referred to as 'Humpty Dumpty' and the 'Red Queen') which - on at least one reading - grew out of that failure, in the sense that it was the collapse of that project that allowed modern trends in moral and political philosophy to become intellectually attractive.

It seems to me that the foregoing casts serious doubts on the view, which MacIntyre holds (surprisingly for someone so well read in the literature of the period) that the philosophes wanted to distinguish "the moral from the theological, the legal from the aesthetic" and to create an "independent rational justification for morality."<sup>63</sup> It is true that they were no longer prepared to base morality on theological maxims, but it is not the case that they 'distinguished' between theology, morality, aesthetics and law, if by 'distinguished' MacIntyre means 'separated'. As my brief overview of both main currents of Enlightenment moral and political thought indicate, their attitudes were consistent (even when they disagreed with one another) over a whole range of topics, and this stemmed from their (generally) common philosophical position which in the human sciences created their 'science of man'. Nor is it true that any of the thinkers so far discussed have any real sense of the 'failure' of the project that MacIntyre trumpets. One of the thinkers whom he alludes to having realised the thin ice on which (according to him) the Enlightenment was skating, is Diderot. MacIntyre argues, first of all, that "Diderot and Hume very largely share the view taken by Kierkegaard" (who, MacIntyre alleges, first isolated the 'failure' of the Enlightenment) "and Kant of the Content of Morality."<sup>64</sup> This is simply incorrect. While Diderot certainly shares the general Enlightenment view that there are some universally valid norms and that it is the business of the 'science of man' to lay them bare, it is nonsense to say that his view of the 'Content' of Morality is that of a "conventional bourgeois moralist with as staid a view of marriage, of promises, of truth telling and of conscientiousness as any adherent of Kantian duty."<sup>65</sup> This,

remember, of the man who told Sophie Volland that "I forgive anything that is inspired by passion", <sup>66</sup> who anticipated Chamfort's cynical definition of love as 'nothing but the contact of two epidermises' by calling it 'the transitory rubbing of two intestines', <sup>67</sup> and whose Supplément au voyage de Bougainville posited a revolutionary view of sexual morality very far from anything Kant was likely to approve of.

MacIntyre attempts to defuse criticism at this point by arguing that in the Supplément Diderot tries to distinguish "between these desires which are natural to man - the desires obeyed by the imaginary Polynesians of his narrative - and those artificially formed, and corrupted desires which civilization breeds in us. But, in the very act of making this distinction he undermines his own attempt to find a basis for morality in human physiological nature. For he himself is forced to find grounds for discriminating between desires (and) .....in Le Neveu de Rameau he forces himself to recognize that there are rival and incompatible desires and rival and incompatible orderings of desire." <sup>68</sup>

Unfortunately, this is too simplistic a reading of both the Supplément and Le Neveu de Rameau. The latter, to begin with, is a much more complicated dialogue than MacIntyre seems to believe. He says, for example, that "in Le Neveu de Rameau, the 'moi', the philosophe with whom the older Diderot so clearly identifies himself, is a conventional bourgeois moralist" <sup>69</sup> (my emphasis). Now it is true that, insofar as either of the speakers in the Dialogue is Diderot, it is the 'moi', but the point of the dialogue is that Diderot is exploring two positions, distant yet related, opposed yet in a subtle way parasitic one upon the other. His model here, is a satire of Horace, where Davus, one of Horace's slaves, is the Rameau figure. It is instructive, in fact, to compare the two dialogues - for Diderot's is by far the more balanced of the two. Rameau is given less to say than Davus, the 'moi' more than Horace, but the success of the dialogue is the dramatic fusion between the two, and even the 'moi' is scarcely a 'conventional bourgeois moralist.' Diderot's 'moi' (where he is most like Diderot) is a stoic, but a sensual one. <sup>70</sup>

There is another point here. MacIntyre, it seems, is attempting to have his cake and eat it. For you cannot, on the one hand,, argue that Diderot was a 'conventional bourgeois moralist' who believed in marriage, truth-telling and

so on, and at the same time argue that he recognized that there were 'rival and incompatible desires and rival and incompatible orderings of desire'. Either he is a moral relativist or he is not. MacIntyre is suggesting, of course, that Diderot is effectively claiming what Isaiah Berlin once alleged Machiavelli claimed - that morality was simply a quagmire of competing value systems and all we can do is to choose our side and stand to our arms.<sup>71</sup> In other words that he is recognizing that what the Enlightenment is trying to do cannot be done, and collapsing into 'emotivism' as a result.

My argument earlier, however, and my additional points here, suggest on the contrary that Diderot, as far as morality and politics are concerned, stood firmly in the mainstream of the Enlightenment, in believing (in Cassirer's words) that, "(the) belief in the immutable moral nature of man, and in a firm principle of justice arising from this nature remains unshakeable."<sup>72</sup> All of his works show this, from the Encyclopaedie to Le Neveu de Rameau and La Rêve D'Alambert. He is, by turns, a determinist, a relativist and a materialist, he traverses the whole way from an a priori to a utilitarian foundation for ethics,<sup>73</sup> but in his ethics he remains an ethical naturalist of a somewhat peculiar sort (and this is the real message of the Supplement)- "the man who despises the pleasures of the senses", he once wrote to the Princess of Nassau - Saarbruck "is either a lying hypocrite or a crippled creature, but the man who prefers a voluptuous sensation to consciousness of a good condition is a diseased creature."<sup>74</sup>

MacIntyre then, fails to carry his point as far as Diderot is concerned and (by extension) more broadly, in that in no sense did the mainstream Enlightenment feel that it had failed. At a more general level, however, he has a point in that these ways of thinking were new and did alter the philosophical and general cultural perceptions of the age (though not necessarily in the way MacIntyre thinks). In Chapter Six I shall be taking this up in greater detail. The Enlightenment's 'reconstruction' of the old Platonic question of 'might and right' is just that - i.e. a 'reconstruction'- but it dramatically shifts the ground of philosophical discussion of politics. To show how this is so in detail, is part of my reason for discussing Hume and Kant in my next two chapters, but first I want to make a few more general remarks.



v

For the philosophers of the Vienna Circle (and other fellow travellers and occasional confreres) the Enlightenment in general (and Hume in particular) seemed a very inviting parallel. It too, they argued, had been hostile to metaphysics and 'system building'; it too had been empirical, critical and had tried to use scientific method in philosophy; it too was concerned to describe, not prescribe. For the same reasons, the empirical tradition in British philosophy - represented by the analytical philosophers (excepting the early Wittgenstein) laid claim to the two philosophers who most clearly, they felt, represented their activities in traditional philosophy - Locke and Hume. One was, with Newton, the great forerunner and folk-hero of the Enlightenment, the other its most subtle and important philosophical representative (or so the argument went).<sup>75</sup>

It will by now be obvious, I hope, that this view is a serious misreading of the Enlightenment's general approach, and that for the Enlightenment, all philosophy could have profoundly practical implications. Indeed, virtually all the work of the Enlightenment in literature, aesthetics, religion, law, political economy or philosophy (strictly so-called) was 'political' in the sense that the implications of accepting it would (and did) mean profound social and political changes.

The Enlightenment's 'science of man' (whether it was Montesquieu's or Rousseau's) was intended to have practical implications of the most direct kind; this much seems certain. It would, therefore, be interesting to glance briefly at the two most important political events of the second half of the eighteenth century which, if the Enlightenment had succeeded, should have been influenced by it.

These two events are, of course, the American and French Revolutions, and the fact that both were profoundly affected by the literature of the Enlightenment is now, I think, established beyond any real doubt.<sup>76</sup> The question remains, however, exactly what was the influence? More specifically (and more germane to my purpose) can this relationship be said to be symptomatic of the Enlightenment's view of the effect of philosophy on politics? And how far can it be said to be a distinct view of the

relationship? If we can answer these two questions positively, we can then pass on to look at some of the arguments that chiefly sustain this view of the relationship, and then see how far these arguments bear out - or not - the views of Macintyre on the one hand, and of the 'Humpty Dumpty' and 'Red Queen' theorists on the other.

What then, of America? As J.R. Pole has pointed out, "The American context for the reception of Enlightenment ideas was not only a natural environment very different from - and much emptier than - Europe's, nor merely a context of particular clusters of community in that environment. It was also a specific context of political and ecclesiastical institutions."<sup>77</sup> He adds that these institutions, creations of the seventeenth, not the eighteenth century, were modelled on precisely these same elements of British government which so excited the admiration of the philosophes. These considerations meant that the Enlightenment in America did have, in certain respects, what we might term a different texture than in Europe, and particularly in France. It is this, in part, which bears out May's view that the Enlightenment in America has been seen too often as merely a European idea transplanted to America - that it has been (in his word) 'homogenized' too often, and he also rightly stresses the role of religion in America, (very different from the role it played in Europe).

Too much, however, should not be made of this. American philosophes shared the general approach of their European coevals. The emphasis on nature - seen in different guises in Montesquieu, Diderot and Rousseau (to say nothing of Hume) - is present and observable in the American Enlightenment, and its choice of heroes - Bacon, Locke and Newton - are the familiar (indeed inevitable) trio.<sup>78</sup> All the leading figures of the Revolution were steeped in the literature, language, manners and style of the European Enlightenment.<sup>79</sup>

Of the European philosophes Montesquieu was (again) overwhelmingly the most influential. Members of the Scottish Enlightenment - especially Adam Ferguson - were also greatly admired. There are also echoes of Addison and Steele, of Voltaire and of Hume in the writings of Jefferson, Madison Hamilton and Adams.<sup>80</sup> In Madison's grandiloquent language the fourteenth Federalist announced in ringing and uncompromising prose the project of the American republic and, in unmistakable terms, nailed the flag of the Enlightenment to its masthead:-

"Is it not to the Glory of the people of America that, whilst they have paid a decent regard to the opinions of former times and other nations, they have not suffered a blind veneration for antiquity, for custom, or for names, to overrule the suggestions of their own good sense, the knowledge of their situation and the lessons of their own experience? To this manly spirit, posterity will be indebted for the possession, and the world for the example of the numerous innovations displayed on the American theatre, in favour of private rights and public happiness." <sup>81</sup>

Here are all the hallmarks of the Enlightenment - veneration for antiquity, (but an antiquity recast to 'recapture its essence' for their own cultural milieu as Cassirer suggested); trust in experience; a critical regard for others' opinions and other solutions, and a belief in individual rights and social welfare. To be sure, there was added to it a self-confidence, almost an arrogance that is absent from the earlier writings of the Enlightenment. It is a self-confidence mirrored by that of the early writings of (for example) Condorcet, before the terror had darkened his vision; the self-confidence of the representative of an intellectual movement whose era is moving the way he wants and expects. As a contemporary said, "The researches of the human mind after social happiness have been carried to a great extent, the treasures of knowledge acquired by the labours of the philosophers, sages and legislators through a long succession of years are laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the establishment of our forms of government."<sup>82</sup> This is a characteristic piece of Enlightenment rhetoric; in their various ways, Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire, even Hume and Kant, said or implied similar things, but it was not a philosophe who said it; when George Washington could speak thus, (as Gay has said) "who could deny that the labours of the philosophes had entered the mainstream of eighteenth century life." <sup>83</sup>

It is not necessary to delve too far into the debates over the character of the Enlightenment in America, but it is worth recalling briefly May's division of the Enlightenment into four contrasting phases, and his characterization of certain cardinal features of the pre-Revolutionary American Enlightenment as representative of what he calls the 'Moderate Enlightenment'. <sup>84</sup> This view of the Enlightenment stresses its emphasis on harmony and order through knowledge of nature, (though all four phases are linked by the same element Cassirer placed such emphasis on in his general study of the Enlightenment: Reason). It is the character of the

Enlightenment best represented (again) by Montesquieu in Europe, and it is no accident that it was Montesquieu who was far and away the most influential philosophe in America. The "social and political assumptions of the 'Moderate Enlightenment' in America were, argues Pole, "deeply Conservative. Intellectually it implies that all the structural facts we need to know are known, so that when new ones are discovered they will merely fill gaps in an existing scheme of knowledge." <sup>85</sup> This analysis can be wedded to Morton White's <sup>86</sup> to suggest a very obvious congruity between the philosophical assumptions of the Enlightenment and its political pronouncements and actions. White's argument is that Jefferson and the drafters of the Declaration of Independence used a philosophical concept ('self-evidence') with a long history (White traces it back to Aquinas) and conservative implications. 'Self-evidence' for Jefferson, as for Locke, (argues White) did not necessarily mean evident to everybody; only evident to those who understood the essence of the category which was self-evident. Thus, "we hold these truths to be self-evident" can be read as holding to a tradition of elite leadership (of those who did understand the essence of the truths concerned), which is fundamentally conservative. Other aspects of Enlightenment thought - in particular its emphasis on education and its basic optimism - may have led Jefferson towards a more egalitarian conception (at least this is what Pole suggests) of differential endowment and, therefore, to favour a more 'democratic' political order; Pole concluding that "to democratize epistemology is a decisive step towards democratizing society." <sup>87</sup> Other, more peripheral concerns of the European Enlightenment also had important influences in America. The emphasis placed on collective values and 'republican virtue' by Adam Ferguson, for example, was obviously of great interest to a fledgeling republic and, as a similar emphasis is seen in many writers of the Scottish Enlightenment (Hutcheson, Reid and even the early Adam Smith) it is no surprise to find them also widely read. Viner's famous remark that "Eighteenth Century ethics was, and was proclaimed as being, social ethics" <sup>88</sup> is certainly true of America!

All these characterisations of the American Enlightenment show then, that, in general - as a cultural matrix, as it were - the Enlightenment's views on politics were widely influential in the period of the Revolution, and that - on a more specific point - the Enlightenment's philosophical views shaped to a certain extent, its political approach. This, of course, begs a question: what counts as a 'philosophical' view, and I shall come back to this in a moment, but first, let me turn to France.

Norman Hampson has rightly stressed that "To ask what relationship, if any, linked the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, is a legitimate question -provided one does not expect the answer to be either scientific or simple." <sup>89</sup> Having just looked at the tangled skein of the Enlightenment's relationship with the American Revolution, it is not likely that we would expect the answer to be either.

Of course, any attempt to assess the importance of an intellectual movement in practical affairs (particularly one as diverse as the Enlightenment) is bound to be extraordinarily difficult, but again (as with America) I want to look and see how the relationship between philosophy and politics is mirrored in the relationship between the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

It is, of course, a well-known thesis that the Enlightenment and the Revolution stand as cause and effect - in Taine's picturesque phrase "When we see a man .....apparently sound and of peaceful habits drink eagerly of a new liquor, then suddenly fall to the ground, foaming at the mouth.. .....we have no hesitation in supposing that in the pleasant draught there was some dangerous ingredient."<sup>90</sup> More recent Scholarship has amply demonstrated the falsity of this view, but there is at least a grain of truth in it. The Enlightenment did not cause the Revolution, but (largely by chance) the events of the revolution gave political power and influence to the men who were likely to have been most influenced by it.<sup>91</sup> Again, in the tracts of the revolution the influence of Montesquieu is strong, and active in the first phase of the revolution is Condorcet, on whose role - as last standard bearer of the mainstream Enlightenment in France - we have already had reason to comment.

Increasingly, however, the leading Revolutionaries saw their revolution in Messianic terms, and gradually the dominant intellectual influence became Rousseau. The complexities and ambiguities in Rousseau's thought - still of the Enlightenment when originally articulated - permitted the pressures of war and revolution to lead the Revolutionaries into paths that led them away from the critical, tolerant values of the mainstream Enlightenment. Of course, one cannot (and should not) attempt a causal analysis of the terror by looking at Du Contrat Social, but nonetheless, Rousseau's influence on the way the Revolutionaries perceived what they were doing -

and consequently on how they did it - is marked and, I think, undeniable. His influence on what was, perhaps, the most influential revolutionary tract, Sieyes' Qu'est ce que les Tiers Etat? is great (especially on Sieyes' approach to sovereignty and the General will), and the speeches of St. Just and Robespierre echo with Rousseauian phrases and ideas. The emphasis on collective values (and republican virtue) seen in the American Revolution is present here also - only in its Rousseauian formulation, not its Fergusonean one.

There were, of course, many other points of contact - the attempt to reform the French legal system along the lines suggested in Beccaria's Dei Delitti; the campaign against the slave trade; the initial proclamation of religious toleration. These influences - representative of the mainstream Enlightenment - grew less as the revolution progressed, and its international situation grew graver but they were there; Rousseau's influence, of course, shifted the emphasis, but his reflections in many respects helped to set the parameters of debate for the more radical revolutionaries and, as Cobban has said:-

"Unless by an effort of the imagination we can establish some sort of empathy with men who felt themselves in the front rank of (an) Homeric battle, we shall never understand very much about the Revolution."<sup>92</sup>

Quite so: and it was Rousseau (and, therefore, the powerful undercurrent of the Enlightenment) who helped to create the atmosphere of 'Homeric struggle' that they felt, and so influenced how they conducted it.

## VI

There is, then, little doubt both that the philosophes intended their writings to have practical effect that that they did have such an effect - though assuredly not always what the philosophes may have intended. Pace Macintyre, there is little evidence in any of this that the Enlightenment thinkers felt that their project had failed; indeed, on the contrary, the later writings of the Enlightenment radiate a self-confidence that bespeaks success not failure and to which Condorcet's Esquisse and the Federalist papers both bear eloquent testimony.

Furthermore, in the writings of the Enlightenment, we see a mingling of the literary, political, economic, historical and philosophical that all reinforce each other. In Montesquieu, Diderot and Rousseau, for example, we see social science, philosophy and political theory welded together into an indissoluble whole. This is not to say, of course, that they did not sometimes do what they said they were not doing, or allow confusions to creep into their works, but it is to say that arguments first advanced as philosophy led to others in politics, economics, history and so on - and the process was not all one way. The philosophes were concerned with Science and with laying bare the nature of things - placing man in Society as D'Alambert said. These led to their views of what should be done - both by way of constructing (or reconstructing) institutions (hence Du Contrat Social) and also in terms of personal behaviour (hence Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville).

Now, of course, those theorists that I referred to in Chapter One as holding the 'Humpty Dumpty' and 'Red Queen' view of political theory would argue that though the philosophes may have done this, if and when they did they were simply not doing philosophy. They were being 'ideological', or perhaps aesthetic, but not philosophical, because to be philosophical means not doing (as philosophy) the kind of thing that Helvetius, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alambert, Buffon (and a host of others) all did.

This, naturally, brings us to the question of what constitutes a 'philosophical approach' to politics - and how far a truly philosophical approach may be said to have (and expect to have) practical implications. If it cannot, then (at the very least) the methodology of the Enlightenment is radically misconceived and so - as a result - are a large number of its conclusions and apparatus.

It is this question that my next three chapters intend to examine, but it is worthwhile to pause for a moment to see what the crucial issues here are. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, I have discussed the central assumptions of Enlightenment political thought in order to pave the way for a discussion of Hume and Kant. This is for a number of reasons, which I shall here enumerate.

Their moral and political philosophy has received increasing scrutiny

(until recently Hume's more than Kant's<sup>93</sup>). A number of extremely prominent modern philosophers ascribe to one or the other, the foundations of their views, or attempt to reinterpret their theories for a 'modern' (and allegedly more sophisticated) audience.<sup>94</sup> One modern Hume scholar has gone so far as to say that "an exhaustive guide to discussions of Hume's problems and their descendants as they appear in 20th Century philosophy would be an almost exhaustive guide to 20th Century philosophy",<sup>95</sup> and the author of a recent history of philosophy in English credits Kant with inducing far-reaching changes in the emphasis placed on a whole host of philosophical topics - in particular epistemological topics - by subsequent philosophers.<sup>96</sup>

Their influence, then, is and has been immense and has been as great, if not greater, on those philosophers disposed to a 'Humpty Dumpty' or 'Red Queen' view of the world, as on others. Yet the very fact that Kant's transcendentalism or Hume's psychology need - so some of their interpreters feel - to be radically restructured or even replaced, suggests that there is something in their theories which analytical philosophers, and those close to them, are suspicious of.

Interestingly, approaching the same question from a different angle, a number of historians of ideas have questioned the value of the Humean or Kantian political or social philosophy outside their own time or place. Duncan Forbes, author of one of the best modern interpretations of Hume's political thought, has suggested this, and John Dunn and Ralph Walker have both (in different ways) suggested it of Kant.<sup>97</sup> The various formulations of this argument (and I have some sympathy with it) I shall return to in detail in Chapter Six, but it is important as a first step to see how Kant and Hume viewed the relationship themselves.

It is this that I attempt in the next two chapters and it is for this reason that I have sketched (in a fairly detailed way) the intellectual currents of the time. It will be my argument that, to a certain extent, Kant subsumed elements of both the mainstream and minor currents of Enlightenment moral and political thought in his own political theory and, of course, for this to be valid, I have to make clear what those currents were. Cassirer has called Kant's philosophy "that edifice which overshadows the Enlightenment even while it represents its final glorification."<sup>98</sup> I think that is going too far, but he is right (or so I shall argue) in suggesting that Kant's



philosophy attempts a final re-working of many of the central currents of Enlightenment political thought centering on its concept of reason and that he does so at a level of philosophical sophistication unmatched by earlier writers, with one exception, that of David Hume. For Gay, Hume is the "complete modern pagan.....the most isolated and the most representative of philosophes; he was simply the purest, most modern specimen of the little flock."<sup>99</sup> I shall argue that in this assessment Gay is half right and half wrong. Right, in that Hume is the most isolated of the philosophes, wrong in suggesting that the reason for this was that he was simply the 'purest' of the flock, or its most 'modern' member. My argument is that Hume's philosophy - in his moral and political as much as his general philosophy - exhibits the critical, sceptical face of the Enlightenment to an unprecedented degree, but that this theory, too, as much as Kant's, was intended to have practical implications and to affect the way we live and act.<sup>100</sup>

These two theories, then, represent two key elements in the Enlightenment's concept of the relationship of theory to practise, philosophy to politics - reason and scepticism. In examining them, some of the crucial arguments - briefly observed in the reasonings of the 'Humpty Dumpty' and 'Red Queen' theorists in Chapter One - will be available for further examination, but Hume and Kant must (like any other philosphers) be examined first in the context of their time. Having looked at their arguments, I then want, in Chapter Six, to look at some recent and more sophisticated versions of the 'Humpty Dumpty'/'Red Queen' approach, and to examine its methodological underpinnings in some detail. At that point in the final chapter, I shall discuss how consideration of the arguments of Hume and Kant, in their contextual setting, throw new and revealing light on how we can conceive of the relationship of philosophy and politics and, therefore, show how 'Humpty Dumpty' and the 'Red Queen' can finally be laid to rest.

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CHAPTER 4

KANT: Politics and the Claims of Reason

"Reason showed freedom to be conceivable only in order that its supposed impossibility might not endanger Reason's very being and plunge it into an abyss of Scepticism".

Kant:

Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.

"The Rights of man must be held sacred however great a sacrifice the ruling power may have to make. There can be no half-measures here; it is no use devising hybrid solutions such as a pragmatically conditioned right halfway between right and utility. For all politics must bend the knee before right".

Kant:

Zum Ewigen Frieden.

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I have already quoted Ernst Cassirer's opinion that Kant's philosophy "is an edifice which overshadows the Enlightenment even while it represents its final glorification"<sup>1</sup> and have indicated that, whilst a laudatory oversimplification, it contains an element of truth. My aim in this chapter is to present an interpretation of Kant's view of the relationship of philosophy to politics which will illustrate how far we might accept Cassirer's dictum (and how far not) and what the significance of this is for Enlightenment thought in general and my special concern in particular.

I

In general, over the last few years, Kant's political philosophy

has slowly become recognised<sup>2</sup> not only as worthy of study in its own right, but also as important for an understanding of the critical philosophy as a whole. However, as it is necessary for my argument, I will briefly sketch the outlines of Kant's political theory and it seems appropriate to begin, therefore, by quoting Kant himself on the relation of theory and practice, as expressed in his essay 'Über dem Gemeinspruch: Das Mag in der Theorie Richtig Sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis' (here referred to as 'The Essay on Theory and Practice'). "A collection of rules" he writes "is termed a theory if the rules concerned are envisaged as principles of a fairly general nature, and if they are abstracted from numerous conditions which, nonetheless, necessarily influence their practical application. Conversely, not all activities are called practice, but only those realizations of a particular purpose which are considered to comply with certain generally concerned principles of procedure" (KPW 61/ AA VIII 273). This passage is illuminating in a number of ways. It first of all indicates that Kant held the worlds of theory and practice to be distinct though inter-connected. Other philosophers have done this, of course, but Kant is unique in the priority he assigns to the two worlds. As Howard Williams says "What is unique about the distinction Kant draws between theoretical reason and practical reason is that he places the practical world above the theoretical world"<sup>3</sup>. This priority of practical reason is associated with the structure of the first Critique (to which I shall return) but it shows, clearly enough, the importance of the practical for Kant. Against those like Aristotle (and Hume) who would take men as they are in practical reasoning, Kant says that it is crucial in ethical and political theory to take men as they should be.

The passage also suggests, of course, that theoretical and practical reasoning can be conjoined because, as Lewis White Beck suggests<sup>4</sup>, both are trying to do the same thing i.e., impose order on the chaos of our experience. In its own terms, however, theoretical reason is unable to do this (it cannot know enough), but practical reason can: it "follows our demands for unconditional conditions for every motive and for the unity of motives in a pattern of life" and is "an immanent reason actually producing

the objects to correspond to its ideas"<sup>5</sup>.

This is its role in politics as it is, more generally, in morality. "Nowhere" Kant writes in the section on politics of his Theory and Practice essay "does practice so readily bypass all pure principles of reason and treat theory so presumptuously as in the question of what is needed for a good political constitution ..... but" he argues "reason provides a concept which we express by the words political right. And this concept has binding force for human beings who coexist in a state of antagonism produced by their natural freedom, so that it has an objective practical reality irrespective of the good or ill it may produce (for these can only be known by experience). Thus it is based on a priori principles, for experience cannot provide knowledge of what is right and there is a theory of political right to which practice must conform before it can be valid" (KPW 86/AA VIII 306). If we examine this statement more closely and see how Kant deploys the sense of it in his treatment of politics, the exact nature of the relationship between philosophy and practical (especially political) activity in his thought becomes strikingly apparent. This problem is, however, made more difficult by the wide variety of views held by scholars about Kant's political thought. For some (like Reiss, Williams or Saner) "he ought to be ranked among the leading political thinkers of all times"<sup>6</sup>, for his political thought, in some sense, is "the heart of his philosophising"<sup>7</sup>, whereas for those like Dunn and Walker "Kant's domestic politics seem merely archaic and fusty"<sup>8</sup>. My own sympathies lie, quite emphatically, with the former school of thought but the permutations of their rival arguments do not, for the present, concern me, though I shall have something to say about it at the end of this chapter.

For Kant the central question of the political relationship is his account of the question of political obligation. In considering his views on the relationship of philosophy to politics this is a doubly effective place to start for it presents us with the stark picture of a man whose political thought is, in its general tenor, unimpeachably liberal,

completely forbidding the act of rebellion in theory, while at the same time welcoming certain acts of rebellion in practice (i.e., the French and American Revolutions). Does this show Kant's account of the necessary relationship between theory and practice to be incoherent? Kant is certainly singularly unambiguous in his denial of a right to rebellion: "All resistance against the supreme legislative power" he writes in the essay on Theory and Practice "all incitement of the subjects to violent expressions of discontent, all defiance which breaks out into rebellion, is the greatest and most punishable crime in a Commonwealth, for it destroys its very foundations. This prohibition is absolute". (my emphasis). (KPW 81/AA VIII 299). This prohibition sits uneasily in the rest of Kant's political thinking which has, as I shall elaborate later, 'Freedom' as its centrepiece. As Kant argues in his essay Was ist Aufklärung "all that is needed is Freedom and the freedom in question is the most innocuous form of all - freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters". (KPW 55/AA VIII 36). A deeper look even here, however, reveals qualifications, as in Kant's quoting twice, with seeming approval, Frederick the Great's saying "Argue as much as you like, and about whatever you like, but obey!" (KPW 55 and 59) also, despite his own injunction in the same essay that "matters of religion (are) the focal point of enlightenment" (KPW 59), it is seen in his accepting the decision of Frederick that he should never write again on the subject of religion after the publication of Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, in 1793.

Reiss, rightly I think, suggests that Kant was not easy in his own mind about this and quotes an unpublished note of Kant's. "Repudiation and denial of one's inner conviction are evil" it reads, "but silence in a case like the present one is the duty of a subject and while all that one says must be true, this does not mean that it is one's duty to speak out the whole truth in public". (KPW 2/AA XII 406). This unpublished note is, I think, very interesting and revealing, not only about Kant's attitude to that particular case but also for interpretation of his central moral doctrines - but I shall return to this later. However, it is surely apparent from the above that Kant's political thinking does have seeming inconsistencies in it. How might we reconcile them?

To do this we need to go back to the very beginnings of the critical philosophy and remind ourselves that even the great edifice of the first Critique, predominantly concerned as it is with the problems of speculative reason, has a practical purpose too:-

"So far .... as our Critique limits speculative reason it is indeed negative; but since it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason .... it has .... a positive and very important use immediately we are convinced that there is an absolutely necessary practical employment of pure reason - the moral - in which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility". (CPR (B) 26-27/AA III 16).

Kant's whole moral philosophy rests on the distinction between the sensible world and the moral world (to use his own terminology between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds) for which the Critique of Pure Reason was intended to lay the most important conceptual foundations. Structuring the world as he does, therefore, moral principles must be inviolable from empirical attack:-

"A law, if it is to hold morally (i.e., as a ground of obligation), must imply absolute necessity .... the ground of obligation .... must not be sought in the nature of man or in the circumstances in which he is placed but sought a priori solely in the concepts of pure reason". (FMM p. 5-6/AA IV 389).

The above quotation also introduces the predominant element in Kant's moral theory - the concept of obligation. Now the general thrust of Kant's moral theory is well enough known to obviate the need for me to outline it here,<sup>9</sup> but it must be seen that it rests on the foundations erected in the first Critique - principally the postulate of freedom enshrined in the third antinomy and assumed throughout the rest of his work.

Kant intended his moral philosophy to be a guide for individual moral action and equally his political philosophy is a guide for

political action. "A state" he says in Der Metaphysik der Sitten "is a union of a multitude of men under Laws of Justice. In so far as these laws are necessary a priori and follow from the concepts of external justice in general .... the form of the state is that of a state in general, that is the idea of what a state ought to be according to pure principles of justice. This idea provides an internal guide and standard for every actual union of men in a commonwealth". (MJ p.77/AA VI 313). No clearer indication of Kant's belief that philosophy could be a guide to political practice could be given.

Kant's ordering of powers within a state is also relevant here. Kant distinguishes between a state of nature, which can include societies of sorts, and a state under rightful laws, which is out of the state of nature. What makes the difference is the organisation of the three branches of government - sovereign, executive and judicial - and Kant makes quite clear, as Peter Nicholson has rightly pointed out,<sup>10</sup> that the sovereign - for which Nicholson reads the legislative power - is, in fact, supreme.

It is the sovereign, of course, which passes the laws which establish the framework of civil society. For Kant this means what he calls 'Public Law', for he argues that there are two types of law; natural law (or Private Law) and civil law (or Public Law). This division is predicated upon the distinction he makes (which I have already remarked upon) between a society within a state of nature and one beyond the state of nature. The transition from state of nature to civil society is made by means of the separation of powers and conceived through the idea of the original contract:-

"All the three authorities .... are necessary to the formation of a state .... they embody the relationship of a universal suzerain (who, if regarded under the laws of freedom, can be none other than the united people) to the aggregate of individuals regarded as subjects. That is the relationship of commander (imperans) to one who obeys (subditus). The act by means of which the people constitute themselves a state is the original contract. More properly it is the

idea of that act that alone enables us to conceive of the legitimacy of the state". (MJ 80/AA VI 315).

Now Kant, of course, does not consider this to have been a necessary historical process (though approximations to it may have occurred in the past). It is a conceptual device, but a conceptual device of great practical importance for it is the apex of Kant's political thought and the point at which his moral and political philosophies converge and, therefore, the point at which the unity of his philosophical enterprise is most apparent.

Let us look at this a little more closely. Kant's denial of the right to resist in the essay on theory and practice is repeated, with added emphasis, in the first part of the Metaphysik der Sitten:-

"There can .... be no legitimate resistance of the people to the legislative chief of the state; .... it is the people's duty to endure even the most intolerable abuse of supreme authority. The reason for this is that resistance to the supreme legislature can itself only be unlawful, indeed it must be conceived as destroying the entire lawful constitution because, in order for it to be authorised, there would have to be a public law that would permit the resistance". (MJ 86/AA VI 320).

Indeed, Kant goes even further:-

"Moreover, if a revolution has succeeded .... the illegitimacy of its beginning and of its success cannot free the subjects from being bound to accept the new order of things as good citizens". (MJ 89/AA VI 323).

He concludes, in fact, that - in an almost Hobbesian phrase - "the sovereign in the state has many rights with respect to the subject but no (coercive) duties". (MJ 85/AA VI 319).

Kant's reasons for this denial, as the above quotation suggests, are rooted in his moral philosophy. For an individual, under no matter what provocation, to resist the sovereign is a violation



of the moral law, that "I should never act in such a way that I could not also will that my maxim should be a universal law". (FMM 21/AA IV 402). It is so, for the simple and obvious reason that such an act of resistance could not, according to Kant, be universalized without destroying the concept of law itself and thereby destroying the state. Resistance to the sovereign is also (transparently) unlawful - in order for it not to be, there would have to be a law authorising it; a ridiculous state of affairs which, Kant says, is patently self-contradictory as it would imply a power greater than that which is, necessarily, the greatest power in the land. Kant's system of duties for the individual citizen is based on a second dichotomy. "All legislation" argues Kant "consists of two elements: first a law that objectively represents the action that is to be done as necessary, that is what makes the action a duty; second an incentive that subjectively links the ground determining will to this action with the representation of the law .... therefore" Kant continues "all legislation can .... be differentiated with regard to the incentives. If legislation makes an action a duty and at the same time makes this duty the incentive it is ethical. If it does not include the latter condition in the law and therefore admits an incentive other than the Idea of duty itself, it is juridical .... The mere agreement or disagreement of an action within the law .... is called legality; but when the Idea of duty arising from the law is at the same time the incentive of the action, then the agreement is called the morality of the action". (MJ 18-19 / AA VI 218-19).

Kant concludes from all this that "All duties, simply because they are duties, belong to Ethics. But their legislation is not, therefore, always included under ethics: in the case of many duties it is quite outside ethics". (MJ 20 /AA VI 220).

For Kant, therefore, political obligation is both an ethical and a juridical duty and thus doubly enjoined on citizens. An act of rebellion is wrong because it 'destroys the very foundation of a commonwealth': it is also, obviously, illegal. Kant offers us, however, a further aspect of the relationship between philosophy and practice if we consider briefly the remarks he makes about history. It is an over-remarked irony

in the history of ideas that the same Kant who gave such an unambiguous denial of the right to revolt, was a sympathizer with the two most successful revolutions of his own time: the American and French Revolutions! (Heine even went so far as to call him "the philosopher of the French Revolution"). There is only a superficial incongruity here, however, and the way it is resolved can be seen in Kant's writings on history where his reflections show once again the centrality to his thought of the postulate of freedom. As I have already said, in his famous essay defining the Enlightenment Kant stated "All that is needed is freedom .... freedom to make public use of ones reason on all matters". (KPW 55 / AA VIII 36). Of course this is not yet achieved (very far from it); "If it is asked whether we at present live in an enlightened age the answer is no, but we do live in an age of Enlightenment". (KPW 58/AA VIII 40). He suggests in the latter part of the essay that eventually this gradual accretion of freedom will achieve the end he sets for it - enlightenment itself: "mans emergence from his self-incurred immaturity". (KPW 54/AA VIII 35). In a paper published the same year (1794), Idee zu einer Allgemeinen Geschichte in Weltburgerlicher Absicht, Kant enlarges upon this theme. He does so tentatively, with no great certainty, regarding the enterprise chiefly as what a "philosophical mind well acquainted with history" (KPW 53/AA VIII 31) might derive from its study but, nonetheless, believes that it can "give us some guidance in explaining the thoroughly confused interplay of human affairs". (KPW 52/AA VIII 31).

Kant develops his thesis by arguing first, that all natural capacities develop in conformity with some end; secondly, that, in man, such capacities as are associated with Reason could be developed fully only in the species (not the individual) and thirdly, that nature intended man's happiness to be a product of his own instinct and reason. With these three observations made, Kant argues that the inevitable antagonism within society creates "Law governed social order and thus leads to the greatest problem for the human species ..... that of attaining a civil society which can administer justice universally". (KPW 45/AA VIII 22). This state may never come into being, Kant thinks, but some approximation to it will. A law-governed relationship between states will begin the process, in its turn brought about by the

same antagonism that operates in the civil union, "Distress (of wars etc.) .... force....states .... to renounce brutish freedom and seek calm and security within a law governed constitution". (KPW 48/AA VIII 24). Gradually, as nations become more and more interdependent, war will be seen as prohibitively expensive and internally too damaging to be considered and thus "after many revolutions .... a universal cosmopolitan existence will at last be realised as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop .... The history of the human race .... can be regarded as the realisation of a hidden plan of nature to bring out an internally - and for this purpose also externally - perfect constitution as the only possible state within which all natural capacities of mankind can be developed completely". (KPW 51/50 /AA VIII 28/27).

Kant's argument in the Idea for a Universal History is, be it noted, a purely explanatory one and one aimed (in Kantian terminology) at the phenomenal world; it attempts to show how an aim manifestly good in the context of Kant's general moral philosophy, can (or even will) be achieved. I shall, therefore, call it Kant's 'phenomenal' teleology.

There is another side to this teleological approach which interconnects both with the empirical, explanatory argument outlined above and with the a priori arguments of Kant's moral philosophy. This is the approach to teleology found in part ii of the Kritik der Urteilskraft. Here, Kant displays precisely what it is that, for him, makes morality so uniquely important for mankind and it is here that Kant's difference from Hume (and indeed, from all positivists, materialists, empiricists and sceptics) is most obvious.

"There is nothing in nature" Kant argues (repeating a theme from the first Critique) "for which the determining ground present in itself would not be always conditioned and this holds not merely of external (material) nature but also of internal (thinking) nature - it being, of course, understood that I only am considering that in myself which is nature". (CJ 285/AA V 435). But "a thing that is to exist necessarily on account of its objective constitution as the final purpose of an intelligent cause, must

be of the kind that, in the order of purposes, it is dependant on no further condition than merely its idea". (CJ 285/AA V 435).

There is only one being in the world "whose causality is teleological i.e., directed to purposes and is at the same time so constituted that the law according to which they have to determine purposes .... is independent of natural conditions and yet is itself necessary; the being of this kind is man, but man considered as noumenon. The only natural being in which we can recognise, on the side of its peculiar constitution, a super sensible faculty (freedom) and also the law of causality, together with the object which this faculty may propose to itself as highest purpose (the highest good in the world)". (CJ 285/AA V 435).

We can, for the present, ignore the question of how far Kant's arguments may be said to be valid or not, in order to see exactly what it is he is trying to do. This aspect of Kant's teleology (in keeping with the first, I shall call it Kant's 'noumenal' teleology) places morality at the heart of human life - he is, in effect, saying that it is our moral capacity that makes us human for it is this that releases us from total servitude to nature and thus differentiates us from the other sentient aspects of creation. Of course, both aspects of teleology would, to Kant, reinforce each other. Phenomenal teleology would help individuals to recognise and act upon their moral duty and recognition of our final purpose and its character, will encourage and speed up the approximation to the 'perfect political constitution' Kant thinks must come.

All the above are, of course, philosophical reflections; coherent observations in one of the most far-reaching and complex philosophical constructions - yet Kant's moral advice is rooted in them and the actions he wishes us to take in both the practical and the political worlds are conclusions drawn from his philosophical reasonings. Of course, in order to accept them one has to accept the system (or at least part of it) but for Kant there can be no doubt that philosophical reasoning and practical reasoning - while distinct - were complimentary aims of true reason. One can, therefore, understand how Kant's explanatory theories could show that the French and American Revolutions served good ends according

to his moral theory, whilst that self-same moral theory forbade the act of revolt. In Kant's view, philosophy is understanding the world, and the understanding of ourselves it brings about would commend certain actions as good (and therefore to be undertaken) and others as evil (and therefore to be refrained from). It is, after all, this capacity for reasoned moral experience and reflection which makes us distinctively human.

## II

The above, then, is an outline sketch of how Kant merges his general philosophy and his moral and political philosophy. There are, of course, a number of problems with this approach and in section III of this chapter I shall concentrate on potentially the most dangerous (that Kant fails adequately to establish the link between his general philosophy and his moral theory). For the moment, however, a few points that arise out of this analysis deserve closer scrutiny. It will be remembered that, according to Gay, "The philosophy of the Enlightenment insisted on man's essential autonomy" and we find this feature across the board of Enlightenment political thought from Montesquieu and Voltaire to Rousseau; but it is nowhere as well-deployed or as central as it is in Kant. Kant's moral theory, it has been well observed, is essentially expressed in the language of duty and "Kant assumed from the first that duty is essentially a phenomenon of volition (and) since duty expresses a necessary relationship between a moral subject and an object of his volition, it represents a necessity of freedom rather than of nature"<sup>12</sup>.

The Enlightenment's claims for autonomy extended across the boundary of morality, of course, (it was precisely this that gave it its political force) and Kant's theory, also his denial of the right to rebel, far from denying man's essential autonomy is founded upon it, but upon man's autonomy considered as a rationally chosen moral will.

As Schrader points out "Kant's reasoning seems to be that an imperative can be no stronger than the end to which it is related. If the end is either arbitrary or only contingently necessary, the imperative that enjoins us to promote it cannot be unconditionally binding".<sup>13</sup> Schrader criticises this on the grounds that Kant may have confused the enunciation of commands and their acceptance or recognition but, for the moment, this need not concern us. What does is the character of Kant's manifestation of this aspect of Enlightenment political thought. As Marcuse has rightly pointed out "All formulations of Kant's concept of right signify a synthesis of opposites: the unity of arbitrary will (willkür) and right, freedom and compulsion, the individual and the community."<sup>14</sup> His emphasis on the autonomous nature of the will, is matched by his insistence on the necessary nature of human society and therefore government which coerces individual nature. From these two implicitly opposed premises he derives his two sets of duties; ethical and juridical. The juridical duties are in tune with the categorical imperative (indeed, obviously so) but they recognise and cater for (as the categorical imperative cannot) the dual, flawed nature of man.<sup>15</sup>

Here, it can be seen that the two main elements of Enlightenment thought are combined and synthesized in Kant. What Williams calls Kant's 'universalist' approach<sup>16</sup> mirrors, essentially, the Rousseauian one,<sup>17</sup> whilst his account of juridical duty has more in common with elements of mainstream Enlightenment thought. In this sense Kant's view of the autonomous nature of man, though absolute, is at home chiefly in the ethical sphere for which the autonomy of man in the juridical sphere helps to set the parameters. Charles Taylor suggests<sup>18</sup> that Kant's theory follows Rousseau's specifically in rejecting the mainstream (Taylor calls it 'naturalistic') Enlightenment's view of freedom and nature. "It was Rousseau" he argues "who turned the tables on the naturalistic theory. He rehabilitates the distinction between virtue and vice ..... the key to vice is other-dependance, a failure to be determined by one's own internal purpose and virtue is nothing other than the recovery of this self-determination. Morality is critical freedom ..... To be virtuous is to be able to listen to the inner voice of nature; to be dependant on oneself.

It was with Rousseau that (this) important feature of modern culture' ..... emerges ..... Freedom becomes the central value ..... Kant follows Rousseau in offering (a) theory of freedom as reconnected to morality ..... (and) the centrepiece of Kant's doctrine is the notion of Rationality. The error of the naturalistic Enlightenment for Kant is that it sees Rationality as having a purely instrumental role".<sup>19</sup>

I think Taylor is right in the sense that it was Rousseau's concern with connecting morality and freedom that struck a chord in Kant's pietist heart, but wrong in arguing that Kant was as distant as Rousseau from the concerns of the mainstream Enlightenment. To be sure Kant regarded Reason (as did Rousseau) in a different way than Hume - the 'representative' of the mainstream Enlightenment that Taylor cites<sup>20</sup> - but, as I shall argue in the next chapter, Hume, far from being the quintessential mainstream Enlightenment figure (as he is so often held to be and as Taylor assumes), is the most radical and subversive of the philosophic flock (with the sole exception of Rousseau himself). Kant's dictum, expressed memorably in the first Critique, that Reason is like a judge who "compels the witnesses to answer questions which he himself has formulated" (CPR 20/AA III 16) certainly echoes Rousseau (as Taylor justly claims) but does it not also echo Montesquieu who 'draws his principles from the nature of things' examined by his reason?<sup>21</sup>

Taylor is right, though, in seeing Kant's notion of Rationality as central to his project. "Reason is given to us" as Kant says "as a practical faculty i.e., one which is meant to have an influence on the will" (FMM 15/AA IV 396). As I have already pointed out, for Kant, practical Reason was in a sense superior to theoretical Reason as it was determinable in a way the latter was not - it could provide what Williams calls "an object for its conception".<sup>22</sup> The conception concerned is, fundamentally, a notion of freedom dependent on a conception of rationality.

According to Taylor, for Kant, rationality imposes obligations on us as rational agents "The moral law is thus essentially a

law we give to ourselves . . . . . In Kant's term, the moral will is necessarily autonomous. The law it follows is its own; what reason and reason alone has dictated to it. And so Kant, like Rousseau, makes freedom central to morality".<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, this freedom must be seen in a social context. We are free in that we stand in a certain kind of moral order - what Kant calls 'Das Reich der Zwecke' - conceived as "A systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws". (FMM 59/AA IV 433). As Taylor admits, for Kant this order is an ideal - it is not realised on earth - but recognising it is part of being free and such recognition means recognising the necessity of our social nature. It is this recognition that brings about the political realm, for our harmonious social life is impossible without it.

These two notions, rationality and freedom, are of crucial importance for Kant's political philosophy - and for his attitude towards how philosophy relates to politics.

This can be best illustrated if we turn briefly to Hans Saner's treatment of Kant's political thought in his Widerstreit und Einheit: Weger zu Kant's Politischem Denken. According to Saner "The circle of problems central to political thought can be circumscribed in Kant's phrase 'The way to peace' . . . . . 'Way to peace' is a figure of speech that encompasses the war/peace dualism, which in turn points to such other dualisms as repulsion/attraction, motion/rest, chaos/order, diversity/unity, difference/identity".<sup>24</sup> Saner's view is that what this emphasises is the element of 'conflict' or 'struggle' in Kantian thought and that it identifies "the turn from diversity to unity" as the same problem across the whole field of Kantian philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

He specifically concentrates on the idea of 'polemic' in Kant's work and suggests that Kant sees different 'modes' in polemical discourse.<sup>26</sup> "To controvert for truth's sake; to dispute for the sake of being right i.e., superior in argument",<sup>27</sup> he quotes Kant as saying, meaning that "A polemic carried on for truth's sake would be a controversy, while a dispute would be a quarrel sought in order to strengthen one's ego. The aim of the first is cognition; the aim of the second, victory. Only



the first can be truly philosophical; the second is a collective term for philosophical perversions".<sup>28</sup>

Saner's conclusion is that we find two basic ideas of polemics in Kant - the socratic and the eristic. In Der Streit der Fakultäten, Kant calls the distinction one between 'lawful' and 'unlawful' debates. (AA VII 1-116; see esp. pp 18-30).

Saner discusses ten Kantian variants of these 'modes of polemical combat',<sup>29</sup> but argues that they all ultimately collapse to the two above, each itself subdivided into two forms. "The dichotomies" he writes "take their bearings from the will that sets off the debate. There is a correspondence between controversy and lawful debate and between dispute and unlawful debate. Common to the first pair is the principle of solidarity in the will to truth and reason, while the principle common to the second pair is the exclusive will to a triumph of subjectivity".<sup>30</sup> The four 'types' of polemics are, therefore, quarrel, polemical use of reason, debate and dispute<sup>31</sup> and, argues Saner, they have counterparts in the political realm; respectively, war of aggression sustained by power, war waged for the right, the political struggle for reason and law.

In politics the analogies of the polemics are wedded to Kant's concept of taste. In Kritik der Urteilskraft Kant gives the antinomies of taste as follows:

- "1. Taste is neither disputable nor debatable.
2. Taste is disputable. There is one taste, based upon objective grounds of judgement .....
3. Taste is debatable, though not disputable, contention brings an accord into view although there is no compelling in it".<sup>32</sup> (CJ 183-191/AA V 338 ff).

The importance of this lies in the fact that taste is educated in public, "that it is a way to civilization, just as sociality is such a way: that it is a means to promote culture and at the same time a product of culture: that it is finally a propaedeutic for developing morality just as the development of morality is a school for taste. As a means of civilization, cultivation and

moralization, taste becomes a public propaedeutic of republican polemics".<sup>33</sup>

Thus, in Kant, we have a theory that is both individualistic in the strongest terms possible (thus echoing much of the thinking of the mainstream Enlightenment) and socialistic in that a polity is necessary for us to exercise our moral capacity. It is interesting to note that Patrick Riley once suggested that Rousseau's 'General Will' could best be seen as an attempt to combine what he called "ancient cohesiveness and modern voluntarism".<sup>34</sup> The 'General Will', for Riley, is "a fusion of the generality (unity, communality) of antiquity with the will (consent, contract) of modernity".<sup>35</sup> As Riley notes, this leaves the problem of making will at once individual and communitarian. In Rousseau, according to Riley, the problem is solved as "consent is no longer to be a question of mere volition and the general will is something like a modified common good morality".<sup>36</sup>

In Rousseau, however, this notion is notoriously vague and ultimately gives way in his political theory to the 'deus ex machina' of the legislator. Now Kant, working from similar premisses and (as I have argued) recognising, like Rousseau, the dichotomy between individualism and the necessity of our communal life, found the bridge in the postulate of freedom and its necessary premiss, a universalist view of rationality. In these premisses and in their application, Kant fuses the two traditions of Enlightenment thought into one that has, as Taylor says, "made him one of the most important thinkers in the development of modern culture".<sup>37</sup> As I have already stated, Kant himself in his famous laudatory essay looking back on 'the century of philosophy' defined enlightenment as "freedom to make public use of ones reason in all matters" (KPW 55/AA VIII 34). There, in one sentence, Kant expresses the three essentials of his political theory and the plainest possible reasons for linking philosophy and politics irrevocably together - individual freedom, the use of reason and a 'public arena' in which to use it, and (to understand all of these properly) the limits to reason must be known, the idea of freedom postulated and the 'public arena' defined.

III

Finally, in this chapter, I want to paint on a somewhat broader canvas and indicate where I think the significance of this lies for my wider theme (i.e., for the 'problems of modern culture' etc sketched by MacIntyre, to which I referred in chapter one) and to answer one powerful objection to the view of Kant I have outlined here.

In this, some of the ideas that distance Kant both from the mainstream Enlightenment and Rousseau are more obvious, and especially so in Die Religion Uberhalls der Grezer der Blosser Vernunft (hereafter Religion) which helps, with the second Critique, to provide for the three postulates Kant connects with the 'enlarged' Moral law i.e., the summum bonum; freedom, immortality and God.

The first, and in many ways the most central, I have just explained; the second two depend on postulates explored in the Religion concerning the nature of the radical evil to which mankind is heir. This evil is that which attacks the boundaries of the moral law in us itself and is not merely our sensual appetite. In this material is to be found views of human nature far removed from the tolerant cynicism of Voltaire, the exasperated materialism of Diderot, or the anguished passion of Rousseau. For Kant there is both an (atemporal) fall and a (revolutionary and atemporal) repentance.

The views found here can be connected to a number of remarks in the opus postumum and to the second part of the Kritik der Urteilskraft to show that Kant's teleology is far subtler than MacIntyre, for example, allows.<sup>38</sup> Kant's teleology, as J.N.Findlay remarks, "helps to gather together Kant's whole thought regarding the relation of the phenomenal to the noumenal".<sup>39</sup> We saw earlier<sup>40</sup> how, in his writings on history, Kant displays a 'phenomenal' teleology in the Kritik der Urteilskraft and that this is wedded to an organic noumenal teleology which, for Kant, shows that (in Findlay's words) "The possibility of unifying

teleology with mechanism cannot be allowed at the phenomenal level, we have to think in terms of the supersensuous substrate of nature, where the same phenomena, superficially ordered by a system of mechanical laws, are also the expression of a deeper system of organising purposes. Such a system of purposes must be woven around a single unifying purpose and no such unifying purpose is to be found in phenomenal nature ..... it is here that practical reason with its unconditional moral imperatives rescues us from the impasse; man as subject to the moral law has an unconditional absolute need in the fulfillment of that law".<sup>41</sup> Kant expresses it this way:-

"We have in the world only one kind of beings whose causality is teleological ..... The being of this kind is man ..... considered as a noumenon". (CJ 285/AA V 435)

In these reflections two points of immediate relevance to my purpose emerge. First, here displayed beyond any doubt at all is Kant's Leibnizian, rationalist heritage and it is this more than anything else which marks Kant off from both main strands of Enlightenment thought. In this he is the heir of an older tradition (via Leibniz, Wolff and Baumgarten as I mentioned in Chapter three) and therefore incorporates this into his philosophy. With this perspective it is possible to see that, far from his late emphasis on teleology indicating his awareness of the 'failure' of the Enlightenment project - as MacIntyre argues - it is assumed throughout the whole critical philosophy and is integral to it. In its turn the critical philosophy is, in part, a recognition of the value of much of the mainstream Enlightenment's empirical, critical theorizing, without the complete abandonment of an earlier tradition of rationalistic thought. Rather than a recognition of the Enlightenment's failure, Kant's teleology is a measure of its success.

In this respect Kant offers some instructive parallels with Locke. John Dunn has claimed that "The entire framework of (Locke's) thinking was 'Theocentric' and the key commitment of his intellectual life as a whole was the epistemological vindication of this framework".<sup>42</sup>

With some minor qualifications, as the above study has indicated, a similar claim could be made about Kant. Dunn further argues that "Locke presumed that there were strict theoretical implications between the abandonment of theocentrism, the acceptance of a purely internal conception of human rational agency and the resting of all human rights and duties on the contingencies of human opinion".<sup>43</sup> Kant argued that, in fact, a true understanding of the nature of human agency and what makes it up - taking on board much of the critical work of the mainstream Enlightenment and the individual/community dichotomy of Rousseau - would show that God was necessary for it and thus provide the requisite theocentric element.

In this Kant was, of course, disagreeing with his fellows in the philosophical family on both sides and also (as I shall examine in the next Chapter) underestimating the threat posed by Hume both to himself and to the others. Yet, again, it was in no sense a 'failure' of the Enlightenment Kant diagnosed - more its emerging success.

"If it is now asked whether we at present live in an enlightened age the answer is no, but we do live in an age of Enlightenment ..... once the germ on which nature has lavished most care - man's inclination and vocation to think freely - has developed ..... it gradually reacts upon the mentality of the people, who thus gradually become increasingly able to act freely".  
(KPW 58,59/AA VIII 40,41).

Given all of the above, it will be seen that Kant's philosophy is, in one sense, the 'final glorification of the Enlightenment' (as Cassirer argued) but only when the differences, as well as the similarities, between the two are clarified. Kant plainly saw his philosophy as being intimately related to his political theory. By concentration on a number of aspects of human existence from understanding through to freedom, immortality and God, he held to a certain necessary view of rationality and freedom, despite the multifarious manifestations of human nature and predicated his moral and political theory upon this. It was, in its turn, buttressed by his account of how we understand

and what we understand and what that reveals about the nature of the world.

Kant's philosophy represents a 'glorification' of Enlightenment thought in that most of the characteristic themes of the Enlightenment are taken up in it. Specifically, in his political theory, the great divide between Rousseau and the mainstream Enlightenment is bridged by the postulate of freedom (predicated on the universalist view of Rationality) and what Kant derives from it. Like Rousseau, Kant believed that we must adapt ourselves to a cosmic order and that no-one can force us to it - we must be 'ruler and ruled', 'lawgiver and subject' - yet the mechanism Kant uses to produce this effect is a view of Rationality that many of the mainstream Enlightenment could have accepted; there is no need for a 'general will' as long as there are individual particular wills which are in accordance with the Categorical Imperative.

At the same time there is much in Kant that both has echoes of the past and prefigures the future. His relation to 17th Century Rationalism (and in particular Leibniz) is well known and in a felicitous analogy J.N. Findlay has drawn attention to the marked similarity of much of Kant's account of our phenomenal predicament to Plato's - in particular to the analogy of the Cave: "the Platonic cave-dwellers, like the Kantian ones, are unable to see the objects that cast the variously shaped and arranged shadows on their cave wall and had to be content with noting how they accompany or follow one another and with projecting such regularities into the imagined future, finding their substitute for substantial things and causal relations in the systematic inter-relations of the shadows whether actual or possible ..... (indeed) the Kantian cave-dwellers are much disadvantaged in comparison with the Platonic ones and their intimations of a being-in-itself which transcends the vanishing and the bounded and which is necessary rather than contingent, are much dimmer .... and their intimations of a moral law which transcends impulse and of a freedom which promulgates and can carry out that law and of a secret teleology responsible for the beauty and order" they see in appearances are likewise much vaguer and more problematic".<sup>44</sup>

In a yet more apt phrase, Findlay ties together Plato and Kant with perhaps the most Kantian of modern thinkers - Wittgenstein "for, if Plato placed men in a cave from which egress was, with effort, possible, Kant placed them in a cave from which escape was impossible in this life though it remained thinkable and desirable. Wittgenstein, however, constructed a habitation for hermits (or for a single hermit) from which escape was not only impossible but neither thinkable nor desirable except owing to a confusion".<sup>45</sup>

The similarities between Kant and Wittgenstein have been remarked on before,<sup>46</sup> and they point to another interesting fact. A number of analytical philosophers have held Kant to be an immensely fruitful and interesting philosopher while virtually ignoring his political philosophy. Ralph Walker has already been mentioned, and even so acute and perceptive a critic as Peter Strawson in the Bounds of Sense,<sup>47</sup> is severe on those parts of Kant's system that go to make up his Transcendental Idealism and which include, of course, freedom, immortality and God; precisely those parts of Kant's system most essential (in Kant's own view) for linking the theoretical and the practical. (Findlay, by contrast, would keep most of the concepts but abandon the name Transcendental Idealism.)<sup>48</sup>

Now, admittedly, Strawson's essay is specifically on the first Critique, so a detailed treatment of Kant's moral theory is not called for, but he uncompromisingly rejects as incoherent precisely those parts of Kant's system which Kant himself felt most vital to his whole project (i.e., linking together the theoretical and the practical):- "If the natural world were all there was" Strawson says "Kant (would) hold (that) human freedom would be an illusion and the ideal of moral justice would be a dream perpetually mocked by the facts. But the sphere denied to knowledge is thereby left open to a morally certified, though uncomprehending, faith that the reality of human freedom is somehow secured in the sphere and moral justice is really there attained. Clearly" he goes on "the belief in ..... supersensible reality is essential to this part of Kant's doctrine".<sup>49</sup>

Strawson further argues that "It is, manifestly, of importance .....

to ensure that there is a point of connexion, in the way of identity, between the supersensible world and the world of human beings, between things as they are in themselves on the one hand and Kant and his meanders ..... on the other. Without such a point of connexion, in the way of identity, the claim that freedom is at least possible (though to us incomprehensible) as a property of supersensible beings would be without relevance to the moral nature or situation of human beings".<sup>50</sup>

Strawson argues, however, that "There is no refuge but incoherence from the question how the connexion is to be made, in the way of identity, between the natural being, the man, with a mental history of thoughts, perceptions and feelings and the supersensible being, with no history at all, 'in which the representation of time has its original ground'".<sup>51</sup> This is because, according to Strawson, "The point of contact, in the way of identity ..... is to be found ..... in the man's consciousness of his own possession and exercise of the power of thought, of the facilities of understanding and reason. There immediately arise (however) on Kant's own principles, first, that anything which can be ascribed to a man as a case or instance of self-consciousness must be something that occurs in time, and, second, that it must be consciousness of himself as reasoning or recognising or thinking something, as intellectually engaged at some point or over some stretch of time. Any such self-consciousness must, it seems, belong to the history of (and must be consciousness of some episode belonging to the history of) a being which has a history and hence is not a supersensible being, not 'the subject in which the representation of time has its original ground'".<sup>52</sup>

I have examined Strawson's argument in some detail partly because it represents the high-water mark of analytical sympathetic criticism of Kant and partly because he draws attention to a very real apparent lacuna in the first Critique which might vitiate much of the rest of Kant's undertaking if it cannot be met. Two considerations can be fruitfully introduced, however, to suggest how it might be met.

First, it seems far from clear that Strawson's argument is as convincing a knock-down as he himself clearly thinks it to be.



To say this is not to deny that Kant displays lapses, lack of clarity, infelicities of argument or inconsistency in the way he deploys some of his arguments, but it is to suggest that Strawson's criticism at least partly misses the point. It does this because, in his treatment of the Transcendental Dialectic, he denies most strongly what Kant affirms i.e., that despite our lack of knowledge of our unitary consciousness, things in themselves and supersensible reality, we can think of and about them and that we must think about them as they are the necessary foundations for much of our understanding of practical, scientific or theoretical life. In his concern for strict certainty and logical coherence Strawson employs the Kantian principle of significance so ruthlessly that he fails to limit it as Kant does (as Findlay rightly points out)<sup>53</sup> and consequently ends up grossly distorting the Kantian position. It is, for example, not the case that Kant merely 'assumes' the identity of the real or supersensible subject as Strawson alleges.<sup>54</sup> "Pure Reason" Kant claims in the Antinomy of Pure Reason "is not subject to the form of time (CPR A551, B579/AA III 373) ..... For since reason is not itself an appearance and is not subject to any conditions of sensibility it follows that even as regards its causality there is in it no time sequence and that the dynamical law of nature which determines succession in time in accordance with rules is not applicable to it ..... Reason, therefore, acts freely; it is not dynamically determined in the chain of natural causes through either outer or inner grounds antecedent in time". (CPR A553, B581/AA III 375-5) This might, of course, be invalid (on other grounds) but it is not a 'mere' assumption.

Secondly, examination of the rest of the Kantian corpus also goes some way to refuting Strawson's assertion. That Strawson (merely by assumption?) arguably distorts whatever Kant says and, in any case, is certainly unjustified in alledging a prima facie incoherence in the Transcendental Dialectic, is born out if the introduction to the third Critique is examined. Here Kant divides philosophy into theoretical and practical by means of concepts:-

"Now there are only two kinds of concepts" he goes on "and these admit as many distinct principles as the possibility of their objects, viz: natural concepts and the concept

of freedom. The former renders possible theoretical cognition according to principles a priori, the latter in respect of this theoretical cognition only supplies in itself a negative principle (that of mere contrast) but, on the other hand, it furnishes fundamental propositions which extend the sphere of the determination of the will and are therefore called practical".

(CJ 7/AA V 171)

Kant goes on to make a further distinction between technically practical principles and morally practical principles (according to whether the concept which determines the causality of the will is natural or that of freedom) and then argues that "the natural concepts which contain the ground of all theoretical knowledge a priori rest on the legislation of the understanding. The concept of freedom which contains the ground of all sensuously unconditioned practical precepts a priori rests on the legislation of the reason. Both faculties, therefore, besides being capable of application as regards their logical form to principles of whatever origin, have also, as regards their context, their special legislations above which there is no other (a priori) and hence the division of philosophy ..... is justified. But in the family of the supreme cognitive faculties there is a middle term between the understanding and the reason. This is the judgement". (CJ 13/AA V 177)

Kant alleges also a third triad - The three 'faculties' - knowledge, desire, and pleasure and pain and argues that "for the faculty of knowledge the understanding is alone legislative ..... For the faculty of desire, as a supreme faculty according to the concept of freedom, the reason (in which alone this concept has a place) is alone a priori legislative. Now between the faculties of knowledge and desire there is the feeling of pleasure ..... we may therefore suppose provisionally that the judgement likewise contains in itself an a priori principle. And as pleasure or pain is necessarily combined with the faculty of desire ..... we may also suppose that the judgement will bring about a transition from the pure faculty of knowledge, the realm of natural concepts, to the realm of the concept of freedom, just as in its logical use it makes possible the transition from understanding to reason".

(CJ14-15/AA V 178-9)



Now with this argument, Kant displays very clearly how he would have wanted to get round Strawson's objection that "the indentity of the empirical self-conscious subject and the real or supersensible subject"<sup>55</sup> is simply assumed and not proved. Even in the first Critique the argument is given some basis (as I indicated above) and in the third it is made explicit that the link between them is not something that can be 'proved' on the categories of understanding or reason (the subject of the first two Critiques) but can be indicated by considering judgement - the final link in the chain of rationality that bridges the two.

A further example of this refutation of Strawson's view is contained - at least by implication - in Kant's lectures on Anthropology.

Here he divides consciousness of ourselves into two - consciousness of reflection and consciousness of apprehension. "The first" he says "is consciousness of understanding, the second of inner sense ..... This self-contains a plurality of determinations through which an inner experience is made possible". (APV 15n/AA VII 134n). Here, surely, is an anticipation of the view that we can have a plurality of beings (noumenal and phenomenal, for example) and, at the same time, be one.

This has, of course, met with much criticism<sup>56</sup> but it serves to illustrate at least that, in the wider context of the critical philosophy, the claims that Kant makes for the intimate connections in his system between philosophy, morality and politics are not incoherent (Strawson's charge) though they may, of course, be wrong and I shall briefly take up that particular question in Chapter Six. Yet if, as I have argued, Strawson is wrong in suggesting that Kant fails to give a plausible basis for his transcendental arguments linking understanding reason and judgement - and, therefore, knowledge, desire and feeling and philosophy, morality and politics - egress from the Kantian cave is, perhaps, not quite as impossible as Findlay supposed. Strawson's argument, though freeing the Kantian analytic, would have bound the dialectic (together with its moral, political and theological offshoots) into a Strawsonian hermitage even more narrow and confining than that of Wittgenstein.

If we take stock of the critical philosophy as a whole, however, I think it is clear that this is not the picture that emerges. The third Critique, in Peter Gay's phrase, "heals the dualisms that divide the world"<sup>57</sup> and in doing this it represents the purpose of the Kantian philosophy: To reconcile these world-dividing dualisms, Rationalist/Empiricist, Noumenal/Phenomenal, Knowledge/Freedom, Individual/Community.

In so doing he tied his political thought and philosophy irrevocably together - one might disagree with aspects (or all) of both (or either) but one cannot separate them.

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CHAPTER 5

HUME: Scepticism and the Moral Sciences

"To begin with clear and self-evident principles, to advance by timerous and sure steps, to review frequently our conclusions; and examine accurately all their consequences;....(these) are the only methods by which we can ever hope to reach truth, and attain a proper stability and certainty in our determinations".

Hume:

The Enquiry Concerning Human  
Understanding.

"Here then, is the chief triumph of art and philosophy, it insensibly refines the temper and it pours out to us those dispositions, which we should endeavour to attain, by a constant bent of mind and by repeated habit."

Hume:

The Sceptic

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Among the philosophes (as Peter Gay has observed) David Hume occupies a prominent but rather elusive place.<sup>1</sup> Much the same, I think, can be said of his position in modern philosophy. Not that his importance is disputed, only where that importance truly lies. In this chapter I want to do two things. First, I shall offer an interpretation of Hume which emphasises (or perhaps I should say re-emphasises) the central place scepticism has in his thought. Secondly, I shall use this to discuss how Hume's conception of philosophy - and by an inescapable extension his application of that philosophy to politics - is influenced by it. This will be a springboard to a discussion of the role this conception of philosophy has in undermining the Humpty Dumpty/ Red Queen thesis that I shall undertake in a later chapter.

To begin with, that 'elusiveness' of Hume's is best overcome by taking to heart T.E. Jessop's advice that the precondition for sound Humean exegesis is to read as Hume himself wrote, read and lived - widely.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the strengths of a number of modern interpreters of Hume that Jessop's advice has been followed, and the results have shown impressively in studies of Hume by Duncan Forbes and David Miller - to name but two. Thus, to begin my examination of Hume it is as well to clear up some general points first.

## I

"Philosophy" writes Hume, in the Treatise "is commonly divided into speculative and practical, and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division, it is supposed to influence our passions and actions and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgements of the understanding..... Morals excite passions and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason." (T.457).

Thus, does Hume announce the central principle of his moral theory - the elevation of the passions (and the dethronement of reason) in moral judgement. Reason is "utterly impotent" in producing actions; what matters are our sentiments - our passions.

Reason, he argues "is the discovery of truth or falsehood" which "consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence of matters of fact..... Now, it is evident our passions, volitions and actions are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagreement, being original facts, and realities complete in themselves ..... it is impossible, therefore, they can be pronounced either true or false, and be either contrary or conformable to reason..... Actions may be laudable or blameable; but they cannot be reasonable or unreasonable." (T.458)

In the introduction to the Treatise Hume makes it plain that what he is trying to do is explain - as part of a general 'science of man'. It is this, coupled with his emphasis on experience, that he sees as creating a method "entirely new". In attempting "to explain the principles of human nature", he says "we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new and the only one upon which they can stand with any security." (T.XV1) Furthermore, although "we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments <sup>3</sup> to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes; it is still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature ought, at first, to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical." (T. XVII) For no theory, according to Hume, "can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority." (T. XVIII).

Despite some changes of style and expression and a few changes of mind, the scope and effects of which I shall return to in a moment, this project is held to in the Enquiries, and implicit in all of Hume's writings. There are, of course, crucial questions concerning the nature of Hume's empiricism and the relations between the Treatise and Enquiries which I address later on, but for the moment I shall put them to one side as I develop this initial stage of my argument.

In Section I of the first Enquiry, Hume divides what he calls moral philosophy <sup>4</sup> into two, "each of which has its peculiar merit, and may contribute to the entertainment, instruction and reformation of mankind." (EHU 5). The first is an "easy and obvious philosophy, which considers man as influenced his measures by taste and sentiment" (EHU 5), and the second "considers man in the light of a reasonable rather than an active being and endeavour to form his understanding more than cultivate his manners" (EHU 6). These latter thinkers, says Hume, consider it "a reproach to all literature, that philosophy should not yet have fixed, beyond controversy, the foundations of morals, reasoning and criticism" (EHU 6). Hume describes these two philosophies, notes that the former has the preference of the "generality of mankind", and then goes on to consider the advantages of each. His criticism, of course, centres on the latter type of philosophy, which he

identifies as "commonly called metaphysics" (EHU 9). He finds it obscure, "painful and fatiguing" (EHU 11), but, also, "as the inevitable source of uncertainty and error" (EHU 11). He feels that "the justest and most plausible objection" against a considerable part of metaphysics is that "they are not properly a science; but arise either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding " (EHU 11). He adds that "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 " (EHU 12).

This project is, of course, what Hume attempted in Book 1 of the Treatise, and what he then attempted anew in the first Enquiry. He applied the same kind of argumentation, (transferred to "morals") in Books 2 and 3 of the Treatise, and, in the second Enquiry, the Essays, the Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, and even in the History of England (albeit in a modified form), we see the running thread of this enterprise. What exactly, however, does this method consist of, and how consistent is Hume in its use? Before turning to look at the most important parts of Hume's philosophical approach for the relationship of philosophy to politics, I must first attempt a brief sketch of what his method entails.

## II

Like most philosophers, Hume usually had specific targets in mind when composing his works. It is the view of a large number of Humean scholars (a view I share) that Hume's philosophical interest was first fired by issues in moral philosophy.<sup>5</sup> and, without being drawn too far into the scholarly minefield of 'Hume's intentions', the development of his method can, I think, best be seen in relation to his moral philosophy. This has a double advantage for me, of course, as it leads, quite naturally, into his consideration of politics and, therefore, into those aspects of his method more salient for his treatment of that subject.

His principal targets, to start with at least, were ethical rationalists like Richard Cudworth, Samuel Clarke and William Wollaston, whose cardinal



belief in the moral sphere was that reason alone could determine the benevolence or malignity of an act.<sup>6</sup> These Rationalists were, of course, the heirs of a long tradition in moral thought stretching back ultimately to Plato. Clarke, for example, held that there were "eternal and necessary differences" of things in nature, which make it "fit and reasonable" for human beings to act in a certain way "separate from considerations of these rules being the positive will or command of God, and also antecedent to any respect or regard.....of any particular private and personal advantage and disadvantage."<sup>7</sup> Mossner's view is that the character of Demea in Hume's Dialogues, is based on Clarke and his ideas and, given that Hume was making the final corrections to the Dialogues on his deathbed, it is reasonable to assume that if Mossner is right, Hume was still concerned to rebut the views of the ethical rationalists long after the publications of even the majority of the Essays and the two Enquiries, let alone the Treatise.<sup>8</sup>

Hume at times felt, I suspect, that there is, in the ethical rationalists, a good deal of argument which is, in many ways, the purest sophistry however sincerely meant. He would have appreciated Leslie Stephen's acid comment on Wollastan, that "30 years of profound meditation had convinced Wollastan that the reason why a man should abstain from breaking his wife's head was that it was denying she was his wife "<sup>9</sup> a point which could, with some amendment of content or temper, be applied to most of the ethical rationalists.

Hume was scarcely alone in opposing these ideas, of course. Both Shaftesbury and, more importantly, Hutcheson, did so as well, not to mention Kames, Turnball and the whole school of Common Sense philosophy that came after Hume, offspring, as it were, of the Scottish Enlightenment. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson opposed the rationalists from a somewhat similar stand-point to Hume's, at least insofar as they too placed great emphasis on a "moral-sense" - (I shall leave this elusive phrase without a definition, at least for the moment). For Shaftesbury, for example, virtue consists "in certain just disposition.....towards the moral objects of right or wrong,"<sup>10</sup> and, for Hutcheson, reason is nothing but "the sagacity we have in prosecuting any end."<sup>11</sup> Similar attacks on rationalism were, of course, being made by the Mainstream Enlightenment: Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot (indeed all the Encyclopedists) were - by temperament as well as by intellect - empiricists, as I indicated in Chapter Three.

How far, then, does Hume's method differ from these other responses to rationalism! How far is his "new scene of thought" actually "new"? This question must be answered before we attempt any analysis of the theory itself and as there has (of course) been a huge amount of scholarly ink spilled over this question, I do not intend to do anything other than indicate which interpretation I favour and why. It is no part of my inquiry to attempt an adjudication between the innumerable opinions already expressed on this subject. The quotations from Hume I have already given will have indicated clearly enough at least one aspect of Hume's method - his uncompromising empiricism. Of all of the aspects of his method, it is probably the most familiar and commented upon:- "As the science of man is the only sound foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation." (T.XVI). This method of experience and observation was, of course, the hallmark of the new science whose most illustrious practitioner - Newton - Hume explicitly sets out in the Treatise, to emulate. Even its sub-title emphasises this empiricism: ("being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects."); Later on, when "casting the whole anew", in the first and second Enquiries and in the Dissertation on the Passions, the empiricism remains as strong and as essential a component as ever.

It has been argued,<sup>12</sup> however, that after he wrote the Treatise, Hume progressively abandoned the psychological empiricism displayed therein, adopting a more modest, less systematic and more historically based empiricism, and that it was this change of mind that lies at the back of many of the (allegedly) surprising changes and omissions in the Enquiries, and, ultimately, in the famous "disavowal" of the Treatise appended to the 1977 edition of the complete Essays and Treatise's on several subjects. Even Selby-Bigge, in the introduction to his edition of the two Enquiries, remarks that "The psychology of sympathy, which occupies so much space in Book II, and on which so much depends in Book III of the Treatise, is almost entirely ignored in the Enquiry .....when we come to consider the Treatment of Sympathy in the Enquiry concerning the Principles of morals by the side of its treatment in the Treatise, we shall see reason to think that Hume has very considerably modified his views, not only as to the functions of sympathy, but also as to the proper limits of psychological analysis."<sup>13</sup>

I have two comments on this. The first is that it is certain that there would appear to have been a change of temper, at the very least, between Hume's views in the Treatise and his essays in the Essays and Enquiries. The note of philosophical pessimism with which Hume concludes Book I of the Treatise, is unique in his work, and though oft quoted is worth quoting again "My memory of past errors and perplexities" he writes "makes me diffident for the future. The wretched condition, weakness and disorder of the faculties, I must employ in my enquiries, increases my apprehensions. And the impossibility of amending or correcting these faculties, reduces me almost to despair." (T. 264). One does not need to agree fully with commentators like Ross <sup>14</sup> who argues that this passage expresses metaphysical "anguish" (surely an inappropriate word to use for Hume even here) to recognise there is something present there which nowhere recurs, at least in that form, anywhere else in Hume's writings although something similar to it is contained in the closing sections of The Dialogues, where Philo makes plain the randomness and arbitrary nature of creation. Let us not forget, however, that in that famous disavowal of his earliest work Hume gives, as his reason, that he was "sensible of his error in going to the press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, (i.e. The Enquiries, etc.) where some negligencies in his former reasoning and more in The Expression, are, he hopes, corrected" <sup>15</sup> (My emphasis). This would indicate that Hume's main reasons for disavowing the Treatise were chiefly stylistic rather than substantive, and two other considerations reinforce this. Hume, obviously, was a "philosopher" in the 18th Century sense of the term not the 20th Century sense (a topic to which I have already referred). He considered himself a man of letters, as he suggests in his valedictory essay of himself ("My own life"). <sup>16</sup> Here he describes the "love of literary fame" as his "ruling passion". Thus his desire to impress his audience could easily have led him to change the way he presented some of his arguments, and so to drop or modify many of the more explicitly difficult passages in the Treatise. Those, for example, on time and space, which are drastically curtailed in the first Enquiry from the position that they occupy in Book one of the Treatise. This would not necessarily mean that Hume had abandoned the views he held there - although it would be remarkable if his views did not alter to some degree over the years as he was a perpetual corrector and re-assessor of his own works, correcting them even on his deathbed. <sup>17</sup> Also, whilst I would agree that Hume's interest in the more explicitly psychological aspects of the

Treatise waned, this was more, I suspect, because he came to feel that the essay (long or short) was a better vehicle for his method, (as well as for his literary ambitions) than a lengthy philosophical treatise. Furthermore, he was surely just as aware of "historical" empiricism in the Treatise as he was later - as the concluding paragraph of his introduction displays. "We must.....glean up our experiments" he observes "from a continuous observation of human life and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs and in their pleasures." (T.XIX) and part of this "observation" would be historical of necessity.

The second confirming instance of the basic continuity of Hume's method is that, as Mossner significantly points out, Hume's disavowal of the Treatise was largely brought about by the misunderstanding of it and attacks on it by James Beattie and (more intelligently) by Thomas Reid. It must have been infuriating for Hume to have his ideas so radically misinterpreted and understandable that he take some steps to counter the misunderstanding and this interpretation is supported by his comment to his friend and publisher Strahan, that the "advertisement is a complete answer to Dr. Reid, and to that bigoted, silly fellow, Beattie." <sup>18</sup> I therefore conclude that while there is a change in emphasis the essential element of the Humean approach, the empirical method, remains by and large the same throughout his writings and this empiricism is, naturally, very different from the approach of the ethical rationalists.

If empiricism is one fundamental part of Hume's programme, another equally well known and widely debated one is his secularism. Hume's treatment of religion was, for his contemporaries, the most radical part of his thought as he was well aware and it was also one of the closest to his heart. His most sustained, brilliant and subversive work in the philosophy of religion, The Dialogues concerning Natural Religion was worked on for over 25 years and published only after his death. <sup>19</sup> Yet those works he did publish on religion, the essay of Miracles, the long essay on The Natural History of Religion and various peripheral works (like the essays of Suicide and On the Immortality of the Soul) earned him the title of the "Great Infidel" and made him the subject of attacks from all shades of religious opinion, from the Clerics of his native Edinburgh <sup>20</sup> to Samuel Johnson. <sup>21</sup>

By the time of his death his religious views were so notorious that Boswell presumed upon his moderate acquaintance with Hume, and visited St. David Street to probe the dying philosopher on the question of his fear - or lack of it - of his approaching death - a questioning Hume responded to with his habitual calmness and gentle irony.<sup>22</sup> Yet he had chided the French philosophes for their dogmatic atheism and was content himself merely to question; "Divinity or theology" he wrote "has a foundation in reason so far as it is supported by experience" (EHU. 165) - explicitly linking this aspect of his thought with that first fundamental principle, empiricism.

It was, of course, the point of most of his work on religion to demonstrate that such supporting evidence was lacking. His dryly ironical conclusion of the appropriate section of the first Enquiry, (the conclusion of the essay on 'Miracles') is that "upon the whole, we may conclude, that the Christian religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one." (EHU 131; PW:4 108).

Even in the parts of his works not dealing explicitly with religion, we find him commenting on the topic, usually remarking on the adverse effect of religious men or principles - see for example, his elegantly ironical demolition of the divine right theory of political obligation in the essay 'Of the Original Contract' (PW:3 443-450) or again, the pointed comment in Book One of the Treatise that "Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous, those in philosophy only ridiculous." (T.272).

This conscious and thoroughgoing secularism was of equal import in Hume's method as his empiricism. According to Duncan Forbes, "(it) was what set Hume apart from the Newtonians: the discovery that a genuine experimental philosophy ruled out final causes and involved a conscious separation or bracketing off of the natural from the supernatural,"<sup>23</sup> moreover, argues Forbes, "Hume's political philosophy is wholly and unambiguously secular."<sup>24</sup> This latter assertion is one that I shall have to return to, but I agree with Forbes in general that Hume's secularism was the second aspect of his "new scene of thought".

This brings me on to the third and for me most important methodological

tool of Hume's method - scepticism! That Hume was a sceptic of some sort, no-one has ever attempted to deny - least of all Hume himself - but the precise nature of his scepticism has aroused considerable passion even (ironically) dogmatism in certain circles. It is said by some, indeed Hume said so himself, that he is a "mitigated sceptic" <sup>25</sup> but from the very beginning his reputation as a sceptic has transcended this modest scepticism which he himself freely admitted. Reid's Inquiry into the principles of the human mind on the basis of common sense began the misinterpretation of Hume's thought that even today still persists in an astonishing number of ways, <sup>26</sup> and one of the areas of radical distortion was his view of Hume as the arch-sceptic.

"It seems to be a peculiar show of humour in this author (Hume)" writes Reid, in the introduction to his Inquiry to "set out his introduction, by promising, with a grave face, no less than a complete system of the sciences, upon a foundation entirely new, to wit, that of human nature, when the intention of the whole work is to show that there is neither human nature nor science in the world." <sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, aspects of Hume's scepticism have been used in ways that he would highly disapprove of. Isaiah Berlin, for example, has noticed the influence of Hume's theory of belief, one of the prime legacies of scepticism as regards reason, on the thought of the German Anti-Rationalists, especially the man Kant called the "Magus of the North", Jacob Hammann - a thinker who in most other respects is diametrically opposed to Hume. <sup>28</sup> All of this is, in part, simply a result of thinkers taking what they wanted from Hume, and ignoring or belittling the rest, a fine old philosophical tradition - but it does raise the problem of just how far Hume intended to press his sceptical reasonings. In section XII of the first Enquiry, Hume asks precisely this question: "What is meant by sceptic?", and then adds "and how far is it possible to push these philosophical principles of doubt and uncertainty." (EHU 149). In response to his own question, he argues, first that there is "a species of scepticism, antecedent to all study of philosophy" (EHU 149) which he identifies with Descartes. It recommends a universal doubt, "not only of all our former opinions and principles, but also of our very faculties" (EHU 149). This, however, Hume considers foolish "were it ever possible to be attained by any human creature" he writes "(as plainly it is not) (it) would be entirely incurable." (EHU 150).

"It must, however, be confessed" he adds "that this species of scepticism, when more moderate, may be understood in a very reasonable sense and is a necessary preparative to the study of philosophy, by preserving a proper impartiality in our judgements. and weaning our mind from all those prejudices which we may have imbibed from education or rash opinion. To begin with clear and self-evident principles, to advance by timorous and sure steps, to review frequently our conclusions and examine accurately all their consequences, though by these means we shall make both a slow and a short progress in our systems, are the only methods by which we can ever hope to reach truth and attain a proper stability and certainty in our determinations" (EHU 150).

Hume then goes on to describe another "species" of scepticism consequent to science and enquiry: but the conclusion he wants to draw from his consideration of these "sceptical topics" is that "Those who have a propriety to philosophy, will still continue their researches; because they reflect that, besides the immediate pleasure attending such an occupation, philosophical decisions are nothing but the reflections of common life, methodized and corrected. But they will never be tempted to go beyond common life so long as they consider the imperfection of those faculties which they employ, their narrow reach and their inaccurate operations." (EHU 162).

Hume is here stating the guiding rule and principle of all his thought - not really "conservatism", (as it is so often called) but caution and humility in our attempts to understand and explain. He is not a "pyrrhonian" sceptic but he is concerned to stress the dangers of believing that we understand too much. Amongst his essays are the series of inter-connected essays, entitled 'The Stoic', 'The Epicurean', 'The Platonist' and 'The Sceptic'. Hume says in a footnote to the first of these essays (The Epicurean) that his intention is to "deliver the sentiments of sects that naturally form themselves in the world, and entertain different ideas of human life and happiness." (PN:3 197) He did not, therefore, intend that any of the four should represent his own thoughts to the exclusion of the others, but his opening sentences in the Sceptic essay strikingly echo his comments in the first Enquiry, and it is difficult to believe that this is not Hume's own view: "I have long entertained a suspicion with regard to the decisions of philosophers

upon all subjects.....there is one mistake to which they seem liable, almost without exception; they confine too much their principles, and make no account of that vast variety which nature has so much affected in all her operations." (PW:3 213).

This sentiment expresses one of the most important aspects of Hume's "mitigated scepticism": an awareness of the huge variety of human customs, institutions and practices and an unwillingness to attempt to combine them all within a single 'system'. This insight is given specific illumination in A Dialogue, an important work for an understanding of Humean scepticism. Hume makes plain that like Montesquieu and Diderot he feels that, in general, "the principles upon which men reason in morals are always the same, though [significantly] the conclusions which they draw are often very different." (D 335.6). Hume's point in A Dialogue is, I think, both a philosophical and a polemical one. He recognises the variety in human life: when Palamedes asks "what rule shall we establish for the many different, very contrary sentiments of mankind?" (D 343) he is to say that "when men depart from the maxims of common reason and affect these artificial lives..... no-one can answer for what will please or displease them." (D 343) and it is significant here that a little later on Hume refers to two such artificialities - he calls them illusions - both of which were high on his list of dangerous activities: religious superstition and philosophical enthusiasm. (D 343). To say this, however, is not to deny that such differences exist - "would you try a Greek or Roman by the common law of England?" he asks, "hear him defend himself by his own maxims and then pronounce." (D.330). It is this scepticism which I shall contend is the most interesting feature of his political philosophy and about which I shall have most to say in a moment. First, however, there is a problem with which I must deal.

It has been said by a number of commentators that, understandably, Hume had his own blind spots and that, naturally, many of these were the common currency of his age. He was, it is alleged, unnecessarily optimistic about human progress, too convinced about the success of (Newtonian) 'Natural Science' and of the necessity for his science of man to follow it and too set in his own circumstances and situation to see the huge political and social problems developing around him... It is said, in particular, that he fell in with the general failing of Enlightenment historiography, in accepting the 'universal man' <sup>29</sup> theory which asserts, in the now infamous words of the first Enquiry:-



"Mankind is so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may find our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour." (EHU 83).

A long line of influential commentators, including Black, Collingwood and Meinecke, have used this passage to allegedly show that, for Hume, history was (in Black's words) "simply a repeating decimal."<sup>30</sup> Others, like Vlachos, interpreting the passage similarly, have argued that Hume's theory of the 'universal man' leads only to confusion and incoherence in his political thought,<sup>31</sup> and that his scepticism obviously did not stretch far enough to take in this presumption also.

This, I think is a misreading of Hume's position. Duncan Forbes has suggested that there is no conflict in Hume's science of man as a result of his theory of history. First, because Hume's theory was nothing like as monolithic as traditional commentators have supposed - in evidence he quotes passages from the second Enquiry and A Dialogue - and secondly, in any case, Hume's universal principles "are to be regarded as abstractions from the concrete variety of human (= social) experience."<sup>32</sup> Hume does assume that by application of the proper empirical method, an historian can in some sense come to understand the motivating factors affecting men in the past since the essential "springs" of human action do not change, only their application. If this is what he means in that passage from the first Enquiry, then it is not in the least inconsistent with the application of individual and cultural diversity that Hume displays elsewhere. He is merely saying that for any explanation to be possible at all, there must be some constancy in the basic drives of human life.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, his position on this is a striking anticipation of certain aspects of the philosophy of Collingwood (otherwise dissimilar a thinker) who, as I said, explicitly criticises him in this regard. I shall come back to the relationship of this unlikely pair in Chapter Six.

In addition to this, those who accuse him of 'over-optimism' or laud him

as being the most 'modern' of the philosophes (as Gay does) appear to be discussing his character more than his philosophy. He did, it is true, have hope that "progress" as he saw it would continue but he was under no illusions about the difficulties it would face. Adam Smith recalled, in his account of Hume's last illness, how the philosopher had diverted himself by imagining various excuses he might make to Charon to avoid entering the latter's boat, one of which was "I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition." Charon, however, would have none of it. "You loitering rogue" Smith recalls Hume's Charon saying, "Do you fancy I will give you lease for so long a term?" <sup>34</sup> Hume had no doubt that many of the things he fought against had a good deal of life in them yet and was no easy optimist.

He was, however, by nature, as the testimony of his friends amply show, an optimistic man and he did share many of the hopes common to the philosophic family. Wittgenstein once wrote that "It is sometimes said that a man's philosophy is a matter of temperament. and there is something in this." <sup>35</sup> In this case it indicates simply that Hume's "optimism" is more a personal trait than a theoretical construction. There is, after all, nothing in Hume's thought itself to justify that optimism and indeed Hume's philosophy easily lends itself to those who wish to stress the limits on human nature and human ambition (though Hume himself never decried it). It is for this reason, very largely, that he has been so often identified as a conservative when, in philosophical and theological terms, he was amongst the most radical philosophes and also when his thought has very little in common with Conservatism after Burke (this is not the place to become embroiled in the argument over whether, and in what way, Hume was a Conservative - though I discuss it briefly later on in connection with David Miller's interpretation of Hume).

This method, empirical, secular and most importantly, sceptical is carried over into his Essays and even the History of England. In his history, for example, Hume many times digresses with philosophical asides, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of certain actions. One of the best known examples is the execution of Charles the First of England,

an event which permits Hume to discuss the question of "whether the people, in any case, were entitled to judge and to punish their sovereign." (H.491) His conclusion is relatively simple and indeed unexceptionable "From the memorable revolutions which passed in England during this period, we may naturally deduce the same useful lesson which Charles himself in his latter years inferred of necessity, to assume more authority than the laws have allowed them." (H.492-3). He then adds a decidedly Humean rider, however, "It must be confessed that these events furnish us with another instruction.....concerning the madness of the people, the fires of fanaticism and the danger of mercenary armies ." (H.493).

### III

Now in general (like Montesquieu) Hume claimed to be a scientist of man, explaining not recommending. These two remarks are not, however, simply explanation - although they arise out of Hume's explanations of the events leading up to the execution of Charles I - and it is precisely this relationship between explanation and activity (or the recommendation or condemnation of activity) that I shall want to turn to later on. For the moment it is enough to say that Hume's 'History' attempts to explain the past and - certainly - to draw lessons from it, but the lessons are prudential ones. Hume may offer advice, but he does not preach; he does not make the mistake Schlick was warning against, and that I quoted in Chapter 1, yet he does prescribe (or so I shall argue) far more radically than Schlick was willing to allow was proper for a philosopher.

These then, are the hallmarks of Hume's philosophical method. How exactly does he apply them to politics? To examine this I shall discuss in detail one famous aspect of his political thought - the critique of contract theory and his account of political allegiance. This topic constitutes a battle-field that has been fought over many times by scholars of varying allegiances and I do not intend to trace all of the by-ways and alley-ways that the debate has followed. <sup>36</sup> My intention is to demonstrate how Hume used the method described above. to address himself to one of the perennial subjects of debate among political philosophers - the problem of political obligation.

Hume treated this problem most fully in the Treatise and his argument, in general, is so well known that I need do no more than sketch in the

essential element here. Having initially discussed the nature of morality, arguing that "morality is more properly felt than judged of" (T.470) <sup>37</sup> Hume alleges that "there are some virtues that produce pleasure and approbation by means of an artifice or contrivance, which arise from the circumstances and necessities of mankind" (T.477). It is of this kind, that Hume takes justice to be. However, "though the rules of justice be artificial they are not arbitrary" (T.484). The priority that Hume accords justice, essentially treating it as the cornerstone of social life, suggests that in this, if in little else, he would agree with Rawls that "justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought." <sup>38</sup> He examines next how "the rules of justice are established by the artifice of men," (T.484) and also "the reasons which determine us to attribute to the observance or neglect of these on moral beauty and deformity" (T.484). For the first he argues that man needs certain things which he can never get by himself, and "Tis by society alone he is able to supply his defects" (T.485). Society then binds men together through, Hume insists, mutual self-interest - a remedy not derived from nature but from artifice (see T.489) and can be done only "by a convention entered into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of these external goods, and leave everyone in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry" (T.489).

Hume stresses, however, that "this convention is not in the nature of a promise. For even promises themselves .....arise from human conventions " (T.490)- a point which is of great importance for his attack on contract theory - and he asserts that "after this convention, concerning abstinence from the possessions of others, is entered into, and everyone has acquired a stability in his possessions, there immediately arise the ideas of justice and injustice; as also those of property, right and obligation." (T.490-1).

There is a good deal more detailed argumentation about justice and property, including Hume's discussion of the obligation of promises (T. 516-525) before Hume turns, in Section VII of the Treatise to the origin of government and, in Section VIII, to the source of allegiance. "Nothing is more certain" argues Hume in the opening paragraph of Section VII "than that men are, in a great measure, governed by interest,

and that even when they extend their concern beyond themselves, 'tis not to any great distance; nor is it usual for them, in common life, to look further than their nearest friends and acquaintance" (T.534): furthermore, "men are mightily governed by the imagination and proportion their affections more to the light under which any object appears to them, than to its real and intrinsic value. What strikes upon them with a strong and lively idea commonly prevails above what lies in a more obscure light." (T. 534-4).

This quality, Hume says, "not only is very dangerous to society, but also seems ..... to be incapable of any variety (T.538) ..... (since) if it is to be impossible for us to prefer what is remote 'tis equally impossible for us to submit to any necessity which would oblige us to such a method of acting ....." (T. 536). In Hume's view, however, it is precisely this infirmity which gives us the remedy: "the provision we make against our negligence" he argues, "proceeds merely from our natural inclination to that negligence" (T. 536). Men cannot change their natures, but they can change their situation and "render the observance of justice the immediate interest of some particular persons and its violation the more remote " (T.537) and it is thus, argues Hume, that government arises. Now government, though very advantageous and usually necessary, is not always necessary. Although it is possible to maintain a small uncultivated society without government, says Hume, it cannot be maintained without the Laws concerning the stability of possession, its transference by consent and the performance of promises." These are, therefore, antecedent to government, and are supposed to impose an obligation prior to the obligation before "the duty of allegiance to civil magistrates had once been thought." (T. 542). It is after this that Hume notes the "fashionable system of politics" (T.542), which argues that "Government and superiority can only be established by consent: the consent of men in establishing government imposes on them a new obligation, unknown to the laws of nature. Men, therefore, are bound to obey their magistrates, only because they promise it." (T.542)

Hume concedes that this will (or may) be so at the first institution of government "yet it quickly takes root of itself and has an original obligation and authority, independent of all contracts." (T.542).

Hume's argument in support of this contention is founded on the fact, which he feels he has already proved, that natural justice itself (as well as civil) is dependent upon human conventions and, therefore, it is fruitless "to resolve the one into the other and seek, in the laws of nature, a stronger foundation for our political duties than interest and human conventions." (T.543). Hume's argument depends on his identifying the performance of promises - like the other laws of nature, - as "an effect of the institution of government, and not the obedience to government as an effect of the obligation to a promise." (T.543). The first motive of the intention of government, Hume continues, "as well as the performance of both, is nothing but self-interest, and since there is a separate interest in the obedience to government, from that in the performance of promises, we must allow of a separate obligation." (T.544).

His final argument against consent is derived "from the universal consent of mankind." (T.546). First he points out that "there is a moral obligation to submit to government because everyone thinks so, it must be as certain, that this obligation arises not from a promise, since no-one whose judgement has not been led astray by too strict adherence to a system of philosophy, has ever yet dreamt of ascribing it to that origin." (T.547).

Secondly, he argues that the only kind of "promise" there could conceivably have been would be a tacit one, "where the will is signified by other more diffuse signs than those of speech; but a will there must certainly be in the case, and that can never escape the person's notice, who exerted it, however silent or tacit. But were you to ask the far greater part of the nation whether they had even consented to the authority of their rulers, or promised to obey them they would be inclined to think very strangely of you; and would certainly reply, that the affair depended not on their consent that that they were born to such an obedience." (T. 547-8).

Most of these arguments are repeated (with some deletions and alterations of style), in the relevant sections of the second Enquiry, (EPM. p.183-211), and in Hume's various essays dealing with the same topics, "Of the First Principle of Government", "Of the Origin of Government", and especially "Of the Original Contract", and "Of Passive Obedience". In the original

contract essay he also dismisses almost contemptuously "divine-right" theories using an argument he was later to use to great effect in his essay on suicide, to the effect that "Whatever actually happens is comprehended in the general plan or intention of providence; nor has the greatest and most lawful prince any more reason, upon that account, to plead a peculiar sacredness or inviolable authority, than an inferior magistrate, or even an usurper, or even a robber and a pirate."  
(PW: 3: 444). <sup>39</sup>

In this brief outline of Hume's views on political obligation, we can see the practical application of his method sketched earlier. It is, a secular approach, most obviously in its dismissal of divine-right theory, but also in its attack on contract theory which, in the case of many writers - Locke, for example - had a religious basis. Hume grounds political obligation firmly in our nature and the conventions that arise from it, and his references to "providence" only serve to explain it away and eliminate its influence. The approach is empirical - it appeals to facts about ourselves and our situations that are - Hume thinks - testable. Have we consented to government? Well ask and see - and, of course, his answer is no. Finally, of course, it is sceptical. Hume is arguing that it is stretching reason, flying in the face of the observable facts and simply unnecessary to ascribe political allegiance specifically to Divine Authority or to an elaborate 'contract' between government and governed.

Moreover, in attacking contract theory Hume is undercutting one of the influential strands in Enlightenment political thought. It is true, of course, that he was more in keeping with the Mainstream here that might at first be thought. The greatest propogators of contract theory in the Enlightenment were Rousseau and Kant - neither of whom were, in this respect representative of the Mainstream Enlightenment (for reasons I have already discussed).

There is, however, a crucial difference between Hume and the mainstream Enlightenment. On this question Montesquieu, for example, in some respects so close to Hume, believed as strongly as Hume, that it was folly to "try a Greek or Roman by the Common Laws of England". But nonetheless he enunciated (as Hume did not) the characteristic belief of the Mainstream Enlightenment, in an ultimate, universal standard

of some sort, and (as we saw in Chapter **three**) he was followed in this by Diderot, Voltaire, Becceria, Condorcet and the other luminaries of the mainstream. It is this which allows Becker to charge that the Enlightenment constructs its own heavenly city (though, as I argued in Chapter one, he is wrong to do so).

Hume's empiricism was, of course, to a large extent shared by these writers (as he freely acknowledged).<sup>40</sup> It was part of the common Newtonian, Lockean inheritance of the Enlightenment. So too, by and large, was his secularism - though not necessarily in as radical or as uncompromising a way. However, what makes for the real difference in Hume is the character of his scepticism, and how that alters his approach to philosophy and to 'philosophical politics'.

His critique of contract theory illustrates this very well. The argument as it is couched is generally 'sceptical' in tone in what we might call the 'weak' sense of 'sceptical' in Hume. i.e. it is doubtful about, and destructive of 'received wisdom' (in this case the idea that, to be legitimate a government must be based on consent). without (in any sense) being Pyrronhean. At the same time, to see Hume's critique in its full light, a number of other considerations must be borne in mind, specifically, his writings on religion, and his scepticism about Causation.

It is in these works, essentially the long essay The Natural History of Religion, the essay on Miracles, the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (of which I shall have more to say later) and essays like On Suicide, that Hume's destructive scepticism is most openly on view.

In the essay on suicide, for example, Hume argues that "if suicide be criminal it must be a transgression of our duty either to our neighbour, or ourselves." (PW:4 407). Hume then takes on his clerically minded opponents on their own ground and argues that "All events in one sense, may be pronounced the action of the Almighty; they all proceed from these powers with which He has endowed His creatures." (PW:4 408). Thus, he continues, "were the disposal of human life so much reserved as the peculiar province of the Almighty, that it were an encroachment on His right for men to dispose of their own lives, it would be equally criminal to act for the preservation of life as for its destruction. If I turn aside a



stone which is falling upon my head, I disturb the course of nature and I invade the peculiar of the Almighty", ( PW:4 410 ). Hume therefore concludes that, as "Providence guides all these causes and nothing happens in the universe without its consent and co-operation..... then neither does my death, however voluntary, happen without its consent" ( PW:4 412).

One can imagine, of course, the pleasure Hume would take in outlining this argument. David Hume, the 'Great Infidel' justifying suicide on 'religious' grounds! More germane to my purpose, however, is the parallel between this and that argument against 'passive obedience' and 'Divine-right' theories of political obligation that I have already quoted. <sup>41</sup>

What these two arguments show is the method of Humean 'scepticism' turned on two distinct (albeit semi-related) areas. This scepticism is not pyrrhonian; it does not doubt the 'existence' of certain feelings, beliefs, or arguments; it merely suggests that we are not justified, even if we possess those beliefs, in arguing for certain conclusion contrary to 'natural reason'.

Reason for Hume, of course, is not what it is for Kant, Rousseau, or even Montesquieu, but that famous phrase about reason being the slave of the passions has perhaps coloured subsequent interpretations of the role of Reason in Hume's thought. Hume, no less than the other philosophes believed that 'Reason' was vital for Enlightenment, a cause to which he was as much committed as they, though he was perhaps more realistic about its inevitable 'success'. <sup>42</sup> But 'Reason' concerned not the ends but the means of achieving such enlightenment.

There is another element to Hume's scepticism which must be remembered here, however, an aspect best brought out by his much trumpeted scepticism about Causation. As has been said "No element of Hume's philosophy has had a greater and more lasting influence than his theory of causality. It has been frequently attacked, and frequently misunderstood." <sup>43</sup>

Hume's general position here is well known and I need do no more than give a brief sketch of it. He first states that all reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effect and that we can never infer the existence of one object from another, unless they be connected together either mediately or immediately." (T.649). Now Hume

takes causation to be a compound concept; that is to say it comprises more than one crucial idea: to be precise, of course, Hume's famous trinity - priority, contiguity and necessary connexion. The arguments that have raged over this trinity are endless, but I want to concentrate on the last and most important - the idea of necessary connexion which leads to the 'nerve' of his theory of causality (as Ayer has called it <sup>44</sup>). It is the question which, according to Kemp Smith "Hume has been keeping in reserve throughout all the preceding discussion " <sup>45</sup>; "What is our idea of necessity when we say that two objects are necessarily connected together." (T.155 ).

Hume's answer to this question involves first, denying that there is any logical relation between independent matters of fact (T.138-40) and secondly, that there is no such thing as natural (as opposed to logical) necessity either. It is this second point that Hume illustrates by recourse to his famous billiard-ball argument. As he says in the Abstract:  
When I see a billiard ball moving towards another, my mind is immediately carried by habit to the usual effect and anticipates my sight by conceiving the second ball in motion. But is this all? Do I nothing but conceive the motion of the second ball? No surely, I also believe that it will move. Where then, is this belief? ( Abstract:T. 655-657 ).

So, given that we do have the idea of necessary connection and given also we have it as a belief, from what impression (Hume continues to ask) is it derived? He argues (T.139) that not only is there 'nothing in any object considered in itself' which affords us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond it (my emphasis) but that "even after the observation of the frequent or constant conjunction of objects we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have had experience"(T.139). From this Hume ultimately concludes, however, that the 'impression' from which the idea of necessary connection is derived, is one of feeling and imagination. As he puts it in the first Enquiry "the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant and to believe that it will exist." (E.175. My emphasis). It is in this feeling that Hume locates the impression from which is derived the idea of necessary connection. Thus causation, like morality (though not in the same way) is 'more properly felt, than judged of'.

Now this is only the flimsiest abbreviation of Hume's rich and complex argumentation in this section of the Treatise or the first Enquiry, but sufficient I hope for my my purpose. Remember that Hume's technique, on arguing against the idea of an original contract, or against the prohibition on suicide, is not to doubt the existence of certain 'feelings' or 'concepts' only to question their logical validity. Here in his theory of causation, we meet the same technique again. Hume never denies that events are caused, and suggestions that he did excited weary (if at times heated) rebuttals. John Stewart's suggestion that this is what Hume does, made in an essay, included in the first volume of the Essays and Observations, Physical & Literary, published by the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh in 1754, elicited from Hume a letter which makes his position on this quite clear. "I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause " Hume writes, "I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration, but from another source." (LI. p.185). This scepticism, then is informed by lack of other options for Hume, it does not produce (dare I say cause) his arguments. His further remark, in the same letter, amplifies this point: "There are many different kinds of certainty "he chides Stewart" and some of them as satisfactory to the mind, tho' perhaps not so regular as the demonstrative kind."

Hume's scepticism is designed to show these 'many kinds of certainty' at work in human knowledge, morality and politics, not to deny that there is such a thing as certainty. In this regard, Hume stands outside both the mainstream and minor currents of Enlightenment thought who both, in different ways and for different reasons, believed in certainty not certainties; but he stands too, at the opposite position from Kant by not attempting to synthesize these two strains and by denying (as Kant accepted)<sup>46</sup> an essential element in both. It is his 'scepticism' (as I have interpreted it here) which brings this about more than any other aspect of his philosophy.

#### IV

Critics and interpreters of Hume, from Stewart, Reid and Beattie in his own day to philosophers in our own, have often missed, or misinterpreted, this point and, as a result, have often missed or misinterpreted the requisite

conclusions to be drawn from it. I shall return to these conclusions in a moment,<sup>47</sup> but first I want to briefly digress on the subject of contemporary Humean exegesis. The point here is that commentators on Hume can be roughly divided into those who believe that Hume's philosophical method in some (ascertainable) way determines his political conclusions, and those who do not.

As an example of the first school of thought let me take David Miller.<sup>48</sup> Miller's argument is predicated upon an analysis of Hume's general philosophy which, he thinks, yields a theory of judgement which "has three main features which will prove to be of significance for his social and political thought. First ..... he has given an account of how judgements are made.. ..... second, it has been shown that the judgements thus made are incapable of being rationally vindicated ..... third, it does not follow from these premises that our judgement cannot be improved..... Mitigated scepticism shows how better judgement is possible but is suitably modest about the character of the improvement."<sup>49</sup>

Miller further argues that Hume's moral theory is dependent on his theory of the understanding in two respects: "First, processes in the understanding are referred to in order to explain how moral judgements are made..... second, the general thrust of Hume's moral theory may be described as mitigated scepticism and in this respect it closely parallels his theory of the understanding, the parallelism being not merely a formal similarity but a result of the connection just noted."<sup>50</sup>

Miller's conclusion is that "Hume's theory of moral and political judgement was intended to have practical implications ..... Hume assumes that men's actions are sometimes affected by their beliefs about what ought to be done in a given set of circumstances ..... if this is true, a theory of judgement - which examines the justification that may be offered for beliefs, separates the adequate from the inadequate and indicates the extent to which improvement in judgements are possible - will have practical consequences for anyone who embraces it. Such a theory forms the case of Hume's philosophy."<sup>51</sup>

I have chosen to present Miller's account in some detail because it is one of the most coherent and sophisticated attempts to trace some sort of necessary relation between Hume's general philosophy and his political philosophy and to argue that this political philosophy had practical implications for conduct.<sup>52</sup> On this view, then, Hume is in no sense an

'Under-labourer', or a representative of the 'Humpty Dumpty' or 'Red Queen' schools of thought, as it has so frequently been alleged that he was, whilst at the same time it does not deny that his approach in philosophy is largely explanatory in mode. Against this, some very distinguished scholars of Hume - and Duncan Forbes is perhaps the best example here - have argued that this approach to Humean exegesis and analysis is largely a mistaken one.<sup>53</sup> Forbes is, for example, far less sanguine about attempts to isolate the "philosophical" influences on Hume's politics from the "ideological" ones than Miller is: "the more of his [i.e. Hume's] writings one takes into account, the less confident one feels that one can ever break through. This is the 'general impression' that one ought to get but one will not get it by trying to get a general impression,"<sup>54</sup> and he adds that, "obviously, if a past political thinker is to be made relevant to us, all sorts of adjustments have to be made and allowances for the times he lived in and the special needs of the circumstances as he saw them."<sup>55</sup> Forbes thinks that if one is to properly appreciate and understand Hume's science of politics, one must take one's bearings on the definition offered in the introduction to the Treatise: 'politics consider men as united in society and dependant on each other'. "This is broad enough" Forbes suggests "to take one right across all Hume's writings from the Treatise to the History a perilous journey which philosophers, as such, are rarely called upon to face. They can confine themselves to the Treatise and the Enquiries, or even just the former, and quarrel over meanings and interpretations without having to use this controversial material."<sup>56</sup>

Over and above this argument, more radical in one sense than either Forbes or Miller, is the view that Hume held speculative and practical philosophy as methodologically distinct enquiries, and that, therefore, (of course) his general philosophy in no sense paves the way for his moral philosophy. The most recent such interpretation is David Fate Norton's. He has offered a detailed interpretation of Hume<sup>57</sup> in defence of three main theses:-

"(1) Hume's philosophy developed in response to two quite distinguishable philosophical crises, a speculative crisis and a moral crisis or, as may be preferable, in response to two kinds of scepticism, epistemological and moral.

(2) Hume's responses to these distinct scepticisms, his metaphysics and his theory of morals, respectively differed substantially in method and substance.

(3) Hume was fully cognizant of the differences between his sceptical speculative position and his common-sensical moral theory, and in fact gave reasonably clear ..... reasons for supposing metaphysics and moral theory to be distinct and (partially) different philosophical enterprises." 58

Obviously, it will be said, these three interpretations, (and the many others that in certain senses are similar to them) cannot all be right - but I would like to offer a reason for supposing that they are all right in one very important sense. This revolves around two contentions: the first a conceptual confusion about the nature and role of "philosophy" and Hume's view of it, and the second, a consequent re-evaluation of the nature of Hume's philosophical enterprise itself.

First then, all serious scholars of Hume have taken to heart Selby-Bigge's words in the introduction to his edition of the Enquiries, "(Hume) says so many different things in so many different ways and different connections, and with so much indifference to what he has said before, that it is very hard to say positively that he has taught, or did not teach, this or that particular doctrine..... This makes it easy to find all philosophies in Hume, or be setting up one statement against another or none at all." 59

All the three scholars I have quoted above have said similar things, albeit in different ways, and yet seemed not to have realised that, as a result of this, Hume's writings, more than most philosopher's, must be read as a general whole, rather than as specific parts of a wider whole. Forbes, to be sure, stresses this but seems to ignore its obvious philosophical application, perhaps because (as he continually remarks) his enquiry is historical, not philosophical.<sup>60</sup>

The essential point is that Hume did not consider himself any the less a philosopher when writing his Essays, or even his History, as when writing the Treatise. The application of his method - empirical, secular and sceptical - is broadly the same across the whole field of his literary activity. Fate Norton is right in saying that Hume saw a difference between speculative and practical philosophy, but wrong in saying that therefore his method differed. What differed were the results Hume expected to get from his method - though even here, the difference was chiefly in degree, rather than in kind, as my analysis of Hume's scepticism suggests.

When Norton says that, for Hume, the kind of truth available in morals is significantly different from that available in metaphysics" <sup>61</sup> he is only, I think, half-right. He feels that the difference lies in the fact that moral judgements or decisions are for Hume "a particular kind of reaction to a complete situation of a certain character ..... In such cases, our sentiments serve to reveal the character of the situation to us." <sup>62</sup> Speculative philosophy, however, "is characterised by its incompleteness, or by its attempts to expand our knowledge from the known to the unknown. In this case we must rely on reason, for it is reason that 'judges' the relations of ideas or matters of fact." <sup>63</sup> The implication here is that, for Hume certain situations will necessarily provide certain sentiments in us and this I think is a misunderstanding of Hume's main point in moral philosophy.

As I suggested earlier, (pp.115-116) Hume has a considerable appreciation of the variety of human social experience. Even if we concede that he believes (at least in certain parts of the Treatise) that human nature is always ultimately the same, the point is made largely irrelevant by his recognition of the almost infinite variety of the manifestations of "human nature". Hume is also very aware that much moral experience should be culturally defined in a particular social context - his discussion of the topic in "A Dialogue" shows that, and it has even been plausibly suggested that Hume displayed a neo-evolutionary theory of man and society, <sup>64</sup> though I think that is perhaps reading over-much into a number of Hume's works. <sup>65</sup> However, one does not have to go to this extreme in order to realise that Hume's view of morality and society are in many respects as "incomplete" (I use Norton's own term) as his views on metaphysics and, although he certainly feels that in speculative reasoning, reason can make some difference whereas in moral reasoning it is far less likely to, our moral sentiments are not fixed save by convention (socially created) and so, although one must be suitably modest here, reason can have some effect in morals and politics by helping to 'guide' our 'bents of mind' and habits of behaviour (i.e. by showing to us 'dispositions' that our passions - properly understood - desire).

It is illuminating, I think, in this respect to consider Hume's last work - the Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. In a brilliant essay on the Dialogues <sup>66</sup> Mossner points out two things vital for any understanding of the Dialogues' rightful place in an appreciation of Hume's work. The

first is their importance to Hume personally - witnessed by his constant revision of them (even on his death-bed) and the meticulous care he took to ensure their posthumous publication. The second is the role of irony in their construction. "Hume grew up during the hey-day of Satire" Mossner reminds us "and relished the writing of Swift, a master of ironic prose. It is not surprising then, though virtually unnoticed, that irony is an indispensable factor of the Dialogues and holds, in truth, the key to its basic teachings." <sup>67</sup> This irony is found in many things - in Cleanthes' supposed "Victory" in the debate, in Hume's artful use of Pamphilus (with the conscious echoes of Cicero's de Natura Deorum) and if this irony is ignored the Dialogues cannot be properly understood.

Mossner concludes that The Dialogues is the "final marriage of philosophy with art that had been Hume's ambition throughout a long career as a man of letters." <sup>68</sup> and something else that he makes clear (also emphasised by Kemp Smith in his introduction to the Dialogues) is their prevailing scepticism. Mossner comments that a sceptic is, "perpetually re-thinking his principles. Scepticism, first and last, is a frame of mind, neither a collection nor a system of doctrines and it frequently ends with suspense of judgement," <sup>69</sup> and notes, surely wisely, how perfect a setting the inevitable ambivalence of a dialogue is for a sceptical philosopher like Hume. This is undeniably true of Hume's presentation of his religious views, not only in the Dialogues, but in the essay on Miracles, and the posthumously published essays on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul, and it goes a long way to explaining the continued debate over who exactly is Hume's real spokesman in the Dialogues (though, that it is Philo seems to me impossible to deny). Furthermore (as Forbes continually points out) Hume's political thought is incomplete if consideration of his criticism of "the religious hypothesis" is excluded. While Forbes is right in this, however, he seemingly ignores his own advice by trying continually to "down-grade" Hume's scepticism, which is the most important part of his attack on that "religious hypothesis". In Forbes' case, this is as much I suspect, a rhetorical point as an historical one and is done in order to bolster the interpretation of Hume's political theory as "constructive, forward-looking, a programme of modernization, an education for backward looking men." <sup>70</sup> 'Scepticism' is seen as a danger to this account because of its allegedly negative impact. It is this same fear that leads Norton to discuss five types of scepticisms that were not Hume's <sup>71</sup> (though he may have borrowed substantially from at least one of them - what Norton



calls "Academic Scepticism") in order to show that, however sceptical he may have been about reason's role in morals, he was not sceptical about its role in "speculative" thought - and that, therefore, Hume was not party to the "subordination" thesis (of reason to passion) in the completely naturalistic manner ascribed to him by Kemp Smith, Stroud and others. Yet on the interpretation of Humean Scepticism offered in this Chapter, this no longer becomes a problem because (as Mossner says) scepticism is as much a 'frame of mind' as a set of doctrines and Hume's scepticism does not imply a denial of certainty, nor does it imply (as Hamann and Novalis seemed to think) <sup>72</sup> raising mere 'Belief' above fact or knowledge in determining or judging opinions. It simply means that, as Hume wrote in his letter to Stewart, there are many kinds of certainty, and a wise man adapts his mind (and habit) to the kind of certainty appropriate for the situation. In the Dialogues, Philo destroys the argument from design, again (as in the case of suicide and the original contract) largely by arguing on his opponents' 'own ground', as it were, showing the arguments to be vacuous & implies that men should adapt their 'bent of mind' (as Hume puts it in his essay on The Sceptic) away from it, but the ironical ending of the Dialogue (i.e. Cleanthes 'victory') is Hume's way of indicating that the fires of passion may well be strong enough to prevent that and that anyway- "There are many kinds of certainty". For himself, Hume has no doubt that to understand man, one must be prepared to accept the great variety of human nature and that even though one person's 'bent of mind' may be 'insensibly improved' by art and philosophy, others may not be.

His attempted explanation of the various manifestations of human nature varies with subject and circumstance but the method he uses as the premiss for explanation and description is the same. "First to last, Treatise to Dialogues, Hume is ever the sceptic", writes Mossner "true to his own premiss that human nature is the only science of man". <sup>73</sup>

V

This leaves one question left to be answered - what, in the field of politics, did Hume truly expect of this method? Is Miller right, for

example, in thinking that in some sense Hume meant it to have practical applications for conduct - even though he may not be right about the exact manner in which these applications were manifested (i.e. a theory of judgement?). Is Harrison right in thinking that Hume considered explanation and recommendation as part of the same enquiry?

The answer is characteristically Humean; both yes and no. In one sense, I think Miller is right - although it is conceding very little to say it, as even many commentators who generally do not accept that Hume's general philosophy was meant to have practical moral implications would agree with it.<sup>74</sup> That is that it is at least intended to have critical - negative if you like - implications. Even Forbes who, (rightly I think) emphasises Hume's continuity with much of the Natural Law theory he criticised, accepts that Hume's critical fire was directed at theories he wanted to show as false and that, therefore, he wanted - at the very least - people to stop thinking or acting on the basis of these false theories, or giving them as - in any sense - a premiss for an argument or a reason for their actions, (as Philo's arguments in the Dialogues are designed to do, for example).

In this sense, Hume shows up one error common to all 'Humpty Dumpty' and 'Red Queen' theorists of whatever philosophical stamp - the belief that explanation and description do not, in some sense lead on to action or the refraining from action; that they do not have, in themselves, a prescriptive effect. Even constructing a theory is action - of a sort - and demolishing theories means, by implication, asking others to recognize their invalidity and refraining from their conceptual use. Hume certainly took this view and so would all 20th Century positivists and their fellow travellers with regard to "metaphysics" - so why part company over 'morals'?

Not, I think, because Hume felt that the same did not apply in morality (which is essentially what Norton argues) but because he felt that his explanation of the nature of morality, if it was correct, made it virtually impossible in most cases for even the most telling argument to actually affect our conduct or our moral choices, because - quite rightly, even necessarily - our sentiments are involved in morality in a way that they are not with purely speculative concerns: indeed that it was this that characterised a specifically 'moral' choice. Yet even here, Hume wants to say, there was something that could be done, in that an understanding of

why we act as we do act and how we organise our society as we do, will help us to recognise hypocrisy and possible danger to our mutually connected social well-being and individual self-interest. Mistakes in philosophy are, for Hume, usually merely ridiculous but can, nevertheless, be pernicious (as for example, social contract theory). Yet Hume was sceptical enough to suspect that all his criticism would not be enough to 'scotch the snake' once and for all. As the ambiguous ending of the Dialogues suggests and as Adam Smith's 'charon' anecdote <sup>75</sup> amplifies, Hume was fully conscious of the natural longevity of superstition. Johnathan Harrison expresses surprise that after Hume's devastating critique, contract theory still survives (and indeed flourishes); <sup>76</sup> Hume, I suspect, would not have been surprised in the least.

The real significance of Hume's scepticism is that no enquiry is to be taken as final - in metaphysics, epistemology, morals or politics. Hume believed that we could express some - though very few - general laws in politics, but his use of them makes them appear as rules of thumb, rather than "laws" in any scientific or quasi-legalistic sense. But even these, he suggests, are only provisional. The "implications" of his method for practical activity are chiefly, though not exclusively, concerned with showing us that we can, by ingenuity, make our passions serve us when in their natural state they might harm us. Hume's discussion of the origin of government, where precisely this argument is used, shows this. A first step, however, has to be a clear explanation of why we are motivated as we are, and this Hume offers. Thus, Hume's conception of the relationship between philosophy and politics is a much closer one than many of his modern followers would allow, without being "necessary" in a Hobbesian (or even Lockean) sense. Our explanations will inevitably have practical consequences of some sort, but they will not be fixed, or necessary and may be affected by a wide variety of other factors. This goes beyond Miller's claim that Hume's political theory is linked to his general philosophy by a theory of 'judgement'. To be sure it is, but as Norman Kemp Smith said of Hume's ethics, Hume's political theory is integral to his general philosophical outlook and stands or falls together with it <sup>77</sup> and involves more than his theory of judgement because it embraces the whole of his philosophical enterprise that I would want to characterize by the word 'sceptical' (used as I have used the word here).

At the same time, I do not wish to deny the substance of Forbes' argument

that the history of ideas and political theory more generally is messy and it is difficult to exactly pinpoint where philosophy ends and ideology begins (always assuming a sensible distinction between these two terms can be made). This point is itself a very Humean one. As Hume himself wrote in his essay the Sceptic "the chief triumph of art and philosophy (is that) it insensibly refines the temper, and it points out to us those dispositions which we should endeavour to attain, by a constant bent of mind, and by repeated habit " ( PW:3 124. My emphasis).

This last remark surely indicates, however, that Hume intends his science of man to have practical implications, just as did Montesquieu, Rousseau and Kant. 'Habit' is an important aspect of Hume's philosophy from his epistemology to his political theory. It is habit which creates the impression that leads to the idea of necessary connection; habit which creates the strongest ties of sympathy, and habit which can often bind together, ruler and ruled. Habit, however, can be effected by thought; not definitely or necessarily, but it can, and, suggests Hume, will do so, if philosophy is pursued.

On this point Hume does, largely, agree with the rest of the Enlightenment. Art and philosophy, he suggests, work 'insensibly' on our minds and habits - but chiefly, of course, if we pay some attention to art and philosophy. This is what Enlightenment is all about and, therefore, why the mainstream Enlightenment so deplored the arguments of Rousseau's first Discours but Hume, while sharing the distaste the philosophes felt for this, was far less sanguine than they about the prospects for such Enlightenment, (as Becker notes <sup>78</sup>). The fact that this is so, however, does not mean that the project is a failure, or that Hume conceived it as such. MacIntyre, like many others, seems to fear the 'suspension of judgement', the 'many certainties' that Hume's scepticism leads to, but Hume does not. Nor does he regard it as reducing morality to a series of interminably clashing wills (though many of his professed admirers both in the Counter Enlightenment and in contemporary philosophy do believe this) <sup>79</sup> or have complete faith in what John Dunn has called the "socializing powers which can be imputed to all societies". <sup>80</sup> To impute to Hume, as Dunn does, a "purely internal conception of rational human agency (that) has left human individuals..... increasingly on their own and devoid of rational direction in social or political action" <sup>81</sup> is a misrepresentation of Hume's thought, as I hope this chapter has shown.

We are not 'devoid of rational direction'; indeed, on the contrary, Hume's thought is full of ways in which we can (and should) allow ourselves to be rationally directed through our response to a whole range of issues and situations. Of course, it is also Hume's view that in many cases our 'close and immediate' interest or passion will blind us to our long term interest and thus our reason will work towards the former and not the latter. This, for Hume, is an error but it is still, after a fashion, being 'rationally directed'.

Interestingly, what appears to be behind Dunn's thought (as it is behind MacIntyre's - more explicitly) is a cry for a unitary conception of Reason. A conception located outside ourselves but at the same time autonomous within us. In this regard his great exemplar is Locke (as MacIntyre's is Aristotle). "Locke presumed" Dunn argues "that there were strict theoretical implications between the abandonment of theocentrism the acceptance of a purely internal conception of human rational agency and the resting of all human rights and duties upon the contingencies of human opinion ..... If there is indeed nothing rationally to human existence, individually and socially, but opinion, it will certainly be bad news if opinion ever falters." <sup>82</sup>

As far as Locke is concerned, Dunn is, I think, quite right and more interestingly for my purpose, similar echoes can be found in some writers of the Enlightenment, especially Rousseau and Kant. My arguments for this contention will, I hope, be apparent from Chapters Three and Four of the present work. It is true also that Hume (and Adam Smith, whom Dunn couples with Hume in his article) fails to share this view. It is not true, however, that Hume was facilely optimistic about the 'socializing powers' imputed to all societies; as I have shown, he was very well aware of the powers of 'superstition' (as he would term it) to prevent that socialization.

Moreover, (as Forbes has argued) Hume's political theory was (in part) 'an education for backward looking men' and although he abandoned theocentrism Hume did not mean by this simply 'resting all human rights and duties upon the contingencies of opinion' except in the very general sense that all human 'rights and duties' are ultimately contingent on their faults being recognized by the humans to whom they are meant to apply. Hume's criticism of 'religious hypothesis' removed (for him) any possibility of there being a theological base to these rights and duties, but it did not shoot him straight into emotivism. His arguments were meant to hold the ring between the views

of the ethical rationalists<sup>83</sup> and pyrrhonian sceptics and thus not simply to reduce everything to opinion but to understand why we come to the sorts of opinions we do about morals and politics and therefore to find a securer base for those opinions than that provided by the 'religious hypothesis'. Hume's answer to Locke (and by extension to Dunn and MacIntyre) is that, as the religious arguments cannot any longer provide an adequate external support for our opinions, then something else will have to be found and it is this question that his political theory - and his 'science of man' - sets out to answer. Hume is a naturalist because he finds this answer in our nature (and the nature of our situation); he is a sceptic because of the character and status of the arguments used to discover and probe this naturalism.<sup>84</sup> His theory is most emphatically not what the under-labourers, the emotivists, the partisans of Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen thought it was, because it has inescapable conclusions for our practical life; inescapable not because they 'morally' proclaim this way of life or that - not because they 'preach' (in Schlicks contemptuous word) - but because they present a view of man's nature, and of his cognitive, rational and sentimental character. This inevitably leads to practical conclusions in our moral and political world, though the specific conclusions to which it leads are not necessary or determined.

Hume presents a view of man radically different from Kant's, and also different (pace Gay) from his Enlightenment confrères in important respects. Yet like Kant (and like Rousseau), despite these differences, Hume is essentially of the Enlightenment in two key respects:- The problems he dealt with were located firmly in the matrix of Enlightenment thought (and thus, characteristically, the solutions were shaped by that matrix also) and, secondly, (just as important) Hume was temperamentally one of the philosophic family. He was as concerned as they were with the cause of Enlightenment and this gave polemical edge to many of his writings (particularly his political and religious writings). To this was added the whole matrix of Eighteenth Century British political culture (as Forbes' study has superbly illustrated) and his writings on that topic betray the Enlightenment mode in politics par excellence.

In all of this two things are prominent. First, there is no sense in which MacIntyre's claim about the 'failure of the Enlightenment project' is justified. Hume did not see it as a failure and (as the response to Dunn

suggested) only someone already convinced of a different view of human nature and/or philosophical method would consider it so in general (as opposed to rejecting specific arguments). Thus, on precisely those elements (method and the science of man) where Hume was in agreement with the Enlightenment in general terms (if not always on specifics), he (and by extension the philosophes) cannot be convicted of an inherent, inevitable failure to rationally justify morality.

Secondly, all attempts to lay claim to Hume by Humpty Dumpty/Red Queen advocates, can now be seen to be greatly mistaken. As much as the mainstream Enlightenment, perhaps even as much as Rousseau or Kant, Hume's political theory has practical implications. even though the views of nature and man Kant and Hume adopt are radically opposed to one another. As Kemp Smith says "Hume's reflexions on the study have, in his view, been effectual, and on issuing from the study he is acting on the principles to which they have committed him. Have not these reflexions taught him that it is upon Nature's guidance, operating ..... not through reason but by way of feeling (inclusive of belief) that we have to reply?"<sup>85</sup>

One does not have to argue (I would not) that Hume's theory is without major flaws and failures, that in many respects it does not fully cohere, or that his political theory is not (in many ways) one sided,<sup>86</sup> to recognize that his approach, largely explanatory and non-'moral' (at least in the usual connotations of that much abused word) is tied into -necessarily tied into - a whole series of assumptions, actions and events in the practical world of moral and political choice. Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen may continue snapping at the heels of those who would entwine philosophy with politics but they must do it without Hume.

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PART 3: BRINGING PHILOSOPHY BACK IN.



CHAPTER 6

Sceptical Philosophy and Rational Politics

"Enlightenment is the emergence of man from his self incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another".

Kant:

Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung.

"I .... should be sorry to think, that human affairs admit of no greater stability, than what they receive from the casual humours and characters of particular men".

Hume:

That Politics May Be Reduced To A Science.

"Part of what is involved in having a better theory is being able more effectively to cope with the world".

Charles Taylor:

Social Theory as Practice

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"I do not blame anyone" Kant remarks in Der Streit der Fakultäten, "if political evils make him despair of the welfare and progress of mankind" (KPW 189/AA VII 93). Transparently, however, they did not make Kant himself despair. As is, I hope, apparent from the argument of chapter four, Kant was confident that mankind would progress towards the ideals the Enlightenment had sketched for it, however painful the pathway proved to be. This is not because Kant harboured any illusions about the character of his own era; "If it is now asked if we at present live in an Enlightened age, the answer is no" Kant asserts in his essay Was ist Aufklärung (KPW 58/AA VIII 40). Nonetheless, he did believe he was living in an age of Enlightenment (KPW 58/AA VIII 40), and the nub of this Enlightenment was "Man's inclination and

vocation to think freely" (KPW 59/AA VIII 41). This inclination, however, is vital not only for itself but because "it gradually reacts upon the mentality of the people, who thus gradually become increasingly able to act freely" (KPW 59/AA VIII 41).

Thus, again we see the linking of the theoretical and the practical in Kant. As I argued earlier, this project is the logical outcome of his synthesis of the two main elements in Enlightenment thought. Even in the philosophically most radical member of the Philosophic flock, we see a similar approach. Hume, too, for all his much vaunted division of philosophy into speculative and practical (T 457), is constantly concerned to demonstrate that the two are inextricably intertwined; as my arguments in chapter five show, his political thought is incomplete if we ignore his general epistemology and his critique of the 'religious hypothesis', and their relation to each other as well as to his moral and political thought.

The three previous chapters, then, show both the general character of the Enlightenment project (at least as far as moral and political thought are concerned), and the specific arguments within it of perhaps its two most influential philosophical voices. It will be remembered, however, that this discussion was begun as a response to MacIntyre's consideration of the 'moral dilemma' that faces us today: I would like to open the concluding section of this study, by returning to my starting point and seeing where these arguments leave MacIntyre's case, and what the implications of this are.

## I

In chapter nine of After Virtue, and again in chapter eighteen, MacIntyre announces the theoretical centrepiece of his thesis - that the condition of our moral culture today leaves us with a stark conceptual choice - Nietzsche or Aristotle. MacIntyre's own choice, of course, (as I have already remarked), is Aristotle, but more interesting for the moment is why the other 'genuine theoretical alternative' is said to be Nietzsche.

MacIntyre's argument is that the reason for this is to be found, at least partly, in Neitzsche's perception of the fact that today, "morality has become generally available in a quite new way" (1). To understand what MacIntyre is referring to here, it is important to see that his thesis about contemporary morality is essentially that it "can only be understood as a series of fragmented survivals from an older past and that the insoluble problems which they have generated for modern moral theorists will remain insoluble until this is well understood"(2). This philosophical fragmentation is what, in large part, the Enlightenment project is supposed to have brought about.

According to MacIntyre, therefore, we need to develop a philosophical acuteness and vision somewhat akin to the vision "which anthropologists at their best bring to the observation of other cultures, enabling them to identify survivals and unintelligibles unperceived by those who inhabit those cultures" (3). As an elucidation of this point, MacIntyre discusses Cook's third voyage and the discovery of the polynesian word Taboo. Coupling Cook's experiences with the hypothesis advanced by the anthropologists Franz Steiner and Mary Douglas, MacIntyre proposes both that the notion of Taboo was not fully understood by the Polynesians themselves, and that Taboo rules have a two stage history; the first of which embeds them in a context which confers intelligibility upon them, the second which is what occurs when this context is negated, ignored, or disappears. In this latter stage the rules become deprived of their authority and "if they do not acquire some new status quickly, both their interpretation and their justification become debatable. When the resources of a culture are too meagre to carry through the task of reinterpretation, the task of justification becomes impossible"(4).

It is precisely this situation that we have now reached in our own culture, or so MacIntyre wants to argue, and the fact has been most clearly perceived by Neitzsche. Jeering at any notion of basing morality on inner moral sentiments on the one hand and the categorical imperative on the other, he disposes,

argues MacIntyre, "of both what I have called the Enlightenment project to discover rational foundations for an objective morality and the confidence of the everyday moral agent in post-Enlightenment culture that his moral practice and utterance are in good order"(5).

For MacIntyre, this leads to one overwhelmingly important conclusion; "It was because a moral tradition of which Aristotle's thought was the intellectual core was repudiated during the transition from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century that the Enlightenment project of discovering new, rational, secular foundations for morality had to be undertaken. And it was because that project failed, because the views advanced by its most intellectually powerful protagonists and more especially by Kant, could not be sustained in the face of rational criticism, that Nietzsche and all his existentialist and emotivist successors were able to mount their apparently successful critique of all previous morality. Hence the defensibility of the Nietzschean position turns in the end on the answer to the question, was it right in the first place to reject Aristotle?"(6).

The latter part of this question I shall return to briefly later in this chapter, but I want to suggest now that even the first part is, at best, misleading. To begin with, let me fill out a little MacIntyre's picture of 'the Enlightenment project'. In his section entitled 'why the Enlightenment project had to fail', MacIntyre argues that "any project of this form was bound to fail, because of an ineradicable discrepancy between their shared conception of moral rules and precepts on the one hand and what was shared - despite much larger divergences - in their conception of human nature on the other"(7). MacIntyre claims that both these conceptions have a history and that their relationship can only be understood in the light of that history. The thrust of this argument is that a new - and fundamentally anti-teleological - view of Reason was brought into the mainstream of European thought with the Reformation and the movements that immediately prefigured and anticipated it, and that this conception of Reason, allowing for differences in

content and temper, was essentially that which dominated the Enlightenment, and consequently the Enlightenment's project to rationally justify morality. "Reason is calculative; it can assess truths of fact and mathematical relations but nothing more. In the realm of practice therefore it can speak only of means. About ends it must be silent .... Even Kant retains (this concept's) negative characteristics; reason for him as much as for Hume, discerns no essential natures and no teleological features in the objective universe, available for study by physics. Thus their disagreements on human nature coexist with striking and important agreements and what is true of them is true also of Diderot, of Smith and of Kierkegaard"(8).

This view, however, conflicts with the contextual setting of the moral schema which was the historical ancestor of the framework of moral values within which they operated, which had, as its basic structure, that which Aristotle analysed in the Nichomachean Ethics, and which required three main elements: "untutored human nature, man as he could be if he realized his telos and the moral precepts which enable him to pass from one state to the other"(9). The new - and Enlightenment adopted - conception of reason, however, did away with the middle element and, consequently, one is left with a view of untutored human nature as it is and a set of moral injunctions deprived of the context which gave them sense, and so, argues MacIntyre, "the eighteenth century moral philosophers engaged ... to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature, while inheriting a set of moral injunctions on the one hand, and a conception of human nature on the other which had been expressly designed to be discrepant with one another"(10).

It is at this point that MacIntyre goes through his list of those Enlightenment theorists who came close to recognizing the failure of the project, Diderot and, most importantly, Kant. In chapter three of the present work I have already shown that MacIntyre seriously misrepresents Diderot's position on a number of issues(11), but his remarks about Kant at this point are, I submit, extremely damaging to the substance of his own case.

He notes that Kant introduces the notion of teleology in book II of the Second Critique, and that its appearance in Kant's moral theory surprised some of his friendly critics in the nineteenth century. In chapter four of this study, however, I showed that teleology did not simply 'appear' in Kant's philosophy, it was central to it(12). Yet, if I am right, what then becomes of MacIntyre's two most crucial claims at this juncture of his argument: First that the Enlightenment had no place for teleology because of its adoption and adaptation of what MacIntyre calls 'the protestant-cum-Jansenist' conception of reason; and second that the whole of the Enlightenment shared this conceptual blind spot: that 'their disagreements on human nature co-exist with striking and important agreements'?

Chapters four and five above, show that although there are some similarities of approach between Hume and Kant - they were both, after all members of the 'philosophic flock' - in temper and content they stood at opposite poles of Enlightenment thought; on my interpretation of the Enlightenment, Kant attempted a unification of the main themes of both the mainstream and minor currents in Enlightenment thought, Hume was its subtlest and most perceptive internal critic, despite sharing some of its aims. Yet this is the reverse of the position adopted by MacIntyre; for him, "the Scotsmen Hume and Smith are the least self questioning"(13), whereas "if Diderot is far closer to recognition of the breakdown of the project than Hume, Kant is closer than either"(14). My interpretation of the Enlightenment shows this to be completely at odds with how both Diderot and Kant themselves saw their thought(15). Specifically, the conception of Reason that Kant works with and develops through the critical philosophy is nothing like MacIntyre's 'protestant-cum-Jansenist' conception., and neither Diderot, Hume or Kant thought, or came close to thinking, that the Enlightenment had failed. (One important similarity between Hume and Kant that MacIntyre ignores I discuss briefly later on).

Moreover, as I hope chapter three makes clear, it is far from obvious that there was an Enlightenment project, and more likely that there were only projects undertaken by various Enlightenment thinkers. To be sure, the projects often had a number of things in common, at least within the mainstream Enlightenment, but to simply describe them all as trying 'to rationally justify morality', is oversimplistic at best and deeply misleading at worst. Illuminating in this regard is the scant attention paid by MacIntyre to Rousseau. He is mentioned only twice in After Virtue(16), and one of these is simply to identify a Rousseauian style of argument. Yet surely this is a curious omission for is not Rousseau the great critic of the philosophes? Surely, if anyone recognized the failure of the 'Enlightenment project' it would be him. The fact is that Rousseau's approach is so different from that which MacIntyre wants to hang on the Enlightenment, it would be very difficult to bring him into the discussion in a way that does anything but harm MacIntyre's case. If he is made of the Enlightenment, then, again, out must go the thesis that all the Enlightenment thinkers shared important similarities in their conception of human nature, whatever their differences, for (as I demonstrated in chapter three [17]) Rousseau's view of human nature is the arena of his greatest clash with the other philosophes, and it is also part of the aspect of his thought that appealed most strongly to Kant(18). However, there would be even greater difficulty in attempting to define Rousseau out of the collective term 'the Enlightenment project' (as it is perfectly possible to do in the case of another seminal thinker of the time, Vico, for example). Again as I showed in chapter three, Rousseau, even at his most critical, remains firmly embedded in the soil of the Enlightenment. It is therefore probably safest for MacIntyre to pass over Rousseau in relative silence, and that is what he does. Thus, it seems to me that MacIntyre's assertion that the 'Enlightenment project' was 'bound to fail' itself fails because the interpretation of the Enlightenment offered in After Virtue cannot be sustained.

II

So far, I have been heavily critical of MacIntyre's thesis in After Virtue, but as I remarked in chapter one(19), there are also points of agreement between us. To a large extent I accept much of the analysis of the problems our contemporary culture seems to possess; I also accept the contention that conceptual shifts of great importance occurred during (roughly) the period of the Enlightenment, and that these shifts were instrumental in bringing about the 'climates of opinion' (I deliberately use Becker's phrase) which enabled Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen (or 'emotivism', for MacIntyre) to become so influential.

What, then, are the implications of this when wedded to the fact that I have rejected the main plank in the conceptually causal sequence of events given by MacIntyre, the 'inevitable failure of the Enlightenment project'? To grasp most effectively where this rejection takes us it is useful to note one of the criticisms of MacIntyre made by Bernstein in his perceptive paper on After Virtue: "MacIntyre's attack on the Enlightenment project" he says, "is itself part of what might be called 'the rage against the Enlightenment, or modernity'... we find similar motifs in Heidegger, Adorno and Horkheimer, and Foucault ...(but) MacIntyre himself appropriates from the very project that he tells us 'had to fail'"(20). In particular, according to Bernstein, MacIntyre appropriates, without perhaps fully realizing it, the Kantian principle of 'always acting so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, as an end and not as a means'. This principle, says Bernstein, is fundamental for MacIntyre's whole project, because a good deal of MacIntyre's reconstruction of the Aristotelean Virtues consists in rejecting the idea of exclusion, that principle on which, historically, the tradition of the Virtues has been based (i.e., there is always some group or groups who are excluded - women, non-Greeks, non-Christians, slaves, barbarians etc.). MacIntyre denies this principle, and says, in a kind of partial defence of Aristotle's subscription



to it, "This blindness of Aristotle's was not, of course, private to Aristotle; it was part of the general, although not universal, blindness of his culture"(21). For MacIntyre, any adequate conception of the good life should not exclude in principle any member of the human species, and while MacIntyre might claim to be simply strengthening the tradition of the Virtues, as Bernstein remarks "(he) Universalizes the tradition of the Virtues on the basis of principles which were hammered out in the Enlightenment"(22).

This is where the full implications of the rejection of MacIntyre's Enlightenment, and the substitution of mine begin to become apparent. MacIntyre's reference to Aristotle's 'blindness' points the way here, because, of course, Aristotle is only 'blind' by the lights of a culture that has already decided that a principle of exclusion is partly constitutive of moral or conceptual blindness; ours has, Aristotle's had not; MacIntyre's own admission demonstrates more clearly than anything else that we are living in a culture created, in part, by the Enlightenment, and that we cannot escape it. We cannot do what MacIntyre would have us do and simply go 'back' to a tradition of the Virtues, suitably amended and dressed up to avoid the kind of 'blindness' which afflicted poor Aristotle, because in so doing we are doing precisely what MacIntyre is trying to break away from and combining together elements of vastly different cultures and attempting to impose a false cohesion upon them.

In the final chapter of After Virtue, MacIntyre anticipates three objections that he says are likely to be levelled at him. One, he thinks, will come from those who disagree with him on his interpretation of Aristotle, and I shall put this to one side; another will come from Marxists, who see themselves as the chief opposition to what MacIntyre calls 'Liberal Individualism' - presumably the general consensus of Western values - and deny that a return to the Aristotelean tradition is a viable critique of Modernity. This too, I shall put to

one side (though I shall briefly return to it later). The third objection he gives, however, is worth a closer look. This objection, which will come, thinks MacIntyre, from a motley collection of utilitarians, Kantians and others, will centre on "a different and incompatible evaluation of the arguments"(23) and to rebut them MacIntyre recognizes he will have to deploy a systematic account of Rationality, which will enable disputes in moral philosophy to be 'settled'. This account, MacIntyre says, will be given 'in a subsequent book'.

This book, of course, has not yet appeared, but it is perhaps not beyond the limits of reason to see his argument against Incommensurability that I outlined in chapter two(24), as at least part of the performance of this task. Here, it will be remembered, MacIntyre is addressing the problems of "how issues can be rationally resolved when they divide the adherants of large and comprehensive points of view whose systematic disagreements extend to disagreements as to how those disagreements are to be characterised"(25). Is this not attempting to outline "appropriate rational procedures .... for settling this kind of (moral) dispute"(26)?

MacIntyre's conclusion in his article on Incommensurability was that the rational superiority of 'one large scale philosophical standpoint' over another consisted in its ability to 'transcend the limitations of the other by providing from its own point of view a better explanation of the failures, frustrations and incoherencies of the other point of view (judged internally) than that other point of view can give of itself'(27). Thus, on MacIntyre's thesis, for it to be judged rationally superior, the Aristotelean tradition must give a better account of the 'failures, frustrations and incoherencies' of the Neitzschean position, than the Neitzschean position can give of itself. It is, of course, precisely this that MacIntyre attempts to do in After Virtue, but the project is fatally flawed. First, because MacIntyre's presentation of the Neitzschean position as being the only genuine alternative to a revived Aristoteleanism, is dependant on his erroneous

interpretation of the Enlightenment and, secondly, because the reconstruction of Aristoteleanism is itself guilty of exactly the vice MacIntyre constantly asserts is fatal for philosophy; trying to hold anachronistic theories together in a false unity.

MacIntyre is right, of course, that incommensurability is fatal for his case, or at least, for the whole of his case, and so he is right to make the attempt to try and meet it. The attempt fails, as I have said, because it falls at three hurdles: the interpretation of the enlightenment, the failure to perceive that he is not practising what he preaches, and, most important (as I shall argue later) because his argument is in any case internally incoherent. Nonetheless, he has, as Bernstein remarks, touched 'a sensitive moral nerve'(28), and his critique of much modern moral philosophy is valid, I think, as my introductory chapter indicated. Must we, then, leave the field to Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen, or is there a way out of the conceptual maze that escapes the problems we come across by following MacIntyre's map?

### III

We can, perhaps, first begin to see a glimmer of light if we return to the arguments of Rorty outlined in chapter two. Rorty's chosen metaphor of conversation is meant to illustrate his guiding concern in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, to warn against taking 'philosophy' as the name of a natural kind, making it, in other words 'foundational'. His chosen three philosophical heroes of the twentieth century, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey, all began by trying to make it foundational and then seeing the error of their ways: "thus their later work is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program"(29). The thrust of the critique of contemporary philosophy Rorty develops is

both similar and dissimilar to MacIntyre's, as chapter two illustrates. The main difference, however - and it is best displayed in their differences over incommensurability - is the role each wishes to assign to philosophy.

As I argued in section II above, and earlier in chapter two, MacIntyre must dispose of incommensurability or his whole project of asserting that one hugely different moral system is rationally superior to another, is in jeopardy. As he thinks that the moral quandary that makes this task so vital was brought about by episodes in the history of philosophy(30), obviously philosophy has a pre-eminently important role in shaping our moral life; in this sense, then, it is foundational. For Rorty, on the other hand, it is merely one voice in the ceaseless cacophony that is the conversation of the West, and to insist on pride of place for philosophy (still less certain problems or methods within philosophy) in that conversation is an insupportable arrogance.

Given this view of philosophy, and the account of the formation of the history of philosophy given both in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and in 'The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres', it is easy to see why Rorty can accept with equanimity the quite extreme position on incommensurability that he does. Let me examine in more detail, for a moment, just what the implications of this analysis are. If Rorty is right, a good deal of the history of philosophy comes about by chance; because of a certain set of historical accidents a certain way of looking at a certain problem or problems becomes pre-eminent at a certain time. This then sets the scene, as it were, for philosophy for a period until the next particularly powerful set of historical accidents comes about, and the whole procedure is nudged in a different direction(31). According to Rorty, this is what happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the 'creation' of epistemology.

Nonetheless, however contingent the prevailing interests of philosophy may be, this does not mean to say that they are not

important. An important question for a particular culture does not become any the less important because it was stumbled on wholly or partly by chance. In discussing the issues that separated Galileo and Bellarmine, Rorty is insistent that there was no standard to which one might appeal to establish Galileo as 'true and rational' and Bellarmine as 'irrational'; "the 'grid' that emerged in the later seventeenth and eighteenth century was not there to be appealed to in the early seventeenth century" he says, and thus, while conceding that we are the heirs of three hundred years of 'rhetoric' (Rorty's word) about the importance of distinguishing between science and art, science and religion, science and philosophy and so on, he repeats that "to proclaim our loyalty to these distinctions is not to say there are objective and rational standards for adopting them"(32). Perhaps not, but if we are in the position of Galileo or Bellarmine we cannot afford the luxury of judging by existing social practice for (as Bernstein remarks), it is precisely what is (or should) count as existing social practices that is at issue.

In his essay on 'The Historiography of Philosophy' however, Rorty's analysis suggests a way out of this dilemma. Not, it should be said at the outset, that Rorty himself makes use of it for, of course, he does not accept that there is a dilemma to escape from. It will be remembered that in this essay Rorty distinguishes three allowable methods of pursuing the history of ideas: historical reconstruction; rational reconstruction and *Geistesgeschichte*, but that he adds, towards the end a 'large and diffuse' genre, called by him 'intellectual history', which, he says, embraces discussions of all those peripheral figures that he mentions and who "do the jobs which philosophers are popularly supposed to do - impelling social reform, supplying new vocabularies for moral deliberation, deflecting the course of scientific and literary disciplines into new channels"(33).

This genre, Rorty says, provides the 'raw material' for the historiography of philosophy, yet surely it is more than that,

for philosophers do sometimes do the job they are supposed to do (i.e., sometimes it is philosophy which impells social reform, or supplies a new vocabulary for moral deliberation or shifts a discipline into a different channel). Rorty says that 'intellectual history' brackets the question of what it is these peripheral figures and their confrères were doing but, nonetheless, studying intellectual history in this way will, almost certainly, do two things. First, it will emphasise the variable, though inevitable, inter-relations between not only different areas of intellectual activity, but also between those areas and the wider, practical world. This thesis is upheld both in a number of the essays in Philosophy in History(34), but also in both MacIntyre(35) and in (perhaps the best extant example of this approach in practice) Quentin Skinner's magisterial The Foundations of Modern Political Thought(36). It is also, I suggest, observable in the currents of Enlightenment thought that I discuss above in chapters three to five. The Philosophes, some of them at least, were not only philosophers in the strict sense of the word, but also men of letters, novelists, essayists, aestheticians, legal reformers, economists and political actors. More to the point, although they were aware (and in Hume's case more than just aware) of the difference in kind between these multifarious activities, they were also convinced, as my interpretation above shows, that the activities were interdependant.

There is, however, a second implication of Rorty's analysis. This is simply that such a history would also tend to show the leading intellectual trends of the age very clearly indeed. It is, of course, precisely for this reason that Rorty thinks that the genre can provide the raw material for the historiography of philosophy. If changes in the history of philosophy take place as Rorty says they do then any attempt to understand how changes in the philosophical atmosphere come about will need to consider the whole gamut of social and intellectual activity in that society; we have, in other words to study the 'grid' out of which the philosophic scene itself arises.

This, of course, is close to what MacIntyre is attempting to do in After Virtue, but by concentrating (almost) exclusively on the history of philosophy only a distorted picture of the 'grid' created in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries emerges and the subsequent analysis is inevitably seriously flawed. Thus, although MacIntyre's presentation of the problem is acute and perceptive, his suggestion of the causes is heavily oversimplified; and, since his chosen solution is dependant on the excusivity of the choice he poses between the legacy of the Enlightenment 'truly' perceived by Neitzsche and a restructured Aristotelean tradition, and his account of the Neitzschean position (and thus the Enlightenment's legacy) is dependent on this oversimplification, it is not surprising the argument runs into problems.

Moreover, since MacIntyre himself is a creation of the 'grid' referred to by Rorty, it is also not surprising that his values are those that make sense to someone else whose experience is drawn from the same well, but are very dissimilar to those of someone like Aristotle who was formed by a very different 'grid'. My saying this should not be taken to imply that I am subscribing to the incommensurability thesis; the fact that we are creations of our culture, society and history does not make us prisoners of them. It does mean, however, that a way out of the problems inherent in one 'grid' cannot be found by attempting to recreate one that has disappeared.

Thus, if I am right on this, it seems likely that a solution to the problem I started out with in chapter one - the tortuous and much debated question of the relationship between philosophy and politics, theory and practice, in twentieth century thought - is more likely to be apprehended by examining the 'grid' out of which twentieth century thought grew in a positive way, rather than trying to replace it with an almost completely anachronistic one.

IV

In a perceptive analysis of the current state of political philosophy, John Dunn has remarked that, "The idea of a secular authority grounded outside and above the beliefs of a particular population no longer make sense today"(37). One of the reasons why it no longer makes sense is, of course, the success of what I would say was the true 'Enlightenment project' (in so far as it had a project, that is). This project was, as Kant famously put it, to make man emerge from his self-incurred immaturity, where immaturity was defined as the 'inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another'.

Maturity, or at least our present pretence of it(38), however, poses its own problems, as MacIntyre, Rorty and Williams all agree (they do not agree, of course, on what the problems are). It does seem fair to agree with MacIntyre (as I did in my first chapter) that one of the most serious of the problems is what it implies for our moral consciousness. In Dunn's essay, referred to above, he makes the point that the clearest assertion of a specifically modern identity is precisely the recognition and acceptance of the fact of broad moral incommensurability; "The claim to know better .... can be vindicated only within identities .... the only authority which it can possess is a human authority, an authority for human beings not an external domination over them .... what it is to be modern .... is simply to face up to this knowledge"(39).

Now, it is also MacIntyre's case that the characteristic feature of the modern world is a recognition of moral incommensurability but MacIntyre thinks that this is a mistake and one deeply damaging to our moral consciousness. For reasons that I have already outlined I think that his solution to this dilemma does not stand up, but, like Bernstein, I do think that he has touched a 'sensitive moral nerve'. There is something potentially worrying about the condition of our moral and political reflection that a simple acceptance of its seeming implications does nothing to allay.



I want to suggest that the reason, or at least the chief reason, why MacIntyre's argument disturbs us is that the 'sensitive moral nerve' that he has touched is the sundering of theory and practice characteristic of the advocates of what I have called Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen. However, as my study above has shown, that was not a disjunction that owed anything to the Enlightenment, indeed quite the contrary. Even David Hume, that thinker most often held to be the most rigorous proponent of separating the theoretical and the practical in the Enlightenment, has been seen, rather, to have strongly believed in the necessity for theoretical reflection on practical matters; though he was quite willing to believe that 'the casual humours and characters of particular men' would mean that, more often than not, they would place their near and immediate interest above their longer term interest(40).

We saw, furthermore, the specific ways in which the Enlightenment itself attempted to bind together theory and practice. Why, for example a work like Diderot's Supplement au Voyage de Bougainville is a 'political' work with serious practical overtones, while being at the same time a revolutionary work of moral theory(41); or how Condorcet argues from theses about probability to conclusions in politics(42). The point here is not that these arguments themselves necessarily hold (many do not), or that the philosophes agreed among themselves about the specific way theory and practice were related (as we have seen they didn't). What is important is that at the specific point in our intellectual history when the 'grid' (to use the Foucaultian and Rortyesque term) that, in large part, helped to create 'modernity' was first emerging, its intellectual vanguard strived to link theory and practice, rather than separate them.

The analysts of Modernity that I have discussed in this study, (Rorty, Williams, MacIntyre, Dunn etc.) have not disagreed that there is a problem in our moral and social consciousness - whether, like MacIntyre they call it 'emotivism, or, like Rorty and Williams (and possibly MacIntyre in a different sense)

they identify it as some version of the incommensurability thesis. Their disagreement comes, of course, in their proffered solutions to the problem. For Rorty that solution is to, as it were, become truly modern, to recognize that the conversation that forms any intellectual, political or cultural tradition is an endless clamouring of different voices and that one - philosophy - is no more (though no less) privileged than any of the others in determining our moral consciousness. MacIntyre and Williams, in different and at times almost opposing ways, claim far more for philosophy than this; MacIntyre, that as the mistakes that created the problems of modernity are largely to be found in the history of philosophy, then it is in the history and analysis of that subject that their solutions will also be found; Williams, that certain techniques and approaches within philosophy are permissible, whilst others are not, and that while this does not, perhaps, make philosophy a natural kind, it makes it far more than simply 'one voice' in the conversation of the West.

In chapter two I quoted a remark of William James to the effect that at times of unrest in the philosophic atmosphere, philosophy is often characterised by 'a loosening of old landmarks a softening of oppositions, a mutual borrowing from systems anciently closed'. As I said such a period of unrest appears to be upon us at the moment, as is eloquently witnessed by the levels of mutual borrowing among the very disparate thinkers I have discussed here. The old landmarks - 'analytical philosophy', 'continental philosophy' and so on - do appear to have loosened considerably, and yet, as MacIntyre says, the moral dilemma of the West is still acute. If, therefore, as I have, I ruled out the solution offered by MacIntyre, and if further (as I showed in chapter two) the modifications to Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen proposed by Williams still leave the essentials of their position unchanged and finally if, further still, we are unable (as, earlier in this chapter I suggested we were) to accept without serious reservations Rorty's appeal that we simply continue taking part as best we can in the continuously changing, conceptually multifarious conversation of the West without saying that one part of the

conversation is truer than any other, or even that the conversation of the West is in any way demonstrably superior to any other, then what possible solution to the modern world's predilection for separating theory and practice do we have?(43)

The solution I want to proffer has several stages, but we must begin by recognizing the truth in the arguments of MacIntyre, Williams, Rorty and the others, as well as their errors. I have argued that, first, MacIntyre does touch a 'sensitive moral nerve', that there is, in fact, a moral dilemma; secondly that Rorty's approach, though deeply suggestive of some of the ways in which the history of philosophy is shaped does little to accommodate us to this dilemma, except by conceptually shrugging its shoulders and saying that the dilemma, if we choose to see it as such, is insoluble.

Where does this leave us? I have said that, as is shown in MacIntyre's own case, we cannot escape, in the sense of putting ourselves completely outside, the grid that has helped to shape our intellectual selves (this does not mean, of course, that we have to tamely accept that 'grid' without reservation or qualification). Thus we are forced, if we seek a solution to the dilemma that MacIntyre has posed for us, to look for one in the 'grid' itself. Now it is, of course, quite true that each 'grid' leaves a residue of itself, as it were, imbedded in its successor. It is this that gives MacIntyre's portrait of a moral vocabulary haunted by the ghosts of dead concepts, and incoherent as a result, some semblance of plausibility. The phenomenon has been discussed better, however, by a philosopher who MacIntyre explicitly acknowledges as an influence on After Virtue, R.G.Collingwood(44).

Collingwood argues that "any process involving an historical change from P1 to P2 leaves an unconverted residue of P1 encapsulated within an historical state of things which superficially is altogether P2"(45). Like Rorty, Collingwood thinks that philosophy is not a natural kind, and points out that "the alleged distinction between the historical question

and the philosophical must be false because it presupposes the permanence of philosophical problems"(46). On the contrary, according to Collingwood, philosophy must (like everything else) be located in a certain historical context, be part of a particular historical process, and processes "are things which do not begin and end but turn into one another;...(and)... if P1 has left traces of itself in P2 .... it follows that the traces of P1 in the present are not, so to speak, the corpse of a dead P1, but the real P1 itself, living and active within the other form of itself P2"(47).

It might be thought at this point that I am, to a certain extent, arguing against the very case I am trying to establish. Did I not say that we could not go back to a previous 'grid' to find our solution? and yet here I am saying that there will be living elements of past 'grids' in our present one. Does this not imply that there might be something in MacIntyre's attempt to rejuvenate the Tradition of the Virtues after all? Something, yes, but not what MacIntyre thinks. The point of Collingwood's argument is to show that history can remedy the mistakes of the present: in this sense Collingwood, like MacIntyre, believes that the problems of the present can be dissolved by a scrupulous study of the past, both actual and intellectual. However, for Collingwood, we are also, to a certain extent, governed by the here and now insofar as this aspect of the subject is concerned. For Collingwood, the philosophical historian is related to another as the trained woodsman is to the ignorant traveller: "Nothing but trees and grass' thinks the traveller, and marches on. 'Look', says the woodsman, 'There's a Tiger in that grass' ... what history can bring to the moral and political life is a trained eye for the situation in which one has to act"(48).

Consider the implications of this, for a moment comparing it with how MacIntyre, Rorty and Williams approach the issue. For Williams the historian of philosophy cannot be in a more privileged position than the analyst, essentially for the reason that philosophers (sub-specie aeterna) are none of them

more privileged than the rest of us when it comes to the central questions of morality(49); all an historian of philosophy might conceivably have greater expertise in is the history of philosophy, and this is, necessarily, limited to the philosophical; as I showed in chapter two, Williams adheres to the broad outlines of the Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen position regarding the essentially contingent nature of the relations of philosophy and practical life (cf. Graham's argument from chapter one). Yet this position in itself is one that is predicated on the assumptions mentioned in chapter one and criticised there, it does not meet Collingwood's challenge head on.

Rorty, on the other hand, appears to take the Collingwoodian point on board and then carries it to an extreme. As we have seen, he agrees that philosophers must be historians in order to do their job effectively, moreover, in the last sections of Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, there are even indications that he agrees with the broad outlines of Collingwood's moral concern(50), but his main concern is that it is what he has called (in his 'Historiography of Philosophy' paper) 'intellectual history' and not merely the history of philosophy that is really to be employed here, and, furthermore, that the 'grid' within which we still labour (for all that it might be changing in various ways) is still essentially that established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that the next set of accidents that will propel philosophy in a different direction are (naturally) neither clear nor predictable. It seems extraordinarily unlikely, given the rest of Rorty's arguments, that the emerging 'grid' will in any way resemble the restructured Aristoteleanism of MacIntyre.

For MacIntyre, on the surface, Collingwood's case mirrors his own; MacIntyre does indeed want to point out a tiger in the grass - the tiger being emotivism, of course - and he wants to level the trees and grass of modernity with a scythe forged from the 'failure' of the Enlightenment the better to expose the tiger. Yet his own Aristotelean forest, with which he

hopes to seed the dead ground, is itself laden with problems, as I have shown above, and is crucially dependent on an elusive theory of rationality itself predicated upon a refutation of the incommensurability thesis based, as I show below, on the flimsiest of premisses.

The true key to the importance of Collingwood's argument, as far as the theory and practice debate is concerned, is to recognize the fact that Collingwood intends his argument as a premiss for action in his own world; "In addition to the rapprochement between philosophy and history" he says, "I was also working at rapprochement between theory and practice"(51), and, as he reveals a little later on, the second rapprochement was very heavily dependant on the first; "I no longer thought of them as mutually independant; I saw the relation between them was one of intimate and mutual dependance"(52).

Essentially this boiled down to a rapprochement between the two in his own life, and this, necessarily, means taking into account what Dunn called the 'view from here and now'.

To delineate the true significance of this, I would like to point out that within the large and diverse group of thinkers I have (for convenience) referred to as the 'historical school', there are two views on the propriety of such a view. Opposing Collingwood (and, of course MacIntyre, who also believes this) are a number of thinkers of whom perhaps the most prominent and disturbing is Foucault. I have already indicated that Foucault is an influence on Rorty (the significance of which I shall discuss in a moment), but he is a doubly interesting thinker to examine in the present context, because his final position is an explicitly Neitzschean one: neutrality between the various power structures, relations and value systems he examines. In this sense his case is far more extreme than even Rorty or Williams. "Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth; that is the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the

techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true"(53). Foucault stresses again and again that there can be no such thing as a truth independent of its regime, and thus transformation of regimes never results in a gain of 'truth' or 'freedom', or whatever, because they are truly incommensurable, indeed completely incomparable. In fact, Foucault's position is yet more radical, because, as Charles Taylor has pointed out in a perceptive essay on him(54), "due to the Neitzschean notion of truth imposed by a regime of power[55], Foucault cannot envisage liberating transformations within a regime. The regime is entirely identified with its imposed truth. Unmasking can only destabilise it; we cannot bring about a new, stable, freer, less mendacious form of it by this route"(56).

Thus, for Foucault, we are trapped in the notions of truth forced on us by our regime of power, the two together helping to establish the 'grid' within which we have our being. He can, therefore, explain the problem that preoccupies MacIntyre, but there is no way out of it, as any replacement system (MacIntyre's rejuvenated Aristoteleanism as much as anything else) would be complete with its own (incommensurable) notions of freedom and truth. Aristotle was not 'blind', he was simply a Greek of the fourth century B.C., and there is no way that we can argue that our notions are 'truer' than his(57), or, at least, so Foucault would argue.

Even on his own terms, however, it seems unlikely that Foucault's Neitzschean position can be maintained. In the article cited above Charles Taylor suggests that Foucault is best interpreted "as having documented some of (the) losses .... that denizens of Western Christendom have undergone"(58), a certain amount of dehumanization, for example, inherent in modern systems of control in comparison with their predecessors, and "an inability to respond to key features of the human context, those which are suppressed in a stance of thoroughgoing instrumental reason"(59). Losses, however, imply at least the possibility

of gains and Taylor thinks that there are also obvious things we have gained from the change of the 'grid'; but more important than either gains or losses for my present concern, is Taylor's claim (a just one, I think) that "We have become certain things in Western civilisation. Our humanitarianism, our notions of freedom - both personal independence and collective self rule - have helped to define a political identity we share and one which is deeply rooted in our more basic .... understandings ....; of course, these elements of identity are contested .... but they all count for us"(60).

Moreover, Taylor claims that one of the reasons why this understanding is believed in preference to others, is the advance in the scientific comprehension of the natural world which, he says, we have every reason to believe represents a significant gain of truth. What all this implies, of course, is that, as opposed to Foucault's monolithic relativism, (which, as Taylor rightly judges, assumes the Olympian stance of a soul in Plato's myth of Er) we have already become something, "in short, we have a history. We live in time, not just self enclosed in the present, but essentially related to a past which has helped define our identity, and a future which puts it again in question"(61).

Now this, of course, is essentially the position of Collingwood. For him the study of history (including, naturally, perhaps even crucially, the history of philosophy), helps to make our understanding of the various aspects of that identity (not always harmonious ones, as Taylor says) ever clearer. As far as his rapprochement between theory and practice is concerned, this implies surely that to spot the tiger in the grass (and therefore to avoid it) we must examine not only the sources of the forest (which, of course, is what MacIntyre does) but must also bear in mind the perspective from which we are viewing it. To do what MacIntyre would have us do, and return to a period before the forest was there at all, is impossible as MacIntyre's own hidden assumptions show; we cannot simply toss aside the influence of the 'grid' that has



helped to shape us however much we want to. Then again, as Taylor's criticism of Foucault shows, we cannot attempt to choose in a vacuum; we are none of us outsiders in the required sense, we are already somebody.

A little earlier in this chapter I said that we must find a solution to MacIntyre's dilemma in the 'grid' which has helped to shape us, and in the discussion of Collingwood, Foucault and Taylor I have attempted to amplify this claim; Collingwood's analysis explains the plausibility of MacIntyre's account of the fragmented nature of our moral tradition but also indicates, particularly when taken with some of the arguments presented by Rorty, Dunn and Taylor, that the nature of this fragmentation precludes MacIntyre's chosen solution and suggests further that it is in our own 'grid' (as it were) that we must search(62).

V

What, then, in general does the period in which this 'grid' emerged have to tell us? First of all I need to say a brief word in defence of my specific concentration on the Enlightenment. After all, the seventeenth century was the century in which the roots of modernity were laid, so why not concentrate on that? The answer, I want to suggest, lies in Collingwood's account of the historical process that I outlined above. Here, the process P1 to P2 is from, if you like, the 'pre-modern' world to the modern world. It will be recalled that Collingwood held "any process involving an historical change from P1 to P2 leaves an unconverted residue of P1 encapsulated within an historical state of things which superficially is altogether P2"(63). 'Encapsulated' here means that a former set of beliefs or habits is retained in residual form, but the results of such beliefs or habits is not the same as it was previously. In chapter three I tried to make the case that it was during the Enlightenment when a set of beliefs and habits emerged that was 'altogether P2' i.e., an obvious and unambiguous 'prelude to modernity' (to borrow Gay's phrase).

It contains, of course, a large residue of Pl in it, but prior to this point the elements of Pl were too prominent to be described as 'encapsulated'; many of them still held centre stage. Therefore, if it is the emergent 'grid' of modernity we need to examine, it is to the Enlightenment that we must turn.

I have said that the 'sensitive moral nerve' that MacIntyre's argument touches is the sundering of theory and practice. This is shown most clearly in the tradition of modern thought that I have christened Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen, although it is not exclusively confined to them (Foucault, in some moods could be said to say similar things, but he is, of course, by no means a Humpty Dumpty or Red Queen theorist in the strict sense of the terms as I have deployed them here). These traditions, most especially what I called the underlabourer tradition, considered, in many cases, however, that they were continuing the work begun in the 'Enlightenment'. This, as we have seen, is certainly not the case, but, notwithstanding this, does the experience and thought of the Enlightenment have anything to offer us in a positive way that might help to resolve the problem that is the root of that sensitive moral nerve?

I have shown above that the Enlightenment as a self-conscious movement, far from separating theory and practice, attempted above all to find a satisfactory way of reconciling the two that fitted with their changing conceptions of both what it is to be a human agent and what natural science had displayed the natural world to be. This is the task performed by Diderot in the Supplement au Voyage de Bougainville le nouveau de Rameau and La Reve D'Alambert. It is part of what Montesquieu attempts in De L'esprit des Lois and what, from a very different perspective, Rousseau is reflecting on in his 'great trilogy' in the late seventeen fifties and early seventeen sixties. Without question, however, the two most searching and consistently rigorous examinations of these questions comes in the work of Hume and Kant.

Let us return, then, briefly to the examination of Kant's thought offered in chapter four. Here the link between theory and practice is very clear; "A collection of rules is termed a theory" according to Kant, "if the rules concerned are envisaged as principles of a fairly general nature .... which, nonetheless, necessarily influence their practical application" (64 - my emphasis). Thus, as analysed above, Kant's philosophy affects this link between theory and practice through the internal structure of the critical philosophy, resting initially on the third antinomy, and the consequent dualism between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds and, more generally, on the notions of teleology Kant develops in some of his essays and the Kritik der Urteilskraft.

In chapter three I showed that, in Gay's words, "the philosophy of the Enlightenment insisted on man's essential autonomy"(65). In chapter four I showed that one of the most important elements in Kant's attempt to reconcile and combine the mainstream and minor currents in Enlightenment thought centred on his concept of freedom and autonomy. Moreover, I argued that it was Kant's notion of freedom which was the conduit through which his teleology linked theory and practice, and that, properly understood, his teleology was neither inconsistent with the rest of the critical philosophy nor an admission (tacit or otherwise) of the 'failure of the Enlightenment project', as MacIntyre argued; nor was it internally incoherent in the manner suggested by Strawson. What his notions enable us to do, is to legislate for ourselves (to use explicitly Kantian terminology). For Kant, as Taylor points out, rationality imposes obligations on us as rational agents(66), and one of the chief of these obligations is to dictate our own moral law, that apprehended by our reason.

It will be remembered that Taylor claims that Kant is one of the most important thinkers in the development of modern culture largely because of the importance he attaches to this notion of freedom. In many ways, as chapter three makes clear, the insistence on autonomy was one of the Enlightenment's most important conceptual shifts, as I remarked earlier in this chapter, it is partly that which led to the fact, noticed by

John Dunn, that the idea of a secular authority grounded over and above a particular population no longer makes sense today. It is also one of the chief points at which MacIntyre's inconsistency over the values of the Enlightenment is at its clearest. In many ways it is the Enlightenment's views on this point that he casts as the chief villain in the drama of the decline of the tradition of the virtues that he is attempting to salvage, and yet the denial of that tradition's customary emphasis on exclusion, which is a key element in that salvage operation, is dependent on that self-same notion of freedom, which is one of the essential premises for the idea that it is a mistake to exclude this or that group.

It is important to remember too, what Kant felt followed from his theory. First that it meant that practical reasoning was, in a sense, prior to theoretical reasoning(67), but also that it must always acknowledge what theoretical reasoning can do in this sphere, particularly, as he emphasises in his 'Theory and Practice' essay, in the arena of politics: "Reason provides a concept which we express by the words political right. And this concept has binding force for human beings who co-exist in a state of antagonism produced by their natural freedom, so that it has an objective practical reality"(68). In other words, concepts of political right, law etc. are necessarily prior to practice in the political realm, although it is only through practical reasoning that they can 'impose order on the chaos of our experience' (in Beck's words) and therefore 'follow our demands for unconditional conditions of motivation', which is what places practical reasoning above theoretical reasoning(69).

What does all this imply? First, it must surely mean that our moral and political life, the actions we take in the moral and political world, cannot be divorced from our intellectual life, from our conceptions of the moral and political world. For Kant, we need the latter to buttress the former and the former to complete and actualize the latter; they are two arms of the same project and each, without the other, is a failure.

Far from suggesting that the Enlightenment's alleged failure leads to the sundering of theory and practice, and thus opens the door to today's quagmire of moral impressionism, Kant's argument is the clearest possible indication that it is the departure from Enlightenment projects that is most likely to do this, given the premiss, for which I argued earlier, that the attempts of MacIntyre and others to substitute an 'intellectual grid' at variance with that of 'modernity' founders on the condition of modernity itself.

At this point it might be thought that I am putting forward a version of Kantianism as a solution to our problem, but that is not what I am doing and, furthermore, I do not even need to defend or elaborate (after the manner of MacIntyre on Aristotle) Kant's substantive arguments. In chapter four I defended those parts of Kant's argumentation that are necessary for my own case, but my main task was to present an account of Kant's thought which showed how he viewed the relationship of philosophy to politics, theory to practice, in the context already developed (in chapter three) of the mainstream and minor currents of Enlightenment thought. For what this reveals is that, first, virtually all the philosophes, in one way or another, were attempting what Kant was attempting, (though, naturally, not all in the same way) and that, secondly, Kant's reconciliation of the mainstream and minor currents bound the Enlightenment's general philosophy, moral and political philosophy and the notion of political and moral action into a Gordian knot which could be cut, but never untied.

Yet if there was one member of the philosophic flock of whom this could surely not be said, it was Hume, and so it was important for me to look at how Hume saw the relationship. Here too, however, we found that despite all his divisions of philosophy into speculative and practical, Hume's was a philosophy which had severe and radical implications for those who accepted it, and that he could be just as critical of his fellow philosophes as he was of the clerical party in his

native Edinburgh. Despite all the differences of style, content and temper that separated them, there were several interesting and suggestive points on which Hume and Kant held broadly similar positions, and nowhere is this truer than in the fact that both are insistent that it is in our own minds that the source of our political and moral actions are to be found and that we ignore this at our peril. For Hume "the chief triumph of art and philosophy (is that) it insensibly refines the temper and it points out to us those dispositions which we should endeavour to attain, by a constant bent of mind and by repeated habit"(70). For Kant, philosophy discusses the limits of reason, and Reason "is given to us as a practical faculty one which is meant to have an influence on the will"(71).

Taylor is quite right that Kant is one of the most important figures in the development of modern culture, and largely correct about the reason. Kant divined the nature of the Enlightenment better than any other philosophe; he could see the true importance of the emphasis on autonomy, see, moreover, the possible dangers in the approach (he thought he had divined those in Hume), and moved to head them off. In Kant we see the finest statement of the structure of a theory which can accommodate the stresses and tensions inherent in the conceptual framework of modernity (stresses and tensions which any system of thought is liable to, as Collingwood, Foucault and Rorty have all demonstrated). Naturally this does not mean that all the content of Kant's theory must be accepted, just that in his striking perceptions of the way his age was developing, he put his finger on many of the crisis points that would emerge long after the Enlightenment proper had waned, though, of course, he did not always succeed in bridging or even in papering over, all those emerging cracks.

It is not by chance then, that for many of the critics of the Enlightenment, it is Kant who is the great opponent. One of the earliest and most formidable critics of all, Kant's former pupil Hamann, saw his former patron and friend as the fountainhead of all that was worst in the Enlightenment. He

bitterly flayed Kant's "Gnostic hatred of matter" (72), and attempted, in the words of Isaiah Berlin, "no less than a total reversal of the values of the Enlightenment" (73), of which Kant was held to be the most formidable representative. More interesting still, Hamann exerted a powerful influence on Kierkegaard (who called him the 'emperor')(74) who, according to MacIntyre (it will be recalled), was the first person to really expose the 'inevitable' failure of the Enlightenment. Hamann was, in fact, a far more thoroughgoing critic of the Enlightenment than MacIntyre ever can be. For Hamann, the modern 'grid' was not in place (as of course, it is for MacIntyre, and for us); it was still emerging and so the critique of the Enlightenment he advances is full of echoes of a still very much alive (for him) past, as well as acute, if only partial, perceptions of the new problems to which the Enlightenment would give rise. Even so, as Berlin's paper makes plain, Hamann misconstrues and distorts the Enlightenment (beginning a tradition which its critics have continued to this very day) and nowhere is this truer than in his treatment of Hume.

Hamann's Hume is an attenuated, partial and corrupted figure because Hamann's exercise is a very poor attempt at what Rorty called 'rational reconstruction'. Leaving aside obvious incongruities such as assuming identity between Hume's doctrine of belief and what Berlin calls 'the full doctrine of Pauline faith in things unseen', Hamann misconstrues the nature of Hume's philosophical project. This is not to say that he does not recognize that Hume is a 'champion in the enemies camp' - he knows that, of course. Nonetheless, like other contemporaries (Reid, Beattie and so on), and indeed like many others since the eighteenth century, lack of acquaintance with the mass of Humean writings produced distortion when one doctrine was concentrated on out of context. As Berlin points out, Hamann "systematically ignores everything in Hume which is antipathetic to him, that is almost all that is most characteristic of the Scottish philosopher"(75). Despite this distortion, however, Hamann's treatment of Hume has one interesting aspect from my point of view. By attacking the Enlightenment with weapons

borrowed and adapted from one of its leading protagonists, he unintentionally displays very clearly one of the key areas where Hume's thought, explicitly critical of his fellow philosophes on this point, can act as a corrective to parts of the structure that is seen at its most rigorous in Kant.

As Berlin makes clear, Hamann's admiration of Hume was due entirely to his certainty that Hume's doctrine of belief completely nullified any possible rationalist view of the world, and especially any rationalist ontology. This doctrine, however, is not anything like as simple as Hamann seemed to have supposed. In an exchange with Kant, Hamann argues that 'if you want a proof for everything you cannot act at all - Hume realizes this'(76). What Hamann fails to realize, however, is that what Hume derives from (amongst other things) his doctrine of belief is not a denial of the efficacy of proof, but an idea of its limits in practical life. 'Proof' is an idea that is constrained to operate in the realm of speculative philosophy, and yet as such will have a greater impact on the practical world than otherwise, because its limits are properly understood.

This impact can only be correctly assessed when one considers the Humean project more widely, and, of course, it is this that I undertook in chapter five. Here the real significance of that famous scepticism was found to lie in the idea that all inquiries are to be taken as provisional(77) and that even sceptical conclusions in general philosophical topics (epistemology, say, or religion) will have effects in the practical world. My argument is that it is precisely this scepticism which can remedy the deficiencies in the grand structure of the conjoined Enlightenment which was Kant's legacy to emerging modernity. Hume's political writings are markedly different from those of the rest of the Enlightenment, largely because of this scepticism. Different, that is to say, in tone, temper and sometimes even content - but not really different in aim. As Gay has written "the general and particular nourished one another in Hume's mind"(78), a belief borne out if one considers writings like A Dialogue, the second



Enquiry and a number of the Essays(79), but notwithstanding all this, he remained a member of the philosophic flock, hopeful (though perhaps less hopeful than most) of spreading Enlightenment.

In chapter four I mentioned Cassirer's opinion that Kant's philosophy represented the 'final glorification' of the Enlightenment, whilst at the same time overshadowing it, and suggested that it overshadowed it only in the sense that by combining the two elements of Enlightenment thought together, the two parts became greater than the whole and provided a structure through which the emerging age could be conceived. However, that structure had many weak points as most of Kant's critics from Hegel to Strawson have pointed out. It is, however, significant that, increasingly, attempts to heal the breach between philosophy and politics and to rebuild the edifice of modernity, are being undertaken by avowed Kantians (like Rawls) or modified Utilitarians (like Parfit), the inevitable result of which is that the remaining protagonists of Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen are left holding an increasingly narrow strip of the philosophical field (though they are holding on with their customary tenacity). For they are squeezed between these thinkers and those (like Foucault, and MacIntyre) who, in certain ways, reject the edifice, and want to pull it down.

It is also significant that these attempts are being undertaken partly because it is another indication that MacIntyre (with others) is right in diagnosing a problem in modernity's conceptual 'self image', as it were, and partly because it points to a way forward for the project of re-building the Kantian edifice. In chapter two I discussed one of the key problems that the modernist dilemma rests on; incommensurability. In various ways this is a central issue for virtually all of the thinkers I have discussed, and there are essentially three responses to it. Some, Foucault and Rorty for example, welcome the notion of incommensurability as being powerful evidence in support of their case. Others, of whom the most relevant here is, of course, MacIntyre, reject incommensurability and attempt

to find a way round it. Finally, there are those who essentially ignore it as being irrelevant to their concerns and, where they had one, this was the position adopted by many of the classical 'Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen' theorists that I discussed in Chapter One.

It seems to me that the last of these is no longer tenable. The challenge that the Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen thesis now faces from, for example, what I called in Chapter Two the 'historical school' (in all its varied guises) has brought the question of incommensurability firmly into a central place in considerations over the relationship of inquiry to action(80). The more acute and perceptive allies of the Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen approach, like Williams, recognize this and have adapted their arguments accordingly, usually adopting a variant of the response that welcomes incommensurability(81). As I said earlier, I think it is also apparent that MacIntyre's attempt to get round the problem (which as he rightly says is crucial for his project) also fails. Along with the two causes I mentioned before, this failure is due to the fact that in adopting a benchmark by which to judge competing standards and traditions, MacIntyre chooses a philosopher who, while certainly a fountainhead of Western - and even Middle Eastern - thought is still a figure located within a particular tradition. It would be futile to judge - say - Asoka or the Buddha, by the standards established by Plato, a thinker from a completely different tradition, and yet this is exactly what MacIntyre counsels: "Nobody is to count as a philosopher" he says "who does not have to be judged, in the end against standards set by Plato"(82). It does no good to argue for a standard to defeat incommensurability, when that very standard is predicated on a concept of philosophy locked within even a very large collation of individual intellectual traditions; to provide adequate grounds to reject incommensurability in the manner that MacIntyre wants to, the standard must apply to all traditions and this MacIntyre's does not do.

We appear, then, to have abandoned the ground to, on the one hand, the protagonists of Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen and their allies, and, on the other, to those champions of the historical school (like Rorty and Foucault) who triumphantly announce that the inevitability of incommensurability means that judgement is always relative, and therefore projects like those of Rawls, Nagel and Parfit within (as it were) the tradition of Modernity, and MacIntyre, who would be outside its walls, are all equally doomed to failure.

In fact, there is another option and, moreover, one that is, I submit, considerably more helpful (given the already remarked fact that MacIntyre's question is a real one for us, and not one we can easily or happily duck). Consider the position that we have now arrived at. MacIntyre's problem is a serious and acute one, but his solution is neither possible nor, even if it were, would it be desirable. No solution, however, can be adopted by a straight Humpty Dumpty/Red Queen theorist, for them the problem (even if it is perceived as such, as it is, for example, by Williams) is an irresolvable one. This will not do, however, as the arguments of Rorty and others have graphically shown. We must pay more attention to the history of philosophy - indeed to the whole idea of the 'history' of ideas - than any 'analytical' philosopher will do. Even Michael Oakeshott, the solitary thinker who adopts a recognizably Red Queen stance, without owing anything to analytical orthodoxy, and who is as aware as anybody of the importance of the history of ideas for political theory, is curiously myopic on this point. In his thoughtful and characteristically elegant essay, 'On the Character of a Modern European State'(83), Oakeshott gives a brilliant, if maverick, view of the development of the modern European political consciousness since the high middle ages, and concludes that "modern European reflection about the character of a state and the office of its government has explored two diverse analogies, each denoting a distinct mode of expression

with a logic of its own, in terms of which to understand it; that of civil association .... and that of 'enterprise' or 'purposive' association .... What these two understandings have in common is the recognition of a state as an exclusive association; no man can be a member of two such associations"(84).

Now thus far, of course, there is nothing problematic about Oakeshott's case; in fact, it is simply a form of what Rorty calls *Geistesgesichte*; Oakeshott is, after all, basing his case on an analysis of the history and development of the modern European State, and deriving his two analogies from two concepts much used by medieval jurists - 'societas' and 'universitas' giving birth to civil association and enterprise association respectively. However, Oakeshott's conclusion is that the modern European consciousness is a polarised consciousness, and that "these are its poles - and that all other tensions such as those indicated in the words 'right' and 'left' ... are insignificant compared with this"(85). Oakeshott considers this polarization both inevitable and unending, with, at certain times, one analogy being in the ascendant, and at other times the other. Nonetheless, Oakeshott has his own preference and it is undeniably for the civil association model. This is brought out in a later essay, where the 'civil association model' (under the guise of the phrase the 'rule of law'), is elaborated more fully(86) and where Oakeshott claims that its pioneers in the modern world were Bodin and Hobbes(87).

Now the details of this Oakeshottian argument do not concern me here (though I have discussed them in detail elsewhere[88]), but observe what the structure of his argument implies in the present context. Here is an argument generated by philosophical reflection about history (that kind of reflection which MacIntyre claims is 'sovereign over the rest of the discipline', and which Collingwood and Rorty insist is essential if historical anachronisms of the worst sort are not to creep in to the argument) from which Oakeshott derives, at least

in part, a set of evaluations which help to structure his own commendations or criticisms which he makes in other essays(89). He cannot, in all fairness, here say that it is merely a contingent relation; either his philosophical views have in some sense informed his judgement or his political judgements have influenced (perhaps even dictated) his philosophical ideas.

It seems charitable (and, it must be said, for a scholar as stimulating and provoking as Oakeshott, likely) to assume that the former is the case, and this implies, not that Oakeshott's opinions are in any sense necessitated by his philosophical views, but that they are inevitably shaped to a certain extent by them. The error of those like Graham and, in a way, Oakeshott himself, has been to assume that the only choice that exists is between those who (like Oakeshott's 'Rationalist') believe that theories are simply (or perhaps not so simply) applied 'in practice', and those who say in response that the relation is entirely and always a 'contingent one'. As Charles Taylor remarks in his essay 'Social Theory as Practice', "Most theories are not of the kind that can simply be applied .... they affect practice only in shaping or informing it"(90).

This shaping and forming, however, is the kind of thing that is best understood, at least in general terms, in the light of the discussion of Rorty, Collingwood and Foucault that I undertook earlier on, although, as was indicated then, none of these accounts is completely satisfactory. What they collectively imply, however, is that, to adequately compass a theory which attempts to explain and elaborate the fissures in modernity, it simply will not do to analyse just the symptoms of strain that manifest themselves at a particular point, we must look also at the process of development within which the cracks originated, which in our present case (as virtually everybody agrees) is the traditions of thought which originated in, and grew out of, the Enlightenment.

Thus Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen are ultimately false, not merely because nobody can ever consistently adhere to their claims (though indeed they cannot; vide Oakeshott), nor because there are philosophical quirks and distortions of a very high order within them (as indeed there are, especially in the 'harder' theorists discussed in Chapter One). They are false principally because no idea which so rigorously separates out 'philosophy' from 'politics' (The Red Queen) or accepts only an internal definition (after the manner of Humpty Dumpty) can develop the kind of understanding necessary to produce an adequate account of any aspect of our (inextricably intertwined) moral, intellectual, theoretical, practical, political life.

Nonetheless, as I said above(91) the accounts offered by Rorty, Foucault, Collingwood and so on neither cohere in their entirety nor are free from serious flaws of their own(92). In the closing part of this essay I first want to suggest a way in which these differences, while not being resolved might be seen, in a certain sense, to dissolve, and, secondly, given this first step, what my analysis of the Enlightenment suggests regarding the problem that MacIntyre isolated and with which I have been concerned in this work, the sundering of theory and practice in the 'modern world' and its implications.

## VI

It is surely true that part of our most basic assumptions are historically located in a very strong sense. It is this fact which gives the arguments of Rorty, Collingwood, Foucault and others their plausibility. I have said that on the basis of these arguments we cannot escape that historical and cultural location and, therefore, cannot do what MacIntyre would have us do. I want now to examine this and its implications in a little more detail.

In a sense, what MacIntyre is asking us to do is to adopt a different self-definition, a different identity, for he thinks we have lost the notion of teleology and with it, in a metaphysical as well as a literal sense, our purpose. The nuance of the notion of identity here is, however, surely the same as when we talk of 'finding one's identity' or 'going through an identity crisis' but, as Charles Taylor has persuasively argued, "Our identity is defined by our fundamental evaluations"(93). These fundamental evaluations will, in part, be nourished and fed by our background and by the nature of our self-description.

In his important essay 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person' (94), Harry Frankfurt makes a distinction between first order and second order desires; a second order desire being a condition in which I have a desire whose object is my having a certain (first order) desire. "It seems to be peculiarly characteristic of humans", Frankfurt argues, "that they are able to form .... second-order desires ...."(95). Part of the point of Frankfurt's argument here is, of course, to stress that our second-order desires are 'motivating' desires in a special way - they are at least part of what motivates action X rather than action Y in order to achieve first-order desire Z. The nuances of this discussion do not concern me(96) but as Taylor rightly insists(97), it is not just the capacity for second-order desires that is important it is also the capacity to evaluate them. The character of this evaluation is, in itself, difficult and yet of the utmost importance, for if our evaluations, our self-descriptions, are (as I have already hinted) dependent on, without being determined by, an identity created in part by a matrix or grid which establishes a whole culture, then to turn against them would be to repudiate oneself and, consequently, to be incapable of what Taylor calls "fully authentic evaluation"(98).

As Taylor insists, however, such 'fully authentic evaluations'

must strive to be faithful to something "But what they strive to be faithful to is not an independent object with a fixed degree and manner of evidence, but rather a largely inarticulate sense of what is of decisive importance"(99).

This 'sense of what is of decisive importance' is what we articulate when we give elaborations of that which is of value to us, but such articulation will inevitably change our sense of what is of value as well as express it; in Taylor's words "It makes it accessible and/or inaccessible in new ways"(100). The way in which this might occur is obvious enough. In pinning down and articulating our sense of what is important, we become aware of it in ways we perhaps were not before and if we have to defend it, rather than just articulate it, any number of different interpretations, senses and usages may become relevant to it.

This judgement is important because it recalls something to which Gallie refers that I mentioned in Chapter One(101). It will be remembered that when discussing the essential contestability of some concepts, Gallie talks of a 'logic of conversion'. I criticised this on the grounds that, given the presentation of essential contestability Gallie makes, we could not expect people to see the possible validity of an opponents point of view. However, if the above arguments are accepted, I think it possible to revise Gallie's case such that it proves illuminating in the present context.

If my interpretation of the Frankfurt/Taylor argument holds, such a recognition implies that a degree of 'openness' in our arguments and understandings is essential for our own better self-understanding. In a different essay Taylor remarks that "Part of what is involved in having a better theory is being able more effectively to cope with the world"(102). To do this we must naturally understand ourselves better and for this we need to recognise the character of our articulations, what they represent and how they evolve and develop.



This means there will be a kind of 'elastic limit' beyond which our articulations cannot be stretched but within that limit we have a responsibility to open ourselves to alternative interpretations and understandings. We cannot, of course, completely step outside the 'Sense of what is of decisive importance' (which is what MacIntyre would have us do) without serious conceptual rifts, but neither can we adopt the Nietzschean/Foucaultian stance of Olympian neutrality and detachment, a stance to which Rorty is also prone, without equally severe problems.

Thus any use of various concepts whose meanings are located within a particular intellectual tradition can never be essentially contested, in the sense Gallie means (i.e., totally incommensurable) because they must be predicated on this stance of 'openness'. Whilst this says nothing, of course, about relations between widely disparate cultures and value-systems with completely different traditions, it seems eminently reasonable within one tradition or 'family' of traditions.

It is in this way that the real significance of Hume, Kant and the Enlightenment more generally lies for the question of the relationship of theory to practice, philosophy to politics in the Western tradition. We have seen that the Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen approaches fail to yield a coherent position on what that relationship should be, yet one of the most powerful explanations of why this should be so - MacIntyre's - itself fails. This failure is due, first and foremost, to an incorrect interpretation of the Enlightenment and its significance. The re-interpretation of the Enlightenment offered in Part II of this work remedies this and links it with certain concerns that can be seen activating both Humpty Dumpty and Red Queen theorists and critics like MacIntyre and Rorty. The emphasis on the importance of historical reflection in Philosophy (and theory generally), the notions of intellectual and cultural 'grids' and 'matrices', make plain the importance for our own culture of the period where most of its characteristic stances were beginning

to be first articulated.

It was my thesis in Part II that in Kant's articulation of the relationship of philosophy and politics we have the most suggestive and fruitful of Enlightenment analyses. It is not simply that the content of his ideas are interesting and important (though both are true even when they cannot be sustained). More important is the intellectual vision which prompts them for, as Williams rightly suggests, he sees man as perpetually standing at a crossroads(103) and that the task of choosing which path to take means an inevitable linkage of action and theory, politics and philosophy. For we cannot move without understanding ourselves as independent agents - the recognition of which, according to his famous remark in the essay Was ist Aufklärung, is the surest sign of our maturity - and we cannot possess this understanding without the link between the theoretical and practical parts of our nature that it was the aim of his philosophy to articulate and give form and substance to.

In this endeavour he combined the aims and intentions of both mainstream and minor currents of Enlightenment thought and thus, in the period in which the characteristic problems of modernity were first emerging, sounded the clearest possible warning of what would follow if the attempt to link theory and practice together was forgotten. For Kant, as all his writings manifest, the only rational politics is one that recognises both theoretical and practical arenas and is clear on the linkage and priority between the two.

On one aspect, however, Kant's thought is particularly vulnerable. Hegel, and since Hegel's time many others (as I documented in Chapter Four) have had no difficulty in ridiculing the lengths Kant is forced to go in justifying a unifying absolute standard of rationality and morality for his system. The arguments I have put forward in Chapters Two and Six, however, have shown that a complete project of

commensuration is unnecessary for the problem of reconciling theory to practice - at least in our own tradition - whatever Kant may have thought. Yet the point was made, in essentials, in Kant's own time, by Hume who, because he represented the sceptical and critical face of the Enlightenment to an unprecedented degree (and in a particular way as I argued in Chapter Five), is much closer than Kant to the realization of the need for a stance of 'openness' in our philosophical, moral and political enquiries.

I cannot forbear from additionally pointing out that it is not, perhaps, entirely coincidental that the thinker (Kant) who built most fruitfully on the foundations laid by the Enlightenment was from both its geographical and conceptual fringe - Germany - and that the thinker who was at once its most sceptical and far-seeing internal critic (Hume) showed a similar remoteness - at least geographically. This is another bond that links them and, for all its contingency, is perhaps suggestive. Coming from outside the societies which gave vent to the Enlightenment's classic problems and approaches, they were, perhaps, able to see more clearly than those embedded within those societies the direction and shape of and the problems inherent in the conceptual framework they all shared - at least in the sense discussed earlier in Chapters Three to Five.

This too, of course, makes plain that our theorising and our practice cannot be made completely distinct. Our actions in the moral and political world will very largely be determined by what we consider to be of 'decisive importance' and this, as I have discussed in Chapter Six, will be a product of historical and cultural location and our own reflection and articulations (perhaps inchoate) of this historical and cultural sense. Thus what (in Humean terms) is a sceptical approach to philosophy must go hand in hand with what is (in Kantian terms) a rational approach to politics and in both

the links between theory and practice, philosophy and politics, are firm, necessary and unbreakable.

## VII

Although in this work I have travelled a long and, at times, diffuse and seemingly remotely connected road, I now hope the connections are plain and the arguments clear. In conclusion I want to make a few comments as to just what I take to be some of the implications.

Primarily, it establishes that political theory must concern itself with both theory and practice. In other words it must be substantive as well as methodological, but it must do this in a particular way and that way is concerned with history and how a particular issue, concept, tradition or thinker is located within it. One of the chief virtues (if I may be pardoned the pun) of After Virtue is its, at least partial, recognition of this fact.

This does not mean, however, that all works of political theory must also inevitably be works of history. The writings of Rawls, Nozick and others are major contributions to an ongoing tradition - articulations of it, if you like - and the 'historical' content in either is minimal. This is, however, fully consistent with what I have been saying provided always the stance of 'openness' I have attributed to Hume is borne in mind and as long as it is not supposed that the positions are universalist (Rawls never supposes this but Nozick certainly seems to in Anarchy State and Utopia [104]).

Moreover, or so I would submit, it points to one of the most important issues for political theory to address today. In certain respects Kant's suggestion, implicit in Zum Eiwigen Frieden and explicit in the Idee zu einer Allgemeinen Geschichte, that states would become ever more interdependent,

has proved correct (although what he thought followed from it, of course, has not). Nonetheless, the world that has arisen from this growing interdependence is one of huge cultural and evaluative differences. Like Dunn, I think that the starting point for political theory must, in a certain sense, be the here and now of our situation and this must mean reflecting on the impact on our political institutions, culture and values of growing political, economic and legal interdependence on the one hand and wide cultural and value independence (and, indeed, incommensurability) on the other.

Here again, MacIntyre shows himself to be sensitive to the problem, even though his diagnosis is flawed and solution unacceptable. There is a yawning gap between the two parts of this conceptual dichotomy and it must be the task of political theory to attempt some bridge building (105). I make no claim that this is the only task for modern political theory but the analysis I have offered here suggests why it is one of the most important. If theory and practice are bound together in the way I have suggested and if our various societies are now becoming interdependent to an unprecedented degree, the 'level' (as it were) of incommensurability is bound to increase; our articulations of what is of 'decisive importance' will, therefore, become less homogeneous and more inwardly riven and, consequently, our evaluations (and hence our actions) more problematic.

This is an inherently unsatisfactory situation and, for both coherent theoretical understanding and sensible practical action, political theory needs to face up to it and discuss the problems involved more often and more deeply than it has done in this century up to the present. In whatever form they continue to exert influence in modern political theory, the true legacy of Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen will be to condemn it to increasing parochialism and irrelevance.

Over the past few years philosophers have come to recognize the truth of this, at least in part. It accounts for the revival of substantive moral theory (of which Rawls' book was not only one of the first but also still, perhaps, the loudest opening shots), the launch of journals explicitly concerned to link together philosophy and practice (Philosophy and Public Affairs, for example) and the formation of groups such as the Society for Applied Philosophy.

The ground, however, still requires a lot of clearing; as I have tried to suggest it needs an awareness of the historical dimensions of our present situation and what, as a consequence, follows from such an awareness. As I argued earlier in this Chapter, given the significance of Kant's theory, it is scarcely surprising that so much recent work designed to 'rebuild' or 'reconstruct' the edifice of modernity is, directly or indirectly, Kantian in its inspiration (106). I have tried to amend this, however, by pointing to the additional relevance of a Humean position and by suggesting that this leads inevitably to a concern with the possibility or otherwise of cultural commensuration.

It is no part of my purpose to embark on this here (107). Like Hume, however, "I .... should be sorry to think that human affairs admit of no greater stability than what they receive from the casual humours and characters of particular men" (PW3: ). My argument in this monograph has shown, I hope, that the marriage of a sceptical Humean approach to philosophy to the rational structure of Kantian politics produces at least the embryo of a 'better theory .... able more efficiently to cope with the world'; one, moreover, which admits of perhaps slightly greater stability than that provided by either the 'casual humours and characters of particular men' or the stark conceptual choice supplied by MacIntyre; and, finally, one which enshrines the link between theory and practice, philosophy and politics as a cornerstone of our social life. "As a human being" wrote Kant, "each of

us is a man of affairs; and since, as human beings, we never grow out of the school of wisdom, we cannot arrogantly and scornfully relegate the adherent of theory to the classroom and set ourselves up as better trained by experience in all that a man is .... For all this experience will not in any way help us to escape the precepts of theory, but at most to learn how to apply it.... after we have assimilated it into our principles" (KPW 72/AA VIII 285 ). The assimilation involved is, perhaps , considerably more complicated than Kant envisaged , but that does not invalidate his point; our theories and our practice are not, and cannot be, completely distinct. The attempt to separate them was no project of the Enlightenment as both Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen and MacIntyre, from their opposing positions, seem to have supposed. Indeed, within Enlightenment thought is both a realization of the folly of so doing and clear illuminating attempts to meet the problems created by the assumption of a new set of conceptual understandings. Whatever the cracks that have appeared in the matrix since then - the 'grid' of which the Enlightenment was the harbinger - no solution is yet available for us outside it and so the Enlightenment's own solutions, however much they must now be revised, are still the best guide from which to start looking.

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NOTES TO ALL CHAPTERS.



Notes for Introduction

- (1) Essentially the period from Plato to the Twentieth Century
- (2) John Dunn Rethinking Modern Political Theory  
(Cambridge University Press 1985) p.1
- (3) Dunn Rethinking Modern Political Theory p.189
- (4) Peter Gay The Enlightenment : An Interpretation 2 Vols.  
(Wildwood House, 1970) Vol.II,  
The Science of Freedom  
See Esp. Chapter One.

Notes for Chapter One

1. M. Schlick Fragen der Ethik (Vienna. 1930)  
translated as Problems of Ethics (Dover, New York 1962)
2. The literature on the former is well known. As a representative sample see A.J. Ayer Language, Truth and Logic (London, 1936)  
For its effect on politics and political theory see Footnote 12 p.33  
and for a description of the realist position see R.G. Collingwood  
An Autobiography (1939) (Oxford 1970)  
  
For Oakeshott see, for example, M.J. Oakeshott Experience and its Modes  
(Cambridge, 1933)  
  
Rationalism in politics (Methuen 1962) On Human Conduct (Blackwell 1975)
3. Isaiah Berlin "Does Political Theory Still Exist" in  
Concepts and Categories (Oxford, 1980) p. 172
4. see John Rawls "The Independence of Moral Theory"  
in Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association  
(1974-5) and also A Theory of Justice (Oxford, 1972) p. 46-53  
  
Interestingly, writers who have challenged Rawls - especially some libertarians - have taken a similar view. This does not mean, of course, that they view ethics and politics as separate - quite the contrary - merely that they have not (to date) seen fit to give a general philosophical explanation for their ethical position. See D. Gordon 'Contemporary Currents in Libertarian political philosophy' in Literature of Liberty Vol 4 No. 1 Spring 1981.
5. see Alan Ryan's review article in The Times  
Higher Education Supplement (8.10.82)
6. Rawls Theory of Justice p VII and, for example, 'Outline for a procedure for Ethics' in The Philosophical Review Vo. 60 (1951)  
  
John Dunn Western political theory in the face of the Future  
(Cambridge, 1981) p. 50 (FN.)

7. see P.H. Partridge "Politics, Philosophy, Ideology"  
in Political Philosophy (ed. A. Quinton)  
(Oxford University Press 1967) p.32-52
8. see D.J. Manning "Liberalism" (J.M. Dent & Sons 1976) passim  
and (ed.) The Form of Ideology (George Allen & Unwin 1980) passim
9. There are many works covering this, either from a Marxist point of view  
or others. Good introductions are  
John Plamenatz Ideology (Macmillan, 1971)  
Alex Callinocos Marxism and Philosophy (Oxford, 1985) pp. 127-153
10. see Peter Winch The Idea of a Social Science and its relation to  
philosophy (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958) p.3
11. Alisdair Macintyre After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory  
(Duckworth: 1981) p.9
12. For the Sophists see, in particular:-  
Gorgias The Enconium on Helen and The Funeral Oration  
[Both translated in Kathleen Freeman's Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic  
Philosophers (Oxford, 1966)]  
(it should be noted that Freeman is, in fact, a translation of Diel's  
Fragmente der Versokratiker and it is in some ways better to  
consult Diel's original.  
In addition, Plato The Gorgias (Penguin Books 1960)  
(trans. Walter Hamilton)  
and The Protagoras and the Theatetus. For the views of Protagoras  
Protagoras and Meno (trans. W.K.C. Guthrie) (Penguin 1950)  
For Lucretius - De Rerum Natura translated as  
"On the Nature of the Universe" by R.E. Lotham for Penguin Books (1951)  
  
I have discussed Gorgias' views on this in an unpublished paper  
Rhetoric VS. Philosophy - Gorgias and Socrates on ethics & politics.  
  
and see too the discussion in  
Peter Gay The Enlightenment: An Interpretation (1968)  
(Wildwood House, 1970) 2 Vols.  
  
Vol.I The Rise of Modern Paganism: passim.

13. see for Weldon The Vocabulary of Politics (Penguin 1953) passim  
and 'Political Principles' in Philosophy, Politics and Society  
(ed. P. Laslett) (Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1956)  
  
for Margaret MacDonald 'The Language of Political Theory' in  
Logic and Language (first series) (ed. A. Flew) (Basil Blackwell, 1951)  
  
and for Rush Rees Without Answers  
I consider some more sophisticated versions of the approach in later  
chapters.
14. Lewis Carroll 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' in  
The Philosophers Alice (Academy Editions, London. Edited and  
annotated by Peter Heath 1974 p. 148-9)
15. Alisdair Macintyre After Virtue p.6
16. Lewis Carroll The Philosophers Alice p.193
17. see W.B. Gallie 'Essentially Contested Concepts' in  
Philosophy and the Historical Understanding (Chatto and Windus, 1964)  
pp.157-191
18. W.B. Gallie Essentially Contested Concepts p. 158
19. W.B. Gallie Essentially Contested Concepts p. 183
20. W.B. Gallie Essentially Contested Concepts p. 186
21. W.B. Gallie Essentially Contested Concepts p. 188
22. D.J. Manning The Form of Ideology (Allen & Unwin 1980) passim  
the quotation is on p. 86
23. D.J. Manning The Form of Ideology p.130
24. D.J. Manning The Form of Ideology p. 75-6
25. Ludwig Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations (Oxford 1953) p.124-49
26. quoted by Malcolm himself in Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir  
(Oxford University Press, 1958) p.32

27. Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations p. 119-48
28. Moritz Schlick Problem of Ethics p.1-2
29. Schlick Problem of Ethics p.17
30. Schlick Problem of Ethics p.17
31. Though I scarcely like to refer to him as an 'occasional companion', it was during the writing of Problem of Ethics that Schlick was most heavily influenced by Wittgenstein - both in person and through the Tractatus.
32. Macintyre After Virtue p.20  
As well as Rawls, Macintyre includes writers like Gewirth and Hare in this category.
33. see T. Honderich Violence for Equality (Pelican Books 1980)
34. Gordon Graham 'Practical Politics and Philosophical Enquiry' in The Philosophical Quarterly (July 1978)  
For Oakeshott and Anscombe see:-  
Michael Oakeshott Rationalism in Politics (Methuen 1962) and  
G.E.M. Anscombe in her essay 'Modern Moral Philosophy' included in the third volume of her collected papers, Ethics, Politics and Religion (Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1981) p. 26-42
35. Graham Practical Politics pp. 257
36. Graham Practical Politics pp. 257
37. I should point out, to be fair to Graham, that he does not accept this as really possible in any case. He assumes it here, however, for the sake of the argument.
38. Graham Practical Politics p. 240
39. Oakeshott Rationalism in Politics p.21
40. Macintyre After Virtue pp.35
41. Macintyre After Virtue pp.36
42. Macintyre After Virtue pp.36

43. Although many felt they had not entirely succeeded (for example Diderot). However, this was not because the entire project was flawed from the start, which is Macintyre's argument - see my arguments in the next three chapters.
44. Peter Gay The Enlightenment: an Interpretation (1968)  
Vol I The Rise of Modern Paganism  
Vol II The Science of Freedom  
(Wildwood House London, 1970) passim
45. Carl Becker The Heavenly City of the 18th Century Philosophers  
(Yale University Press, 1932)
46. Becker Heavenly City p.8
47. Becker Heavenly City p.31
48. Becker Heavenly City p.12
49. Becker Heavenly City p.14
50. Becker Heavenly City p.15
51. Becker Heavenly City p.68-69
52. see Ernst Cassirer Die Philosophie der Aufklärung (Tubingen 1932)  
translated as The Philosophy of the Enlightenment  
(by C.A. Koellen and James P. Pettegrove, Princeton University Press  
1951)
53. see Gibbon Memoirs (ed. O.F. Emerson, Boston 1898) p. 135  
Also, for Hume's disputes with the philosophes - over religion and with the physiocrats on political economy etc. see E.C. Mossner The Life of David Hume (Oxford University Press, 1980) p. 485-486
54. Barry Stroud Hume (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977)
55. In fact there is a whole cluster of problems about interpreting texts, and their possible relevance for periods other than their own, which Becker's arguments give rise to. I shall return to this in Chapter Six.

56. Which is Macintyre's solution. See After Virtue Ch's. 9-18
57. i.e. Chapters 3 - 5

Notes for Chapter Two

For brevity in the notes to this Chapter certain abbreviations are used [e.g., Williams (1)].

- (1) Bernard Williams (1) Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy (Fontana/Collins, 1985) p. v-vi
- (2) One only needs to consult any of Wittgensteins works to see this. The fact is further amplified in the disputes over his stand on various topics-particularly ethical and aesthetical topics. Good on these is Stephen Toulmin and Allan Janik Wittgenstein's Vienna (Touchstone books 1978); see also the various anecdotal evidence gathered in Norman Malcom's Memoir and in Rush Rees' collection Recollections of Wittgenstein (Oxford University Press, 1984). I have also discussed this tangentially in two papers:  
'Wittgenstein and the Synonymity of Ethics and Aesthetics' given to a Literary Studies conference at the University of Durham in 1983, and 'Wittgenstein and Hume on Aesthetic Judgement', presented to the Society for Philosophical Aesthetics at Nottingham University in 1986.
- (3) Williams (1) p.197
- (4) A similar approach, in form if not content, to MacIntyre's. I shall be returning to this later in the Chapter and in Chapter Six.
- (5) Williams (1) p.198.
- (6) Williams (1) pp 201-2
- (7) Bernard Williams (2) Moral Luck (Cambridge University Press, 1981) pp 71- 82
- (8) See Isaiah Berlin Against the Current: Essays In the History of Ideas (Oxford University Press, 1981). All the Essays display Berlin's belief in the irreducible plurality of values, but see especially 'The Originality of Machiavelli' pp 25 - 79
- (9) Williams (2) p.72
- (10) Williams (2) p.76
- (11) Williams (2) p.80
- (12) Williams (2) pp 132 - 143 esp. p.132
- (13) Williams (2) p.134
- (14) Williams (2) p.138
- (15) Williams (2) p.138
- (16) Williams (2) p.139
- (17) Williams (2) p.138
- (18) Williams (2) p.142
- (19) Williams (2) pp.21 - 22



- (20) Williams (2) p.22
- (21) Williams (2) p.39
- (22) Williams (1) p.198
- (23) See my discussion in Chapter One above.
- (24) Philosophy in History (Cambridge University Press, 1984)  
Eds. Quentin Skinner, Richard Rorty and J.B.Schneewind.
- (25) Philosophy in History p.11
- (26) Philosophy in History p.11
- (27) Philosophy in History p.11
- (28) Philosophy in History p.12
- (29) Philosophy in History pp 12 - 13
- (30) Richard J. Bernstein Philosophical Profiles (Polity Press, 1986)  
p.27
- (31) Richard Rorty (1) Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature  
(Princeton University Press, 1979/Basil Blackwell 1981) p.3
- (32) Bernstein Philosophical Profiles p.40
- (33) Michael Oakshott 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of  
Mankind' in Rationalism in Politics (Methuen, 1962) P.197
- (34) Rorty (1) p.389
- (35) Rorty (1) p.367
- (36) Rorty (1) p.372
- (37) Rorty (1) p.394
- (38) Quentin Skinner 'Meaning and Understanding in the History  
of Ideas' in History and Theory 8 1969 pp. 3 - 53
- (39) See Martin Heidegger 'Sketches for a History of Being' in  
The End of Philosophy (Trans.J.Stamborough, New York,  
Harper and Row, 1973): MacIntyre in After Virtue:  
Focault in The Order of Things: and Blumenberg in  
The Legitimacy of the Modern Age
- (40) R.Rorty (2) 'The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres'  
in Philosophy in History
- (41) Rorty (2) p.63
- (42) Rorty (2) p.62
- (43) Rorty (2) p.63
- (44) Rorty (2) p.68
- (45) Rorty (2) p.69
- (46) Rorty (2) p.70
- (47) Rorty (2) p.73
- (48) Rorty (2) p.73
- (49) Alisdair MacIntyre (1) 'The Relationship of Philosophy to its  
Past' in Philosophy in History pp 31 - 48

(50) Consider the following:-

"The subject matter of the moral philosophy of the 17th and 18th centuries provides a telling example. Its twentieth century intellectual heirs and beneficiaries include not only the attenuated and impoverished discipline that modern philosophical ethics has become at the hands of its modern practitioners, but psychology and the other social sciences ... (and) the scope of morality has diminished along with that of moral philosophy".  
MacIntyre (1) pp 31 - 32

Compare this with the arguments of MacIntyre discussed above in Chapter One.

(51) MacIntyre (1) p.35

(52) MacIntyre (1) p.39

(53) MacIntyre (1) p.39

(54) MacIntyre (1) pp 39 - 40

(55) MacIntyre (1) p.40

(56) See T.S.Kuhn The Structure of Scientific Revolutions  
(University of Chicago Press, 1970. 2nd edition)

(57) MacIntyre (1) p.41

(58) MacIntyre (1) p.42

(59) MacIntyre (1) p.42

(60) MacIntyre (1) p.43

(61) MacIntyre (1) p.44

(62) MacIntyre (1) p.45

(63) MacIntyre (1) p.45

(64) MacIntyre (1) p.46

(65) MacIntyre (1) p.47

(66) MacIntyre (1) p.47

(67) See above.

(68) Williams (2) p.77

(69) Williams (2) p.72

(70) Williams (2) p.81

(71) Williams discusses the possibility of this, apropos his contention that:- "Some versions of modern technological life and its outlook has become a real option for members of some traditional societies, but their life is not .... a real option for us". Williams (2) p.140

(72) In a paper given to and published by the ECPR, I have argued that this possibility seems a remote one. See N.J.Rengger 'The Public Interest, Privacy and The Modern State' [ECPR 1985]

(73) See Rorty (1) p.330

- (74) Rorty (1) p.331
- (75) Rorty(1) p.179
- (76) Rorty (1) p.361
- (77) Those Regimes which, in other words, say that any philosophy not in tune with the political complexion of the ruling group is not true philosophy.
- (78) Bernstein Philosophical Profiles p.55
- (79) Rorty (2) p.73
- (80) Bernstein makes a similar point (see pp56-7), and, while I would differ over some points of detail, his analysis of Rorty is essentially similar to my own.
- (81) Rorty(2) p.73
- (82) MacIntyre (2) After Virtue p.107
- (83) MacIntyre (2) p.111
- (84) MacIntyre (2) p.174
- (85) MacIntyre (2) p.175
- (86) MacIntyre (20 p.178
- (87) This charge is made in a variety of forms, and by a number of thinkers. Perhaps the most recent is that of Bernstein in Philosophical Profiles ('Neitzsche or Aristotle: Reflections on Alisdair MacIntyre's After Virtue'). MacIntyre has written a reply: 'Bernstein's Distorting Mirrors: A rejoinder' in Soundings 47 (Spring 1984) pp 30 - 41
- (88) Bernstein Philosophical Profiles p.127
- (89) MacIntyre (2) p.204
- (90) MacIntyre (20 p.204
- (91) MacIntyre (2) p.206
- (92) MacIntyre (20 p.207
- (93) In chapter 9 of (1) Williams modifies some of his claims made originally in 'The Truth in Relativism'(see footnote 3 p.220). However, his essential point remains the same, as does the distinction between real and notional confrontation.
- (94) Williams (1) p.162
- (95) William James ' A World of Pure Experience' in the Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods 1, 1904, p.573.

Notes for Chapter Three

1. See Peter Gay The Enlightenment: an interpretation: 2 Vols.  
(Wildwood House 1970) (1969)  
especially Vol II Ch's 7-10.

I should take this opportunity to acknowledge the debt I owe to Gay's writings on the Enlightenment. The extent to which I have benefited from the range of his scholarship will be obvious, and even while I disagree (as I do to a certain extent over his view of Hume, for example), he is always a scrupulous and stimulating historian. I follow him specifically in using the general term 'philosophe', untranslated, to refer to the members of what he has called the 'philosophic family', and in referring to all these collectively as the 'Enlightenment'.

2. Ernst Cassirer Die Philosophie der Aufklärung  
(JCB Mohr: Tübingen 1932)  
  
(available in English as The Philosophy of the Enlightenment  
Translated by Fritz Koellen and James Pettegrove  
(Princeton University Press: 1951).
3. Gay The Enlightenment Vol II. pp. 398
4. Roy Porter and Miklaus Teich The Enlightenment in National Context  
(Cambridge University Press: 1981).  
see, for Porter's view, 'The Enlightenment in England' p.4.
5. Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment pp.235
6. Montesquieu Ceuvres Completes ed. Andre Masson (3 Vols)  
Vol I, Part 1 1c - 1xi - The preface to De l'esprit des lois
7. Gay The Enlightenment: Vol II pp. 325
8. For Becceria's praise see the introduction to Dei Delitti e delle Pene:  
for Hamilton's, the Federalist paper and for Hume's relations with  
Montesquieu see E.Mossner's Life of David Hume  
(Oxford 1954) pp. 218, 229, 232, 267, 423

and finally for Catherine the Great, see Gay The Enlightenment

Vol II, pp.325

(Chaps. VII - X in the same volume trace Montesquieu's influence admirably).

9. For a pioneering study of the political importance of Lettres Persanes in the thought of the Enlightenment see Marshall Berman's The Politics of Authenticity (Allen & Unwin 1970) esp. Ch.1 'The Subjected Self in Revolt'.
10. See Neuman's introduction to his edition of 'The Spirit of the Laws' (1949) p. XXXIV.  
see also Gay The Enlightenment Vol II. p.326  
  
This view is, to a certain extent, challenged by Cassirer (see The Philosophy of the Enlightenment p. 243), but my reasons for accepting it will, I hope, become apparent as my argument progresses.
11. See Gay The Enlightenment Vol II. p.410-423.  
and for much fuller treatments of the problem of slavery in the Enlightenment, see Shelby T. McCloy The Humanitarian Movement in Eighteenth Century France (1957) and David Brian Davis The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (1966).
12. Neuman 'Introduction' p.1-IX
13. Montesquieu De l'esprit des lois Ch.II, Book II; Ceuvres 1,1251.
14. For Voltaire as 'l'homme aux Calas' see David Briens The Calas Affair : Persecution, Toleration and Heresy in Eighteenth Century Toulouse (1960) and also Peter Gay's Voltaire's Politics (Princeton University Press 1959)
15. Owen Chadwick 'The Italian Enlightenment' in Porter and Teich The Enlightenment in National Context p.96
16. Quoted in Michael Walzer's book Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the trial of Louis XVI (Cambridge University Press 1974) p.58
17. Walzer Regicide and Revolution p. 58.

18. Walzer's Regicide and Revolution has a full account of Condorcet's and Paine's arguments at the trial (including an edited transcript) and also gives those of Jacobins like Robespierre and St. Just, which give a good indication of the extent to which their views were alien to those of what I have called the mainstream Enlightenment. Robespierre's relation to Rousseau - which is more problematic - is one which I discuss briefly later on (p.71-73 in the present chapter). For the general effect of Becceria's writings see:-

Coleman Phillipson's Three Criminal Law Reformers (1923)

The other two are Romilly and Bentham.

Gay The Enlightenment I, pp. 437-47

Paul Spurlen 'Becceria's Essay on Crimes and Punishments in Eighteenth Century America' in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (ed. Theodore Besterman) XVIII. (1963).

For Becceria's Dei Delitti, as I have little Italian, I have used Henry Paolucci's excellent translation On Crimes and Punishments (1963)

19. Gay The Enlightenment II. p.196

20. Diderot's most ambiguous works - in particular La Réve D'Alambert and Le Neveu de Rameau (neither published during Diderot's lifetime) show, it is true, some doubts creeping in. Yet these doubts are not really about the idea of the Enlightenment project itself (which is what Macintyre alleges) but about what Cassirer has called the 'centre of gravity' of the concept of 'Nature' in the Enlightenment (Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment pp. 246). Diderot's radical materialism in La Réve D'Alambert shifts this firmly to a thorough-going empiricism from the earlier mixture of a priori reasoning and empiricism found in (say) Montesquieu. I shall deal with this in more detail a little later on (p. 67 in the present chapter).

21. Gay The Enlightenment II. p.450.

22. Bentham Works X, 282

This should not be taken to deny that occasionally there were real differences over forms of government between the philosophes (Voltaire, after all was a Royalist in Paris) - merely that their differences were minor in comparison to the unity of their aims.

23. See Gay The Enlightenment II. pp.131 and 174-187
24. D'Alambert 'Elements de Philosophie' quoted by Cassirer  
Philosophy of the Enlightenment: p.4
25. Montesquieu De l'esprit des lois Book 1, Ch.1. quoted by Cassirer in  
Philosophy of the Enlightenment p.245
26. See Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment pp.33-5  
Gay The Enlightenment II. p.211
27. See Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment Ch. III 'Psychology and  
Epistemology'.
28. Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment. p.13 My emphasis.
29. Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment. p.14
30. As I argue later. See Chapter 5
31. Correspondence ed. Georges Roth (1955) Vol. IV. p.81  
letter dated 31st July 1762.
32. See Gay The Enlightenment II p.167
33. Again Cassirer's Chapter III in The Philosophy of the Enlightenment  
is excellent on this.
34. For a good discussion of Condorcet's Esquisse see Gay The Enlightenment  
Vol. II, pp. 12-122. For an excellent (and all too rare) discussion of  
Condorcet by a professional philosopher see Ian White's 'Condorcet :  
Politics and Reason',  
in S.C. Brown's(ed) Philosophers of the Enlightenment  
(Harvester Press 1979)
35. Gay The Enlightenment Vol 4. p. 122
36. Condorcet Esquisse in Oevres (ed A.C. O'Connor and M.F. Arogo)  
(12 Vols. 1847) p. 244  
I have followed Gay in abbreviating Condorcet's essay as Esquisse and  
have borrowed this translation from him. ( p.120).

37. I owe this point to Ian White 'Condorcet: Politics and Reason' He quotes this passage from Condorcet's Essay on the application of analysis to the probability of decisions taken by a majority of votes. on p. 128.
38. Gay The Enlightenment Vol II, p. 529.
39. Gay The Enlightenment Vol. 4 p. 531.
40. J.J. Rousseau Oevres Completes eds, Bernard Gagnebin Marcel Raymond et al. (Paris, Gallinard, 1959-60) 5 Vols. (to date) Vo..III p.6.
41. Marshall Berman Politics of Authenticity p. 81
42. Ronald Grimsby's essay 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau Philosopher of Nature' in S.C. Brown (ed) Philosophers of the Enlightenment discusses this. pp. 184-5.
43. Oevres Completes Vol 3. p.936
44. Gay The Enlightenment II p. 538
45. He argues this in the third Dialogue Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques (see J.J. Rousseau Oevres Vol 3 934-5
46. I owe this point to Ronald Grimsby's discussion in Jean Jacques Rousseau, philosopher of Nature.
47. J.J. Rousseau Emile (in Oevres Vol.I pp.5-6)  
Berman also discusses the tree analogy. See The Politics of Authenticity Part III, 'A New Morality : The Authentic Man'.
48. Gay The Enlightenment II p.548
49. See, for a discussion of this:-  
Gay The Enlightenment II, Chapter IX 448-496  
and Porter and Teich The Enlightenment in National Context
50. See Roy Porter The Enlightenment in England  
in Porter and Teich The Enlightenment in National Context



51. Again Gay discusses this well. See The Enlightenment II. 517-528
52. Berman The Politics of Authenticity p.115
53. See J.J. Rousseau Oevres Vol IV. p.602  
This is an obviously Platonic point, and it scarcely needs saying that Plato was Rousseau's favourite 'ancient philosopher'. (See the discussion in Gay The Enlightenment Vol. II p. 529 See also Grimsby's presentation of Rousseau as the 'philosopher of Nature' in S.C. Brown (ed) Philosophers of the Enlightenment.)
54. J.J. Rousseau Oevres Vol I. p. 1021
55. J.J. Rousseau Oevres Vol. III p.364 (from Du Contrat Social of course. Book 1 Chapter VIII). A startling example of the moral thrust of Rousseau's political theory, and which helped to influence the direction of Kant's; but more of that in Chapter Four.
56. J.J. Rousseau Oevres Vol III p.364 emphasis added.
57. Gay The Enlightenment Vol II. p. 50
58. Gay The Enlightenment Vol II. p. 552
59. J.J. Rousseau Oevres Vol I. p. 7
60. John Plamenatz Man and Society 2 Vols (Longmans 1963) Vol I. p. 435.
61. Gay The Enlightenment Vol II. p. 52
62. Cassirer The Philosophy of the Enlightenment p. 273-4
63. Alisdair Macintyre After Virtue p.35
64. Macintyre After Virtue p. 45
65. Macintyre After Virtue p. 45
66. Diderot Letter to Sophie Volland (31 July 1762) in Correspondence ed. Georges Roth (1955- ) Vol IV. p. 87

67. Both quoted by Gay The Enlightenment II p. 202  
Diderot's remark actually referred to sexual intercourse but Gay is surely right that "This callous medical tone is surely Chamfort's ancestor."
68. Macintyre After Virtue p. 46.
69. Macintyre After Virtue p.45
70. See Gay's discussion in The Enlightenment I. p. 173-6.
71. See Isaiah Berlin's 'The originality of Machiavelli' in Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas (Oxford, 1978)
72. Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment p. 246
73. Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment p. 247
74. May or June 1758. Correspondence II. 56.
75. For this see, of course, A.J. Ayers Language, Truth and Logic (1936), which conjoins British philosophical analysis (a la Moore, Russell and Ryle) with the Vienna Circle. Also, his The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. (1940).

For the Vienna Circle themselves, representative writings would be 'Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung der Wiener Kreis' (1929) (The original statement of the circle's programme); Moritz Schlick's 'Positivismus und Realismus' in Erkenntnis (1932) (The 'house journal' as it were, renamed in 1939-40 The Journal of Unified Science) and papers gathered together by Ayer in Logical Positivism (1959).

There is a good discussion of the relationship between analysis and positivism in Susan Stebbings 'logical positivism and analysis' in The Proceedings of the British Academy (1933) and in John Passmore 100 Years of Philosophy (1957) (Penguin 1968, pp. 386-8).

76. For America see:-

Henry May's The Enlightenment in America (New York, 1976).

Henry Commager's The Empire of Reason (New York, 1977)

Donald Mayer's The Democratic Enlightenment (New York, 1976)

Morton White's The Philosophy of the American Revolution (New York, 1978)

Gerry Wills' Inventing America (New York, 1978).

Gay The Enlightenment II pp.555-568

J.R. Pole's 'Enlightenment and the Politics of American Nature' in

Porter and Teich 'The Enlightenment in National Context, and

Bernard Bailyn The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (1967).

For France:-

Norman Hampson's The Enlightenment (Penguin 1968) has an excellent chapter (Ch.8. 'The Revolutionary Climacteric') on the Enlightenment's role in the 1789 revolution. Also, his article 'The Enlightenment in France' in Porter and Teich is valuable.

D. Mornet's Origines Intellectuelles de la Revolution Francais (Paris 1933) is still a standard, if difficult, work.

Cassirer The Philosophy of the Enlightenment Ch. VI.

M.S. Anderson's Historians and Eighteenth Century Europe (Oxford, 1979), has a lot of valuable information on how historians have seen the relationship between the Enlightenment and the Revolution.

77. Pole's 'Enlightenment and the Politics of American Nature' in Porter and Teich. p. 194. Pole's emphasis.

78. Quoted in Pole's 'Enlightenment and the Politics of American Nature' in Porter and Teich. p. 196.

See also Gay The Enlightenment II pp.559-60.

79. See, for example

Alfred Aldridge's 'Benjamin Franklin and the Philosophes' in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, XXIV (1963) pp.43-65

Gay The Enlightenment II 558-563

Adrienne Koch (ed.) The American Enlightenment: The Shaping of the American Experiment and a Free Society. (1965).

80. See Douglass Adair's 'That politics may be reduced to a science'.  
David Hume, James Madison and 'The Tenth Federalist' in  
The Huntington Library Quarterly XX, 44 (August 1957)  
Also, Gay The Enlightenment II. p. 560  
Pole, 'Enlightenment and the politics of American Nature'. p. 194
81. Madison, Hamilton, Jay ('Publius') The Federalist Papers  
Mentor Books 1961. ed. (Clinton Rossiter) No. 14. p. 104
82. quoted in Douglass Adair 'That politics may be reduced to a science'.p.343.  
Also by Gay The Enlightenment II. p.560.
83. Gay The Enlightenment p. 561
84. May The Enlightenment in America.
85. Pole 'Enlightenment and the politics of American Nature'. p. 198.
86. The Philosophy of the American Revolution
87. See White Philosophy of the American Revolution and  
Pole 'Enlightenment and the politics of the American Nature'. p. 204-5
88. Jacob Viner The Role of Providence in the Social Order  
(Philadelphia 1972) p.59
89. Norman Hampson The Enlightenment p. 251.
90. Quoted by Alfred Cobban in Aspects of the French Revolution  
(Cape 1968) p.18
91. See Hampson The Enlightenment pp. 256-7
92. Cobban Aspects of the French Revolution p. 446
93. Iris Murdoch The Sovereignty of Good  
(Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) She even goes so far  
as to call Hume and Kant the Patron Saints of Modern Thought.
94. There are, of course, many examples of this. Of modern philosophers  
influenced by them, I have already mentioned Rawls whose A Theory  
of Justice is, he says, an explicitly Kantian work; logical  
positivists like Schlick and Carnap (who virtually canonized Hume) and

philosophers like Ayer and Russell who have attempted to restate what they see as Classical Humean Empiricism, with 20th Century logical tools.

In addition, one might mention moral philosophers like Hare, whose attempted synthesis of Kantian and utilitarian systems owes a great deal to Kant, and attempts like Peter Strawsons The Bounds of Sense, to 'rescue' Kant from the awkward (for an analytical philosopher) implications of his transcendentalism.

Then again there are philosophers like Anthony Kenny and, to a certain extent, David Pears, who see Wittgenstein, in some respects, as a 20th Century Kant, arguing about the true limits on Reason. There are many other examples :-

See (as a selection): John Rawls A Theory of Justice (Oxford 1972)

Ayers The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge (1940)

R.M. Hare The Language of Morals (Oxford 1952).

Freedom and Reason (Oxford 1963)

and Moral Thinking (Oxford 1981)

Peter Strawson's The Bounds of Sense (Methuen 1966)

(which I shall discuss in more detail in the next chapter).

David Pears Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy (Fontana 1967)

Anthony Kenny Wittgenstein (Penguin 1973)

95. Barry Stroud Hume (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1977) p.X.

96. See F.C. Copleston (S.J.) A History of Philosophy (Image Books 1946-77)  
Vol. 6, Part II 'Kant' especially pp.184-229

97. For Forbes' views see his Hume's Philosophical Politics  
(Cambridge 1975)

and also an article 'Linking the Philosophical and the Political' in  
Political Studies 25 (1977) pp.272-3

For Dunn's comment that "Kant's domestic politics seem merely archaic and fusty" see Chapter 2 ('Liberalism') of his Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future (Cambridge, 1979) and for Walker's similar remarks see his Kant (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

Certainly in the case of Dunn and Forbes this is part of a more general

(and understandable) reaction against philosophers treating social or political theorists as though they were contemporaries whose departmental offices were just down the corridor; a reaction shared, and to a certain extent pioneered by, their Cambridge Confrère, Quentin Skinner, who, in his turn, was influenced by Collingwood.

I shall return to this in Chapter Six.

98. Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment p. 274.
99. Gay The Enlightenment I. p. 401 and p. 418
100. Gay is, of course, not the only theorist to view Hume in this light. A number of other writers will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Notes for Chapter Four

(1) Cassirer Philosophy of the Enlightenment p.274

In this and following chapters, reference will be made to a specific English translation of Kants works, and to the standard German edition, the Gesammelte Schriften (ed. Preussische akademie der Wissenschaften: Berlin and Leipzig, 1902-68). I abbreviate the latter, following custom as AA, and follow the abbreviation with a volume and a page number.

In most cases, the English translation is quoted direct from the translation that I have used, but occasionally I have substituted my own. Where this is the case, I have indicated it in the text.

The English translations I have used are as follows:-

Kritik der Reinen Vernunft(1781 and 1787)

The Critique of Pure Reason (trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillans 1933) abbreviated(abr.) as CPR- A or B indicating, respectively 1781 and 1787 editions.

Prolegomena zu einer jeden kunftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird Auftreten Konnen (1783)

Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysic that has a Right to be Judged a Science (trans. L.W. Beck, Bobbs-Merril, 1970) abr. as Pr

Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten (1785)

The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals (trans. L.W.Beck Bobbs-Merrill,1969). abr. as FMM

Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft (1788)

The Critique of Practical Reason (trans L.W. Beck, Bobbs-Merrill 1956) abr. as CPrR.

Kritik der Urteilskraft (1790)

The Critique of Judgement (trans J.H.Bernard, Hafner Press, 1951) abr. as CJ.

Die Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der Blossen Vernunft (1793)

Religion within the limits of Reason alone (trans. T.M.Greene and H.M.Hudson, Open Court Chicago, 1934) abr. as RA .

Metaphysik Anfangsgrunde des Rechts (1797)

The Metaphysical Elements of Justice (part 1 of the Metaphysic der Sitten; trans John Ladd, Bobbs-Merrill, 1965) abr. as MJ

A number of Kant's specifically political writings have been collected together by Hans Reiss in Kants Political Writings (trans. Nisbett, Cambridge University Press, 1970) abr. as KPW. Those relevant to the present study are as follows:-

Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in Weltbürgerlicher Absicht

'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose'

Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?

'An answer to the Question :What is Enlightenment?'

Über dem Gemeinspruch: Das Mag in der Theorie Richtig Sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis

'On the common saying, 'this may be true in theory, but it does not apply in practice''

Zum Ewigen Frieden: Ein Philosophischer Entwurf

'Perpetual peace: A philosophical sketch'

Also relevant are the essays collected in L.W.Beck(ed) Kant on History (Bobbs-Merrill, 1963); abr. as KH: see especially:-

Das Ende aller Dinge (trans R.E.Anchor)

'The end of all things'

Musshmasslicher Anfang das Menschengeschichts

The conjectural beginning of human history trans E.L.Fackenheim. Then there is also Der Streit der Facultäten translated as the Conflict of the Faculties by M.J.Gregor (Abaris Books, 1979) abr. as CF

There is also the Opus Postumum published in the 1920 supplementary volume of Kant-Studien (Ed. Erich Adickes) abr. as OP

Finally there is Kant's Anthropologie in Pragmatiker Hinsicht Translated as Anthropology from a Practical Point of View by M.J.Gregor (The Hague; Nijhoff, 1974) abr. as AP



- (2) Stages in the rehabilitation of Kant's Political thought include the Reiss and Nisbett collection, a number of Journal Articles many of which are referred to in the text of this Chapter (see, for example, notes 10, 18, 34), and a growing number of book length studies of which a good example is Howard Williams' Kant's Political Philosophy (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1983)
- (3) Williams Kant's Political Philosophy p.37
- (4) See his Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason (University of Chicago Press, 1960)
- (5) Beck Commentary p.48
- (6) See Reiss' introduction to KPW, Williams Kant's Political Philosophy (passim but especially the preface) and Hans Saner Kants Political Thought (University of Chicago Press 1973. Trans.E.B.Ashton).
- (7) Saner Kant's Political Thought p.3. Williams shares this view. See Kant's Political Philosophy p.vii
- (8) See John Dunn Western Political Theory in the face of the Future (Cambridge University Press, 1979) p.45 and Ralph C.S.Walker Kant (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978)
- (9) A good account is H.J.Paton's The Categorical Imperative (Hutchinson, 1947); for a more recent discussion see Bruce Aune Kant's Theory of Morals (Princeton University Press, 1979)
- (10) Peter Nicholson 'Kant on the Duty Never to Resist the Sovereign' in Ethics Vol.86, 1975 - 76.
- (11) Gay The Enlightenment Vol.II p.398. See above, Chapter Three.
- (12) George A.Schrader 'Autonomy, Heteronomy and Moral Imperatives' in Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals (text with critical Essays) Ed. R.P.Wolff (Bobbs-Merrill, 1969) pp.118 - 9  
Bernard Williams also believes this, though he also believes it to be largely mistaken. See Chapter Two of the present work.
- (13) Schrader 'Autonomy' p.120
- (14) Herbert Marcuse Studies in Critical Philosophy (London, 1972) p.82
- (15) See Williams Kant's Political Philosophy Ch.2 especially pp 59 - 63 for an elaboration.

- (16) Williams Kant's Political Philosophy p.69
- (17) It should not be necessary, of course, to repeat or emphasize how indebted to Rousseau Kant was, in his moral theory. As Williams argues (p.162) "Kant approaches the state from a point of view similar to Rousseau", but in working through the general implications of his political theory, he moves away from so distinctively Rousseauist a position. His account of governmental forms, for example, bears the stamp of Montesquieu, not Rousseau, and his rejection of 'pure' democracy is an echo of the Federalist Papers (as Williams notes, p.188). In the terms of my argument in Chapter Three, although heavily indebted to Rousseau for many of his characteristic moral opinions, Kant remained far more firmly wedded to the ideals of the Mainstream Enlightenment than ever Rousseau was.
- (18) Charles Taylor 'Kant's Theory of Freedom' in Philosophy and the Human Sciences (Philosophical Papers Vol.II, Cambridge University Press, 1985) pp 318 - 37
- (19) Taylor 'Kant's Theory of Freedom' p.320 - 321
- (20) Taylor 'Kant's Theory of Freedom' p.321
- (21) See above Chapter Three.
- (22) Williams Kant's Political Philosophy p.37
- (23) Taylor 'Kant's Theory of Freedom' p.325
- (24) Saner's work was originally published as Widerstreit und Einheit: Kant's Politischem Denken. For the English Translation see note 6 of the present Chapter, the quotation is from p.3
- (25) Saner Kant's Political Thought p.4
- (26) Saner Kant's Political Thought p.73
- (27) Saner Kant's Political Thought p.73  
He is quoting Kant's Reflexionan zur Logik (AA XIV 34,73)
- (28) Saner Kant's Political Thought pp.73 - 74
- (29) Saner Kant's Political Thought pp 79 - 103
- (30) Saner Kant's Political Thought p.103
- (31) This is, it must be admitted a highly simplified account of Saner's argument which displays a grasp of the Kantian corpus that can only be described as encyclopedic. It is, however, sufficient for my purpose.
- (32) This is Saner's rendering
- (33) Saner Kant's Political Thought p.107

- (34) P.Riley 'A Possible Explanation of Rousseau's General Will' in The American Political Science Review (1970)
- (35) Riley 'A Possible Explanation' p.91
- (36) Riley 'A Possible Explanation' p.96
- (37) Taylor 'Kant's Theory of Freedom' pp.336 - 337
- (38) See above Ch.1.
- (39) J.N.Findlay Kant and the Transcendental Object (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981)
- (40) See above Chapter Four.
- (41) Findlay Kant and the Transcendental Object p.282
- (42) John Dunn 'From Applied Theology to Social Analysis: the break between John Locke and the Scottish Enlightenment' in Rethinking Modern Political Theory (Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.55
- (43) Dunn Rethinking Modern Political Theory p.66
- (44) Findlay Kant and the Transcendental Object pp. 348 - 349
- (45) Findlay Kant and the Transcendental Object p.370
- (46) For example by Anthony Kenny in his Wittgenstein (Pelican, 1970)
- (47) Peter Strawson The Bounds of Sense (Methuen, 1966)
- (48) See Findlay Kant and The Transcendental Object P.ix
- (49) Strawson The Bounds of Sense p.241
- (50) Strawson The Bounds of Sense p.247
- (51) Strawson The Bounds of Sense p.249
- (52) Strawson The Bounds of Sense p.248
- (53) Findlay Kant and The Transcendental Object p.382
- (54) Strawson The Bounds of Sense pp.248 - 249
- (55) Strawson The Bounds of Sense pp.248 - 249
- (56) A good summary is found in W.H.Walsh's article 'Self-Knowledge' in Kant On Pure Reason (Oxford University Press, 1982) Ed. R.C.S.Walker. See especially pp.158 - 174
- (57) Gay The Enlightenment Vol.II p.313

Notes for Chapter Five

All references to Hume's works in this and the subsequent Chapter will be to the undernoted editions, abbreviated as given below, followed by a page number or numbers:-

A Treatise of Human Nature (T)

(ed. by L.A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford Clarendon Press 1978)  
revised by P.H. Nidditch.

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (EHU)

An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (EPM)

A Dialogue (D)

All from the Selby-Bigge edition of the Enquiries (ed. and introduced by L.A. Selby-Bigge. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1975) also revised by P.H. Nidditch.

The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (DNR)

(ed. N.K. Smith. Thames Nelson & Sons 1947)

The History of England (H) (Parker & Coates, Philadelphia)

There is no standard edition of the history, so I have used the one to which I had the most direct access.

The Letters of David Hume (ed. J.Y.T. Greig - Oxford University Press 1932) (L1)

The New Letters of David Hume (ed. Raymond Klibansky and E.C. Mossner. O.U.P. 1954) (L2)

ESSAYS in T.H. Green and T.H. Grose The Philosophical Works of David Hume (London. 1882) 4 Vols. Vols 3 & 4. 'Essays: Moral, Political and Literary' (PW)

1. Gay The Enlightenment I, 401.
2. T.E. Jessop 'The Misunderstood Hume' in Hume and the Enlightenment (ed. W.A. Todd, Edinburgh University Press. 1974)  
(herein referred to as Todd).
3. Hume's sub-title for the Treatise was, I need hardly say, 'Being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral

subjects', and, towards the end of the introduction to the Treatise he gives his conception of the "experiments" meant as follows - "we must, therefore, give us our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and then as they appear in common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company in affairs and in their pleasures." (T. XIX)

4. By calling it this Hume intends to distinguish it, of course, from Natural philosophy (i.e. Science). He does not, however, mean it only to refer to "moral philosophy" in the contemporary sense of the term; it is much wider than this, as is shown by his subsequently aligning it with the whole "Science of Human Nature" (EHU 5).
5. See, for example, Norman Kemp Smith:-  
The Philosophy of David Hume (Macmillans. 1941 pp. 14-18)  
and E.C. Mossner The Life of David Hume (Oxford, The Clarendon Press 1980 pp. 104-5)
6. For discussion of these thinkers and their relation to Hume see, in particular:-  
J.L. Mackie Hume's Moral Theory (Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1980)  
D.D. Raphael 'Hume's Critique of Ethical Rationalism'  
in Todd Hume and the Enlightenment  
R.D. Broiles The Moral Philosophy of David Hume (Martinus Nijhoff.1964)
7. Samuel Clarke Discourse Concerning the Unchanging Obligations of Natural Religion (ed. by Selby-Bigge)
8. Mossner ( Life )
9. Leslie Stephen English Thought Vol. I
10. The Third Earl of Shaftesbury An Enquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit
11. Frances Hutcheson An Enquiry Concerning Moral Goodness
12. Most persuasively by James Noxon. See his Hume's Philosophical Development (Oxford 1973) Noxon's thesis receives some support from R.G. Collingwood's section on Hume in The Idea of History (Oxford. 1946 see p. 73)

13. Selby-Bigge in his ed. of The Enquiries already cited.  
Introduction p. xxi-II.
14. Ian Ross 'Philosophy and Fiction. The Challenge of David Hume' in Todd (Ed.)  
Hume and the Enlightenment.
15. Given in the Advertisement to the Selby-Bigge ed. of the Enquiries.
16. See Mossner Life and also Green and Grose (Eds.) Philosophical Works  
Vol. 1 (PW pp. 1-8. See especially p.3 and p.8).
17. It is given in full on p. 611-615
18. See Mossner Life p.597 and p.582
19. For a full description of the development and writing of the Dialogues  
see especially Mossner Life p.64, 223, 319-20, 592-3, 602-607.
20. See Mossner Life passim especially Ch. 25/26 p. 336-369.
21. Mossner Life 393-4 p. 587  
Also Gay The Enlightenment: an interpretation I: passim.  
and, of course, Boswell's Life of Johnson (1980. ed. Pat Rogers )  
see p. 314-15, 838, 1288
22. See Mossner Life p. 597-598
23. Duncan Forbes Hume's Philosophical Politics (Cambridge 1975) p.59
24. Forbes Hume's Philosophical Politics p.65
25. He, in fact, uses this phrase in the first Enquiry p. 161
26. See T.H. Reid The Enquiry into the human mind, on the Principles  
of Common Sense (Edinburgh. 1764)  
See also Mossner Life for coverage of Reid's correspondence with Hume.  
For the annoyance Hume felt at both his and Beattie's attack on the  
Treatise: I have already referred to p. 577-588 of Mossner's Life.
27. Reid. Inquiry. See also Mossner Life p.287-300.
28. See Isaiah Berlin 'Hume and the Sources of German Anti-Rationalism' in  
Against the Current; Essays in the History of Ideas (Oxford, 1981 )  
[See also Chapter Six pp 168-170]

29. For a description of this see D.H. Fischer  
Historians, towards a logic of historical thought  
(New York. 1970)
30. J.B. Black The Art of History (Oxford 1926)  
R.G. Collingwood The Idea of History (Oxford. 1946 Ed.T.M. Knox)  
Meinecke Die Entstehung des Historismus Vol. I pp. 209-215  
(Munich and Berlin. 1936)  
See also the discussion in:-  
Forbes Hume's Philosophical Politics Ch.4 (especially p.102-3)
31. George Vlachos Essai sur la politique des Hume (1955)
32. Forbes. Hume's Philosophical Politics p. 118-9
33. For a discourse of this see S.K. Wertz "Hume, History and Human Nature"  
in the Journal of the History of Ideas (1975)
34. Mossner Life p. 601 quoting Smith's "letter" to Strahan, appended to  
The Life of David Hume Esq., Written by Himself (London. 1777)
35. Ludwig Wittgenstein Culture and Value (trans. by Peter Winch)  
(Oxford, 1981)
36. One Scholar, David Gauthier, has even argued that Hume is, in fact, a  
contractarian of sorts (See D. Gauthier "David Hume Contractarian" in  
The Philosophical Review (1979). This article, ingenious though it  
is, strains my credulity. Only a most eccentric definition of what  
constitutes a contractarian allows the argument any plausibility at all,  
and to be honest, I think Hume is perfectly clear in what he  
(specifically) is arguing against, for this definition and its  
consequent, to fall at the first hurdle - in the sense that he uses  
the term (and how most political thinkers would use it) Hume most  
emphatically is not a contractarian.
37. He repeats his arguments in the second Enquiry here. (See EM 171)  
"Truth is disputable, not taste, what exists in the nature of things  
is the standard of our judgement what each man feels within himself  
is the standard of sentiment".

There are, of course, differences. Hume himself felt that the second Enquiry was "of all my writings .... incomparably the best" (from 'My Own Life': See Mossner Life p.613), and others since then have considered the second Enquiry superior to the Treatise, as an exposition of Hume's ethical thought (see, for example, C.D.Broad Five Types of Ethical Theory (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1930 (1962) p.84; Also James T. King 'The place of the Language of Morals in Hume's second Enquiry', in Livingston and King (Eds.) Hume: A Re-Evaluation. (New York 1976) p. 343-361 . I have no intention, however, of entering into yet another of the Humean scholarly minefields, and fortunately, I do not think it germane to my purpose to do so. I shall briefly explain why.

Even though, as I suggested earlier, there does seem to be some change between the Treatise and Enquiry most of it appears as omissions, rather than additions - again lending support to the view that in a sense Hume was 'watering down' some of the more difficult or badly expressed sections of the Treatise. Much of what is not left out is curtailed, and inevitably distorted from what it had been in the Treatise - the most notable example surely being the difference in the treatment of sympathy between the two works. Hume's essential arguments, however, remained unchanged, still premised on the methods discussed earlier, and his arguments in the Treatise on the specific topic of political obligation are mostly implied or simply quoted anew in his later essay "of the original contract", aside from being very largely similar in the second Enquiry. I conclude from all this that, though differences there are between the Treatise and Hume's later work, they do not significantly affect my arguments here; see for added thoughts on this - Nicholas Phillipson 'Hume as Moralist: a Social Historians perspective ' in S.C. Brown ed. Philosophers of the Enlightenment

38. John Rawls A Theory of Justice (Oxford 1972 p.3)
39. See my discussion below
40. See Mossner's Life pp.475-488
41. See above p. 29
42. It should not be thought by this that I am conceding anything to Macintyre's thesis about the 'inevitable failure' of the Enlightenment project.



43. By. A.J. Ayer Hume (Oxford, 1980) pp.55
44. A.J. Ayer Hume pp.58
45. Norman Kemp Smith The Philosophy of David Hume (1941) (Macmillans 1964)
46. See above Chapter Four, passim
47. In Chapter six of the present work.
48. David Miller Philosophy and Ideology in Hume's Political Thought (Oxford. 1981)
49. Miller Philosophy and Ideology p. 39
50. Miller Philosophy and Ideology p.41
51. Miller Philosophy and Ideology p. 94-5
52. Other writers who argue a similar case include Stroud (Hume) and Kemp Smith (The Philosophy of David Hume). These two, however, are principally concerned with Hume's moral theory and general philosophy, and discuss his political theory only in an abstract or tangential way.  
  
Books more specifically concerned with Hume's political theory, which offer similar conclusions are Shirley Letwins The Pursuit of Certainty (Cambridge 1965) and Johnathan Harrison's Hume's Theory of Justice (Oxford 1981).
53. Miller, in fact, explicitly mentions Forbes in his introduction (see Miller Philosophy and Ideology p.14)
54. Duncan Forbes Hume's Philosophical Politics (p. VIII-XI)
55. Forbes Hume's Philosophical Politics p. VIII
56. Forbes 'Hume's Science of Politics' in Hume: Bi-centenary Papers (ed. G.P. Morcie) (Edinburgh University Press. 1978) p. 39-40
57. David Fate-Norton David Hume: Common Sense Moralism, Sceptical Metaphysician (Princeton University Press 1982)
58. Fate-Norton David Hume p. 304-5
60. Stroud's Hume also emphasises this.
61. Fate-Norton David Hume p. 309
62. Fate-Norton David Hume p. 307

63. Fate Norton David Hume p. 307 (my emphasis)
64. See J. Martin Stafford 'Hume, Spencer and the Standard of Morals' in Philosophy Vol. 58 No. 223 Jan. 1983
65. Stafford mentions by name A Dialogue, and the Essays The Sceptic and On the Standard of Taste.
66. E.C. Mossner 'Hume and the Legacy of the Dialogues' in Morice Hume: Bi-centenary Papers
67. Mossner 'Hume and the Legacy of the Dialogues' p.2  
See also, Mossner's Life p. 232-239, for a discussion of Hume's "humour of displaying his wit".  
For a thorough and comprehensive treatment of Hume's irony see John V. Price: The Ironic Hume (Austin, 1965)
68. Mossner 'Hume and the Legacy of the Dialogues' p.2
69. Mossner 'Hume and the Legacy of the Dialogues' p.5
70. Forbes 'Hume's Science of Politics' p.39
71. See Fate Norton David Hume
72. See Berlin 'Hume and the Sources of German Anti-Rationalism'
73. Mossner 'Hume and the Legacy of the Dialogues' p.19
74. See, for example, K.B. Price 'Does Hume's Theory of Knowledge determine his ethical theory' in The Journal of Philosophy ((1950) pp. 425-34
75. See Mossner Life and above p.117
76. See Harrison Hume's Theory of Justice p.191
77. N.K. Smith The Philosophy of David Hume p.566
78. See Chapter I of the present work. pp.16-17
79. See Berlin 'Hume and the Sources of German Anti-Rationalism' for the counter Enlightenment and the various emotivists discussed in Chapter One for modern versions of this.

80. John Dunn 'From applied theology to social analysis: The break between John Locke and the Scottish Enlightenment' in Rethinking Modern Political Theory (Cambridge 1985) p.66
81. John Dunn 'From applied theology to social analysis' pp. 66-7
82. John Dunn 'From applied theology to social analysis' pp. 66-7
83. See D.D. Raphael 'Hume's Critique of Ethical Rationalism' in Todd (ed.) Hume and the Enlightenment
84. It will be observed, of course, that in my account of Hume's philosophy here I have not mentioned one major area of Humean exegesis - the 'Ought/Is' controversy. This is because, in so far as it is relevant, I discuss it in some detail in Chapter Six.
85. Kemp Smith. The Philosophy of David Hume p.545.
86. For a good discussion of the ways in which it is.  
See J. Plamenatz Man and Society (Longmans 1963) Vol.I, pp.299-331

Notes for Chapter Six

- (1) MacIntyre After Virtue p.104. MacIntyre's emphasis.
- (2) MacIntyre After Virtue pp 104-5
- (3) MacIntyre After Virtue p.105
- (4) MacIntyre After Virtue p.106
- (5) MacIntyre After Virtue p.107
- (6) MacIntyre After Virtue pp 110-111
- (7) MacIntyre After Virtue p.50
- (8) MacIntyre After Virtue p.52
- (9) MacIntyre After Virtue p.52
- (10) MacIntyre After Virtue p.53
- (11) See above, chapter three, pp 65-66
- (12) See above, chapter four passim
- (13) MacIntyre After Virtue p.53
- (14) MacIntyre After Virtue p.53
- (15) For Diderot, see chapter three pp 65-66  
For Kant, see chapter four passim
- (16) See pp.10 and 221
- (17) See chapter three pp 54-64
- (18) See chapter four pp 89-91
- (19) See chapter one p.15
- (20) Bernstein Philosophical Profiles pp.135-6
- (21) MacIntyre After Virtue p.149
- (22) Bernstein Philosophical Profiles p.137
- (23) MacIntyre After Virtue p.242
- (24) See chapter two pp 33-38
- (25) See chapter two p.35
- (26) MacIntyre After Virtue p.242
- (27) See above, chapter two pp 33-38
- (28) See Bernstein Philosophical Profiles p.134
- (29) Rorty Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature p.5
- (30) See MacIntyre After Virtue pp 1-5
- (31) As Bernstein says, Rorty's argument here seems to be a novel blending of themes suggested by Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault, Kuhn and Feyerabend. (Bernstein, p.26). Wittgenstein, Collingwood and Hume all, at some time, and in various ways, say similar things.
- (32) Rorty Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature pp 330-331

- (33) See chapter two p.32
- (34) See in particular the essays by Quentin Skinner, Charles Taylor, MacIntyre and Shneewind.
- (35) See After Virtue esp. pp 1-5
- (36) The Foundations of Modern Political Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1978) 2 vols.
- (37) John Dunn 'Identity, Modernity and the Claim to Know Better' in Rethinking Modern Political Theory p.151
- (38) My suspicion is that Kant would have been depressed rather than exhilarated by the progress made by the cause of Enlightenment since the end of the eighteenth century.
- (39) Dunn Rethinking Modern Political Theory p.153
- (40) See above chapter five passim
- (41) See above chapter 3 p.54
- (42) See above chapter 3 p.59
- (43) For Rorty's full case see, of course, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature passim. See especially part III 'Philosophy'.
- (44) MacIntyre states this on pp 3-5 of After Virtue
- (45) R.G.Collingwood Autobiography (Oxford University Press 1939) pp 140-141.
- (46) Collingwood Autobiography p.69
- (47) Collingwood Autobiography p.98
- (48) Collingwood Autobiography p.100
- (49) See Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy pp 1-3
- (50) Here I am referring to the closing sections of the book, in which he refers to Oakeshott's metaphor of conversation and then talks about 'the philosopher's moral concern'. See Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature pp 390-394
- (51) Collingwood Autobiography p.147
- (52) Collingwood Autobiography p.150
- (53) Michel Foucault Power/Knowledge (New York, 1980) p.131
- (54) Charles Taylor 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' in Philosophy and the Human Sciences (Cambridge University Press 1985)
- (55) Foucault's notion of Power here, is, of course, 'power without a subject'. This is, in a number of ways, perhaps the most interesting aspect of his work from the point of view of a student of political theory, but a full consideration of it would take me far too far outside

my subject here.

For Foucault's own reflections see Power/Knowledge and Surveiller et Punir (Paris, 1975); and Histoire de Sexualité (Paris, 1976, Voll)

(56) Taylor 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' pp 178-9

(57) There are points where Collingwood makes a similar point (see for example, T.M.Knox's reference to an unpublished passage in his writings, in the introduction to The Idea of History (Oxford, 1946)).

This has led some people to suggest that Collingwood's position is essentially a relativist one. That this is not what Collingwood himself intended is, I think, obvious from reading his Autobiography but for a refutation of the idea that, even unintentionally, Collingwood's position is relativistic see my friend Tariq Modoods 'The later Collingwood's alleged historicism and relativism' in History and Theory (forthcoming 1986). I have also discussed Collingwood's position here in a paper to a conference organized jointly by Nottingham and Leicester Philosophy Departments in February, 1986 'Collingwood, Oakeshott and Rorty: Relativism and the Philosophy of History', now submitted for publication.

(58) Taylor 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' p.181.

(59) Taylor 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' pp 181-2

(60) Taylor 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' p.181

(61) Taylor 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' p.182

(62) Naturally this does not mean that discussions of the historical processes involved and their implications are not relevant to them. As Taylor says, for example, among the most fundamental questions raised by Foucault, are whether we can step outside the identity we have developed in Western Civilisation to such a degree that we can repudiate all that comes to us from a Christian understanding of the will, and even granting that we could, would what Foucault (at least according to Taylor) substitutes for it (an 'aesthetic of Experience') be at all admirable. The first question is one that any attempt to criticize the notion of personal identity (such as that of Derek Parfit in Reasons and Persons [Oxford University Press 1984]) must find an answer for.

As yet none has.

- (63) Collingwood Autobiography pp 140-141
- (64) See above Chapter Four p.78
- (65) See above Chapter Three p.51
- (66) See above Chapter Four p.89-90
- (67) See above Chapter Four p.78
- (68) See above Chapter Four p.79
- (69) See above Chapter Four p.78
- (70) See above Chapter Five p.104
- (71) See above Chapter Four. passim
- (72) See Hamann's Sämmtliche Werke (Ed.J.Nadler, Vienna, 1949-57)  
Vol 3 p.285
- (73) See Berlin's 'Hume and the Sources of German  
Anti-Rationalism' in Against the Current: Essays in the  
History of Ideas p.170
- (74) Berlin 'Hume and the Sources of German Anti-Rationalism'  
p.170
- (75) Berlin 'Hume and the Sources of German Anti-Rationalism'  
p.174
- (76) Quoted by Berlin in 'Hume and the Sources of German  
Anti-Rationalism' p.172
- (77) See above Chapter Five. passim
- (78) See Gay The Enlightenment: An Interpretation Vol 2 p.483
- (79) See above Chapter Five pp 111-116
- (80) It could be said that it was always there (in embryonic  
form, at least); as, for example, in Peter Winch's  
The Idea of a Social Science
- (81) This, of course, is William's response, as I explained  
in Chapter Two.
- (82) See above Chapter Two p.37
- (83) Included in his 'On Human Conduct' (Basil Blackwell,1975)
- (84) Oakeshott On Human Conduct p.313
- (85) Oakeshott On Human Conduct p.320
- (86) See Oakeshott's essay 'The Rule of Law' in On History  
and Other Essays (Basil Blackwell,1983)
- (87) Oakeshott On History p.161
- (88) See my paper 'The Public Interest, Privacy and the  
Modern State'. Published by the European Consortium  
for Political Research (1985)
- (89) Most notably, of course, in the essays contained in  
Rationalism in Politics (Methuen,1962)

- (90) Charles Taylor 'Social Theory as Practice' in Philosophy and the Human Sciences p.114
- (91) See earlier in this Chapter
- (92) On Foucault and Rorty see, for example, R.J.Bernstein's Philosophical Profiles pp 21-94 and Anthony Giddens's Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory (Macmillan's, 1982) pp 215-230.  
On Collingwood see E.H.Carr's What is History (Penguin, 1964) passim, and Tariq Modood's paper referred to earlier.
- (93) Charles Taylor 'What is Human Agency' in Human Agency and Language (Cambridge University Press, (1985) p.34
- (94) In the Journal of Philosophy 67: 1 (Jan.1971) pp 5-20
- (95) H.Frankfurt 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person p.6
- (96) Although it is not strictly necessary, I think this would be a sensible place to make a few remarks concerning the relationship of understandings and motivations in human action. In the main text I have attempted to offer an interpretation of our capacities as human agents, predicated upon a certain view of the way our understandings of ourselves - our self-descriptions, as Taylor calls them - mediate with our actions. It might occur to some to doubt this linkage, and so it is important for me to make plain exactly what I am alluding to.

As Jon Elster has pointed out, "In order to know what to do, we first have to know what to believe with respect to the relevant .... matters" (Rational Choice (Blackwell's, 1986) Ed.J.Elster p.1) It is the assumption governing the above arguments that, in this case, 'knowing what to believe with respect to the relevant matters' is (at least in large part) a complex construct of our historical, cultural experience and manifestations. (This is the case argued for at length, and in different ways, by Foucault, Collingwood and Rorty in the various works discussed above). It is



also one which some Red Queen Theorists (for example Oakeshott) seem to be inclined to accept (See his 'On the Character of a Modern European State' in On Human Conduct).

Nobody, of course, denies that the relation between our beliefs, our understandings and our actions is anything other than a vastly complicated one, but, in the widest sense of that much abused term, our ethical understandings obviously play a crucial role in helping us to orient ourselves as far as our conduct is concerned. Thus, any attempt to look at the relationship between 'philosophy' and 'practical politics' (to use Graham's nomenclature) will inevitably mean offering an interpretation of the nature of this understanding. It is this that I attempt here.

I offer further reflections on this in my 'Agency, Rationality, Responsibility' paper. (See Note 105 below).

- (97) 'What is Human Agency' p.16
- (98) 'What is Human Agency' p.34
- (99) 'What is Human Agency' p.38
- (100) 'What is Human Agency' p.38
- (101) See Chapter One p.7
- (102) Charles Taylor 'Social Theory as Practice'.  
See footnote 90 above.
- (103) H.Williams Kant's Political Philosophy p.278
- (104) "Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating these rights)" (p.IX). Whether or not Rawl's original position can be defended on non-universalist assumptions remains a separate question.
- (105) Some theorists have already begun this. Dunn, MacIntyre and Rorty in the works already mentioned, for example, even if their solutions are only partially acceptable.

A similar point is implicit in Michael Walzer's Spheres of Justice (Cambridge, 1983), in W.B.Gallie's 'Wanted: A Philosophy of International Relations' in Political Studies Vol.XXVII No.3, in Hedley Bull's

'International Theory 1919-69' in The Aberystwyth Papers (Oxford University Press, 1974) Ed. B. Porter and The Expansion of International Society (Oxford, 1985) (Ed. with Adam Watson)

I have explored some of the issues in three papers:-  
'Rights, States and Persons in Contemporary Just War Theory' (E.C.P.R. 1986)

'Rationality, Agency, Responsibility: Three problematic Concepts in the Modern Theory of the Just War'.

(A paper to be given to The Oxford Political Thought Conference, January, 1987).

'Incommensurability and International Theory' Review of International Studies (1987, forthcoming)

(106) Rawls has already been mentioned. I might add Thomas Nagel in Mortal Questions (Princeton, 1979) and The View from Nowhere. (Oxford, 1986) A good deal of Rights-based arguments (See for example David Luban 'Just War and Human Rights' in 'International Ethics' (Princeton University Press, 1985) and arguments such as Onora O'Neil's (See for example 'Lifeboat Earth' in the same volume).

(107) I have attempted to make a start elsewhere.  
See 'Incommensurability and International Theory'

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